ANCIENT WISDOM

A monthly journal devoted to teaching theosophical and occult truths

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VOLUME XIII — JUNE, 1947—ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI — NUMBER 4

THE SWASTIKA

(Not the Nazi Variety)

By OLIVE HARCOURT

(Continued from Last Month)

It has been a charm for good luck from very early times, even from prehistoric days: it is found in tumuli and other tombs, made as amulets in copper and bronze, and can be seen in European museums with a little hole in it for the purpose of suspension around the neck, to attract the beneficent influence of the Sun, that emblem of the spiritual Fire from above giving Life to everything, both spiritual and material. In early Christian times it was carried as a symbol of the new religion and is frequently found in the tombs of Christian martyrs in the Catacombs of Rome, but later was suppressed by the Church as of Pagan origin and also because it has been adopted by the Gnostics, those heretics abhorred by the ruling Church.

But later it was restored to favor, the four axes being rearranged to a more decided Cross. Still it was not regarded with much affection because, like other forms of Swastika, it was adopted by magicians as a fortunate charm, while Christians looked upon any Cross used as an emblem of good luck as Satanic in origin.

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KARMA AND THE SELF

By PROFESSOR ERNEST E. WOOD

To understand KARMA in relation to THE SELF we need to see these two ideas against the background of first principles. When Madame Blavatsky wanted to introduce her Occult Philosophy, later called Theosophy, to the Western World she emphasized first the One Life, secondly the alternate waking and sleeping of that life, and thirdly the production of the manifested world at the time of waking through the agency of the Divine Mind. Out of the sleeping life then come pouring the great groups and orders of beings, emerging from some kind of interplanetary or cosmic Devachan. They all come forth in order to experience something, and thus get the opportunity of growth and development by the use of their powers, and they all bring something with them.

Theosophists are familiar with the idea that when man retires from a period of incarnation at death he takes his good thoughts with him to Devachan, and there digests them into character. Here we have the concept in reverse—vast armies of beings coming out into manifestation, bringing something with them. They all bring their karma with them, and thus the worlds are formed as the karmas of all the beings. H.P.B. alluded to these beings as the Working Units of creation, and stated that there is no form without life. The forms are in fact projections of the thoughts of the working units or "sparks of the one fire."

It is not difficult to see in our own life that mind operates in this way and that the principles which appear in the large cycle appear also in the smaller one.

Look around the room! You will see almost nothing of form in the range of the five senses that is not the product of mind. Take for instance a wooden chair. We say a carpenter made the chair. How did he make it? A child will say, "With his hands," but the psychologist will say, "With his mind," because his hand was directed by his mind, and without mind behind his hands there would never be anything in the world having any semblance to a chair.

That chair is a karma, because Karma strictly speaking means work. Kar-

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THE OCCULT INTERPRETATION OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Spring Tonic

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

(Continued from March)

VII

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The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

This quatrain is somewhat more intelligible than usual but still cannot be properly understoood in the dead letter. Omar appears to be counseling an end to winter repentance and a bout of heavy drinking to mark the coming of Spring. An inconsistency if read literally, as there is no evidence anywhere in the Ruba'iyat that Omar drank less or recommended anyone drinking less at any one season of the year than at at any other nor that he repented of his dissolute ways (assuming for the moment that he *was* dissolute) to any greater extent in Winter than in Spring. The stanza might be paraphrased as advising one to drown repentance in drink and to do it quickly while there was still time. It would be terrible to die without having imbibed all one could possibly hold.

But as we have no belief in Omar the toper, we revert to our esoteric symbology, this time lying rather near the surface but of course unsuspected by those who class the Persian Sufi's philosophy with that of a night club owner.

The filling of the Cup to which Omar call us is, we well know, the charging of the personality with that spiritual potation which alone is an escape from sorrow and limitation and the way to the place of the gods. The Fire of Spring, however, is a very ingenious astrological symbol for this same act. Occultists are often repetitive in their ciphers, as we have seen in decoding Bible symbology, and Omar intends to make very clear to the initiated what he is talking about.

The Spring equinox begins when the Sun enters the fiery sign Aries. Fiery signs, in the horoscope, rule spirit, inspiration, intutition, long-range vision, all those higher qualities of the soul which the "wine of life" typifies. And Aries, first house sign, is the sign of

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will know what to do. If not sure, write local Lodge join it. If not sure, write The Theosophical Society in America, Olcott, Wheaton, Ills. Mention ANCIENT WISDOM if you wish. If there is no local Lodge, become a National Member.

In the St. Louis area, The Theosophi-

he wishes he had never been born.

That is the cue for Angel Clarence. With some heavenly cooperation he contrives to re-arrange current events as they would be if Stewart really had never been born. The latter has been a good citizen, altruistic, a help to the community, definitely a force for the

blessing to others. Only Theosophy can point the real moral to the film fairy tale.

See "It's A Wonderful Life" if you can, and as you see it apply to yourself its implications and the far wider and deeper implications which your

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Admirable as this sentiment is, righteous and self-denying though it sounds, we submit that it is too puny a reward, too scant an "immortality" for the period over which it must serve—which is for all eternity. Particularly as we are to know nothing about it and it can

intelligent immortality than either of these arid alternatives. With all the faith that is in us we believe—we know—that it has. Do not let these barren notions of survival, which is no survival at all, rob you of your profound faith in the real immortality

OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE

"Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow"

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

The Laban family was bitter. Their hick cousin had outsmarted them and, quite contrary to their intentions, had grown wealthy in their employ. Or, as the Genesis narrator so well recounts it: "And he" (Jacob) "heard the words of Laban's sons saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory."

It must have been very unpleasant for Jacob. True, he had legitimate claim to all he had acquired. His uncle had told him, "The streaked and spotted cattle are yours." Jacob's legerdemain in arranging that all the worthwhile animals should be born streaked and spotted was unknown to Laban, fortunately for his nephew, but the former had a sneaking suspicion that somehow he had been taken. No one resents getting the short end of a deal quite so furiously as one who is accustomed to giving it.

No wonder the Bible naively observes, "And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before." Probably a freezing understatement.

Jacob took counsel of the Lord, who, it will be recalled, had been on his side right along and had in fact aided him in getting the better of his uncle, for most certainly the peeled rods trick would never have worked without divine aid. "Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred," said the Lord, "and I will be with thee."

Jacob would have need of the latter promise if he was to go back to his "kindred," meaning among others his wronged brother Esau. However, the idea appealed to him so he called a family conference with his two wives and presented to them the case for immediate removal. He was a persuasive speaker, was Jacob, as we have reason to know and his wives were quickly convinced. Rachel and Leah had been having a hard time too—also they had Laban's blood in them. Viciously they denounced their father: "Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

True chips off the old block, Rachel and Leah. The economic aspect of the situation was the paramount one. They knew which side their bread was buttered and they were backing the winning horse.

"Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan."

The poor immigrant was now the millionaire emigrant. He had come in penniless on his own two legs. He went out with a great following of flocks, herds, servants, children and wives — and on camels to boot, the Rolls-Royces of the ancient East, while Rachel, shame on her, had actually been mean enough to steal her father's gods. Why she should want them when she had full evidence of the poor job they had done for Father, is unclear. But steal them she did.

Jacob's exit was quite in character. He "stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled." A somewhat artless statement. It is difficult to imagine the nephew, departing with all his plunder, summoning the uncle and announcing, "This is to inform you that I am about to flee."

"So he fled," says the Bible, "with all that he had."

Nobody told Laban about it until the third day after the flight. One would think he would have missed his nephew but he was out shearing the sheep and didn't notice the latter's absence. He took quick action on learning of it, however, he and his relatives immediately forming a posse which overtook Jacob after a strenuous chase of seven days.

Then the Lord kindly and conveniently interposed once more on Jacob's behalf, appearing to Laban in a dream and warning him not to speak to Jacob "either good or bad." Perhaps it was only Laban's guilty conscience. We are sure the psychoanalysts would say so.

Laban tried, however, to heed the behest, though it must nearly have killed him. "What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?"

The notion of Laban hiring an orchestra to speed the parting guest must have caused his nephew to utter a cynical "Oh, yeah?" But Laban, like most of the other Biblical characters, had no sense of humor and he continued indignantly, "And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing."

Forgetting for the moment the Lord's stern warning Laban menacingly declared, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt," but recollection came to him instantaneously and he reluctantly admitted, "but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight saying, take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now,

(Continued on Page 31)

DO YOU KNOW?—

That in average cases there is some but not a great deal of improvement in the social standing from life to life?

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That normally we return to about the same staatus as we achieved in the former incarnation?

****

That, as in all these occult matters, there are numerous exceptions, all of which are in the interest of the individual himself?

****

That a great soul, Lincoln for instance, may be born in humble circumstances or, as with Washington, into an affluent family?

****

That if the collective karma of a nation requires it, a young and unfitted Ego (whose karma, of course, alco permitted such a destiny) might be born into a royal family and become king?

****

That bad monarchs (unless very weak) are not always young souls but often old souls who have through many lives followed the wrong path?

****

That this also applies to evil Dictators and other malevolent national leaders who start wars of aggression and heap misery on their peoples?

****

That many of these are said to be reincarnated Atlanteans, the cult of evil for its own sake having reached a high point on the ancient Continent of Atlantis?

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That this diabolism resulted in the wiping out of the entire Continent by water, the last of the Atlantean islands having sunk beneath the Atlantic comething over 11,000 years ago?

****

That the notion possessed by some foolish people that they are reincarnations of famous characters such as Caesar, Napoleon, Cleopatra, etc., is complete nonsense?

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That as some 5 billion people have lived and died since Napoleon trod the earth and about 60 billion or more since Caesar and Cleopatra were here, the chances are one in five billion against anyone living being a reincarnated Napoleon and one in 60 billion against a reborn Caesar or Cleopatra?

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That in view of the records of all three, this is probobly just as well, although occultists declare that Julius Caesar has been or will be reborn in this Century and will become a very great and beneficent world leader?

***

More reincarnation angles next month.

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ERSATZ IMMORTALITY

A great many people, if asked their views regarding immortality, will very grandly declare that the works done by man, his achievements, his impress on his times, constitute his immortality and they can conceive of no other. One hears this sentiment advanced even from the pulpits of the more liberal religions and it appears again and again in modern books on philosophy, psychology and metaphysics. An allied concept which frequently accompanies it is that we gain immortality through our children. Being a part of us physically, we continue to live in them after our own dissolution. The childless, of course, cannot share in this vicarious survival.

There may be those who find satisfaction in such *ersatz* immortality, or who at least think they do until the time comes, but to a Theosophist it is a cheap and shoddy substitute for the real thing, that falls to pieces even while it is being examined. And if the dead who "know not anything" could take pride or pleasure in the knowledge that their achievements were noteworthy enough to be remembered, how many have lived or are living whose deeds would be "immortalized" as long as fifty years after their death?—Probably not one in a million. So that for most the survival, if such it can be termed, would amount virtually to nothing in eternity and the gratification the possibility of it could give when dwelt on during physical life would be fleeting in the extreme. The present writer of course hopes that his books and articles may continue to be read for awhile after he has passed on to other planes. It would be nice to think that he had produced something that might even live through the centuries. But if the producer is *not* to live through the centuries, the fate of his productions can be of small moment as compared with his own dreary fate.

"You should not care," admonishes the proponent of deathlessness through deeds. "Whatever of good you have done must in some measure, tiny though it be, have affected your generation and those that come after for good. That must be your reward, that your immortality."

Admirable as this sentiment is, righteous and self-denying though it sounds, we submit that it is too puny a reward, too scant an "immortality" for the period over which it must serve—which is for all eternity. Particularly as we are to know nothing about it and it can only be a pious hope. The world does not always appraise our works as we appraise them or even as in justice they should be appraised.

"No matter," asseverates our mentor, who is truly too good for this selfish world, "If your conscience approves what you have done, that is all you need and you may die content, knowing that you live on in your contribution to the welfare of the race."

We must confess that we are not highly enough evolved to die content with any such assurance, even if we are fortunate enough to have it, if to die means to cease to exist. Nor, we venture to say, are most people. Those who profess otherwise, if in their right minds, will struggle to survive in the face of danger. Man wants to live, he does not want to perish without trace. And living on in one's earth achievements after one has left the earth is no answer to this craving of the human soul—it is, in fact, a cruel and meaningless fraud.

Better to be remembered, of course, than not to be remembered, if the memory is that of one who was a benefactor of humanity, but if that is all there is to it it is not, in eternity, very much. Of what satisfaction now can it be to Washington, to Lincoln, to Nurse Cavell, to Thomas Edison that they wrote their names on an imperishable scroll, if they themselves have disappeared forever from the book of life? They did not work for such immortality nor perhaps for any immortality. But have they not deserved it? Is not the denial of an immortality justly earned (not this spurious imitation), a denial of a just God?

As to the platitudinous assurance that we survive death through our children, that is an even greater hoax. The analogy is given of the amoeba, who lives on forever by dividing in two, each half constituting a new creature. That may be very satisfactory immortality to an amoeba but man passed the amoeba stage thousands of aeons ago, if he was ever in it, and it is no longer satisfactory to him. Our children, too, will not live forever. Their children probably will know little about us and care less. Their grandchldren may not know, except academically, that we ever existed. If they should by chance come across our photographs in some antique family album they will probably lapse into gales of laughter over our funny clothes, quaint hair-dos, and generally antediluvian appearance. Some immortality!

The intelligence of the Supreme Intelligence must have ordained a more intelligent immortality than either of these arid alternatives. With all the faith that is in us we believe—we know—that it has. Do not let these barren notions of survival, which is no survival at all, rob you of your profound faith in the real immortality which occultism teaches—immortality within the framework of reincarnation until you have reached the stage where rebirth is unnecessary, and then a glorious future of helpfulness in the Cosmos. No matter how high the authority, never let this faith be taken from you. There is no authority higher than your own true intuitions.

We reject *in toto* the shallow theories of survival which these claimed authorities advance with so much circumstance and pomp. We want none of them. We are happy with our own. They do not seem too happy with theirs.

IT MAY BE TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

If you who read this are not a member but are intensely interested in the teaching, if you feel that the finding of Theosophy is for you journey's end so far as your philosophy of life is concerned, we suggest you consider very seriously the facts which follow.

It is not true that one can just get as much from Theosophy outside of the Society as in it. That is a popular delusion which breaks down under the actual experience of those who *are* members, even members unattached to any Lodge. As occultists know, an organized body is ensouled with a collective life of its own which is something more than the aggregate life of its members. Each cell in the physical structure is a unit but the totality of the cells constitutes the physical elemental which attends to every subconscious function of the body. And this holds good all the way up, even to the Logos Himself, in whose body we are cells; all of us together, plus a very great deal more, making up His life.

In this sense The Theosophical Society is an entity and each member shares in a greater spiritual life than the composite spiritual life of the individual members. He shares in an accession of power and force which energizes his spiritual life not only, but infiltrates into his mental, emotional and physical actions also. Difficult to put into words, this glowing experience of sharing in something literally "out of this world," but every earnest T.S. member will instantly recognize what we are trying to convey and bear testimony to its truth.

The Theosophical Society is a unique organization. There is none other like it. Blavatsky and Olcott were its founders and first sustainers on the physical

plane, but its inner founders and sustainers were two Masters of the Wisdom, and it is their strength, their power and their spiritual wisdom which still energizes it, guides it and from which its members draw the power and inspiration the nature of which we are trying feebly to convey. Each member strengthens and augments the volume of these forces and shares in them. And as a result they find, aside from the wider knowledge their membership bestows, greater happiness, well-being and even material efficiency in their own lives.

But these are only by-products of membership, valuable as they are. The real karmic recompense comes from working, in unison with others like-minded to enlighten the millions who, without knowing it, are hungrily seeking for the understanding of a bewildering life which Theosophy alone can give. The weak excuse, "I'm not a joiner," is not likely to release one who has been permitted to discover the priceless occult truth from aiding in the work which devolves upon so few. We do not say that all who have contacted Theosophy should join the Society. But those who secretly concede to themselves that they belong in it are not fulfilling their dharma if they stay outside. And the karma of the unfulfilled dharma of an opportunity presented is simple. The opportunity does not come again, perhaps for many lives.

The constant prayer of Theosophists is that the next time they also be blessed as to be led to the philosophy again—and very early in life. if they are not born into it. Many non-members who have accepted its magnificent teachings echo the same prayer. But surely their chances are lessened, if not eliminated, if they have not united with those who are carrying the burden—happy burden though it be—of universalizing this all-embracing knowledge.

We hope this does not sound like some churchly attempt to threaten dire spiritual consequences in an after-life, at which the religions are so adept. It is not meant to be. We despise that sort of coercive invention and have no wish to descend to it. But we do suggest to those who are heart and soul in the occult philosophy and who yet find "reasons" for remaining without the Society which needs their aid so urgently, that they examine their reasons to be sure they are valid. If after a brave heart-searching they are found to be without validity, the individual will know what to do. If not sure, write local Lodge join it. If not sure, write The Theosophical Society in America, Olcott, Wheaton, Ills. Mention ANCIENT WISDOM if you wish. If there is no local Lodge, become a National Member.

In the St. Louis area, The Theosophical Society of St. Louis, 5108 Waterman Blvd., will welcome you with open arms. Write or call Charles E. Luntz, President of the Lodge, ROsedale 8361, and an appointment will be made to talk things over at the Lodge.

The writer of this article examined his own reasons for non-membership over 24 years ago before joining the Society. Like many whose inner urge is to belong though they refrain from doing so, he, too, had other interests, was a member of various organizations and—above all—was very, *very*, busy. But he joined, and in doing so took one of the happiest and most decisive steps of his life. Never for a moment has he regretted it, never for a moment failed to be grateful for the unknown karma which led him that way. No more can be said. It's your move if you think you should make it—and your superlatively good karma. ANCIENT WISDOM would like to hear from those who do.

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE"

The recent photoplay of that name, starring James Stewart, gives food for thought to every Theosophist. The theme is both novel and, in a sense, occult. It brings down from Heaven a rather comic angel (Henry Travers) whose rank is ASC (Angel Second Class), as he has not yet won his wings. To make the grade he must help James Stewart, who is in a terrible mess of trouble, to get a grip on himself, to maintain faith and to carry on until events can shape so that all is cleared up happily.

Clarence, as the angel is called, has been waiting this opportunity to earn his wings for 200 years. He is rather a muddleheaded angel and when wings were being given out has always been passed by in favor of someone else. He is very sad about this and earnestly desirous of another opportunity. After two centuries as a mere ASC people are, as he says, beginning to talk. So he carefully studies a celestial movie of Stewart's earlier life, run off for his special benefit.

We need not go into the details of the plot which is well put together and admirably acted out by a powerful supporting cast, including Lionel Barrymore as a rich and heartless capitalist, and Donna Reed as Stewart's wife. The interest for Theosophists lies in the heartbroken declaration of Stewart as his world crumbles around him that he wishes he had never been born.

That is the cue for Angel Clarence. With some heavenly cooperation he contrives to re-arrange current events as they would be if Stewart really had never been born. The latter has been a good citizen, altruistic, a help to the community, definitely a force for the uplift and betterment of the small town of Bedford Falls where he has lived his life. He has contrived to checkmate many of the greedy plans of villainous Lionel Barrymore (Millionaire Potter in the film).

Now he sees, without understanding, a different town, no longer Bedford Falls but Potterville for Potter has acquired everything in sight with no Jimmy Stewart to stop him. It is not the community of churches, schools, decent movie shows, self-respecting people, but a disreputable wide open rip-roaring town of honky-tonks, clip joints, run-down houses and poverty-stricken inhabitants, over all of which broods the evil influence of Potter. He finds his four children no longer exist. How can they when he himself never existed? His attractive wife is a very unattractive old maid who works in the library. No one knows him. No one ever heard of him. His mother, a cultured and affectionate woman as he knew her in life, operates a tacky boarding house and shuts the door in his face as a lunatic when he tries to claim his relationship. His "wife" screams for the police when he tries to kiss her in the street.

All is, of course, eventually made right by the amiable Clarence after Stewart has finally grasped the situation and earnestly prayed to go back to his former existence again. Clarence gets his wings and everything is straightened out to the satisfaction of all, including the audience. But, as Clarence sagely remarks, "We don't realize what a hole we would have left had we never been born, nor how interlinked our lives and events are with other lives and events." And that is worth pondering on. Had you who read this never been born, how many others who owe their existence to you would likewise not be here? How differently would events have shaped their course and how many who have been benefited and helped because you lived might have had a far different fate? How large a hole would there be in today's events had you never come to birth?

Think about it a little and you may be surprised how much your being here has meant to your world. We are all needed here and that is why we are here. Some miss their chance and the world would have been a better place had they never dishonored it with their presence, but they too had to be given their opportunity and they will not always fail. There will come incarnations when their presence also is a blessing to others. Only Theosophy can point the real moral to the film fairy tale.

See "It's A Wonderful Life" if you can, and as you see it apply to yourself its implications and the far wider and deeper implications which your

(Continued on Page 32)

OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE

"Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow"

By Charles E. Luntz

The Laban family was bitter. Their hick cousin had outsmarted them and, quite contrary to their intentions, had grown wealthy in their employ. Or, as the Genesis narrator so well recounts it: "And he" (Jacob) "heard the words of Laban's sons saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory."

It must have been very unpleasant for Jacob. True, he had legitimate claim to all he had acquired. His uncle had told him, "The streaked and spotted cattle are yours." Jacob's legerdemain in arranging that all the worthwhile animals should be born streaked and spotted was unknown to Laban, fortunately for his nephew, but the former had a sneaking suspicion that somehow he had been taken. No one resents getting the short end of a deal quite so furiously as one who is accustomed to giving it.

No wonder the Bible naively observes, "And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before." Probably a freezing understatement.

Jacob took counsel of the Lord, who, it will be recalled, had been on his side right along and had in fact aided him in getting the better of his uncle, for most certainly the peeled rods trick would never have worked without divine aid. "Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred," said the Lord, "and I will be with thee."

Jacob would have need of the latter promise if he was to go back to his "kindred," meaning among others his wronged brother Esau. However, the idea appealed to him so he called a family conference with his two wives and presented to them the case for immediate removal. He was a persuasive speaker, was Jacob, as we have reason to know and his wives were quickly convinced. Rachel and Leah had been having a hard time too—also they had Laban's blood in them. Viciously they denounced their father: "Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

True chips off the old block, Rachel and Leah. The economic aspect of the situation was the paramount one. They knew which side their bread was buttered and they were backing the winning horse.

"Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan."

The poor immigrant was now the millionaire emigrant. He had come in penniless on his own two legs. He went out with a great following of flocks, herds, servants, children and wives — and on camels to boot, the Rolls-Royces of the ancient East, while Rachel, shame on her, had actually been mean enough to steal her father's gods. Why she should want them when she had full evidence of the poor job they had done for Father, is unclear. But steal them she did.

Jacob's exit was quite in character. He "stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled." A somewhat artless statement. It is difficult to imagine the nephew, departing with all his plunder, summoning the uncle and announcing, "This is to inform you that I am about to flee."

"So he fled," says the Bible, "with all that he had."

Nobody told Laban about it until the third day after the flight. One would think he would have missed his nephew but he was out shearing the sheep and didn't notice the latter's absence. He took quick action on learning of it, however, he and his relatives immediately forming a posse which overtook Jacob after a strenuous chase of seven days.

Then the Lord kindly and conveniently interposed once more on Jacob's behalf, appearing to Laban in a dream and warning him not to speak to Jacob "either good or bad." Perhaps it was only Laban's guilty conscience. We are sure the psychoanalysts would say so.

Laban tried, however, to heed the behest, though it must nearly have killed him. "What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?"

The notion of Laban hiring an orchestra to speed the parting guest must have caused his nephew to utter a cynical "Oh, yeah?" But Laban, like most of the other Biblical characters, had no sense of humor and he continued indignantly, "And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing."

Forgetting for the moment the Lord's stern warning Laban menacingly declared, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt," but recollection came to him instantaneously and he reluctantly admitted, "but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight saying, take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now,

(Continued on Page 31)

DO YOU KNOW? —

That in average cases there is some but not a great deal of improvement in the social standing from life to life?

****

That normally we return to about the same staatus as we achieved in the former incarnation?

****

That, as in all these occult matters, there are numerous exceptions, all of which are in the interest of the individual himself?

****

That a great soul, Lincoln for instance, may be born in humble circumstances or, as with Washington, into an affluent family?

****

That if the collective karma of a nation requires it, a young and unfitted Ego (whose karma, of course, alco permitted such a destiny) might be born into a royal family and become king?

****

That bad monarchs (unless very weak) are not always young souls but often old souls who have through many lives followed the wrong path?

****

That this also applies to evil Dictators and other malevolent national leaders who start wars of aggression and heap misery on their peoples?

****

That many of these are said to be reincarnated Atlanteans, the cult of evil for its own sake having reached a high point on the ancient Continent of Atlantis?

****

That this diabolism resulted in the wiping out of the entire Continent by water, the last of the Atlantean islands having sunk beneath the Atlantic comething over 11,000 years ago?

****

That the notion possessed by some foolish people that they are reincarnations of famous characters such as Caesar, Napoleon, Cleopatra, etc., is complete nonsense?

****

That as some 5 billion people have lived and died since Napoleon trod the earth and about 60 billion or more since Caesar and Cleopatra were here, the chances are one in five billion against anyone living being a reincarnated Napoleon and one in 60 billion against a reborn Caesar or Cleopatra?

****

That in view of the records of all three, this is probobly just as well, although occultists declare that Julius Caesar has been or will be reborn in this Century and will become a very great and beneficent world leader?

***

More reincarnation angles next month.

PERSONAL OPINIONS

By L. W. Rogers

The Masters

(Continued From Last Month)

The method of practicing control of mind in acquiring the art of concentration is strongly recommended here for various reasons. One reason is its simplicity. If you begin in the usual way of fixing the mind on a physical object you must make some preparation. You must arrange to be alone in some place where you will not be disturbed by anybody or by any loud noises or unexpected occurances. You must also appoint a certain time for it, which may be difficult if you are a busy person. Also it should be at the same hour daily. All this is difficult if you are living in close association with a number of other people. By the method here advised all these difficulties are avoided. No arrangements need be made, no hour set, no thought given to interruptions. You merely decide that you will do your best at keeping your mind on whatever you are doing. It will be helpful to some people to select a specific thing that they do daily and specialize on that one thing. Let us say, for a man shaving; for a woman her cosmetic toilet. During the process let the mind be fixed exclusively on the work. Try to shut out every other thought and concentrate on what the hands are doing. Make it as perfect a job as you can. Make it an improvement on what you usually do. You are specializing on this one daily task but the endeavor to keep the thought on what the hands are doing should be carried through the day. Of course there will not be immediate success. Neither was there immediate success when you first tried to walk. But just as you then, as an infant, got up and tried it again and again until walking became simple and easy, so now you can gain full control of the mind by similar persistence.

Another reason is that by this method you will develop a habit of definiteness, percision and perfection through an inner coordination of mind and body. The Master Kuthumi says to his pupil, "Think how you would do a piece of work if you knew that the Master was coming at once to look at it; in just that way you must do all your work. Those who know most will know all that that verse means." It is worth while to think deeply upon that statement.

While developing a few virtues of that sort the prospective pupil should also be busy eliminating the faults in his character that are preventing his progress. One of the worst of these, which stands directly opposite cheerfulness, is worry. The habit of worrying is as harmful as it is common. What multitudes of people worry! They worry about their health and about the health of the other members of the family. They worry about their investments, fearing that they may be lost or at least may not turn out to be profitable. They worry about the associates of their children—"Oh where is my wandering boy tonight?"—and about the safety of any member of the family who makes a trip by air. In short, there is nothing much in the entire catalog of human events that a good worrier can't utilize!

Worry seems to be a combination of imagination and fear, leading to anxiety and mental distress. It is disastrous to the nervous system and to good health. With many people it becomes a habit, dooming them to a life of misery, and may make their immediate associates exceedingly uncomfortable. Worry is the antithesis of cheerfulness and the two cannot exist in the same individual.

No worrier can have the slightest chance of catching the glance of one of the great Teachers. If he is so fortunate as to have a desire to be associated so closely with one of the Elder Brothers the first step is to eliminate worry in every form; and that is not so difficult as may be supposed at first thought.

People who worry about things that are important or trivial need to do a little thinking about the solar system in which we live and evolve. They should first consider the obvious fact that it is a system of natural law and order. From the atom up to the sun everything in nature is witness to the fact of universal law. So definite, so precise, so dependable is the solar mechanism that the astronomer can calculate to the minute the position of any planet centuries in advance. The worrier himself, and all his family and friends, as well as atoms and planets, are within the grasp of that all-pervading natural law. Nothing ever did occur and nothing, good or bad, ever can occur that is not a result of the operation of those laws. That simple fact is the foundation on which the person who worries can begin to build in eliminating worry. In such a universe there is no room for accidents. Whatever occurs is the result of causes, either obvious or occult, which produce the alleged "accident."

The next point to ponder is that back of the natural law is a wisdom so profound that it administers exact justice to all that lives in all the worlds. The crude religious beliefs of our ancestors were not so far from the facts as some skeptical people may think. As children we used to be told that God was a witness to everything, that He never forgot what He saw, that recording angels jotted down all our wrongdoing and that we would sooner or later be called to account for it. Our childish imagination created a being with wings, writing with indelible ink on a page of stone all our naughty sayings and doings. In some vague future we were to be called upon to balance this account in coin of shame and pain, and if we were very bad, in brimstone.

In later years we laughed at those crude beliefs. There was no lake of burning brimstone and no being with wings writing down our misdeeds; but how many of us discovered that these childhood stories were just symbolical descriptions of occult laws? The Recording Angel is really there jotting down not only all our good and bad conduct but also every word we utter and every thought we think. The only thing that is changed is her name Instead of Recording Angel we know her as Karma, not only seeing all, knowing all and recording all but also seeing to it that every living being reaps precisely as he sows, happiness for good deeds and pain and suffering for the evil he has done.

These two facts--a solar system in which chance and luck do not exist—and a natural law by which we reap as we sow—should be sufficient to cure the worrier's malady. He must see that if everything is governed by natural law then anything that comes to him or his friends is the reaction, good or bad, as the case may be, of what they have previously thought or felt or done. Therefore what is , is precisely what it ought to be. If in the past they have been at fault the reaction from their wrong course is not only exect justice but it is also a lesson-experience that teaches them to take the righteous course hereafter and thus escape pain or humiliation from inevitable reactions. Karma is not merely the adjuster but also the teacher. When through physical brutality or sarcastic speech we make another suffer we are sooner or later automatically thrown into a situation in which we experience the pain or humiliation he felt. In the parlance of the day we "get what is coming to us." Only so can we realize what our treatment of others means to them. Thus we develop the sympathy for others and the desire for our own protection which, together, lead us into a more serene type of life. Whether such reactions are related to events that are pleasant or painful, trivial or tragic they are valuable experiences and we cannot evolve without them. Then why should anybody worry either when they come or when it is feared they may come? The right attitude of mind is to welcome all experiences, goood or bad, because they are useful teachers and, remember, they are inevitable anyway.

(To be Continued)

How fortunate that the Intelligences responsible for the workings of natural law never decide to go on strike.

GEMS OF OCCULT THOUGHT

By F. Milton Willis

Charity

There is a charity that is merely formal, that does not spring from the soul. This is the charity that on the spur of the moment does a kindly act—perhaps in some cases merely to be rid of the consciousness of some particular suffering. And there is a charity that is a habit of the mind—a permanent attitude toward everything and everyone, of good-will, benevolence in the widest sense, readiness to overlook faults in others, a disposition to put a good construction upon the actions and words of others.

Some people are charitable only to those whom they love. The word charity itself connoted this originally. Derived from the Latin *carus*, meaning dear, it indicated something done for one that was loved. This derivation, however, does not lose its significance even throughout the whole range of charity; for the truly charitable person, the person who is imbued permanently with all that charity means, is literally doing something for "one who is dear" even when he succors the vilest of mankind or befriends his enemy. Such a person has reached so exalted a stage of insight that he perceives the reality of the brotherhood of man and recognizes no inherent vileness, no indefeasible faults of character, no hostile separation of one person from any other—in the inmost soul. He may withdraw from contact with the vile, he may refuse to dwell with his enemy, but in his heart he stands ready to help, no matter how vile or hostile the object of help. This the truest charity, the truest love.

The essence of charity, as of love, is giving. It exhibits its quality in the long run quite accurately in the kind of gifts it bestows. The nature whose strongest pulsings of vitality find vent in physical things makes material gifts whose costliness is generally the index of the strength of its charity or love. There comes to mind an incident in which a young man of wealth out of the fullness of his heart bestowed upon an elderly man whom he reverenced a beautiful and expensive flower—an orchid of rare variety. It would last but a day or two; it was a present rather for a lady than for a man; it was—considering the densely material nature of the giver—a gift most bizarre, yet the spirit went with it, and the delicacy of it indicated the quality of the giving, the refinement of the charity that under most conditions would have exhibited itself in the lavishment of money.

The person whose greatest outpouring of vitality finds vent in higher things than physical, displays his charity or love most strongly in a radiating and uplifting sympathy, or in assisting in one way or another the moral or intellectual development of those upon whom he turns his attention. Such a person finds his greatest joy in this aiding of others. He is most truly alive in such work as this. Such a person even though in his personality, his outer self, he be defective in many things, nevertheless dwells within reach of the inspiration of the all-inclusive One, within reach of that glorious Life which is the life of all. By giving unto all without stint he has become a channel for this Life Divine, and no matter how far at present removed, is approching in nature the nature of the ineffable Giver of All, the Source of all charity, of all love.

LETTERS FROM READERS

The restricted space of ANCIENT WISDOM does not permit a regular column for readers' letters such as is featured by many periodicals. Occasionally a letter raising a point of unusual interest which has been answered fully by the Editor is reproduced in whole or part together with the reply.

Three letters have been selected for publication this year, each of which we think will hold the attention of our readers. The first, published last month, brings up a question constantly asked, "Why is so much of the Bible crude, unclear and at times even obscene?" It will be found under the caption, ONE READER'S REACTION TO THE BIBLE.

The other two concern Astrology and Vegetarianism. The first will appear under the title ASTROLOGY—FICTION OR FACT? and the last named will be headed IS VEGETARIANISM A "MUST" FOR THEOSOPHISTS?

The Editor cannot on account of lack of time (certainly not of interest) undertake to answer personally every letter of the hundreds he receives, but does try to reply to those which voice original viewpoints or old viewpoints in an original way. There is then a chance that, if the question seems to possess exceptional reader interest, the correspondence may be reproduced in ANCIENT WISDOM some weeks, months or years later. Names are never used except by express permission.

If you have some burning question on the subjects with which this journal deals to which you have never been able to obtain a satisfactory answer, those are the kind of questions we like to attempt to answer and those are the letters most likely to be published. But the thing to strive for is what we are always striving for: something new, original, profound and of surpassing practical interest. Both letters and articles are always considered if they possess these essentials, set forth clearly and in good style.

And if you care to comment on the letters we are publishing we will be pleased indeed to have your views.

THE SWASTIKA

(Continued from Page 25)

The hub is the most important part, the Sun's disc around which everything turns, the whole represents not a figure of the world but the action of a Principle of Life. The central Sun is the symbol of the Great Spirit, and the Four Cardinal Points are the Creative Forces upon which the Spirit works to produce its results, manifesting in Matter as Fire, Water, Air and Earth. This is further shown in the Kabalah by the Four Archangels of the Elements called the Kerubim, the Guardians and Governors of the Elements. They are better known to us as the Signs of the Zodiac: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius, the Holy Living Creatures of the Bible.

The Swastika of the early days of this world, degraded today as it is into a lucky charm and the emblem on a disgraced flag, was once a metaphysical hieroglyph, more widely known and revered than even the Pentagram. Its beauty and value are not impaired by its connection with war, nor by the modern vulgarised meanings attached to it; it is one of the earliest beginnings of the vast system of religious symbolism developed by great initiates during long ages of historical happenings.

KARMA AND THE SELF

(Continued from Page 25)

ma is work in its objective sense, in the way in which the carpenter may say: "This chair is my work," or an artist may say: "That is my work; I painted that picture." When the artist looks at the picture he has painted, he learns from it. He painted it yesterday and today he looks at it, and if he is really an artist, not a man who just paints for money, he will not be entirely pleased with his picture. He will look at it a little sadly and will say: "Not good enough." Then he will try again.

We may ask ourselves why it is that this man who paints these pictures and tries again and again, can never satisfy himself. The simple reason is that as he painted a picture, he was trying to do his best. His thoughts were in it; his heart was in it, he was putting out all his power and skill. All the forces of his mind and in his body were working to produce a better picture than before and thus he was not merely making a picture. Without knowing it he was doing something more important. He was making a man. After painting the picture he was a better artist than before. He is now looking at the picture according to his wider development and understanding. We see from this example the way in which the

mind works and makes karmas, and how a man benefits by the way he deals with his own karmas.

Don't take only the idea of an artist and a picture, because this really applies to everything and everybody. Also don't too much isolate man from man. In all this work of world-making and world-experiencing there is a lot that is collective karma, and a lot of the business of social exchange. In the work of social exchange also we get what we make. The carpenter who makes an uncomfortable chair may very well get an uncomfortable shirt.

[To Be Continued]

THE OCCULT INTERPRETATION OF OMAR KHAYYAM

(Continued from Page 25)

the personality. It is the "fiery" Aries that is mentioned here, the personality filled with the fire or wine of spirit, for both symbols mean exactly the same. Jesus spoke of baptism by fire (spirit) as well as by water (psyche-emotion). It is in this fire and this wine that "the winter garment of repentance is to be flung."

Which poses another question. Why should repentance be a winter garment? Repentance, according to our religious brethren, no matter of what faith, is a hardy perennial, always in season. It is very pleasing, they assure us, to God. Actually, as a great occultist has declared, the only repentance that is worth anything at all is the resolve not to do it again. Groaning and wailing over past "sins," real or fanciful, is sheer waste of time. Firmly determining to put them out of mind and never repeat them—and then adhering to the determination—is worth a thousand bleating repentances. Some people love to repent. They repent over and over, and sin over and over. Repentance is such fun!—Almost as satisfying as the sin.

The serious minded Theosophist has no time for such folly. That he has made countless mistakes he well knows; that he will make many more is a foregone conclusion. He tries to see where and why he went wrong, to avoid similar error in the future and to make restitution if his fault has harmed someone else, but he chants no *Mea culpa* and he seeks no indulgences from karma. The occultist completely agrees with that wise old Frenchman La Rochefoucauld, who shrewdly remarked that "Repentance is not so much remorse for what we have done as the fear of consequences."

And consequences cannot be avoided by a babbling repentance, to which karma gives no heed. They can be avoided by convincing karma, by deeds not words, that there is no need for harsh treatment to pound in the lesson, because it has already been learned. That lies within the possible reach of everyone and it is the "Fire of Spring" into which Omar adjures us to cast our "Winter Garment of Repentance."

But why *winter* garment? Simple. Capricorn is the sign which rules winter. The entry of the Sun into Capricorn marks the commencement of the winter solstice. And in all the zodiac there is no greater "repenter" than the native of Capricorn. Not all Capricorns, of course, but those whose nativities are afflicted in certain ways in the religious department really go to town in their contrition and remorse. They practically make a business of it, and poor business it is for those about them. Not only are they busily repenting themselves, but they insist that others do likwise, a proceeding which the others not infrequently resent and possibly ridicule. The term "winter garment" is therefore highly appropriate and the medium for burning it up is most certainly the Fire of Spring.

The "Bird of Time" as contrasted with the Bird of Eternity is the egoic fragment in incarnation. It comes into earth life in time and has but a short way to fly. The quatrain standing at the head of this installment is as it appears in the First Edition and the subsequent three editions. In the Fifth Edition either for purposes of euphony or because he thought it better expressed the sense of the original Persian, Fitzgerald changed the third line to read:

"The Bird of Time has but a little way to flutter."

Fitzgerald was an Englishman and to him (though not to an American) this would rhyme beautifully—

The Bird of Time has but a
Little way to flutta.

But whether for euphony or for meaning, the revised translation better illustrates the rather feeble essay of the personality to fly. At our stage it does little more than flutter. Still at least it has its wings and its successors, if not itself, will some day soar into the empyrean.

(To Be Continued)

OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE

(Continued from Page 28)

though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"

Jacob's reply was to the effect that he was afraid Laban would take his daughters back by force—a poor excuse when it was obvious that Laban was only too happy to be rid of them—but as to the gods, what did Jacob want with gods? He had a most cooperative and satisfactory one of his own. "If you find anyone with your gods, kill him," said Jacob, who was unaware of his wife Rachel's kleptomaniac tendencies.

So Laban started to search. First he gave Jacob's tent a going over, then Leah's and then the two maidservants'. No gods. Finally he entered the tent of the real culprit, Rachel. But Rachel, true to her heritage, had prepared for just such a contingency. She put the gods under the saddle of her camel and very irreverently sat on them.

Her father went over the tent, finding nothing. "I'm sorry I cannot rise," said Rachel, firmly perched on the camel and the gods. "I'm not feeling well."

And that was that.

(To be Continued)

The conviction of Theosophists of the absolute validity of their concepts is quite unlike the expressed convictions of the religionists. The former are always joyously convinced — the latter, not seldom, gloomily convinced as a matter of duty. They might go to hell if they were not.

WHEN YOUR FRIEND SAYS:
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TO A BIGOT

By Charles E. Luntz

To anyone who sure is
That nothing any truer is
Than what he thinks is true;
Who knows the information
With which his conversation
Is crammed to suffocation,
Relating to salvation,
Eternal bliss, damnation,
Celestial commendation
Or heavenly indignation,
Is just the thing for you:

Why agonize about us?
Your faith can do without us
And we are satisfied
With our reINcarnation,
Which you think degradation,
The devil's own oblation,
A heathen innovation
And misinterpretation
By deft manipulation
Of Bible complication,
And sure to get us fried.

Your views attenuated
In no way seem related
To likelihood or reason;
Yet with recrimination
And much reiteration,
Impatient exclamation
And swelling peroration,
You threaten devastation,
Eternal condemnation
With no exoneration,
Both in and out of season.

So leave us to our folly
We find it rather jolly—
Your wisdom is so gloomy.
We have no inclination
To look for our salvation
In self-depreciation
Or mental mutilation,
Which, in our estimation,
Of grace is the negation.
We keep our approbation
For types of thought more roomy.

ITS A WONDERFUL LIFE

(Continued from Page 27)

knowledge of reincarnation will enable you, perhaps alone in the audience, to understand.

You will decide, with James Stęwart, we are sure, that it is a wonderful thing to have been born on earth with all its opportunities and associations. And if it is indeed wonderful to have been born even once, how infinitely more wonderful to be born many times—to know that many lives lie behind us, many more ahead, and after that life yet more wonderful, more abundant, more full of opportunity, onward and upward forever.

It can truthfully be said that not one sensible or logical argument against the truth of reincarnation has ever been advanced—not one. Nor is one ever likely to be. You can't argue away the truth.

ANCIENT WISDOM'S CIRCULATION IS NEARLY FOUR TIMES WHAT IT WAS A FEW YEARS AGO

* * *

CAN WE DOUBLE THAT?

* * *

To stand still is to go back. Through the help of readers for whose generosity we can never be sufficiently grateful we have achieved a circulation which would have seemed almost impossible in the 'thirties. But we are not satisfied—we are far from satisfied, in fact. You don't want us to be satisfied and would think little of us if we were.

ANCIENT WISDOM has proved its worth with its readers. It presents the occult teaching in a way no other publication has ever attempted or is ever likely to duplicate. It was a bold experiment—to offer the hoary wisdom of the ages in modern, streamlined, even humorous fashion. But it has succeeded far beyond our original expectations.

Now we have much greater expectations. We want our four figure circulation to increase quickly to five figures and then we will start concentrating on our ultimate six-figure goal of some years hence.

Your donations, subscriptions for others, prompt renewal of your own subscription when it expires, are our working tools to achieve these aims. Help whenever and with whatever you can . . and our grateful thanks to you.

NEWS OF THE T. B. G. I.

By L. W. Rogers

The Theosophical Book Gift Institute has shifted its office from St. Petersburg, Florida, to Wheaton, Ill. Thus it comes into the theosophical center and capital where theosophical activities really belong. As planets revolve about the sun, theosophical enterprises gravitate toward Olcott, which is destined to grow until in due time it will be widely known as a great spiritual and educational center.

Mrs. Lillian Carr continued her library tour westward to California and return and new information has been gained. One bit is that our Theosophical literature is being read. In various large cities where our books had been placed two years ago, librarians asked for a new lot because the books were so much worn that it was desired to pass them on to branch libraries where the demand would not be so continuous. Several librarians in colleges have written letters of thanks, remarking that the books would be most useful in the classes in comparative religions and philosophy. A few librarians have expressed personal interest in the books but we are finding that the chief reason why the libraries want them is that the public is at last beginning to call for occult literature and the librarians have nothing to give them. No librarian likes to have to say, "No, I'm sorry, but we have nothing on that subject." That is the real explanation of the favorable attitude of the average librarian.

THE ZODIAC IN "AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER"

3. Gemini

"You must distinguish not only the useful from the useless, but the more useful from the less useful." —*I*

FEBRUARY, 1944 ANCIENT WISDOM WANTED

Will any reader having a copy of the above in good condition kindly mail it to us if he can spare is? Every three years two 3-year volumes of the publication are bound for permanent reference but the demand for the Feb. 1944 issue was for some reason so great that only one office copy is left. We can use as many as are sent in as we like to have a reasonable overage of each issue on hand.