

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY BY POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS, INC.

Subscription (6 issues)
\$2.50; foreign \$3.00

P. O. Box 6507 — San Diego, California 92106

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Per Copy 50c

RINGS-PASS-NOT

In theosophical philosophy, in the deeps of its cosmogony, we come upon the picture of the Ring-Pass-Not, and find it helps explain and clarify for the student the structure, the anatomy, and, more important, the consciousness-side of the Universes. The beings of this Earth are earth-bound. The greater beings explore the vaster spheres. And one does not leave one sphere and enter another until it is in the order of Nature to do so, that is until the inner consciousness, awakened and attuned to the greater dimension, permits this.

There are thus forbidden bounds in universal Nature. Forbidden by whom or what? By the Law, by the very habit and behavior of the beings or essences filling those regions, a universally imposed natural Law. The beasts cannot enter the human kingdom. Why? Because unprepared, as yet lacking self-consciousness, the awakened mind. The human cannot trespass into the divine kingdom because as yet unevolved in those areas of consciousness fitting them to be at home there. The divine beings themselves are forbidden entry beyond the metes and bounds of their own greatly expanded consciousness. All this we can in general understand; and we say, Ah yes, but that is a study of cosmogony — and are inclined to leave it at that.

But let us remind ourselves that "everything in Nature has to be judged by analogy" (H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 116 fnt). We all have our individual rings-pass-not, boundaries of ability, of character, in the intellectual and emotional and moral field; and early in life, as a rule, we succumb to those limitations, alas even become comfortable in them, settled in them. And how little these human rings-pass-not change in a single lifetime! The ambitious remain ambitious; the selfish selfish, the greedy greedy, the weak weak. We fail to fling away that which limits and binds. And when that happens life, real life, ends. The bouyant spirit has fled, the will, the daring to advance has gone.

H.P.B. (S.D. I, 130-1) says we "may cross the 'circle of the Pass-Not' . . .". But adds in mystical language: "only on the day 'Be-With-Us', that day when man merges thereby into the One Essence to become not only one 'with Us' (the manifested universal lives which are 'ONE' LIFE), but that very life itself."

That is the eventual goal, far far distant, the final "Pass-Not" which only Time and the great evolutionary processes can conquer. But what of today's steps toward that horizon? In *Fountain-Source of Occultism* (p.255) G. de P. puts it appealingly: ". . . the Ring-Pass-Not does not mean so much any particular cosmic plane, but rather the entity's ability, beyond which he cannot as yet pass." And again: ". . . a man can reach inward, going 'upward' step by step, climbing as his spiritual force and power wax greater and more subtil, until he reaches beyond his normal faculties, and steps beyond the 'Ring-Pass-Not', as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky calls it in her *Secret Doctrine*. Where and what is this 'Ring-Pass-Not'? It is,

at any period of man's consciousness, the utmost reach that his spirit can attain . . . *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* (p.12).

And so we come to thought of our own theosophical work: Are there not rings-pass-not here that can be transcended? Alone each Society, each Group, each individual, can answer this. Have we tried for that 'utmost reach'? Great steps forward have been taken in the last half century. The Movement as a whole has been enriched by minds more alert to basic theosophical issues; perspective in many areas is clearer; inter-theosophical understanding wiser and more generous. But more can be done, and this inner growth can continue more surely only if we hold ever firm to Principle; hold undeviatingly to the philosophy of the Founders and those who have faithfully followed them, and find in this the inspiration for the daily task. And then, one is tempted to say, quoting words of W.Q.J. (in our Meditation for this *Eclectic's* issue): let the rest go, holding to harmony, sacrifice, devotion, and remembering too, as H.P.B. admonished in her Messages to the American Conventions, that differences of Opinion, within reason, are yet a healthy sign from which we can learn and grow.

Thus each individual becomes a Center, a vibrant force radiating the higher qualities of his nature. Inwardly we press beyond old rings-not-pass nearer to that Infinite which is our own heart-of-being (part of the very essence of THAT); and outwardly we become more efficient workers in a Cause that ever needs its supporters, unwavering and alert.

—W.E.S

"THE OPEN END"

HELEN TODD

Thousands of viewers must have watched with interest the recent television series, "The Long Search," which introduced to us groups of people in all parts of the world and of various faiths, who were gathered in worship. The scenes were colorful, and some of them were quite moving. And one could not but feel that this universal recognition of a Supreme Power to which they gave homage could be a factor uniting all members of the human family, evincing a growing acceptance of the right of all people to worship in their own way.

Inevitably, accompanying the actual ceremonials, there were discussions with the interviewer regarding the various creeds and dogmas, fixed and obligatory, in many religious groups; dogmas that have crystallized around people's feelings of veneration. This is where the divisive element exists, fostering a whole family of negative reactions which are just the opposite of the "brotherly love" enjoined by their "Savior."

One could not help but notice the one clergyman, after a discussion of the particular creeds of his church, who said quietly and earnestly: "But I believe in the Open End." His words were like a shaft of light streaming through a crack in a wall!

The question then comes naturally to mind: What then

characterizes the Theosophical philosophy and its promulgation when we say: "We have no creeds and dogmas"? And we would reply: "This does not mean that 'anything goes.'" What it does mean is that in the vast field of Wisdom where treasures have been gathered down the ages by qualified Seers, the student has the opportunity and responsibility to take what he can understand: to love it and live by it. And this applies to all of us, whether we are beginners or students of many years. The field is so vast that in our present life we absorb but a modicum of what there is to learn. The limitations: Thus far and no farther, simply indicate the limitations of our maturity. And it is not so much that limits are *imposed* on us, but that we ourselves have built up restrictions through our own ignorance, or lack of power to comprehend more.

In the end, it is a matter of becoming. The "End" is always open.

Dr. de Purucker emphasizes this in words from Vol. III of his *Dialogs*, p.440:

"... Companions, it is always wise to check yourself when you say: 'I know that; I have studied that; I have got it.' You are bound to find that what you have got is but an entrance into a chamber of knowledge out of which you may look through translucent windows into still larger vistas of wonder; and that this chamber of knowledge possesses doors, one of entrance and one of exit through which you will pass into still more wonderful habitations."

WHAT KARMA IS NOT!

ELSIE BENJAMIN

Reprinted from C.F.L. Bulletin, No. 400., March 1980 (Worthing, England)

While typing the duplimats for the Feb. Bul. No. 399, we felt the need to issue a word of warning about falling into the error that: Agreed that everything that happens to us is karmic and has been brought upon us by ourselves — and this is where the error creeps in — there is nothing we can do about it, we 'must grin and bear it'. *This is not true.* There is *always* 'something we can do about it'. Karma — and in this instance we are talking about mis-called punitive karma — is Nature's endeavor to help us restore harmony where we have upset it. It is: (a) a chance for us to pay our karmic debt; (b) it always presents us with some lesson to be learned, some task to be performed, thus intelligently working through and paying that debt.

This is easily seen when we have broken Nature's laws as regards physical health. There are right and wrong ways of ameliorating or curing the consequent illness or disease (if it can be cured). But never should we look upon it negatively as 'There's nothing I can do about it, it's my karma!' We do not think the matter is stated correctly: [Feb. Bul.] "as pain is a part of one's karma, as much pain should be endured as necessary." It could be a misplaced or swollen muscle pressing on a nerve. According to a homeopathic physician: "It has been said that pain is a prayer of a nerve for relief." Taking pain-killing drugs is not the only remedy; in fact it is no remedy. It is not only on the physical plane of course that we meet our karma. There are different levels of consciousness on which to act in meeting karmic lessons.

About animals and karma, a further question posed in the Feb. Bul.: HPB has a note in her BCW VI 236-37 titled *KARMA*, in which she says the error often committed is to mistake the general law of cause and effect for the law of

merit and demerit. She points out that karma implies moral responsibility. "Neither have animals [small] children, idiots or the insane moral responsibility... The law of Karma is a moral law, and where no moral responsibility exists, there can be no application of the law of Karma; but the law of cause and effect applies to all departments of nature."

Thus in discussing pain or illness in animals we must not consider the question on the same level as we do for self-conscious humans. True, if *we* mistreat animals, we have to make karmic recompense to them at some time.

[Then follow paragraphs on "What is Karma?" For those the reader is referred to *CFL Bulletin*, Feb. 1980, Worthing, England. — EDS.]

AND WE QUOTE

The Greatest Conceit of Our Age

The refusal to admit in the whole Solar system of an other reasonable and intellectual beings on the human plane than ourselves, is the greatest conceit of our age. All that science has a right to affirm, is that there are no invisible Intelligences living under the same conditions as we do. It cannot deny point-blank the possibility of there being worlds within worlds, under totally different conditions to those that constitute the nature of our world; nor can it deny that there may be a certain limited communication between some of those worlds and our own.

— H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 133

The Tao of Physics

I am suggesting that the implications of modern physics go far beyond technology; that the way — or *Tao* — of physics can be a way to spiritual knowledge and self-realization.

— Fritjof Capra

One Religion

I do not find that the age or country makes the least difference; no, nor the language the actors spoke, nor the religion they professed... I see that sensible men and conscientious men all over the world were of one religion.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Preacher*

Find Out For Yourself

If I had to explain what Theosophy is, I could of course discuss various theosophical doctrines, as far as I have understood them myself. Instead of this, however, I feel more and more inclined to answer: "If you *really* want to know, you have to find out yourself!" It may seem that with this evasive answer we are beating about the bush, but I am convinced that — of all possible answers — this is one of the most direct ones, at least when the word 'really' is emphasized. Who else should do it?

You could of course object and ask: "How about our theosophical teachers; are they superfluous?" Of course not. The necessity of their work is beyond any doubt and therefore we will not go into the subject here. I would only like to point out how encouraging it is to realize that from time to time Teachers appear among mankind. I believe, however, that their work does not consist of the forcing upon us of compelling instructions and of drawing up teachings which are formulated once for all. It is always the inferior gods that come with compulsion and dogmas. A real Teacher will

always appeal to something within ourselves. In physical science this would simply be considered as a matter of resonance.

— Arien Smit, *Theosophia*, Spring 1980

Porous to the Soul's Recollections

Memory of a prior life is not needed to prove that we passed through that existence, nor is the fact of not remembering a good objection. We forget the greater part of the occurrences of the years and days of this life, but no one would say for that reason we did not go through these years. They were lived, and we retain but little of the details in the brain, but the entire effect of them on the character is kept and made a part of ourselves. The whole mass of detail of a life is preserved in the inner man to be one day fully brought back to the conscious memory in some other life when we are perfected. And even now, imperfect as we are and little as we know, the experiments in hypnotism show that all the smallest details are registered in what is for the present known as the subconscious mind. The Theosophical doctrine is that not a single one of these happenings is forgotten in fact, and at the end of life when the eyes are closed and those about say we are dead every thought and circumstance of life flash vividly into and across the mind . . .

By living according to the dictates of the soul the brain may at least be made porous to the soul's recollections; if the contrary sort of a life is led, then more and more will clouds obscure that reminiscence. But as the brain had no part in the life last lived, it is in general unable to remember. And this is a wise law, for we should be very miserable if the deeds and scenes of our former lives were not hidden from our view until by discipline we become able to bear a knowledge of them.

— W.Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p.108

Something Within Understands

Fire — altar flames, yule logs, pillars of fire, burning brands and bushes, bonfires, and round towers whose lambent flame illumines men's souls — played a prominent part in the religions of Judea, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome as well as at the Irish Mystery-center of Tara, at Kildare where Brigit and her *inghean au dagha* (daughters of the flame) tended the undying fire and performed rites comparable, it is believed, to those practiced by the virgin priestesses of the Mysteries of Vesta. Undoubtedly the holy flame they enkindled, by concentrating with a "brazen lens" the rays of the sun onto pieces of wood, and from which they lit all of the sacred fires of Ireland, had a power far higher and more symbolic than we understand. Perhaps, this purest of elements was to them, as it has been with mystics of every land, the visible symbol of the divine which, dwelling within every substance, can ultimately transmute base material into spiritual "gold."

The inextinguishable fire of culture and truth that "shone in Kildare's holy fane, and burn'd through long ages of darkness and storm," continues to burn in many an Irish tale. It is carried by them to people the world over, so that every now and then someone hearing feels its warmth and rejoices. He may not know why, but no matter, something within him at that magical moment understands.

— Eloise Hart, "Brigit of Ireland," *Sunrise*, April 1 1980

A SENSE OF REVERENCE IN OUR STUDY

[*Word-Wisdom in the Esoteric Philosophy*, a collection of early class lectures given by Dr. G. de Purucker at the Theosophical Headquarters at Point Loma, is now off the press.* The following are the opening words of the 7th lecture, given on January 5, 1914. The lecture continued with "the study of Jesus the man and Jesus the type-figure, taking up the Jewish historical or semi-historical records of the Syrian sage, and toughing lightly upon the Mohammedan teachings regarding him. — EDS.]

It seems to me that when we are present together here, in a sense we are on holy ground. In ancient days, when the subjects which we are now studying were taken up, there was observed, as we said in opening this series of studies, an attitude of reverence and devotion not only towards the higher beings in nature, which were called gods or spirits, as the occasion may be, but also by the students towards each other, a sense of reverence towards our very selves, as being incarnations of divine beings, sleeping gods, gods asleep in the flesh, for according to Oriental methods of study the students assembled with a mind filled with thankfulness and a species of joy, by putting themselves in the proper state of mind, come nearer to the beings from whom we draw our higher principles.

In ancient days all initiations were held in the temples or groves† or, in the northern countries, under the spreading boughs of some majestic oak; or they might have been held as sometimes in India, for instance, under the sky, the roof of the world, as it was expressed. They saw in that a symbol of the encompassing life, and themselves types or symbols of the hierarchy of beings which move things in nature. And so we, in our way, according to the methods of this century and according to the evolution or rather according to the status of evolution which we have, approach these majestic studies, or at least we should do so, with the same reverence for them and for each other. And these studies do not mean only the Theosophical studies strictly speaking, but also the different religious philosophies of the earth, which contain or enshrine the aspirations of those who have gone before us, who are or rather have been, ourselves; and in studying them we come with the thoughts which we thought and the aspirations which we had, and I dare say that there is no religion and no religious philosophy and no science which in itself could be unfamiliar to us, to our higher natures. Memory, as we shall see later, is the fountain of recollection or remembrance of the things stored in our higher natures. So therefore, in taking up a study apparently, as it may seem to some, so untheosophical as the one we studied last week, we really are studying a branch of the activities of the human mind, and we get back into the ideas and ideals which brought about the fabric which is called Christianity now.

**Word-Wisdom in the Esoteric Philosophy* by G. de Purucker, Point Loma Publications, Inc. paper, 160 pp. \$5.95

†Groves in Hebrew is AShR, *asher*, [See Zohar (*Wizards Bookshelf*, 1979) p.211] meaning happy or blessed. See S.D. references thereon. — J.D.

SIGNS OF THE CYCLE

The lead article "Signs of the Cycle" in the April 1980 issue of *Theosophy* (U.L.T., Los Angeles), discusses the Three Objects of the Theosophical Movement in the light of the history of the last hundred years. The whole article is worthy of careful study, but we limit ourselves here to quoting only two paragraphs relating to the Second Object — EDS.

For evidence of benefits derived from work done in behalf of the Second Object — the study of religions, sciences, and philosophies — H.P.B. spoke of the reviving respect for Sanskrit literature in India, due to the inspiration found in Theosophical teachings and conceptions, and of the "taste for Aryan philosophy" which was spreading throughout the world. It was the work of Theosophists, H.P.B. suggested, which animated this current of interest, and in the century since it has grown into a flooding tide. While the popular expressions of Eastern religion may not excite much enthusiasm among today's students of *The Secret Doctrine*, the fact remains that behind the superficial drama of exotic show, costume, and chanting, the mind of the West is opening to the philosophical profundities of Indian thought, while its themes and terms are appearing more and more in contemporary essays on religion and philosophy. New translations of the *Gîtâ* appear, the *Mahâbhârata* and the *Râmâyana* are available in shortened versions in English, and Western psychology pays tribute to the Eastern thought by adopting various of its concepts. Actually, the *leaven* of Theosophical influence is everywhere in evidence, and this is surely the result of the vitality in the thinking of students of Theosophy, which, because of its content, exerts a more than ordinary effect.

Today there are scholars who, regardless of affiliation, reveal an orientation plainly harmonious with the Theosophical enterprise — such writers as Frances Yates and Kathleen Raines in England, and Theodore Roszak, Jacob Needleman, and Huston Smith in the United States. Many more who similarly qualify in some measure have been named in 'Lookout' during recent years. The current Platonic revival should also be noted, marked by the frequency with which modern essayists return to Plato to establish a sound basis for understanding present-day problems. It seems no exaggeration to say that the serious thinkers of the modern world are turning toward philosophy and metaphysics as the foundation for both the theory and the practice of the future. Among such leaders, Materialism has had its day and no longer dictates the terms of inquiry. The Theosophical Movement has played a substantial if unostentatious part in this great change . . .

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READER'S NOTEBOOK

En Route

As I sat at my table in the cafeteria this morning and sipped my very good coffee, I looked around at the interesting faces, feeling as if I were on a railway journey and these were my fellow travelers.

One who has traveled much must be impressed with the different ways in which people adjust themselves to circumstances. The seasoned traveler accepts; the inexperienced kicks against the pricks. The philosopher, if the spread provided is not to his liking, draws from within and butters his bread with wisdom, while the kicker (be it within or without) tastes of the bitterness of maladjustment and consequent disharmony. We all know the blustery, self-important person who takes all the officials of the road to task, be they present or absent, from the president downwards, for whatever goes wrong. Be it delay in the dining-car service or delay in the schedule, there he goes fretting and fuming and necessarily overcoloring the day for those around him: the landscape with its unfolding pictures of beauty is so much blotch of color and conveys nothing of its peace; the day drags by while the inner volcano consumes him and parches those unfortunate enough to be his companions or within the radius of his lava-like projectiles of thought. They suffer a part of what he suffers, and at the end of the day are bespread with the acrid ashes of the upheaval.

But our serene friend who knows that life is not all 'beer and skittles' takes what comes and reads his philosophy into each occurrence. Poor coffee and hard-cooked eggs at breakfast incline him to weigh the essentials against the non-essentials and so top off an unacceptable breakfast with good digestion. The delay in schedule, which no amount of protest could change, gives him added opportunity to revolve that problem in his mind that so acutely needs right thought before right action can be taken. His day is spent in creative thought evoked from the higher attributes of the mind. The panorama of nature that flows by, of trees and meadows and streams, or perhaps the golden desert rimmed with mountains of mystic blue, speak to him as mighty music speaks to the soul. In such a thought-stimulus his imagination is kindled, is alight, is aflame, and as he sleeps it plays its true part in leaping across and forming the bridge between the mind and the soul.

Morning comes, and with it a better understanding of the perplexing questions that had plagued him before. The traveler who consciously directs his journeying is now calm and happy, and from his inner strength there flows strength to others, and thus he constantly adds to the sum total of good.

It would be well, and perhaps it would be the part of wisdom, if we as Travelers through Life would take note of our mental and spiritual baggage. There inevitably comes a time when we are forced to make a true declaration of what we carry to the Customs-Officers of another country than this. Are we traveling light? Have we put wings to our heels? Or are we weighted down with hates and fears and ignoble desire of mere comforts? Just what have we packed away in our hearts? Is it harmful, or is it something of real help to our fellow-man?

— Ethel Green Small

WHY STUDY THEOSOPHY?

VIRGINIA ROSS

Life is a constant challenge. Each day is a learning experience that causes us to grow, and the natural trend is upwards.

When we seriously begin to care about the direction our lives are taking and no longer wish to be tossed and thrown about on the stormy sea of our emotions, we seek a definite path or pattern which, if followed more consciously, controls our destiny.

We see that there are changes to be made, but that we must develop the right vision and judgment to know where to start and what can be done. But to what do we relate this inner search? Has there ever been a clear and unchanging foundation in our life of real wisdom and moral strength?

The benefits of a good education are many. Perhaps the most basic one is learning to help ourselves. This in itself is reason enough to study. Then, when the fire of Mind is kindled, deeper questions arise — about ourselves, and Nature and the Universe.

This is what I have found from a study of Theosophy in our group which meets weekly and has done so for several years. I have found that a sincere heart and an eager intellect attract opportunities for spiritual growth and that the source of enlightenment is found in the Ancient Wisdom, Theosophy. For Theosophy is said to be “the formulation in human language of the nature, structure, origin, destiny and operations of the Kosmic Universe and the multitudes of beings which infill it.” Theosophy, also, “is not a new religion, but is as old as Truth itself; it is the inner life of every religion.” It is for everyone who has ever been inspired to do a kind deed or to think a noble thought. With the help of Theosophy they have the key to understand many of life’s unanswered questions.

For me it has become the anchorage and strength helping me to see Truth, to approach life boldly, and to accept my responsibilities happily. It has helped me face life’s hardships with understanding of their purpose. It has brought appreciation of my relationship to all that is visible and invisible in life. The reward is peace. It comes in obedience to Nature’s one law, Harmony.

— [Virginia Ross is a member of the Point Loma Theosophical group in Chicago, Illinois]

BOOK REVIEWS

Sûrya Siddhânta, A Textbook of Hindu Astronomy, translated by Rev. Ebenezer Burgess and William Dwight Whitney; San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf; 1978; cloth \$17.50

The *Sûrya-Siddhânta*, called by H.P. Blavatsky “the oldest astronomical work in the whole world,” is one of the approximately twenty important reprints in the Secret Doctrine Reference Series published by Wizards Bookshelf. It is a must for anyone serious about following up the hints given in *The Secret Doctrine* on chronology, cycles, astrology, and so on. As an instance of its utility, remember how T. Subba Row showed that the date of the inscription discovered by Gen. Cunningham confirmed the date of Buddha’s death

stated by Buddhist writers rather than disproved it as declared by the General. He did this by pointing out that there is more than one kind of year, each somewhat different in length; and, by making calculations with the kind of year in use at the time and place in question, showed complete agreement between Buddhist tradition and said inscription.

It is data from the *Sûrya-Siddhânta* that Subba Row used, which gives not only four kinds of year, but four kinds of month and three kinds of day. Out of fourteen chapters (containing exactly 500 verses) it has three on eclipses alone, and also gives information on the yugas and on the important sixty-year Jupiter cycle. This edition has extensive notes which give much supplementary material including very useful tabulations on the twenty-eight lunar asterisms.

“*Sûrya-Siddhânta*” is of course a Sanskrit title, the present translation having been made from that language last century. “*Sûrya*” means Sun, and refers to the tradition given in the first few verses that the author, after great austerities, received this information directly from the Sun. “*Siddhânta*” here refers to a treatise on one of the three main divisions of Hindu astrological science, the closest to what we call astronomy, but containing much more (such as cosmogony). The other two divisions are horoscopy and natural astrology (which latter includes most everything). The author, called Asura-maya, is said to have received this work more than two million years ago! This would have made him an Atlantean. H.P. Blavatsky repeats this tradition in *The Secret Doctrine* saying that he was the greatest astronomer of Atlantis.

The importance of this book has always been acknowledged by the Hindus. It is one of the five *Siddhântas* summarized by Varâha Mihira in his classic, the *Pañchasiddhântikâ*, written in the sixth century A.D. There it is given more space than the other four; and a comparison of that summary with its present form shows very little change.

There is another feature of this, as well as other Hindu astrological texts, which is worth our attention. In the Sanskrit the numbers are not stated directly, as “three-hundred, seventy-nine,” but are given in reverse sequence using many word symbols from mythology and philosophy, as “*sirâ-nâga-agni*” (*sirâ*, the nine main veins in Hindu medical works; *nâga*, the seven serpents of wisdom; *agni*, the three kinds of fire) = 973 = 379. This is an ingenious built-in safeguard (which we miss in English translations). In the original it is not possible to comprehend these texts without a thorough knowledge of Hindu philosophy, giving the keys to number symbolism employed. So if you know the philosophy well enough to read them, and then misuse the astronomical knowledge so gained, you can’t say you didn’t know better!

— DAVID REIGLE

What is Theosophy? A General View of Occult Doctrine, by Charles J. Ryan; Point Loma Publications, Inc., San Diego, 83 pp. paper, \$2.00

The book under review is number one of a series of twelve theosophical manuals dealing with the Ancient Wisdom in its fundamentals. As its title suggests, it presents a general picture — an outline of the overall theosophic teachings — as the editors state in the Preface. Considering its size, consisting of eighty-three small pages and sixteen chapters, it is commendable that the author has managed to introduce the

undreamt of previously. But to do this requires a subject of six of the more detailed succeeding books in the series, as well as short chapters on such differing subjects as Psychology and Theosophy, The Masters of Wisdom, Compassion and Peace, and Theosophy and Mythology.

The author quotes H.P. Blavatsky, who took a commanding part in the establishment of the theosophical movement, as saying: "Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions." He is at pains to bring out, in his definitions of the meaning of Theosophy, the outer and inner aspects in each case — Dr. Gottfried de Purucker's "vast causal realms behind the outer Nature which our senses know . . . for these inner and causal realms are the inner Heart of Things."

The point is made from the beginning that religion, philosophy and science are a unity: "The mistake of the modern age is to separate the field of knowledge into divisions." Theosophy does not create a division between the speculations of philosophy and the practical conduct of life, but rather shows that a conscious attempt to apply the universal laws in Nature in daily life brings about a better understanding of these laws.

Bare outlines though these manuals are, they yet include statements which act as a direct and extremely well-informed spur to the student to pursue his studies along lines which he may not have discovered in his own reading or more advanced theosophical literature. Dr. Ryan gives an ennobling lead, particularly in his description of the Masters, as "the efflorescence of their age," and in his emphasis on "the ideal to which all true aspirants to a holy life should look."

— Bridget Paget in *The American Theosophist*

ECHOES OF THE ORIENT — VOLUMES 1 AND 2

A few of the challenging topics in these writings of William Q. Judge: Volume 2, now off the press: Meditation, Concentration, Will: The Sheaths of the Soul; The Adepts in America in 1776; Mesmerism; Astrology Verified; Thought Transference or Mind-Reading; Chiromancy and Palmistry; Cycles and Cyclic Law; Theosophy in the Christian Bible. —The Section "Faces of Friends" gives life sketches written by Judge himself and pictures of some of the more prominent members of the Movement of those early days.

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MEDITATIONS — 18

Be what you love. Strive after what you find beautiful and high, and let the rest go. Harmony, sacrifice, devotion: take these for keynotes; express them every where and in the highest possible way.

— William Q. Judge

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Handbook on Reincarnation

This handbook is a supplemental work on Reincarnation now being widely used in class courses in colleges and universities. Written in conjunction with the authors of *Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery* (universally accepted as the standard work on the subject), it contains (in Book I) papers presented at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons: "Reincarnation and 'The Child and Death'," "Reincarnation in the Classroom, Problems and Suggestions"; "Juvenile Crime and its Relationship to Concepts of Death." It also has an interview on reincarnation with Ian Stevenson, M.D., Carlson Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia Medical School, and lectures on the subject given at a conference in England under the auspices of Sir George Trevelyan's Wrekin Trust.

Important teacher aids are contained in Book II, being Questions Frequently Asked on Reincarnation and Source Material where Answers may be Found. Here are some of the 38 questions asked, each followed by full reference material: The word 'Reincarnation,' from its derivation, obviously means that human beings when they die are supposed to be reborn in another body. *But what is it that is to be reborn?* — If body and brain are destroyed at death, what could possibly be left to think with and to preserve individuality? — Are cases involving hypnotic age regression reliable evidence? — Is there any danger involved to the one hypnotized? — Why is Karma always associated with the idea of reincarnation? — How long are people supposed to remain out of incarnation, and who or what determines this? — What do reincarnationists say about suicide? — If an individual is convinced that reincarnation and karma are true, how would his conduct be affected? (Published by Death Education Books, Box 437, New York, N.Y. 10021, paper 42 pages, \$5.00).

Reincarnation — the Idea is Spreading

In New York, on April 15, Sylvia Cranston, co-author of *Reincarnation, The Phoenix Fire Mystery*, spoke for 30 minutes over radio on the general subject of Reincarnation. We tuned in on station 1130 FM San Diego, and listened to her well-reasoned theosophical presentation and responsive answers to questions from the interviewer.

"Rebirth of the Occult Tradition" in Dutch and German

This historical Introduction by Boris de Zirkoff to the new two-volume edition of *The Secret Doctrine* has now been translated by our friends in Europe. In Holland (tr. by Jan Moliijn and Henk Dubbink) it is called: *Aan de Bron Van de Occulte Traditie*, printed jointly by Uitgeverij Theosofische Vereniging in Nederland, and Theofisch Genootschap of The Hague, a co-operative enterprise by the Adyar TS and The Theosophical Society-HPB (Point Loma). (Order from: Mirananda Uitgevers B.V., Carolus Verhulst, Zijdweg 5e, Wessenaar, Holland.)

The German translation: *Die Wiedergeburt der Okkulten Tradition: Wie 'die Geheimlehre' H.P. Blavatsky geschrieben wurde* — is by Max Gräf. (Order from Die Theosophische Gesellschaft, D-7376 Bad Liebenzell 3, Germany). Both the Dutch and the German translations contain reproductions of the pictures in the English edition. (Selling price of the latter in the U.S.A. is \$3.00, obtainable through Wizards Bookshelf, T.P.H., Wheaton, or P.L. Publications, Inc.)

"Search and Find"

Prof. Bernardino del Boca in *I Quarderni Dell 'Eta Dell 'Acquario*, Turin, Italy, writes: "Mrs. Elsie Benjamin, ex-secretary of Dr. G. de Purucker, leader of the Point Loma Theosophical Society, following the teachings of Mme. Blavatsky, started compiling an index in 1929, to look up in theosophical literature authentic information on all subjects of interest to Theosophists. This index has finally been published by Point Loma Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 6507, San Diego, California. The title is "Search and Find", 154 pp. price \$3.95. (Discount to dealers of 40% is allowed on purchases over \$10.00). It would be a good thing if someone were to import and propagate in Italy the books of these theosophical publishers. This book will be useful in the coming years when mental confusion will be great and when theosophists will have to be able to give answers to those who ask."

Two Secret Doctrine References

— formerly available in hard cover are now expended and new paperback editions have been issued by Wizards Bookshelf, P.O. Box 6600, San Diego, California, 92106. These are: *Origin and Significance of the Great Pyramid* by C.S. Wake (\$4.95); and *The Desatir* by Mulla Firuz bin Kaus (\$6.95). Order direct from Wizards.

Correspondence Classes

In addition to the course based on the 12 Theosophical Manuals conducted by Point Loma Publications, four courses — on *The Ocean of Theosophy*, and *The Key to Theosophy*, *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, and *The Mahatma Letters* — are given by George Cardinal LeGros, 301 N. Wall Ave., Joplin, Missouri 64801. There is no charge for these but students are expected to defray costs of postage.

"Madame Katherine Tingley and the Theosophical Society"

This was the topic of W. Emmett Small, one of the speakers at the Congress of History in San Diego, California, March 7 and 8. The over-all subject for the Congress was "California, Land of Many Missions, People with a Purpose." Mr. Small also showed a series of slides (courtesy T.S. International, Point Loma College, and P.L. Publications) of the Theosophical Headquarters grounds from its early 1897 days when, treeless and practically without a house, save Dr. Wood's sanitarium-hotel, the first Theosophical Congress was held there on February 23 of that year.

April Issue of "The Theosophist"

We read in *The Theosophist* (Adyar) for February that the April issue will be "dedicated to the memory of John Coats; it will contain articles and tributes covering the many facets of his life and work and his contribution to the cause of Theosophy to which he was so deeply dedicated."

In the February issue also is the "Presidential Address" to the 104th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, on 26th December, delivered by Miss Joy Mills, which gives a most informative overview of accomplishments of the year just then ended, covering such items as International Tours by the President, Vice-President, and other lecturers; Deaths of prominent FTS, Staff Changes at Adyar; Information about the Adyar Library & Research Center, the Archives, the Publishing House, the Society's Finances, and Section Reports from around the world. Of *The Theosophist* we read: "The 100th anniversary of the publication of this truly international

journal, established in October 1879 by H.P. Blavatsky, was duly celebrated at Adyar, when the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Prabhudas Patwari, was to have released the centenary issue. Cancellation of an Indian Airlines flight prevented his attendance, but his speech for the occasion was read and the President, Mr. Coats, released the special issue. With this landmark in its history, *The Theosophist* takes on a new format, but the policy continues to focus on reaching both the general membership of the Society and the wider public interested in theosophical and occult thought. A balance is sought between deeper articles for students and writings that appeal to intuition and faith."

Dutch "Lucifer," Spring 1980

What looks like a lively number of this Dutch magazine is brought to our attention by two pages of summary in English (for which we are grateful) on the inside-back and back cover. From its challenging subjects we select only one item, which reads as follows: "The liberty to act and think in the Theosophical Movement": This article, being a report of the lecture by D.J.P. Kok at the close of the 1979 Convention in The Hague, deals with the theosophical view on personal freedom. In no way can a Leader or a President of any theosophical organization force a man to enter into membership or to live up to certain standards. Man is totally free to follow his own will and is not answerable for his doings to anybody but his own Higher Self. In this respect there is absolutely no reason to raise a discussion on this subject. However, joining a theosophical organization implies that one agrees with its aims and with the manner in which it was organized. This means that one can no longer merely follow personal impulses. One does that in perfect freedom! How far one deprives oneself of personal freedom in joining a theosophical organization is clearly expressed in the explanation H.P.B. gave in an early edition of *Lucifer* of what a Theosophist is: 'He who does not practice altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own — is no Theosophist'."

Inter-Theosophical Co-operation In Holland

From Holland we get cheering word that inter-theosophical co-operation is receiving sound support: in publishing, in plans for joint-public meetings, and in general appreciation of the spirit behind and at the center of all theosophical activity. From Joop van Beukering of Arnhem we hear of meetings of the "Theosophical Contact Group," which agree on the following general points: (a) to foster contact among the different theosophical groups or organizations, and to encourage certain joint activities; (b) each group will be represented by two of their number; (c) each group is free to act within its own 'modus operandi'; (d) only those activities subscribed to by all can (if this is desired) be conducted under one common name.

Spring 1980 Courses

At Krotona Institute, School of Theosophy, spring courses (8 sessions each) include: *Life's Deeper Aspects* (Joy Mills,

Director of the School); Man's Emerging Powers (Oliver Greene); Masters and Men: The Human Story in The Mahatma Letters (Virginia Hanson); Know Thyself (Karen Hesli); Altars of the World (Lew Ayres), a documentary motion picture in full sound and color consisting of authentic ceremonies, rites and sacraments, etc., recorded in various parts of the world.

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Cyril and Margaret Duncan-Miller, Walton-on-Thames, England. — We send our best wishes for the continuance and success of the very valuable work you are doing at Point Loma Publications.

Larry Cook, Rector, Arkansas — [The Theme of the January *Eclectic*] is one much neglected by so many; that theme being 'The Heart Doctrine' and its application to work of the Theosophical Movement in general. It showed a fundamental turning toward the 'Spirit' of the law and a looking at the dead letter formalism in a way which helps understanding, as in your article "Inconceivable?"

It confounds me why those of the Theravada or Southern School of Buddhism, fail to see in the very example set by Buddha himself, that of the Bodhisattva, rather than the Pratyeka. Did not Buddha himself, on the verge of Nirvana hear the cry of humanity and turn back to help it? As for the Pratyeka, his selfishness is of a very sublimated form. As G. de P. said, "He is so completely absorbed in the beauty and glory and wonder of the spiritual spheres, that the very beauty is like a veil which beclouds his eyes and dims the memory of the struggling hosts of beings behind him." (*Fountain-Source of Occultism*, p.517). It isn't selfishness, but such a deep falling in love with spiritual bliss that it simply blots out the memory of suffering humanity.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of John B.S. Coats. His article "To Accept the Challenge" shows that rare kind of Theosophical insight by which we all profit. This article, along with the others in the past, shows him to have been a significant contributor to the thought of the Theosophical Movement. And also shows him to have had a deep appreciation for the spirit of Theosophy as given by the Founders.

And I must also say the same for the staff of Point Loma Publications, and the work you are doing through the pages of "The Eclectic" in establishing a platform of real spiritual brotherhood within the Theosophical Movement; one which fosters unity and harmony rather than creating grounds for strife and division amongst us. By emphasizing those things which unite us in common effort you help to quench the fires of sectarianism and unbrotherliness, which amongst us, especially as Theosophists, has no place whatsoever. Universal Brotherhood begins first with ourselves, and the pages of the *Eclectic* maintain that spirit.

Terrence Hughes, Palm Desert, Calif. — How interesting that the ET and the CFL Bul had lead editorials on "thinking differently"! I received the ET first (#56) and weeks later the CFL Bul (#398); the latter's "Thinking Differently" was the perfect follow-up to "Inconceivable?" re the pratyeka-buddhas. I'm convinced (!) that both newsletters operate independently [true! —eds.] so the numbers of coincidences, articles-wise, in both papers is always noteworthy. (I have always known that I'm 'different' and that I think and sense

'differently', yet it's just such thoughts of others coming into my life whenever they do that restart my 'awareness' of my 'difference'(s) — but a mite higher 'on the spiral. I have a constant awareness of 'newness' and 'firstness' and 'beginnings', side-by-side with the equal awareness that it is so just for me now. And that is the perfection of it, and it's confirmation within myself that I'm growing, evolving.)

I shall always think well of Gina Cerminara for introducing me to General Semantics. I thought of her while reading GdeP's article on the Pratyeka-Buddhas. 'Failure' and 'Selfish' are such misunderstood words. I recall my upbringing by nuns when very young, and that they were all named Sister Mary Something. While reading the two newsletter articles, I wondered how the world would be if we all had the middle name 'Apparent': William Apparent Smith, John Apparent Jones, *et al.* Wouldn't that be a wonderful mental/spiritual exercise?

From Finland — Our faithful friend in Helsinki, Finland, Sylvi Kohva, shares with us the following letter from Helka Savolainen, one of her correspondents in Karelia, about 300 km from Helsinki. She is an invalid in a hospital for the aged, though she is only 45 years old; but she has suffered from tuberculosis of the backbone since she was 8 years old. Twice Sylvi has visited her in the beautiful hospital "farmer house", deep in the forest, with a lake full of water lillies. The letter follows:

"I have got that treasure, *Letters That Have Helped Me* by W.Q. Judge — a hundred pages of divine wisdom, as we used to say. I found your own copy of pages 22-23 which says, 'There is the Universal Spirit (soul)-idea. That's what I live on. Without the understanding of the Soul - idea and that of the Soul itself, I would be dead, although my body were still alive.

"There is another extract in this book that helps me as I wonder at the cruelty of my illness. The book says: 'put your trust and faith and hopes in Karma.' And the third extract that I noticed: 'I'm connected with the lake and its water that is useful, humble, wonderful and shy' ('The Song of Praise of the Creatures' by Francis of Assisi). I am connected with the sun and with all the creatures, such as the sweet little fox terrier which comes to me with its eyes full of expression. It wants to be petted, and it licks one's hands, one's nose. One day it licked my whole face. The most important fact for my sick personality is that I feel myself connected with the Law that rules over the stars as well as my life and death and the small heatherbells. It is the Love, the Truth, the Wisdom, the Justice, the Strength, the Goodness, the Beauty, the Joy . . . So how dare I, as it often happens, get impatient with my perishing and ruined body? Is it because of the pain though I myself am that Big Good Law too which rules and cares about everything?

B.F., California — I loved *Wisdom of the Heart* the minute I saw it. With its beautiful cover design and its choice content, this is one of the jewels in my library, and a precious treasure which I often hold lovingly in my hands.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Our grateful appreciation for the following contributions received since our last reporting: H.J.M., \$3.00; V.U., \$49.61; M.R.H., \$2.50; L.T.T., \$10.00; D.LeG., \$15.00; R.H., \$30.00; N.A., \$23.50.