THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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THE best, the chastest, the most sacred and pious worship of the Gods, is to reverence them always with a pure, perfect, and unpolluted mind and voice; for our ancestors as well as the philosophers, have separated superstition from religion.

— CICERO: *On the Nature of the Gods*, xxviii; translated by Yonge

IS LOVE A FORM OF SELFISHNESS?

T. HENRY, M. A.

IN the correspondence columns of a newspaper we meet with a definition of love as "the most subtil form of self-interest"; and another writer makes the comment: "Not very spiritual perhaps, but how true!"

Most people will be shocked at this, but may perhaps find a difficulty in pointing out the sophistry. But this is quite easy to do, in the light of the Theosophical teachings as to the nature of the human mind.

That part of the mind which functions chiefly in the average person of today is the *lower manas*. This principle is the seat of the personal self. It gives the feeling of *I-am-ness*, the sense of personal separateness. Consequently every thought, feeling, or sentiment which enters this part of the mind is looked at from the point of view of personality; and it is therefore possible to define every motive, even the best and purest, as a form of self-interest. But that does not necessarily mean that these motives *are* forms of self-interest. It only means that they assume that form when reflected in the lower manas, when analysed by the brain-mind. Hence the statement above quoted loses its force, and amounts to no more than a statement that all the motives of the personal self are selfish; which is a truism. But even so, we have to push our brain-mind logic to great extremes in order to make the definition fit in certain cases. A man in the French Revolution, who has not been condemned, contrives to introduce himself into the condemned cell, in order that he may die with his lover, preferring to be guillotined with her rather than live without her. If this is self-interest, it certainly is a very 'subtil' form.

Love is a spiritual force, but it will become personalized when passing through the lower strata of our mentality. But its essence is the very opposite of self-interest. It desires to give, and to lose the sense of self. To define the love of a mother for her children as a subtil form of self-interest seems perfectly monstrous (except as a mere quibble or logical feat). This is so, when we have in mind the real unselfish parental love. But again, are there not forms of parental love, so-called, which contain a considerable amount of self-interest? That love which would rather enjoy the presence of the child, even when it is harmful to the child, than consent to a temporary separation for the child's good — this might be defined as a form of self-interest; for in this case the parent consults her own interests rather than those of the child.

All this goes to show that our selfish desires are perversions of the

high and pure motives that arise from within. As the light from the sun may be reflected from the moon, or glow dimly through a mist, so the light from the Heart may be reflected or transmitted through our selfish nature, or distorted by the mind, so that it takes on a perverted and selfish form.

The personal self is not the real Self of man; it is only a passing stage in our evolution. We have to learn to supersede it. He who serves self serves a tyrant, as is well known. All experience goes to show that self-interest is not the law of life for humans.

People who for some reason have lost the enthusiasm of youth, often become cynical, and try to make their reason support their feelings. The fox who had lost his tail tried to make out that his condition was the right one and that all the other foxes were wrong. Thus it may suit some people to try and prove that they are no worse than others, and that the generous feelings of other people are nothing but selfishness in disguise. Still another class of people may be genuinely despondent, having lost faith in virtue, through disappointment or some other depressing cause. In both these cases the lower manas has drowned the voice of its higher counterpart, and the man is temporarily under delusion. If every motive we can have is selfish, the word selfishness loses its meaning.

The facts of life show us that the desire to benefit others is continually active as a motive power; and that we fulfil the little amenities of social life without troubling whether they are unselfish or not. It is only when the absurd lower mind goes to work analysing, that we can persuade ourselves these motives are selfish.

The reason why people have found love such a puzzle is that it is partly a pure aspiration and partly a passion. It is, in fact, an epitome of the whole man himself. Man is born with an unquenchable love for the truth and the right; he tries to find satisfaction for it in one object after another, mistaking the shadow for the substance and reaping disappointment; until at last he finds that the last particle of the dross of selfish desire must be purged out, ere the true indestructible gold will remain. He discovers that love is *not* a form of selfishness, but the very opposite; that it is in fact the means of rescue from selfishness.

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"To nourish the heart, keep the desires few. Here is a man whose desires are few; in some things he may not be able to keep his heart, but they will be not many. Here is a man whose desires are many; in some things he may be able to keep his heart, but they will be few."— MENCIUS

TWO ESSAYS

KENNETH MORRIS

I: ON JUSTICE AND MERCY

WE count them both virtues; and they seem opposed to each other; which they cannot be if they are both good. So we think of compromise, and talk about justice *tempered with* mercy: which is about as meaningful as truth tempered with honesty, temperance with soberness and chastity.

All this through shallowness of thought as to what justice is. To go to the root of it, or make some attempt to: —

If justice is good, its aim must be good, and its results good. Therefore the justice that punishes for the sake of punishing is not justice at all, but merely satisfying a spiteful instinct for revenge which inheres in the least noble part of our nature.

If virtue has any real existence, there is a divine side in things. That implies order and purpose in the universe. We know that there is such a thing as consciousness, because we are conscious. And we know that consciousness is impelled into that condition which we call life: our selves are in contact with this world, and therein experience of all sorts is constantly being forced on us. Through this experience we are forced to learn, to increase, modify and alter from day to day the contents and nature of our consciousness.

The fact that we can apprehend justice as a virtue, shows that it is something really existing within our consciousness, and therefore within the universe of which we are a part. If one sees a light, it is because there is a light to be seen. If one aspires towards an ideal, it is because the ideal exists, and has been perceived. There is, then, a Universal Justice.

Here is this world, in which consciousness is being incessantly dashed against experience like the waves against the shore. The purpose seems obvious: that the consciousness should acquire, amass, store up, infinite treasures of experience, forever enriching itself, forever changing and growing by what it acquires.

To what end? The noblest we can conceive; because if we can conceive it, it exists. And the noblest purpose we can conceive for existence is, perfection: experience is forced upon consciousness, that consciousness may attain perfection, in fineness, in scope, in wisdom.

If then that is the noblest conception, it is the ultimate or the truest conception.

Now for every unit of consciousness — or individual self — there must be a shortest possible road to such perfection: it may be infinitely long, but it is still the shortest possible. The purpose of the Universe is that each such unit should travel on that shortest road. Nothing would be justice that would deflect it from that road. Divine Justice would be in accord with the Universal Purpose. Every divine quality, every good thing, every thing that we can call a virtue, would be so in accord with, and furthering, the Universal Purpose.

So that the sole end of justice would be to force consciousness forward on the road of learning; thus there could be no idea of punishment in it, but only of curing. With the Universal Purpose in view, it would take the line of least resistance: what matters to the universe is, that men should learn; and that is what matters to men themselves; it is the purpose of existence.

Now what other end could mercy have? The two things are one. Not to bring back the errant consciousness into its one possible road, would be unmerciful to it, and unjust. Wilfully to hurt or harm it, without an eye to bringing it back to its road, would be unjust — or unmerciful.

What then becomes of our prison systems,— and above all of capital punishment, where the endeavor is to throw the consciousness altogether out of the field where experience is won? What kind of justice is this, which deliberately works against the purposes of life? It is the house builded on the sand; its foundations are falsehood. Why must we build like fools?

II: On the Rights of Man

What are they? "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," says the well-known document; stating as axiomatic what is perhaps only dogma: thus, if you accept that statement, well and good; but who is to show that it is based on fundamental Natural Law, or derives logically from proved truth? Another school argues that man's right is his might; what he has won and can hold, that he has the right to hold; and this at first has a more logical look to it. There is only one witness to truth, and only one discoverer, and only one that can perceive it: Man; and if anything comes to him calling itself revelation, it still must be judged by him, with his heart, his reason, imagination, intuition, fears, ignorance, inclinations, in the jury-box. Now the heart is a vague and indeterminate juror, because its nature is infinite; but reason, being quite finite and

exhaustible, may know its own mind thoroughly, and arrive at comfortable dogmatic assurance. So the heart has to be sounded more deeply than commonly we do; and the reason is only to be trusted within its own limited sphere.

It is the heart here that has said "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness": it is perhaps reason that has given the other dictum, which will win no suffrage from the heart, because the heart senses infinity, and sees objections which it cannot easily define. On the other hand we feel that its own verdict is incomplete; that it has found but energy to say a very little of what it knows; while it senses great distances, it has not focused or made them clear. Reason has the gift of focusing things; when the heart, asserting itself, borrows that power from reason, it becomes a safe guide.

So we must look to universals, and see again man and the world in terms of consciousness in contact with matter for the grand purpose of gaining experience, heightening and refining itself through infinite experience, and perfection in wisdom and character the goal ahead. Humanity is the embodiment of consciousness on that great march of progress; each individual a fragment of the whole.

To gain infinite experience, Consciousness is infinitely broken up into these individual fragments: Life, which is one, manifests itself through an infinite number of units. But it is one, and its end is one — the evolutionary path.

In the light of this, what are the rights of man? To advance, along the line of least resistance, on that evolutionary path. Life in this world is the field in which that advance is possible; it is the school in which all lessons are learnt. So he has the right to life; and no man, nor government, nor humanity at large, has the right to deprive him of it. In doing so, humanity acts against itself, hinders its own advancement, cuts off its nose to spite its face.

In each individual, consciousness is in contact with matter: something divine and universal is in contact with limiting and adverse conditions: or good is in contact with evil. The treasures of experience are gained, as that Higher, that Universal part, conquers and masters the lower. A right springs out of this: each man has the right to wage that war: a right that belongs to the individual, because it inheres in the whole. So he has the right to win without adverse interference from outside; further, because it is the interest of the whole that he should win, he has the right to all help, all service.

He has the right to be protected from injuring himself; but no other has the right, under pretext of so protecting him, to impose that other's personal will on him, or use him for that other's personal advantage, or

deprive him of any good that might arise within himself, or deflect him from his own path of advancement.

Here is the right that no man can forfeit: the right to receive help for his higher and against his lower nature; or stated conversely, it is the duty of giving help. The heart senses something of this,— and is often accused of sentimentality for stating a little of it in vague unfocused terms. But focused, it is seen to be stern fact, natural law, certainty.

GOD AND MAN — A THEOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION

C. J. RYAN

(An Address recently delivered in San Diego)

SO many mistaken views have been circulated about the teachings of Theosophy in regard to God's and man's relationship that a few ideas on the subject from an old student of Theosophy may not be unwelcome.

First of all, let me say that as a philosophy and as a practical method of life, Theosophy is essentially spiritual. It is founded upon the basis that the appearances of the matter in which we are existing are ephemeral and that "Nature exists for the Soul's experience," as a very ancient Hindû philosopher said. But because it is spiritual, Theosophy is not dogmatic nor has it a creed or formulary to which its adherents must submit under pain of excommunication. William Q. Judge, the second Leader of the Theosophical Movement, declared most earnestly that "the genius of the Theosophical Movement is for the destruction of dogmatism," and that "evolution, slowly progressing, will bring out new truths and new aspects of old truths, thus absolutely preventing any dogmas or 'unequivocal definitions.'" "The moment the Theosophical Society makes a hard and fast definition of Theosophy it will mark the first hour of its decay." "Inasmuch as Theosophy is the whole body of truth about man and nature, either known now or hereafter to be discovered, it has the 'power of growth, progress, and advancement,' since every new truth makes it clearer."

Theosophy has, however, certain fundamental principles which are given in no spirit of dogmatism, but as explanations of the great facts in life to which your consideration is invited if you have not been satisfied with those you have been offered from other sources. We make one positive claim, but this cannot be called a dogma; this is, that humanity

is a great universal brotherhood, and that our duty is to recognise this and to act accordingly. Our hearts tell us this is true; Theosophy helps us to realize its truth in all its beauty, and to make the spirit of brotherhood a living power in our lives.

It is clear, then, that Theosophists are not likely to lay down dogmatic statements about the nature of God, such as the makers of creeds in all ages have audaciously ventured to do.

There is a profound truth in the sarcasm that "God was made in the image of man." Some primitive persons make images of their deities which they beat when their prayers for personal advantages are not answered; others, a little more advanced, perhaps, create a mental image of Deity which exhibits the worst qualities of its worshipers — cruelty, jealousy, anger, etc. It is creditable, however, to human nature that even in the lowest savages there is a sincere belief in a kindly and benevolent Power in the background, though for prudence' sake the more devilish and dangerous Deity receives the supplications and sacrifices. It is highly important from the Theosophical standpoint to remember that the most spiritual beliefs are not necessarily the most recent — it is the other way. Civilization moves in great cycles, not on a steadily upward-rising plane. Many savage races are remnants of far more civilized peoples. Take as an illustration of the sublimest conceptions of the Divine certain hymns of the ancient Egyptians, many, many thousand years ago. What could be more magnificent than this:

> "God is One and Alone; and there is none other with Him;
> God is the One, the One who made all things;
> God is a Spirit, a hidden Spirit, the Spirit of Spirits —
> Unknown is His Name in Heaven.
> He does not manifest His forms,
> Vain are all representations of Him.
> He is the Only One alone without equal,
> Dwelling alone in the holiest of holies."

The Egyptians had many deities, personifications of spiritual principles, but they fully believed in the inscrutable, infinite majesty, all-inclusive, passing all understanding, the Nameless Eternal.

Dr. Brugsch-Bey says:

> "The forty-two commandments of their religion, which are contained in the *Book of the Dead*, are not inferior to the precepts of Christianity, and in reading the old inscriptions concerning morality, we are tempted to believe that Moses modeled his teaching on the patterns given by those old sages."

The Egyptian had a deep-seated interest in religion and acted up to his convictions. As Dr. Budge says:

> "His conscience was well developed, and made him obey religious, moral, and civil laws without question. . . . He thoroughly understood his duty towards his neighbor. . . .

He never indulged in missionary enterprises of any kind. His religious toleration was great . . . and yet the influence of his beliefs and religion, and literature, and arts and crafts, on the civilization of other nations, can hardly be overestimated. . . . He proclaimed the deathlessness of the human soul, and his country has rightly been named the land of immortality."

Compare this state of things with what prevailed thousands of years later in supposedly civilized countries: can we honestly claim that there has been an ascent in the understanding of what real life means!

Looking around us today we may well ask if we are living in a country that has any sincere belief in spiritual things. What is the actual condition in regard to belief in any kind of God or in the immortality of the soul? A small test in the shape of a questionnaire was tried lately by Chinese students at the Chicago University and they were naturally surprised at the result. It was sent to hundreds of persons including college professors, business men, teachers, theologians, factory workers, prisoners, etc., and the answers ranged from blank atheism to the most primitive belief in the personality of God. Some believed because they were taught in childhood, others for policy. An unexpected tone of atheism on the part of some preachers puzzled the Chinese students. They were warned by some "not to be deceived by hypocritical Christians who wear religion as a cloak, but to remain open-minded." A great many repudiated the idea of God altogether.

It is not surprising that the students were puzzled by so many contradictory opinions from representatives of a nation which sends out missionaries to undermine the faith of people of other countries where the majority actually possess an active living belief in the spiritual governance of the world, even if they do not know the name Jehovah.

Another inquiry was lately made by Professor J. H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr, among university men. The believers in God and immortality among Sociologists was 53 per cent.; among Physical scientists 50 per cent.; Biologists 37 per cent.; and of Psychologists — students of the soul — only a fraction over 19 per cent.!

Is it possible that our method of education is responsible for the loss of spiritual life? Do we know what "success in life" means? Is it not a very serious matter for parents to consider that their children are growing up in an atmosphere in which the material and superficial, worldly prosperity so called, and social and merely intellectual advancement, are the leading constituents?

Are the orthodox churches free from blame? How is it that Mrs. Margot Asquith, wife of the famous British statesman, can seriously quote an eminent divine as saying to her: "*My dear, you must believe in God whatever the churches may say!*" Might it not have been very different with us if the uncouth legends of Jehovah's dealings with the ancient Hebrews had not been taken so seriously? Think of the crude stories

which represent Him as a Tempter, constantly trying to trip up the unfortunate creatures he made; hardening the heart of Pharaoh, putting an evil spirit into Saul, sending lying messages to the prophets, tempting David to sin, and commanding warfare and acts of cruelty and lust! This caricature of the majesty of the Infinite, Nameless Spirit of the Universe has been hammered into the impressionable minds of children for generations. Of course, there are magnificent passages in the prophets which give a truly Theosophical impression of Divinity, but the picture gained by the study of the earlier parts of the Old Testament naturally made a more vivid impression upon the child because it dealt with battles, and kings, and adventures, in which the tribal personal Deity of the Jews had a prominent part.

However this may be, no one can deny that the age is calling for direction towards the path of spiritual knowledge, and students of Theosophy believe that its teachings throw the brightest light upon that path.

Theosophy has been criticized for denying the personality of God while it speaks of many hierarchies of spiritual beings or individualized Creative Forces in ascending degrees of glory. It seems that we have reason to ask our critics how the word 'personality' can be applied to the All-embracing, the One, without utterly twisting the meaning out of all recognition. Theosophy does not look upon the Supreme Power as *personal* in any form, for personality always means limitation. One person is distinguished from another by the presence of individual characteristics not found in the other. As men advance they become less separated, their resemblances increase, they transcend some of their limitations, they approach nearer an ideal, and blend more closely into a corporate body with a higher consciousness into which the separate personalities tend to unite. We see this in the cells of the physical body. In simple forms of life there is a general diffusion of consciousness, each cell acting more or less as an individual, but in higher forms large groups of cells unite into organs whose capacities are more effective. Carry the analogy into human life and we can see that if individuals would rise above personal selfishness and co-operate by making the principle of brotherhood the guiding star of conduct we should no longer be a mere mob of clashing personalities, "each for himself and the Devil take the hindmost"; the face of the world would quickly change its expression. Psychologists tell us of the 'mob-consciousness,' a temporary unity usually formed by the lowest passions and leading to violence, but, as the higher consciousness grows in the individual the feeling of *spiritual* unity — almost identity — with others becomes a constructive power. This feeling of unity, of brotherhood, widens on impersonal lines, yet it is no less acute than the limited, boxed-in consciousness of the self-centered personality; it is

larger, more comprehensive, more gracious; it contains the smaller but transcends it, just as the active organ includes the individual cells. From this suggestion of a wider, comprehensive state of consciousness, a faint glimpse may be attained of the meaning of divine consciousness, and why the word 'personality' is entirely out of place in such a connexion.

H. P. Blavatsky, the Founder of the Theosophical Society, had much to say about the Divine Principle, in *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and other works. Among the Three Fundamental Principles of Theosophy the first is that the Divine Principle is Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable, transcending any conception or expression of human thought. We cannot make a mental image of the vast abysses of space between us and the nearest star, a simple fact in matter: how can man by thought approach the awful majesty of the Divine! In speaking of prayer from the Theosophical standpoint, Katherine Tingley says:

"Theosophists, not believing in a Personal God, cannot conceive how one can pray for one thing and another for just the opposite, or how different nations professing to believe in the same God, to love the same God, but each asking for something different, can expect to have their prayers answered. For what is this but self-serving? But we do believe in prayer to the Central Source of All Light, seeking only for strength to do our duty — prayer that lifts one far above all the discouraging aspects of life and brings one home to his own and into harmony with his own divine nature. In that way, I think, we can interpret the beautiful idea of 'going home to the Father,' that is, to the Supreme, to Deity, the Omnipresent, All-Powerful, and All-Loving — to the Infinite."

This reference to the All-Loving reminds us that there is a ray which leads direct from Man to God, and that is Love or Compassion. In *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, a devotional treatise brought to our attention by H. P. Blavatsky, we find:

"But stay, Disciple. . . . Yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS — eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

"The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which IS, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE."

So Theosophy teaches that the Path to Wisdom is entered only through the Gateway of Love to all that breathes; this means Universal Brotherhood in practice.

The Second Fundamental Proposition in Theosophy is the universality of the law of rhythm, of ebb and flow. This periodic law extends from the atom to the great universe of stars, and in man's life is shown in the reincarnation of the immortal soul at intervals in material bodies. In connexion with the law of ebb and flow, which has always been taught by the great philosophers of the Orient, a remarkable development in modern scientific speculation has lately taken place, bringing it into harmony with the teaching of Theosophy. Until recently it was positively

declared by leaders in science that when the sun and the stars grew old and died the universe would run down like a clock for want of winding. Collisions between stars might produce a temporary respite, but universal death would ultimately prevail. There being no God to start the machinery again, all would be over. But new discoveries about matter have pressed the more unprejudiced into the admission that it is more reasonable to suppose that after the running-down process is complete the reaction will come and a running-up process will begin. It is interesting to see thinkers finding their way out of the fog of materialism into the light of Theosophy, although they may not yet recognise the direction in which they are going.

The Third Fundamental Proposition is that all souls are sparks of the Oversoul, passing through a pilgrimage to acquire individuality, first through natural impulse and then by self-determined effort, checked by the law of cause and effect, Karma. It would not be in place here to enter into a detailed exposition of the three propositions, nor to show how they are contained, though often under a misleading guise, in every system of thought worthy of the name philosophy, nor to justify them further than to say that when the student has gained a comprehension of them and realized the light they throw upon the great problems of life, their reasonableness becomes evident. The reason for mentioning them here is because they indicate that, even though, as we say, it would be presumptuous to dogmatize on the nature of God, yet something may be gleaned about the laws of Being which are the Divine Will in action.

Take, for instance, the periodic law as shown in Reincarnation, as an expression of divine justice. The ignorant see no fundamental principle governing the birth of children except the very obscure and much-disputed principles of heredity; to them it is the merest chance whether you have a fine intellect and healthy body, or an imperfect or even utterly degenerate constitution, whether you came into a desirable family or one of criminal type. Theosophy shows that divine law reigns throughout the universe -- not even a sparrow shall fall "without your Father"; reigns in every field, the moral as well as the physical, and that it is actual blasphemy to imagine that a soul shall be born into conditions of lifelong misery for no fault of its own. The conception of Reincarnation, however, redeems our idea of divine law from the imputation of cruelty and enables us to see a glimpse into the working of divine justice. The cartoonist suggested a deeper lesson than perhaps he realized when he drew the horror of the new-born European baby presented with an enormous bill for damages and debts to which it had fallen heir!

In regard to the existence of a Universal Mind, an aspect of the Unknown Divinity, there is a hopeful sign of change in modern scientific

thought. For years scientific leaders have taught that species were produced by the blind action of natural forces without aim or intelligence. Natural Selection and the Survival of the Fittest and the brute Struggle for Existence have their place in Nature and have been misused to support the atheistic 'blind-force' theories, but Theosophy has always denied that they have been the *directors* of evolution. And now a school of thinkers is arising in the scientific ranks which suspects that instead of pure chance being the cause of certain forms of life, their line of descent (or ascent) proceeded on a definite road, each succeeding variety moving nearer to a pattern foreseen from the first. For instance, the development of the horse can be roughly traced in this way through several stages from a small animal of quite different proportions from the final result. The development of the flying bird from the reptile, of the flying bat from an unknown insectivorous quadruped, etc., are difficult problems unanswerable on the blind-force hypothesis. This subject is fully considered by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, written at a time when the materialistic position was absolutely orthodox in Darwinian circles. Today, however, we find such distinguished scientists as Fabre and Cuentot and the new school, looking for deeper causes, *for Mind in Nature*, in order to explain the tendency of evolution to go in certain directions rather than in others.

It is impossible to speak on the subject of Divinity without touching on the question "What think ye of Christ?" Is he man or God? It is hardly necessary to do more than quote the words of an eminent churchman, the Rev. Hastings Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle Cathedral, England, at the Modern Churchman's Congress in August, 1921. He is reported as saying:

> "Jesus Christ never claimed divinity for himself, and was in the fullest sense a man, with not merely a human body but a human soul, intellect and will. Jesus may have allowed himself to be called the Messiah, but never in any of his critically well-attested sayings is there anything which suggested that his conscious relation to God was any other than that of any man towards God."

Neither Dean Rashdall nor his sympathizers have been indicted for heresy, and it seems that one may hold a high position in the church and teach the sound Theosophical opinion that Jesus was not an incarnation of God in any sense other than that he was a great Adept Teacher, one in whom the divine spark had become a consuming fire, one in the same class with the other great Teachers of Theosophy throughout the Ages. This should be a very welcome thought to some who may fancy that the acceptance of Theosophical interpretations of the Bible would render them liable to be considered heretical. It would be interesting to enlarge upon this point, but it is only possible to say that Theosophy is no new-fangled

invention; it declares to men of all faiths: Look deeply enough into your own religion and you will find the basic truths of Theosophy there. Listen to H. P. Blavatsky's words which, though written more than forty years ago, are as appropriate to the position of the Theosophical Society today as they were then:

"History teems with examples of the foundation of sects, churches, and parties by persons who, like ourselves, have launched new ideas. Let those who would be apostles and write infallible revelations do so; we have no new church, but only an old truth to commend to the world. Ours is no such ambition. On the contrary, we set our faces like flint against any such misuse of our Society. If we can only set a good example and stimulate to a better way of living, it is enough. Man's best guide, religious, moral, and philosophical, is his own inner divine sense. . . . He should lean upon that better self — his own prophet, apostle, priest, king and savior. No matter what his religion, he will find within his own nature the holiest of temples, the divinest of revelations."

Theosophy is a Life, not a creed; practice brotherhood on the lines indicated in the words just quoted and you will attain a *new point of view;* the old things pass away and a new life begins: we who have tried it can testify from knowledge.

It will now be clear that, according to Theosophy, whatever may be the ignorance of the mind of man about the awful mystery of the Divine Principle in the Universe, we may be absolutely sure that we are moving in the right direction if, in the words of Paul, "we love the brethren." It is plain that we cannot love others and not wish to help them. To worship God in spirit and in truth is to serve humanity whose crying need is so urgent. What sort of a Deity would ask for personal adoration, praise, recognition of His standing, to the neglect of the service of His suffering creatures? Yet all through history we see that it has been much easier to give time, work, and wealth to the promotion of man-made creeds and dogmas than to act the part of brothers one to another. Do not let us deceive ourselves that the days of strife on behalf of dogma are over; human nature is not changed, and the simple teaching of brotherhood which all the Great Ones brought as the essence of their message, has not yet been tried on a large scale.

According to Theosophy, the practice of brotherhood in its full beauty, not only opens the heart and brings abiding joy, but reacts upon the mind as well, clarifying it and illuminating it to greater understanding. William Q. Judge, the successor of Madame Blavatsky as Leader of the Theosophical Society, writes in a famous passsage:

"The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind."

This may be a new and startling idea to some, but Theosophy declares that it works. As Katherine Tingley says:

"We must bring the material and intellectual part of our nature into closer touch with the

wonderful mysterious power of the spiritual life that is at the very root of our being. It is mysterious because we do not find it often. Only occasionally a little of it comes into our lives. But to have its full companionship, to go through life depending on it and guided by it — it is all in the great scheme of life; and you and I can have it; and even the humblest, the most unfortunate, the most depraved, they too must have it."

This mysterious spiritual life at the very root of our being is the indication of the existence of the Higher Self, the permanent immortal spark of Divinity which is passing through its long pilgrimage and using many incarnations — human personalities — on the way, and casting them aside as we put off worn-out garments, or as the actor changes his character from one day to another. As H. P. Blavatsky says:

"The great achievement of a Mystic is 'Self-Knowledge,' meaning not only the analytical knowledge of his own limited personality, but the synthetical knowledge of the 'one' Ego from which that passing personality sprang."

And this Self-Knowledge is no cold, abstract, far-off thing, removed from daily life, for the key to it is, in the words of the Eastern scripture brought by H. P. Blavatsky: "Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child." When Jesus said that to know the doctrine one has to obey the Divine Will, he made it very clear that the primary requirement of obedience was universal brotherhood: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

It may be suggested that a life devoted to brotherhood means a life of painful self-abnegation and sacrifice. The very reverse is the case. Self-abnegation there may be, but if the true spirit of service is beaming in the heart the idea of pain is absurd. As soon speak of the melancholy fate of the mother who gives up worldly enjoyments in order to devote herself more faithfully to the training of her children; what true and loving mother would think of calling that a painful sacrifice! Look around and think what this unhappy world might be made into if the principle of brotherhood became a living power in all hearts! Instead of a number of warring creeds, there would be a federation of religions, each recognising the right of the rest to exist and to express Religion in itself, pure and undefiled, through the forms that suited its own followers. The face of the world would be changed by the adoption of a true system of education, not based upon the brain alone, nor aiming at preparation for brutal competition, but primarily conducted for the development of nobility of character. Government would become an easy matter, and laws would be only regarded as rules for the regulation of affairs, not for the repression of crime. War would, of course, entirely disappear, and so would abject poverty and excessive luxury. The arts and sciences would advance by leaps and bounds into realms undreamt-of.

We firmly believe that something of this kind will come in time, and that the general principles of Theosophy will be found to be the only vital power that can bring this about. To talk, therefore, of the awful

sacrifices that must be made by those who see the vision of this Promised Land and ardently wish to work for it, is out of place. The only 'sacrifice' demanded is the sacrifice of desires which are those of the lower nature, and which stand in the way of the New Birth.

In a brief address much has to be omitted, but I hope it has been made clear that Theosophy teaches a profoundly reverent view of the Divinity behind the visible and invisible creation, while repudiating the childish tendency to look upon God as a personality in any ordinary sense, a big man, however glorified, located in some point in space. And also that there is a true Path, the only one, the Path of Brotherhood, which leads upward and onward to freedom and ever nearer to the Divine Source from which all comes and to which all must return.

Space will not permit more than a reference to the principles of Theosophy which explain the relationship between the personal man and the reincarnating Ego, the Divine Ray which is the true self, the "Father in Heaven" — heaven, as the Christian and all other ancient and wise Teachers tell us, being within. Nor can we consider, however appropriate here, how the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, under the Leadership of Katherine Tingley, is putting into practice the teachings of Theosophy in the life at Point Loma, in the educational work among young people, in the prisons, and in numerous other ways. I am glad, however, to be able to put on record here my conviction that those who have earnestly tried to put the principles of Theosophy into practice, to make brotherhood a living power in their lives, seeking self-mastery with love of humanity in their hearts, without personal aims, and with a sincerity that overcomes all obstacles, find that *life indeed becomes worth living.*

I cannot do better than close with a few inspiring words from Katherine Tingley:

"And so the great message of Theosophy for the New Time is: Find the Path, find the True Man, the Real Man, the Soul, live in it, for it is within the reach of everyone. It is the Warrior, the Warrior-Soul, that carries man on from life to life, from experience to experience, till he attains perfection and shall 'go no more out.'"

"SILENCE is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind and spirit. The man who preserves his selfhood ever calm and unshaken by the storms of existence — not a leaf, as it were, astir on the tree, not a ripple on the shining pool — his, in the mind of the Sage, is the ideal attitude and conduct of life. If you ask him, 'What is silence?' he will answer, 'It is the Great Mystery. The Holy Silence is His Voice.' If you ask, 'What are the fruits of silence?' he will answer, 'They are self-control, true courage or endurance, patience, dignity, and reverence. Silence is the keystone of character.'"

— *Ohiyesa* (Dr. Charles Eastman)

GOOD-BYE

RALPH LANESDALE

THE night was still, and all the house was quiet: the room was hardly lighted by the reading-lamp on the table; but the fire still glowed, and there were pictures in its magic caverns for those who could see them. But the old man in the big arm-chair was seeing pictures of a different kind in the mysterious region we call memory. He had been occupied with those other pictures in the fire — pictures of a bright future, in which he was not alone, — when the letter came that now lay on the table beside him with the news that the boy, who was to share that glowing future, was lying dead somewhere in France.

He had read the letter calmly, as if it were merely an official confirmation of what he knew must happen. It seemed to carry with it a deadly chill and an evil odor, with a sense of horror and utter misery, a fleeting picture of a man lying in the filth of that unknown field; and then a blank. . . .

With curious indifference he had taken from his pocket another letter in a boyish hand beginning "Dear old Dad," and suddenly he was back again in the days when the dead soldier was a poor little ricketty child, who had loved him so unreasonably. His father never could understand why the child should love him. When he thought of the miserable little body, and the sinister heredity with which he had endowed a beautiful soul that had come to him with love and utter trust, he was ashamed. And then the apology for a home . . . poor little lad! What chance had he in life? And yet he had never cursed his father for bringing him into the world. Instead, the child had loved him, wonderfully.

Where had he learned such generosity? More, the little fellow had always thanked his father for doctoring him in his constant sicknesses; and, when he could not speak and could hardly breathe in an attack of croup and his father was applying hot water bandages to his throat, he had put up his hand and stroked his father's cheek by way of thanks. Always patient, he had never complained; but his face came to wear a constant look of wonder as to why things should be so.

And then came a memory of summer days in an old garden, and the little boy tottering along on his shaky little legs, dragging behind him proudly a little cart that his Dad had made for him, and that squeaked and rattled gloriously. The joy of the child was as pathetic as his suffering; he seemed so unnaturally contented with such trifles. And he was

so intuitively tactful and polite that everyone loved him; but they seemed to divine that his life was an unconscious tragedy. No one had ever taught him to be polite; it was not necessary.

One day his father told him to go to the kitchen and ask the cook for something, a message invented to please the cook, who thought all the world of the child then on his first and only visit to his grandfather's house, an old manor-house in the country, with a wonderful garden and rambling stables and hot-houses and other mysteries. The servants all loved him, and he liked to go on errands. His father remembering that there was a heavy swing-door between the hall and the back passages, had followed to see if the little boy could open it alone, when he overheard his messenger rehearsing his message and putting it into proper form thus, "Please Mrs. Robson, Dada says will you be so kind as to . . ." A lump came into his throat, and he looked up to see the old squire, his father, who had been writing unseen at a half concealed desk nearby, watching the child with an expression so gentle that it was a revelation to his son who had generally encountered only the harsher side of an autocratic temperament.

And then one day the child came in with a wonderful tale that had been told him by a farm-laborer, with whom he had made friends, and whom he described as "the gentleman what belongs to the pigs," because the man had been feeding pigs at the farm nearby. His courtesy was spontaneous.

Those summer days at the old Hall were marvelously beautiful to the child, and seemed in some way wonderful to his grandfather, whose rigid orthodoxy was not shocked as it should have been to find that the boy had never been inside a church nor ever learned to "say his prayers." His grandmother, indeed, had tried to remedy these sad omissions in his education. He made no protest, but took it all just as it came: it was all beautiful and strange. He went for long walks with the old squire, talking nearly all the time in his curiously 'old-fashioned way'; while the old man forgot his own worries and anxieties listening to the child and finding unexpected happiness in the adoration of the little pagan, who thought his grandfather the wisest and the noblest being on the earth.

The father of the boy had clashed with his autocratic parent, who despised the artistic temperament of the son who had disgraced the family by becoming an artist. They had not quarreled, but the artist was made to feel that he was almost outside the pale of society. But that was long ago, and now as he sat dreaming of the little boy, the artist could forgive his father and see him a little with the adoring reverent eyes of the child.

Poor little lad! Dead! No. It was the man of forty who lay dead

"somewhere in France." But his father saw no picture of that scene of horror, only a momentary sense of misery that faded into unreality as another memory flashed into objectivity. A sickly child wrapped in a black shawl on an untidy bed in the London lodging that was all the home he knew, till he had gone to spend a summer at that magical palace in the north, where all was clean and orderly and wonderful.

Poor boy! He had volunteered reluctantly because he thought it was his duty. The very idea of war was repulsive to him; it seemed unnatural. He had never dreamed of killing anything, nor of fighting; that too was unnatural. But if it was his duty he felt that he must go. His father had told him always to do what he believed to be his duty, and not to worry about success or failure. So he had gone; and the end was only what was to be expected. But the certain knowledge of the fact made his father realize that the boy was gone for good.

Hitherto, though he had been away in the colonies for the last twenty years, he was always likely to come home some day; but now —! Well, now he seemed to be there in the room sitting on a little stool by the fire playing listlessly by himself, as he used to do.

Twenty years of colonial life had made a man of him, perhaps, though his letters were still boyish, almost childish, to the last; and now no picture of the man rose up before his father's mental vision: it was the child he saw.

There he sat looking into the fire, just as his father had been doing when that letter came, but he did not turn to look at the old man in the armchair — the child would not have known him perhaps; twenty years had changed them both. And yet not so; for, as he sat there, the artist was back in the body that he wore when the dead soldier was a child. Time is a deluder — or rather he is himself but an illusion, and can be made to adapt himself to man's imagination. Time, indeed, may be but another name for man's imagination. Clock-time is artificial: real time is infinitely variable. Truly it was said "a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday." The true seer is the divine Self, in whose sight eternity may be a panorama inconceivable to the mind of man. So the years can fall away in a moment, and pictures of an almost forgotten past may roll by as naturally as they did when they were presenting themselves for the first time, — if there ever is a first time in that eternal drama we call life.

To the mind of the artist many pictures came and went, but the little boy did not grow up into a man. It was as though the dead soldier had been but a make-believe, a fancy imperfectly realized, that had gone to pieces in the storm over there. But the child sat here by the fire dreaming unutterable things; memories too, perhaps, and wondering at the misery

of life that had so often shut out all its natural beauty. Once he looked round at his father and smiled. And the old man remembered that he had not kept his promise — the only one he ever broke to the boy; and that was to take him for a day out in the woods of Epping Forest, where there were wild corners and strange glades, in the days before the place was made into a sort of park, cleaned up, and drained, and thinned out beyond all recognition. Now it was too late. The boy had never complained; he never did. But his father felt that he had failed on a point of honor, and he began to wonder if it were indeed too late to make good his promise. He leant forward to stroke the boy's head, and noticed that the door was open, and the sun shining outside.

It astonished him for a moment, because he thought it was winter; but now there was no doubt about it, the sun was shining out there through the trees, and there was no snow on the ground. The dead leaves were dry and crisp, and the little boy was following a butterfly. Down there in the glade a deer raised its pretty head and bounded off under the low branches of the pollarded oaks and hornbeams, that are the peculiar characteristic of Epping Forest — trees that for centuries were pollarded at regular intervals, but that now were left to grow freely. Their gnarled trunks and weird polls seemed to be making fun of him. He smiled at his own incredulity, and followed the boy out into the forest that he knew so well. The sun-rays danced among the dry dead leaves that rustled at his feet, and a cuckoo called from a nearby tree. He tried to reach the boy, but the butterfly went faster and seemed to draw the child after, though not allowing itself to be caught.

Then there was a whirring overhead, that was not made by any denizen of the forest. The air grew dark and the noise became a roar. Then came a shock as of an earthquake or of a volcano in eruption, and the man dashed forward to save the boy. But he could not reach him; the ground gave way beneath his feet and sucked him down, while the darkness closed over his head. He struggled to be free, and called, but no sound came. His head was weighed down and he made frantic efforts to raise it. Suddenly he awoke, alone in the silent studio.

He tried to remember what had happened. The room was cold, and the fire almost dead. There was a letter on the table, and the lamp shone on it. He could read it where it lay. It told him that his son was dead. He knew it told the truth. And yet his son, his little lad, had just been sitting there, and then had wandered out into the woods just to fulfill that promise, and to redeem his father's word.

It was just like him to do that. His father's promises were sacred to him, and he seemed to know his Dad would be feeling badly at having failed to do what he had promised, so he came back himself to make

it possible for them to have their outing in Epping Forest after all.

That picture passed and another took its place. Yet they were not like pictures, but rather actual experiences relived.

Now he was back in his bedroom at the old home; and on the bed beside his own the little lad was dying apparently of bronchitis; the cough was neverceasing; every gasp for breath became a cough that seemed to strike a blow upon his father's heart, until the pain became unbearable, and he almost longed to lay his hand upon the little throat and end the suffering.

It seemed to the watcher that the fragile body must be shaken from its hold on life, and yet the struggle lasted; and gradually it was borne in upon the father's mind that the imprisoned soul was longing for release. Then the feeble body seemed to lose interest in the fight for life, and for a moment the issue of the struggle hung in the balance, and in that moment he, the father, knew that his will could turn the scale. He longed to end the suffering; but he could not let the child die. He would not let him go.

Within a little while the breathing grew more natural and sleep came. By morning the fever disappeared; and the watcher knew that the boy would live.

Again the door of death had opened, and again the soul stood on the threshold. This time he would not try to gratify his craving for companionship by hindering the process of release. Rather he tried to follow; but his imagination could not carry him across the barrier of life. His feet were rooted in the earth, he could not rise; but he looked up and saw the darkness lighten. Beneath him flowed a river and under the dark water lay a body, such as his own son might have grown into. But on the surface of the river was a boat and a man, the double of the dead one, was stepping aboard the boat which headed towards the rising sun; and one who stood by pointed towards the glory up to which a robed figure soared with outstretched arms, escaping from the shadow-world of earth.

The man embarking in the boat seemed to be almost within reach, though hastening towards some distant goal. Perhaps if called he might be hindered from embarking, held for a while by the strong ties of human love and longing.

But the living man was silent. The pain of parting could not wring from him a thought that might hold back the traveler to the other shore. No word was uttered even of farewell: but the heart spoke in the silence, and its message was a valediction.

The pictures passed; and with them went the sense of solitude and dull regret, and all that yearning for companionship which seems to be the inevitable accessory of death.

The pain of parting lost its poignancy, and gradually was merged in

the calm confidence of unending life. Time seemed to be but the slow dropping of the stream of individual existences into the lake of Universal Consciousness, in which the rushing river of life at last found peace in the fulfillment of its destiny and a return to its source.

WHAT IS FAITH?

R. MACHELL

ONE of the things that might astonish us, if it were not so common, is the vagueness that envelops such a word as Faith. We find religious writers declaring that faith is the gift of God, without any explanation of the word 'God,' or the origin of qualities that are not godgiven. We are told that faith comes by the grace of God, but we are not told what that term 'grace of God' means. Then there are mystics who say that faith is born of love; but who leave us in doubt as to what love is and how it can give birth to faith. More frank are the simple confessions of ignorance contained in the assertions that faith is faith, God is God, and so on.

Now I find a writer declaring that faith is consequent upon belief, without explaining how they are related or in which way they differ. Further, he declares that faith is a bond of love which springs from belief: but he does not show how a bond of love can spring from belief; nor does he explain what he means by a 'bond of love.'

Then there are various kinds of intellectualists who denounce faith as a weakness, a submission to external suggestion or influence — but none of these attempt to explain the real nature of the thinking principle in man nor to distinguish between the operation of the higher and the lower mind. Yet it would seem evident that there is a radical difference between faith and belief, which indicates the existence of at least different faculties of the mind, if not of different minds, or modes of consciousness.

The difficulty of discussing such subjects lies principally in the confusion that is so common as to the meaning of ordinary words. It is evident to any one who tries to think clearly that there is great uncertainty as to the precise meaning of common words and a deplorable vagueness of thought indicated by the constant use of the same words with different meanings attached. The habit of using words in various ways without explanation leads to endless misunderstandings and fruitless arguments. Yet it is evidently useless to be continually defining one's terms when the definition itself must contain undefined words. All that can be done is to try to think clearly and speak plainly: no easy matter,

as will be admitted by those who have ever really tried to practice it.

In speaking to students of Theosophy one has the advantage of being able to use certain terms with a fair chance of being understood, and one who has studied Theosophy at all carefully must have made some effort to clear up his own thinking, for the greatest insistance is laid upon the complex nature of mind and the fluctuations of human consciousness. Theosophists are familiar with the idea that the highest ideals and the lowest passions are within the range of ordinary human experience; and they cannot have failed to hear of the duality of mind.

To the Theosophist then it will be easy to understand that there is a difference of kind, and not of degree only, between faith and belief the one being due to the operation of the higher and the other to the exercise of the lower mind. To the mystic, faith is spiritual perception of truth, while belief is a reasonable appreciation of probabilities deduced from experience or from evidence.

Such a conception is easy to one who sees in man a spark of the Universal Consciousness or Divine Fire, involved in a material body which has a mental equipment capable of receiving messages from its own spiritual self, and capable of clothing such inspirational ideas in thoughts; but these ideas are not deduced from reason or experience though as thoughts they are inevitably affected by both.

If man is compounded of spirit, soul, and body, and indeed of various kinds of soul and body, then it is no hard matter to see that he may, in his inner, higher states of consciousness, be in the presence of Truth itself; that is he may know realities as well as appearances. And this direct perception of truth is called 'faith.' Evidently, this direct perception of truth is not a function of the reasoning faculty or of the lower brain-mind; and this inner experience must be translated by the mind into thought, capable of expression in words or in symbols of one sort or another, such as are used by musicians, poets, or artists, in order to express spiritual ideas.

Those who regard man as merely a thinking animal can only look upon faith as an act of imagination, meaning by imagination a process of self-deception, in no way akin to perception of truth.

The Theosophist looks upon mind as the instrument by which man gathers experience on all planes of nature, and also as the connecting link between the Spiritual Self and the lower material person. When the mind is illumined by the light of the Higher Self then it transmits high ideals, Wisdom, Spiritual Truth. Then the man is regarded as an inspired teacher, a prophet, a seer, a mage, a man of genius. His teachings are a revelation of truth, not an exposition of theories. He speaks "as one

having authority." Yet in speaking, writing, teaching, he must perforce use his brain-mind in order to give intelligible form to his ideas. And it may happen that his brain-mind is unequally developed, or in some way inadequate to its task; then the man will be unable to deliver his message coherently, and he will be in danger of being looked upon as a lunatic and of being treated accordingly. Therefore it is of importance that a man should train his mind to clear thinking as well as to correct expression.

For the same reason it is important that the mind should be clean, lest it pollute the purity of the ideas submitted to it. So morality and physical health are each of the greatest importance on their own plane. The whole personality should be regarded as the instrument of the Spiritual Self and be made fit for its high purpose. This should be the aim of education, to produce a well-balanced character tuned to high ideals.

These high ideals are not merely pretty dreams, but pictures of the next step in evolution. The ideal of one age should be the accomplished fact of the next.

It is distressingly evident that such education is rare today; and it is painfully clear that high ideals may be utterly perverted by unbalanced minds. This is perhaps one of the most obvious facts in the history of our own civilization.

High ideals and a well-balanced character are both necessary: alone they are impotent for good.

All high ideals are founded in faith; that is to say they are efforts to express some new aspect of truth perceived by intuition. Faith is the highest intuition; one of its immediate effects is trust. Without faith there can be no real trust, though a lower form of that quality may be developed from reason and belief, which are motions of the brain-mind. A man may believe in a theory because of its convenience or of its seeming fitness: he may believe a statement to be true because of its probability or because he has accustomed himself to believe all statements coming from that source. But faith knows no BECAUSE. Probability does not affect it. It is a process of direct perception or of intuition.

This conception of faith would of course exclude a great part of the belief that so often passes for the higher quality. And while faith does not depend upon reasoned probability yet it is not irrational.

I believe it is not irrational to recognise the fact in our experience that we all habitually accept our own intuitional perceptions of truth within certain limits and say "I know so and so." In fact we all live by faith to a much greater degree than we may be willing to confess; for we are in the habit of assuming that our intuitve perceptions are the results of reason and experience; whereas in most cases we should be hard put to it

to explain clearly our reasons for the faith we have in the stability of the earth, the continuity of consciousness, the orderly sequence of time and the seasons, our own rationality, the reality of the things we think we see as well as of the things that we do not see. In fact, I think that it would be strictly true to declare that we live by faith; while we reason upon our experiences and thoughts, and try to justify faith by reason. But faith needs no justification; it is self-sufficient. Belief on the other hand is liable to be shaken by argument and to be destroyed by reason or experience.

Again, I must point out that much of that which bears the name of faith is no more than habitual belief, or the unthinking acceptance of popular tradition, or the results of early education. This kind of thing is unworthy of the name of faith, and certainly is not self-sufficient.

It may seem as if faith could be given from one to another, as from teacher to disciple; but what takes place in such a case is really an awakening in the disciple of his own internal spiritual vision, which is like a flame that is kindled by the fire of the teacher, and which may be apparently transmitted as a flame is kindled. But in reality the fire is awakened as a self-sufficient principle without diminution of the parent flame.

When people at a revival meeting 'get religion' there may be an apparent awakening of a dormant fire, but the short duration of the illumination is evidence of the fact that the spiritual flame, if any, was not kindled by the fire of the revivalist but was merely a reflex. There are misleading fires in nature, and the will-o'-the-wisp is paralleled in man's experience of spiritual or psychic fires.

The false fire dies down and cannot be rekindled, being but a delusion or a reflexion. The true light may be obscured; but it will shine by its own radiance, and will know its own kinship to the spiritual fire that burns in other hearts. Beliefs may clash and may arouse intolerance; not so faith. True faith knows for itself; and the mind may not recognise the source of that knowledge. The mind may be untrained and uncontrolled, and so the light of intuition may be broken up like a reflexion in a defective mirror. The mind may fail in its interpretation, or in the transmission of the spiritual light; and this must happen constantly in the great mass of undisciplined, emotional, or impressionable natures, as well as in those too dull even to reflect a ray of spiritual light.

So when a spiritual Teacher brings the divine fire to light the hearts of men, strange things may happen. Even among those who see the light there will be some who have no wick nor fuel in their lamp, only a reflector. And there will be some whose lamps flare up and soon are clouded with smoke from a fire that is beyond their power to control. And some

whose flame rekindled will glow sure and steady but tinted by the color of the personality; and some will seem to glow with the pure light of the parent flame unstained by any personal peculiarities.

It may be that this spiritual fire will burn up much that the world has valued foolishly, but this fire purifies and cleanses, and brings new life to renovate the human race.

Faith is the true source of human happiness, for it transmutes all knowledge and experience into wisdom, as the fire transforms dead fuel into new energy for human service. But it must be true faith, not the result of hypnotic or of auto-suggestion, nor of submission to the mass mind which is called popular opinion. I think it would be well to distinguish between the true faith of intuitive perception and the false faith which is mere belief based on no internal conviction of a spiritual truth.

The intellectuals have perhaps done good work in analysing the foundations of popular beliefs and superstitions; but when they attacked faith and ridiculed imagination they threw the weight of their intelligence into the scale along with forces of destruction and disorganization, tending to hasten the decline of civilization, while posing as its leaders. A leader of humanity must be one who is spiritually illuminated, and who can reveal some ray of truth from beyond the clouds of speculation and reason: for when civilization runs down and high ideals become impotent, it means that true faith has been obscured by theory; and it is time for a new revelation of that truth which is eternal.

When Madame Blavatsky brought Theosophy to the western world she declared the purpose of establishing a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, which was the need of the world. Her successor Katherine Tingley has established that nucleus, and has demonstrated the possibility of realizing that ideal. Those who accepted her leadership by the light of faith have long since seen their faith justified by experience. The work in the Râja-Yoga School has proved that the ideals on which that work is founded are sound, and can be made practical even in a civilization so degenerate as our own. In that school, children learn to distinguish between the higher and the lower mind, and there is little fear that they will ever fail to understand the difference between faith and belief; faith in their own divine nature and belief in the illusions of the senses and emotions.

What the world now needs is to rediscover faith: to feel the conviction that there is a real meaning and purpose in life and a possibility of greater progress towards the goal of true Self-knowledge.

LUCREZIA BORGIA — A STUDY IN THE GENTLE ART OF CALUMNY

GRACE KNOCHE

"TRUTH we search for, and, once found, we bring it forward before the world, whencesoever it comes."— *Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*

"*The thought of death brings no regret, but pleasure;*
And after the last sacrament great peace
Will be mine own — in overflowing measure,
If but your mercy marks my soul's release.

"And here the letter finds a sudden ending,
As though the dying hand had lost its power:
My children to Rome's love and care commending
Ferrara — Friday - at the fourteenth hour.

"An odor as of incense faintly lingers
About the page of saintly sophistries —
And I am thinking clever were the fingers
That could mix poison and write words like these."

THUS a contemporary, who in a recent magazine gives a metrical rendering, with comment, of Lucrezia Borgia's last letter. The lines have a fragrant touch as of mignonette or lavender long laid away, but they are vitiated with the poison breath of calumny, foulest of foul things. We quote them because they assail a great Theosophical principle, violations of which in the cases of slandered men and women, both dead and living, we can find of course on every hand. But it is convenient to take the case of Lucrezia Borgia here, not merely because the name is well known, but because references similar to the above appear with fair regularity, right along, in current reading matter — yesterday's paper, for instance, beginning its report of a notorious poison case with the glaring headline, "A Modern Lucrezia Borgia!" To point a moral, therefore, since the Borgia is arraigned at the time, what is the evidence for and against in her case?

The fact is, the most careful historical research has thus far failed to connect Lucrezia Borgia, placarded down the centuries as arch-poisoner and *intriguante*, with a single vice or crime. The only draught ever mixed by her hands was the beneficial distillation of tenderness and good works, and this from an alembic of suffering that few are ever called upon to pass through. A Theosophist, viewing this fact, asks the old Theosophical question: "Why are libels echoed with such ease?" It seems to be a psychological fact, even though such an anomaly from the stand-

point of the soul, that as H. P. Blavatsky wrote in 1889, in one of her trenchant editorials:

"Lies are ever more readily accepted than truth, and are given up with more difficulty."

Not to mince matters and to make the statement definite: of all the wicked acts attributed to Lucrezia Borgia by writers who have not been in a position to examine their sources of information, but whose words are glibly echoed still in newspaper comment and the fledgling essays of our schools — acts ranging from incest to murder — there exists not a shred of evidence to sustain even one. How is this to be explained?

Very simply. Lucrezia Borgia was *non grata* to the ruling power of the time, and there was always more or less danger that she might some day prove unmanageable. She occupied an important place in political and social life almost from her birth, but she was never wholly docile to her father's political plans, to which her own relation, in his eyes, was that of a mere hostage, a surety; and she knew quite too much about her father's favorite, the infamous Cesare Borgia, one of the most debauched and cruel men of any age. The *clientèle* that served Pope Alexander never liked Lucrezia, and behind the throne of the gossipmongers of the day was just this *clientèle*. So that her fame was established for posterity by her enemies or the hopelessly prejudiced, and the 'Borgia fiction,' once created, fastened upon her to stay. And what would the dictum of such people naturally be like? What have enemies of progress and ignorant traducers not written, all through the centuries, about men and women whom research is now clearing, or will clear? What was the fate at their hands of Cagliostro, Paracelsus, Simon Magus, Saint-Germain, Cleopatra, Mary Magdalene? What of Sappho, Aspasia, Mary Stuart, and the rest? What have traducers not written in their effort to tear down the good name and destroy the work of H. P. Blavatsky? The simplest course for the ruling evil in any age is to slaughter the reputation of those who stand in its way — and a woman's good name is done to death with ease.

Lucrezia Borgia was the daughter of the Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, later Pope Alexander VI. Her mother was one Vanozza de' Catanei, and was, according to several writers, a woman of considerable character and intellectual force, highly educated and beautiful. That the Cardinal was strongly attached to her there seems to be no doubt, and that he always held her in respect is pointed out by several writers. Vanozza bore him four of the eight children whom we find mentioned in official documents, Lucrezia being the third, and when she was finally superseded by the more beautiful Giulia Farnese, she appears to have gained in social position rather than the reverse. She later married one Carlo Canale, a man of letters, and thenceforth, says Garner (in his biography of Cesare

Borgia), "she appears to have lived the life of a respectable and influential matron in the papal city."

The Cardinal was very fond of Lucrezia, and when he became Pope the luxurious 'Appartamenti Borgia' which he maintained in the Vatican became the child's home. According to Richard Garnett, L. L. D. (British Museum), she grew to womanhood "extolled by all as 'lovely, discreet and beautiful.'" Garner tells us that at thirteen she was "a beautiful, vivacious, golden-haired girl," and there is much evidence that between Lucrezia and her father, at least during early years, there existed a strong personal affection.

But while unquestionably the most lovable and most talented of all his children, Lucrezia was also the most gifted intellectually, and the Pope seems early to have shown great respect for her ability. When he absented himself from the Vatican on one occasion to conduct a campaign against the Colonnas, he appointed her to act for him and she conducted the affairs of his office until his return, even to the signing of State papers. Burchard* tells us that on another occasion also she was left "as regent in the Vatican, with authority to open letters and transact ecclesiastical business."

A girl of such ability and warmth of feeling would naturally resent becoming in the hands of an ambition-mad father a mere political pawn; yet in that rôle unfortunately, in his eyes, her supreme value lay. When she was but twelve years old the Pope forced her into a loveless marriage with one Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro, a man wholly unworthy of her but whose alliance Alexander desired in order to strengthen a coalition between the Holy See and Milan. A few years later, when the child was bravely adjusting herself to conditions, Alexander, despite the husband's protest, had the marriage annulled. Politics had changed: the man who had been his political friend and useful to him, was now his enemy, and Lucrezia, to render him the utmost service in the emergency must have her life uprooted, if necessary. It was necessary, and logically therefore Alexander proceeded to force her, almost at once, into a second *mariage de convenance*, to use the mildest possible term, with Prince Alfonso of Bisceglie, son of the King of Naples.

This alliance, however, turned out more fortunately than might have been hoped, for the Prince possessed many of the qualities of the chivalrous man. Between himself and the gentle girl who had been so abruptly

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thrust into his life — herself hardly yet out of childhood — a sincere attachment sprang up. Everything promised happiness when — politics changed again. But disruption in this case was not so easy, for aside from the happiness the two young folk were finding in their affection for each other, a son had been born. However "where there is a will . . ." — and to make a long story short, the young Prince, after several attempts to poison him had failed, was stabbed and then strangled by hired assassins. Cesare Borgia was the instigator of this deed, and its purpose was disclosed when, very shortly, grief-stricken and in broken health, Lucrezia was forced into a third alliance, this time with Duke Alfonso the Younger of the rising Ferrara court.

Lucrezia was then only twenty years of age, and under the circumstances the thought of marriage must have been intolerable to her; but her position was made peculiarly difficult from the fact that the projected marriage was equally distasteful to the young Duke himself. He protested, but in vain. Aided by his father — the fine old Duke of Ferrara, who looked upon the whole affair as an outrage, for he knew the Borgia peculiarities while Lucrezia personally he did not know — he used every possible argument and employed every possible means to avoid it. But to no effect. It was too fine a political stroke. The pressure brought to bear by Pope Alexander was too heavy and the protesting parties succumbed. The marriage was finally celebrated and with extraordinary splendor. Lucrezia's entrance into Ferrara was like a royal progress.

The position of this young girl was indeed anomalous here. She did not even know her husband, much less love him. Her heart was broken and her health was gone. She had in addition the debatable comfort of knowing that her husband as well as his father loathed and detested the Borgia name, cherished feelings of outrage and resentment for what had been forced upon them, and were quite prepared to detest the hapless woman who was the pivot upon which it all turned. Certainly the prognosis was not a favorable one.

But by some strange karmic beneficence due, her biographers think, to the discretion, gentleness, and womanly tact which Lucrezia undeniably possessed — the unexpected came to pass. Ere long she was the light of the household, its sunshine. The old Duke became devoted to her. The young Duke grew to respect, admire, and then to love his wife sincerely, and there is no question that Lucrezia became greatly attached to him. Her health was restored and she became the mother of a son — the Ercole who married the Princess Renée of France — and of other sons and a daughter in due course. Dr. Garnett tells us, in his account of her life at Ferrara, that "she obtained universal respect for her piety and prudence and her patronage of men of letters," and it is well sub-

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stantiated that throughout the city-state she was universally beloved. Her works of charity were innumerable and to the destitute she was an angel in human guise. Upon one occasion, when a plague decimated the city, and the population, including most of the court, fled in terror, Lucrezia was one of the very few who remained behind to nurse and care for the sick. As Dr. Garnett says further, she was

"incapable from every point of view of the atrocities imputed to her by the libelers in her own day and by poets and romancers ever since. She has suffered vicariously for her father and brother."

After the death of the elder Duke, Lucrezia became mistress of the Court, no insignificant position when we understand that it was one of the noblest and most distinguished in Italy, noted for its brilliant intellectual life, and leaving behind it a name "forever associated with the history of Italian literature."

Ferrara rivaled Florence in its splendor, its literary culture, its art, and its rich civic life. Ariosto was its chief ornament in its palmy days, and Guarino Veronese, a pupil of Vittorino da Feltre (of whom Professor Sirén has written in *The Century Path* and also THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH), conducted a school there, sending out pupils of both sexes who became famous throughout Italy for their learning.

It throws additional light upon Lucrezia Borgia and her position to know that this school, which appears to have been based upon Râja-Yoga principles, as Vittorino's was unquestionably, was especially noted for the advantages afforded girl students and the high intellectual standard attained by them. This is noteworthy, for Italy stood quite alone in the Europe of that day in this important respect. Sismondi says of this, quite naïvely:

"Girls were intellectually disciplined as if sex made little difference, for classical learning was too precious for such an accident to disfranchise; hence, individuality of character marks the educated woman of the Renaissance no less than the man."

Whatever the reason, woman had this precious opportunity, and the same historian further speaks of

"the freedom accorded to woman without any struggle on her part to attain it, the unquestioning acquiescence in her equality, and the acceptance of her influence and even participation in active affairs."

adding that

"the same note of equal companionship that distinguished the Court characterized ordinary social intercourse between man and woman. . . . Even the peasants were better off and better informed than elsewhere. There is evidence of the continued existence of a thoroughly wholesome domestic life during the periods of greatest corruption."

None of which things can stay the course of lust for power, however,

when dominant in such tremendous expressions of selfishness and will as Alexander and his son Cesare, and Lucrezia was obviously powerless to maintain her will against their own, despite the doors of a rich intellectual life that remained open to her. But the fact that she passed through these doors raises a strong presumption that far from being mediocre as a woman, she was most unusual. To preside acceptably over such a court as that of Ferrara in its glory demanded more than mediocrity, and the fact is indisputable that Lucrezia Borgia was distinguished, even among the learned Italian women of that time, for her learning as well as her patronage of art and letters. Bayard, writing in 1512, said of her:

"She speaks Spanish, Greek, Italian, and French, and a little, and very correctly, Latin; and she also writes and composes poems in these languages."

Moreover, she possessed a library of her own, a notable circumstance in a day when books were for the most part still copied laboriously by hand, and when a collection of a thousand volumes might represent a fortune.

There is something rather wonderful in these facts when we consider Lucrezia's undirected, hounded, hunted life, bandied about as she was from household to household at someone's political whim, disliking and disliked, constantly in the shadow of her father's vices and her brother's crimes, the victim of plot and counterplot, a mere pawn on the chessboard of sordid plans; for in spite of it all, the sweetness of her nature was never imbittered or chilled, nor her innate love of learning crushed out.

It seems strange to us today that a woman of so much ability and so many gifts should have submitted as she did to this constant violation of her heart-life. But she did not submit unprotestingly; she was a mere child when the chessboard play began, with womanhood hardly reached when the third great move was made. Moreover, there must be considered the psychology of custom in a day when

"marriage was made to serve power and political position; and men especially entirely disregarded its vows" (Sismondi),

and when in one court at least, as the same historian tells us (that of Milan),

"a Court that shone like a star for the personal ability of its men and the beauty and intelligence of its women . . . it was common for the husband to sell his wife's honor; the brother his sister's; the father his daughter's; assassination was much dreaded."

To be forced into a loveless but honorable marriage might have been so positively the less of two evils that if we were to know the real inner history of Lucrezia Borgia's life, we might find less evidence of weakness than of diplomacy and strength. History is one long commentary upon

the duality of human nature, but that of the Italian courts of the Renaissance, when the mind and heart of awakening states and cities were struggling through travail to rebirth, is pre-eminently so. It presented phenomena that, as Garner remarks, "have never ceased to baffle the historian and the psychologist," and we cannot appraise any great figure of that period at its proper value without taking this into consideration.

But to return to our subject: such are a few of the well-attested facts at our disposal as to the life of Lucrezia Borgia, a woman so utterly misunderstood and so cruelly libeled that one does not speak respectfully of her even now without the preface of an argument or offered evidence. And this despite the splendid researches of biographers such as Gregorovius, Gilbert, and Garnett, and of others who, like John Leslie Garner, have incidentally done her justice in the course of other themes.

This is untheosophical; it is base, unbrotherly and unfair; moreover it is so stupid that a rational mind will have none of it, once the attention is drawn to the facts. But the facts are practically unknown still, while falsehoods pass for the truth on every hand. A Theosophist, confronted by wild stories of this or that person whose life or deeds have made history, would say: "It may be as you contend, of course — it *may be* — *but why not examine the evidence?*" If this could be uttered when the mean low challenge of slander strikes the air, or the printed page gives up its libels, what a scattering of empty arsenals there would be!

In a fresco done by Pinturricchio for Lucrezia Borgia's father — after the fashion of that day when persons in power often had their portraits or those of their children introduced into compositions on religious or mythological themes — there is the portrait of a little girl. Tradition says that it is of the child Lucrezia, and there is much to support this view. The portrait of Pope Alexander in the fresco — which was painted on the wall of one of the rooms in his apartments (a suite of six rooms, now forming part of the Vatican Library) — is indisputable, and while the mural decorations were going forward, a matter of some years, Lucrezia was in and out of these rooms constantly; so that there is reason both in this fact and in the custom of the day to hold the tradition tenable. But we also have an undisputed portrait of the Borgia as a woman,* painted by Titian,— than whom no artist ever painted better the woman of exalted rank — and between the two there is a striking resemblance. Titian's portrayal of the dignity and sweetness, the balance, humanity and high intelligence of the patrician woman, writes an unanswerable

*"La famosa Lucrezia Borgia, que fiori in Roma nel principio del XVI secolo; de mano del Tiziano, in Casa Pamfili Doria" (the renowned Lucrezia Borgia, who flourished in Rome in the beginning of the sixteenth century; from the hand of Titian, in the Pamfili Doria house), is inscribed on the reproduction which lies before us.

brief for the very attributes of character that we know Lucrezia Borgia to have possessed.

With regard to the child portrait, the test of internal evidence seems to us to establish the tradition even better. There is in both face and figure, as the illustration herewith shows, a wistful mildness, a lovable yet shrinking charm, great honesty, great sympathy, and unmistakable evidence of a locked-in but deep spirituality — qualities which research has established as having belonged to Lucrezia Borgia in a heightened degree. The eyes of the little figure look into the future, too, with a certain prophetic sadness, as though the shadow of subsequent events were already dark upon her path. Those who wish may review this portrait from the lofty height of the surface-technique of our day, but to us it is one of the loveliest left us by the ages, wonderful in its treatment, wonderful in spiritual content, and telling a mystic story of its own.

There is much inducement to comment upon it further, still more upon the life to which it gives us such a key; but comment really seems to be the least necessary thing in the world. The facts are their own advocate, and in thinking them over the question occurs: may we not be considering the more or less obscured incarnation of some one who is greater than appears at first glance? That is not the issue here, however, which is: shall falsehood pass unchallenged, or shall it not? As long as we live in a world of duality, where light and darkness, good and evil, truth and slander, love and hate, are "the world's eternal ways," so long must we expect a constant battle between fact and fiction in the records of human lives. But all battles must end sometime, and victory is not delayed when those who grasp the issue rise to its opportunity and cast the weight of research and ripe reason on the side of justice and truth. Responsibility in matters of this kind rests upon open minds in a very special way, whatever their creed or wherever they are to be found, for the ancient fight for truth's sake is the soul's prerogative and cannot with impunity be ignored. The gentle art of calumny finds expression in channels alien to the soul, and one's duty in relation to it is very plain.

"THE race of mankind would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid, have a right to ask it from their fellow-mortals. No one who holds the power of granting can refuse it without guilt."— SIR WALTER SCOTT

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES

C. J. RYAN

THE total eclipse of the Sun, which takes place on September 21st of this year, has been looked forward to with special interest, for it is hoped that the photographs of the stars surrounding the Sun, taken at the moment of totality when the darkness will permit them to be seen, will settle one of the disputed evidences for the Einstein Theory. At the last total eclipse of the Sun, the photographic images of the stars near it were displaced in the direction and to the degree that was expected if Professor Einstein's Theory of Relativity is true. But grave doubts have arisen as to the cause of the displacements upon the plates, and it has been suggested that instrumental errors or refraction of light from one cause or another were really responsible for the slight change in position of the stars. Every possible care is to be taken this time to eliminate all possible sources of error. The stars near the Sun can only be photographed during the few brief minutes when the Sun is entirely blotted out by the disk of the Moon, but at that moment a change of temperature occurs in the atmosphere, and perhaps in the telescope. It may be that the conditions will never be satisfactory enough for sufficiently accurate observations to be made.

Professor Einstein declares that his theory can be tested in three ways. The first is by the amount of bending of the rays of light from a distant star as they pass through a powerful gravitative field such as must exist in the neighborhood of an immense body like the Sun; the second is by the movement of the perihelion of Mercury's orbit; and the third is by the displacement of certain lines in the spectrum of the Sun. He claims that the theory of relativity completely explains the mysterious motion of Mercury's perihelion: the bending of the light-rays is still under discussion: the spectral displacement has not been established.

It is impossible for those who lack the necessary mathematical equipment to follow the reasoning by which the theory is supported, or even properly to understand the theory, except in part, but it is comparatively easy for persons of ordinary intelligence to understand the suggestions that have been made by numerous distinguished astronomers and mathematicians as to other possible causes for the amount of apparent displacement of the stars near the Sun (if definitely proved) and the anomaly in the perihelion of Mercury, which would explain them without calling upon the revolutionary explanation offered by Dr. Einstein. For instance, Dr. C. L. Poor, Professor of Celestial Mechanics, Columbia University,

in a very careful survey of the perihelion question shows that the action of an envelop of very rare, diffused matter surrounding the Sun (the Corona and the Zodiacal Light) is sufficient to explain the anomaly in Mercury's perihelion, and more, to explain other outstanding anomalies in the movements of Venus, the Earth, etc., which are not covered by the Einstein theory. To quote Professor Poor:

'Further, the discordance in the motion of Mercury is only one out of eight or ten similar discrepancies in the motions of the planets. Einstein and his followers have stressed the supposed explanation, under his theories, of the motion of Mercury, but have glossed over the necessity of finding an explanation for the remaining discrepancies. Now the theories of Einstein account partially for one or two of these other difficulties, completely fail to account in the slightest way for others, and finally greatly increase the discordance in the case of Venus. In fact, in the case of this planet, the Einstein formulas would give the orbit a rotation in the opposite direction to that which is required to fit the observations. . . . Einstein and his followers have cited the motions of the planets as conclusive proof of the truth of his hypotheses. The evidence does not sustain this — his hypotheses and formulas are neither *sufficient* nor *necessary* to explain the discordances in these motions. They are not sufficient, for they account for one only among the numerous discordances — that of the perihelion of Mercury; they are not *necessary*, for all the discordances, including that of Mercury, can readily be accounted for by the action, under the Newtonian law, of matter known to be in the immediate vicinity of the sun and the planets.

"Thus the motions of the planets do not prove the *truth* of the Einstein theory, nor, on the other hand, do they prove its *falsity*. While these motions can be accounted for by a certain distribution of matter in the solar envelop, it has not yet been established by observation that the matter is distributed through space in the required way. . . ."— *Scientific American*, 1921

Professor See and Dr. Pickering have also given weighty reasons against the Einstein Theory as applied to astronomical physics.

It would be rash in the extreme for those of us who are not of the select few highly trained mathematicians competent to criticize the Einstein Theory to express an opinion, but we can safely wait until the big men have come to a common agreement, and then, if they sustain Dr. Einstein, we shall expect some clear expositor of science to rise up and try to explain the main principles so that persons of ordinary intelligence and fair education can understand them.

Whatever the outcome of the eclipse observations, whether the great mathematician is sustained or not, thanks to his work an exceedingly important fact in nature has been prominently brought to the attention of thousands of persons who may never have thought of it before. This is that nothing stands alone or unrelated, that relativity is a necessary means by which we attain some understanding of nature, on the material plane at least. Appearances are deceitful; the more so as we confine ourselves to the physical. An elementary illustration of relativity is given in the attempt to define, without gross error, such an apparently simple matter as the *actual movement of the Moon.* We learn, first of all, that the Moon travels in a perfect ellipse at a maximum distance of

251,947 miles and a minimum distance of 225,719 miles; but for this to be ever approximately true we must ignore the orbital movement of the Earth which carries the Moon along with it. In reality the 'perfect ellipse' is thereby entirely pulled out of shape. Furthermore, the Sun is drawing the whole Solar System with it in another direction, and this enormously complicates the problem of the track of the Moon. For absolute accuracy we must relate (or compare) the track with something fixed — if we can. It cannot be to the moving Earth or the moving Sun, and we do not know of any really 'fixed' stars.

Can we relate it to 'space'? That must mean the 'ether,' for abstract space can hardly be used as a measuring rod. But the famous Morley-Michelsen experiment, which was tried to ascertain if the ether, through which the Earth travels like a fish through water, is stationary, gave an incomprehensible answer — so strange that some think that there may be no ether at all! We do not know any fixed object or substance to which we can finally compare the motion of any celestial body; everything seems to be relative to everything else. But of course Einstein's theory is a towering mathematical structure of which the general idea of things being relatively known to us is but one of the foundation-stones.

The study of Number, so essential in astronomy, as Plato says, deals with relative amounts and relative values, so that every object it presents to our thought brings to mind other objects of comparison. Every number requires other numbers to be held in mind; one cannot think of 2 without also thinking of 1 and 3, a greater and a less.

In another field, relativity is well marked. Everyone who has anything to do with color, whether it be in decoration or pictures, knows that the effect of any particular color is immediately modified when another hue is introduced; many pictures in public galleries have been ruined in color-impression by being hung near others that 'killed' them. There is a well-known anecdote of the great landscape painter Turner, who hid a generous heart under a rough exterior. On 'Varnishing Day' at the Royal Academy he was seen glazing some of the more brilliant parts of one of his own pictures with sober grays, because he had noticed the disappointment on the face of another artist whose adjoining picture had suffered from the blazing colors of the Turner. After the exhibition closed Turner cleaned the obscuring washes of gray and restored his painting to its original brilliancy.

Philosophically, there can be no doubt that much that we label as 'good' or 'evil' is only relatively so. "One man's meat is another man's poison." Among certain savage tribes certain courses of action are good and satisfying, even legitimate, in their state of development, while in civilized society they would be repulsive and degrading. And it should

not be forgotten that much of the conduct and many of the ideas of the ordinary 'civilized' person, intelligent maybe but not truly wise, would be impossible to the *spiritually enlightened* man, such as the few who stand out throughout the ages as 'divine' Teachers. These have a vision as much larger than that of the ordinary personality as that of the latter exceeds the limited purview of the lowest savage. The broad principle of relativity in human life is important for those who wish to see it clearly and as a whole, and especially to students of Theosophy whose ardent desire is to relieve the suffering arising from ignorance of man's true nature and possibilities and to help the world to a higher and truer civilization.

On May 14, 1921, a remarkably brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis was seen in North America and elsewhere; it extended so far south as to be well seen in San Diego, on the borders of Mexico, a practically unprecedented event, for there are only vague traditions of an aurora having been seen there by 'old-timers' many years ago. Professor T. J. J. See, of the Mare Island Naval Observatory, near San Francisco, described it as

"the most brilliant aurora ever seen in California. At 9.30 p. m. the auroral streamers reached from the horizon to the zenith and beyond; the colors displayed included red, orange, yellow, green, and bluish purple. . . . For many years the aurora has been known to be periodic and to follow the curve of the sun-spot development. As an unusually large spot was on the central meridian of the sun, this display verifies the electro-magnetic theory published by me in 1917."

Professor See hardly approves of the Einstein theory, for he remarks:

"Incidentally, this auroral display, showing that the electrical state of the earth is dependent upon spot development in the sun and the magnetic waves thus sent to the earth, gives the final coup-de-grâce to Einstein's theory, which has no physical basis. Einstein denies the existence of the ether and thus his theory is shown to be erroneous. . . ."

But to return to the aurora of May, 1921, which attracted such wide attention on account of its brilliancy and extent. There is another reason which may cause it to be noteworthy in future astronomical research. A few years ago, Mr. J. R. Henry advanced a remarkable hypothesis in the *English Mechanic* (Dec. 17, 1915 and later) suggesting that magnetic storms, which are closely associated with auroras, show a marked tendency to recur when the Moon is in, or near, four equidistant positions in its orbit (celestial longitudes 53°, 143°, 233°, and 323° — 90° apart). These longitudes are very nearly those of the four 'Royal Stars' of the ancient Persians, Aldebaran, Regulus, Antares, and Fomalhaut. These stars roughly mark the heavens into quarters, and were considered to have special significance. Mr. Henry gave a number of instances to prove that a majority of magnetic storms take place when the Moon is within 22½° of those longitudes. It is noteworthy that these positions of the Moon in its orbit have nothing to do with the *pasesh* of the Moon; it may be in any phase of illumination at the critical times.

Yet should the Moon be in syzygy or quadrature (full, new, or half) when near one of the degrees mentioned, "the occasion becomes one of supreme importance" according to Mr. Henry.

Now, on May 14, 1921, the Moon was passing through one of the critical positions in the zodiac (143°) and also in quadrature (first quarter) and, therefore, according to hypothesis, something unusual was to be expected. This came in the form of the extraordinary aurora and magnetic disturbances, as mentioned above. Mr. Henry also connects these positions of the Moon with meteorite displays, but this opens too large a field for present consideration; but we may add that May 12 marks the close of the richest period of meteoric showers in the first half of the year.

It may take centuries of observation to determine whether there is more than 'coincidence' in Mr. Henry's apparent discovery, for which no definite explanation is offered on modern physical principles, but it is singular, to say the least, that he should be able to offer good reason in favor of an unknown influence of the Moon upon the earth's magnetism, etc., when our satellite is in the four positions which happen to bring it into closest relation with the four 'Royal Stars,' and not necessarily when the so-called 'changes of the Moon' are taking place which are the usual times when those who look for lunar influences upon weather, etc., expect results. Perhaps the ancient astronomers had some unknown and good reason for attaching importance to the zodiacal positions approximately marked by the brilliant first-magnitude stars mentioned.

TRIBUTE TO HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

Read at the commemorative celebration of her birthday anniversary, International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma, California, July 31, 1922

IVERSON L. HARRIS

WE are assembled today to express our gratitude to one who reawakened soul-consciousness in us, who set us upon the path that leads our footsteps to the mountain-tops, our vision to the stars beyond the Milky Way and the universes within the heart of man.

The scientific achievements of the nineteenth century, especially in the field of geology, history, and anthropology, made utterly untenable to thinking minds the dogmas upon which the religious life of Europe had so long rested in complacent insecurity.

Science gave the world facts, which destroyed dogma. H. P. Blavatsky

gave the world science, spiritualized, which accepted all the proved facts of modern research, but saw behind the veil of external phenomena to the one spiritual Reality. She reconciled the great conflict between religion and science by feeding man's religious nature with spiritual truth in place of dogma, and by awakening earnest scientific minds to the vast potencies of the spiritual laws that govern the microcosm and the macrocosm — the first principle underlying the atom and the universe. And the basis of her teaching was the spiritual solidarity of all — the universal brotherhood of man, the immanence of the infinite Deity, the ever unknowable, causeless cause and source of all.

It took four years of the great war to teach even a few thinking minds outside the ranks of Theosophy, in some measure, what H. P. Blavatsky clearly and unmistakably taught a quarter of a century before the terrible August of 1914. And because the world would not listen to her message, upwards of ten millions of human beings actually killed one another in the fighting, another twenty or twenty-five millions died as an indirect result of the war, and literally scores of millions suffered and became enfeebled by lack of proper food and other necessities — to say nothing of the incalculable undermining of the general mental and moral tone of the world!

The things which H. P. Blavatsky plainly taught, and for which she was laughed at, persecuted, and driven prematurely to her grave, are today being advocated by some of our most widely known authors, and are being read and believed by millions. That is the tribute which the world today pays to H. P. Blavatsky, without acknowledging its debt.

But it will not do for us, her students, merely to read, to write, and to believe what she taught. *We must live it.* It will not do for Theosophists to accept the teachings in *The Voice of the Silence* and then give way to personal desires that conflict with duty to humanity. We cannot afford to accept the mental food which H. P. Blavatsky gave us in *The Key to Theosophy*, and then shirk our duties, fail to carry our share of the burdens of this Organization, or perform no more work at the International Center than is necessary in order to appear respectable. We cannot accept Madame Blavatsky's dicta as to the true spirit of internationalism, and then be participants in the vanities, the prejudices, or the chauvinism of our own particular native lands. It is unbecoming and unworthy of Theosophists to do so.

Nor can we pay a fitting tribute to the "Lion-hearted One," so long as we are selfish enough to put one single stumbling-block in the way of her chosen successor, Katherine Tingley, in her efforts to bring truth, light, and liberation to discouraged humanity. If we are really to show our gratitude to our first Teacher, we must uphold the hands of our

present Leader. We will not demean ourselves by criticizing or trying to pick flaws in the glorious work she has in hand to meet the world's spiritual hunger. If individually or nationally the critical faculty is so much developed in us that it *must* have exercise, we will turn it *inwards* and judge *ourselves* by the standards to be found in *The Voice of the Silence* or the *Bhâgavad-Gîtâ*.

If we students of Theosophy, who have for many years been in a position to drink of the waters of enlightenment H. P. Blavatsky gave us, cannot do this much; if we cannot put our shoulders to the wheel, stop criticizing others, cease coquetting with our weaknesses, and all become lifters, we can count ourselves failures and hold ourselves personally responsible if the world's spiritual hunger is not satisfied. And that will indeed be the sin against the Holy Ghost! But we are too grateful to "the Lion-hearted One" for what she has given us ever to deny it to others! We must not fail! We cannot fail! We will not fail!

THEOSOPHY'S MESSAGE, AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT

WHEN H. P. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society at New York in 1875 her aim was to create an understanding between the philosophic Orient and the sincere mystical spirits of the Occident. This indefatigable seeker for Truth was convinced through and through that the basis of a Universal Peace could rest on nothing other than a disinterested and sincere spirit of brotherhood. In the thought of H. P. Blavatsky, universal peace without the 'pure spirit' of a true brotherhood was only an illusion, a mockery, a dangerous fantasy, or even a chaotic dream as deceitful and as pernicious for the human race, perhaps, as war itself. Her foresight was realized; for, in truth, there can be no universal peace without universal brotherhood.

H. P. Blavatsky had seen fully with her own eyes the distress and the real needs of the men of her century, and this is why we have seen her travel and work with such ardor, in order to bring to the world the truth of Light and Liberation. Her first step was to appeal to all persons of sincerity and of good faith, without distinction of race, sex, creed, caste, or color. Her work has been victoriously followed by her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley.

Indeed, great responsibility weighs upon the Leader and the members

of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. Hence, it becomes really necessary for each one of us — before beginning our work — to make, each for himself, an examination of his conscience, so to say: a sincere appeal to whatever there is of the best in our interior nature; and thereafter to develop this our interior and better nature, in order to make it the focus of all the fruitage of ourselves which is en rapport with our spiritual aspirations and the amelioration of human conditions.

By such an examination we would render ourselves responsible for our acts, and would become the real arbiters of our destiny.

Conscious in this manner of our responsibility, we allow our heart to speak freely, rejecting all passion and all prejudice; it becomes easy for us to distinguish between the good and the evil, the true and the false, the just and the unjust. The choice remains with us, and we should not hesitate.

When we have accepted in principle the precepts of true brotherhood, it becomes easy for us then to take the first steps in the path of duty, to direct and to transport our thought, our will, into a more limpid and purer air; to open our hearts to the perfume of the virtues, to consecrate ourselves, finally, with complete devotion, to the glory of the Supreme Law, and to the progressive and spiritual elevation of humanity.

The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society is the organization to face the egotism of our epoch, the remedy for the anguished cries of mankind; while Theosophy is the path that leads to the Mystic Temple. The God of Truth is the God of the Ideal, the God of Perfection. This Deity exacts no prayers, but only our good will; and in recompense, we are filled beyond measure with the spiritual light of which we have need.

There is the seed that we must broadcast among those who are wandering in the shadows. This divine seed finds no ready field except in the hearts of men; and if we sow it in the multitudes which groan in sorrow, it will surely produce precious fruits.

THE VISITANT

L. L. WRIGHT

THE young priestess stood solitary in the azure gloom of the temple. Without, night was falling over the ancient opulent city of pleasure, in the center of which stood this marble zone with its altar of perpetual fire.

Sounds of awakening revelry throbbed against the cool walls of the temple and stirred a reluctant pulse in the watcher at the shrine. Pictures of festal processions, of lighted palaces bursting with music and laughter,

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invaded the sanctuary of her thoughts. Not desire, not temptation, but wonder and questioning — curious, uneasy doubts awoke the fever in her mind. For where, in the face of idol-worship and profligacy and cruelty, lay the meaning of the august pageantry of her sacrificed womanhood? Twice seven years of devoted service lay behind her youthful feet as they stood here patiently before the altar. Tradition told the tale of centuries of such virginal lives, countless as the stars of midnight. Yet tonight the waves of lawless self-indulgence beat like a measureless ocean against this pearl of purity imbedded in the city's mud. Wherefore and to whom this age-long sacrifice of youth and womanhood?

Upon the altar a clear flame bloomed and waned in the dim milky luster of engirdling marbles. Flecks of gold and cerulean blue winked from dome and fretted cornice. Before the lofty treasure-chest, which inshrined the sacred vessels and the seven holy symbols, hung a veil of cloudy purple like the very curtain of the night.

The priestess awoke from her reverie. Slowly, with the measured beauty of the temple ministrations, she set alight, one by one, the candelabra of massive gold.

Night wore on, and silence, the peace of the gods, flowed at last about the temple precincts. As she kept sleepless watch and ward before the altar, she was aware — when the night grew deepest — of a growing prescience in the air. What seemed a soundless rhythm welled up from some near but invisible source and inundated the silence. Fragrance, fresh and forest-sweet, swept about the place, and in its breath the lights paled and fell. A hushed and expectant twilight held alert her senses.

Slowly, in the space between the treasure-chest and the altar, there grew the tall and gracious figure of a woman. Deep-bosomed, wide of brow, flowing with ample draperies that glimmered like foam within the gloaming, she fixed the mystic quietude of her divine regard upon the kneeling maiden.

Reverent, yet unafraid, the priestess lifted her eyes. With heart beating deep and full in sacred awe she gazed with yearning into the wise, sweet, fathomless eyes of the goddess.

The Presence spoke. Her voice, musical as the cadences of falling waters heard afar, rose and fell in the dimness.

"I am Hestia, the Spirit of Home;

"I am Woman, treasury of the divine fire in the heart of humanity;

"I am Motherhood, the guardian and guide.

"Within me lies the well-spring of eternal being;

"My heart knows the far deep goal of this, my pilgrim people.

"I am Hestia, the permanent, the pure;

"Against my white, ineffable flame the hot vapors of passion and selfishness roll their vain dissolving mockeries. They change, increase, and vanish. I endure.

"I am Hestia, the stainless, the eternal."

Silence, like a benediction of deeper harmony, followed her words. Night throbbed around them. The flame on the altar burned like an unwavering prayer.

Then rose once more the largo of her voice.

"Oh daughter of a vanishing race, forget not that the light of your soul is the eternal fire. The age changes. Yonder stedfast flame shall wizen and be quenched. Slavery of outward shackles shall give place to the darker slavery of impulse and wandering desire.

"In those future days will the worship of Hestia be forgone. Yea, women shall tread in the miry paths of forgetfulness. Motherhood shall fall well nigh to the dust. But, O child of my immortal spirit! despair not at my words. For that dark and distant hour shall pale at last before a radiant dawn. Then shall the souls of Hestia's votaries descend from the secret empyrean of immortality to clothe themselves anew in flesh. And with you shall be reborn in the race the inspiration to spiritual womanhood. Once more shall you set alight the sacred fire — not alone upon temple altars, but upon the altars of your hearts and homes. And seeing again the clear sapphire flame of your souls, men will turn once more to the worship of spiritual truth.

"Then shall a new and wondrous motherhood spread its heavenly radiance over all the earth. The golden age of childhood shall burgeon everywhere and a godlike destiny beckon man forward to perfection.

"Be faithful then, O stainless Priestess of Hestia! Guard well the sacred fires. Preserve a hallowed silence in your soul where I may speak and cherish you.

"I Hestia, Spirit of divine womanhood, bless and dedicate you to the service of the ages to come."

Like echoes of remembered music the utterance died rhythmically away. The great candles burned again in undimmed luster. Upon the altar the flame now rose and swelled and trembled. Only the fragrance lingered, withdrawing gradually into the invisible chambers of the air.

But in the heart of the kneeling maiden there dwelt the light of a new and wondrous knowledge and the sacred sense of an immortal dedication

ANCIENT GRECIAN GRANDEUR OF MIND AND BEAUTY OF ART RESTORED IN 'THE EUMENIDES'

AUSTIN ADAMS

THE glory that was Greece! We saw it: we felt it; we thrilled to its potent splendor — and this right here in San Diego! Under a star-lit sky it was, the other night, at the presentation of *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus in Katherine Tingley's matchless Greek Theater over on Point Loma. It was not merely a 'pageant' nor a theatrical performance nor a superb drama superbly staged, albeit it was all of these. It was a tremendous spiritual adventure - under the stars! For those two immortal hours, so powerful was the spell, so subtle the suggestion, we were no longer in America, in the twentieth century. We were in ancient Greece, in the thrall of her greatest dramatist, face to face with the supreme and supernal forces of good and evil battling for a human soul.

How, indeed, convey through words the elusive witchery of it all — the exquisite coloring, the haunting music, the unforgettable tableaux, the mystical lights, the soft surge of the sea below the perfect dignity and serenity of the gleaming white temples, the whole entrancing thing — and above it all, the heart-gripping steady unfolding of the stupendous spiritual meaning of the play itself. Memory rejects as pitifully inadequate the adjectives which usually trip into the mind when criticizing a dramatic performance.

MORE THAN GREAT BEAUTY

It was beautiful, yes, and fine and wonderfully done, and great and amazingly unusual; but it was more than all this. It caught one up above the things which seem to count, and revealed with majestic simplicity and compelling clearness the things which do count — eternally. It was the "katharsis" of Aristotle — the purgation of the soul through horror and pity. It was a religious function; the vast hushed audience became worshipers — of "the good and the beautiful" because the "true."

Coming now to the details of the performance, what a joy it was to hear English — at last! The perfect enunciation and pronunciation of of the words was in gratifying contrast to the slipshod mumbling and slurring too frequently endured from actors today. Nothing of the profound meaning and golden beauty of those wonderful speeches was lost. Far out across the great sweeping tiers of seats around the theater and on

and on into the solemn night, every word rang out like a silver bell till lost among the phantom fringe of the surrounding groves or out over the misty sea. The groupings and processions, and dancing and rhythmic movement, the softened music of the unseen orchestra and, oh, the ecstatic call to life and conflict of the trumpets!

Everything was perfect, the costumes, the lighting effects, the gorgeous color schemes, the 'business,' everything. Katherine Tingley is a great dramatic director; the students of the university under her leadership are uncommonly gifted actors. As a man of the theater, I knew that such a performance as we witnessed the other night can come only after infinite pains, and then only to such as get to the heart of art by loving the divine beauty.

Magnet for Whole World

As I sat waiting in that enchanted spot for the play to begin, I fell to wondering if we here in San Diego appreciate all that this Greek Theater, and the spirit of those ministering to us there, means to our little far-off city. It means that we have something unique not only in America, but in the world, something potentially more vital to our cultural and spiritual well-being than anything else we have, something destined to draw hither in years to come all such as are beginning to find "the husks that the swine did eat," unsatisfying to the soul, and who therefore "seek a land of heart's desire" through the gates of art, which are the only real outlets for self-expression. And then I remembered some one had told me the day before, that Madame Tingley had decided to give three Greek plays every year — and I beheld a prophetic vision of caravans of pilgrims wending their way to San Diego from the four quarters of the earth — San Diego where one may know something at least of the glory which was Greece. And I was glad.

Then the play began. For the next two hours I forgot all about San Diego, all about myself, all about everything except the awful, the tremendous, the sublime spiritual drama unfolding before my eyes. Then the play was done. In the long hush that held the audience at the end I looked up at the dim, dark sky. My trusted confidants, Vega and Arcturus and Altair, caught my eye from their serene heights, and I swore to them that I would never forget the lessons *The Eumenides* has taught me — nor ever write a play except my utmost best.

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