ANCIENT WISDOM

A monthly journal devoted to teaching theosophical and occult truths

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—Hamlet

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EVERYDAY OCCULTISM

BY H. K. SCHOLEFIELD

We call it "The long arm of coincidence" when a natural sequence of events flows mechanically from cause to effect on planes just beyond the wave-band of human vision. "Coincidence" is a term for an ignorant man's trash-can; whatever he fails to grasp gets thrown into it. For example, this was an actual happening:

A young man whom I shall call John, deeply in love, bought his sweetheart a wrist watch but delayed presenting it for several weeks pending her birthday. Meanwhile he kept it by him and fondled it and admired it daily until the entire mechanism became heavily charged with his personal magnetic force; the more readily as it was new and had had no previous handling other than its treatment at the factory. The birthday came, the watch changed hands and Mary soon thereafter departed for another town to complete her education while John attended to his job. But very soon he fell ill and for three days lay in so critical a state that Mary's family avoided communication with her until they had more cheerful news about John. "But I knew all about it all the time", Mary announced. "Did somebody write or telephone?" "No, I knew it by my watch. It stopped the day John fell ill and started up again three days later, so I knew then that he was all right again."

A watch, being composed of a multitude of tiny metal parts, can respond to such occult influence most readily since each part, when charged with magnetism of the owner, combines that force accumulatively. The effect can be quite powerful enough to derange the action while the author of such magnetic influence lies in peril, his etheric double strained and torn. That force encompasses whatever is akin to itself throughout this earth's etheric field, for space means little or nothing on higher planes. John's recovery naturally withdrew the interdiction and confusion of the magnetic aura which had become attached to the watch while still being a part of his own vehicles, and it recovered with him.

One of the commonest coincidences arises when two correspondents write at the same time and their letters cross in the mail. John, thinking strongly of Mary while writing his letter, stimu-

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STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BY GEOFFREY HODSON

In this article I have selected from among many needs of our Society two of the most important. They are dependent upon each other. The first is for students in our movement and the second for teachers. I think I perceive a dearth of deep students of our philosophies in our Society, and as a result, of course, a great lack of teachers and lecturers.

By study I do not mean merely skimming the occult cream from the more interesting of our books; I mean real study, the patient investigation of the fundamental teachings of the best of our literature and the literature of the world, idea by idea, and truth by truth, the mastering of the basic doctrines upon which the great religions and philosophies of the world are founded. I would go further in my definition of study and add the necessity of contemplation, of research by meditation and test by application to life. Thus the great truths may become embodied within the student and he become established in his own truth, knower of the truth for himself, unassailable, unshakable and capable of teaching from individual experience.

Furthermore, the student must keep himself abreast of the times so that he can present to the world the ancient truths in terms of modern thought, so that cultured intellectual people can follow and accept them. This to me is an all important need in our Society.

Only as we know can we truly teach and only as we study can we know. We must study in order to teach; become imbued with the real spirit of the teacher.

I have five practical suggestions to make for the attainment of this ideal.

First, the sounding of the note of scholarship throughout the Theosophical Society. An impulse in this direction could be sent out from Adyar, inspiring the membership with the spirit of learning, the desire for knowledge, a call to study and to teach.

It is of vital importance that during the early months of membership, the new member should be made welcome by older members and that they should show the greatest interest in his theosophical welfare and happiness. All too often new members meet with keen disappointmnt in this respect, especially on attending their first Lodge meeting. A woman hostess and a special

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OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE

Double Play

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

Resuming the esoteric explanation of the Joseph story at the point reached in the last instalment, we find Joseph, the young Ego, being instructed by his father to journey to Shechem and ascertain how his brethren and the sheep are getting along, the two latter, as we have seen, being the various phases of the personality including its many vices (at that stage) and its few, if any, virtues.

About all the immature Ego, no more than dawning conscience, can do during the early spiritual evolution is to take note of what is going on in the incarnated personality. Later — much later — it commands, as Joseph is destined to do; but at the period under consideration it has no power to curb its headstrong lower self—it can only "dream," as Joseph did.

We are first introduced to an intriguing bit of Bible symbology which can only have been employed to reassure any student still doubtful of the identity of Joseph with Sagittarius that such indeed is the case. Oriental teachers are strong for repetition. We have seen how the scriptural characters constantly reiterate what has just been told to them so that there can be no mistake about it, and often repeat in full what they themselves had said shortly before. There are no ditto marks in the Bible. Everything is spelled out in fullest detail so that "he that runs may read." Again and again the narrator returns to something he has said earlier, in case his audience may have missed it.

Particularly is this the case with the occult symbology. We have seen in the Joseph narrative what pains the author has taken to connect Joseph with the ninth house sign. First he uses one allegory then another, a third, a fourth, a fifth — as many as needed, and to us it seems more than are needed—to trade-mark his hero so there can be no least doubt what occult principle he represents. But he still is not satisfied. Sagittarius is a double bodied sign. Everything concerned with it is dual. Our conscientious instructor must therefore indicate this fact in some unmistakable way just as he has indicated Joseph as the Ego by his coat of many colors (causal body), dreams (Sagittarius), long journeys (ninth

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YOUR BACKGROUND

When one applies for a position of any importance, runs for political office or seeks preferment in any prominent field of endeavor, the question is invariably asked, "What is his background?"

By this is meant the past history, education, record, social standing, business experience and any and every achievement or failure which could possibly have contributed to or detracted from the personality as it currently subsists.

But to an occultist his background is only a minute segment of the infinitely greater background which extends not merely into the past few decades of the present life but into a remote past expressible in terms of thousands, even millions of years.

Is it practicable to take note of such in immeasurable background? If it is not, then a great part of theosophical teaching is purposeless for it aims to canvass this past and put its experience to use. Not in its details, of course, for it is granted only to the adept and to those verging on adeptship to have knowledge of these while in incarnation, but in its principles.

Background has always had enormous social significance in human society, yet the kind to which society pays attention is a piffling little thing compared to the Egoic background which immeasurably predates it and will illimitably outlast it.

In your background you may have lives as a medieval monk, a Hindu Brahmin, a Roman patrician, Greek philosopher, Arabian sheikh, Egyptian priest, Chaldean astrologer. You may and probably do also have lives as a sweating coolie, despised pariah, colored slave, Judean peasant, prehistoric cave dweller. We all have these or similar incarnations somewhere in our background. For good or ill they have made us what we are today. But we should not say for ill — the trend has always been for good. Each life's experience has had its minute distillate to contribute to the Ego's store. The experiences are etched into the speck of the permanent physical atom — an achievement only a few degrees more remarkable than the recording of an hour's speech on a spool of wire. But while these will one day be recoverable and be "played back" as a matter of curiosity or interest, they are side issues only. The real value of those many and varied lives — hundreds of them — lies in the background they have given us for living our present life—and those to come.

How foolish for any of us, knowing we are likely to have lived in almost every race, in every country and followed every great religion—and many lesser ones—to indulge in race or religious hatred or prejudice! How foolish, especially, if we realize that by occult law excessive dislike for anything will draw us irrevocably to that thing in future incarnations—perhaps in the next one! Be assured if we persecute we shall be persecuted, if we hate we shall be hated, if we despise we shall be despised. And so, surely, it ought to be. How else may we learn the deepest lessons of brotherhood, about which we talk so much? How else can it be brought home to us that we are a unity of life, separated only in seeming by outer form and that this unity knows no color, no race, no religion.

Let the Theosophist keep his background—his real background— in the *foreground* of his consciousness. The blue blood that runs in his veins, his descent from the Norman kings, from the Mayflower pilgrims or from the Virginia Cavaliers is a trifling matter alongside of his spiritual descent which has passed through generations more ancient than the oldest genealogy that can be traced on earth. It should make him more than tolerant—tolerance, after all, is a supercilious word. (Has anyone really any right to "tolerate" a fellow-man? Suppose God did no more than "tolerate" us?) This knowledge should make him *understanding* of his fellow-man. Understanding because whatever the latter is today each of us has been that, or something akin to it, in the past or will be in the future. Evolution plays no favorites and all of us go through the same mill.

We are exceedingly antique. So is everyone, relatively speaking—but we, being Theosophists, know it and others do not, which should give us a breadth of outlook appropriate to the background we realize ourselves to have. It behooves us all to think well on this if we are at times tempted to be petty, spiteful, ill-natured or uncharitable, failings of the immature. Though we have thousands of centuries still ahead of us we are still very old people. Should we not endeavor to be our age?

WHY SO CERTAIN, GENTLEMEN?

A source of amazement—if one could longer be amazed at any point of view expressed by anyone — would be the cocky assurance of materialistic writers in their own proofless conclusion that there is no spirit either in the universe or in man. In many books this is taken for granted or implied in so lofty a fashion that it reminds one of the similar assurance to be found in some works on religion that the particular belief of the author — that and no other—is necessarily true and not subject even to the slightest argument or dispute.

Seemingly few, outside of Theosophists, are willing to submit their *credos* to the test of examination and discussion. Whether it be the atheist, with his negative creed, "I believe in no God," or the ultra-orthodox and his "I believe in this God which has been fashioned for me," or the agnostic, "I believe that no one can possibly know whether there is a God or not," all are, or seem to be, equally convinced that their faith or lack of it represents the last and only word on the subject.

All three groups contain very intelligent thinkers, capable of clear, logical reasoning along other lines but it is very evident that along "God lines," if we may so describe the controversial matter herein dealt with, at least two of the three groups have reasoned most unintelligently or not at all. Two of them *must* be wrong if one of them is right for their views are mutually exclusive. And if two bodies of presumably intelligent people can unquestionably be wrong, then all three groups can be wrong.

The atheistic scientists are ostentatiously sure they are right—no God. Are they not scientists? How can their reasoning be wrong? Who are these inconsequential thinkers who dare to dispute them?

But there are orthodox Christians who are scientists too, and very good ones. And some of the agnostics can match degrees and celebrity with any of the arrogant materialists—and with the religionists too. So where does that leave the irresolute leaner on authority? His "authorities" cancel each other out. Awed by distinguished names, daunted by impressive masterminds uttering what, to the Theosophist, would be singularly unimpressive pronouncements — one mastermind's conclusions exactly contradicting those of another mastermind of equal eminence—where is he left?—What *is* he to think? Whose opinions *is* he to accept? Or, in the words of a well known author, what *can* a man believe?

Your true authority lover will either end up by accepting one group or oracle as his mentor—and always, perhaps, having a sneaking idea that he is holding onto the wrong coattails, or —if he is very lucky—he may decide to believe none of them and do his own thinking. Not many do that, but the ranks of Theosophy are recruited from the few who do. And even some of them come in and immediately start looking around for new authorities. When a stern thinker and straightfor-

ward talker like Krishnamurti, himself raised in Theosophy, happens along and says, "You won't find any authorities here—you are your own authority," they try, to his utter disgust, to make an authority out of him. When he repudiates their efforts they sink back dumbly, their world crashed around them, their last hope failed.

That is, if they have weakling minds as so many who have strong bodies and strong minds along other lines sometimes do in the matter of basic beliefs. Theosophy is powerful medicine—no milk for babes—and in our view no faith for those who want ready-made, hand-me-down beliefs. There are plenty of those on the outside. Occultism is definitely a tailored job, cut and measured to each one's capacity by the individual himself. It will furnish the raw material but the fashioning of it is a personal task.

Authority in religion or in atheism will probably not be scrapped for thousands of years to come. We shall doubtless find it in our next and many subsequent incarnations, and will presumably be born into some form or other of it. But we shall break away—be assured we shall break away—if we maintain our one-pointed hold on the truth. We did so this time if we are Theosophists. We shall do so next time. How many lives it took us to learn to think for ourselves cannot be known—possibly hundreds. Maybe we still have not learned this vital lesson thoroughly. Maybe we still yearn at times for someone's comforting *ipse dixit* to lean upon—for someone to do our religious or philosophical thinking for us. No need for self-reproach if such is the case. It is a stage everyone has to go through. But until we do indeed reach the point where we are not afraid to challenge any and every belief no matter by what alleged authority — not for the mere belligerent purpose of dispute but in order that we may think our own thoughts and not those of another—until then our progress in evolution is necessarily retarded.

Challenge and reject what seems untrue or unworthy. Challenge and accept what seems true and right. But put something of your own into your beliefs too. What you add may be far more important than what you take from others. And accord the full right to others to modify or amplify what you may give to them.

As to the "authorities" who are so certain that their unproved pronouncements and theirs only are to be accepted, leave them to those who still need them. They will have an ample population running into millions to draw from. But — if we may use a mixed metaphor—let us stand on our own mental feet. Because, to disclose a deep, dark secret, the "authorities" are not nearly so sure of themselves as some of them pretend to be.

A 5000-YEAR OLD MISTAKE

"Judge not, that ye be not judged."
— *Sermon on the Mount*

The woods are full of critics and criticisms. Pick up a book, a magazine, a newspaper—attend a lecture, go to church and listen to a sermon—chances are better than even that the author, columnist, editorial writer, lecturer or preacher is bawling somebody out. Open the Bible at random; your eyes are more than likely to light on a threat by the Lord or by one of his prophets or saints. If all the censure, reprobation, scoldings and rebukes of the last fifty centuries were assembled in a giant bomb they would surely have force enough to blow up the world.

That is what they amount to anyway—blowing up the world. But the world, like the individual pays little heed. This is not now considered even a good method of training children and much as we deprecate the "running wild" system now in favor, we agree. Deprivation of privileges or pleasures is much more effective. Karma doesn't yell at us when we misbehave, doesn't read us a lecture, reproach us or denounce us—just takes something away from us or, without a word, makes things generally unpleasant until we learn the better way.

The assembly of critics and naggers above cited might well take a lesson from karma's handling of the situation. It is very effective and karma exists to give lessons. What is the reaction of the average person when he is upbraided by someone he doesn't have to listen to? Resentment. And we don't have to listen to ninety-nine out of a hundred of our self-appointed judges. We can turn our backs on them, dial them out, close their books, throw their journalistic effusions in the waste basket, walk out of their lectures and sleep through their sermons. The rare few whose criticisms are really constructive and worthwhile — and how few there are!—we may hearken to and heed.

It is our reasoned conviction that this mania of people for offering reproof to their fellows whether qualified or not to give it—and hardly anyone short of an adept is so qualified—is a 5000-year old mistake. (Probably much older, but for present purposes we will use the Ussher chronology). To go back to Bible times, there are hardly a dozen instances of the hundreds recorded of the various tribes, peoples, kings or commoners who were subjected to constant tongue-lashings, scowls, frowns and menaces by their allegedly spiritual betters, whose conduct as a result, improved. On the contrary, it usually seemed to get worse. One notable exception was the wicked city of Nineveh to which Jonah preached the wrath of the Lord. The Ninevites promptly repented and started to mend their ways. They were heathen, however, and didn't know any better. Jonah's own people cheerfully disregarded all the dread pronouncements of their numerous prophets. Revilements, fulminations, anathemas and malisons alike left them cold. And while religious bans, threats and excommunications undoubtedly throw superstitious fear into the hearts of some of those at whom they are directed, fear drives no one to righteousness. Abstention from anything because of terror is not even negative goodness. The most that can be said for it is that it is better to abstain from wrongdoing even though only from dread of consequences than to indulge in it.

Which brings us back to the main thesis of this discussion—that it is a huge mistake to expect to improve his conduct because someone for whom he has no particular respect and whom he does not have to obey lays down the law.

Naturally professional or educational correction is not included. Nor is the genuine service rendered the world by exposing those who prey on it. A teacher must necessarily point out the errors of his students, but even he may do so in a way which will not wound the pupil's self-respect. This however, is beside the point. The criticism referred to here is of conduct belief, opinions and modes of thought all legal and within the discretion of the individual.

If one can find some scant few grains of wheat among the mountains of verbose chaff poured out on the world daily and use them for mental or spiritual nutriment he is fortunate. But the writers and lecturers of most value to the race are not those who eternally criticize the foibles of their fellow men which they usually share. As we see it, they are those who try to arouse in others the spirit of original thought for self-betterment which all possess but few employ. This can never be achieved by empty criticism or by pouring banal opinions into apathetic minds. It must be done by striving in a multitude of ways to fan into flame the spark of greatness which shows as a tiny light in every human soul. It can and too often is, stifled for the incarnation by dampening miserable criticism which has no object but to exalt the lower ego of the critic.

Ignore such criticism, we beg of you if you would preserve the two most precious innate possessions of your divine Ego—your self-respect and belief in yourself. Do not allow yourself to be hamstrung by the malice of those who would make you the victim of their 5000-year old mistake.

They will do better by-and-by and you will be saving them some nasty karma, besides maintaining your own peace of mind by taking no more note of their disparagement than if it had been written or uttered in an unknown language.

TRUTH

By Clara F. Gaston

Truth, in its own nature, is the Eternal Verity, that ever existed, is ever unchangeable, and upon which the whole manifested universe is built —its very foundation; but its manifestations are as infinite in number as the number of individuals that make up the human race.

This does not mean that Truth itself ever varies its action or appearance; it is ever changeless, but its effect upon people varies in accordance with the ability of the individual to recognize it and this differs widely according to the individual's stage in evolution; we can all observe these stages in our own lifetime; that which was true to us even a year ago is no longer true, not because Truth itself has changed but because the experiences we have had have changed our angle of vision, have given us a new understanding. To this must be added the natural increase of knowledge through growth.

In the course of a long lifetime this may occur repeatedly, depending largely on our rate of growth, spiritual growth, mental growth, emotional growth; in other words, upon the stage in evolution which we attain, and since our growth in these various parts of the personality varies widely it naturally affects our recognition of Truth as well as our judgment with regard to it.

In the first place let us remember that "A thing is true because it's true, not because somebody believes it, neither is it untrue because somebody else does not believe it." The world believed for centuries that the earth was flat and had four corners; that did not make it true. Our judgment at all times is based upon our knowledge as well as upon our angle of vision.

How, then, shall we know whether the rule of life we are following at any time *is* Truth?

We must recognize first of all that we are, each one, the result of a separate line of incarnations, the circumstances in each case being individual to the particular entity, hence the result for each differs widely, each affecting in its own way the judgment and understanding of the individual.

This explains also the wide difference in men's ethical, mental and spiritual level. The act that to one is unimportant and easy is to another difficult or impossible; why? because it involves directly or indirectly, loss, injustice or pain to another. To one that does not matter, his comment is merely—"Oh well, he has to learn his lesson sometime, he'll get over it."

We have here the perfect example of a memory of past births, an unconscious memory, truly, but effective. The special circumstances are not within the memory of the present physical brain but in the one case the results were so painful that that suffering was impressed upon the consciousness itself to act as a monitor, an unconscious memory—we call it CONSCIENCE. The other man had no similar experience in his past, hence no restraining influence. His lesson is yet to come for it is true of each one of us—of *each* child of God—that, like our Master, we too through suffering must be made perfect. There is no other way.

How then shall we answer the question asked? How may we know whether the rule of life we are following *is* true?

It must be clear from the sketch given above of the evolutionary process that every man's judgment must differ in some degree from that of others, sometimes only slightly, so that in what seems to him important points he may unite with others; sometimes so seriously that he can not.

Hence the many variations in the forms of worship all based on the one foundation, the Divinity of The Christ! No one can say that one is more right or wrong than another, yet each can only worship sincerely after that form to which he has allied himself.

But, some one may ask, if only One is true are not all others necessarily false?

By no means. The infinite variety of the evolutionary process has produced an equal variation in the color of men's consciousness. We can only point out that anything which persists through generations in spite of objections or even persecutions, persists only because of that aspect of Truth upon which it is founded. The accretions which have gathered about it will fall away when no longer needed, which will not be until that form can no longer give a spiritual uplift to any of its devotees, and that will not be until those devotees can no longer join in its forms with true sincerity and devotion.

SINCERITY and DEVOTION. These are the only conditions required; but they are absolute, for the true seeker after spiritual growth. He may in his progress encounter and recognize many fallacies that had escaped his notice before, each of which will now give him a new angle of vision, but if he sincerely and devotedly follows the Truth as he sees it each new step that he takes will be toward Truth as it is, each new angle of vision will disclose a new vista and add not only to his knowledge but to his spiritual growth and strength as well.

So we may definitely say that form of worship by which the worshiper's spirit is most truly and fully uplifted, which brings him to such a degree as he is able to reach into touch with the spiritual source of his being, his true origin, is, for him, the right form. Nor should he change for another merely under persuasion. That only is right for him which he recognizes as right from within—the Voice *Within* which is The Voice Of God. Nor should he condemn those who differ with him. He must assume that they are as sincere in following their form of worship as he is in following his. If they are not, the Great Law will correct them.

As one great Divine Teacher expresses it: "By *whatsoever* path men approach me, equally do I receive them, for the paths men take on every side are mine."

ADEQUATE PRAYER

"Why should I pray long prayers?" asked Patience Worth, and this question was emphasized by an incident which occurred in August, as reported in the Detroit papers and recounted by the editor's son recently.

Charles Luntz, Jr., with three companions, was caught in a squall in his outboard motor boat, four miles out in Saginaw Bay. The boat, hit by a huge wave, upended and sank. The four were thrown overboard and spent twenty minutes trying to keep afloat in the stormy waters until rescued by a fishing party.

Luntz Jr., a good swimmer and former Army Top Sergeant, remarked, when asked, that he was not especially perturbed by the incident, though keeping afloat in clothing and shoes in rough water is not exactly recreation. "However," he observed, "the Army throws you into something like that about once a week when they train you, just to get you used to it."

One of the party, who could not swim, kept crossing himself and reciting "Hail Marys" while trying to cling to a safety cushion. "And," said Charlie, with a wicked grin, "every time he crossed himself he went down."

The editor, who heard this hair-raising episode for the first time on a recent visit to Detroit, had an inquiry to make:

"Didn't you do any praying yourself? After all, you were in considerable danger."

"Oh, when it was all over, I said a little prayer of thanks."

"What did you say?"

"Oh, I sort of looked up sideways and nodded and said, 'You did all right.' "

Which the Power that took care of him probably thought quite adequate.

It seems to us, on the rare occasions we go to church and listen to a sermon, that the minister presents the problems of life most ably. On the answers he doesn't do so well.

DO YOU KNOW? —

That the system of imparting occult instruction in the east is altogether different from that employed in the west?

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That this system is very ancient and goes back to the furthest reaches of prehistoric time?

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That it is based on the fundamental idea of compelling the pupil to use his own wits to the uttermost in order to determine the true meaning of the instruction given?

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That a large part of such instruction is likely to be in parable form, with a few hints at the end as to what the parable means sufficient to enable an alert pupil to decipher its significance?

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That if the pupil is not alert or will not take the time to work out the meaning in his mind or by his intuition, he simply remains uninformed?

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That while this method may seem preposterous to western educators, who try to make their instruction as clear as possible, it is—for esoteric teaching —very sound in principle?

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That the idea behind it is that only those who will exercise their spiritual intelligence to its furthest limits are entitled to receive the profound Truths of occultism?

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That, valuable as this method is, it has its drawbacks, as the duller pupils, misinterpreting the teaching, are likely to perpetuate erroneous concepts it was never intended to convey?

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That this is particularly the case where parables and allegories not described as such in the text are accepted as literal history?

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That while the characters in these narratives may actually have lived, the deeds attributed to them may be largely or wholly allegorical?

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That this explains the obscurities, perplexities and seeming inconsistencies of the Bible so far as they are not due to interpolations, mistranslations or errors in copying?

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That ANCIENT WISDOM has published for nearly 15 years a series, OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE, designed to enlighten readers on the true meaning, esoterically interpreted, of the biblical text?

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(More biblical DO YOU KNOWS? next month.)

A reader inquires if there is any term by which to designate inhabitants of the astral plane. "Astralians," we presume.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE SIMPLY EXPLAINED

Pneumatos tou deou

By Charles E. Luntz

IV-2 Learn what we, who descend from the Primordial Seven, we who are born from the Primordial Flame, have learnt from our Fathers...

What is called the Ancient Wisdom, Divine Wisdom, Theosophy or by many other names, all signifying the esoteric teaching regarding the universe and man, constitutes a revelation.

It may seem incongruous that ANCIENT WISDOM which has taken such strong and repeated exception to so-called revelations which are the fundamentals of most religions, should make a statement such as this.

But there is a difference — and a vitally important one.

Attached to every other revelation is an ironclad condition that it must be accepted... or else. And the "or else" ranges from the mild admonition that if it is not accepted the one who rejects it cannot obtain the highest spiritual benefits, to the ferocious sentence of eternal punishment if the alleged revelation is not ingurgitated to the last morsel.

The Old Testament is full of curses and threats for those who do not accept its revelation. The New Testament ends on a similar note. The Book of Revelation, which probably no one but an occultist versed in the symbology used can understand, appends this gruesome warning to its teaching (XXII:18-19):

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life..."

A happy thought, well calculated to force belief, willing or unwilling, into the mind of anyone at all influenced by religious threats — and that was nearly everyone in the days of our fathers. It is also quite efficacious with many people even today. The words may not, however, have been written by the author of the book but, as with so many Bible passages, inserted by some enthusiastic copyist, editor or translator who thought they ought to be there as a discouragement to those who would tamper with the text. It would not occur to the interpolator, of course, that he himself should be the first victim of his own horrific prediction. Says Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol. XIII p. 37), referring to this well-established habit of adding to, subtracting from, altering and revising works written by others," ... texts were as clay in the hands of exegetes" (commentators).

Menacing language is not unusual at the end of religious books (often at the beginning and in the middle, too — see some of the books on religion by our Puritan ancestors). The Old Testament gets started with curses very early, in Genesis Chapter III, sin of Adam and Eve. The last word in the last verse of the last chapter of the last book is "curse." (Malachi IV:6). "... lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

In older times the curse and the punishment were not reserved for the future life. Reject the prevailing beliefs and the religious authorities would do a very good job of translating both of the former into reality right on the physical plane. Now that this power has been taken away, some of them still hopefully rely on heaven to do that which they can no longer do themselves to the unbeliever — burn him. And not for a few short minutes but forever.

No theosophical revelation contains any curses, maledictions, intimidations or threats against the spiritual future of those who refuse acceptance of all or any part of the theosophic teaching. That is the privilege of everyone, and to the Theosophist it seems that it is a poor revelation indeed and one very unsure of itself that must be rammed into the doubter with the weapon of hideous invention as to what will happen to him if he doesn't accept it. Religious duress is unknown to the occultist. The revelation he offers stands or falls by its own inherent truth. If it seems good, true, beneficial, logical, explanatory of what cannot otherwise be explained, it may be accepted *if one wishes*. And it may equally be rejected, ignored or put aside for further thought if one wishes.

What sort of truth can it be that is proclaimed in substance as being "true because we say it's true (or perhaps, because we say the Bible says it's true) and if you say it isn't, the *hell* with you—but literally."? To the Theosophist the unnecessary vehemence of the proclamation is almost a guarantee that what is proclaimed is *not* true. We expect children, perhaps, whose word is doubted to stamp their feet and bitterly cry, "It *is*, I tell you —it is, it *is*, it *IS!*" but hardly grown-ups. Yet that is precisely the reaction, in possibly a little more mature language, that we receive from the ultra-religious whose "truth" we are so reprehensible as to doubt.

Theosophical revelation forces itself on no one. It is that which, as the stanza recites, those early Divine Instructors who incarnated to guide infant mankind learned from their own Instructors who were their progenitors still ages before.

We have always stated that in our view it would have been impossible for the highest human intelligence with which history is acquainted to have invented the transcendent scheme

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AN IMPERISHABLE GIFT

By Ella Welge

The Esoteric Healing Group of the Theosophical Society of St. Louis offers an imperishable gift to all the readers of ANCIENT WISDOM and to mankind at large who will accept it and use it. There is no limit to our giving. Our gift to the world is priceless and cannot be found in any market place. It is a spiritual gift, not made with human hands but created out of the very essence of Divine Love. Therefore it is an imperishable one and will give full and lasting satisfaction. Most gifts offer pleasure for a while but soon lose their newness and charm unless the giver is motivated by an inner love and a joyous spirit. The spirit is the real part of all giving. Any gift without a spiritual pompting is bare.

Our gift to you is Healing Love. If you will accept this gift and use it freely in you life you will find that it fulfills all your temporal and spiritual needs. Our gift comes from the very heart of our being. It is the spiritual life-force that flows through us from on High, produces harmony on all planes of being, and establishes peace and order in mind, body and affairs.

Should you need help of any kind for yourself or others take time for quiet relaxation and meditation. Think of our Healing Group as a channel through which the life-force flows to heal the world. Know that spiritual love and purity is being outpoured to sustain you not only at the Christmas season but at all times of the year. Realize that these currents of Light bring renewed life, strength, peace and wholeness to soul, mind and body. Cherish this Christ-Light and express it for the spiritual upliftment and blessing of mankind. Open your hearts and minds to the inspiration of The Almighty and you will be guided into paths of righteousness and peace. Healing love brings the One Life into manifestation which dissolves every discordant idea and establishes health and harmony. It is for you to receive these blessings and to enjoy their benefits.

As the Christ's ministering Angels hovered close to earth this Christmas season just past with songs of peace and goodwill to all men, remember that the consciousness of our Healing Group blends with Their harmony in releasing the imperishable gift of Healing Love.

In accepting this supeme gift our New Year will be filled with joy and gladness.

God bless you every one.

* * * *

Make all requests for spiritual aid to Mrs. Ella Welge % The Healing Group, Theosophical Society of St. Louis, 5108 Waterman Ave., St. Louis 8, Mo.

LET'S BE COMPLICATED

By Anna Mae Yakosha*

Let's talk about the Gunas and the Vikritis and Prakritis.
Let's dissertate on Plato and the apothegms of Socrates.
'Most any subject recondite may be considered eligible,
But please forgive me if, by chance, you find my talk intelligible.

I love to babble nonsense and with double-talk to putter.
I strive for ambiguity with every word I utter.
Unclarity's a thing of which I've made a lifelong study.
My puzzled hearers think I'm deep— I'm really only muddy.

In phrases long, involved, obscure, I frolic and I revel,
Though seekers after knowledge may consign me to the devil.
On themes transcendent, deep, occult, that others deal with warily,
In fatuous language I orate or talk about quite airily.

My chairman on the platform sits and looks a mite unhappy.
He thinks no good can follow from my disquisition sappy.
Although with words caliginous my voice still fans a breeze,
The audience is leaving now by ones and twos and threes.

But still I prattle gaily of the Chains and Rounds and Races.
There are newcomers here tonight— I'll put them through their paces.
The speaker all can understand is greatly overrated—
I'm only happy lecturing when I am complicated.

* A mythical local lecturer who has driven more people out of the Society than most national lecturers have brought into it.

EVERYDAY OCCULTISM

(Continued from Page 81)

lates her directly by thought transference to take similar action, which she does without knowing whence came the urge. Mob psychology is well known, and all of us have laughed heartily at some silly joke while sitting as one of an audience. The same joke would not amuse us in the least if we were not swayed by the emotion of the crowd; thus any demagogue may sway a group to accept, as a whole, whatever is acceptable to any strong minority present whose ideas and emotions are already formed and fixed in the required direction.

Many superstitions are founded upon a basis of fact no less cogent. Men carry a rabbit's foot, a "lucky" coin, or a relic believed to have been the possession of some departed saint. It need not have been so; in fact the saint need never have existed at all. Yet in handling these supposed protective playthings, the owner vigorously and continually charges them with his own magnetism heavily co-mingled with the thought of success, protection and safety. They become important and useful talismans imparting courage and fearless enterprise in time of peril when the proprietor touches them, gets a "recharge" of his own natural equanimity to adjust his emotional disturbance, and thus fortified goes on to success. But as such people grow wiser, they outgrow such devices as children outgrow toys.

More than one religious sect makes use of figures and images displayed in church, in homes and paraded publicly on "holy days." Use of the crucifix, image, icon or other symbol in religious ceremony is as old as mankind; the most primitive savages make hideous fetishes in the likeness of whatever elemental entities attend their periodic orgies and are of the class seen in delirium by alcoholics when their normal field of vision is distorted, which actually brings such objects into focus, to the horror of the foolish victim who has broken down his own protective shield. Whatever the grade of religious feeling to be evoked, whether of the lowest or highest, the use of images, symbols, pictures or talismanic relics, is perfectly logical and useful. Those of us who are not readily moved in that manner and who object to them as idols in violation of God's Commandments, should make a clear distinction between worship of a block of wood, a tooth, a painting or a silver cross *per se,* which is not only wrong but very silly, and worship of the power therein represented. We do exactly the same thing ourselves when we open a book and read the words, "God is Love," which are in cold fact nothing but the impress of some inked type. However, the thought and emotion evoked by that impress are of extreme value.

Superstition is often well founded in malign directions also, as by the careless person who breaks a mirror and, in addition to being obliged to buy another mirror, also accepts "seven years of bad luck" supposed to be attached to the event. His subconscious mind then adjusts his physical reactions, through the nervous system, to produce weakened health: his emotional body opens to entry of fears and destroys self-confidence, precluding constuctive action, and we have a case of psycho-neurotic upset which may possibly endure for seven years —the price, in experience, of learning to have better sense and to refuse to accept evil.

(The End)

Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.

— *St. Augustine*

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

(Continued from Page 81)

friendliness on the part of older members would avoid this disturbing experience, from which some people never recover.

Men members can assist in establishing and maintaining a high standard of efficiency in the conduct of Lodge business. Those who have a special training and knowledge in a business or profession, may contribute these to the Lodge. A doctor for example, can bring to Lodge study information concerning theosophical developments in medical science and also give public lectures and classes on health and healing from the theosophical point of view. Specialists in other walks of life may similarly contribute, thus keeping the Lodge abreast of modern thought.

Outside of the Lodge, members may tactfully take the theosophical outlook and spirit into domestic, civic and national life, contributing especially the theosophical solution of the more serious problems of home and city.

In addition to these activities the new member will naturally desire to increase and deepen his knowledge of the teachings of Theosophy. Study must, therefore, have its due place in the successful theosophical life. In this, advanced students may be consulted so that reading may be well chosen and knowledge ordered and progressive. A wealth of fascinating theosophical literature on almost every conceivable subject is now available; its systematic study will contribute greatly to happiness and progress as a Fellow of the Theosophical Society.

As he studies Theosophy, the new member will gradually acquire the theosophical attitude towards life. If this could be summed up in a phrase, it would probably be "tolerance born of understanding." Especially will he learn to be tolerant of the opinions of others with which he may disagree.

Next to the President, the Librarian can be the most important official of the Lodge. He or she has a unique opportunity to serve, and, one might add, a unique responsibility.

Nearly every visitor to the Library is inquiring about Theosophy, about life, or, and very often, about their own personal life and problems. Such inquiries are often of distinct and separate types each requiring different treatment and specially chosen reading matter.

How often are inquirers turned away from Theosophy by a book, splendid in itself but utterly unsuitable to their type or stage of study! The ideal librarian is one who intuitively recognizes the need of each inquirer, knows the most suitable book for him and knows where to find it. Also the ideal Librarian requires the gift and should be provided with the means of making the library a place of beauty and of peace. Beauty, quietness, efficiency, order and great care of the books themselves should be the keynote of every theosophical library. however small.

The negatives of a good library, are, I think obvious. Shabby bindings, dusty and untidy shelves, the absence of system in storing and lending books, untidy notice boards and unsympathetic library attendants. All these are the antithesis of the ideal and their existence is unthinkable when the more occult aspects of a theosophical library are realized.

A reading room with a harmonious social atmosphere is a most valuable asset in Lodge life and work. Afternoon tea may well be served there to visitors. Visiting lecturers and students may usefully attend on certain afternoons to answer more intimately and informally than is possible from the platform, questions arising from public lectures.

Good relations should be established with principal local libraries and librarians. As many theosophical books and magazines as possible should be placed in them and the public encouraged to inquire for them there. Thus public libraries may also serve as extensions of the Himalayan library, the Theosophical Lodge Library serving as link between the two.

Ideal and difficult to acquire though such conditions may be, I believe them to be within the reach of most Lodges. Indeed, I know of many Lodges which already possess them and many others which closely approach the ideal.

A library dedicated to the service of the teaching department of the Inner Government of the World, recognized as a centre of spiritual power and light and presided over by a well read Theosophist who is a lover of both books and men, can do magnificent work for the cause of Theosophy.

(The End)

OCCULTISM IN THE BIBLE

(Continued from Page 81)

house), prosperity (Jupiter), all of which jointly represent the Ego occultly and astrologically.

Now, in order that there cannot be any remaining shadow of doubt, he confirms the fact by repeated incidents repetitive in nature which need not have been put in at all as they add nothing to the interest, suspense or dramatic value of the story, if the story is only literal. Indeed they rather detract from it by introducing apparently valueless and tedious material. The author of the Joseph story, one of the greatest dramatic writers of all time, was too skilled to insert meaningless or irrelevant passages. When he appeared to do so, thereby slowing up the action or impeding the development of the plot, there was a very good reason—he was forced to it by the exigencies of the esoteric interpretation.

Thus Joseph has *two* symbolical dreams when one would have been quite enough to indicate (a) that he was Sagittarius, (b) that he was the future ruler of his "family" (personality). He has to journey to *two* places, Shechem and Dothan, to find his brethren and the flocks. The exoteric story is not helped one iota by this unnecessary piece of information—the locale might just as well have been made Dothan in the first place or left at Shechem. No doubt there were plenty of pits to cast him into at the latter place and also a trail or road through it along which merchants travelled on their way to Egypt. Indeed Shechem (the modern Nablus) was notable long before Jacob's day and is mentioned 24 times in the Bible while Dothan appears only twice. Important archaeological discoveries have been made there, indicating great antiquity. The map shows it as a logical north and south route for caravans journeying to and from Egypt. Not a thing is gained by the writer in introducing the superfluous Dothan into a fictional tale (as the story undoubtedly is, at least as to details). Except—and mark the exception—to bring in the element of *duality,* as was done in the duplicate dreams.

But that is not all. We saw how the writer, able as he was, apparently made an inexcusable mistake in having Joseph pulled out of the pit by Midianites, sold to Ishmaelites, and then somehow sold by Midianites who no longer had him to the Egyptian Captain of the Guard. But a little further on it says that the latter bought him from the *Ishmaelites.* Very confusing to say the least and implying that the writer could not keep proper track of his own characters.

In the August instalment, which covered this phase, we left it at that, as this series deals with the literal text literally and does not anticipate the esoteric interpetation to come. So that this "discrepancy" as indeed it is, was indicated as a rather stupid error on the part of an allegedly inspired writer. It was exactly that if our literalist friends are right and this is a historical episode. There can be no other explanation.

But this ancient narrative is *not* history. If it were we would certainly not expect to find so proficient a master of the writing art losing the thread of his own narration. They were very careful, these biblical scribes, of what they committed to papyrus. Their art was considered sacred and a blunder was desecration. This Midianite-Ishmaelite mixup—a *dual* purchase—was introduced for a purpose — the same purpose as the dual dream and the dual journey—to show the dual nature of the sign which was the antitype of Joseph. And we shall find, as the story progresses, more *unnecessary* incidents further confirm this purpose.

As to the error, this too was purposeful and in line with common scriptural procedure. An inconsistency or

Ancient Wisdom Articles Make Excellent Lodge Study Material

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We often receive letters from Lodge officers telling us that ANCIENT WISDOM articles are used as text for study groups and members' meetings.

They should be appropriate for that purpose as many of them are based on lectures or discussions in St. Louis Lodge. The editor makes mental notes of all new ideas which suggest themselves at the time and these frequently form the basis for editorial, series or short articles in ANCIENT WISDOM. Many contributions by other writers are also very suitable.

Every Lodge in the United States and Canada receives a ropy of ANCIENT WISDOM monthly and has done so for years. A large percentage of these subscriptions are paid for by the Lodges themselves but the paper is mailed whether paid for or not. At least that is our aim. Should any Lodge not be receiving it because in some way the name of the Lodge or of the appropriate officer is not on our list, the omission will be rectified if we are informed.

THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM, "HOW CAN WE HOLD THE INTEREST OF OUR MEMBERS OR STUDENTS?" MAY BE SOLVED BY OFFERING THE CONSTANT NEW APPROACHES TO THEOSOPHY TO BE FOUND IN ANCIENT WISDOM.

It might be worth trying.

obvious absurdity or impossibility is always there to direct the student agile enough to detect it to the fact that here an occult truth is enshrined: stop and investigate.

A peculiar method it may seem to us, thousands of years later. But our method of easy education in spiritual things would have seemed much more peculiar to the old time teachers. If students wanted these priceless truths to aid in their understanding of life and their spiritual progress, they must dig for them. The keys were furnished but they did not turn too easily in the locks.

A continuation of the symbolism up to the point reached in the exoteric narration will have to be carried over. We had hoped to cover it in this instalment but the richness of the material, not excelled by any in the Old Testament, calls for thorough analysis of each incident, and the space that can be allowed in any one issue is strictly limited.

(To Be Continued)

THE ZODIAC IN THE CLASSICS

10. Capricorn

He is never less at leisure than when at leisure.

—*Cicero*

MINSTRELSY

A Selection From The Poems of Patience Worth

* To Little Charlie, Aged 7

I cannot deem the day is dull or drear.
I cannot contemplate long weary hours.
Wisdom doth not awe me
And learning is a toilsome way.
I am unafeared and shall approach wisdom
As a child who knoweth his Mother's breast,
Never learning the cant of sages,
Oh, I shall laugh at sages
For my wisdom is older than their ken.
I am a consorter wi' shadows,
Wi' moving things half phantom.
I perceive without desire;
Knowledge is mine like dew
Which falleth upon the flower.
What need I the shackles of learning
When I can laugh and buy Life?

* This poem was given for Charles Elliott Luntz, Jr., Aug. 2nd, 1926. Patience prefaced it by saying "Charlie's Ego Speaking."

Life is a battle between the Ego and the elementals. Don't be disheartened if the elementals win occasionally. As we are "half-way through" it is perhaps normal that they should win half the time. But nothing to feel elated about if they maintain that average.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

(Continued from Page 85)

known as Theosophy. It is too all-embracing, completely logical, consistent within itself and consistent with everything we know of the workings of nature and events, to be the product of mere human imagination. What man succeeds in producing when he exercises his own fancy in the realm of religion is all too familiar—blood sacrifices, chosen people, some to be saved-some to be damned, predestination, salvation by belief, salvation by rites and ceremonials, placating an angry deity by prayers constantly repeated, salvation by belief in the sacrifice of another, salvation only by divine pleasure or caprice, salvation by austerity, suffering, self-mortification... we could go on and on cataloguing the weird ideas man has evolved when he set his mind to formulating what he imagined God had ordained as the principal or only end and aim of earth life.

And these "revelations" must be accepted on peril of one's soul. No wonder the Theosophist shies off from the word revelation or uses it hesitantly as we do here. Its connotations have not been pleasant ones.

But the word must be used because no other fits the source from which come the real Truths of life — the Truths deeply and majestically enshrined within the strange words of the Dzyanic stanzas on which *The Secret Doctrine* is built. These Truths, not arbitrary nor capricious edicts, are indeed the Eternal Verities—and are worthy to be. It seems almost a deprecation to say that they add up, they make sense, they appeal to the reason, to the intuition, to everything that is highest and noblest in the human soul. Whatever one says of them seems to demean them, though some language, lame and imperfect as it is, has to be used to describe them.

Few are those who can receive them, in spite of their beauty, their exalted dignity and the supremely elevated concepts they give us of our place in the universe and in the Divine Plan. Wrote the Apostle to the Corinthians: *Psuchikos de anthropos ou dechetai ta tou pneumatos tou deou· moria gar auto esti.* "The worldly man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." The teachings embraced by Theosophy are those which Paul terms *ta tou pneumatos tou deou,* the things of the Spirit of God. Do we wonder that they are unacceptable to the world at large?

(To Be Continued)

It's quite a thought that we have to learn to love the people we now dislike (we won't say hate, Theosophists should have gotten over that) or karma will keep throwing them at us in successive incarnations. That makes sense out of the scriptural admonition, "Love your enemies."