



A monthly journal devoted to teaching theosophical and occult truths

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—Hamlet

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IS REINCARNATION A FACT?

By T. H. REDFERN

(Continued from Last Month)

The hypothesis of reincarnation is that man's nature is made up of several parts, and can be analyzed in various ways. Using the simplest of these, a threefold division, man is a reincarnating spirit or individuality, a soul or personality or mask, and a physical body. The individuality evolves inherent faculties by repeated participation in the problems of life in physical bodies, a new personality of emotional and mental habits being formed in the process each time; but characteristics, consequences of the sort of activity habitually engaged in, are passed on from one personality to another in the chain. In this way the individual reaps what all its successive personalities sow, and learns and unfolds will-power, wisdom and the creative ability of the intelligence in tackling the problems of the successive circumstances arising from life to life. He learns how misery is created, how loneliness is caused, what gives rise to disease, and the sources of despair, through his successive personalities, male and female, making misery, loneliness, disease and desperation. That goes on, with recurrent grief, anguish and bitter complaint, until there arises in the personalities no longer a complaint, but a purpose—to find out why and how it happens, and why and how, too, he has had other experiences of happiness, serenity, fun and loveliness. Then he begins the task of getting to know himself, and he becomes increasingly aware of how others around him are involved in the process, not condemning their faults because his own are becoming patent to him, and he realises the half-baked stage we are all at, roughly speaking—some of course are only quarter-baked, and some perhaps three-quarter baked!

That is the general teaching, apart from exceptions which would unnecessarily complicate a preliminary consideration. Is it true? Accepting that, short of direct experience, it can neither be proved nor disproved, is it probably true? Is it the most likely explanation of some of the problems of life? Let us look at the alternatives.

Is man a mere physical body with a lifetime's consciousness and then nothing—death and obliteration after a life that may have been 100 years or 5 minutes or anything in between; no purpose in it, differences of fortune

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THE LOGIC OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS

The Path

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

"The Path" is an Eastern term adopted by Theosophy to signify the condition into which the advanced Ego passes after he has partially transcended the material desires and ambitions with which most people concern themselves. Its full title is "The Path of Holiness." It is not the ultimate aim of spiritual evolution by any means; indeed when one reaches the Path he may only be said to have graduated from the lower grades. He is just beginning to amount to something spiritually but a great deal of hard work still remains for him to do before he can really be used or usable in the higher echelons of the Inner Government which has our globe in its charge.

There is much theosophical literature having to do with the Path. The little classic by Krishnamurti, *At The Feet of the Master*,* is perhaps the most popular. It gives the requirements for what is technically called the First Initiation, an extension of consciousness which definitely marks the Ego as having entered the Path though still not far along its rough road. Many—but not all—Theosophists make earnest efforts to shorten the distance ahead of them so that they may tread the Path at an earlier period than by normal evolution.

It is not the purpose of the present series, however, to deal with the technique of the various phases of man's spiritual life which theosophic teaching covers, except briefly as a groundwork for the main theme, which is—*their logic*. If these teachings were illogical, fantastic, without rational basis or without benefit to those who accept them, we would want no part of them. Having searched for years before coming upon Theosophy for just the kind of foolproof system that Theosophy is, we would without hesitation reject any of its teachings that we felt after close analysis would not pass the test of reason. Others may do so, but for us they stand proved by their own inherent logic and plausibility.

As we see it there *must* be something analagous to what Theosophists call the Path, or nature is going to an

*Obtainable from The Theosophical Press, Olcott, Wheaton, Illinois.

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COMMONPLACE MIRACLES

By H. K. SCHOLEFIELD

The remarkable thing about mental healing, or faith-cure, is not that it is successful in many instances. Granting that many people who claim that remarkable cures have been effected were not sick at all anyway and merely "enjoyed poor health" for a short or long period, thus encumbering their nervous systems with mental depression and enjoying the excitement for its own sake, and granted also that many other cases of "cure" through prayer would have recovered anyway because of the cyclic functioning of nature's processes and the body's power to heal itself, the fact remains that "extraordinary" cures do appear following mental healing, prayers or ceremonies; and in primitive society they arise after administration by some witch-doctor with charms and incantations, hocus-pocus and rhythmic stampings by the tribesmen assembled. Such cases are vouched for constantly by medical scientists who are obliged to accept the facts after examination of evidence and elimination of all cases in which natural repair could have arisen, and those imaginary illnesses so frequently noted.

To say "coincidence" is no longer a good means of dignified exit on the part of our learned savants as they dust the dilemma off their fingers; it became too sticky a long time ago and had to be taken into medical recognition, since it could no longer be fenced out, under the customarily erudite term of "Psychosomatic Medicine." As long as a supply of Greek derivatives remains available, we shall not lack expensively portentous terms in diagnostics. All of which calls to mind an old country physician known in our youth who had considerable practice among Indians, who in those days were unlettered.

"Doc" picked up quart beer bottles whenever he found them by a roadside. "Those," he explained, "are for my Indian patients. No sense in giving an Indian a 6-ounce concoction for dosage in teaspoon-measures. He would never pay me if I did. Your Indian wants plenty for his money. He wants a hearty swig of something that will make his stomach hot and his eyes water, something with red-pepper in it and a violent odor. I mix a stout jorum of that sort and add the needed medication for an Indian patient and he loves it and would take me to his bosom if I let him, which I don't!" So

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ANCIENT WISDOM

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TO BANISH FEAR

The thing that numbs the heart is this:

That men cannot devise
Some scheme of life to banish fear
That lurks in most men's eyes.

—James Norman Hall

Infants are born with only two inherent fears—fear of falling, fear of loud noises. Happy infants! If they are blessed (?) with the usual run-of-the-mine parents, it won't be long before their almost empty storehouse of fears will be augmented by hundreds more. By maturity these will have probably multiplied into thousands. Yet the child can be conditioned to know no fear—at least for himself—by wise parents who themselves must have cast out fear. It has been done.

Lord Nelson, hero of England's Battle of Trafalgar, when a little boy of five, is said to have wandered into a thick wood and been caught in a terrific thunderstorm. When found hours later, drenched but quite unafraid, he was asked if, when the lightning played around him and the thunder crackled and roared, he did not feel fear. Interestingly he inquired, "What is fear?"

This story may be as apocryphal as little boy Washington's cherry tree but Nelson's character was of the stuff to validate it. He had not been filled with the foolish and useless fears which are implanted in so many children and make life a burden to them both in childhood and—because they encourage other fears—throughout life.

Of course they must be taught what to avoid and what is harmful or dangerous, but this can and should be done without the injection of a fearsome element. And it is little short of criminal to invent fears that prey on the child's imagination of unseen terrors, to torture him into good behavior. Modern children are in many cases too sophisticated to take stock of the spooks, goblins and bogey-men, with which the youngsters of the last century were frightened into going to bed on time, eating their supper or drinking their milk. There is still doubtless some of this mischief perpetrated on little boys and girls, to make its mark on their later life, but it has largely disappeared. Parents have at long last learned what some of the churches unhappily have not. Fear of hell is still inculcated to chill the blood of the small being un-

fortunate enough to be reared in that kind of orthodoxy.

And this is a fear that has a tendency to stick, as the cunning minds that disseminate it well know. Without any more substance than the horrendous uglies of the superstitious nursemaids who scared our grandfathers, it accomplishes as much and more in making the modern child, youth or man—or woman—do his duty by his church, if not by anybody or anything else. Those who teach it have no intention of going to hell themselves. Many of them probably do not believe in it. For those who do, it is a place for others—not for them. They are careful to profess the right things, go through the proper formulae, observe the ordained ritual and generally conform to what they are assured is necessary to keep a safe distance between themselves and the caloridity.

There are still a lot of people who believe in hell, some of whom imagine they have committed unforgivable sins which will send them there. Others are not quite sure whether they are "saved" or not and have uncomfortable moments when they rather incline to the negative. And the "sins" usually are not such things as murder, theft or mayhem. These are forgivable. We constantly read of the condemned professing absolute assurance that having repented and embraced "the faith" (one of them) heaven now awaits them. Their unfortunate victims, who probably were given no time to repent or make the proper professions, have doubtless gone to hell.

No, the "sins" are strictly on the technical order—failure to believe the "right" things, neglect to be baptized, marrying a divorcee with her ex-husband still alive—and such-like. God is expected to cooperate and send the wretches guilty of these hideous transgressions where they belong. The sentence is not light and there is no remission for good behavior. Eternity is the duration—no doubt a fitting punishment for failure to follow the party line of the particular faith that does the threatening . . . and the hoping that the threats will be made good.

It's all very pitiful and, to anyone not indoctrinated with such incredible fears, a completely childish piece of business; but it is serious and dreadful to those under its spell. And these number some highly intelligent men and women who would be outraged if told that they are believers in a set of absurd and harmful myths for which not one atom of substantial proof exists, which Jesus did not teach and the Bible, correctly translated, nowhere supports.

Theosophy has rolled that stone away from the lives of many. It has dissolved the clinging horror of eternal punishment poisoning the minds of otherwise sensible people. "The Lord is God," sang Whittier, "He needeth not the poor device of man."

That is what hell is—a poor device

dreamed up centuries ago to keep people afraid, to keep them coming to church, to keep them—very important this—giving to support those who in return offer them a blessedness in the beyond far outside the gift of those who pretend to award it.

Many have seen through all this, but many have not. Theosophy with its rational teaching, ready to answer every challenge, has been termed fantastic by those who believe in a congeries of fantastic inventions not one of which dares be submitted to challenge. It will not always be so.

CONCERNING CONTROVERSY

Apropos of our publication of Arthur Jacoby's reply to the article printed in the *American Theosophist*, IS PEACE BETTER THAN WAR? and to our comments thereon, a California reader wrote us as follows:

"I read with interest the recent article in 'Ancient Wisdom' on war and peace. Although I agree with most of the statements made in the article I think that the editor of the *American Theosophist* was perfectly right in not publishing it. The holding of another person's views up to ridicule is a perfectly proper method of discussion in many kinds of periodicals but not in the official journal of a society dedicated to brotherhood.

When we read something apparently presenting only one side of a question, and that a side other than our own, we tend to react with as forceful a statement as possible of a point of view diametrically opposed to the one already presented. But the best answer to a one-sided statement is not another one-sided statement. Would it not be better to present what we agree with in the other person's views together with what other things we think should be said to develop a balanced and well rounded picture?

It may sometimes be that there is apparently nothing in the other's view with which we can agree. In this case a simple, positive statement of what we believe should be sufficient to make this fact amply clear if we write with a broad-minded attitude. Darkness is not dispelled by attacking it, but by turning on the light. So let's have a little more light and a little less heat."

Another reader—in Long Island—wrote as follows:

"I wish to thank you for publishing Arthur Jacoby's article 'Is Peace Better Than War' which was rejected by *The American Theosophist*. I agree with you that constructive controversy (without personalities) is good for any movement. In fact, without it, stagnation is apt to develop.

Aside from this, I thoroughly agree with Mr. Jacoby's point of view and consider his conclusions well taken and irrefutable.

Exponents of such ideas may well hasten the coming of brotherhood."

The Editor's reaction as conveyed to

the writer of the first letter was as follows:

"Thank you for writing me your views regarding the Arthur Jacoby article. I am afraid I cannot agree with them for reasons which I think were expressed in the foreword to the article's publication. I do not think that Mr. Jacoby's arraignment can fairly be said to hold anybody or anything up to ridicule. His opinions were forcefully presented, of course, which has to be done if any impress is to be made in the mind of the reader. The article, however, contained no objectionable personalities and I think was in line with good journalistic practice.

I see no reason why such an article should not appear in the official magazine which indeed was the proper place for it, seeing that the original article which it answered was published there. I have a counter-article submitted by a reader who takes strong exception to Mr. Jacoby's views and which I intend publishing also in the near future. I wrote Mr. Jacoby and asked him if he would like to see it before it was printed and he replies—very sensibly I think—"I am interested in seeing the article. Differing opinions, when logically based and minus personalities, add relish and zest and perhaps enlightenment to any discussion. I do not deem this a controversy. Should an answer appear advisable, I am considering a request to my fellow member, the lady whose son was killed in the last war, and who vainly protested to our Wheaton Headquarters that some reply be published to the article advocating war. She is amply competent to state her views."

If only one opinion is ever to be permitted to reach the members of The Theosophical Society in America—the opinion of the National President or those concurred in by him—the Society is indeed in a bad way. Such was not the policy of Annie Besant nor of George Arundale, great International Presidents, who cheerfully published dissenting views in the *Adyar Theosophist* without embarrassment or resentment. In our humble fashion we follow their mighty lead. ANCIENT WISDOM is a clearing house for all sorts of opinions, some of which are outspokenly critical of the Editor's point of view.

It is not smart to stifle opposing views, or rather to try to stifle them for they will always find a way soon or late to be heard. It is also contrary to our democratic principle of government which—unlike the Totalitarian system—is by means of two parties, one in opposition. The Theosophical Society is a democracy and should be governed as a democracy by those in power. The Founders wanted it that way. Its reiterated Declaration of Principles published monthly in both National and International magazines plainly sets this forth. And except perhaps for a few who prefer to follow obediently in official footsteps wherever these may lead, we are convinced

that the membership wants it that way.

It will be part of the business of ANCIENT WISDOM to uphold and maintain this great tradition whenever it seems to be challenged by the uncalled-for suppression of opinions which have a right to be heard.

"TRIVILIZATION"

Senator Benton of Connecticut has coined this word in connection with the great amount of rubbish that pours over our radios. He calls these broadcasts, "Programs of Trivilization." We like that word as an expression for the drivel, drool, fatuity and morosity of which much of our modern civilization is made up. Trivilization! It's just the word.

No, we haven't gone sour on the lighter things of life. We are fond of them—in their place. We relish a joke—a good one—and agree that it would be horrifying to go back to the humorless and joyless days of our forefathers. But without one taking either himself or others or circumstances too seriously, it is still a fact that "Life is earnest, life is real." And the pap-happy stuff that too often comes over radio, over television, on the stage and on the screen—as well as at social gatherings and "dinners"—is no tribute to the intellectual level of the listeners. The fact that some of the dispensers of this insipid fare are paid more for one hour of dishing it out than many erudite professors earn in a year is still less of a tribute to our sense of proportion.

"Anything for a laugh" is the principle behind this willingness to pour out a king's ransom for top flight entertainers who can evoke hilarity from the public, and that laughter is a morale builder there is no denying. There can be no quarrel with that. This sad old world needs laughter, and a few—a very few—of the highly touted comedians who command the ear of the public do really possess a vein of genuine, unforced and original—and original—humor, appealing alike to the so-called intelligentsia and to the groundlings. We are far from disparaging them. We listen to them and enjoy them.

But how few there are—in the theater, the films, the radio or TV—as compared with the boring mediocrities and fifth raters who somehow have managed to wangle a place in the popular esteem! What does constitute public taste anyway? The writer asked a professional entertainer the question and the reply was, "If I could figure that out I could make myself a million dollars." The fact remains that the "best thought" of the country—which does not mean a stuffy group who look down their noses at the *hoi-polloi*, but men and women recognized as leaders in their specialized fields—regard the public taste as deplorably low.

It is no use writing articles of this kind and ending up, as is so often done, with solemn asseverations that "the answer is that we must raise the public

taste." That is a senseless statement. No one can raise the public taste but the public itself. It will pick and choose among the programs it is offered whether they be highbrow or lowbrow, and its average level will be reflected in the patronage accorded to each type. The Symphonies, Shakespearean plays, educational and informative programs will be swamped out a hundred or a thousand to one by the corny comedians, hit parades, crime depictions, soap operas and sensationism.

A section of the younger generation, perhaps of some of the elders too, may react with the feeling that this article should be captioned, "Reflections of an Old Fossil," but reactions do not change facts. And the facts are that the "Programs of Trivilization" outnumber the purposeful, enlightening and even the really entertaining by a huge majority. Television has performed a wonderful service in bringing into the remotest corners of the land such episodic happenings as the Kefauver hearings and the Japanese Treaty discussions so far as its scope will permit. But this does not alter the fact that an appalling amount of junk comes over both mediums; the films likewise.

The public taste will raise itself—slowly. Those who offer the programs can do a small something to contribute to the elevation by leavening in a little more of the worthwhile, a little less of the trash—and that is about all that can be done. The public wants what it wants and will withdraw its patronage if it doesn't get it. There is such a thing as educating public taste but it has to be done very imperceptibly and very subtly. People shy away from obvious attempts to "uplift" them. They feel that they are quite capable of deciding for themselves what is desirable—for them—and what is not. And our American form of civilization is such that we must not even interfere with "trivilization" so long as it is demanded. They do it in Russia, where anything savoring of Americanism is sternly suppressed—where everything, in fact, is suppressed that is not supposed to be good for the people—which means what is not good for the ruling bureaucracy.

Theosophy—and only Theosophy—can take the low average level of public taste in stride. Because Theosophy alone understands that public taste, like each member of the public, is evolving. And it can be helped—a little—as individuals can be helped, to evolve more quickly. But it cannot be rushed, any more than individual evolution can be rushed—only speeded up a trifle, and it is only a trifle compared to the immensity of achievement still to be attained and the colossal periods of time allotted by nature for attaining it.

So we need not be too mournful about the present whirlwind of Grade B or C or D entertainment. It is in the throes of evolution too, and as human
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THE ASTROLOGICAL BASIS OF SHAKESPEARE

Julius Caesar — Leo (Cont'd)

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

Gaius Julius Caesar, commonly referred to by his second and last name only as few are aware that, like Thomas Woodrow Wilson, he had a seldom used first name, was almost as legendary a figure in Rome as he has become since. Had there been newspapers in those days they undoubtedly would have resorted to their much loved adjective "fabulous" to describe him. His career has scarcely been duplicated before or since. He was a great man, a history maker, a genius—and well he knew it.

The masses revered him, the classes feared him, and not a few of the patrician class hated him and plotted his downfall. Cassius was the ringleader of this group. Brutus—honest Brutus, stupid Brutus—was still on the fence but ripe to be pushed over. But Caesar, with Leo-Aries sticking out all over him, had no fears and much disdain. At the moment he was annoyed about something, as Brutus promptly noted when the godlike Julius re-entered the street with his retinue. Said Brutus:

"Look you, Cassius

The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train:
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being cross'd in conference by some senators."

Calphurnia was Caesar's wife. Quite a man Caesar, to be able to scare his wife! Cassius, eagerly watching the scene but too far away to be able to hear, assured Brutus,

"Casca will tell us what the matter is."

Casca was another leading conspirator, a treacherous individual whom apparently Caesar did not yet suspect as the former was one of those allowed near him. There was someone not far away, however, whom Julius did suspect and he made known his suspicions at first glance in no uncertain terms.

"Antonius" called Caesar imperiously to his close friend Mark Antony.

"Caesar," replied the latter deferentially.

"Let me have men about me that are fat," ordered the Roman dictator, seemingly unaware that he was being funny, "Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights," he continued. Then with a venomous look and menacing gesture at the object of his dislike, he made known his misgiving:

"Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous."
Antony was surprised.

"Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given." (well disposed)

Caesar was not reassured. "Would he were fatter!" he replied doubtfully; then, as if ashamed of his momentary qualms and remembering that he was a near-god, came back strong with "But I fear him not." And with his next breath belied the new boldness:

"Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius."

A good hunch had Julius, but the Aries in him could not admit the possibility of anyone or anything scaring him, even slightly. That Cassius had rung an alarm bell in his brain, however, is plainly evident from the fact that he couldn't drop the subject. A keen observer of men, this Caesar. Had he not been a statesman and a soldier he would have made an excellent psychoanalyst, had Rome possessed such modern conveniences. One would have thought he had spent days studying the complexes and frustrations of the very complex and frustrated Cassius, to judge from the shrewd appraisal of the latter which followed:

"He reads much;

He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no
plays,

As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be mov'd to smile at anything.
Such men as he are never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous."

Not much was left of Cassius that Caesar didn't know, apparently. The above is one of the most acute character summations ever given in as few words. Full of irony and bitter humor as it is, it tears to pieces the nature of a scheming, ambitious human soul.

Again Caesar pulled himself together. Ye gods! This would never do. Antony might think he was afraid of something. He cleared his throat importantly:

"I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what to fear.—for always I am Caesar."

Antony did not utter the Roman equivalent for "Sez you?" but doubtless he thought it. Especially as his exalted friend and boss followed with,

"Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him."
No he wasn't scared of Cassius, Caesar wasn't, at least not very much, or at least so he would have Antony believe.

The latter moved over to Caesar's good ear and they resumed the parade, still talking about Cassius.

(To Be Continued)

REINCARNATION IN THE MOVIES

In the film, "Bannerline," Lionel Barrymore as an aged high school teacher on his deathbed is made to say to his wife "Everything that is born must die and everything that dies must be reborn; so perhaps in a thousand years you'll learn how to knit a pair of socks."

Less impressive, perhaps, than Shri Krishna's stately pronouncement, but conveying the same truth. The great Hindu Avatar, as reported in Bhagavad Gita, put it this way:

"For certain is death for the born,
and certain is birth for the dead; therefore over the inevitable thou shouldst

MATTER PATTERN

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

"Nature is thought immersed in matter."
—A. B. Alcott

The Atheist is certain that all life is made of matter—

That talk of a Divinity is so much idle chatter—

And folks who don't agree, he says, are mad as any hatter.

Their silly views he undertakes with voice or pen to shatter.

The Christian Scientist, however, goes him several better.

There is no matter, he proclaims, she's just a mortal fatter.

She has no standing in your life unless you choose to let her.

She'll discommode you only if you aid her and abet her.

The Orthodox Religionist against them both is bitter.

The devil waits to claim their souls and cook them to a fritter.

And though his fusty views may cause a lot of folks to titter,

Some people still believe in them and listen, all atwitter.

And then there's the Agnostic, says "I haven't time to potter

With things like these. The mystery's tied too tight—I can't unknot her.

One speculates—and reason on its throne begins to totter.

I'm here, that's all I know. Upon this earth I'm just a squatter."

So enter now Theosophy, to all of them rebutter.

Alone it shows some common sense in what it dares to utter.

It has no creed nor doctrines strange with which your mind to clutter.

No dogmas to profess and no long-winded prayers to mutter.

It says that Spirit cannot work without the aid of matter

For use as active instrument its benefits to scatter.

We need them both while we revolve upon this earthly platter.

The twain are indissoluble—and that should end the clatter.

not grieve."

The Barrymore paraphrase, which bears earmarks of having been based on the original, may still in its homely language have been able to stir thought in an occasional moviegoer whose mind might grasp that the humorous tag line was for the millions to laugh at, and the statement itself a profession of faith.

THE ZODIAC IN ALEXANDER POPE

Aquarius

A friend to human race. —The Iliad

STARTING IN APRIL

An Important New Series of Hitherto Unpublished Articles By Marie Russak Hotchener With Henry Hotchener

MRS. MARIE BARNARD RUSSAK HOTCHENER was a leading figure in The Theosophical movement for 39 years; from the time she joined the Society in 1906 to her death in 1945. She was educated at Mills College, Oakland, Calif., and renounced a distinguished operatic career and a Bayreuth engagement to become honorary private secretary of Col. Olcott, co-founder of The Theosophical Society. She accompanied him to Adyar Nov. 7th, 1906 and devotedly cared for all his many interests until his passing Feb. 17th, 1907. Dr. Annie Besant, his successor as President, stated that "she proved herself a very godsend in those days of prolonged suffering." She was Dr. Besant's secretary for years and Deputy for President in 1908. Dr. Besant appointed her International Lecturer in 1909, which office she held for life. In 1916 she married Henry Hotchener.

Mrs. Hotchener was Associate Editor of *The Adyar Theosophist* and Managing Editor of *The Theosophical World*. She was author of many articles in theosophical journals, Editor *The Channel*, and Editor of the magazine *World Theosophy* for three years. ANCIENT WISDOM regards it as a piece of great good fortune to have been able to arrange with Mr. Hotchener for publication of a number of articles and notes by this very great Theosophist (in which Mr. Hotchener collaborated, though he modestly depreciates his own share in their production).

HENRY HOTCHENER is one of the foremost of the older generation of theosophical leaders and workers—and is still as active in the movement as ever. An account of his vibrant personality and something of his impressive background was given in November ANCIENT WISDOM under the title "A Memorable Visit."

The first of the Hotchener articles, HEREDITY AND OCCULTISM will be found in the center column of the first page in April. Readers may look forward to a series full of original thought, basic instruction and practical benefit.

The President of Yale University, which has just celebrated its 250th anniversary, described one of its aims as the discovery and fulfillment of man's ultimate purpose in the universe. A Department of Theosophy could contribute materially to the discovery, and perhaps a mite to the fulfillment.

Asks a correspondent, somewhat atheistically inclined, "Why do you believe in Theosophy instead of one of the countless other attempts to explain life?" That's easy! Because—in our opinion at least—Theosophy is the only one of those "countless" explanations that makes sense.

DO YOU KNOW—

That the teaching of Theosophy in the West has been extremely difficult because of the unpreparedness of the occidental mind for acceptance of profound concepts which have no analogies in Western religion or philosophy?

* * * *

That the human mind is so constituted that its tendency invariably is to reject out of hand any truth heard for the first time if it conflicts with ideas already firmly fixed in the mind?

* * * *

That Reincarnation is one such truth, as it clashes violently with the assurance most people have that they live on earth only once, have never lived before, will never live again?

* * * *

That this "take one life for granted" attitude raises an immediate bar in the mind to the multiple birth teaching, which usually precludes its dispassionate consideration?

* * * *

That among Eastern nations, which take Reincarnation for granted, the same barrier would be raised to the notion that there is only one life?

* * * *

That this undoubtedly accounts in part for the very small number of converts among such nations obtained by missionary effort, as compared with immense number who remain "unconverted?"

* * * *

That the classic example of this is the failure of Bishop Colenso to convert the Zulus about a hundred years ago, the Zulus almost succeeding in converting *him* by their pertinent and logical objections to the Bible narratives and religious doctrines he tried to teach them?

* * * *

That the good Bishop was so profoundly impressed by the questions propounded by these "ignorant savages" that he came home and wrote a book setting forth their objections as his own?

* * * *

That as a result he was tried for heresy and narrowly escaped being unfrocked by his outraged colleagues?

* * * *

That theosophical teachers, lecturers and writers must always keep in mind the inhibitions of their classes, audiences or readers and endeavor to find some common ground between Theosophy and conventional beliefs?

* * * *

That this is not too difficult if simplicity and intelligibility be the aim rather than a display of occult erudition, mysteriousness and wordy but impractical idealism?

* * * *

That mind blocks to acceptance of Reincarnation and other theosophical truths are all artificial, having been set up by early indoctrination and not by nature?

FIT TO BE TIED

A bewildered Marine Corps rookie unable to perform the simple operation of tying his necktie prior to inspection by the Commanding General of the Corps, had the temerity to ask the General to tie it for him when the latter appeared in his living quarters. What is more, the General, good-naturedly declaring that he never could tie a necktie on anyone but himself, requested his aide, a Brigadier General, to do the job.

Not exactly in the military tradition, perhaps, and it is unlikely to start the fad of generals acting as valets to privates, but there is something very wholesome and American in this little episode. Imagine what would happen in Russia to the luckless common soldier in a like instance. Imagine what would have happened in Nazi Germany. But no! Imagination reels at the thought. There would probably have been two fatalities—the soldier at the hands of a firing squad and the General from apoplexy.

There is still democracy in this land, even in the Services, where democracy must of necessity have bounds. But we suspect the young rookie spent a rather unhappy period with his First Sergeant after the inspection was over. A later picture shows him undergoing "tie drill" under the bristling eye of a Staff Sergeant—tying and untying the thing until he learned how. But he is alive and in one piece and, from the newspaper reports, the General's blood-pressure is not up a single millimeter.

Everything happens to everybody sooner or later if there is time enough.
—George Bernard Shaw

Requests are coming in for comments on the outcome of the British election. Sorry, but ANCIENT WISDOM has no British politics either. However, the Editor regards Winston Churchill as incomparably the greatest statesman of modern times—the reincarnation undoubtedly of some mighty world figure of the past.

Strange how some people balk at the notion of "coming back"—not that nature will heed their protests, of course. We have not had an easy life exactly, but we like the idea of returning. There is a lot that is very much worth while on this good old earth, and a lot to be done—such a lot to be done! We want to keep on doing our infinitesimal bit.

MINSTRELSY

A Selection from the Poems of
Patience Worth

Tomorrow

Oh tomorrow, do not bruise me.
I have suffered.
Life is young,
Tomorrow is hope.
Bruise me not, oh Life,
For I am a laborer
Tending the taper of love.

IT MAKES NO SENSE THAT—

The latest scientific theories regarding evolution, survival, original creation or any other natural phenomenon should be accepted without question as true, seeing that such theories constantly change?

* * * *

As scientists of equal repute often differ from one another in their theories, the theory of one should command greater respect than the theory of another, if they are opposed.

* * * *

What applies to scientists should not also apply to religionists, seeing that all religious doctrine must of necessity be theory, and theory, no matter by whom advanced, may later be proved erroneous.

* * * *

Teachers of religion should be allowed to make their own rules of logic or ignore them, as they see fit, and when challenged take refuge in unrealistic statements based on garbled, misunderstood, mistranslated or interpolated passages in the Bible.

* * * *

The slightest attention should be paid to nonsensical threats of after-death punishment made by fanatics who obviously can do nothing whatever about it and are merely trying to frighten the poor soul weak enough to believe them.

* * * *

Healthful and helpful religious teaching should have to be mixed up with doctrinal inventions which never helped anyone, when there is so much that is good and true in the purely moral and spiritual teachings of every religion.

IS REINCARNATION A FACT?

(Continued from Page 89)

mere chance, no justice; lunatic or genius, savage or savant—just haphazard. We will not dwell on that, for immediately you find evidence that convinces you of the probability of survival, that theory has to be abandoned; and when you *know* that others have survived, or that you have lived before, you *know* that physical materialism is just a stupid and crazy illusion.

Consider Shavian Vitalism—that we are energized by an impersonal intelligible Life Force. There is no individual survival of death, but our lives merely contribute to the evolution of a collective soul. Is the idea true? Discover that individuals do in fact survive death, and it is punctured and becomes mere refuse for the mental rubbish box, though if it is enlarged so that collectivity is regarded as a background to individuality, its validity is likely.

Granting that man is a surviving material soul as well as a physically ma-

IT MAKES SENSE THAT—

Scientific facts, on the other hand, cannot be gainsaid and to dispute them in the name of religion, after they have been fully proved, is futile and ridiculous.

* * * *

Scientific theories should at best be accepted provisionally and with an open mind, but not allowed to become ingrained in the mentality so that it closes against later and more plausible theories or even against facts subsequently proved to be true.

* * * *

Religious theories should be subjected to the test of logic, reason and their beneficence or otherwise, and the unfair claim that somehow religion is above such tests and a law unto itself should be ruled out of court.

* * * *

As there are many religions all claiming to be true and some to be the only true, and as there cannot possibly be any reliable test of these claims, one should feel perfectly free to accept whatever religion he feels will best suit his needs—or to reject all of them if such is his desire.

* * * *

One should not fill his mind with morbid absurdities to poison his life, when life itself needs all the energy one can muster to meet its problems and trials rationally, without wasting it on imaginary fears of the hereafter.

* * * *

Those who desire a philosophy that is wholly consistent within itself, that contradicts no scientific fact but is confirmed by many, and that makes no demands for acceptance on authority or on anything other than its inherent reasonableness, should look into Theosophy which meets all of these conditions.

terial body, was the superphysical part of him generated with the physical body, but has a longer life? An everlasting soul with a generative beginning, presents a difficulty. It is hard to conceive of something having a beginning but no end.

Did the superphysical part of us exist before our birth and take up habitation in the generated baby body?

Both these hypotheses have one big difficulty. Whether new souls come from God for each body, or are generated with the body, where do they all go to? There may well be five billion human babies born in the present century—rather a staggering volume of procreation. Mankind has been on the earth for 10,000 centuries according to current calculations of modern scientists, 180,000 centuries according to occult schools; and there are all the thousands of centuries to come. Is a constant stream of trillions of new souls conceivable?

Consider the diversities—primitive

instinctual savages, learned intellectuals, harassed mothers, babes that lived a few hours or days, murderers and saints, prostitutes and loving home builders, lunatics and astute men of affairs, perverts and men of holiness, the filthy and the beautiful, artists, architects and musicians, saboteurs, wreckers and din-makers, the diseased and the healthy, those with empty hearts and lives, and those who are generous and full living—all new souls, all to get their permanent deserts after death, their numbers being continuously added to at the present rate of say 50 million a year, all to be accommodated for evermore in heaven, limbo, hell, or what have you! Does it make sense?

Compare with these the reincarnation hypothesis. The disparity between the primitive and the cultured is revealed as extremes of a process which one has only started and the other nearly finished. The incompleteness of life is completed in the series of many lives. Earth experience is as a school to which we return many times. The various races with their distinctive cultures and religions, and their peculiar problems and difficulties, are the classes. Starting with animal naturalness, we build many personal "I's." "I" follows desire, gets in a mess repeatedly, makes trouble, creates disharmony, becomes confused, fumbles with clumsy inexperience, gains experience out of pain, understanding out of intelligent observation, and love out of sympathy with others in their troubles. Consequences pass over from life to life, action causing its own appropriate reaction in the circumstances and environment of future births. The naturalness of the animal is lost, but a strong individual focus is built up as the "I". Then comes the realization that the "I" is an ephemeral futility a mere device to an end—the end of the upbuilding of a new God-focus; then the work of the sloughing off, dissolving or burning up of the personal "I", leaving in its place a God-world. Animal naturalness has gone, "I" contortion has gone, Divine naturalness results.

Which of the alternatives is more likely? Which rings the bell of validity? Which has the more coherence? Each of us is the judge, ours is the responsibility of finding out which is true if we would live intelligently.

You may say: granted that reincarnation is more comprehensible, that living in our physical world would look a more reasonable sort of business if reincarnation be true, that does not prove it true, and how can we square it with other truths that are scientifically accepted? How, for example, does reincarnation fit in with the facts of heredity?

This can well be taken with two other questions; the influence of environment and early training, and how does reincarnation accord with the facts of astrology, which of course is not recognised by any branch of official

science, but many of us know from our own studies and investigations that it has substance of truth.

If there is reason, upon their own planes, for accepting 4 premises as true in experience:

(1) That there is a reincarnatory process of successive personalities in which traits, weaknesses and faculties are carried over from one birth to another.

(2) That there is a process of heredity by which traits and characteristics are transmitted by bodily heritage.

(3) That parents, teachers, nurses and others by whom a child is powerfully influenced in his earlier years, have a marked formative influence upon traits and character.

(4) That characteristics of personality and propensity can be discerned and deduced by charts which indicate the position of the sun, the moon and the planets in relation to the zodiacal belt of stars at the time of birth:

how do these four kinds of truth gear in with one another?

(To Be Continued)

THE LOGIC OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS

(Continued from Page 89)

awful lot of trouble to make something of us for no reason whatever. And as nature, which is God in action, shows no evidence of purposeless activity in any of her works whose results we can trace, it is highly unlikely that she would, over millions of years, have evolved human beings into a state of complete self-consciousness, some amount of intelligence, even a spiritual sense of sorts, unless in the course of additional millions of years a far more exalted destiny is in store for them.

Purposeless reincarnation would be as devoid of sense as the purposeless living of only one life. Cradle to grave and *finis* would not be more—or less—futile if multiplied a hundred or a thousand times. Almost the first question asked by the inquirer who is able to accept the reincarnational thesis, is, "What is its terminal aim?" It is a sound question and deserves a satisfying answer. There is one. It is not enough to say "Our ultimate perfection." If the inquirer has a sufficiently persistent mind he is likely to follow with, "And then what?" Mere perfection is not enough. We were perfect—the Monads which are our true Selves were perfect—before we started the evolutionary journey. True, they were perfect without experience—the perfection of an infant. We shall be perfect *with* experience. But there is more to it than that.

With experience, long and often repeated, comes wisdom and with wisdom powers unfold—powers that we already possess in embryo but have no conception at present how to use. Wisdom at long last becomes infallibility. Having passed through all possible

types of situation, having learned over countless lives to master every conceivable difficulty, to do the right thing in all circumstances no matter how trying, our primary education—the corporeal human stage—is complete. We have become what might be termed "infant super-humans." Fritz Kunz designates the Adepts as "The Men beyond Mankind." At the stage we are considering we are not yet that. We have not grown into that. "The Babies beyond Mankind" would be more appropriate. But we shall grow into adeptship then, as we are growing up now into the fulness and stature of what God intends for us at the close of this period of our human cycle.

The Path is our immediate goal though in the personality few are aware of it. The Ego knows it, however, and does his best, a very feeble best in the earlier stages, to direct his obstinate personalities to take a little interest in getting there. But the personality, fascinated with the material world and eager to enjoy to the fullest the sense gratifications which only a physical body permits, at first pays little heed to the weak stirrings of the higher self. Material success, affluence, prosperity, power over the destinies of others are the prized treasures to be sought after and experienced. After successions of hardships, privations, much suffering and all the other ills that no life wholly escapes, they are eventually won. In many lives all the physical satisfactions that these things can give are experienced to satiation. There is nothing left that has not been done, no worlds of attainment on the material plane still to conquer. Then the Ego really has the chance for which he has been waiting over the ages.

Surfeited with every kind of worldly achievement and enjoyment, the personality turns his back on all of it and looks toward the true goal of human evolution—perfection in goodness, power, wisdom, and the ability to apply all three to the Cosmic work that awaits those who have transcended the necessity for further evolution at the human level.

Is this logical or is it not? And if it is not, what other goal can evolution possibly have? There are only three ways to balk this question—one, by rejecting the fact of reincarnation entirely; two, by declining to look that far ahead; three, by discovering some better goal. This series is little likely to be acceptable to those in category No. 1. Category No. 2 have not yet developed the true spirit of theosophical inquiry which always looks ahead and is not daunted by magnitude of either time or space. As for Category No. 3, if any reader is in it will he kindly communicate with the writer of this article, giving his aeonian discovery in brief and readable form? We would like to publish it if it really betters the goal which Theosophy teaches that

evolution has in store for us—the goal of Adeptship and later of godhood.

The Path, by whatever name one cares to call it, must be an existing fact—one of the grandest facts in nature for it justifies reincarnation and the whole great system which Theosophy tells us is the purpose of our being here. It is and must be logical if anything in Theosophy is logical. To those who unconsciously insist that their spiritual beliefs be illogical, it will not be acceptable and nor will anything else probably in the magnificently ordered occult philosophy. We take no issue with them for believing what they will, as they certainly have the divine right to do.

But those to whom—in the words of the apostle—God hath given the spirit of a sound mind* must surely desire that existence both here and hereafter shall make sense and have a reasonable purpose behind it rather than the senseless and unreasonable objects invented by ancient theologians. It is to these that theosophical logic will appeal, and to these it is directed.

(To Be Continued)

*II Timothy 1:7.

COMMONPLACE MIRACLES

(Continued from Page 89)

much for psychology in medical ethics, and strong dosages of medical verbosity which usually appear on the bill.

No, it is no longer considered extraordinary to find cures effected by prayer. The remarkable thing is that all healing cannot be accomplished thus, because it should be so done. Consider our friends the Christian Scientists and their work. Again, after eliminating all the cures which can be accounted for by other means, whether the practitioner agrees with us or not, there remains a lusty residuum of cases not to be classified except as psychosomatic cures. Some of them would fall into the classification of miracles were it not for our deference to our physician's feelings upon meeting with such a nasty word. How unscientific! No Greek roots whatever; a common, bare-faced word without a trace of whiskers about it! But those cases arise nevertheless. How is it done?

It is done by the natural use of the powers of God in man, functioning in greater fullness than is customarily observed in our evolving society. We do not lack explanatory literature or doctrine. The most primary Sunday-school lessons set forth that "God is everywhere, and hears everything you say." To which our small fry react for the rest of their lives by setting that yarn aside among the many fairy tales with which adults pester children for reasons undetermined. But the moment we accept a Divine Creator, as by crushing force of logic we must, that moment we have to accept all the implications.

Of necessity, then, God is everywhere, always. He is the Hearer and

**THIS LETTER, WRITTEN CHRISTMAS EVE,
ACCOMPANIED AN ORDER FOR 30 OF THE
BASIC THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS BY**

CHARLES E. LUNTZ

It is from a new reader in New Jersey.

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the Healer, the Father and the Maker of worlds and of suns, of men and animals and little bugs, and of all the living, vibrating atoms of which all those bodies are composed: and still further and more obviously He is every one of the electronic constituents of those atoms. God's Life: Everywhere! Creative Power: Capacity to respond to that Power! The substance in and of which that Power manifests, and Its action of so functioning, depending on the term used in the Triune doctrine: God the Father, the Son or Holy Ghost: First, Second or Third Logos. We have a plethora of terms but little understanding, and it is exactly here that we find the core of our problem.

It is a matter of consciousness and of accepting the facts of nature (which is God in action) in full sequence, beginning at the buddhic plane and source of inspiration, the seat of the Ego who is that part of God-consciousness sent down and invested in the life and nature of man. Creative force in manifestation descends thence to the mental level and we give it recognition for the first time in saying we think. The same

force extends its vibrations on downward through the astral plane and we know it as an emotion, and as it echoes on to still grosser levels of being we discover it anew in the orbital motion of the constituents of the atom, whirling about their centers as planets about the sun, and with proportionately as great interplanetary spaces between them. All is God; matter is God. Then why does it become imperfect?

Exactly because a creator has made it so. Imperfect but evolving man, using his creative function unintelligently, has wrought disharmony in this or in previous lives and that disharmony shows forth as disease or dis-ease. And behold, it was not at all good and we don't like it. But we are the same people who created this trouble and must un-create it, so where do we begin?

The answer is in faith. Creative force acting through the several fields of manifestation, is effective only when the path is unbroken, just as electric power fails when a wire is cut. First the mind accepts the logic of the healing project and sends healing force

down to the physical body through the emotional body, provided that the emotional body (also called the subconscious) accepts and transmits that power-flow. But usually it does not.

Consider the story of Peter who walked on the water only while his faith was complete in the Master's command. The elements were servants to his will, even as the waves quieted when the Lord said to them, "Peace, be still." When Peter saw himself thus, his emotions refused to sustain the shock of unaccustomed experience and rebelled. He sank forthwith.

We see no reason to deny this story although we take our Bible as being largely made up of allegory. It is well enough attested that today certain primitive men walk barefoot, uninjured, over red-hot stones in India and in the Fiji and Phillipine Islands. To command the elements is given to those whose faith is complete: to those who function perfectly in their emotions, be they saints or savages.

Power to walk on water is no more strange than power to walk on fire; and to cure incurable ailments is still less strange a power than either and is one available to every person who will put his emotional life in order and make that function work for him instead of letting it be his master. Faith is the missing ingredient; it is that something new which is yet to be added and it is entirely an emotional quality or deficiency lying below the level of consciousness. Right thought re-creates or restores right emotion and right emotion completes the faulty power circuit.

The End

TRIVILIZATION

(Continued from Page 91)

beings are born over the centuries with bigger and better minds, greater appreciation of what is real wit as against mere slapstick and farce, more desire for enlightenment and less for lazy amusement, the standards of public entertainment will evolve *pari passu*. Who would be satisfied today with the crude films of 1913? When they are shown it is with a view to arousing the audience to mirth over their immaturity as they never fail to do. Perhaps in forty years or much less the recordings of some of our topnotch radio shows, if reproduced, will strike the audiences of that day as even funnier in their "trivilizations."

Observing an intelligent young man laughing heartily at the banalities of a television comedian the writer inquired as to the reason for the hilarity. "It's a good show," the young man protested. "You won't think so, if you should see it twenty years from now," the writer observed. The answer was illuminating: "Maybe not, but let me grow out of it gradually, will you?"

And that is *really* the answer for everyone, and for the race as a whole, to the problem posed by "Trivilization."