

ANCIENT WISDOM

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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INTELLIGENCE IN THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

BY ALFRED ANDERSON

There are many clues pointing to the working of an Intelligence in the vegetable kingdom—in this case pertaining to efforts made to perpetuate the species. One may suppose, by the evidence in the following cases, that there are many more interesting ones to be reported.

Alfalfa, a member of the pea-bean family, but one that lives for a number of years, is one of the principal hay or forage crops of the United States. It is seeded thickly for hay and when the stand is good and conditions of moisture and food are adequate it grows tall and lush, producing quantities of forage, but little seed. Let that stand become thinned out for any reason, and especially if a lack of moisture also exists, and there is an ideal condition for seed production. With a thin stand there is room for more plants and so a necessity for seed. Lack of moisture threatens the life of the plant so, faced with that threat, the plant makes provision for the perpetuation of the species by turning its energies to seed production.

Another year may produce an abundance of moisture to sprout and nurture a new crop of plants and in these offsprings the life of the species may be carried on. It would seem that where the stand is good and moisture sufficient, the evolution is attained best by lush growth and the production of seed is secondary or incidental.

A similar trend, although worked out a little differently, is observed in the Douglas fir—a valuable timber tree of the Western States. A tree that has been maimed and scarred by fire is found to produce seed in quantities far above the average. This has been taken into account by foresters, who in their efforts to select superior seed to use in reforesting burned over or logged-off land, select the best specimens from which to gather seed.

In an effort to get the selected trees to produce seed, they constrict them with steel bands around the trunks—not so severely as to kill the tree, but enough to produce a condition which will cause a heavy seed crop, as in the case of fire.

Here again we have a threat to the life of the plant, for fire scars, destroys the bark and underlying wood, exposing the tree to attacks by fungi and boring insects which may complete

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WHY THE VICARIOUS ATONEMENT?

1. Its Old Testament Basis

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

The voluntary sacrifice of his life by Jesus to insure the salvation of sinners who repent and believe, and of non-sinners (if any) who believe, is a fundamental doctrine of all Christian sects except the Unitarians and Universalists.

The word "atonement," of course, means at-ONE-ment, and if all Theosophists do not know this, it is not for lack of repetition in our books and lectures on the subject. It is a rather clumsy word and it may surprise many to learn that while it appears in the Old Testament forty-four times, the New Testament uses it just once—in Romans V:II, as a translation of the Greek word *katallaghe*. The Revised Version does not even use it here, preferring to translate the word as "reconciliation." We prefer it too. In the Old Testament "atonement" is nearly always associated with bloody animal sacrifices which, however, always possess a symbolical meaning.

It is probable that the symbolical sacrifices of animals as enjoined in the Pentateuch were at first not intended to be carried out literally. The symbolism is so plainly astrological that to an occultist it is obvious that the bullocks (Taurus) rams (Aries) he-goats (Capricorn) turtledoves (Virgo) and other creatures were "covers" for the various defects associated with these signs which had to be "offered up" as a sacrifice. The numbers of the animals to be sacrificed at a given time were also esoteric. The idea that a marching army with wives and children running into the millions and traversing a barren desert for forty years could supply countless beasts and birds for constant slaughter is preposterous.

The esoteric teaching, probably going back to a remote age and long since forgotten by a people grown materialistic and wanting their religion "bloody," was literalized some time during the life of the first Temple. Suspended during the seventy years of exile, the sacrifices were re-established when the Temple was rebuilt and by the time of Jesus apparently were "big business." The money-changers with tables set up in the outer court had excellent pickings, discounting at a high rate the foreign coinage brought in by pilgrims who wanted to buy animals for sacrifice. The account, as given in Matthew

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THOUGHTS ON THEOSOPHY

BY MARIE RUSSAK HOTCHENER
WITH HENRY HOTCHENER

Character-Rebuilding

The fact must be recognized that at the present time a large number of serious minded people are definitely turning their attention to exact methods of character improvement. They are no longer satisfied with accidental betterment. They want practical methods and as scientifically considered as is possible with such elusive elements as the subconscious discloses.

The psychologists are largely to be thanked for this determined effort on the part of people to improve themselves. In the textbooks they have written there is such a volume of astonishing truths, attested by scientific experiments, that to read them and compare them with the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom is to find oneself alarmed at one's ignorance. Also filled with fear that unless the personality is better understood and brought under greater control it will continue to remain master of an unworthy nature and disclosing shortcomings of character to which one has formerly been more or less indifferent.

This indifference to moral standards by large numbers of young people, (and old, too), aided by this powerful speeding up by cosmic vibrations of the emotionalism of the times, has given greater license to depravity, and serious minded people are beginning to awaken to the necessity for understanding what all the present excesses mean. In trying to understand it they naturally turn to those who are devoting their lives to the study of human characteristics, and, in the light of what they have scientifically demonstrated, seek that which can have a practical bearing on behavioristic phenomena, and which can be applied to character building without interfering with the busy life and serious responsibilities that are the lot of most people.

In character building it is not safe to tear down and try to remake one's habits unless there is first a superstructure, a protecting scaffolding, that must sustain the efforts made, so long as weaknesses and indetermination remain in us. The will to succeed must be as strong as the will to live. This will to succeed must rest on the firm conviction that what we have set out to do is founded on exact knowledge, and that it is ourselves alone that must accomplish our regeneration. We will

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RESIGNING FROM THE SOCIETY IS NOT THE ANSWER

Quite often we receive a letter from a reader who tells us he likes our way of presenting Theosophy, and then goes on to say "I resigned from the Society years ago because I disapproved of the policies and methods being pursued." In such a case we always reply with a letter pointing out that this is not the way to get the policies or methods changed. It may be that a private member can do little to counter things of which he may disapprove, but it is quite certain that the little he can do is far greater than the nothing he can do if he resigns.

We have frequently expressed disapproval of what we consider to be hidebound, antiquated and ineffective ways of disseminating our great philosophy. We have thereby from time to time incurred official displeasure, which troubled us not at all, but we have never dreamed of resigning our membership. Also our particular methods, as put into practice in St. Louis Lodge, received the unqualified approval of two of the greatest T. S. officials who ever lived, Annie Besant and George S. Arundale, the latter even going so far in the *Adyar Theosophist*, after a visit to St. Louis Lodge, as to suggest that other Lodges send delegates here to see how the Lodge activities are operated. (A suggestion, by the way, which was studiously ignored in official quarters of the National Society).

It is pleasant to record that in recent months we have placed this point of view as to resigning before two people who were formerly valuable members of the Society—one a Lodge officer. Both resigned many years ago because they were out of harmony with national policies. Both have re-joined the Society, and in our opinion, to the Society's great benefit. The first letter from the most recent member to re-join was dated Jan. 7th, 1952, and reads in part as follows:

"Allow me to congratulate you on a most interesting December number of ANCIENT WISDOM. I could mention several articles in it of more than average appeal, but the one which took me most was your first editorial, 'Are We Going To Do Anything About It?'

You review a subject and ask a question which has bothered me for a long time. I myself belonged to the T.S. 20 years ago, I don't today. Reason—I felt I could advance myself through personal contacts and the proper reading better out of it than within its policies. You suggest in your article that perhaps the Society hasn't had the proper vision, 'has had a mission which it has not done.'

I hope your question brings forth good response. I feel your criticism most constructive and I sincerely hope from it an answer may be found."

Relevant excerpts from the Editor's reply follow:

"I wish that those who, like yourself, are completely dissatisfied with the managing policies of the Section, would remain in it or would re-join if no longer members.

Without the help that those who dissent can give—and they cannot do it if they drop out of the Society—the work of those of us who are trying to bring about a change is enormously hampered . . . Perhaps you would reconsider your position and decide to renew your membership."

The reader's reply, dated Jan. 19th, was most gratifying:

"Although when I first wrote you on this subject I had no idea of re-joining the Society at the present time, I get the point you bring out in your letter . . . I might do more good being a member than not being one. Therefore if you would like me to come into the St. Louis Lodge under the very commendable program conducted by ANCIENT WISDOM, I will be very happy to do so. You may consider this letter my application and send me whatever papers you wish for me to sign."

We probably have hundreds of readers who were formerly T. S. members and resigned or dropped out for exactly the same reasons. We appeal to them to come back and give the Society the benefit of their constructive ideas for its betterment. ANCIENT WISDOM will be delighted to hear from any or all of them. Resigning is not the answer—staying in and helping to support what is effective and to alter or eliminate what is ineffective is the answer. That is our own policy and we have reason to believe that it is going to pay off.

ULTERIOR MOTIVE OF A ROAD-CROSSING CHICKEN

No, we have not suddenly become flippant nor are we aping the newspaper comic strips. Consideration of the question posed by the above caption may, however, furnish a clue to some failures both in public and private life.

The answer to the facetious question, "Why does a chicken cross the road?" is the equally facetious, "To get to the other side." But a further question immediately poses itself: Why should the chicken want to get to the other side, often risking a violent and

messy death *en route*? Are the worms more luscious, the sprinklings of corn more plentiful, the prospect more pleasing to poultry vision than on the opposite shore? Hardly. For no sooner does the agitated bird, with many clucks and t-krks, reach the other side than she is quite likely to start hot-foot again for the original point of departure.

There must, therefore, be a deeper reason, if there is a reason at all, for this quaint longing of *gallina domestica* to be, at any given moment, where she is not, so long as it is an antipodal point with a road in between. It cannot be for the sake of the exercise, for this could as well be taken in a less hazardous area where the peril to life and limb is absent. It is not for the purpose of visiting relatives or engaging in chit-chat among friends, for nearly always there is no other member of the species on the other side, or if there is there seems to be no particular warmth of greeting or even mutual recognition. There can therefore be only one motive in the mind, or whatever does duty for a mind, of our peregrinating fowl, and that is to relieve the monotony—to do something, anything, rather than continue to be bored on one side of the road. So, as chickens do not smoke, drink, chew gum, play cards or watch television, after the possibilities of the barnyard and company of other hens, etc., have been exhausted, there is only one thing left to do—to cross the road. And when that has been successfully accomplished, only one thing more—to cross back again.

A somewhat useless procedure one must admit, but no doubt in line with the present evolutionary level of the creature. Perhaps, after awhile, even the Group Soul gets a little disgusted at these profitless maneuvers, which may account for the large number of chickens that meet untimely ends on the highway—an end, however, that probably anticipates by a few months only, the fate which karma seems to ordain for most of our edible younger brethren.

A hen, being a hen, may be excused for her purposeless conduct, but there are human beings whose oddities of behavior are not dissimilar. They cannot be due to individualization through the "hen ray," as we are assured by occult investigators that we do not come up in evolution through the bird kingdom, which is reserved for the primary education of those who will eventually graduate as angels. Be that as it may, there are those who go through motions almost as purposeless as those of our hen friend crossing the road, apparently under the delusion that being busy and getting nowhere is filling a very important role in the cosmos. We all know people who wear themselves—and others—out writing unnecessary letters, making needless and lengthy telephone calls, taking up the time of those with important tasks

to complete, with frothy conversation—all about as essential as the wanderlust of the road-crossing chicken.

To a working Theosophist, who usually has other activities and interests also, this irresponsible time-wasting is amazing, when it is not annoying. There is so much to be done, and so little time in a working day to do it in! Of course there must be recreation, amusement, relaxation, an occasional change of scenery, but these things fit in. They are not taken haphazard with no regard for those who have work to do and who cannot at the moment cooperate in the carefree mood temporarily possible because earned by earlier industry.

Activity must be purposeful if it is to count. All of us in business are familiar with the correspondent who, if a little research is needed to answer a letter intelligently, fluffs it off with a miasma of words that convey nothing except that he is too lazy to do his job properly. All of us know the "I'll-see-what-can-be-done" boy, who sees that nothing is done. Everyone is familiar with "Mr. I'll-look-into-it," who never looks anywhere, or with "Miss Doing-all-we-can," who doesn't stir a finger. And those who are that way in business are likely to carry their easy-going methods into private life and be among the well-know time-wasters, fritterers and general non-productive nuisances with whom the world abounds.

We hesitate to narrow these thoughts down further to the field in which we are most interested—Theosophy—and especially as there are so many devoted and laborious toilers who carry on their shoulders the enormous burden of keeping the lamp of Theosophy alight in an indifferent or hostile community. But even in the theosophical field, it seems to us, there is much purposeless and ineffective work at both high and lower levels.

It is not enough—we have said it before and we'll say it again—to talk Theosophy, lecture on it, write about it, teach it. All this must be done *intelligently*. And this means that thought, real thought, new thought, original thought, constructive thought must go into it. That's a lot of trouble. It is much easier to follow the old beaten paths—much easier to read something out of Besant or Leadbeater without comment, or with comments so obvious and uninspired they might as well not have been made. "I have no talent for original thought," some class leaders say. Oh yes you have. Everyone has. But first one must start thinking—deliberately refusing to repeat the thoughts of others, or at least striving to repeat them in an original way. It is surprising what can be done along this line—surprising how really constructive thought will come with just a little encouragement. Put it into plain language. Don't strain after emotionalism, odd methods of expression or artificial stringing of words together because they sound imposing. There has

been too much—far too much—of that in the T.S. and while a few members, who perhaps do not have the background to recognize the difference between effective and ineffective phrasing, may have been carried away, the majority are on to it or rapidly getting on to it.

There is no value in either written or spoken language if it is ambiguous, irrelevant, oracular or florid, without a clean-cut message one can get one's teeth into. Exhortations to this, that or the other noble conduct, translucent thought or out-of-this-world behavior is, from the practical standpoint, needed about as much as the chicken needs a compass to cross the road. Everyone knows all this and the very words, sincerely uttered as they may be, ring hollow, except to the few so constituted that they love what Jesus described as "vain repetitions."

We are speaking plainly and we hope we have not offended anyone, but we feel strongly on this point. With the greatest Truths in the world to give out, shall we waste our time and energies in declaiming solemn generalities? If we do, we shall get no further, be assured, than our mythical chicken, and having crossed to one side of the road we shall find that the only thing for us to do is to cross back again . . . unaccompanied.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

Alfred Schindler Elected Board Chairman

St. Louis Lodge has had only one Chairman of the Board during its many years of existence—the late Mr. M. B. Hudson. When the present President, Charles E. Luntz, was first elected he declined to serve unless a continuation of the wise counsels and long experience of the retiring President, Mr. Hudson, were assured by creation of the office of Board Chairman, with Mr. Hudson acting in that capacity. This was done, and Mr. Hudson served as the first and only holder of the office until his death eleven years later.

The office was then left unfilled, out of respect for the memory of the very great Theosophist for whom it was created, and it remained vacant for fifteen years. At the May business meeting, however, Mr. Luntz proposed that it be reconstituted and that Mr. Alfred Schindler, a long-time member of outstanding distinction be elected to fill it. The motion was seconded by the newly elected Vice-President, Mr. C. H. Stierman and was unanimously carried.

Mr. Schindler has had a brilliant career both in business and government. Former General Sales Manager of one of the largest industries of its kind in America, he was called to Washington during World War II, becoming first a consultant in the building of defense plants and later U. S. Undersecretary of Commerce. Recently

he was Chairman of the Board of the National Association of Salesmanagers, with a membership of ten thousand of the country's leading sales executives, handling two million salesmen. He is an active participant in Lodge affairs, widely read and deeply versed in Theosophy, in which he is especially interested in its relation to the troubled affairs of today's chaotic world.

The Lodge is most fortunate in his accession to the highest office within its gift and looks forward to an era of extended usefulness to the theosophical movement and to the community. The Lodge President, Charles E. Luntz, is especially happy that Mr. Schindler has consented to occupy this post which can be made of so much value to the work. Mr. Schindler is a friend of many years' standing and as Mr. Luntz remarked in his nominating speech, "We speak the same theosophical language . . . with a little different accent, perhaps—but the same."

From an inquirer: "What kind of Theosophy does ANCIENT WISDOM teach—the Theosophy of the Masters or of Blavatsky or of Besant and Leadbeater?"

The Theosophy ANCIENT WISDOM tries to teach is the Theosophy of God—as ANCIENT WISDOM understands it. And it was the Theosophy of God—as they understood it—that the Masters and Blavatsky and Besant and Leadbeater taught. Our debt to them is beyond payment but such small payment as is in the power of any Theosophist can best be paid by pondering their teachings and endeavoring to understand them, apply them, disseminate them and, in whatever minute way he can, elucidate them further through his own thought, application, and experience.

Those who gave them so urged—and if they be unquestioningly accepted as unerring revelations which it is blasphemy to question, challenge or examine, those who gave them are thereby not exalted but repudiated, and their high purpose in giving out the teachings nullified. Theosophical "true believers," if there are such, are shirking their duty if they "accept unquestioningly" what anyone tells them. "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good."

Acknowledgement

We like to acknowledge with a personal card any donation of over \$1.00. An envelope postmarked Berwyn, Illinois, has been received enclosing \$5.00 with no name and address. This is to extend our grateful thanks to the kindly contributor.

Address Wanted

If T. A. Burton of Evansville, Indiana, who submitted an article on the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, entitled "Is It Really Evidence?" will furnish his street address, the Editor will write him regarding the publication of his article.

THE OCCULT INTERPRETATION OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Muzzy Muezzin

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

XXIV

Alike for those who for TO-DAY
prepare,

And those who offer a TO-MORROW
stare,

A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness
cries

"Fools! your Reward is neither Here
nor There!"

This is gleefully interpreted by the atheists who have for so long taken the name—and philosophy—of Omar in vain, as necessarily proclaiming that there is no heaven (no reward THERE), though they are a little hazy on why Omar should also declare that there is no reward HERE. Also they conveniently overlook that it is not Omar who promulgates this dismal doctrine but a Muezzin—a crier—from the Tower of Darkness.

We may ask our unbelieving friends first why anyone should put faith in a pronouncement that comes from the Tower of Darkness, meaning of course from the Dark Forces. Ignoring the very rude mode of address—"Fools!"—which is not quite the way either to make friends or influence people, the very location makes any statement coming from there suspect. Towers of Darkness are not customarily the abiding place of Truth—quite the opposite in fact, and certainly the opposite in occult symbology.

Our dismal Muezzin proclaims himself a liar by his very statement. Whether one concedes that a reward exists "There" or not, there is most assuredly a reward—there are many rewards—"Here." We may not know anything about the "There," but we certainly have the evidence of our own senses as to what often happens "Here." Those who "for To-day prepare" and "those who after a To-morrow stare" do frequently reap the benefit of their preparation by a considerable measure of happiness. The dark Muezzin has proved nothing. Like so many modern Muezzins of similar ilk, he has made unproved assertions, one of which can be disproved immediately by citing facts.

Why then did Omar put in this quatrain? For the same reason that so many curious passages which superficially seem to mean exactly the opposite of what they really do mean, are found in all scriptures. It is just the way of the occult teacher. A topsyturvy way, it may seem to us, but it is his way, and we may take it or leave it as we see fit.

Omar, as a matter of fact, was branding the statement as a falsehood by attributing it to the source he did. If he had wanted to assure all and sundry that it was true, would he not have put the words—perhaps minus the epithet—in the mouth of a Muezzin from the

Tower of Light? Also, from the literal standpoint, what has happened to that wonderful reward, a Jug of Wine, for those with prescience enough to lay it in? According to previous stanzas and according to many that are to come, Wine is the *summum bonum* of human happiness, the richest sort of reward for anyone with a sufficiently strong constitution to keep drinking it constantly without quite killing himself. And the gloomy Muezzin—no doubt a total abstainer—says there is no reward! He must be the Fool.

As has been repeatedly emphasized in this series, symbolical esoteric writings are not to be skimmed over as one might glance at the headlines of a newspaper or lazily dip into a novel. Every word must be conned, reflected upon and linked up with its appropriate antitype (that which the symbol represents). Modern journalists may dash off flimsy articles in language precise enough for the meanest intellect to comprehend—ancient esotericists never. The latter had no deadline to meet. They were not paid by the word. Their lives were not busy and they had plenty of time to meditate on the profound truths they were to entrust to the written word. Plenty of time, also, to swathe those truths in the mysterious mantle of occult symbolism—mysterious to the world at large but crystal clear to those who, after long years of testing, had been taught to understand it and to use it.

The scholarly orientalists and others devoted to study of the letter that killeth and insensible to the spirit that giveth life, may obtusely insist that there is no occult science of symbology. The overwhelming evidence assembled in the *Secret Doctrine* alone, renders their position completely untenable. Ancient spiritual teachers—the real article, not the fakes, of whom there were as many then as now—did not think as we do, write as we do, teach as we do. To them their knowledge of spiritual truths was ineffably sacred—something which for ages was communicated orally, not in writing, to the selected few. Later a carefully devised code of ingenious symbols based (1) on natural phenomena (2) on astrology (3) on numerology (4) on names, became the universal written language of the esotericist. His numbers were scanty and scattered throughout the globe, but the universality of the symbols employed, as the *Secret Doctrine* conclusively shows, goes to prove that somehow—perhaps on higher planes—occultists, no matter where situated, were in contact with one another and their symbology traced to the same source.

There were other methods of disguise besides the four classes of symbol. One was to state the exact opposite of what was really meant, as Omar does in this stanza, but to put the words in the mouth of someone identified as a purveyor of falsehood—in the present instance our Muezzin of the dark
(Continued on Page 39)

DO YOU KNOW?—

That Theosophy has no illusions as to the lack of perfection exhibited in a few, some, or many respects by the great figures of history and by its own leaders?

* * * *

That it does not try to deify its founders nor those who later carried on the work?

* * * *

That, on the contrary, in such volumes as *Old Diary Leaves* by one of the founders, Col. H. S. Olcott, the shortcomings of his co-worker, H. P. Blavatsky are fully, and often humorously, recounted?

* * * *

That her great qualities of mind and soul are also given recognition, but without the least attempt to minimize her impetuous and often difficult disposition?

* * * *

That Col. Olcott does not spare himself in the recital and shows almost a naive humility in recording his own mighty share in establishing and developing of the Society in face of overwhelming obstacles and harassments?

* * * *

That this policy was continued by Col. Olcott's successor, Annie Besant, whose "Autobiography" most faithfully chronicles what she considered to be her weaknesses and faults?

* * * *

That this refusal to set themselves on a pedestal by laying pretensions to impossible goodness appeals greatly to thinking people, who are nauseated by absurd claims of righteousness and infallibility made by the founders and heads of some of the sectarian religions?

* * * *

That the Beings in charge of evolution are said to fasten their gaze only on the good in those they select for "key posts" in the scheme, using this and ignoring the deficiencies?

* * * *

That this is the true explanation of the curious fact that every "chosen" Biblical character (except Jesus) possessed glaring faults, this partiality of the Lord for shady individuals being intended, for those with eyes to see, to emphasize the very great truth thus exemplified?

* * * *

That there is therefore hope for everyone, no matter how full of error and weakness he may feel himself to be, so long as he possesses some good qualities and is striving to attain more?

* * * *

That there is no hope for anyone short of an Adpet (until he changes his thought) who labors under the delusion that he cannot err and is already perfected?

* * * *

That if this were really so, he would have no business in incarnation at all but would be an interloper, occupying a physical body that someone else could be using to much better advantage?

IT MAKES NO SENSE THAT—

The consciousness in man should survive death, and the consciousness in the animal should not.

* * * *

Animal consciousness, which in its lower forms is very dim, should follow the after death route of human consciousness which has millions or billions of years more of evolution behind it.

* * * *

Even in the microbe or amoeba the life should not have a future that will lift it out of these primitive conditions into a fuller consciousness.

* * * *

The lowliest consciousness should be dissipated when the form it inhabits wears out or is killed, seeing that the form has given it a cohesiveness which, in nature's orderly way of doing things, can only betoken survival and not annihilation.

* * * *

The inchoate life should be possessed of an individual soul as with humanity, seeing that it is far from having reached the stage where individuality can express itself.

* * * *

The Group Soul should not, like everything else in nature, have its chance to improve, evolve and progress, and Theosophy explains clearly and beautifully how this comes about.

OBSCURE TERMS THAT THEOSOPHISTS SHOULD KNOW

1. Apologetics

Apologetics is the term applied to a branch of Theology which concerns itself with argumentative defense of Christianity. It may seem strange to a Theosophist, accustomed to state spiritual facts as his philosophy gives him to understand them but never to try to force them on anyone or defend their existence, that a religion should require defense. There is a wide gulf, however, between Theology and Theosophy. Apologetics are said to be based on reason, conscience, experience, authority or a combination of them.

Actually it would seem that authority has played by far the greater part, at least in the old-line sects. "The Church says . . ." is enough for most Roman Catholics—"The Bible says . . ." for fundamentalist Protestants.

The Theosophist, disdaining the term Apologetics, would most certainly affirm that his own beliefs are based on reason and conscience and may, at least in part, be confirmed by experience if

IT MAKES SENSE THAT—

As all consciousness is that of God, none of it, in whatever form it may temporarily manifest, can fail to survive.

* * * *

As the lowest forms of life are known to be virtually immortal on the physical plane, dividing and subdividing into new forms, astral and devachanic experience is evidently not necessary at these rudimentary levels.

* * * *

As the evolution of the incipient consciousness proceeds, and reproduction by fission is replaced by methods which no longer involve the immortality of the form, some sort of after-death existence for the consciousness is necessary before it takes possession of a new form.

* * * *

Survival of any type of life that has inhabited a form should be in a state conditioned by that form and prior forms it has used, and not diffused as mere elementary life that has never had experience in physical form.

* * * *

The "Group Soul" teaching of Theosophy, whereby one entity with permanent home on the lowest subdivision of the mental plane ensouls great numbers of its own species, being practically the god of the species, is logical, probable and (in the experience of clairvoyant investigators) true.

* * * *

The Group Soul which informs each of its many physical representatives, is the storehouse of their collective experiences which it translates into instincts is the only rational explanation of the "mystery" of instinct for which heredity alone is insufficient to account.

one is sufficiently advanced in spiritual evolution to be the subject of that type of super-normal experience. Authority he will have none of, though he will respectfully examine the "revelations" of those he has reason to believe are qualified to make them. But they are in no way binding on him. Theosophy for the individual Theosophist must stand or fall by its logic, probability, beneficent results and—to put it bluntly—by the fact that it adds up and makes sense out of the business of living. That is the test and it is a test which many Theosophists are not satisfied that conventional religion can pass.

Apologetics, therefore, has no place in Theosophy, but it is desirable that Theosophists should know what the term means when they see it in literature or hear it from the lecture platform.

* * * *

2. Epistemology

This formidable looking term was coined by a Nineteenth Century Scottish metaphysician named Ferrier, from two Greek words meaning knowledge and theory or account. It is a

branch of philosophy that investigates how man comes to know what little he does know—also how much more he can possibly know before his capacity for absorbing knowledge ceases.

Professor Ferrier makes the point, if it is a point, that there can only be ignorance if the thing of which one is ignorant is capable of being known. Just why this obvious fact should be important is not quite clear to the layman, nor how it could be applied, seeing that our greatest ignorance is of what facts there still are to know, and what facts we cannot ever hope to know. Ferrier does declare the necessity of the existence of an Absolute Mind that knows all things and that is infinite and everlasting. With this the Theosophist will heartily agree, at the same time wondering why this aeonic fact, implicit in all the great religions both Eastern and Western, should require so much demonstration.

Theosophy postulates limits for knowledge far beyond anything that probably entered the head of Mr. Ferrier. Its Epistemology covers realms of whose existence he was not even aware—also methods of cognition, the possibility of which he doubtless would not have admitted. It is a word we might make our own if there were any good reason for doing so, but as it would probably scare off many seekers, it is suggested that it be regarded as of mere academic interest, and seldom, if ever, employed.

* * * *

3. Pragmatism

This is a word we really like because of the idea for which it stands—that the only real value of a philosophy is how much good it will do if practically applied. This, perhaps, is stating it crudely and may annoy a few of our erudite brethren who prefer complexity to simplicity. But the very essence of Pragmatism is practicality, and of what practical use is it to state a definition in sixty-four dollar language when ten-cent words will much better convey the idea?

ANCIENT WISDOM has constantly urged and begged for Pragmatic Theosophy, though we have never before called it that. Again and again we have stressed the enormous value of theosophical concepts when applied to the daily affairs of life—to the thinking, the speaking, the doing, the planning to the whole attitude of the living person. So we hail Pragmatism as a useful, if uncommon term. Oddly enough the adjective pragmatic also means meddling or officious, sometimes opinionated or conceited. It must therefore be employed with caution if at all. It is better left to the lecturer or writer—but it is a term which could rightly be applied in its best sense, to the highly practical system of thought which is Theosophy.

* * * *

4. Hedonism

This is from the Greek word *hedonikos*, pleasurable. It is the doctrine that

THOUGHTS ON THEOSOPHY

(Continued from Page 33)

be assisted by these textbooks, but even in using them we are led to realize that within ourselves there are the divine laws of Nature and only *they* are sure; and that they will unflinchingly answer to well intentioned intelligent efforts. How can one rely on them if he does not understand their processes within and without himself? The textbooks help us to understand.

People so often complain, and to a certain extent rightly so, that the textbooks of the psychologists are so full of technicalities and differences of opinion, so replete with difficult terms that the reader becomes confused. And the opinion is widespread that in order to re-educate the habitual tendencies of the personality, one must go through a long period of study and treatment under a specialist. There is a certain amount of truth in their contentions. A large number of people are helped by suggestion, persuasion, vocational psychology, psychoanalysis, and clinics of scientific practitioners—often the same who have issued helpful books relating most gratifying results.

But to those who are too occupied to give the time to such technical methods it is suggested to read carefully what facts of behavioristic phenomena these technicians have discovered, what they have disclosed as factors inhibitory to progress in character building, in diseases, in phobias, etc., and then what success they have had in the re-educative suggestions they employ.

These facts cannot fail to impress profoundly the reader and disclose to his mind many pertinent truths of his own nature. Next, if he will add to this knowledge that which enters into the more abstruse teachings of Theosophy concerning the spiritual nature of man, the powers of mind in meditation, suggestion, states of consciousness, and other mental practices, he will have a real foundation for character-building that is practical and useful.

The technical knowledge of the physical body, its cerebo-spinal and sympathetic nervous systems, the endocrine systems, the subconscious processes and their effect upon character, reveal what the autonomic system is, how it works, and how it must be re-educated in changing one's habits. How can progress be other than haphazard when one is trying to control and re-educate something of which he knows little or nothing?

(To Be Continued)

Oddity

"How odd of God to choose the Jews!
But not so odd as those who choose
The Jewish God—and spurn the
Jews."

Quoted by Nedra Ruder, Headquarters Worker, at a talk to members of St. Louis Lodge.

NON-THEOSOPHICAL VIEWS
ON REINCARNATION

Why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest?

—Lessing.

* * * *

Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him: It is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of nothing and that his present birth is first entry into life.—Schopenhauer.

* * * *

God generates beings, and sends them back over and over again till they return to Him.

—The Koran.

* * * *

Mother of Pity, hear my prayer
That in the endless round of birth
No more may break my heart on
earth.

—Epitaph on the Tomb of a
Chinese Woman.

(Translated by L. C. Byng)

* * * *

I am this spirit, compounded of the
memories of my endless incarnations.

—Jack London.

OBSCURE TERMS

(Continued from Page 37)

pleasure or happiness is the chief good and if interpreted merely in a physical light is very dangerous. However, the Hedonists themselves, or at least the more rational of them, counseled the pursuit of the "higher" pleasures which were less likely to bring later pain. They were careful to explain that no moral considerations entered into this choice—only prudential ones. Modern Hedonists are "moral" for similar reasons—to keep out of trouble.

The philosophy, if that is what it is, was first formulated by one Aristippus who lived some twenty two centuries ago. He might be termed a "whole hog" Hedonist as his concept of pleasure was purely physical and he carried it out as literally as his large means permitted. It does not seem to have done him too much damage—physically—as he lived to be seventy-nine. His daughter and his grandson carried on his philosophical school after his death in the tradition established by the old gentleman himself, but later Hedonists, observing the shallowness of the philosophy and its often painful consequences, modified it to signify the pleasures associated with art, music, literature, the drama and other satisfactions of the higher life.

If these satisfactions are extended to the spiritual realm, then, in a sense, Theosophists may be termed Hedonists

but the term doesn't fit very well, eschewing, as it does, all moral considerations. Modern Hedonists are not very different from their ancient brothers—perhaps indeed are reincarnations of them. They may be found not once in awhile but night after night in the taverns and night clubs—and places much worse—throwing away their money and their health. Aristippus would probably have approved of them but the later Hedonists would have warned them—and for no moral reasons—that they were playing the fool.

* * * *

Next month: *Humanism, Nominalism, Positivism, Eclecticism.*

INTELLIGENCE IN THE
VEGETABLE KINGDOM

(Continued from Page 33)

what the fire started. Also, where there is fire, it is apt to consume all shrubbery and much of the grass, leaving the ground fallow and providing a fine seed-bed for the coming crop of seed, and thus more fir trees.

It is a common saying, one borne out by observation, that when a shrub or plant blooms out of season it is going to die. This is true in the case of the yucca of the arid west. It would seem that the plant knows that its days are numbered so bends all its energies to putting forth blossoms and seed, though out of season, to the end that they may take root and grow, and new yuccas replace the perishing parent.

The actions of the above plants seem to be explainable in no other way than that of an Intelligence, though instinctive, if one may term it that, whereby nature through the group soul seeks to provide for the survival of her children.

There is another case in which nature has provided an ingenious method of fighting fire and thus protecting one of her species. Although this has nothing to do with seed, it shows ingenuity and intelligence.

Examine a piece of yellow pine that has the bark on it and you will notice that though the bark may be from a half inch to several inches in thickness, it is composed of shallow flakes of irregular shape, each separated from its fellows by a cleavage tissue. The shape and size of those flakes resemble the pieces in a picture puzzle that is to be put together. This bark is thickest at the ground and for some feet of the trunk where the fire hazard is the greatest. There is no life in this bark but it is dry and rather corky and covers the true bark beneath. Here is the amazing fire-fighting factor; under each flake of bark is a tiny pocket of volatile pitch. When high heat is applied to the bark it vaporizes this pitch, causing it to expand and literally blow the overlaying bits of flaming bark off the tree—in many cases for quite a distance. In this way the tree repels fire by throwing it, together

with those pieces of bark, far enough from the tree that they may harmlessly burn out.

It must have served its purpose down through the ages or the bark would not be so arranged today.

Thus is presented a little more evidence in support of theosophic teaching; a fragment that can and is being multiplied in every field where man takes the trouble to probe the reason why things are as they are. Materialists, of course, will remain unconvinced for although they may admit the facts and concede that the inferences are probably true, they will still maintain that it is purely accidental that plants react as they do, and deny that Intelligence was responsible for the little patch of pitch being placed where it is and acting as it does. But to some of us it is one more piece of evidence of the working of an All-Wise, adaptable, ingenious nature, which is God in action and "which doeth all things well."

(The End)

OMAR KHAYYAM

(Continued from Page 36)

tower. Still another was to construct a narrative so completely asinine that the uninitiated could make neither head nor tail of it and would have to dismiss it as a "Divine Mystery." The Bible is full of such "mysteries," which are in no way mysterious to those in possession of the key.

Sometimes one class of symbol is used in the same account, other times more than one. Not seldom all four of them appear, together with the "confusions" described in the foregoing paragraph. The series on Bible Occultism, now in its seventeenth year of publication in ANCIENT WISDOM, gives numerous examples. The present Omar Khayyam articles also furnish many.

Admittedly this method is strange to the West, though the very lifeblood of the deeper Eastern religious philosophies. Yet we talk largely in symbol ourselves, though until this is pointed out few people recognize the fact. Consider a few of our commonplace symbols: Up to one's ears in work: have a finger in the pie; feeling one's oats; a stick-in-the-mud; cut out for the job; getting a bear by the tail; barking up the wrong tree; in deep water; cut the ground from under one's feet; kick up a dust; born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and thousands of others—all symbols which would certainly have been as esoteric to the old-time symbol users as are their symbols to most of us.

If any of your acquaintances who happen to be both Omar Khayyam fans and also materialists should twit you with the "fact," which is not a fact, that the Rubai'vat declares that there is no reward either here or there, may we suggest that you reply, "Yes, but have you noticed who said it?"

(To Be Continued)

WHY THE VICARIOUS ATONEMENT?

(Continued from Page 33)

and Mark, relates that Jesus, incensed at this traffic, overturned the tables and chased out the concessionaires who operated them. It was a fine gesture, but doubtless they were all back at the old stand the next morning.

The esotericism of the Mosaic laws had been degraded to a gory literalism against which not only Jesus but the Old Testament prophets sternly inveighed. "I spoke not unto your fathers," declared Jeremiah (VII:21) "nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice."

Which would seem to show that there is something wrong with a literal reading of the Bible for the Lord most certainly *did* command them in the day they left Egypt concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices, or at least within a very short time thereafter. Almost immediately following the ignominious drowning of the Pharaoh and his host the Lord started his instructions for the Tabernacle, one of the principal features of which (Exodus XXVII) was an elaborately constructed altar with ashpans, shovels, basins, fleshhooks and firepans (Verse 3). Chapter XXIX is full of instructions for killing and dismembering the bullocks, rams and lambs that were to be offered to the Lord as sin offerings, wave offerings, heave offerings and peace offerings. The Book of Leviticus consists largely of sacrificial ritual and the Book of Numbers carries detailed instructions regarding meat offerings, drink offerings, continual burnt offerings and "sacrifices made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

It was a bloody business but the people loved it. An easy way of getting rid of sin, to offer up a bullock or a ram or a he-goat! And "sin" was just as much of an obsession with the Bible characters as with their modern counterparts who eagerly seek for some way to free themselves, not perhaps so much from sin as from what they imagine to be its consequences. The easier the way, of course, the more attractive it becomes, and in scriptural days it consisted of bringing a not very expensive animal to a priest, who butchered it, burned up the not-so-good parts and ate the rest, according to a carefully prescribed ritual. The Lord was satisfied—so presumably was the priest, who was provided with several filling meals gratis—and the erstwhile sinner, now warrantably pure, went his way rejoicing. Everybody, in fact, was happy except the cremated bullock or ram or he-goat who had done nothing to deserve the shabby fate visited on him.

The prophets, however, showed a notable lack of enthusiasm for this

simplified method of whitewashing guilt. One after another of them denounced both the method and those who practiced it. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" God inquires through the mouth of Isaiah. "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of rams or of he-goats." (I:11)

"They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings and eat it," be-moaned Hosea, "but the Lord accepteth them not." And herdman Amos, also speaking in the name of God, angrily repudiates the whole business, including the special days when the sacrifices were at wholesale instead of retail: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not inhale your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts."

That seems to be clear enough and to put blood sacrifices where they belong, which is definitely not in the worship of the Lord. But religious ideas ingrained for millenia die slowly. The animal sacrifices of the Bible were a milder substitute for the human sacrifices of the surrounding non-Hebrew peoples and of the tribes displaced by the conquering Israelites. And as even the most ardent vegetarian would admit that it is better to eat animal flesh than to be a cannibal, so it may have been necessary to "wean" a primitive populace accustomed to seeing human beings killed and offered up to monster gods, by allowing them to burn up beasts and birds instead of people.

So a highly symbolical code embracing a great deal of esoteric truth cast into an astrological mold, was permitted to be used as a literal system of animal offerings for various sins and deficiencies. The enlightened prophets saw both the folly and danger of continuing such an obnoxious system indefinitely and thundered against it—with small result, however, for after the return from the Exile the sacrificial ritual was re-established on a more gigantic scale than ever. By the time of Jesus it had developed into a huge commercialized activity which drew his wrathful denunciation of the money-changers and dove sellers.

This is the Old Testament groundwork for the sacrificial atonement which became a cardinal tenet of the Christian religion. The blood of Jesus once and for all did away with the need for the shedding of the blood of uncounted animals. But it should be observed that the Bible's greatest prophets declared long before the Coming of Christ that no such need existed. There have been numerous reasons advanced for this supreme sacrifice of "the only begotten Son of God," and the reasons have changed with the centuries and with the sects. The next installment will deal with these.

(To Be Continued)

SEQUEL TO THE ORDER FOR 30 OF THE BASIC
MANUALS REPORTED IN MARCH ANCIENT WISDOM —
AN ORDER FOR 200

★ ★ ★ ★

A reader in Portland, Oregon, writes us under date of February 21st, as follows:

"Enclosed is my check for \$100.00 for which please purchase for me 200 copies of your Three Basic Manuals.

But these are NOT to be sent to me but are instead to remain in your possession to be distributed free, as occasion may arise from time to time, to those who you have learned are sincere in their search for the Truth so graphically expressed by your 'Ardent Desirer' from New Jersey in the current issue of ANCIENT WISDOM I have just received."

With gratitude we have segregated at St. Louis Lodge rooms 67 each of

BACK TO EARTH (Reincarnation In Modern Dress)
UNFINISHED BUSINESS (The Why And How Of Karma)
MIND MAGIC (Mechanics Of Creative Thought)

These are being carefully given by the Editor to inquirers or others who he feels are genuinely interested and will respond favorably to their contents.

A grand gesture by a reader* who has helped our work generously on many occasions. Our grateful thanks to him and a further acknowledgment to the New Jersey reader whose initial order of 30 multiplied itself more than six times by inspiring this additional gift.

*We regret to report that since this announcement was prepared our generous supporter in Portland has passed on.

TERMINOLOGY OR NATURAL ERROR?

From *Eirenicon* Easter 1952:

"ANCIENT WISDOM (December, 1951) says: It makes no sense that anyone should give credence to the constantly reiterated statements of the dogmatic Blavatskyites that the writings of Besant and Leadbeater, her devoted and well loved pupils, conflicted with or contradicted any of her fundamental teachings. If this means 'untested credence' we agree, but if it means we must reject the possibility of divergence and not examine the facts to find out for ourselves, then we disagree."

ANCIENT WISDOM accepts the amendment but we point out that in the parallel column we wrote: "It makes sense that the truth of the matter should be arrived at by study both of the original teachings and of the later additions and clarifications . . ."

Mr. Redfern then points out an apparent conflict between the earlier teaching of another Eastern philosophic school that there is only one Bodhisattva. He also refers to incompatibility of the usage of the term *Pratyeka Buddha* by Leadbeater with the Buddhist understanding of the same term.

We suggest two explanations: (1) That the terminology employed may have meant something different to the earlier teachers than to the later teach-

er, as theosophical nomenclature was in a state of utter chaos during the Mahatma-Blavatsky period. (2) That in spite of Leadbeater's profound theosophical knowledge, coupled with an exalted clairvoyant vision, the possibility of error in investigating the orders and nature of Beings of such lofty altitude must have been very great, and he claimed no infallibility.

We might also point out that we referred to conflicts in *fundamental teachings*. It may be that some Theosophists would consider information regarding Bodhisattvas and *Pratyeka Buddhas* as fundamental, as they have the right to do. From our point of view, however, we would not class this very recondite phase of occultism as fundamental, as it can at best be academic knowledge to most Theosophists. (The same would apply to the celebrated Mars-Mercury controversy). We had in mind rather the more basic teachings which would be of practical effect in the formulation of a livable philosophy. But we accept the word "untested," as suggested by *Eirenicon*, with good grace. It clarifies the meaning of what we wished to express.

THE ZODIAC IN "QUOTES"

Cancer

No mood can be maintained quite unaltered through the course of hours.

—Thomas Mann

FACTUAL FANTASY

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

"Oh would," the youth romantic sighed,
"that I had lived of yore,
And rescued maidens in distress and
shed my foemen's gore!

Oh would I'd fought in Normandy and
loved in Old Madrid!"

"Don't grieve," said the Theosophist, "It's
probable you did."

"I wish in some heroic age," declared the
ardent lady,

"That I'd been wooed by handsome
knight in castle gardens shady;
A lovesick gentleman, who from my side
would never stir!"

"The odds are heavy," snapped the
bored occultist, "that you were."

"I sometimes feel," the old man said,
"I've been on earth before.

Things first time seen, folks met just once
seem often to restore
Some broken link in memory's chain that
traces back afar.

Perhaps I'm a repeater here."—The
mystic smiled, "You are!"

"My life has been a failure," cried the
vagrant, heavy-hearted,

"For all that makes a life worth while,
from me has long departed.

Ah, if I could come here again, some
purpose to fulfill!"

The T. S. member quick replied, "It's
certain that you will."

"I don't think I've accomplished much,"
the homely woman quavered.

"I could have done so many things had
I but been well-favored.

Might doing this time what I can, next
time set matters right?"

The esotericist looked pleased: "Without
a doubt it might!"

And you, Kind Reader, if you live in
future or in past,

Or if the pleasant present seems too
wonderful to last,

Or if it seems so bad that it has shaken
your morale,

Your highest good is yet to come—and
be assured it shall.

MINSTRELSY

A Selection From The Poems of
Patience Worth

Akasha

The day is granite.
I have felt its
Hard, crass touch.
My hand hath bled
At the lift of it . . .
But I know that it holdeth
The mute record
Of all the yesterdays.
I love granite
For the record of all time
Is sealed within it.
It is the script of living
And I am an inheritor thereto.