

THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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“Theosophy will gradually leaven and permeate the great mass of thinking and intelligent people with its large-minded and noble ideas of religion, duty, and philanthropy. Slowly but surely it will burst asunder the iron fetters of creeds and dogmas, of social and caste prejudices; it will break down racial and national antipathies and barriers, and will open the way to the practical realization of the Brotherhood of all men.”—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE LAW OF CYCLES

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

THIS expression is frequently met with in Theosophical literature; but we must guard against considering that there is a definite dogma or article of belief on the subject indicated, or that the law in question is of the nature of an edict pronounced by a sovereign personality. Theosophy is an interpretation of facts; and the law of cycles, which is revealed in the course of that interpretation, *is of the nature of 'law' as understood in science*; that is, it is a formulation or generalization of certain facts observed in the workings of nature. Like all other such laws, it will be found inextricably interwoven with other laws; and the wholeness of Theosophy and the interdependence of all its parts will thereby be illustrated.

The law states that all movements, whether viewed as spatial or temporal, are of the nature of circles — they return to similar phases; or the illustration of a vibration may be used. The circle is a universal and well known emblem of eternity, or of the entirety of time; and sometimes the symbol becomes that of a serpent swallowing its tail. But the circle is a closed figure; and by continuing the curve on another plane we get the helix (which is sometimes popularly called a spiral). From this again we get the vortex, and so indefinitely (See Swedenborg). So that the spiral might be taken as a symbol for the law of cycles.

Reasoning by analogy, often scoffed at by adherents of the syllogism, is not only permissible but paramount in Occultism. The method is of course continually used by investigators and discoverers of all kinds, whether they acknowledge it or not. The fact that the method, in its practice, is found to be prolific of error, militates not against its validity; a false analogy argues the existence of true analogies. What has been discovered by science to be true has been asserted as such before, on the strength of the laws of analogy: for example, that the atom is a miniature copy of the universe. In the well-known words 'macrocosm' and 'microcosm' we have an expression of the belief that man is a miniature copy of the universe; as also in the aphorism, "As above, so below." Therefore we may take the movements of the heavenly bodies as a type of movements in other parts of the universe.

The heavenly bodies move in cycles. These cycles may be regarded as closed curves — ellipses; yet we know that the ellipses themselves move cyclically, giving rise to periods of node and apsis. Thus we find cycle within cycle, proceeding indefinitely. The day is compounded

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with the solar year, and that again with the precessional cycle. The validity of the analogy is demonstrated to common experience in many cases; for the diurnal and annual cycles play a major part in the ordering of our affairs and in the habits of the various kingdoms of nature. The cyclic motion of the moon, universally believed to have important influence, has been disregarded by recent science; though its connexion with insanity and with certain physiological cycles is admitted. It is inevitable that many other cycles of the heavenly bodies must have their appropriate influences, as has been a universal belief in antiquity; and it is only a question of time before much of this will be verified. The influence of sunspot cycles is now explained in accordance with modern physical theories.

Astrology depends largely on the view that there is an analogy between the cycles of the heavenly bodies and events on earth or in human life. Apart from the idea that the planets shed an influence upon man and upon earth, they may be regarded as parts of a great clock indicating time. This is indeed done in ordinary experiences: we can predict the onset of attacks in an intermittent fever by the course of the sun or of a clock regulated thereby. What more likely than that a closer study would reveal the connexion of events with other cyclic revolutions?

Astrology, however, though mentioned here as part of our topic, is not recommended as a study for present-day students. It is a remorseless devourer of brains and energy, an insatiable taskmaster, even in its present-day degenerated state. Whatever heights of excellence and utility it may have reached in past ages, when the conditions and demands of life were different and knowledge of it was real, and competent sages were at hand to explain and use it; its present uses are mostly futile. It is certain that we can order our life better without it as it now is.

It is part of the ancient teachings that all the revolutions of the planets, together with those of their nodes and apsides, return at the end of a Great Age to their 'original' positions; and that subdivisions of this period are similarly marked by the coincidence of some, but not all, of these revolutions. Thus the motions of the heavenly bodies constitute a vast clock; and one division of Occult Science is connected with its interpretation.

But knowledge, as long as it is merely speculative, may be more interesting than valuable. Theosophical teachings are valuable from their applicability to daily life. By living our life with these teachings in the back of our mind, we tread the path of real useful knowledge. It has been well said that man peoples his path in space with the creations of his own thoughts and acts. This is more than a metaphor. Just as the earth, in its peregrinations, strikes periodically a trail of meteorites;

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so man, it appears, sets whirling in their orbits certain thought-meteorites, which cross his path again and again. You indulge some weakness; it passes off; you think you are done with it. But no; some time, sooner, later, when you least expect it, there is the thing back again! Probably no one fixed time for the return of all such cycles. Heavenly bodies have all sorts of orbits. But knowledge is power; with a knowledge of the enemy's plans, one is equipped to circumvent him. When the foe appears, you can unmask him — recognise him for what he is, a creature created by *yourself*, armed with weapons furnished by *you*. Give him the go-by; and when next he appears he will be weaker, and you stronger. People your current in space with friends and allies!

The connexion of this with the law of Karma is obvious. On our cyclic journeyings through life, we find what we have put there. The scientifically minded will doubtless require a 'physical nexus' connecting cause with effect. They are not forbidden to seek it. There must of course be a nexus, whether 'physical' or not; and it would be rash to deny its existence merely because we may not be able to see it. 'Hyper-space' and transcendental geometry will furnish all we need to ask in the way of a possible machinery. Perhaps my mind is a four-dimensional magnitude, operating in some free and easy kind of space with laws of its own. But let us study life and amass a few facts first.

The law of cyclic motion can be applied to elucidate evolution. Taking here the small as a pattern for the great, we may observe that the succession of days in our life constitute the volutions in a spiral: we return again and again to our uprisings and nocturnal retirings, and yet move forward through the years all the while. And thus the lifetime itself may be regarded as one volution in a larger spiral, other incarnations being the other volutions, and progress being accomplished all the while by the incarnating Soul. In the same way the living monads of the animal, vegetable, and other kingdoms, are passing onward through their cycles of evolution, appearing in the physical world in successive forms.

By keeping in mind the cyclic principle we should avoid many inconsistencies between fact and theory, which crop up in the arena of debate on evolution. For science has met with a common experience of investigators, in that, while seeking new facts to corroborate its theory, it has found much that it was not looking for; it has found facts which, instead of supporting the old theory, start new clues. The evolutionary scheme is, as might have been supposed *a priori*, far more vast and complex than the first tentative theories.

In many of our actions and social institutions we instinctively recognise the validity of laws which our reason takes no cognisance of. We commemorate, we centenerate and tercentenerate, we make new-year

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resolves, we elect propitious seasons for inaugurating, celebrate birthdays and golden weddings, and so on. What is all this but a recognition of the law of cycles and of its validity? There is a time for sowing and a time for reaping. A resolve made in the first conscious moment of the day is far more potent than one made later; as is also any evil thought that may be harbored in that crucial moment. And this leads us a step farther in our study of the meaning of cycles. So far the symbol of a circle has been used. But is that enough? A circle is the same in all its parts. But a day, a year, a zodiac,— these vary from end to end. There is mystery about the origin and meaning of that ancient book, the zodiac. One of its meanings is evidently that of a cycle divided into twelve different parts, the symbols being intended to represent and convey the qualities of those twelve regions or parts. Thus viewed, the zodiac becomes a key to evolution. It is one of the symbols of the Secret Doctrine, a science whose symbol-language conveys generalizations too profound for verbiage. Let not science balk at this — science that uses the benzene ring and the polygon of forces as symbols for some of nature's secrets.

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KENNETH MORRIS

WHETHER proceeding from the luminance of the Evening Star,
Or arisen from the blossom of God's blue rose the Sea,
Innumerable and very noble the Princes of Beauty are,
In whose hearts we are held unfallen, in whose will we are free.
Some plummy willow spirit, accustomed to thrill
Wingless from Canopus to the Dragon that guards the Pole,
Fluted thee into being, O my lady the daffodil,—
Or kindled the flame thy bloom with the star her Soul.
And there is no pansy, but Aeons aglow in the gloom
Of purple and ink-dark skies, and their wings on fire,
Sang; — no iris, nor rose nor hyacinth bloom
But was born of a gust of song from the Starry Choir.
If I go up into the mountains, to the blue crags, I shall find
The ancient healing beauty in the ways untrod;
If I rise from the worn tracks of the heart and mind
Shall I not commune with the Dragon Hosts of God?

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SEEING IS BELIEVING

R. MACHELL

THERE would almost seem to be a magic potency in certain aphorisms, which causes them to be accepted without hesitation by people who would be much offended if told that they were bewitched by a formula. Of course the one accused of such submission to the hypnotic influence of a form of words would say that the formula was used as a convenient way of expressing an observed truth. But experience shows that the unthinking public is quite content to accept familiar aphorisms as unquestionable truths, and to attribute their popularity to their truth. When this unconscious bluff is called, too often the solid truth of the accepted formula dissolves before the searchlight of independent thought: for bluff is the art of giving substance to a shadow; and shadows disappear when the light shines through them.

An aphorism beguiles us with its simplicity, while it deludes us with its ambiguity. It is so natural to mistake simplicity for truth. What formula could be simpler than this: "Seeing is believing"? How bewitchingly elusive! It is as clear as a shadow, and as luminous. And, while stuffed with falsehood, how true it is!

Few things are more unbelievable to the average man than that his own sight could deceive him; yet the faculty of seeing correctly is very rare, and has to be trained by long practice and experience. Those who trust their own power of correct sight should visit a good conjuror and allow him to demonstrate the futility of their vision as a guarantee of truth. It is easy for anyone to prove to himself that his sight is not as quick as the movements of animals, birds, machines, or even of men trained in 'sleight of hand,' and it is not at all impossible to prove to oneself that one's sight may seem to register more than the facts in some cases, as well as to fall short in others.

To the unthinking, unobservant, person, sight seems so direct, so automatic, so unbiased, that it is hard to doubt its evidence. But sight is not simple, far from it. Sight is a very complex combination of processes, any one of which may fail to co-operate with the rest. In the first place, eyes might seem necessary; and yet one can see perfectly with the eyes closed, as in sleep: or occasionally in the dark. Then it may seem natural that the two eyes should transmit identical pictures, but they do not. Moreover, it is usual to find discrepancies between the power of the two physical organs. Further, it may seem inevitable that the eyes must

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automatically record all that comes within their range. But even this is not so. The eyes may be trained to see more, as well as more accurately, and also to see no more than the facts.

But it is better not to speak of the eyes seeing. They simply focus an image on the retina, and even that is upside down; it is the seer who does the seeing. And who is the seer? and where does he reside? And how does he translate the color- and light- and form-combinations registered on the retina into pictures for the mind to see? For sight is a faculty of the mind; and it is hard to say where the transformation takes place which converts those moving patterns of color, form, and shadow, into intelligible pictures.

One naturally imagines that sight is a record of observed facts recorded by the eyes and seen by the individual: but, in delirium, the sick man sees things that are to him more real than the material objects around him; while other people in the room will declare that his visions are purely imaginary, basing their opinion on the confidence they have in their own power to see all that is really to be seen. But then in what way does the sight of the delirious man, the lunatic, the sleep-walker, the ghost-seer, differ from the sight of a sane and healthy person in the waking state?

Even in full possession of one's faculties one may see a man and find it was a bush, one may see a snake and find it a dead stick, and so on. One may see a crowd and miss a well-known face, or see one who was not there. These errors of sight are common to all; but the habit of indifference and lack of observation makes people practically blind to all but their immediate interests. Yet they continue to declare that 'seeing is believing.'

The faculty of sight is very wonderful, and one has only to watch the movements of young children stretching out to touch things far beyond their reach, raising their feet to climb up the wall which we see as the floor, and so on to understand how much they have to learn before they can move safely on the earth.

The picture thrown upon the screen, or the retina, is of course flat, and very small; everything seen is photographed upon that ridiculously small concave surface behind the lens of the eye, and is then translated into objects that move in distance, that are big or small beyond all comparison with the actual size of the picture on the retina, objects that move in space, and then the people that are seen and must be understood.

Then think of all the years of training, during which the mind acquires experience by which to test its new experiences and bring them into some relation to the body of the seer: for the body is the test and measure of size and distance, of texture and of weight. Is a place near or far? That means 'how soon can I get there?' Is a thing heavy or light? means, 'can I lift it easily, or not at all?' Is it hot or cold? or wet or dry? All,

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all is put to the test of contact with the body, until a set of standards is established and scales of measurement: and every one of these rests finally upon the body of man as the norm or unit of measurement. Self is the first fact in consciousness.

At first everything goes into a child's mouth, as far as possible. Then everything must be touched, and tried, and tested. Then new things must be seen. Then comes the reading of books; and all the time sight works, both objectively and subjectively, either in response to external stimulation or by an inverse process of visualization of subjective states of consciousness, which we call imagination, which works all the time, sometimes unconsciously, as in the case of people who have not trained their sight and tested it, as artists do.

We often speak of people going through life with their eyes shut; but of course their eyes were wide open and must have registered an endless succession of moving pictures which their minds never, or only partially, took note of. The process of seeing was incomplete. The faculty of sight had not been cultivated; and faculties that are not cultivated will deteriorate; for nothing is permanent in man; change is continuous, either in growth or in decay.

Those who really do cultivate their vision soon become aware of the fact that this faculty goes far beyond the ability to see the material aspect of objects. A landscape painter who sees too much is almost worse off than the one whose sight is defective, because the seeing too much implies lack of discrimination which latter faculty is the most important for a painter. To have a mind that is all seeing is to lack self-control. To have the vision of an artist is to see the essentials only: that is to say it is to have the power to cut off the all-seeing faculty and to make control of sight automatic, eliminating the irrelevant before it reaches the mind. A photographic camera is like the mind of a gossip, it records everything without discrimination. To see like a camera is to be artistically uneducated.

But what are the essentials, and what is the irrelevant in nature? What is the basis of discrimination that an artist must employ? That I take to be decided by the evolution of the soul of the seer. What he sees as essential is the indication of his peculiar character as a seer, or an artist, for an artist is a seer truly. If not he is but an artisan, or a walking camera. As to how far his vision may transcend the sight of ordinary mortals, who shall say? It may go beyond the mere record of the contents of a landscape, and may include all the more subtil aspects and moods of nature; or it may pass beyond the range of material objects and penetrate to what the ordinary man would call the unseen. It may see peace and purity, or it may find storm and titanic struggle everywhere. It may see nature, as the servant of man, or as his lord and master, or

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again as his instructor and guide on the Path that leads out and beyond the confines of material existence. To the artist the first essential of vision will be the perception of that spiritual rhythm which is the life-movement of the soul of things revealed through that which we call nature.

He may never have analysed or tried to understand his own vision, he may have taken it for granted, and may have imagined that other people saw as he did, only to suffer constant pain from their cruelty which was quite unintentional. Too often a genuine artist has been lost because he could not understand why his work should be unintelligible to the public or even to other artists. He may have given way to despair, or may simply have dropped out of sight, for lack of power to co-ordinate his vision with the understanding of his contemporaries. It is obvious that if you address people in a language that they do not understand, you will not convey your message. The loss may be theirs; but the artist who is not understood is apt to suffer first and most unpleasantly. His work may educate the people of a later age, and his life may prove a benediction to the world; but by that time he will be otherwise occupied and will be in no danger of getting a 'big head' by hearing his work praised. Of course the artist, if he really is an artist, sees nature differently from the general public and by them is said to distort the truth. But who shall say what is Truth?

Those who have not yet learned to see correctly the material aspect of things, and who go through life blindfolded by their own prejudices and preconceptions, will naturally believe that there can be no other way of seeing things, and will consider a photographic camera as a model of perfect vision, and they will look upon an inspired artist as a romancer who is trying to seem clever by misrepresenting facts.

What are the facts? The dream of this age may be the simple fact of a later day, and may soon be forgotten in the realization of new dreams and new ideals; and the leaders of evolution must be the seers, who are dreamers to their contemporaries, and whose vision will be justified only by their successors. But besides the true seers there are many impostors, who with no vision of their own get credit for their exploitation of the dreams of others; and there are morbid minds, whose vision is sincere as the wildest dream of the delirious inebriate or lunatic: and such unfortunates sometimes enjoy a brief popularity; for the public is slow to discriminate between genius and insanity.

But while genius is necessarily marked by some unusual power of vision, it is not confined to artists. Spiritual insight may make a man a recluse or a reformer, a poet, or an inventor, a dreamer or a statesman, a religious enthusiast or a cynic. There is no walk in life where genius may not shine; for spiritual vision will reveal the divine origin of all,

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and may see beauty where the ordinary mind sees only degradation. Therefore beware of measuring genius by any rule or measure. Better to judge not at all, if you have not the faith in your own soul, which is your only guide to right judgment. But if you must judge, then try to use common sense, and confine your judgment to that which you yourself understand: let genius go by. You have no test for that. And if you are dazzled or perplexed by things that seem supernatural, remember that your senses can be deceived by any conjuror, and hold your judgment in suspense: even if you are shown marvels and mysteries. For the whole universe is a mystery. If you say "seeing is believing" then learn to see.

HOW SHALL THE WISDOM OF THE INNER DIVINITY IN MAN BE UNFOLDED?

E. A. NERESHEIMER



HERE is a paramount force at work in Nature that urges every organized center of life and consciousness on to progressive development from within, unfolding outward. This same force endeavors to express itself objectively in various ways, according to a definite plan which embraces the whole of the manifold spectacle of creatures, things, and events that we see marshaled before our eyes.

The most important object of course is Man himself. He is the only being that has placed at its disposal a combination of sufficient resources for realizing the highest summit of existence. In him are represented all the powers and potencies enabling him to contemplate himself, which makes him unique in the scale of sentient beings. We are told by the Wise that many hierarchies and progenitors of all degrees of intelligence, from the sub-human to the godlike, have contributed their quota towards constructing and maintaining the exquisitely co-ordinated vehicles endowed with physical, mental, and psychic faculties, that are for the use of the Divine Spark, who is the spectator of man's evolutionary pilgrimage through the labyrinth of matter. From the earliest times of man's history, particularly courageous and determined souls, who long since have outdistanced the general average unit of mankind, have left us precious information from their experience, on the subject of humanity's hereditary career, as also very profound suggestions with regard to the means by which man may attain to his ultimate goal. From these Enlightened Ones, who are the real advance-examples of what man shall eventually be, we received our first knowledge of the interrelations that exist between

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and among all beings, creatures, things, and Universes throughout the Cosmos, eternally in One absolute ethical Unity.

If personal proof is needed of such an ethical basis underlying the phenomena of conscious life, it will quicken man's perception if he observes his own experiences in contact with Nature. When approaching any natural form of life in a genuinely responsive mood, the soul thrills instantly with a sense of reciprocal sympathy. The very earth at our feet, the life-pulsations of plants and trees, call out, in the stillness, an intangible something that recognises the connexion between the life within us, and the life without. An inexhaustible reservoir of kindred forces seem to be waiting for our recognition, and when contacted in the right spirit, may kindle a flame of inspiration that will throw light on the path, in our search for truth, for all time to come. What may we not attain when once our own immortal nature is fully awakened? "Where then will sorrow be, where illusion?"

How many of us realize, especially while in full enjoyment of good health, how marvelously our body is constructed and equipped for all its manifold automatic functions? How little do we appreciate the fact that this is due to the accumulated knowledge of vast ages of past experience stored up within us and in the consciousness of countless little lives that go to make up our physical tabernacle! True, the body is yet far from being perfectly responsive to all the higher impulses, but should we on that account regard it as anything less than a most precious instrument, full of potential living power and purpose? Should we not rather bow in reverence before those many Intelligences that, in an unbroken chain of collaboration, have helped to create our living form as a fitting vehicle for our Inner Self?

If it had not been for this assistance and guidance it would be difficult to say what undetermined medley might have emerged from Nature's nursery unaided and alone. Primitive evolving man — the mindless, passionate being of the earlier stages of development — if left to himself among the overpowering seductions abounding in nature, would, without the help of these Intelligences, have gone much further astray than he actually did. The general method of growth of merely natural beings has always been, and still is, by selfish arrogation of everything desired regardless of destruction wrought among other more yielding forms. However, with the expansion of self-consciousness, man's relation to nature is bound to change continually, with his increasing sense of responsibility awakened in him by a more frank surrender to the admonitions of conscience.

We do not need to go very far afield in our intercourse with our fellow-men to note that a distinct thread of virtue runs through all classes of

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society, from the lowest to the highest, despite the different ethical standards that distinguish individuals and classes from each other. In order to obtain a just measure of gradual moral development as contrasted with passion and selfishness, we have to consider the method by which humanity has grown and is still growing, in this respect, since the earliest beginnings of incipient responsibility. This is nowhere more clearly indicated than in the most ancient of the traditionally revealed scriptures — the Vedas, in which it was held that humanity was originally divided into four castes, as a natural sequence of its antecedent heredity.

These four castes were designated in the Vedas as — Brâhmana, Kshatriya, Vaiśya, and Śûdra, signifying:

A — the man of self-restraint, serenity, and austerity;

B — the man of prowess and daring, the protector of property and virtue;

C — the trader, husbandman, householder, artisan, agriculturist;

D — the man whose disposition and function it is to serve.

These natural divisions were conceived of as denoting the respective degree in which spiritual quality permeated each class, broadly marking the basis of a man's true position in relation to other units of the human family. Let us see how this doctrine applies to our present time and conditions.

Putting aside outward appearances, we find an urge towards some ideal in every one of these four classes, and the form that this ideal assumes in each case determines the natural trend of the caste to which the individual belongs. A man's normal disposition will incline and confine him to one of these particular forms of ideals, from which he cannot depart without difficulty, and only by means of self-initiated effort. It will be observed that the ideals of each of the lower castes are more or less arbitrary, inclining them to intolerance against all the others, while still covetous of the privileges of at least the next higher class.

So, for example, we note that the ideals and spiritual life of Class D (the lowest), are sustained by the hope of a permanent continuance of earthly happiness in heaven, while evil action is checked merely by fear of punishment. Better conditions are coveted by persons of this class, but cannot be realized because established habits and beliefs are too rigid to permit of an expansion of ideals.

Class C keenly appreciates virtue, but relies for its stability therein on the restraint imposed by being wedged into a certain social environment rather than from the pricks of conscience or from an esteem for ethical principles; its quest is chiefly that of happiness, profit, and pleasure obtained within the avenues of least resistance.

Class B cultivates a sense of duty more on principle and from a natural

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disposition which has already superseded emotional beliefs. As a class the units begin to desist from merely begging at the doors of the senses.

Class A has an inner urge towards things abstract, ideal, and universal, aiming at identification with universal Law; its actions are mainly performed on the principle of non-attachment to the results of action.

We thus see that a thread of virtue runs through all the classes, that prompts them to aim either consciously or unconsciously, though irresistibly, towards a higher life.

No matter into what caste or station of society a man may be born, a certain innate ideality will cause him to aspire and to make efforts, at some time of his life, to reach the ideals of a higher order, with a view to fitting himself for association with the same. It is the inner voice that speaks, and that urges man on forever, even though seemingly against his will. Hence it happens frequently that, as an individual expands his knowledge, he grows dissatisfied with the form of virtue of his own particular class, and works strenuously to emulate and, at least temporarily, to enter the moral atmosphere created by the standards of a superior class. It is a question of constant expansion, to attain which the experience of many lives is needed. The first sign of growth is a supreme discontent with old forms, whereupon a new viewpoint is taken into consideration. Thus human nature grows, by adjusting itself to various degrees of the same thread of virtue, on which the pearls of knowledge and peace of mind are strung, one by one, finally producing the chain of wisdom of the inner realities.

No sincere student should therefore ever allow himself to become crystallized in the grooves of forms, but rather cultivate a tendency to discard rigidity and set habits of thought, and to embrace with an open mind and full confidence such new types of ideals as commend themselves to his reason and innate good judgment. It goes without saying, however, that for the sake of others it is incumbent upon us not to disturb but rather to uphold such accepted types of virtue as are necessary for the guidance and moral support of others of our fellow-travelers along the Path, although these may no longer be adequate for our own further development.

Tendencies once strongly cultivated are apt to reappear again and again, in life after life, and to reassert themselves at about the same period as before. Whatever has been gained on the ideal side of the nature, will subsequently act as a fortress against lower tendencies, that also reassert themselves in due season. So it happens that of two entities equally endowed at birth, the one pushes forward, sweeps irresistibly forward, to join a class whose ideals are higher than those of his earlier environment; while the other, who hearkens not to the inner promptings

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of his soul, gravitates, in spite of apparently the best of opportunities, downward to associations of a lower caste. This accounts for many cases where people differentiate themselves suddenly from the social standards to which they were born, and become better or worse than was to be expected; each drifting towards that particular class of society which best suits his individual nature. More often than not, neglect on the part of parents in implanting the proper moral seeds in the fertile soil of their children's minds, is among the most potent causes of failure in starting the little ones fairly on their life-journey. Even then, in spite of all drawbacks, we often see such effects overcome by a persistent urge towards virtue and high ideals, held as the result of endeavors made in previous lives. It is said in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* that birth in a family of the spiritually wise is most difficult to obtain.

We are accustomed to attribute to 'Nature' many of our strong tendencies, turbulent inclinations and passions, without giving her equal credit for the finer impulses, not to speak of the adjusting power and rejuvenating vigor that she continually infuses into us in order to establish equilibrium out of temporarily chaotic conditions. And whence comes that urge towards virtue, and the unremitting yearning for harmony with the dictates of conscience, that thrill the soul a thousand times each day? Nature, however, is not Divinity. As in Man, so also in Nature, Divinity is infolded in Matter. Both have higher and lower qualities, but the office of each is a different one. From the standpoint of the Ego, Nature is to be viewed but as a hall of preliminary learning, as one of the many stations through which man has to pass in his journey upon his obligatory pilgrimage towards an appointed goal.

Truly, physical man is formed of the dust of the earth, to which that temporary vehicle returns again and again, to be reassembled at each rebirth of the Pilgrim-Ego, whose concern it is to learn to know itself in order to know Nature also. For Nature is verily one of the objective forms of Divinity, that must be known and understood, that freedom may be gained from her embrace. Meanwhile, Man, as an evolving personal entity, stands between the Ego and his nurse — Mother-Nature; patiently proceeding through her amazing labyrinth, from one degree of instruction to another, spinning his own thread of virtue as he advances amidst many unexpected changes.

Arbitrary types of virtue, however, are to the budding soul but as patterns set before it, on which it may temporarily rely as an aid to growth. Gradually, as the outer man, the personality, exhausts the gamut of experience of pleasure and pain, he turns from one form of virtue to a higher one in his search for knowledge and peace. In one who strives earnestly, the standard of virtue will broaden out continually, first mani-

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festing itself in one form and then in another, until each in turn is worn threadbare, while added experience, knowledge, and freedom are constantly being gained.

The inner urge of the Ego on the one hand, and Nature on the other hand in her opposition to stagnation, woo out the higher faculties one by one, making it impossible for the personality ever to become permanently crystallized in any outgrown belief or notion however morally excellent it may appear at the time. Concurrently with these two forces acting from within and from without, the never-failing law of Karma provides new conditions and surroundings, in which higher ideals predominate, whereby the strain and pressure of desire in the lower self becomes considerably lessened. In this wise, thought is diverted into channels in which former crude concepts assume finer forms that harmonize with a loftier standard. And so it comes about that, at the same time, the whole atomic structure of the physical and psychic bodies, organs, and mental equipment, become of themselves transformed, by natural gravity, without any special effort of will in that direction on our part, establishing conditions in which many former seemingly far-away ideals and hopes are, at last, realized.

For one who realizes the possibility of such a broadening out of his innate faculties and abilities, it should not require a great stretch of the imagination to conceive of an extension of consciousness beyond the dreaded gulf called death — yea, even to Eternity, Man's natural home.

We thus see that current *conceptions* of virtue, necessary though they may be at certain stages of development, cannot be regarded as finalities, certainly not on the lower planes upon which we mostly live and work. They bind the Ego to earth in their own especial way, even as sin does in another way. As long as vanity, which is the most difficult hindrance of all to overcome, remains unconquered, an ordinarily selfish, emotional enthusiast will, through attachment to conventional concepts of virtue, but too readily drift into a crystallized attitude of mind. When this is accompanied by spiritual pride, then it divests him for the time being of all sense of proportion, and also deprives him of the merit that would otherwise accrue to him from virtuous deeds previously performed.



“In the whole stretch of eternity, man is one individual, feeling in himself an identity not dependent on name, form, or recollection.”— *W. Q. Judge*

KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-CONTROL

H. T. EDGE, M. A.



PLEA for better understanding of human nature, together with a call to physicians to pay more attention to the mind, is contained in a recent article by Dr. Stewart Paton in *Harper's Monthly*, and extensively quoted in the August, 1924, issue of this magazine.

He says we are haunted by fears, fears of the unknown, nervous about being left alone with our unknown selves, and about not knowing how to occupy our time when the day's work is over. Since the recent world-crisis, people have become disturbed by unknown factors appearing in human nature.

"Let physicians supplement their knowledge of the body with precise information about the activities of the mind, and they can lead in the great forward movement to reorganize society on a sane basis."

Fixed ideas, he says, are not removed by a frontal attack: it is no use arguing with one who is morbidly obsessed by ideas: it only makes him worse: we must find out the basic emotional disturbance and remove that. The same applies to rooted ideas held by the mass and generating social differences and antipathies that wax stronger by the conflict of debate. "We need a race that is more stable emotionally."

It is pleas like this, constantly growing more urgent and frequent, that justify the importance of the Theosophical teachings regarding human nature. The symptoms described are those of loss of self-control, alike of the physical, the emotional, and the mental nature. Loss of control means that the patient has no central stable resource to which he can appeal and on which he can rely.

The evils due to loss of control are daily becoming more evident and alarming: loss of control by the individual over himself, and loss of control by organized society over its component elements. But for a remedy people are often looking in the wrong direction. They expect that advancing knowledge in psychology or biology will yield some novel means. Yet there are many who attribute these very evils to the preponderance of that intellectual knowledge wherein is sought the cure. So we arrive at this — that science must cure the ills which (according to some) it has promoted. We must take a hair of the dog that bit us: cure the results of too much intellectualism by taking a little more.

But it will certainly be found that the true remedy is to get back to certain very ancient and very simple moral rules, which from immemorial

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time have been humanity's standby, and to whose neglect our present evils are attributable. Are we to let parents neglect the proper training of their children, and then call in the specialists in psychology to cure the evils engendered?

The burden of what has been quoted above is that people find no resource in themselves. They dare not be alone; they cannot face the silence. This is surely because they have never been taught to resort to the place of power and tranquillity within themselves. They are like the habitual drinker or drug-fiend, whose body cannot work unless it is stimulated or narcotized; only in this case it is the mind, and it is by continual titillations and excitements that it has been drugged. The emotional nature oscillates between heat and cold; hence excitement leads to despondency, and fits of energy are succeeded by collapse and inertia. Such are the symptoms of neurasthenia and the neurotic condition, which is connected with an over-activity of the sympathetic nervous system and a corresponding weakness in the nerves that control and equilibrate. Usually, in seeking a remedy for this condition, the sufferer has nowhere to go except to a mind which is itself involved in the very emotional disturbance which he wishes to overcome. The real remedy can only be found in some center independent of the winds and tides.

The first requisite is to have sound ideas as to the constitution of human nature and the meaning of human life. Without this basis of right knowledge there is no foundation on which to build a policy of action and conduct. Our remarks apply chiefly to the many who can find no adequate resource in religion or in science; and when we say religion we mean the warring creeds and the churches that are occupied in questioning the validity of their own teachings. A religious teacher who himself doubts cannot afford much help; while a science that is almost exclusively occupied with studying the lower and external aspects of human nature, can tell us nothing about the real and inner nature of man, which is what we seek to be informed about.

What is needed is Religion in the true sense — faith in the reality of man's divine nature, and in its efficacy as a source of light and strength. If the young people had been taught from earliest years to recognise the existence of this divine nature, and to regard it as a real and practical source of light and strength in all their problems, they would not have been left without a resource in their troubles in later life.

Hence the importance of the Theosophical teachings as to the constitution of man and the meaning of life: teachings which are in fact a return to those eternal moral truths which alone can secure the integrity of character and of the social structure.

As to the contradistinction made between mind and body, there is

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still much to be understood about the body. Very many of the complaints with which doctors have to deal are really the various symptoms of a general debility produced by obscure causes set in motion in youth; and the important thing is to prevent these causes from ever originating. Much mental disturbance is traceable to a neurotic physical condition, and is therefore amenable to physical treatment. Thus we may treat the disordered emotions through the body, as well as treating the body through the disordered emotions. In short, it is not well to insist over-much on the distinction between mind and body; we must always bear in mind their intimate interaction.

All sums itself up in the word self-control; and for that it is needful that the man or woman learn early in life how to bring the passions and various wayward instincts under the control of the spiritual will.

“LA MORALE HUMAINE,” BY ALFRED LOISY — A THEOSOPHICAL APPRECIATION

H. A. FUSSELL



URING the last decade or so men and nations have, generally speaking, adopted a new attitude towards the past, especially their immediate past, strongly marked by discontent and disillusionment. Where a complete break has not been attempted, as in Russia, an effort has everywhere been made, and is being made, to rethink questions which, before the world-war, were considered as settled. While this is evident in History and Philosophy, it is especially so in Religion and Ethics, using these terms in a wide sense so as to include the political and social relations of mankind. In all these subjects an attempt has been made to relate them to the pressing practical needs of the New Era, which is vaguely felt to be dawning for mankind. Accepted solutions of world-problems having been weighed in the balance and found wanting, the necessity is felt for finding a new and firmer basis for the reconstructive work that has become imperative, as is evident in many recent books and articles published by thinkers the world over.

Alfred Loisy's book, *La Morale Humaine* (1923), is an instance in point. Not an ethical treatise in the ordinary sense of the word, the author seeks by means of a survey of human life as revealed in history, and as it actually is at the present day, to ascertain the moral principles underlying life and which give it value. The purpose of the book is, therefore, more practical than theoretical, that is to say, it is not so much to determine *what* the good life is, but above all to show *how* the good life

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may be realized in the individual, in the family, in the nation, and in humanity. Instead of elaborating theories, and then trying to relate them to life, M. Loisy, recognising that life itself is the great teacher, surveys it in its individual and social aspects, separates the disruptive from the formative forces in human society, and restates the ideals which it should be man's effort to realize. “Morality,” he says, “is the most essential and the most indispensable element in all true progress,” nor do we have to seek its foundations, for “these are already laid in society and in the soul of man.”

Society, according to M. Loisy, is the great moralizing agent. From the very earliest times, men have lived in groups or societies, bound together by mutual relations, becoming ever more and more complex. The group, or society, demands that the individual perform functions necessary for its preservation, enforcing, moreover, its demands by the infliction of pains and penalties, which, however, are not always just. Society and the individual alike evolve, due mainly to their reciprocal action, but in different ratios, and so conflict ensues. Society furnishes the means for the moral and intellectual development of the individual, and there always have been, and will be, individuals who are in advance of the society of which they form a part, and it is owing to them that further progress and reform are possible. On the other hand, there are those in whom the lower instincts prevail, and if the latter increase in number, retrogression may ensue. Thus the life of society is the seemingly never-ending struggle between the Higher and the Lower Nature, only written large, that all may see it. There is no standing still in the moral world; we are either progressing or retrogressing.

The tension that exists in society exists also within the individual, for, as M. Loisy remarks, “the soul is itself a little moral world.” True; but Theosophy also teaches that each individual soul *is* the world, and that it *should* be an expression of the life and purpose which animate the universe. Its function is to mirror the ALL, and its activity is essentially creative. And so our thoughts, desires, and decisions have far greater importance and influence than we ordinarily are aware of. The greatest issues depend ultimately upon the orientation of the individual. That is why Katherine Tingley says:

“We cannot bring great ideals into concrete expression until *we* are the living expression of those ideals. We cannot set right the affairs of the world . . . until our lives are based absolutely right. The nations are wandering today, and their statesmen admit as much, but no one can help them in a lasting way whose own little nation — *the individual life* — is not spiritually what it should be.”— *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*, p. 68

In both, that is in the individual and in society, there is the same strife between the higher and the lower elements; for the principle of Duality,

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as Theosophy teaches, prevails throughout the whole of manifested life. Light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter, these pairs of opposites being necessary concomitants of finite existence. They underlie all questions of philosophy and religion. Fortunately, as a modern German thinker * expresses it: "Der Mensch ist das ewig werdende Wesen," that is, he is not yet a complete being, his destiny is to be ever becoming more truly man, to show forth ever more fully his essential nature, which is *divine*. In the perfectibility of human nature lies the hope of mankind.

In every society there is a general social conscience, or code of morals, above which the average man does not rise, and below which he takes care not to fall, at least publicly, for society has at its disposal a system of discipline and repression which it is not slow to use. Even those whose individual morality and spiritual insight are in advance of the social conscience are often ostracized, and may even suffer martyrdom. This is particularly true in the case of H. P. Blavatsky, whose heart beat only for humanity. This 'Light-Bringer,' who was sent to stem the tide of materialism that characterized the end of the last century, and to turn men's minds to higher and better things, was libeled and persecuted, as all spiritual reformers have been, though she was truly the greatest benefactress of the age.

The discipline yielded by society is still, in spite of many attempted reforms, pitiless towards those who sink below the accepted standard of morality; they are either shut up in prison or actually got rid of by means of capital punishment. M. Loisy very pertinently raises the question whether society has the right to *punish* at all. "It strikes in self-defense, but in so doing does it perform an act of justice? It may be doubted. For it is radically incapable of estimating the exact measure of evil intention which entered into the act it represses, and the infliction of capital punishment does nothing towards removing the evil intent." And in regard to criminals in general, he advocates interning them in "sanatoriums de moralité." "Society," he says, "has hardly begun to moralize old systems of justice, which in themselves are harsh methods of self-protection."

We are glad to see an author, so influential and so widely read as M. Loisy, advocating reforms which Theosophists have striven for years to bring about. Theosophy teaches that "the *potential* God-life is within the murderer, the thief, the outcast, and that there lives no one who has it not." And Katherine Tingley, the present Leader of the Theosophical Movement throughout the world, has always considered it an important

*Eugen Kühnemann: *Kant* (1923), p. 542.

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part of her general humanitarian work to endeavor to make the administration of justice “remedial” rather than “punitive.” We would refer the reader desirous to know more about the attitude of Theosophists towards these questions to her latest book: *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*, particularly to the Section entitled, “To My Brother in Prison.” Katherine Tingley has had many years’ experience in prison-work, and has earned the heart-felt gratitude of thousands of the poor “shut-ins” for the hope and the encouragement to lead a better life, that she has given them. She advocates what she calls “Brotherhood Reformatories,” “hospitals for the weaklings, the more unfortunate whose unbridled passions have carried them so far beyond the pale of society”; and she has been untiring in her efforts to bring about the abolition of capital punishment. “There is only one way to kill a criminal,” she says, “and that is to transmute the evil within him into good, and the only way to do that is to recognise something else in him that *is* good and gain its co-operation.”

Great confusion of thought prevails, even among educated people, in regard to the subject of punishment. Justification for punishment is generally based on the following grounds: (1) that it is deterrent; (2) that it is a *just* retribution for wrong-doing; and (3) that it is *right* to make the wrong-doer suffer. There is something to be said in favor of No. 1, but 2 and 3 beg the question, as is evident from the expressions ‘just’ and ‘right.’ The Theosophical idea of Karma, the word meaning simply “action and the fruit or result of action,” does away completely with the ideas of *legal payment* and *retribution*, which inhere more or less in that of punishment. Theologians and certain popular writers, who have stigmatized Karma as ‘vindictive,’ are entirely in the wrong, as the meaning of the word shows, and it is a false presentation of Theosophical teaching.

On War, M. Loisy is very outspoken. He recognises that no common ideal as yet unites the nations of the world into humanity, or is strong enough to adjust international relations and put an end to the scourge of war, and says:

“Nothing, in truth, illustrates more terribly the almost adventitious and superficial character of human morality than the case of war, or homicide, the most abominable act from the point of view of humanity, and which is considered as the most heroic, or, at least, is oftenest celebrated as such. The number is not great, even among nations calling themselves civilized, of those who regard war as a deplorable necessity. . . . For some, man-hunting, under the conditions authorized by war, is the most exciting of sports, for in it a brutal nature can employ not only its own strength, but all the resources of intelligence and science. . . . Military discipline, entirely co-ordinated for the work of destruction, cannot be considered in itself as moralizing, its characteristics and intentions being what they are; it can only be so in certain respects and to a certain degree, in so far as it brings unity into the wills and actions of individuals by strict obedience to severe rules and regulations. It would be simply ignoring human

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morality, or flouting it openly, to represent military life as a school of morality for enlisted men, and as a moralizing influence for the nations addicted to it.

"A great war disorganizes more than anything else the moral and social life of a nation, and the debility resulting from the intensity of the struggle and which follows it, is at the expense of public and private morals. From head-hunting and the small wars of savages, in which the victor drinks the blood of the vanquished, and keeps his head or scalp as a trophy, to the scientific and 'perfected' wars of our own times, in which by means of artillery-fire, airplanes, and poisonous gases, men exterminate and pride themselves upon being able to exterminate the enemy *en masse*, the dominating, the most ignoble, and the most disconcerting characteristic of war is the barbarity which regards man as no better than game to be tracked down and exterminated. The fact that certain rules of war have been established, which, however, are often disregarded, and that the wounded and prisoners are more humanly treated, does not prevent war from being the most persistent attestation of our inhumanity. The horror of the scourge has only increased with the centuries, and it has now reached its culmination. So long as war exists, the future of civilization is not secure, or rather, it will never be a *human* civilization, nor will *humanity* exist. "

Though something is being actually accomplished in the way of a more friendly adjustment of international relations, and though the public conscience has been aroused to some extent, it is nevertheless true, as M. Loisy asserts, that "humanity, as such, does not yet exist on earth, but merely societies of human beings, all more or less rivals, which are now tending, some voluntarily, some in spite of themselves, to unite and form humanity properly speaking." The idea even of Universal Brotherhood, that is, of our common humanity, meets with opposition in some quarters, and is by many considered as utopian. After nearly 2000 years of Christianity, there are those who refuse to believe that "God . . . made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The earth is still divided up among nations which have hardly begun to know one another and to understand one another, and which have never ceased to envy one another, to quarrel, and to seek to exterminate one another. The human race exists indeed, but humanity is still to be created. From a spiritual standpoint, the history of mankind appears like a vast brigandage, in which the success of some has been bought at the expense of others, and the greatest efforts to create material civilizations have only served to prepare the greatest catastrophes.

Rome created an empire which lacked soul, and it perished, as empires had done before it. And the nationalities that have sprung up upon its ruins have grown up in mutual distrust and combat. Bound together temporarily by self-interest, each claims the right to safeguard its material prosperity, ignoring the rights of its neighbors. And many of their leaders still believe that war is eternal and inevitable. It is only a small number of people who, even now, are capable of clearly perceiving the *moral* conditions without which a durable peace and Universal Brotherhood are but idle dreams. As a matter of fact, human progress is impossible on material and intellectual lines without a corresponding progress

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in human morality. No Society of Nations is viable unless a different spirit animates the nations who aspire to form it.

Such a society cannot be constituted by a balancing of national egotisms, nor can any peace be more than temporary that does not place spiritual interests above material ones; that only is true patriotism that subserves the larger interests of humanity. Any extension of the relations of human societies directed towards bringing about their incorporation in a universal society must be accompanied by a corresponding deepening and purification of individual and collective morality. Above all nations is humanity, for, as Katherine Tingley truly says: “The Christos-spirit [of universal love] cannot be reborn in the hearts of humanity, save through its rebirth in the hearts of individual men and women.” By perfecting their own individual morality, all may thus become founders of the humanity that is yet to be.

We wish we could quote the whole of the chapter “L’Humanité,” one of the best and most suggestive in the book, for it is impossible to do it justice in the short ‘résumé’ we have just given. We recommend its perusal to all true friends of humanity, rejoicing that truths, advocated by the successive Leaders of the Theosophical Movement throughout the world — H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley, — have found such an able exponent in M. Loisy.

And this brings us to another important point: the natural expression of a world-consciousness is a World-Religion. M. Loisy has some good remarks on this subject, though he fails, in our opinion, to do full justice to the Oriental religions. He rightly says that “the Christian religion, with its noble teaching that all men are sons of one Father, and its proclamation that love is the law of man because it is the essence of God, represents the greatest effort that has been made hitherto to elevate mankind morally.” We are surprised, however, that M. Loisy, brought up a fervent Catholic, finds that none of the great religions he reviews, not even Christianity, is qualified to become the world-religion of the future. Nevertheless, whatever may be the attitude of individuals towards the question of the relative value of the great religions — a question, however, which does not specially interest us, believing as we do, that the source and origin of all religions is one, — the reasons he alleges for his verdict deserve attention, because they are those of an eminent scholar, who is a specialist in religious and exegetical studies. Christians must realize in a practical way the ideal proclaimed by the Master, after whom they call themselves, namely, “the brotherhood of nations, or rather the brotherhood of all men without any distinction of nationality,” to quote from another of M. Loisy’s books, *The War and Religion*.

Nor do we have to invent or create the World-Religion, which so

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many thinkers desire to see prevail. It is already in existence, and has existed from the earliest ages. It is the ancient WISDOM-RELIGION of Antiquity, which H. P. Blavatsky was sent to proclaim anew to the world; and its teachings, or at least such of them as can be given to a material and selfish age, are to be found in Theosophy, especially in H. P. Blavatsky's epoch-making books: *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Key to Theosophy*. It is a moral and spiritual unity which makes of mankind one indissoluble whole, and "the consciousness of this unity," M. Loisy very pertinently remarks, "latent in all societies and in all religions, is now vaguely aspiring to assert itself."

In *The Key to Theosophy*, we find the following:

"The object of the Theosophical Movement is . . . to revive in the hearts and minds of men a knowledge of those eternal verities [the teachings of the ancient Wisdom-Religion]; for on them rests all the hope of human life. The principle of Universal Brotherhood, based on a realization of the spiritual unity of mankind, has been forgotten by the world, and, as a consequence, civilization is threatened with destruction by the unrestrained forces of selfishness and materialism. . . ." (p. 17)

"If the root of mankind is *one*, then there must also be one truth which finds expression in all the various religions." (p. 45)

And in *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*, Katherine Tingley says:

"Theosophy is the inner life of every religion. It is no new religion, but is as old as Truth itself. . . ." (p. 8)

"Theosophy teaches that man weaves his own destiny, and that he is, *to the extent of his knowledge and his will*, the master of it." (p. 15)

On one important point, and it is the only erroneous view we have found in the whole book, M. Loisy, in company with the majority of philosophic writers on Ethics and Religion, is not in accord with Theosophical teaching. He says, and very truly, that "the so-called inferior or primitive societies are not, as is too often affirmed, without morality. In the most rudimentary, the most miserable, the most brutal, the least organized, the nearest, in a word, to animality, there is already a germ of morality." — He is referring to the law of *Taboo*. — "*It is from this that have come, not only the beliefs and practices of worship, but religious morality and all of human morality; and morality would be very wrong to deny its humble origin, for it cannot deny itself.*" We have italicized the last sentence, which contains the points of difference. 'Primitive' man, according to Theosophy, was not left to himself, nor did he invent or evolve either religion or morality. How came animal man to possess mind and soul? That is the question that divides current theories of evolution from Theosophical teaching. As W. Q. Judge says:

"Man never was not. If not on this globe, then on some other, he ever was and will be in

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existence in the Cosmos. Ever perfecting and reaching up to the image of the Heavenly Man, he is always becoming.”— *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 127

And so, when that which was destined to become man, as we know him, and was already so in form and structure, was ready to take the decisive step in evolution, which should differentiate him for ever from the creatures below him, beings already perfected in former universes that have passed away, called in Theosophical phraseology, *Mânasaputras*, or ‘Sons of Mind,’ overshadowed him and gave him of their essence, making him really man, that is, a thinker, a being henceforth capable of *self-evolution*, able to respond *consciously* to, and to *co-operate* with the urge towards perfection coming from DEITY itself, which

“is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for It is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent and even omniscient creative potentiality.”

— *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 64

No! human morality is not of “humble origin,” but has its source in “the Universal Mind” and its countless rays (the *Mânasaputras*) which inform every rational mortal (*Psychic and Noetic Action*, H. P. Blavatsky). Furthermore:

“The hosts of the Blessed Ones have never failed to send their representatives upon the planets they are made to watch over from the beginning.”— *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 586

The first Teachers of nascent humanity were, then, beings from former worlds, who had perfected themselves in the process of evolution, which reigned in those worlds as well as in ours, to the degree that it became their duty to reincarnate in our world, “in order to help the human race in its upward progress” (*Ibid.*, II, 636, note 1364). In the same way, those of our present humanity, who will have attained the highest development that life on earth affords, will in their turn become the ‘divine’ Instructors of a new humanity, already forming in the kingdoms below man, on a new earth, for the succession of “the manifested universes” is endless, as is symbolized in the Hindû teachings by “the Days and Nights of Brahmâ,” each successive universe being on a sublimer and grander scale than the preceding one, though conditioned by it, according to the law of Karma.

Nothing shows more clearly than the above sketch, the vast sweep and grandeur of the evolutionary process, as outlined in the teachings of Theosophy; and its purpose is no less sublime, namely, the perfection of mankind, and the progressive raising, through man, of the whole of nature to the sphere of Deity, in which it originated. “He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed,” says Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* (xiii, 27). And the last word

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in all moral teaching is: "He who understands the perpetual omnipresence of God can be led no more captive by criminal acts."

We have done no more than touch the fringe of a great subject, and have only alluded to the important doctrines of the essential Divinity of Man, his Dual Nature, and Karma and Reincarnation, the two last being the method according to which all progress, intellectual as well as moral, is realized.

Owing to the unwarranted assumptions and statements of certain pseudo-Theosophists, who have falsified the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion to suit their own purposes, the fair name of Theosophy has been besmirched. We feel it our duty, therefore to append a few categorical statements on the subject of morality, its sacredness and its necessity, by the three Leaders of the original Theosophical Society, now known as THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. H. P. Blavatsky, the Founder and first Leader, says:

"The Theosophist must live a life of *strict morality*, doing his duty by all men. . . . The ethics [taught by Theosophy] are the essence and cream of the world's ethics, gathered from the teachings of the world's great reformers. . . . The true Theosophist must put in practice *the loftiest moral ideal*, must strive to realize his unity with the whole of humanity and work unceasingly for others."

William Q. Judge, the Co-founder and second Leader, declares:

"Our philosophy is one grand whole, every part necessary and fitting into every other part. Every one of its doctrines can and must be carried out to its ultimate conclusion. Its ethical application must proceed similarly. If it conflicts with old opinions these must be cast off. *It can never conflict with true morality.* . . . Theosophy does not announce a new ethics, it declares that true ethics is eternally the same."

And Katherine Tingley, our present Leader and Teacher, says:

"The mission of the Theosophical Society is to set aside errors, misconceptions, unbrotherliness and intolerance, and put love and trust, right action and the sweetness of truth, in their place. Its mission is to spread new ideas throughout the world for the benefit of those who most need them; to release the mind of man from prejudice and fear, and human life from its digressions. Its mission is to bring the whole human family up to a standard of spiritual foresight, discrimination, intuition, right thought and right action, with a new and diviner conception of justice and love. If men and women could work together as one great universal body towards this end, they would be creators of a new order of ages, a Universal Religion verily, and a true Brotherhood of Man."

To return to M. Loisy's book, which we are reviewing, space fails us to touch upon the many excellent things he has to say on "Morality and Science," on "The Family," and on "Morality and Happiness." Throughout the book there is much that reminds us of Katherine Tingley's work: *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*. But we trust we have said enough to render due justice to so profound, so independent, and courageous a thinker as M. Loisy, who does not shrink from emphasizing truths which combat prejudices deeply rooted in the mentality of Western nations.

HEREDITY AND THE GERM-PLASM

T. HENRY, M. A.



MODERN researches have led to the conclusion that certain cells in the body are perpetuated and transmitted continuously from parent to offspring throughout the generations, thus constituting an *immortal* element that dies not with the other cells composing the body, but lives on. The same kind of immortality pertains to animals as well as to man; and with the lowliest animals, there may be no other cells but the kind that endure.

“It results from the constitution of the Protozoan body as a single cell and its method of multiplication by fission that death has no place as a natural recurrent phenomenon among these organisms. Among the Enterozoa certain cells are separated from the rest of the constituent units of the body as egg-cells and sperm-cells; these conjugate and continue to live, whilst the remaining cells, the mere carriers, as it were, of the immortal reproductive cells, die and disintegrate. There being no carrying cells which surround, feed, and nurse the reproductive cells of Protozoa, but the reproductive cell being itself and alone the individual Protozoon, there is nothing to die, nothing to be cast off by the reproductive cell when entering on a new career of fission. The bodies of the higher animals which die may from this point of view be regarded as something temporary and non-essential, destined merely to carry for a time, to nurse, and to nourish the more important and deathless fission-products of the unicellular egg.”

— *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, Article ‘Protozoa.’

Whether the bodies are designed to nourish the immortal germ, or the germ is provided to keep the bodies going, may be regarded as a question of viewpoint. Man, and many of the animals, manage to accomplish a number of things besides merely carrying about the immortal germ and nourishing it. Besides, it seems difficult to regard the mere perpetuation of a germ as a desirable end in itself. If the whole object in life of a fruit-tree is to provide the means of generating an infinite line of future fruit-trees, one can hardly see why there should be any fruit-trees at all. It becomes still more difficult to regard the mouse as simply and solely a machine for the creation of more mice. This comes of looking at the matter from the material side alone. H. P. Blavatsky says on this topic:

“There are but two ways of explaining the mystery of heredity; either the substance of the germinal cell is endowed with the faculty of crossing the whole cycle of transformations that lead to the construction of a separate organism and then to the reproduction of identical germinal cells; or, *those germinal cells do not have their genesis at all in the body of the individual, but proceed directly from the ancestral germinal cell passed from father to son through long generations.* It is the latter hypothesis that Weismann accepted and has worked upon; and it is to this cell that he traces the immortal portion of man. So far, so good; and when this almost correct theory is accepted, how will Biologists explain the first appearance of this everlasting cell? Unless man ‘grew’ like the ‘immortal Topsy,’ and was not born at all, but fell from the

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clouds, how was that embryological cell born in him?— *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 223 (published in 1888).

She also says that embryologists will never discover the forces at work in the formation of the foetus, or the causes of hereditary transmission, till they condescend to accept the Occult teachings.

“Complete the physical plasm, . . . the ‘Germinal Cell’ of man with all its material potentialities, with the ‘spiritual plasm,’ so to say, or the fluid that contains the five lower principles of the six-principled Dhyân — and you have the secret, if you are spiritual enough to understand it.”— I, p. 224

We thus see that the immortality of the physical germ is but a copy or counterpart of the immortality of the spiritual germ, which constitutes the true basis of man’s immortality. The ordinary science of heredity studies only the material effects of the invisible causes; the subject is further elucidated when we take into account non-physical factors or agents; and especially in the case of man, whose nature is so much more complex than that of lower beings. There are several distinct lines of heredity for man.

“It is, moreover, unquestionable that in the case of *human* incarnations the law of Karma racial or individual, overrides the subordinate tendencies of ‘Heredity,’ its servant.”

— *The Secret Doctrine*, II, p. 178

Elsewhere we learn that there are in Nature three separate schemes of evolution, interblended at every point: the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical; each having its own laws, each being represented in the constitution of man. Nature alone cannot evolve intelligence, but can only create ‘senseless forms.’ (I, p. 181) Without entering here into details as to these schemes of evolution, we observe that the question of human heredity is seen to be much more elaborate than is allowed for by science. The method of studying physical processes does not yield solutions, but discloses new mysteries; and it is found that Mind, not Matter, is the place to look for causes. In stating, as H. P. Blavatsky did, that chemistry and biology were the magicians of the future, she foresaw that the pursuit of these sciences must sooner or later lead to a vindication of the truth of the Occult teachings.



“HEREDITY is a puzzle, and will always remain one so long as the laws of Karma and Reincarnation are not admitted and taken into account.

“Karma and Reincarnation include the premise that the man is a Spiritual entity, who is using the body for some purpose.”— *William Q. Judge*

NOTES BY A STUDENT

CRANSTONE WOODHEAD

IN addition to the books which have been left by H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge as guides to study and meditation, there are many isolated passages scattered among their more exoteric writings which serve to elucidate the precepts with which we are familiar, and bring into greater prominence their inner meaning.

In Volumes VI and VII of *Lucifer* appears a translation of 'Pistis Sophia,' which is probably the greatest gem of Gnostic wisdom now preserved for us. Its value to modern students chiefly consists in the notes which have been added by H. P. Blavatsky. The magnificent and complicated symbology imbodyed in the text by the Gnostic writers is almost incomprehensible to the Western mind. But one or two essential points, emphasized by H. P. Blavatsky, stand out clearly, so that all can readily understand them.

The first part of the allegory relates the so-called Thirteen Repentances of Pistis Sophia (the antaskarana or aspiring ego-soul), when after descending to the depths, she begins her return to the Light. Here we are confronted with the true meaning of the word 'Repentance.' It is emphasized by H. P. Blavatsky that this really means the forsaking of ignorance, or initiation into a higher realm of wisdom. It is to be observed that we do not hear anything about sin. The inference seems to be that for the man who has any conscience at all, sin and ignorance are synonymous terms.

During the ascent of Pistis Sophia, or the ego-soul, she is opposed by a host of crafty powers who seek to delay her progress. Of these the two most prominent are "the Power with the appearance of a Lion," and the "Self-willed One." H. P. Blavatsky explains that the "Power with the appearance of a Lion" is the desire-principle in outer nature. This we can readily understand. Do not we all know that when the soul of man is obscured by any desire, the latter fills the whole horizon of our consciousness? We can see nothing else. Our long pilgrimage of the past, our potential soul-destiny, is overshadowed. We are enchained by a power which is of the earth,—earthly; one unworthy of our true selves which should be outside and above it.

Sacred literature is filled with instruction as to the remedy in this and similar cases. It appears to lie in a refusal to allow oneself to be identified with the enemy. The effort to do this enables us to see the opponent in

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its true light. Slightly changing the words of the Eastern Sages we no longer imagine the snake to be a rope.

The second great opposing power is the "Self-willed One." Here again we have symbolized one of our greatest stumbling-blocks. Which of us does not know this terrible obstacle to all progress in spiritual wisdom? It is another Lion in the Path — an enemy to true understanding.

In the writings of Jakob Böhme, we find the following:

"The Master said:

"If thou wilt cease from all brooding and willing of thine own, then the Eternal Hearing and Seeing and Speaking shall be revealed in thee and shall discern God through thee.

"Thine own hearing and willing and seeing hinders thee that thou canst not hear or see God.

"If thou keepest silence, thou art what God was before nature and the creature, and out of which he made thy nature and creature."

In further explanation of this, let us see what H. P. Blavatsky says of Böhme. In the Glossary to *The Key to Theosophy* we find the following:

"Had this great Theosophist been born three hundred years later, he might have expressed it otherwise. He would have known that the 'God' who spoke through his poor uncultured and untrained brain, was his own Divine *Ego*, the omniscient deity within himself. . . ."

In Vol. VIII of *Lucifer*, H. P. Blavatsky has an article on the ancient Persian teachings with regard to the two great opposing forces of Good and Evil, typified by Ahura Mazda or Ormuzd, and Angra Mainyu or Ahriman. One of the traditions about them is, that once on a time the subordinate powers twitted Ahriman by telling him that he had never made anything beautiful. So he replied that he would see what he could do, and forthwith created a most beautiful peacock, the very embodiment of personal vanity. On this story H. P. Blavatsky comments as follows:

"How often does one see strong-hearted men and determined women moved by a strong aspiration towards an ideal they know to be the true one, battling successfully to all appearance with Ahriman and conquering him. Their external selves have been the battleground of a most terrible, deadly strife between the two opposing Principles; but they have stood firmly and — won. The dark enemy seems conquered; it is crushed in fact, so far as the animal instincts are concerned. Personal selfishness, that greed for self and self only, the begetter of most of the evils, has vanished; and every lower instinct melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent sway of Ahura Mazda, the radiant Ego-Sun, has disappeared, making room for better and holier aspirations. Yet, there lurks in them, their old and but partially destroyed vanity, that spark of personal pride which is the last to die in man. Dormant it is, latent and invisible to all, including their own consciousness, but there it is still. Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours — nay, five minutes even — of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training and laborious work, in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. Such is the result of the silent and unspoken, but ever present worship, of the only beautiful creation of the spirit of Selfishness and Darkness."

Returning for a moment to the 'Pistis Sophia,' we find that each of the

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Thirteen Repentances, or Enlightenments, of the Soul, is illustrated by one of the Psalms of David. It is explained that these were songs of initiation into the Mysteries, but their meaning has been so obscured by ignorant translators, that their original beauty is almost lost, together with the ancient rhythm in which they were written. It is clear that they were not the ordinary battle-songs of a conqueror in the world's conflicts, but of one who had overcome in an inner warfare. Read in this way, the 'Lord' to whom they are addressed, is the same as Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, and the enemies referred to are the enemies of Arjuna. Take for instance the 23rd Psalm:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

No doubt it is the intuitive feeling of their true meaning which has made some of these psalms a comfort to many a simple righteous soul throughout the centuries. To sing them on the world's battle-fields is a desecration.

In the *Crest Jewel of Wisdom*, by the great sage Śankarâchârya, we find the following question and reply:

"The Pupil said: When the five veils are thus set aside through their unreality, beyond the non-being of all, I see nothing Master; what then is to be known as anything, by him who knows Self and not-self?

"The Master said: Truth has been spoken by thee, wise one; thou art skilled in judgment. Self-assertion and all these changes, — in the Self they have no being. That whereby all is enjoyed, but which is itself not enjoyed, know that to be the Self, the Knower, through the very subtil intellect."

This question of the pupil is the same as that addressed to Krishna by Arjuna in the first chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. Arjuna says:

"Having killed the sons of Dhritarâshtra, what pleasure, O thou who art prayed to by mortals, can we enjoy?"

No doubt all of us have felt this condition of deep despondency. W. Q. Judge describes it thus:

"All old ideas gone; all old consolations worthless; the extreme worthlessness of things in life evident; friends gone or become so mediocre as to be of no use; alone in space though living with hundreds. A new world not yet opened. New powers not conferred. . . . At that stage you must help yourself. It is the taking of Heaven and only you can take it; it is one of the meanings of the words of the Christian Bible about taking up the cross and giving up all."

It would be out of place here to discuss the state of those who have

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arrived at this point of the evolution of Pistis Sophia. We have to consider "the fullness of the seeming void, the voidness of the seeming full."

One thing is certain. It is impossible for us at this stage of our progress either to escape from or to destroy our higher individual consciousness. And as a Theosophical writer says: "It is something of a staff to lean on to know that others have gone on that road."

We may also be sure that with the inner Divinity which stretches forth a hand to help us there is no such thing as condemnation. Why, therefore, should we condemn others or waste one single precious moment in the useless egoism of our own regrets?

In one of the Comments on 'Pistis Sophia' H. P. Blavatsky writes as follows:

"He who would be an occultist must not separate either himself or anything else from the rest of creation or non-creation. For the moment he distinguishes himself from even a vessel of dishonor, he will not be able to join himself to any vessel of honor. He must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath leaving no trace behind."

And in 'Occultism versus the Occult Arts,' she says:

"Let them know at once and remember always that true Occultism or Theosophy is the 'Great Renunciation of Self,' unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. . . . It is *Altruism*, and it throws him who practises it out of calculation of the ranks of the living altogether. 'Not for himself but for the world he lives,' as soon as he has pledged himself to the work. Much is forgiven during the first years of probation. But no sooner is he 'accepted,' than his personality must disappear, and he has to become a *mere beneficent force in Nature*."

For those who are firmly convinced of the ever-present Divinity within their own beings, there surely need be neither doubt nor hesitation. They are seeking the unknown, and if they have the strength to do that, they are the pioneers of the human race; with this difference, that whilst they do so consciously, the bulk of mankind do it unconsciously, and with terrible suffering. Our essential divinity is ever ready to help, but we must do our part.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky quotes from an ancient scripture as follows:

"All the creatures in the world have each a superior above. This superior, whose inner pleasure it is to emanate into them, cannot impart efflux until they have adored."

And in Vol. IV of *Lucifer*, among 'Oriental Gleanings,' we find the following:

"In every meeting of mortals, though their brains are stuffed full of all the follies and mad-nesses of the world; though their hearts and minds are drugged with the dull intoxication of self and sense, there is, quite unknown or hardly suspected by these former, another far different company; august, powerful, beneficent; living with the everlasting laws; breathing the pure air of divinity; watching in silence their mortal companions, and making their presence

felt by quiet, scarce heard monitions in the recess of the heart, gently and steadily leading the weak and uncertain steps of the mortals up the steep path of divinity.


“These august immortals are no other than the mortals themselves, as they are now in promise, and as they will one day be in consciousness and life, when man shall have left behind the garment of follies, which he, though a divinity, consents to wear.”

In conclusion, we must not for a moment forget that our visible Teacher is but an outer semblance of the Great Soul which is one with our own Higher Selves; and that the inestimable privilege which we enjoy is as nothing compared with the fact that our real and more lasting privilege is the inner guidance and teaching which we receive whether the Teacher be far or near. For this especially we are responsible, that we may fit ourselves for the service of Humanity in the coming ages.

MAN AND NATURE

MAN AND NATURE

H. T. EDGE, M. A.

 HUMAN sentiments are sometimes treated by modern theorists, with their upside-down way of looking at things, as sublimated products of selfish instincts in the lower creatures from which man is supposed to be derived. In contrast with such a view, observe this, from *The Secret Doctrine*:

“When, moved by the law of Evolution, the Lords of Wisdom infused into him [man] the spark of consciousness, the first feeling it awoke to life and activity was a sense of solidarity, of one-ness with his spiritual creators. As the child's first feeling is for its mother and nurse, so the first aspirations of the awakening consciousness in primitive man were for those whose element he felt within himself, and who yet were outside, and independent of him. DEVOTION arose out of that feeling, and became the first and foremost motor in his nature; for it is the only one which is natural in our heart, which is innate in us, and which we find alike in human babe and the young of the animal. This feeling of irrepressible, instinctive aspiration in primitive man is beautifully, and one may say intuitionally, described by Carlyle. He exclaims: ‘The great antique heart, how like a child's in its simplicity, like a man's in its earnest solemnity and depth! . . .’”—Vol. I, p. 210

And a little further on we read:

“How comes our physical body to the state of perfection it is found in now? Through millions of years of evolution, of course, yet never through, or from, animals, as taught by materialism. For, as Carlyle says: ‘The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself “I,”—what words have we for such things?—it is a breath of Heaven, the highest Being reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for the UNNAMED?’

“The *breath* of heaven, or rather the breath of life, called in the Bible *Nephesh*, is in every animal, in every animate speck as in every mineral atom. But none of these has, like man, the consciousness of the nature of that highest Being, as none has that divine harmony in its form which man possesses.”—pp. 211-212

What different ways there are of looking at things! The relations between an animal and its young, or between parent and child, *can* be regarded as selfish instincts, reappearing in a refined form in the adult human being; but we see that they can be regarded as manifestations of

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a universal and sublime principle, the principle of Devotion. Even the animals are vehicles for the manifestation of some of the divine laws; man is a far more perfect vehicle for their manifestation. For man possesses, besides the animal body, that self-conscious mind which Nature unaided can never bestow; and which came to him from Beings already endowed with it.

The battle between fundamentalism in religion on the one side, and certain scientific teachings on the other, may well be described as a strife between two narrow dogmatisms. Each party feels the cramping influence of the other. It is only the ancient teachings, now presented in Theosophy, that can achieve that great synthesis or sum-total of knowledge which knows no arbitrary division into science and religion. The Truth is *one*. Man is a divine Soul in his essence, though inhabiting a human body; but Evolution is a great undeniable truth, though far ampler and grander than the present scientific notion of it.

We must beware of underrating knowledge in the interests of an alleged practicality; for what has just been said shows how important knowledge is. It is hardly possible to estimate the effect that would be produced by a diffusion of a true conception of human nature in place of the conflicting dogmas that we find. Change a man's idea of himself, and you change his entire attitude towards life and profoundly influence all his conduct for ever after.

Scientific authorities keep on denying that science teaches the descent of man from anthropoids; and yet people speaking in the name of science make that very claim. But even if man, though not descended from anthropoids, is descended from some animal that is the common ancestor of both, we get a purely speculative history, which may well be matched with literal interpretations of the English translation of *Genesis*. And, as so often pointed out, the supreme mystery of the origin of Man the Thinker is left all unsolved. H. P. Blavatsky says that religion and science can be reconciled on condition that each puts its house in order; and science certainly needs to put its house in order as regards evolution. There *can* be no antagonism between religion and science, when both are rightly understood; but there can be, and is, much antagonism between the narrow theories of men.

Nature as a whole manifests a grand harmony, which, to the thoughtful mind, is sufficient evidence of the magnanimity that moves it. It is true that we may discover in Nature many things which, *if they were done by man*, would be selfish and cruel. But, performed artlessly and according to their own natural law by the creatures, they fit into the general harmony. And to the unprejudiced eye there are a far greater number of actions that manifest kindness, love, and self-sacrifice. We

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must never forget that man, with his freewill and knowledge, cannot innocently commit actions which, in an animal, would be innocent. The animal acts in accordance with its animal nature; the man violates his divine nature.

It has been said that "man is arrogant in proportion to his ignorance"; and we certainly find that his pride and presumption are in nowise diminished by his theories about his alleged animal origin. But arrogance is not self-respect. Has it occurred to man that, in virtue of his superior nature, he can make laws and set examples for inferior creatures? Nay, that, in neglecting to use this prerogative, he is failing in his duty? It is an essential part of the ancient teachings, and follows from the Theosophic teachings, that all Nature waits upon man, joys in his triumphs, and suffers from his failings. The lower creatures live largely by what man throws off. Man stamps his impress upon the face of creation. It is the tendency of evil forces to evolve downwards and become more and more gross and violent. Such forces, set in motion by man, can no longer be expressed in human bodies. They must be worked off harmlessly in Nature. Thus, so far from Nature supplying man with passions, as the theorists seem to suggest, the reverse is the case, and it is man who generates, by the powerful influence of his thoughts, propensities that manifest themselves in the kingdoms below him. It is matter of common observation that domestic animals will manifest perversions unknown to the wild breeds. It would be possible to diagnose the master by his dog.

Man, towards Nature, is both learner and teacher; as to a child.

REALISM AND IDEALISM

STUDENT

 ONE of the most misleading words in our vocabulary is surely the very plain word REALISM, simply because we have no generally acceptable standard of reality. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say because our generally accepted standards are too various. Of these the most popular no doubt would be that of the senses: it being generally conceded that nothing is real that is not perceptible to the senses.

But sight is a most important sense, and the air we breathe is surely a reality; and yet it is not visible. Light and Darkness: are they unrealities because not audible nor sensible to touch or taste? Are our emotions

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unrealities? If so we pass the greater part of our existence in a world that is not real. And if the world we live in is so largely made of unreality what is to be our standard of reality?

Material objects are endowed with weight, which is not visible, nor audible, nor can it be smelled nor tasted, no, nor even seen; yet surely it is real. How can we say that the reality of things depends upon the testimony of one or more of the senses, seeing the general disagreement of these witnesses?

If we rely upon our dictionaries we shall say things that are real are not imaginary, but actually exist quite independent of the senses that perceive them. But how can we test their actual existence except by use of the imagination? It is by the imagination that we co-ordinate the experience of the senses, and then draw our conclusions. It is the mind that weighs the evidence for or against the reality of things; and while that reality may be entirely independent and self-supporting, yet it can only be known to us by the assistance of our senses or our mind.

So when we speak of realism we are talking about a mode of mind, a system of thought, a manner of expression, a literary or artistic style, that deals with concepts of reality not with reality itself. All that we ever know about reality is an *idea*, a mental concept; and so our realism after all is not so very far removed from its apparent opposite *idealism*.

The ordinary man conceives of idealism as dealing with abstractions, fancies, fictions, or pure imagination; while realism deals with facts. But the idealist thinks otherwise: to him reality is not material; far from it. To him the ideal is the revelation of the real. Ideas to him are concepts of reality, and the entire universe is an expression of ideas conceived in the eternal mind of Nature, the Great Mother.

The fact that we are all children of one universal mother is the key to all the baffling problems presented by our social system, which ignores this fact, and has for its foundation the popular fallacy of materialism with its twin error "the great dire heresy of separateness." From these two errors spring "all the ills that flesh is heir to." From materialism comes the delusion of death as the end of life, which is a practical denial of the possibility of evolution or the continuity of consciousness. And from the fallacy of separateness arises that justification of human selfishness which finds its ultimate expression in war as the crown of competition and the last word in the great nightmare of our so-called civilization.

A civilization based on selfishness can be no better than a nightmare. Peace cannot be maintained in a society that founds its life and laws upon the perverted principle known as 'the struggle for existence.' The Law of Life, the Law of Laws, is BROTHERHOOD. That is the only possible foundation on which to build a civilization worthy of the name. The

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'struggle for existence' is a fallacy, a theory invented to excuse the selfishness of man's lower nature, which is the only trouble-maker in the world. The only struggle is that made by man in his attempts to get for his own personal enjoyment a greater share of this world's goods than other men receive. The struggle that ensues makes life a veritable nightmare.

The world is dreaming a bad dream. Let man awake, and find the SELF, and end the dream. This is the aim of the idealist, to stand in presence of reality and know no fear; to see beyond the illusive forms and appearances of the material world and recognise the presence and power of spiritual principles at work behind the veil of matter: to perceive the ideal as the soul of things, and know that the ideal is the mental image of reality.

When a man understands how very fallible his senses are, how easily deceived, how subject to suggestion, surely he must admit that their report amounts to little more than partial evidence of the external appearance of a reality which lies beyond, a principle that escapes the clumsy grasp of these uncertain instruments.

Truly the materialist is utterly incapable of realism. The Real must be approached through the Ideal. And no one is more blind to the reality of things than is the self-styled realist who takes appearance for reality; being deluded by the glamor of the material plane on which he lives. The attitude of mind of a materialist who pins his faith to sense-impressions and is content to look no further for reality is quite unlike that of the man caught in a fog who sees the fog and knows that he is lost. The materialist sees clearly and is quite sure of his position, but, like a sleep-walker, he is deceived by his own mind and does not understand that which he sees. So, like a lunatic, he is convinced of his own sanity, and satisfied that what he sees is real and what he cannot see nor measure with his senses has no material existence, and must be therefore a product of imagination, an unreality. Thus the materialist repudiates the ideal as delusion or fantasy.

Not so the idealist, the seeker for reality. He would not dare to call himself a realist, knowing that he as an individual would lose his individuality if once he touched the flame of Truth and was absorbed into Reality. He is content to bathe in the sunshine and to see it everywhere reflected and to know that his own spark of individuality is but a ray from that same spiritual Sun. To the true Idealist life is intensely real in spite of its delusions, for each delusion testifies according to its might to the Reality that lies behind. *That* is the unspeakable. Only the VOICE cries "Know thyself!" "Find thou but thyself; thou art I."

EXACT SCIENCE — A FICTION

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF



WHAT are the fundamental conceptions upon which the whole enormous edifice of science rests? They are clearly evident. Let us review the different chapters of modern physics, and we shall immediately find that its field could be divided up into two quite different parts: one, including questions of mechanics, of hydrostatics, etc.— and a multitude of complements referring to them; the second embracing the phenomena of heat, light, and electricity; and acoustics, which, strictly speaking, could be placed in almost any domain of physics. The principal notions of the first section are: matter with which we work, and energy which is represented to us as the cause of the movements of matter. The second section rests in the same way on the two above-mentioned bases, but the explanation of these phenomena necessitates further the introduction of a new conception which rounds out the theories — the ether. As a matter of fact, in order to explain the transmission of undulatory (calorific, luminous, electric, etc.,) vibrations, a carrier or support was necessary; also, in order to fill up the interplanetary void with something, it was necessary to imagine an imponderable agent with which this void should be full, in order to transmit the luminous vibrations at least, not to mention others. If we turn to chemistry, matter and energy meet us everywhere; so that we are able to say from now on that science is based upon three fundamental conceptions: 1. *Matter*; 2. *Energy*; 3. *Ether*.

Let us remember that scientists not satisfied with their experiments in matter have tried to discover its innermost structure, to find the laws which the innumerable atoms obey, which constitute it; they have wished to see, observe, scrutinize to the very ultimate depths the secret of its mysterious origin and the equilibriums which support its marvelous structures. We shall not occupy ourselves here with the hypotheses without number which have been raised in order to solve this mystery; suffice it to say that the primordial atom formerly held to be indivisible and indestructible during the last century was divided, and transformed (as is generally known) into a solar system with a central mass and very small particles called electrons, which according to certain rules turn round a central nucleus with a speed of the order of that of light.

The theory about the electron could not satisfy the indefatigable spirit of the investigators, and hence we have new hypotheses formulated regarding the structure of the electron itself; it is conceived of as a whirlwind, a vortex, a cyclone of ether,— of this almost immaterial substance

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which, nevertheless, is of a rigidity greater than that of the hardest steel. All matter has thus been brought back to this hypothetical ether which is more indefinite than any other scientific conception.

What then is matter? A whirlwind of ether! It is marvelous! . . . Is matter then nothing but ether? Certainly, though condensed, it is after all just ether.

Strange, indeed! In the attempt to prove the inner structure of matter, which was thought to be the web of the universe, people came to a quite different conclusion, namely, that matter does not exist! The object of our reasoning has thus been shown to be unreal, an illusion, deceptive in the highest degree.

What is matter? —But it does not exist! —But heavens! replies the profane, everything that I see, you yourself, Mr. Investigator, are you not yourself made of matter? I was told yesterday that everything in the Universe was merely matter and atoms in movement. — No. We have just discovered that all is nothing but condensed ether ruled by 'forces,' and since matter has lost its individual existence, ether has inherited its attributes.

Marvelous! This is called the deductive method. The hypothesis is clear and simple, and especially is this its principal merit, *experimentally proved*. Could a more negative conclusion than this one be arrived at? Let us hear then what a scholar of the first rank said of this same matter some years ago, of this matter which has just been so ignominiously driven from its throne.

"What is matter? — In perfect strictness it is true that chemical investigation can tell us nothing directly of the composition of living matter, and it is also in strictness true, that we know nothing about the composition of any material body whatever it is."— *Lecture on Proto-plasm*, by Mr. Huxley

And now of late the tendency seems to be to disregard these most true words of Huxley's. He answered that we did not have any positive knowledge about matter, and today a thousand scientists are telling us that it is nothing but condensed ether. Good! If the thing is as simple as that, let them show us this primordial substance which fills up everything, the interstellar void as well as the interstices between the atoms of a body. Let us try to get some information from men who are competent along these lines, in order to have a more precise idea of this universally known and respected agent.

The answer to our question will not keep us waiting; I can already hear it: Ether is imponderable and cannot, as such, be perceived by any means at our disposal; you want to see it? Impossible! Nobody has seen it, nobody has felt it; it is an invisible fluid, like air, by the way, which also is invisible; the proofs of its existence are so many that no

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doubt is possible as to its reality. — Ah, yes, we reply with some regret; but can you at least give the definitions of its physical properties, its attributes, fix the mode of its exact vibration, describe it to us with at least some precision?

This is the answer of S. Laing, a writer of some years ago, in his book entitled *Modern Science and Modern Thought*:

“What is ether? Ether is not actually known to us by any test of which the senses can take cognisance, but it is a sort of mathematical substance which we are compelled to assume in order to account for the phenomena of light and heat.”

Here we have the ether in all its simplicity: a pure abstraction and nothing more. From now on we can employ a résumé taken from science itself: Matter is composed of atoms; the atom of the vortex produced in the ether; hence matter is ether. Ether, on the other hand, is nothing but a “mathematical substance,” something on which to base calculations — a pure abstraction; hence matter is itself an abstraction. In order to explain the structure of one fiction — matter — another is created a thousand times more abstract — ether; the result of which is really marvelous: two abstractions which explain and complement each other, and which, after all, certainly do not give us a positive and experimentally proved answer to the question: What is the primordial atom?

Science uses facts only and by no means merely abstract notions; but is it perhaps an irony of the centuries that its deepest base, its principle axis of rotation, is found to be precisely an abstraction and one of the most abstract?

Thus the two hypostases of the scientific trinity are established; their ultra-metaphysical appearance is too obvious to necessitate any more profound analysis.

Let us turn to energy. Open any manual of physics, especially one on mechanics, and read the ingenious definitions which you will find of that mysterious entity called ‘energy.’ The inevitable answer to our question What is energy? is the same monotonous phrase, which can only make a thinker smile: Energy is the cause of movement. Energy is known to us only by its effects.

Cause or effect define with very little precision the idea of energy; it is evident that the manuals cannot tell us anything whatsoever about its essence, still less about its origin. Let us then turn to the classics of contemporary science; we shall perhaps there find some interesting passages. In order to quote only one of them, let us take the course of physics by Ganot; we shall find there on page 68:

“In mechanics there is actual and potential energy: work actually performed and the capacity of performing it. As to the nature of molecular energy or forces, the various phenomena which bodies present show that their molecules are under the influence of two con-

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trary forces — one which tends to bring them together, the other to separate them. The first is molecular attraction, the second force is due to the *vis viva*, or moving force. . . .”

Let us then try to find the definition of this *vis viva*, of which Ganot speaks. Here we have the brave Huxley who once more pulls us out of this swamp in which we find ourselves entangled. This truth-loving man answers us with precision and clarity:

“What is this *vis viva*? It is an empty shadow, a product of my imagination.” — *Physical Basis of Life*

And here we have the scientific trinity defined in a rather original manner, it is true, attested by the most faithful sons of science.

I do not know what matter is.

I do not know what the ether is.

I have no notion whatsoever about energy.

And now we have the right to estimate the value of this theoretic foundation, of this basis which resists all external attacks and which the scientists of the time make it a point of honor to defend. Contemplate then for a moment this strange metaphysic, this absolute ignorance out of which they at any price want to form a system and build a lasting edifice. These are the refractory bricks with whose help they intend to shelter themselves against the inclemencies of ages to come.

What does this so-called solidity consist of? with its ephemeral basis which a sudden puff of wind can carry away? Who then can show us, in these abstractions which are more abstract than any others, more nescient than any doctrine previously formulated, an authority worthy of our worship?

Men swear all too often by the irrevocably demonstrated postulates of science; but they fail to notice their fragility, their artificial vitality, their nullity from the experimental point of view; they do not see that they are founded on a pure fiction, on a negation.

By what means do scientists try to explain the universe to us? — The idea of an organic life, or the conception of a living and animated substance are far away; nothing exists but dead atoms, material corpuscles which no breath animates, nor any thought renders fertile, nor any spirit directs; nothing but myriads and myriads of these mute and withered beings, condemned to turn, to revolve, during the eternity of the ages round an imaginary center. No life, no soul, in these elements; nothing but matter darker than ever, more dead than ever; matter governed by fictitious forces, whose cause is unknown.

Would one say that the whole of the universe wells up from these overheated alembics, from these tubes curved and re-curved in a thousand ways, out of these putrefied solutions — a universe full of charm, youth, and hope for the future? Would one say that this marvelous nature,

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temple of the Supreme Life, is organized within the four walls of narrow laboratories, among fetid odors, under the vigilant eye of a rusty chemist? Would one say that man himself, like the homunculus of Faust, suddenly emerges out of these colored salts, of these condensed liquids, of these clouds of vapor, by the imperial gesture of the scientist? Is it dead matter which creates life, activity, progressive evolution? Is it the logic of deductions, three-storied formulae, chemical reactions, that create intuition? It seems as if spontaneity itself ought to spring in full vigor from the bosom of mathematical calculations!

They who prostrate themselves before the grandeur of exact science, do they not see that they are adoring a holy trinity consisting of dead matter, inanimate force, and pure chance?

Exact science, that science which denies the existence of abstractions within the heart of its own being, that science, finally, which does not and will not recognise anything but certain and known quantities, is itself found to rest on such a fantastic basis, such a legendary foundation. Very singular indeed! Listen then to these few words, the truth of which is only too evident:

“The whole structure of modern science is built on a kind of ‘mathematical abstraction,’ on a Protean substance which eludes the senses, and on *effects*, the shadows of a *something* entirely unknown to and beyond the reach of science; self-moving atoms! self-moving suns, planets, and stars!” — *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky

This is pure truth. Noble-minded scientific researchers yearn to know and hope to know, but, what a prodigious distance yet separates them from the final and sublime knowledge of the law of Eternal Nature!

What an unnecessary postulate to start from, this ‘mystery of existence’! Why all this ‘mystery’? There is none; all is there, manifested and calculated.

However, in spite of the ‘mystery’ which surrounds it, in spite of the incertitude which it seems to meet at every step, in spite of the futility and the incoherence of most of its hypotheses, the science of our days finds itself closer than ever to the eternal truth, revealed in days of old by the wise men of antiquity. The consistency with which it has constantly rejected the idea of a living principle, pulsating in every atom, now ends only in this: to show that *matter, energy, and ether are only different manifestations of the same primordial essence, which forms the web of the universe.*

For science today tries to formulate Theosophical doctrines; it whispers already the words of the Archaic Wisdom. Only a few more steps, and it will penetrate to the outer arcana of the universe, where the breath of the spirit is felt; and then endlessly step after step towards wider and deeper knowledge of the Great ALL, origin and end of the stellar evolutions, in which depths there hides the mystery of life.

OUT OF THE PAST: OLD NEIGHBORS

M. G. GOWSELL

ARE these the selfsame souls who built them here
Forgotten fanes the ancient world would know
A hundred thousand fleeting years ago?
Did some dim echo of that grand career,
A still, small voice, lead each from far and near
To these same hills that face the sunset glow,
And that once dreaming harbor stretched below,
Alone with sun and stars from year to year?

Though unsurmised, the Law would thus decree.
Ere men forget the phoenix, fable famed,
This rendezvous of yore shall be acclaimed
The Athens of the seas, and hold in fee
The old, old lore of human destiny,
That men and gods may mingle unashamed.

*International Theosophical Headquarters,
Point Loma, California*

THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

IN a scientific magazine we observe some familiar pictures of ancient megalithic remains in Peru; but they seem curiously detached from the accompanying letterpress, as though inserted by another hand. In fact, the writer, in his remarks on the Indians, appears to us to fail signally in recognising the importance of the evidence thus illustrated. For instance, we have a picture of a wall built of stones weighing hundreds of tons each, yet so closely fitted that "not even a knife blade can be thrust in between." Wonderful as this might be were these huge stones rectangular and with plane surfaces, the wonder becomes immeasurably increased when we find that they are irregularly polygonal and that their surfaces are not plane. This would surely be a delicate piece of work even with stones of manageable size; but when they are as big as a room, what can we think? Under another

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picture we find it remarked that it is hard to believe that no other than stone tools were used. We feel inclined to ask, How could such work be done with *any* tools? In the fortress of Sacsahuaman at Cuzco one stone is said to be 27 ft. by 14 ft. by 12 ft., giving a weight of at least 350 tons. Regarding the terraces constructed in the ravines of Peru, it has been estimated that there are 250,000 miles of stone wall. (See "A Land of Mystery," *Century Path*, Vol. X, No. 47)

The people who built this wonderful architecture must have been correspondingly cultured in other respects.

Orthodox scientific theories of the evolution and past history of mankind will simply not fit in with the known facts, of which the above is a mere sample. The teachings of Theosophy do fit in with these facts.

Fortunately, much is being done now to popularize, by means of cheap publications, the facts of archaeology. Knowledge of all kinds, religious or scientific, has a tendency to fall into the hands of specialists, who, despite their usefulness and necessity, do to a considerable extent hold back and confine progress. Great advances are apt to proceed from sources outside these privileged circles. It is necessary to recognise that mighty civilizations have existed in the remote past, composed of people far advanced in all kinds of knowledge and skill. Many races, supposed to represent primitive stages in human evolution, or races whose evolution has somehow been hindered, are actually remnants, on the downward arc. We recently read of the discovery of two people living a very primitive kind of cave-life; the writer spoke of them as being *still* in the stone age. One was a boy, the other an old woman. Was that old woman still in the stone age of life, and that boy in a much later and more advanced age? Would the old woman evolve into a girl? Races, as well as individuals, evolve from childhood up to a certain point and then decline.

Modern theories speak of the time when the animal became man. H. P. Blavatsky uses this phrase: "Since man became an animal." (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 299) This gives the true idea of human evolution in a nutshell. Man existed before he was clothed in an animal body. If anything has evolved upwards from the lower kingdoms, it was that body, not the man. The man has evolved (or involved) downwards, and is now destined to evolve upwards again.

Science is of course continually changing; and its changes in the past show the certainty of similar changes in the future. Think of the revolution in ideas produced by geology, when men of science were anathematized for declaring the age of the sedimentary strata and their animal and vegetable remains — so contradictory of orthodox religious views. And even now we still labor under absurdly contracted ideas as to the antiquity of humanity, and especially the antiquity of civilization. Theosophy,

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in declaring that the age of man, and even of civilizations, should be reckoned in millions of years, just as geological, palaeontological, and astronomical time is reckoned, is merely anticipating what science will inevitably ere long admit.

The teachings of Theosophy form a self-consistent whole. The evolution of man has required vast periods of time for its accomplishment. Man is the most important of creatures; and the idea of many millions or hundreds of millions of years witnessing a universe peopled only with plants and animals, is not to be entertained.

As a contrast to this grand synthesis of knowledge, this view of the universe as a whole, let us see what happens when branches of inquiry are pursued in isolation, regardless of other branches which must necessarily be connected with them. We find speculations as to the origin of man carried out without any regard to psychology or to metaphysics; so that science, religion, metaphysics, etc., form different and independent views of the universe, and man can be considered under each of these aspects separately. From a book review we glean the following:

“The primate stock, then, sprang from a group of small and apparently insignificant insect-eating mammals rather like the shrews.”—“The Evolution of Man,” by G. Elliot Smith; review in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*

Here we have an alternative to the Eden-story; people may take their choice. But what we read further about the ‘development of intelligence’ is even more vague and fantastic. These shrew-like animals

“made their first great step when they adopted a life in the trees, getting shelter from their enemies, and, much more important, substituting sight for smell as their dominant sense. . . . The next stage was to improve on vision by the simultaneous employment of both eyes, so that both eyes looked directly forward; and this stage, not yet accompanied by true stereoscopic vision, is perpetuated in the little East Indian tarsier to this day. With true stereoscopic sight came the earliest primate, a small animal of the type of a lemur. These sense-changes were accompanied by a relatively tremendous change and development of the brain to make possible and to make use of the new powers, and man was fairly launched on his long journey, though still far removed from humanity. At numerous stages groups of his fellows made haste to reap the advantages of their new powers by specialization. Verily they had their reward, but it involved them in comparative stagnation for the future. It seems to have been man's part to refuse all the lesser prizes and to persist as an ever larger-brained weakling, refusing to specialize almost to the end. Forsaking the trees, he at last seized his one great functional specialization, the erect posture. . . .”

Perhaps it is this kind of thing which is responsible for science not being taken very seriously in some of the papers, but being made the subject of a semi-facetious, semi-patronizing leaderette in the bottom corner. But should this be called science at all? Where is the certainty and exactitude regarded (and justly so) as characteristic of science? Why should the above not be described as speculation of the loosest kind? A handle is given to the advocates of reactionary religious views. Even

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if the alleged processes actually took place, we should still be left in mute wonder as to the agency which promoted them. The whole business seems so irresponsible and casual. Logic requires that the potentiality of manhood should have existed in the germ from the very beginning, in a certain particular group of these alleged animals, and not in the others; thus causing the former to eschew all bypaths, while the latter stopped short at various stages. So that, even if we go back to the primordial atom, we must suppose some atoms as being primitively endowed with the potentiality of the erect attitude, while others would possess only gumption enough to carry them to the arboreal stage, and others again would be satisfied to remain for ever with their eyes on different sides of their head. And so the ancient teachings with regard to 'Monads,' human, animal, vegetable, mineral, etc., is foreshadowed, and the truth is made visible by its absence, like the missing piece in a jigsaw puzzle. By the method of *reductio ad absurdum*, by seeing what cannot possibly be true, we learn what *is*. The ordinary uninstructed mind, if it saw a man emerge from the ocean of primordial slime, would infer that he must first have gone into it.

Scatter a handful of mixed seed on the ground, tiny grains, indistinguishable to the eye. What is it that makes one yield one kind of plant, another another? It is the fact that the mustard-seed came from a mustard-plant, the cress-seed from a cress-plant. Here we have one manifestation of a general law — that whatever becomes manifest must first have existed in the germ. No man could ever be produced by any kind of evolution, unless man had previously existed, even as the design is present in the mind of the artist. The kind of universe imagined by theorists like the above resembles the productions of an artist who should take pencil and move it idly to see what comes; but the actual universe shows design. This has been used as an argument for the Deity. It is a proof that mind and intelligence rule in the universe. Everything in the universe is conscious in its own way, though that consciousness may be very different from man's, says H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*. But others have come independently to the conclusion that the universe is an aggregate of Beings, and all the forces that work therein are manifestations of will and purpose.

Man is the heir of a mighty past, but much of the heritage is held in trust till his maturity and consequently remains yet to be realized.



“It is surely better to pardon too much than to condemn too much.”

— *Anon.*

REASON AND COMMON SENSE

RALF LANESDALE

MOST people will agree that common sense is a very rare quality in other people, while themselves fully assured that reason rules their own lives, and that common sense is the basis of all their opinions. This paradox, like many others, is probably to be accounted for by the general looseness of speech which allows us to use more than one definition of a word without giving warning of a sudden change of 'key.'

The period in which we live is commonly regarded as the age of reason; and reason is usually coupled with common sense or the two terms are used synonymously. Why then is our civilization so full of evidences of unreason? Why is insanity so prevalent? Why is crime so common, and suicide so frequent? Are not these things incompatible with the reign of intellect? Or are they deductions from wrong premisses? Is our civilization the logical expression of mistaken principles?

As far as I can see the processes of Nature tend to bring about results equivalent and congruous to the causes that produced them. Hence I conclude that our civilization is the logical expression of a great mistake; the natural result of following a false ideal.

Katherine Tingley has said that "Unbrotherliness is the insanity of the age." Unbrotherliness is the logical expression of the heresy of self-worship. The false ideal that mankind is following is egoism in its lowest form, self-aggrandisement at any cost to others, self-indulgence at any cost to self or others. The application of this principle to the life of a community produces a civilization based on competition; and competition between nations means war and mutual destruction. War is the most logical expression of it, and is the natural expression of the desire for self-aggrandisement; so the extermination of races is the natural result of the attempt to build a permanent civilization on a false principle: for egoism which is a fact in nature, is not the highest, or most potent principle in human life. There is a fact more vital, more over-powering, more important than this great ruling principle. This prime fact in Nature is BROTHERHOOD. If this were recognised we should have co-operation in place of strife as the foundation of our civilization; commercialism would change its character, and would cease to be a cause of war. Prosperity would mean general well-being and not the creation of a new batch of multi-millionaires. The chief cause of war would have vanished with the transmutation of strife into co-operation.

The root of all our wars and other miseries is a false ideal. How can

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it be changed? Reason might be invoked; but mankind does not act on reason but on feelings, emotions, desires, hates, or fears; and calls in reason to explain and justify the act. That seems to be the chief function of the mind in this age of reason with its multiplicity of paradoxes and incongruities. Were reason blended with Faith in one common sense, then man would have attained to such enlightenment as would protect him from the worst of his present ills; for these all spring from lack of common sense, that is to say lack of true common sense; for Faith is the highest of the senses, not an emotion or mere sentiment. Faith is the faculty of intuition, or interior perception. Man has degraded it, confounding it with superstition and emotional belief.

Faith is an essential element in true common sense; but the modern type of practical man has discarded Faith and has by that emasculated his mind and made it barren. His so-called common sense is like a lamp that has gone out; it cannot show the path. That lamp must be relighted if humanity is to pursue the path of evolution without disaster on the road, for we are in the age of darkness; and if we have no light we cannot see to read the warning on the sign-post, which says "Beware of separateness." True common sense will sound the call of Brotherhood, and Faith will make that call imperative; for Faith is but the intuitive perception of a fact in nature, and a fact in nature is but an aspect of Truth.

I doubt if reason alone would serve to bring men to accept the fact of Universal Brotherhood, for facts are of many kinds and are perceptible alone to the sense that is of like nature; thus the sense that sees a tree is different from that by which the beauty of the tree may be perceived; the intelligence that recognises pain and pleasure is different from that which can appreciate justice as a reality. And the faculty of mind that enables a man to work for his personal advantage is not the same as that by which he can perceive the compelling force of Brotherhood.

To understand the full meaning of the term 'common sense' one must have some idea of the complexity of human nature; it is the lack of this knowledge that makes men materialists, in whose minds logic has stifled Faith, and self-interest has shut out Love of humanity.

It is this ignorance of the true nature of man that makes men talk such nonsense about the glory of our present civilization, being completely blind to the possibilities of human evolution. This age of reason, of which some are so proud, is but the gloomy entrance to the next hall of learning, in which true common sense will be the acquired right of every respectable citizen. Then the progressive minds will no doubt look back in pity on the 'glories of our mighty civilization' and will look forward to the awakening of the spiritual principle in human nature, that lamp of wisdom that men now call the Christos-spirit, innate in us all.

“SELF IS THE ONLY PRISON THAT CAN EVER BIND THE SOUL” --- Henry van Dyke

*(A Paper read before the William Quan Judge Theosophical Club,
May 15, 1924)*

PIET BONTJE

IT is generally held that without freedom there can be no true happiness. All men desire happiness, and so all men love freedom. There is hardly a nation that is not proud of having struggled for freedom at some period of its history, and to say of a country that its people are liberty-loving is to pay it a high compliment.

It is astonishing that so much energy, spent in defense of freedom, should result in so little happiness. Even a single glance at a newspaper suffices to show that real happiness is rare nowadays. Can it be that our conception of freedom is at fault and that what passes for freedom, bears little relation to happiness?

For centuries some prominent people have preached that human freedom is an illusion since every thought and act until the end of time had been determined upon before the creation of the world. As to happiness — it depended on the will of a personal deity, righteously incensed against the human race because of the disobedience of the first man created.

Later, science joined the former in their protest against freedom. Man is the creature of circumstances; heredity determines his physical and mental make-up; environment determines the development of his hereditary tendencies.

These conceptions of freedom, however divergent, have one point in common — they insist that man's freedom (or lack of freedom) depends on factors outside of himself.

Dr. van Dyke would have it otherwise. “Self is the only prison that can ever bind the Soul.” This beautiful quotation suggests that true freedom is an inner condition, independent of outer factors and that man himself is responsible for its absence or presence.

The Wisdom-Religion indorses this view whole-heartedly. The ‘self’ and the ‘Soul’ are manifestations of the duality that runs through all life. The higher principle, eternal and spiritual, manifests itself through its vehicle the lower principle — evanescent and material. Man's true home is the realm of Spirit; he is fighting his way upward and the mind-principle has come to his assistance. This principle is itself dual in aspect. If man allows his thoughts to dwell on the lower side of his being, the ingenuity

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and cunning of which the mind is capable are joined to the desires and emotions of the body. If, on the other hand, he fixes his thoughts firmly on spiritual realities, enlightenment will come and with it true freedom and happiness. It is on the mind-plane that the battle for freedom is being waged, and man himself decides at all times which side shall win.

The Spiritual Principle binds together all manifested nature: "Brotherhood is a fact in Nature." A brotherly thought puts me in contact with all life; opens up endless vistas, and gives me a feeling of infinite freedom and happiness. A selfish thought automatically isolates me and makes me conscious of my separateness. From a spiritual standpoint, separateness means imprisonment. I must learn, then, to discriminate between good thoughts and evil ones. Discrimination is the key to the problem and once the key is in my possession I must use it incessantly — "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

It seems strange that I should ever confuse a thought that will prove a companion, inspiring upward, with one that will turn out to be a jailer, keeping me in prison. The fact is, that an evil thought reveals its true nature only when I turn against it.

Suppose I allow my vigilance to relax, and, forgetful of my true position in life, yield to a negative state of mind, and allow my lower nature to control me — that part of me that is bound to selfish desires and weaknesses. Like attracts like, and automatically, thoughts existing on that plane rush in. Temptation would cease to be tempting, without its glamor. A thought, attracted by my mental hospitality, presents itself as a boon companion, generously offering to guide me and holding out golden promises if I entrust myself to him. I find that it is precisely the thing I want at that moment. My new companion enjoys my hospitality and thrives. Soon he suggests action. Action is to a thought what bloom is to a flower — the ultimate goal of its existence. Growing bolder, he pleads for action, demands it, and finally forces me into it. The moment I resist in earnest, he throws off the mask and reveals himself as my master who expects obedience. I find that I have been led to jail and that my jailer is bent on keeping me a prisoner.

As the fight for freedom progresses, I find that my jailer's resourcefulness is infinite. During his long association with me he has picked up a thousand tricks and has come to know all my weak points. Time after time I am outwitted by his strategy. Today it is flattery he uses to subdue me, tomorrow he challenges me to a combat, knowing full well that I will rush madly at him and will wear down my strength. Again, he lulls me to sleep by feigning defeat or appears in disguise and mocks me when I discover his identity too late.

As long as I stoop to his own plane and try to outwit him in cunning

“SELF IS THE ONLY PRISON THAT CAN EVER BIND THE SOUL”

and resourcefulness, progress is negligible. Does a king come down from his throne to wrestle with a rebellious subject? My servant has become jailer, because I allowed him to usurp some of my power — my jailer is strong because of the strength I gave him. It was my thoughtless hospitality and the attention I paid him that enabled him to grow. Attention he craves; neglect he fears. Resistance leaves him unmoved for it is but a form of attention. But against the policy of neglect his cunning is powerless. Two things cannot be in the same place at the same time. When I direct my mind firmly on the loftier aspects of existence, on the splendor and joy of life, there is no room for selfish thoughts. If I adopt this course and persist in it, my jailer's strength will soon be on the wane; his arrogance will leave him, and one day I shall find that he stands no longer between me and my freedom. Then I walk out into the open and, though richer in experience, I firmly resolve that such things shall not happen again.

Concentration on the spiritual aspect of life is the only way leading to thought-freedom. But it is more than this. By lifting the plane of my thoughts, I open up the farthest corners of my mind to the rays of the Spiritual Light. This Light — not of reason but of intuition — enables me to recognise an unworthy thought in however harmless or attractive a disguise it may present itself. And what is vigilance if not the contemplation of the Divine? Thus the establishment of a lofty mode of thinking not only frees me from present thralldom but safeguards me against future imprisonment. A man is truly free only when at all times he is conscious of the divine presence within. Gaged by this standard, but few can qualify for true freedom.

The current conception that would have freedom dependent on outside factors is based on utter ignorance of human nature. Where theology and science tell us that no man can ever be free, the Wisdom-Religion declares that true freedom, and with it true happiness, are within the reach of all. Even the first step on the path towards inner freedom floods the mind with so beautiful a light that life seems transformed. We see beauty where before we saw but ugliness; law rules where we had detected but chaos. Life-long friends show qualities we had never noticed before, and things we had thought essential to our happiness prove of minor importance. Truly, this teaching of man's duality with the new conception of inner freedom is like an invigorating breeze, blowing through the realm of our thought-life.

The struggle upward demands real fighting-spirit and those bent on setting out, will need the indomitable courage of a pioneer, together with the faith that moves mountains.

“Self is the only prison that can ever bind the Soul.” As yet, most of

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us are in the prison of our flesh-house, with many of our animal weaknesses trying to gain supremacy. The realization of our condition is the first step towards its betterment. We have the knowledge; we have the earnest desire to shake off our fetters and find real freedom — let us break jail then, go out into the open, and, like true Sons of God, shout for joy in the consciousness of the soul having gained supremacy and our spiritual will having been sufficiently strengthened to enable us to say at all times “Get thee behind me, Satan!” This, in our Theosophical teachings, means “Let my lower weaknesses get behind me for they shall no longer obstruct my path to light and freedom.”

THE WISDOM OF APOLLONIUS, THE PHILOSOPHER OF TYANA

P. A. MALPAS

XXII

AFTER Apollonius had departed from the tribunal the Emperor behaved like one under a divine influence, and in a way not easy to be explained, because it was totally different from the general expectation of those who were best acquainted with him. They expected him to burst out into violent exclamations, and to have issued orders throughout the whole empire to discover and prosecute Apollonius wherever found. But whatever the cause, the event was the very reverse and he did nothing in the matter.

He even heard another case the same day in regard to a will. Domitian not only forgot the names of the parties but the arguments used in the case while it was proceeding. He asked meaningless questions and gave answers that had no bearing on the case. But the flatterers around him made him believe that nothing had escaped his recollection.

All this happened before midday.

Damis had arrived at Puteoli the day before and had told Demetrius all that had happened to the moment of his leaving Rome. Damis ought not to have feared and it was unworthy of a philosopher such as Demetrius to have doubts, but both of them were uneasy enough about Apollonius. They wanted to do as he had told them, but they knew they would never see him again, for who ever escaped from Domitian?

They walked by the shore near Calypso's Isle as he had told them, but their hearts were very heavy. They rested in a nymphaeum where statues of nymphs surrounded a pool bordered with white marble. They talked of the water which never overflowed and never diminished when

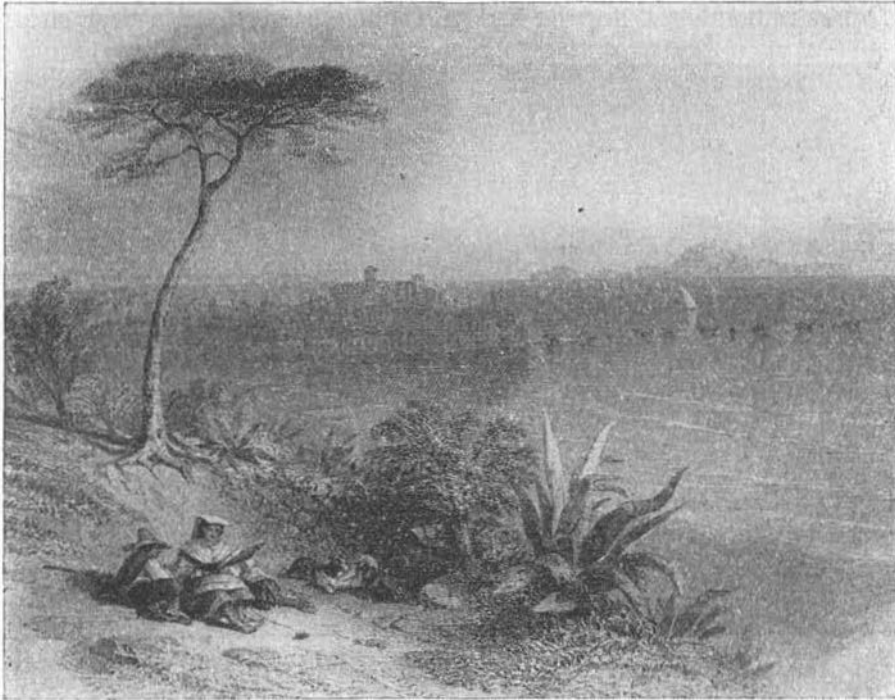
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drawn from. But they failed to make any show of interest and got to talking of the last hours of Damis with the master.

Damis could hold his grief in no longer. He cried aloud in an agony of grief: "Oh Gods, are we never more to see our good and valiant friend?"

"You shall see him, or rather you *have* seen him," said the beloved voice of their dear Teacher, the peerless philosopher of Tyana.

"What, alive?" said Demetrius, carried out of himself. "If he is dead we shall never cease lamenting him."



THE MOLE OF PUTEOLI (from an old engraving)

Apollonius stretched out his hand and said: "Take it, and if I escape you, regard me as an apparition just arrived from the kingdom of Proserpine, like those which the terrestrial gods present to the eyes of afflicted mortals. But if I bear being touched, I wish you would persuade Damis to think I am alive, *and have not yet laid aside the body.*"

Demetrius and the doubting Damis doubted no longer, but ran to him and kissed him. After a while they asked if he had made any defense. In their forlorn talk they had argued, *anything* to keep down the gnawing grief of their hearts. Demetrius had thought he had made no defense because he knew he must die, though innocent. Damis thought he had made one, but sooner than expected. But neither of them thought he

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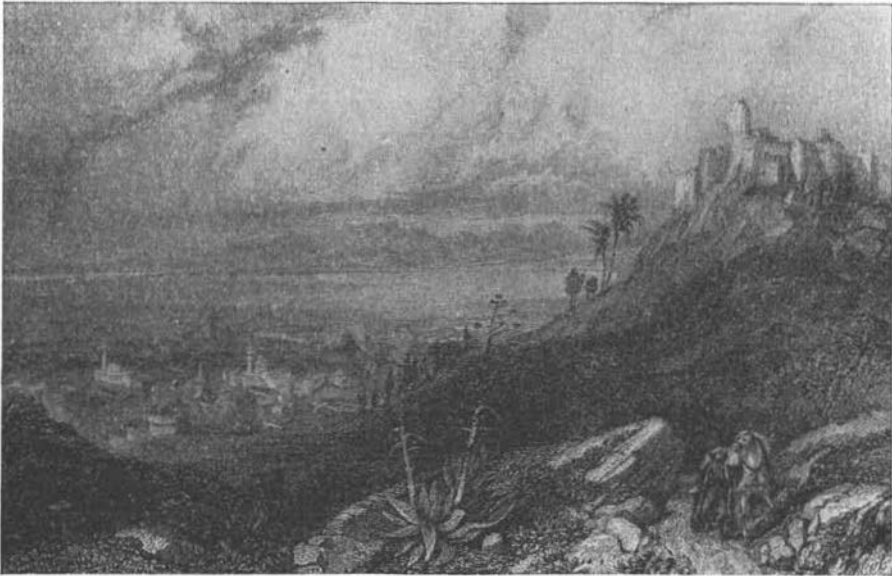
had made it that very day, a few hours before, *in Rome*, at a distance of three days' journey!

"My friends, I have made a defense," he said. "I did so a few hours ago, and we are victorious. That was just on noon."

"How have you made so long a journey in so short a time?" asked Demetrius.

"Think what you like about it," he replied. "But do not imagine I made use of the ram of Phryxus, nor the wings of Daedalus. Put it down to a God."

Damis remembered how he had said "he was going on a very strange



SMYRNA (from an old engraving)

journey" and they had wondered if he meant he was going to some far country on the arrow of Abaris the Hyperborean, who made the circuit of the earth on an arrow, without food, or any fanciful explanation but the right one, that he was going to Rome to face the Emperor.

Demetrius asked a hundred questions about the trial, for he said he could see that a God was interested in all Apollonius did or said and made his every action prosper. He wanted to hear every detail to tell Telesinus, who a fortnight before had dreamed he saw a river of fire overwhelming everything except Apollonius who passed through it safely, dividing to give him passage. Telesinus knew it was a joyous omen.

"I am not surprised that Telesinus should think of me in his dream," said Apollonius, "for I know he has long thought of me when awake." Then on the way to the city he told them all about the trial.

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Then they were in the depths of despair once more. There was no manner of doubt that the Emperor would send all over the Empire for him and capture him somehow. But he calmed their fears, and even Damis said he was at last convinced there was something exceptional, something divine about him, and that it would be all right in the end if he said so. He told Demetrius about the unfettered leg in the prison as the incident that had made him think there was something superior in the wisdom of Apollonius. So they agreed, since it was evening-time, to go to the nearest tavern and care for their beloved master. But he said he needed nothing more than sleep, which he promptly took, after repeating some verses of Homer in place of his evening hymn. But he insisted that they should have a good meal.

In the morning Demetrius went to ask what Apollonius was going to do. He could hear in imagination the hoof-beats of the horses sent posthaste with swift riders to take the Tyanean — he hardly dared look out on the road to Rome. But Apollonius again assured him that none should follow him where he went. The next thing was to go to Greece. Did Damis know of a vessel?

“We are at the sea,” said Damis. “The crier is at the door, and I hear the shouting of the sailors and the noise of the anchor as they prepare to weigh.”

“We will go in her to Sicily, and then to the Peloponnesus,” said Apollonius.

Then they took leave of Demetrius, who was sorrowful at their going. But they bid him be of good cheer and keep up his courage as a man who has the interests of his friends at heart. So they set sail with a fair wind and came to Sicily. Oh! the sorrow of that day for the brave old Demetrius! The sorrow and sadness of farewell!

Rumor said in Greece that Apollonius had been burnt alive; he was alive, but had his back stuck full of little hooks; he was cast into a deep pit; he was drowned in a well. All these might be true. The only thing humanly certain was that his end had come. Even the suggestion that he was alive under perpetual torture seemed extravagant. How was it possible that he or anyone else could escape the homicidal clutches of Domitian?

Then, ‘a voice ran,’ a little undercurrent, a murmur, a rumor, a buzzing of tongues that grew to a torrent of passionate assertion passed through Greece that he was not only alive and well but no farther away than the temple at Olympia! It was incredible, but it was true.

All Greece flocked to the Olympic Games; they were the world’s festival, unrivaled and unchallenged as an attraction. But now the whole

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country flocked to Olympia, from Elis, and Sparta, and Corinth. Athens was not in their territory, but the flower and cream of Athens came to the temple for the chance of a sight, a word of Apollonius. All the world went to Athens to college, Boeotians, Argives, Thessalians, people from Phocis, and undergraduates from all the known world. These joined in the exodus to Olympia, whether they had seen him before or not. Those who had not heard him thought it shame not to have done so; those who had, wished to extend their knowledge, if even by a crumb, a golden word from his divine lips. Even the magicians came, those who degrade divine things for money.

They asked him how he escaped. The old man's reply was very modest.

"I pleaded my cause and came off safe." That was all he said.

Which only made matters the more intense. For when those who now came from Italy told the truth and the wonder of that most wonderful trial at Rome, the people of Greece proceeded almost to the point of adoration. His modesty and refusal to exalt himself above others was a powerful proof of his really divine quality. The priests needed no proof. Had they not seen him in their holy of holies? It was not for them to explain their household affairs to the public, but one thing was absolutely certain, that Apollonius never took one penny for his teachings. Still, there were personal funds ever at his disposition. All the treasures of Babylon he had rejected except a bit of bread and onion "which make an excellent repast"; all the treasures of Vespasian and Rome were naught to him; and Damis found their funds mighty low — the purse he carried was no great burden on their journey.

He told his old Teacher and Master. "I will remedy it tomorrow," said the latter. Damis said no more. *He* had said it was all right, and so it would be.

Next day Apollonius entered the temple and asked the priest for a thousand drachmas out of the treasury, "if the God would not think such a sum displeasing."

"A thousand drachmas! It is a matter of no consequence to the God; but I fear he will be displeased that you ask for such a trifle instead of more!" And the priest gave it to him.

Apollonius stayed forty days at Olympia after his 'resurrection,' (for the people thought it was little less than that), explaining a variety of matters with great wisdom. Then he departed to converse with Trophonius, whose temple he had formerly visited, though without seeing the God. But he promised to return and discourse in the towns, and assemblies, "in your sacred processions, mysteries, and sacrifices, and libations, for all these things require the assistance and advice of a good

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man." Thus he left for Arcadia attended by his real admirers, of whom not one was left behind.

The oracle of Trophonius was a peculiar one. It was consulted by entering a narrow underground cave, much resembling the entrance to the Inferno of the later Dante. The priests refused to allow Apollonius to go down as it was only for the wicked and impure to consult the oracle, not such as he. This oracle was the only one that spoke direct to the suppliant without the answers passing through any intermediary. This Trophonius was a son of Apollo.

Refused entrance by the priests, Apollonius sat down and discoursed of the oracle and the manner of consulting it. Those who entered the cave went down in a crouching position, clad in white garments and holding cakes of honey in the hand to appease the serpents that might be in the cave. After consulting the oracle they emerged, some in one place and some in another at a greater distance. The whole place and ceremony appeared like some labyrinthine mysteries of the after-life of the dead. But Apollonius had little use for such mysteries; rather it might be said, in modern terms, that he himself was capable of preaching to and instructing the dead.

At evening-time he wrapped his cloak about him and prepared to descend. The God himself was so pleased with his conduct that he rebuked the priests for their treatment of Apollonius and ordered them to expect his reappearance at Aulis. Here they waited seven days, and at the end of that time Apollonius reappeared by a way untrodden by any before who had ever consulted the oracle. And with him he brought a little book, like the Sibylline oracles, "fitted for answering all questions." He had asked Trophonius what philosophy he considered most pure, and the book contained the opinions of Pythagoras, to which the oracle gave full approval.

"This book is kept at Antium, which, on this account, is visited by the curious traveler," says Philostratus a hundred years later. "It was carried to the Emperor Hadrian along with some letters written by Apollonius (for all did not reach him), and was left in his palace at Antium."

All his followers, whom the Greeks named Apollonians, came to him out of Ionia, and with them the young men from the country round about, a vast multitude full of philosophical zeal and worthy of admiration. Great crowds went to hear the philosophy of Apollonius, which fell from his lips like the wealth of Gyges and Croesus, free to all who asked. He spoke from the heart and Rhetoric lay neglected in the schools, for the latter made eloquence alone its object; but the wisdom of Apollonius came from the heart and the Apollonians paid little or no attention to the professional rhetoricians.

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He would not allow his young men to accept magisterial offices, nor would he let them have anything to do with lawyers, but drove away his flock when he saw them approach: "I do it through fear of the wolves coming and attacking the fold," he said, in the imagery of the prophet Enoch. Some thought this was because he had seen such bitter suffering, privations, and death in the Roman prisons arising out of the wranglings of the lawyers who fattened on the misfortunes of others.

Two years he stayed in Greece and then sailed into Ionia with his whole company. He philosophized at Smyrna and Ephesus, not overlooking other towns, and everywhere he was received worthily.

(To be concluded)