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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RELIGION

By CLARA F. GASTON

In studying the nature and purpose of what we call Religion it becomes necessary to emphasize that humanity as a whole is separated into innumerable grades and classes each differing widely from all others. We say "innumerable" advisedly as even in like groups conceptions vary almost as widely as the number of individuals that comprise the group.

It should be remembered that man himself is a spiritual entity, clothed in a material body for the purpose of attending school—day after day, incarnation after incarnation; and not only in flesh (incarnation meaning "clothed in flesh") but also having bodies of the matter of the intermediate planes in which his evolution takes place, to contact which he must have bodies composed of the matter of those planes in order to react to their vibrations. There is, first, the Emotional plane which we call the Astral, then the Mental, the plane of Thought, finally the Mento-Spiritual, the real home of the evolving Ego, which lies in immediate touch with the spiritual plane itself and in which is the true home of the soul during the period of his human evolution, during which period he cannot enter the spiritual plane itself.

It is from this 'Home of the Soul' that the Ego receives the keynote of his living, all his higher impulses, all his aspirations for the good and the perfect, his determination to reach perfection and all his aspirations toward perfection, at first unconsciously but more and more consciously as he advances.

This upward striving is what man calls Religion, which means the recognition of a Supreme and spiritual source of Being and the effort to come into conscious touch with and draw spiritual strength and inspiration from it. It is obvious that both recognition and effort must vary both in kind and degree among men, from the primitive to the civilized.

That there is a recognition of a supreme and incomprehensible source of all manifested nature even among the most primitive tribes is evident from the ceremony with which they conduct their worship according to their kind—and it is not to be assumed by the observer that the image before which they prostrate themselves and to which they offer prayer and sacrifice is the

(Continued on Page 38)

THEOSOPHY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

IV

One of the ills that poisons life is the habit many people have of moving through existence against a background of resentments, hatreds and regrets. They can never really be said to live at all, for when one or other or all of these are not thrusting themselves into the consciousness to curdle the happiness of being and doing, worry thoughts are usually ready to fill the vacuum and maintain the atmosphere of g l o o m without which that type of thinker would hardly feel at home.

Perhaps this extreme description seldom fits all of these people all of the time; but it certainly applies to some of the people all the of the time and even to many, we will not say all, of the people some of the time. Few there are who escape it altogether. Perhaps Theosophists come as close as any to doing so, knowing something of the elemental causes which occasion it. But even some of them at times have these black days or hours or moments. And there is a technique for getting rid of them—a very good technique because being based upon the real facts instead of suppositions, it gets results.

We hear a good deal in both religion and occultism of treasure in heaven, which we are exhorted, quite rightly, to lay up for ourselves. These dark moods might appropriately be designated treasures of hell if there were any hell. They are the prized possessions of the astral and lower mental elementals — creatures whose interests run counter to ours and who revel in the things that to us are directly harmful.

A Chinese proverb fits the case: "One cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over his head, but one need not let them build nests in his hair." And this applies to all predatory birds which prey on our peace by taking lodgment not in our hair merely, but in our minds. A psyche thus conditioned is a happy hunting ground for the elementals which constitute the life in the emotional and thought bodies—a life which is theirs but not ours and which, being billions of years behind us in evolution, gains its experiences by thoughts and emotions which to us are slow—and sometimes fast—poison. A good analogy is the existence of nox-

(Continued on Page 39)

"IN DEFENSE OF HYPNOTISM"

Three Letters But No Article

In ANCIENT WISDOM for December 1948 an article appeared by Dr. S. Irwin Shaw entitled "Help Yourself." It was a good article, entirely theosophical in tenor, and brought letters of commendation from readers. A footnote to the article stated that Dr. Shaw was the author of a book "Hypnotism Can Help," and in an editorial we mentioned that he had practiced hypnotism for beneficial ends without remuneration and with very satisfactory results to those on whom it was employed.

At the same time it was stressed that many Theosophists were strongly averse to hypnotic suggestion even when used, as in this case, altruistically and with no apparent harm to the subject. For ourselves, we declared, that we had an open mind though not yet convinced there were no hazards connected with the practice of hypnotism.

We invited Dr. Shaw, for better enlightenment of our readers, to state his viewpoint in an article to be entitled "In Defense Of Hypnotism."

A number of letters from readers followed publication of the editorial and these were forwarded to Dr. Shaw. Almost, if not quite, without exception they were highly adverse to hypnotism, some of them condemning its practice in strong terms. After reading them Dr. Shaw has declined to submit the proposed article but has given permission for publication of his letters of refusal which we reproduce herewith:

"May 4, 1949

Dear Mr. Luntz:

Thanks for the letters.

It is very evident from these opinions that 'Theosophy' can no more accept 'h y p n o t i s m' than can 'Christian Science,' and any effort on my part would be that much waste of time.

Fortunately for mankind, the medical profession has opened its eyes after these many years, and hypnotism *is* r e c o g n i z e d as a healing science. Whether we accept the theory of 'Suggestion' pertaining to hypnosis, or that of separating the soul from its physical haven, the remarkable cures at the hands of these practitioners of hypnotic suggestion speaks for themselves. However, we live in a free country and each of us is entitled to his own opinion.

Not wishing to interfere with anyone else's blood pressure, nor raise my

(Continued on Page 39)

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THE GOOD IN THE RELIGIONS

Theosophy has always been insistent upon the fact that the religions spring from one great source and that in their original pure form each was admirably adapted to the people to whom it was delivered. The accretions of centuries all too frequently have overlaid the primal teaching until little more than a warped travesty remains of the basic revelation. The additions, often meaningless and false, are regarded as the all-essential, while the underlying truths are slighted or ignored. And so the religion degenerates largely into a superstition, a sister under the skin to the mumbo-jumbo of the witch doctor and medicine man.

Enlightened religious leaders, appalled by what has happened to their once pure faith, lead secession movements which, if they succeed, may eradicate some or many of the crass overlays, until they in turn acquire their own new superstructures of error. And so we have the bewildering number of sects, each (with few exceptions) insistent that its exclusive set of illogical and wrong beliefs is the only sure path to salvation but each, happily, with its own *logical* and *right* beliefs which, when analyzed, prove to be completely identical with those of the others.

Sweeping as the foregoing statement may appear, it is provable and not subject to successful challenge. Where the beliefs of one sect directly contradict the beliefs of another, either the former or the latter or both must be untrue. And as the fundamental differences between the sects are based wholly on doctrine and there are as many doctrines as there are sects, only one doctrine, if any, can possibly be right and all the others must be wrong.

But in spite of the emphasis placed on doctrinal conflicts, the real glory of the many religions is that they agree on so many things that are really true. All of them teach love of God and of one's neighbor; justice, morality, honesty and the rest of the cardinal virtues. The bloody religious wars have never been about these things, which are the only things in religion that matter. Always they have been about the things in the religions that *don't* matter. Which is a very good argument for eliminating the latter from religion altogether. They have not brought men together in love but have separated them in hate. And still today in the pulpit and over the radio not a few preachers of "the old-time religion" (whichever of the many that may be) wax far more eloquent in threatening "sinners" with their mythical hell than in holding forth to the righteous on the bliss of their unrealistic heaven. We have often wondered if any of the threatened were ever permanently converted by all this oratorical fiction. Verily there must be more than joy in the preacher's heaven if anyone is turned from evil ways by that kind of menacing denunciation—there must be complete amazement!

As it is to the glory of the religions that all of them still teach many of the ancient verities in spite of wasting their time on the newer falsities, so it is to the glory of their communicants that in times of stress they can often fall back on these eternal truths and find in them consolation and strength. Forgetting the blasphemous "wrath of God," the hideous hell-fire teaching and all else that is negative and repellant, they take refuge in the loving-kindness, goodness and compassion of the Divine which puts to rout the dark doctrines invented by shadowed human minds. There is no comfort in doctrine. Theology will guide no soul safely through the wastes of sickness, bereavement and loss. Dogma is a poor staff to lean upon in the valley of the shadow of death. Yet one would think these were the all-important essentials of faith from the bitter fashion in which men have quarreled and tortured, cursed and damned one another over the ages since Jesus gave his new commandment—to love one another.

All that is true in all of the religions of West and East, Theosophy teaches. That which is false it studies, trying to discern beneath the ugly veneer of the doctrine the original truth, mangled and distorted as it may be, for it is always there. And so Theosophy can point out to the baffled communicant, dazed by the apparent illogic and futility of some of the teachings of his faith, the pearl of great price hidden beneath.

We speak the truth when we say that we wean no one from his religion but only enable him to understand it better. His preceptors, who perhaps are far from understanding it themselves, may enter objection but it is *his* peace of mind and spiritual progress which are at stake. Those who lean on authority may weakly surrender to opinions arrogantly expressed by people without even the beginnings of true spiritual understanding. But the peace of God can never be imposed from without and assuredly not by the modern Pharisees who worship the *letter* of scripture and ceremony and ritual. Such peace is an inner thing and Theosophy exists not to impose it but to aid in its awakening. For experience is our ritual, the pageant of life our ceremonial, and right action our prayer.

IS SURVIVAL ONLY A MATTER OF FAITH?

In a thoughtful letter commenting on the speech of John L. Talbott at our debate with the Rationalists and also the editorial "The Myth of Non-Survival," a reader makes the following statement: "No one can prove either Survival or Non-Survival. They are matters of FAITH."

Our correspondent is a lawyer and only a week ago the present writer, explaining Theosophy to a clever young attorney, a Harvard graduate and very keen, was met with the same statement in almost the identical words: "Acceptance of the fact of survival after death can only be a matter of faith."

These two pronouncements, both from members of the same profession, coming so close to each other, has led the writer (who also had a legal education though never following it up) to wonder if this reaction is the result of training and practice which demands strict evidential proof before giving credence to any controversial allegation of fact. Also whether it may not be possible to offer at least circumstantial evidence which will justify faith in survival "at the bar of reason," to use H. P. B.'s phrase.

We might start by asking ourselves, "From the evidence available, is it more likely or less likely that survival after death is a fact?" Admitting that we can point to no set of facts from which an absolutely airtight case can be made that will satisfy everybody, there still seems to be enormously greater weight on the affirmative than on the negative side.

As, in our opinion at least, the negative is so much the weaker, let us start by summarizing the evidence in its favor:

(1) No one has ever seen a soul either before or after death.

(2) All statements to the contrary are either hallucinations or deliberate falsehoods.

(3) All spiritualistic phenomena is fraudulent and capable of reproduction by physical means.

(4) Spiritualists put to the test in such cases as that of the Houdini message locked in a safety deposit vault with a large sum awaiting anyone who can tell what it is, have failed miserably.

(5) There is no evidence of survival in nature.

(6) Religious teaching regarding survival is based on the credulous and uncritical beliefs of ages ago and on authoritarian pronouncements of people who know no more about it than anyone else and have absolutely no

proofs to offer.

We might present the evidence for, in the form of an answer to these points:

(1) Countless individuals, from earliest times to the present day, claim to have seen some immaterial principle or form corresponding to what is loosely temed a "soul," both after death of the body and occasionally during the life of the body. The literature of psychical research is crowded with modern cases. The scriptures and other writings of past centuries are also full of them.

(2) That is a broad statement and obviously not susceptible of proof. Overwhelming evidence, some of it from most reputable people with world-wide reputations for truthfulness and accuracy of observation (as the late Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle) cannot be dismissed with one grandiose declaration that it is based on illusion or misrepresentation. The Encyclopaedia Britannica article on Spiritualism (Vol. XXI, Page 246) states: "... there is a great body of testimony as to their" (spiritualistic phenomena) "actual occurrences, which cannot properly be ignored."

(3) That was the claim of the late Robert Houdini, who did reproduce a great many of the stock phenomena of spiritualists. It is quite certain that there is in fact a large amount of fraud in connection with many commercialized seances. But if Houdini had duplicated every spiritualistic phenomenon ever reported, that would still be no evidence at all that there was no genuine phenomena, not produced by physical means. Some fraudulent mediums are very clever but none, so far as is known, possesses the conjuring talent of a Houdini, which they would certainly need to fabricate successfully some of the remarkable appearances and communications of which the records of the Psychical Research Societies are full.

(4) This is not a test of the truth or otherwise of after-death survival but of clairvoyance. No occult clairvoyant from the Masters down will ever submit to tests designed to satisfy vulgar curiosity. H. P. B. did so, convincing everyone who beheld her in action, only to be slandered by those who did not, and sometimes, later, by those who did—after they had persuaded themselves that in spite of appearances they must somehow have been deceived. As to the statement of Mrs. Houdini that her deceased husband never communicated with her as he had promised in life that he would do if he could, all this can possibly prove is that he couldn't. His cleverness as a magician on the physical plane would be no guarantee whatever of his ability to perform the difficult feat of communicating from the astral plane which might, and probably does, require quite other talents, not of a physical nature at all. The failure of the ordinary clairvoyant to pierce the mystery of Houdini's locked strong box is completely understandable. The ordinary clairvoyant has not the power—sometimes may be a fraud with no such powers at all, other times with sporadic clairvoyance of a limited type unequal to the task. The *extraordinary* clairvoyant, properly trained, would be an occultist and therefore taught never to give such tests.

(5) This is a rash and obviously unthought-out statement. Anyone naive enough to make it certainly ranges himself in a class with Wordsworth's Peter Bell:

> "A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

The woods are replete with proofs of survival if one possesses the wit to interpret them with intelligence. The trees, stark and apparently dead during winter, revived in the spring, again full of life and vigor. Hibernating animals in their coma-like sleep, animated when the cold weather has passed. The "dead" chrysalis transformed into the lively butterfly. The inert seed beneath the ground giving birth to the lovely flower. And, above all, nature's great law of the conservation of energy—no particle of matter or of the energy into which matter can be transformed ever being capable of annihilation. By analogy it is no strain on either imagination or reason to conclude that this is nature's own way of telling us that no particle of the spiritual energy which constitutes man's soul or spirit can likewise be destroyed.

To those who will have nothing to do with any eternal spirit in man but admit the eternity of the atoms composing his body, surely the words of Jesus (Matt. XXIII: 18-19) most aptly apply. Rebuking the hair splitting Pharisees who made a law that "to swear by the altar, it is nothing; but to swear by the offering which is upon it is binding," he scathingly declared:

"Foolish and blind! for which is more sacred, the offering or the altar that consecrates the offering?"

And of our modern materialistic Pharisees, who are so sure that matter and energy are the only two eternal realities, we inquire,

Foolish and blind! Which is the more worthy of survival, the atoms of the bodily encasement, the mere instrument of thought and action, or the thinker, the actor, the spiritual intelligence that consecrates the body?

(6) With this we go along, at the same time pointing out that not everyone has the reasoning power to evolve for themselves conclusions based on nature's visible processes which so unerringly point to the certainty of spiritual survival. For these, authoritarian pronouncements seem to be necessary and on them the spiritually lesser evolved must lean. The unhappy part of it is that those who have received or have arrogated to themselves the authority to make pronouncements on spiritual matters have concocted such fantastic and gruesome inventions as to what the future life holds.

This has repelled many thinkers—perhaps every thinker who has really had the temerity to challenge such teachings all the way through. There is no scintilla of evidence that the threatenings and rumblings which are the specialty of some churches and preachers are based on anything more tangible than wrongly translated passages of scripture, which even in their correct form may never have been uttered by those to whom they are attributed.

A business acquaintance once informed us that we had sold ourselves a bill of goods in our belief that there was survival. To which we replied as we would reply to any materialist, "Perhaps. But you have also sold yourself a bill of goods in your belief in annihilation, and the merchandise we have bought is far the better brand."

HAS YOUR LODGE A FLOWER FUND?

St. Louis Lodge for many years has been able without strain on its finances to send flowers to sick members, to funerals of members or relatives of members and on other appropriate occasions, by a very simple expedient.

Members are requested to donate on each birthday a penny for every year of age. Those not caring to disclose their age donate $1.00. A note is made of the birthdate and a birthday card sent by the Lodge. This also serves as a reminder of the penny donation. Non-members often contribute also.

Over the years a substantial sum is built up, ample to meet the flower needs of the Lodge. It has proved an excellent plan. Perhaps your Lodge would like to try it if you do not already have a similar fund. The Flower Fund, ANCIENT WISDOM readers will be interested to learn, is in charge of one of the Lodge's hardest working and best loved members — Mrs. Ella Welge.

The difference between the Atheist and the Deist may be stated succinctly as follows: The Atheist believes that the Deist is reading into the natural order something that is not there. The Deist believes that the Atheist is reading out of the natural order something that *is* there.

After visiting (under protest) an exhibition of modernist "art" recently the editor came to the conclusion that some at least of the exhibits should bear the following inscription: "Any resemblance between articles in this picture and anything in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth is purely coincidental."

UNLIKELY BELIEFS REGARDING REINCARNATION

By Charles E. Luntz

(Concluded)

Unlikely Belief No. 3 is not less illogical than the other two, or so it seems to us. It is the notion that rebirths are limited to one or two or a very few. The argument advanced is that if we do not complete our allotted tasks this time we have to come back and complete them next time or maybe a time or two after that.

This seems the very negation of reasonable thought on the subject. How can anyone, even the greatest, accomplish more than a fraction of that for which his Ego has the capacity in the 70 or 80 years or less granted him on the physical plane? A few choice souls perhaps may seem to have done so—Washington, Lincoln, Gandhi, Winston Churchill and those in their extremely limited class. But what of the millions, the billions, who meander through life achieving practically nothing? Why should anyone suppose that another life or two would show results so much better that their earth-curriculum would be over—nothing more to do, nothing more to learn?

What is destiny supposed to do with them if, being who they are and what they are, they just can't finish their stint of work in the niggardly few lives allowed them? Are they pitched into outer darkness, sent to hell or limbo, annihilated, or assigned to some menial job on the outskirts of the Cosmos?

This remarkably jejune idea may trace to the Jewish Cabala where an additional life or two is hesitatingly granted to those who didn't do so well in their first incarnation. But the Cabala, as H. P. B. has exphasized (Sec. Doct. Adyar Ed. Vol. III, p. 52.), is an occult work which, to be understood, must be read "by the light of the Eastern Esoteric Philosophy." It is full of blinds and half-truths intended deliberately to throw the uninitiated off the track, this being the method of all ancient esoteric teachings when committed to writing. Only "mouth to ear" was the real truth conveyed and the keys to decode what was published. The Cabala esotericists well knew the correct rationale of spiritual evolution and multiple births. Fearfully they wrote down as a mere mnemonic to their students that once in awhile another birth might be permitted. Some modern schools of advanced thought seem to have taken the blinds for the facts.

The deeper the Theosophist delves into the religions and metaphysical systems of other organized groups, the more profoundly grateful he becomes for his own cogent, all-embracing, non-evasive philosophy. It seems so self-evident that if reincarnation is a fact in nature at all it must operate as Theosophy teaches and not in the inane fashion of the limited rebirth theorists that it need hardly be stressed. But people do believe that curiously illogical concept and somehow persuade themselves it is more likely to be true than the long-range vista of reincarnation through the ages until human perfection has been attained.

They have a right to their belief and to support it by all the arguments at their disposal—if any. And we have the right to demonstrate its fallacy and to show that it is little if any more logical than the popular misbelief that there is only one earth life assigned to each.

How foolish that sounds to the Theosophist! How more than unlikely—how impossible! One life only on this good earth with its myriad conditions for our education and perfection! One life only when there are so many races about most of which we know nothing when we could know everything if we took incarnation in each! One life only when there are millions of useful things to learn and the best of men can acquire hardly a tiny fraction of available knowledge!

Surely God has blazoned forth the fact of rebirth in all his works if we have only eyes to see. Surely he teaches us this great central fact of evolution in everything that we contact in our daily lives if we have only ears to hear.

The immature spiritual thought of the West may for the time reject this mightiest of truths which the mature spiritual thought of the East has accepted since the dawn of history and before. The West is growing philosophically and one day will accept it too. Reincarnation's hour will strike in America and Europe and "there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose hour has struck."

Theosophy is speeding that hour and when it comes, in perhaps the not-so-far distant future, the Western World will owe one of its greatest karmic debts to the now rebuffed Theosophists.

(The End)

DO YOU KNOW? —

That Theosophists are taught to consider *all* spiritual subjects, including religious and theosophical beliefs, strictly on their own merits without reference to the eminence or otherwise of the source of information?

* * * * *

That this means that final judgment lies with the individual himself and not with anyone presuming to speak with authority?

* * * * *

That from the occult point of view anyone presuming to make final pronouncements on such matters which are to be binding upon others does exactly that — *presumes?*

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That our own theosophical leaders have stressed this denial of final spiritual authority to anyone repeatedly and have not excepted themselves but have gone out of their way to include themselves with more than ordinary emphasis?

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That to those who would inquire if this even covers pronouncements of the Masters, the answer can only be that it does?

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That if warrant is desired for this, at first sight, drastic statement, it is funished by the words of the Buddha himself — a Master of Masters?

* * * * *

That this necessarily rules out as in any way authoritative or binding upon the conscience any commandment, admonition, statement, declaration, behest, injunction or other form of decree embodied in a scripture, promulgated by a church or incorporated in a creed or profession of faith?

* * * * *

That this in no way prevents the individual from freely accepting any of these things and making them a part of his religion or philosophy if he himself, unswayed by the alleged authority of the source, voluntarily chooses to do so?

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That this also does not require rejection of a pronouncement *because* its source claims or is claimed to be authoritative, but the claim of authority alone need be rejected?

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That some very good and true things have come from such sources, backed by professions of infallibility, but they are true because they are true and not by reason of the alleged authority tacked onto them?

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That some very bad and false things have also come equipped with similar assumption of omniscience, which in no way lessons their falsity?

* * * * *

That if one would go through life with an unfettered mind, no other position toward imposed spiritual authority seems to be possible, but these thoughts are presented with no assumed authority and only for consideration by the reader?

THE ZODIAC IN THE CLASSICS

4. Cancer

You may see me, fat and shining,
with well-cared-for hide.

—*Horace*

We submit that it is not selfish to want to survive death—it is not weakness to revolt at eternal annihilation—it is not unscientific to believe that behind the mask of the physical body there is something that energizes, supports and uses it for its own purposes.

PERSONAL OPINIONS

By L. W. Rogers

What Is Your Ambition?

Ambition is desire for advancement and it is doubtful that any human being lives who does not desire to advance in some way. Some are ambitious for wealth, some for power, some for fame and the average man of the world wants all three, and still other things, such as good health to enjoy them. We should all regard a person who had no desire for advancement as hopeless, as useless to himself or to the world, as a sort of evolutionary contradiction. We are all ambitious in some fashion, and perhaps a bit proud of it. Yet *Light On The Path,* a famous theosophical classic and possibly the profoundest of them all, says in so many words "Kill out ambition." That is the advice of one who has completed human evolution to an aspirant who is contemplating the first infant step in the spiritual life.

It is easy to understand that one who wishes to become the accepted pupil of a Master has abandoned all thought of a worldly life that would bring him wealth or power. Wealth or fame might come to him as the result of karma earned in a previous incarnation but if his purpose was to become the disciple of a Master he would have no time for a successful career in material affairs. He could not serve both God and Mammon. But the command does not refer to such things as wealth, power or fame. There are no exceptions or exemptions. It is all inclusive. "Kill out ambition." Since ambition is merely desire for advancement and may apply to spiritual as well as to material things, those three words have probably puzzled many readers.

Light On The Path proceeds to explain: "Ambition is the first curse; the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward."

Then comes the warning against ambition's subtle danger: "Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually."

In that quotation the word "power" refers of course to power of will, of emotion, the power that would enable an aspirant to move forward at a good pace once he had entered upon the higher life.

In tre natural course of evolution every one of us finally comes to the point where he is capable of entering upon the higher life and in a few incarnations to finish human evolution, to reach the state of being in which pain and sorrow can touch him no more forever. At the same time he gains the wisdom and power to help thousands of others to rise to that exalted state. But, says this great Teacher, people with the necessary characteristics to do that are continually being led away from that happy result by ambition. So it is easy to understand why the Master gives such emphasis to the subtle lure of ambition.

It is not an easy thing for a young man or woman to choose the occult path. We are surrounded by throngs of others who have no understanding of anything but the material world and all their thoughts are of the business and professional world. Our relatives and friends all expect us to enter upon some sort of career. We are expected to achieve some degree of success as actors or lawyers or doctors or merchants or managers of some sort. The pressure of thought and custom is great and there is often also the necessity of earning a living for others as well as for one's self. It seems, however, that when the right time comes, that when accumulated past experiences have b r o u g h t the soul to a knowledge of the existence of the spiritual life and awakened a desire for it, th limitations fall away and the opportunity to choose comes, but comes in a very natural way. We may not be aware that we are making so fateful a decision. It may be only the culmination of many decisions in small matters that determines the final choice and which have served to guide us into the circumstances of the moment. It is at this critical point that "the great tempter" ambition, says the Teacher, leads aspirants away from "their higher possibilities."

Since all human beings are gods in the making and are destined ultimately to develop all wisdom and power does it particularly matter if, instead of turning attention to the higher life, they enter upon professional careers for the present? It does matter enormously. C. W. Leadbeater says in one of his books that there are large numbers of young men and women now in incarnation who are ready to enter the Path and would do so if Theosophy were put before them. But it is not done and they drift off into business or professional life for perhaps twenty or more incarnations. It means for the race that it is deprived of the spiritual teachers fho are so greatly needed. It means for the individuals concerned that for the next several centuries they will be returning periodically to about the same sort of life they are leading nom, doing again about the same sort of things they are doing now and finishing each incarnation a trifle further along on the monotonous road; instead of which they could just as well have had that many centuries of the joyous life of the wider consciousness and of invaluable usefulness.

If you follow the matter up in *Light On The Path* you find that we really do reach a point where ambition has been killed out but only by successive steps as we become less and less selfish. Ambition we must have and use for a long time. We must desire to achieve. We must desire spiritual knowledge and attain it. We must desire to attract the attention of a Master by our good work. We must desire to become His accepted pupil and apprentice. Having achiever these ambitions we must look hopefully forward to taking the first of the great initiations. When that ambition is satisfied we begin to comprehend the actual unity of the human race and to realize that ambition belongs only to the personality. We no longer desire anything because we *have* everything.

"OUR LANGUAGE"

A Simple Explanation of Theosophical Terms

Pantheism: The belief that God is in everything, is everything and that everything is in God. Theosophy is essentially Pantheistic and it is difficult to see how any sect which proclaims the Omniprescence of God can deny Pantheism which is the same thing, though most of them appear to do so.

Parabrahman: The Absolute.

Paradise: In Theosophy the higher subdivisions of the astral plane where the personality may exist in great happiness before passing on to the still more supreme bliss of devachan (the heaven world).

Plane: An occult term for a world, globe or area composed of a specific type of matter, dense or subtle. There are seven of these, the lowest being the Physical and the highest the Divine.

Poseidonis (Pronounced **Po-SEE-don-is**): The last small island of the continent of Atlantis to be sunk beneath the waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

Puranas (Pronounced **Poo-RAH-nas**): Hindu scriptures. There are 18 major and 18 minor "books" of these.

Purusha (Pronounced **Poo-ROO-sha**): Spirit.

Raja Yoga: Yoga attained by wisdom.

Rays: There are seven of these and each Monad has his own principal ray to be developed in fulness of the aeons, though not necessarily discernible in any individual incarnation. They are: (1) Will (2) Wisdom (3) Creative Activity (4) Harmony (5) Scientific (6) Devotional (7) Ceremonial.

Rishis: A generic term applied to the Masters and other great Beings.

Rupa: A form.

Samadhi (Pronounced **Sam-AH-dhee**): State of profoundest yogic ontemplation.

Samsara (Pronounced **Sam-SAH-ra**): The incarnations, reincarnations, astral and devachanic periods considered collectively, together with all other states through which manifested beings must pass. Literally, the wheel of births and deaths.

Sattva (Pronounced **SAHT-va**): Existence or being.

(To Be Continued)

WHAT'S INCREDIBLE?

By Charles E. Luntz

It's true that folks who hold the strangest notions,
And with illogic season their devotions,
Are those most apt at other views to sneer,
Proclaiming that indeed they're very queer.
Reincarnation kindles laughter gay.
Eternal hell does not—though quite a stay.

You're told it's not so much the life you lead,
It's "Do you pledge acceptance of our creed?"
Perhaps till then you never realized
You're sunk unless you're suitably baptized.
Yet people disrespectful to Theosophy
On formal rites and creeds build their philosophy.

If, when you die, you crave an angel's wings,
You must believe the oddest lot of things:
Such as, for instance, Adam's sin of eating,
Which gave the rest of us an awful beating.
The pious, gulping this without annoyance,
Get very angry if you talk clairvoyance.

An' cert'nly you mus' believe that Noah
And sons, befo' the rain began to po'ah,
Against the lightning's flash and thunder's bark
Were stowed aboard their cosy little ark.
Accept it and salvation's in the bag,
So why should old Atlantis make you gag?

Another blow to those redemption craving
Is, "Some were made for damning, some for saving."
If you're the former, weep O soul forlorn,
For God decreed your doom when you were born.
So, bowing to this heavenly eviction,
Why claim that anything WE teach is fiction?

Some state, "Salvation's path is through the scripture
And if you fall, don't say we haven't tipped yer."
Others declare, "The way is through our church,
It's wickedness to make another search."
But though these godly say or sing or shout it,
We're sure they don't know anything about it.

RELIGION

(Continued from Page 33)

imediate and sole object of their devotion. It is to them a *symbol* of a Being so great as to be beyond understanding, a Being who created them and all things and can—and often does—destroy and even obliterate not only men but nature. by earthquakes, flood or lightning or by enemy tribes. Of the theory, understanding or practice of Love they know nothing, hence their only conception of The Great Spirit is one of overpowering fear; thus their symbols, the idols created by their hands, bear a fearsome aspect.

On a rising scale, as they advance into the higher tribes and finally come into touch with civilization, their ideas and ideals grow and expand into more spiritual coceptions but it is surprising to note the difference among men on the same social scale even in the advancd stages of civilization. Thus we have the Atheist, the Agnostic, the Literalist, the Fanatic, the Liberal, with all the gradations that lie between. Among all of these classes are many of superior mental attainments which proves that working from the bottom up—the gross physical—man's spiritual nature is the last toward which his conscious efforts are directed.

First the Atheist who declares there is no God. If you direct his attention toward the beauty of the natural universe, as shown in blossom, tree, lake or river; to the unerring exactitude of the stars in their couses which can and often are, calculated centuries in advance, the Atheist will tell you, "Yes, that's true, but due to natural law, it's no proof of a God,"—unconscious of the fact that by recognizing natural law he has already acknowledged a law giver—call him what you will—for it is obvious that no law with its never failing action can arise out of nothing equipped with self-directive will, to follow an unvarying course with its unvarying results through all the coming ages. In itself, its operations, it proves the guidance of a Supreme Intelligence beyond man's understanding. Thus for the Atheist there is no Religion—no *conscious* aspiration towards the spiritual.

Next we have the Agnostic; not so definite in his denial of a divine overruling Wisdom; neither is he ready to believe in it, but he wants *proof*. Such a man's mental attitude expresses itself even in the ordinary transactions of life; every statement to him must be proved, every discovery of Science put to the proof and then only accepted with mental reservations; to him Religion remains a speculative theory, though he may take part in some of its observances if it adds to his standing in the community.

The Literalist is inseparably welded to the exact acceptance of the printed word. For him it is the actual word of God. We read the literatures of these people with utter surprise for there are thinking men among them, and we cannot but respect the spirit of utter devotion expressed in their writings.

Of the Fanatic we can only say he is a Literalist gone to seed; his—and his only—interpretations of Holy Scripture can save man from torture and extinction and he forthwith endeavors to force his beliefs on others—for their own salvation.

In the Liberal we have one who applies philosophical thought to his spiritual conceptions and in many instances forms a reasonable and comprehensible concept of the Universe and its great creator and of the scheme of evolution which recognizes the progression and ultimate perfection of the human race, claims to recognize and respect all forms of religious worship and utterly disclaims any prejudice or form of Orthodoxy on its own part, yet in the same breadth ridicules some of the cherished beliefs of Orthodoxy, points to the writings of their own advanced teachers, proudly proclaiming: We advanced students KNOW.

It would be superfluous to point out that among all these diversified grades of men—from the Savage to the Saint, with their innumerable conceptions of life both physical and super-physical, one ideal could not be applied to all, nor understood and followed. Each class and grade must have an ideal which it can understand and to which it can give its worship and devotion.

This brings us to our own times in the Christian World which comprises most of the Occident and the existence of so many sects among those who call themselves Chritians. We cannot but recognize the wide differences among men even belonging to the same social class. In matters of daily life they can conform pleasantly to the established forms of their class; in his religious observance each follows the form that he can heartily take his part in. Some, staid and sober natures choose a quiet and formal form of worship, some feel an absolute necessity to express their devotion by outward demonstration, even by shouts of joy. *Could* a Primitive Methodist worship with devotion in what must seem to him the cold formality of the Roman Church or could a Roman Catholic find spiritual inspiration in the tubulent atmosphere of a Revival?

It should be recognized as the desire and aspiration of all classes to come in touch with the spiritual realities of life in the way comprehensible to them, therefore as an encouraging condition. It is a further proof that while the mental growth of individuals may be on a comparatively equal level their spiritual growth may vary widely.

But to The All-Father all are equally dear. He knows the devotion underlying each form, whether it be expressed in dancing and shouts of joy or by the solemn chants of ministering priests in the presence of a hushed and breathless congregation. But for all worshippers of whatever degree, from the lowest to the highest, two absolute conditions exist, these are—Absolute Sincerity and Absolute Devotion.

A few words may be added in reference to the misconceptions of many of our people about Religion in general; for example: Allah is not a Mohamme-

dan God—Allah is the *Mohammedan Name* for God. It would be just as correct to say that Dieu is a French God, or that Gott is the German God, or Dios a Spanish God or Deus a Latin God; all are the respective names of the ONE Deity—the Supreme and Ineffable—in the language of the different peoples.

As one Great Divine Teacher expressed it, personifying for the time being the Supreme to His devoted disciple, "By whatsoever path men approach Me, equally do I receive them, for the Paths men take on every side are MINE."

(The End)

THEOSOPHY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

(Continued from Page 33)

ious vermin which feed on garbage and offal. Nature reproduces in lower fields conditions obtaining in the higher. Some of these insects and lesser animals may have their needed uses in the natural order of checks and balances, and certainly we need the life in our astral and mental vehicles, which could not function without it.

The elementals, however, must be trained. Else they will make our lives the instrument of *their* evolution (or rather involution, for they are on their way *into* matter) when they obviously are intended to be the instrument of our own evolution. We need not pity the poor elemental essence whose evolution is retarded by our insistence that it shall subserve *our* purpose instead of vice-versa. We do not, unless we are a bit maudlin, pity the poor fly we have to swat to preserve our family's health, nor the "poor beetle that we tread upon," although as Shakespeare remarked, he may experience "just as great a pang as when a giant dies," nor the poor rat we do our utmost to starve by sanitary measures or to kill in various painful ways if that fails. These lower forms of life must perish if they interfere with the orderly development of the higher forms, obviously of more value in evolution, though the fly or the beetle or the rat might dispute that if they were capable of putting up an argument.

Similarly, we must either bend the elemental essence to our will or expel it from the composition of our higher bodies. The coarser, slow-vibrating type will not submit to harnessing. It will always trouble us and, in fact, constitutes the rankling background this instalment is all about. It therefore has to be ejected and its place taken by the more rarefied and faster vibrating variety. This can be done by consciously reversing the thought currents. You are harboring an old grudge for some wrong done you, some injustice you suffered years ago. It keeps popping into your mind and you rather feel you have to dwell on it—can't explain why, just *have* to. Stop to think that in each of your hundreds of prior lives at least one person per life is likely to have wronged you, used you unjustly, treated you dishonorably. So you must have, in your long evolutionary history, at least a high three-figure to medium four-figure balance of animosities you can't even remember. The memory of them could be recovered by activating the permanent atoms but would you want to if you could?

You are very well satisfied to let these dead dogs stay dead. Someone may have murdered you thirty thousand years ago in Atlantis, robbed you of all you possessed ten thousand years back in Ancient Egypt, brutally misused you as a slave in Rome, 200 B.C. What of it? You don't remember — don't want to remember? These things are as though they never existed. Then why not pitch your present resentments, rancors, dislikes, vexations and piques on the same pile? You will have done so when you reincarnate. Why not take time by the forelock and do it now?

But don't suppress them—don't push them in. That is the way to incubate phobias, complexes and perhaps even physical ills such as arthritis, which often seems to have no material cause whatever—and does not. The trouble lies in the mental and emotional offscourings which have been jammed into the higher vehicles until the latter break out into festering sores, sometimes reproducing their likeness in the body of flesh. Particularly if a sense of guilt accompanies the repression is this likely to happen. Then the subconscious gets two opposed recordings: "I hate him," "It's wicked to hate," and real trouble begins. The two emotions fight below the surface. Neither wins. They just slow up the traffic, creating a road block around which more useful thought and emotion must detour. If there get to be enough of these brawlers traffic stops altogether and the doctors diagnose it as a mental breakdown, nervous exhaustion, anxiety neurosis, something similar or worse.

Use the indirect or opposite approach. We hope it won't sound mawkish but you have to try to like the person who is the object of your feeling of injury. The loud squawkings you may mentally hear when you first try to put this idea into practice are not yours but the elementals'. For in effect you are starting to perform a painful operation on them without an anesthetic. You are excising diseased astral and mental tissue very harmful to your wellbeing but which the elementals, with primitive needs, can efficaciously use for their purposes.

Persist. What can you recall about the detestable person that is good? Nothing? Come now — everyone has something good in him except a black magician and you probably don't know any black magicians. Does he love children, animals; is he a hard, conscientious worker; has he a sense of humor; can he be very likeable when he wants to be? Suppose the high task of an agency of karma had been entrusted to you, of ascertaining just which of this disliked individual's qualities fitted him for at least a short sojourn in devachan, what would you report? Remember you are to record his virtues only, not his deficiencies. And if you found no virtues you would be guilty of prejudice and dereliction, and a karmic heavy hand would descend upon *you*. You would find some all right even if you had to invent them. Very well, then. If you can't find any invent them. Drape them around your thought image of the odious one. Though it gags you, keep on.

It is literally impossible to maintain a hate for someone you have thus glamourized. No matter how long standing your displeasure, it will wither and die as you dwell on the good points, true or mythical, of your former allergy.

And you'll find youself ever so much more comfortable.

(To Be Continued)

Next instalment: To get rid of long standing worry.

IN DEFENSE OF HYPNOTISM

(Continued from Page 33)

own, have decided to forget about further articles on hypnotism in 'ANCIENT WISDOM,' and take this opportunity to thank you very much for your offer of front page space.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) S. IRWIN SHAW

P. S. Am answering the letters. Not getting too involved with your readers will merely point out that hypnosis is only as dangerous as ether, chloroform, etc., in the way of anesthetics, and as risky as opium and other dangerous drugs when used indiscriminately by unqualified persons. In proper hands these are all used to give relief to the suffering and mankind has benefited by their use."

The Editor replied to this letter as follows:

"May 16, 1949

Dear Dr. Shaw:

I was afraid you would be discouraged with the readers' letters I sent you but you will recall that I said I was almost certain this would be the reaction.

I am not personally in entire agreement with the views expressed by these readers but am inclined to accept your thesis that, with proper safeguards, hypnotism may be a valuable healing aid. Although I do not wish to be hypnotized myself there seems to be much merit in your argument that remarkable cures actually have taken place by this means and mankind has been benefited.

It would be only fair, I think, to ask those who oppose its use on theoretical grounds whether they can cite authentic instances of people who have been *harmed* by being hypnotized. If they cannot do so then obviously they have not made a case in opposition.

I renew my offer to publish your

article in favor. Theosophists are not supposed to allow their blood pressure to be influenced by ideas with which they don't agree but to be very tolerant and understanding of opposing points of view. I hope you will reconsider. If not, may I at least publish your letter of May 4th?

But I *would* like that article. Maybe it would change some points of view.

Very sincerely,
(Signed) CHARLES E. LUNTZ"

Dr. Shaw's final reply:

"May 23, 1949

Dear Mr. Luntz:

Thanks for your letter of May 16th.

It is not a case of being discouraged. The misconceptions so evident in your readers' letters could only be clarified by writing a text book which I am not prepared to do at the present time. Besides there are a number of excellent books already available on the subject of hypnotism, and my article in your magazine could scarcely scratch the surface of this highly controversial subject.

In comparison with the issues prevalent on the subject of Theosophy itself, we can say that 'Today Theosophy is accepted and well established among its thousands of followers: it needs no defense. Those who are blind to the vast realm of all that is good in Theosophy have only themselves to blame. They either accept the unauthentic adverse statement of a superficial dabbler in theosophical philosophy, or follow definite principles of disbelief in the same blind way that the great majority of our voters accept a party affiliation because their father a l w a y s voted Democrat, or always voted Republican.'

Only attendance at lectures on Theosophy, and many hours of reading, can give full understanding and appreciation of theosophical principles and practice. No comprehensive knowledge can be obtained from an occasional article read at the breakfast table.

The same is true of hypnotism.

Unauthenicated statements have attributed everything, from committed crimes to actual death, to the use of h y p n o t i s m. One article recently claimed knowledge of a death where the subject died because it was impossible to bring him out of hypnotically induced trance! The coroner's verdict was not quoted.

Suggestion is very powerful, even without the use of hypnotism, and many crimes (and in isolated cases a few deaths) have been the result of suggestion in the *waking* state, because of the criminal tendencies already present within the individual made to commit the crime. Where such an individual becomes a subject for hypnosis he can very easily be made to commit crime under cover of an induced trance. Were he not a potential criminal, the subject would be aroused by his conscience and would refuse to carry out such suggestions.

In the field of theraputics someone pointed to the hypnotic cure of some temptation and asserted that 'Some day there must come a reckoning when the same failing must be met in person and transcended.' The truth is that the patient always cures himself by himself with the aid of the suggestions given under hypnosis in the same way that he cures himself by himself when he takes the medicine as suggested by th physician who prescribed it.

In the hands of an untrained individual or for amusement purposes, hypnotism can under certain conditions produce physical or mental harm, but its therapeutic use in the hands of an expert is a boon to mankind.

To your fair minded readers who honestly want a better understanding of this fascinating subject, I recommend the following books:

"Hypnotism Today" by Le Cron and Bordeaux (Grune and Stratton 1947)

"Hypnotism" by Geo. Estabrooks

"Hypno-Therapy" by Margt. Brenman and Gill (International Univ. Press)

"Hypno-Analysis" by Dr. Lewis M. Wolberg (Grune and Stratton 1945)

Sincerely,
(Signed) S. IRWIN SHAW"

So there the matter stands, as controversial as ever, as some questions are likely to be for a long time to come. They cannot be settled by letters or articles and each reader must decide for himself. For ourselves we will say that we think Dr. Shaw has made out as good a case for his side as we have seen, though personally we still don't want to be hypnotized. But neither, if we can help it, do we want to be etherized, chloroformed, opiumized or anaesthetized in any other fashion. We think the Doctor has a point there. This discussion has, we think, been of use for it has made us exert our mental processes to try to evaluate it pro and con. For even on the subject of hypnotism no Theosophist wants to be hypnotized into forming an opinion based on *ex parte* authority.

Thanks to those who wrote in their views and thanks to Dr. Shaw for valiantly defending what he believes to be right.

(The End)

AN EXPERIMENT

We are sure our readers must get as tired of reading the monthly appeals which appear on the last page as we do of writing them. Yet their generosity has never flagged. ANCIENT WISDOM has been kept going over the years even though periods when it seemed it could not be carried on for three months longer.

So this month, for a change, we report nothing, we ask for nothing. This may indicate nothing more than that it is very hot in St. Louis and we are, for the time, written out on the subject—can't find anything to say that hasn't been said about it.

We will keep our fingers crossed and let you know next month if it made any difference. Maybe it won't.

Meanwhile—the paper goes on.

MINSTRELSY

A Selection from the Poems of Patience Worth

The Sea

Be still;
  Stop thy ceaseless sobbing.
Hush; be quiet but an instant;
  I am before the Sea!
I comprehend its vastness;
  It is as though the tongue of God had spoken,
And his words were awful things—
  Riotous, wild—furious, lashing, goading,
And I become confused,
  For this is not the God I know!

Hush, be still, O Sea!
  I would know Him more intimately;
I am before the Sea; it is calm;
  The sands are wet,
And the waves purr and press inland;
  The gulls swim, and a shallop floats it
Swaying 'cross the horizon.
  It is still, calm;
The night comes down—a sable night;
  And stars; a white moon prying;
And the Sea; Oh, the Sea!
  His monstrous silence—
And I behold the awfulness of this silence,
  And am again awed.

Hush, be still;
  I am before the Sea,
Veiled clouds shutting the sun from my vision.
  The morning star appears;
The Sea is confideful—
  It whispers, and I know its intimate word.
I am before it,
  And I have seen it in its magnitude,
And in its confideful mood.
  I know the Sea—
And in knowing the Sea,
  More intimately do I know GOD!