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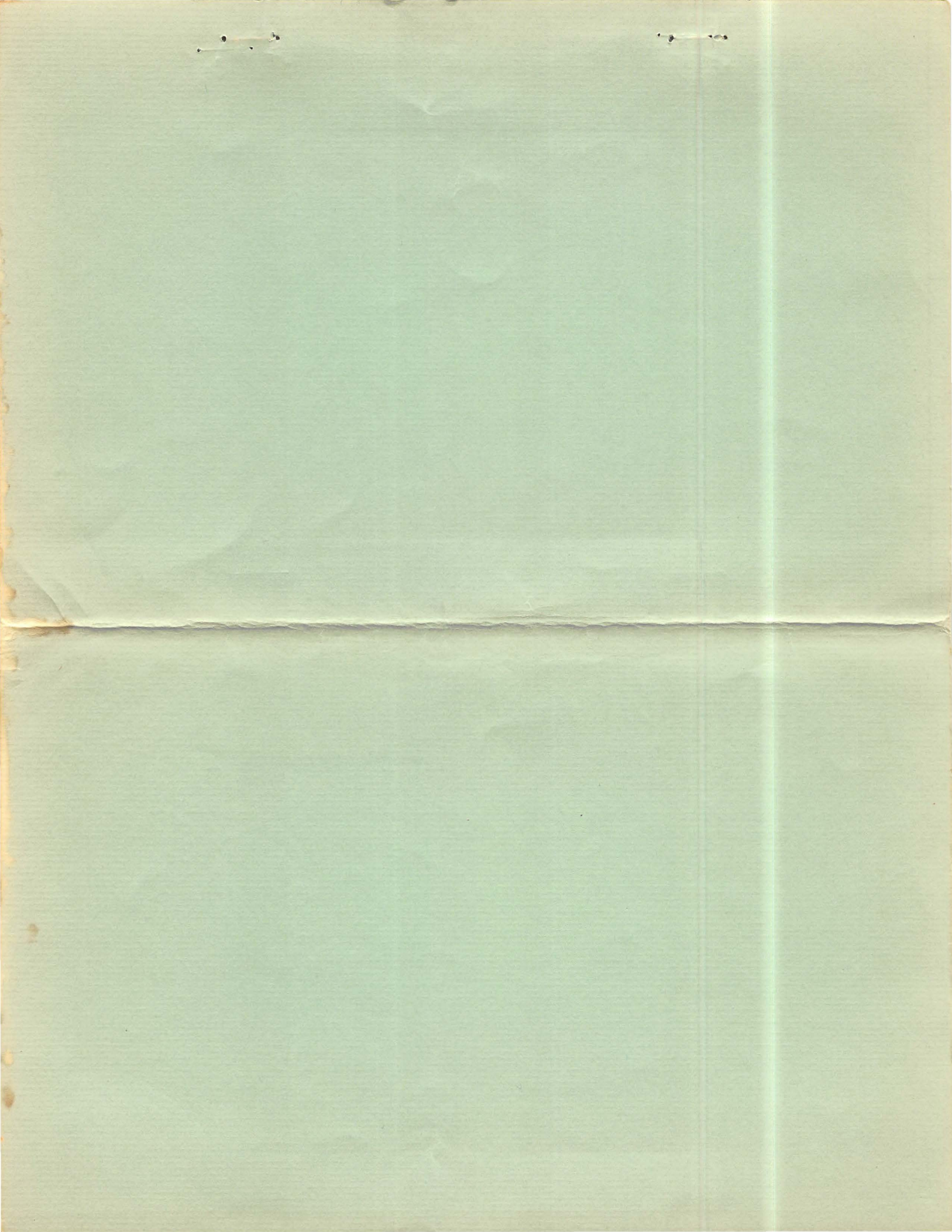
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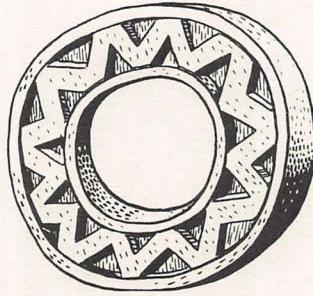
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PHILOSOPHY SERIES ONE

6th and 7th Degrees



ETHICS

DIVIDING RIGHT FROM WRONG

Beloved Companion:

With this new lesson goes forth to you our fraternal love and the beginning of wisdom in the 6th and 7th Degrees. It is a lecture lesson having to do with the things of highest importance in our future lives, individually and as a Nation; indeed, as a world meant to be populated by humanity.

Mankind has existed not merely for the 5,000 years of recorded history but for many thousands of years. The present is not the only civilization mankind has created, nor perhaps the best. There have been many civilizations through the past hundred thousand and more years of man's existence and each one, reaching a certain peak, has fallen back.

Some have been destroyed by cataclysmic acts of Nature. A star fell on Arizona and destroyed all life in that part of North America for thousands of miles around, perhaps 50,000 years ago. Yes, man was there, for mankind is not exactly a new invention.

Another blotting out occurred at the time of the great flood that covered all the earth; fragments of this record are contained in the Biblical story of Noah, and possibly, quite possibly, the land referred to was our lost continent of Atlantis.

There were several destructions where a large part of the earth's surface, perhaps all of it, was covered with ice. How easily this could happen again if some electron-charged planet wandering through infinite space brushed too close to the planet Earth, pressing down higher, icy stratospheres that men have not yet explored but which we know surround our earth at a distance above our heads of only a few miles. Temperatures hundreds of degrees colder than we know, suddenly pressed on Earth's bosom, could freeze everything in an instant.

A puff of planetary vapor, gas, or ionized particles, many things unknown to us, pass over our heads, sometimes less than 200 miles distant, but effect catastrophes

here on Earth perhaps only once in a million years. Mankind, all unknowing, goes on busily, laughing and working and sinning, and sometimes performing good services for his fellow man.

If the earth were an apple, the skin of that apple would be thicker than the deepest depths of the ocean that man has sounded, and thicker than the highest height he has ascended. We know almost nothing of even the near interior of the earth and very little about the "empty" space which seems to surround it.

Once the earth had two moons. One of them disintegrated, we know not how, but the dust of earth's second moon is largely deposited on earth, in a broad band stretching around the world and reaching out hundreds of miles on each side of the equator. Texas, New Mexico, lower California, Louisiana and Florida are within that belt, covered with the dust of a dead moon.

The shift of the magnetic poles may have tipped the earth several times in past aeons, causing ancient seas to rush over ancient lands, sweeping away vast ranges of mountains, covering vast reaches of the earth forever, while the earth exploded up from old ocean depths to form new continents.

How many great civilizations has man created? I do not know. They could be many indeed. And it could be that of most of them, possibly the greatest of them, no trace remains. Traces do remain of many, the vast cave cities which folklore whispers of in Central America, the lovely cities off Greece now sunken in the ocean and almost forgotten, the ruins of the great Mayan cities, covered and hard to find under the jungle growth of centuries.

It seems that every great civilization man has created has followed a certain pattern. As it attains true greatness, as things become too easy, too refined, too ordered, some trait in human nature, perhaps laziness or greed, or cruelty, becomes predominant and pulls down the whole structure. Examine the history of Rome when it was great, of Ancient Greece, of old Cathay, of India, of Egypt, of any of the old civilizations. Greed, cruelty, pride (turning away from God) are always among the causes of their destruction. It is the balancing scales of Karmic Justice that does it.

God gives mankind complete freedom, even the freedom to believe in Him or not, as we choose. He allows man to see, to perceive if he will, to invent, contrive and discover. As long as man lives right he progresses, but when he turns away from right-doing he begins on the path of destruction.

When whole races follow the lower path then whole races and nations soon meet catastrophe.

You, our Companion in the 6th and 7th Degrees, know that we, the Mayans, have for many years heralded The Time. Before and during World War II we told you that the time was now, that this was the travail, the labor pains of the Birth of a New Era.

Perhaps that was difficult for some to see during the horrors of war. Astrologists, and the ancient Maya, the most advanced Astronomers the world has known, have long prophesied the Air Age, the age of Aquarius.

That age began when electricity was discovered, when steam was first harnessed, and all the growth and development of the many years since was merely the period of pregnancy preceding the birth of the New Age.

The actual earth-shaking event, the BIRTH of the NEW AGE, came when the atom bombs were dropped, or shortly before.

But we must remember that in the FIRST discovery of how to make atomic energy usable, that for the first time, as far as any human being knows, God placed directly into the hands of mankind the ability not only to destroy all men but all life on this planet, perhaps even the planet Earth itself.

We can prevent it only by understanding the just laws of God, the laws that are inherent in all Creation, and in so educating people of other nations in these Irrevocable Laws that they too will not be tempted now or in future generations to anger, greed, injustice, pride or any of the other destroyers.

That is why I feel this philosophic lesson of the Mayans is devoted to a subject of highest importance - the subject of Ethics. I hope you will find it good, and that you will devote to it much thought, and that you will, whenever you can, spread its teachings to others, saying: "This is what The Mayans teach." Let us now begin the lecture lesson.



"Realizing the purpose of living is largely a matter of weighing and choosing values", Moo Lu Akin used to say to his Chela. "Life is a kind of storekeeper, and the wise man is the careful purchaser. Some pay heavily for things that are valueless or harmful while others get the really worthwhile things at a reasonable cost and sometimes for nothing."

There is an old notion that some things are right and should be chosen, while others are wrong and should be avoided. That proposition long remained unchallenged, but in our day it is occasionally questioned. A doctrine of self-indulgence has sprung up and has been taught by so many influential men that a good many people have taken it seriously.

"Get what you want and do what you wish," they say. "There is no such thing as a difference between right and wrong. In fact there are no such things as right and wrong. The only good is success in getting what you want, and the only evil is failure to do so. In other words, the only virtue is strength, and the only vice is weakness."

Is there any truth to what these people say? Are right and wrong imaginary? Is there no difference between them after all? Have all the energy and sacrifice invested in the effort to be good been wasted?

To begin with let us take a glance at the effect of the above teaching on the world life. It is responsible for the lowered moral standards, the harmful social customs and the dishonest business practices we see around us. It is responsible for disregard for truth and honor. It is responsible for the poverty, disappointment and sorrow resulting from these things. Worst of all it is responsible

for the strife and envy that breed war among the nations. If a tree is to be known by its fruits, as the Master has said, this should have some significance in finding an answer to the question.

Let us look into the matter a little more deeply still. Turning from human ideas and teachings for the moment, let us ask Life itself whether right and wrong exist and whether there is any difference between them.

Suppose we drive past a well-managed fruit ranch where healthy and productive trees grow from clean, well-kept soil. Then suppose we drive past one carelessly managed. The ground is littered and the trees unproductive, with many of them even dead because of lack of care and blighting insects. Does it not seem that there is a right way and a wrong way to raise fruit?

One way of proceeding in traffic makes for safety while another invites accident. Is not one right and the other wrong? One way of living maintains a strong, healthy body while another breaks down and destroys the physical functions. Is not one right living and the other wrong living? One course of action produces and accumulates happiness and peace of mind for one's self and others while another makes regret and misery. Does that not mean that there is a right way and a wrong way to go about one's affairs?

You need not accept these terms unless you wish to. You may call them something else if you are prejudiced against the words right and wrong. The law and its results are the same, whatever words are used. A rose by any other name smells as sweet and wormwood by any other name tastes as bitter.

A law of opposites seems to run through life and Nature. It appears that nothing exists without its opposite. Black stands against white, East against West, and the negative pole of a magnet against the positive. There must be opposites in conduct then, whether we call them right and wrong or something else.

Some may not admit it, and some may not even realize it, but all human beings are seeking the same thing - happiness. In that quest we find that certain things help us on while certain other things hold us back. In other words, there are roads to happiness and roads away from it. These two kinds of roads are what we mean by right and wrong. In the world we find friendly forces and enemy forces. The wise man leaves his enemies alone and associates with his friends.

Since there is a right and a wrong, and since there is a difference between them, the next question is, where does the dividing line lie, and how may it be determined? To find that line and heed it is simply to keep out of enemy territory. That is hardly a course of action to be questioned. It is simply being smart.

The line between right and wrong is not something arbitrarily fixed by a priest, moralist, or lawgiver. The priest tends to locate it from the merely ecclesiastical point of view. The moralist falls into the danger of making his survey partial and negative. The lawgiver stumbles into technicality and legalism. These are not what the average person, sincerely wanting to live his life rightly, desires. He wants a workable plan that rests on the deep foundations of truth.

Attempts to catalogue sins only prove to those who try it that so-called sins defy cataloguing. One is sure to forget some that are important and include others

that are trivial. For instance, a man who tried to make a list of sins included betting on horse races but did not include horse stealing. Of course all such efforts are ridiculous because no one is wise enough, and the list would be too long.

Anyway, to deal with sin in detail is like treating only the outward symptoms of a disease. There are many sins, and they are deceiving; but if the cause is eliminated they disappear. When a clock is out of order one doesn't accomplish much by merely resetting the hands.

Sin is also an old-fashioned word which you may not like. Use some other term if you wish - error, for instance. That is what it is, after all. But never think that by using another word you lessen its peril or lighten its results. What our elders called sin was simply the doing of the things that result from traveling the wrong road - the road away from happiness and peace.

There are variants too that enter into the calculation. The effect of things for good or ill varies with situations, so their goodness or badness must do the same. A given act in one situation will do great damage, in another small damage, in another have a neutral effect, and perhaps in another way may do some good.

You cannot always measure the motives of the human heart by what happens externally. A man whose life has been ruined by liquor was one day congratulating a friend on the strength of character which had enabled him to leave intoxicants alone. The friend candidly admitted that it was not strength of character at all, but the good fortune of not having any appetite for them. Never having wanted liquor he could claim no particular credit for never having taken it. The drunkard had made a hard fight for sobriety and lost. His friend had won without having to make any fight at all. The drunkard had actually tried harder to keep sober than the sober man had. Here is another indication that the test is not easy to prescribe nor the distinction easy to make. Certainly superficial observation is not enough.

Another difficulty is that it is easy to get into the way of judging the rightness or wrongness of things by uncertain, deceptive, and misleading standards. Some judge others by their own opinions or practices, some by the opinions of others whom they admire and in whose viewpoints they have confidence, and still others by whatever happens to be the prevailing custom at the time. Obviously these are not real tests, and none of them really settles anything.

Of course there are the law, the prophets, and the gospel; there are teachings of all of the great religions; and there is the long record of the trial and error of human experience; but we cannot keep them all in mind. There should be a test that is simple and easily applied.

Some have thought they found it in love, but even love needs the guidance of wisdom. It is the perfect motive but not always the perfect application. There must be a sure way of locating the line between right and wrong, and there is. It is the dividing line between that which blesses life and that which harms and blights it.

The difference between right and wrong, then, is not something determined by arbitrary pronouncement. Still less is it something determined by human opinion. It is something rooted deeply in the essential nature of things. It is the law of life, and law is rooted in the very constitution of universe. It is as fundamental as the law that determines the attractive power of matter or the speed of light, and

it is no more to be disregarded or set aside.

One may start with the smallest known unit of matter and he will find it formed and operating by law and never deviating from that law. For some reason there is a law decreeing that ice will break into six-sided snow crystals at a certain temperature in the air. No one can change it, inasmuch as no one can find a snow crystal with any other number of sides. The patterns vary, but the number of sides never does.

These laws, physical, chemical, and mathematical, run through all the constitution of Nature from the opening of a rosebud to the courses of the stars. The countless orbs in the universe keep their places and go their ways in a perfect balance of mutual attraction. Why? Because they operate by law that was made before it ever had a name.

Law runs through life just as it runs through Nature. Through the centuries men have been succeeding and finding happiness by keeping in adjustment with the universe, and failing to find good by rebelling against it. It was said of Sisera in the Old Testament that the stars in their courses fought against him. They always do that in the case of a man who tries to be greater than the law of life. One has his choice of having life be his helper or having it grind him to powder. Unlike our man-made laws, the law of the Lord is perfect.

Why is a rose beautiful? Because never in its life has it rebelled against the laws by which roses are created and must live their lives. Why does a ship arrive in the right port? Because there are recognized laws of safe navigation, and it has obeyed them. Why does a certain farmer get a good yield of grain? Because he has carried on his work of planting and cultivation in accordance with the laws of production. All the way through the story of life it is the same.

What would happen if a few of the many suns and solar systems in the universe would get together and decide on a few innovations? Everything would be in flaming and smoking ruins in a little while. What would happen if the laws of Life and Nature ceased to be operative for a single instant? We should never know, for none would be left alive to see. The universe and everything in it, including the bodies we live in, run in cooperation, and the basis of the cooperation is law. That is what keeps them in order.

Why then do things not go so perfectly at all times in our lives? Because there is a fundamental difference between a man and a rose, or a snowflake, or a star. They have no wills to rebel and resist, and a man does. He can say, "I won't." That is where his trouble begins. The smallest man is greater than the largest star, because it must obey the law blindly while he is a king with the power to choose his own course, even to choose the wrong one if he wishes to.

True culture is an increasing consciousness and understanding of the universe. Its purpose is that we may understand the laws of the universe so that we may not only obey them but also fashion our own laws in accord with them. That is the only sure way there is to safety, achievement, success, and self-realization. It is the way along which life unfolds in the perfection of its beauty and usefulness as a rose blooms or an epoch in the divine economy takes form.

Of course the human will can rebel and say "No", but it doesn't pay. We might

as well keep the law in the beginning for we shall have to in the end. There is no evading the laws of Nature, which are the laws of God.

Margaret Fuller grew up a most independent-minded girl, determined to do her own thinking and arrive at her own conclusions about everything. Going abroad, she decided to call on Thomas Carlyle and his wife.

"Well", she exclaimed to Jane Welsh Carlyle as she burst in at the door, "I have decided to accept the universe!"

"Egad, she'd better.", growled the old Scotch thinker as he stood in the background looking on.

Margaret Fuller had just discovered something each will eventually find out. We have to take the universe, and life, and their laws, for what they are; and sooner or later we rejoice that we did.

All this is intended to show that right and wrong are not just chance notions, nor are they arbitrary standards set up by any kind of human authority. They are the same for all individuals, creeds, and peoples, for they are rooted in the very laws of existence and progress, and laws that direct the stars in their courses.

As we have already indicated, one can see by observation that there is a point at which acts and conditions cease to have a constructive effect and begin to have a destructive one. No matter how we term what lies on either side of that line, we may assume that what lies on one side of it is good for us and what lies on the other side is not.

That is to say, this line is the place where healthy, happy living ends and breakdown begins, where strength begins to give way to weakness and where effectiveness starts to fade into futility. One cannot say where the line lies for another, but each can surely discover it and recognize it for himself. If observation does not indicate it trial and error will. Those who try to delude themselves and others about it are the ones of whom the prophet wrote when he pronounced woe on those who call evil "good" and good "evil". It is only the worse because they know better.

The creedmaker fashions his systems and the lawmaker engrosses his legislation because each knows that somewhere this dividing line exists, but no man-made deliverance can indicate its location concerning all things and for all individuals. Intuition and reason may both help, but men and nations can best tell by observing what has been good for life and what has not. Where the two meet, there is the line. Safety, happiness, health and even life itself depend upon finding and respecting the dividing line.

What are the things that have a blighting influence on life? They could not be listed in detail for no one could take time to read the list; but they may be indicated in classifications by which they may be easily recognized.

What should the classifications be? Suppose your son or daughter, or pupil or young friend should ask you for a simple and understandable statement as to what things are to be regarded as wrong - what would you say? One who has that experience knows exactly how it feels to be, as they say, "on the spot." One member of these 6th and 7th Degrees had that experience one day and discovered that it is not

the kind of situation which one can evade. However, it is an experience everyone needs to have, for one who has it can no longer postpone facing the question himself.

There may be better and more adequate answers, but here in substance is the one given on that occasion:

"It may not be possible to answer such a question fully in a few sentences, or to give one answer that will suffice for all individuals, but in general here is the form it takes in my mind. The things that may be regarded as wrong, and are therefore to be avoided, are those that (1) are harmful to one's self, (2) are harmful to others or to the human race as a whole, (3) are harmful to the human attitude toward the Divine, or (4) are futile, and useless and foolish. If all that falls under any of those heads is avoided, one should be reasonably sure of being on the safe side."

Let us not forget, however, that merely to be on the safe side is not enough. It is only to stand at the point where positive rightness begins. Good is much more than merely the absence of evil. When one has cleared a field of weeds and briars he has only made ready to start planting something more desirable.

Real goodness is being good for something. Goodness is alive; it grows and reproduces, and spreads. It has vitality. It glows, and thrills and empowers. It is charged with energy. It dreams and plans, and explores, and wins and achieves. It has a leavening positiveness about it. It is life charged with faith and love and service. It is not a city but a highway. It is always going on, seeking and conquering new frontiers. It can no more be today what it was yesterday than can an unfolding flower or a growing stalk of grain.

The word "holiness", so much used in religious expression, comes from an old word meaning "health". The word "wholeness" comes from the same origin. To be holy, then, is to be whole, complete, normally developed, rightly balanced, healthy in body, mind and soul. When a rose has become all its Maker created it to be it is a holy thing. The same is to be said of a man. He is a story concluded, a harmony that is complete, a thought that is realized, a dream come true.

Another question that arises in any consideration of rightness and wrongness is, what attitude should we take toward the wrong doer? Some seem called upon to hate him, thus becoming wrongdoers themselves. Some claim to love the sinner but hate the sin which is a rather indefinite and sentimental escape.

What a wrongdoer needs and deserves from anyone else is sympathy and forbearance. That is true for two reasons, one of which is that he is suffering and will suffer for any wrong he has done. The other is that he is usually a person who did what he did because he didn't know better.

The so-called wrongdoer is not usually one who wishes to do harm or be evil but one who is confused and deluded in his conceptions of good and evil. Indeed he may be one who honestly thought he was doing right, as Paul said was true of him when he was persecuting the Church. The wrongdoer is one who has not discovered the dividing line we have been thinking about, and who therefore does not know the nature and effect of what he is doing. Only one thing will help him, and it is not blame or censure. It is the light of understanding, to know the real nature and effect of his deeds.

People in general do about as well as they know, and as they come to know better they try to do better. The average person wants to do the right thing and is willing to make a very earnest effort; but how can he if he does not know how to find out what it is, or if he is deluded with false and fragmentary conceptions that have been taught him by others as blind as he? If one walks in the dark, can he be blamed if he misses the way?

In all this we are not departing from the teachings of the Man of Galilee, our Great and Ever Present Companion. On the contrary, we are keeping very close to them. At the hands of some who were His followers those who crucified Him might have fared pretty badly, but what was His attitude? He asked the Father to forgive them and not hold them responsible for they did not realize what they were doing. To the priests the law was the law, to the Roman governor policy was policy, to the soldiers orders were orders. That was all they knew. If they had understood, not one of them would have laid a violent hand upon Him.

This, then, was the attitude of the Master toward transgressors - simply that they were people who were doing as well as they knew, but who did not understand how to make their choice of values, or to find the road to peace and happiness. It has always been as it was in the day of the prophet who wrote, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."



The word "conscience" does not always mean an inward sense of rightness or wrongness as is commonly assumed. There is such a sense, though other and less commendable feelings may sometimes be mistaken for it. The word "conscience" comes from two Latin words meaning "together" and "to know." It is, then, the process of knowing things in their relationships, of putting two and two together. When one takes all the facts concerning a proposed course of action, calculates what its general effect will be on himself, on others, and on the kingdom of God, and reasonably decides that the results will be good, he is exercising conscience in the true sense of the word. He is searching intelligently for the dividing line, and is likely to find it.

Every road leads in two directions. One may take the road to happiness or go the wrong way. That is to say, the road leads to the supreme happiness on the one hand and to the supreme unhappiness on the other. The fathers had other names for these conditions. They called them Heaven and Hell.

The old grandiose conceptions of these two conditions were so deeply grained in human thinking that our escape from them is long and slow. One man has said that the old picture-book concept of Heaven reminds one of a glorified street carnival. Of course the prevailing concept of Hell was even worse, for it was sadistic as well as misleading.



Somewhere along the years someone tried to coin a word that would express the fullness of the human dream of happiness, and called it Heaven. He also sought

for a word to express the fullness of the human fear of unhappiness, and called it Hell. One who travels the right road stores up happiness in his memory. One who travels the wrong road does the opposite. He can never escape them for they are part of him, and probably he will be still more keenly affected by them in the life to come than he is now.

Right, then, is the way to Happiness, which is Heaven; and wrong is the way to Unhappiness, which is Hell. In the light of that fact doing right becomes a matter not of arbitrary inhibition but one of consecrated common sense. Amen.

We rejoice with thee, O Companion on the Path to Peace Profound.

THE MAYANS