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

VOLUME XVII JUNE, 1951—SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI NUMBER 4

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

BY WILFRED H. C. SIGERSON

(Continued from Last Month)

But let us proceed quickly to examine your explicit endorsements of theosophical concepts. First, as to spiritual evolution:

258-13: "God expresses in man the infinite idea forever developing itself, broadening and rising higher and higher from a boundless basis."

303-5: "Multiplication of God's children comes from no power of propagation in matter, it is the reflection of Spirit."

264-32: "The universe of Spirit is peopled with spiritual beings, and its government is divine Science."

54-8: "All must sooner or later plant themselves in Christ, the true idea of God."

265-5: "Mortals must gravitate Godward."

Then, let us examine your statements regarding retention and indestructibility of spiritual individuality, a basic theosophical tenet.

337-2: ". . . man, reflecting God, cannot lose his individuality."

317-18: "The understanding of his spiritual individuality makes man more real, more formidable to truth, and enables him to conquer sin, disease, and death."

259-1: "Man is not absorbed in Deity, and man cannot lose his individuality, for he reflects eternal Life: nor is he an isolated solitary idea, for he represents infinite Mind, the sum of all substance."

209-1: "Man, being immortal, has a perfect indestructible life."

477-22: "Soul is substance, Life, and intelligence of man, which is individualized . . ."

317-16: "The individuality of man is no less tangible because it is spiritual and because his life is not at the mercy of matter."

216-3: "Who shall say that man is alive today, but may be dead tomorrow?"

266-29: "Man is deathless, spiritual . . . He does not cross the barriers of time into the vast forever of life, but he coexists with God and the universe."

And as to karma: sowing and reaping, cause and effect:

405-15: "Both (mortal mind and body) will be manacled until the last

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A LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT and THE EDITOR'S REPLY

April 24, 1951

To the Editor
ANCIENT WISDOM
320 Merchants' Exchange
St. Louis, Missouri
Dear Editor:

The May number of *Ancient Wisdom* with its election supplement has come to my attention. That a journal devoted to Theosophy should engage vociferously in an electioneering campaign is regrettable. Surely claims that must be printed in capital letters, added to opinions, however sincere, boxed in heavy black borders can only confuse our members and bewilder inquirers after the Wisdom. Statements that require such excessive emphasis in order to impress imply an immaturity of discrimination on the part of readers. This, I believe, does ill-service to the cause of Theosophy—possibly even turning the thoughtful away altogether from its enlightenment.

If there is felt that some inadequacy exists in the conduct of the affairs of our Society at this time, then it would seem more appropriate that the matter be brought to the attention of the Society's membership through the pages of its established journal. If there are issues that should be explored, let them by all means be investigated with due calmness and consideration for all sides of each question.

I have said in the American Theosophist: "All of our people who enjoy the confidence of their fellow-workers in such measure that they become candidates for national office are devoted to the work of the Society. We can know in advance that however the election turns out, a fine body of officers will be assembled to meet the responsibilities that are ours." I know that when the election is over, we, as intelligent people, who understand the ideal of democracy, having registered our choice, will gather behind the administration and give it whole-hearted support.

I appeal by means of this letter to all who would spread the knowledge of Theosophy and balanced presentations of the truth as understood. Let us guide our every effort to serve the urgent cause of uniting men through building faith in one another and in

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MEMORY

BY H. K. SCHOLEFIELD

Power to remember life's petty details and inconsequential trivia is a faculty so much desired that many training systems have been devised and much money is constantly expended for that purpose—often mistakenly. It might very easily be applied to more useful ends. Each of us remembers the important events of his life and those of daily necessity as required in his work. Constant attention and concentration assure sufficient success in this to serve all requirements. For the rest, we may feel great gratitude that nature has granted us an efficient "forgettory," a well-functioning apparatus of erasure by which the nagging irritations of useless detail are rapidly erased for the great comfort and preservation of our serenity, our emotional body and our sanity.

By way of analogy, any business office of sufficient consequence to employ a filing-clerk, expects that agent to keep the file cleared of valueless papers. Important matter of record must have space. With passage of time much paper becomes worthless and only the skeletal frame of past transactions need be preserved in an "inactive file." Old receipts, contracts and records finally become obsolete also and after passage of years and application of a statute of limitations these too find use as fuel in the company's furnaces or are ground up for pulp. There remain only the bare records of profit or loss for a given year, set forth in quarterly divisions. Meanwhile the correspondence files have been filled and emptied countless time. Were this not done the cost of warehousing and protecting accumulations of paper would ruin the business. In all this we are to liken our faculty of memory to a filing system, which it is, and we may take great satisfaction in the wisdom of karmic forces which have given us this valuable faculty of erasure of needless, painful and unendurable clutter of rubbish which otherwise would prevent functioning of our minds in matters of consequence.

Many people complain of inability to recall names of person; this writer, being one of them, fully understands that embarrassment. Yet it is not so much a disability as it is part of nature's plan for us, and at the same time the deficiency is largely a result of our own unconscious effort in the

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ANCIENT WISDOM
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FOR BIGGER AND BETTER BELIEFS

Oh, he didn't believe in Adam
and Eve—
He put no faith therein;
His doubts began with the fall
of man,
And he laughed at original sin.
—*Hilaire Belloc*

The above rollicking verse by a famed man of letters would doubtless be applicable to all Theosophists and a great many "nons." But while the Theosophist has very adequate substitutes for our alleged first parents and certainly for the grotesque "original sin" with which they are supposed to have cursed their posterity, the "nons" quite often have nothing but blank spaces.

We are moved to these reflections by monthly receipt of considerable literature from atheistic sources, evidently sent "by courtesy of an anonymous donor," who thinks we would be better off if we did not believe so much. We read some of it, too, when we have nothing better to do and it leaves us with a warm, comfortable feeling of gratitude that we have no such chilly and barren skepticism of any and everything beyond the physical, as is displayed by these apostles of rugged materialism.

The literature, of course, pokes fun at the eccentric oddities of religious dogmas. It cites the countless instances of worshippers apparently penalized for their faith by death in church, fatal accidents coming from or going to church, of the obviously wicked things done by the so-called good in the name of religion, of the inconsistencies of church "higher-ups" in disregarding alleged miraculous sources of healing in favor of prosaic physical doctors and remedies.

It is on firm ground here, of course, although such examples have been used by so many for so long that they get a little tedious. Also there are perfectly valid reasons—not rationalizations but reasons—for the seeming injustices visited upon the pious at such apparently inappropriate times. We have no particular quarrel with the listing of these "unexplainable" deficiencies in orthodox religious philosophy, though after awhile they become tiresome and purposeless. When, however, the stream of ridicule is turned on such necessary and obviously true beliefs as the existence of some Guiding Intelligence, purpose in evolution, after-death survival and the need of man for a spiritual faith by which to live, we can only deplore the obtuseness—not to mention the bad taste—of the brethren who train their poor wit upon the grandest and noblest thought of the greatest of mankind.

Man cannot live happily by negatives, and the atheistic doctrine—and it is just as much of a doctrine as the doctrines of orthodoxy—is purely negative. It offers no hope and, for all of its attempted ethics, no good reason outside of fear of physical consequence why anyone should do other than try to extract the highest physical enjoyment out of this one short and purposeless life. True, individual atheists belie the obvious implications of their barren philosophy by leading decent, productive and useful lives; but church people, too, are often far ahead of the pitiless dogmas of their creed.

The atheists ignore—but Theosophy does not ignore—the immense amount of good that exists in the religions, tucked in as it may be with layer after layer of useless and even harmful theological inanities. The average communicant has a way of disregarding the inanities, which he seldom understands and which perhaps no one—not even the erudite divines who invented them—really can understand. But he has a way, too, if sincere in his religion, of clinging to the simple truths he *can* understand and which are common to all religions. If this is as far as he can go, it is better than going nowhere and ending up in the sterile desert of materialism. His rather artless beliefs may not seem much to the Theosophist with his own overtowering, all-embracing philosophy, but they are infinitely preferable to the dismal negativism of the all-out skeptic.

At least the former clings to what for him represents God, sadly anthropomorphized though his God may be. He has something to tie to in trouble—something to look forward to at death, even though it be some vague condition of happiness and reunion he cannot begin to define. He may, as the atheists insist, give credence to a lot of nonsense, but leavened in with the nonsense is a substratum of truth—a mustard seed grain only, perhaps—but enough to outweigh the tons of sophistry poured out by those naive enough to believe that a natural order of the highest intelligence was produced by some "eternal law" without any intelligence. The nonsense of the theologians, against which these materialists inveigh, is not more nonsensical—not *as* nonsensical—as this bovine fatuity.

Theosophy is for the atheist who is weary of his non-beliefs, and some of them do occasionally weary of them. Annie Besant, freethinker, did and became the greatest Theosophist of all. Theosophy, too, is for the "simple believers" who have outgrown or are outgrowing their simplicity. Everyone will arrive at that stage in some life or other if they are not already there. It is a definite step in evolution. Some are obviously at that point right now. It is for them that Theosophy waits—for them, as well as for others, that ANCIENT WISDOM is produced.

The "bigger and better beliefs" that Theosophy affords are the bread of life and the wine of spirit for those who have heretofore subsisted on the meager spiritual fare of orthodoxy or have starved on the husks offered by the materialists. No comparisons can be made between Theosophy and other systems because no comparison can approach adequacy.

And if this seems to the non-Theosophist to be enormous presumption—if to claim for this body of knowledge, held by so small a segment of the population, this unheard-of superiority over the popular and "respectable" beliefs appears as preposterous audacity, we can only say—study Theosophy deeply, get to understand it thoroughly, apply it in everything you do, live as though it was true in every detail, as indeed it is. Do these things and you will understand the "presumption," the "audacity," that prompts the Theosophist to refuse comparison with anything that goes counter to the age-old wisdom called Theosophy. You will find yourself doing the same thing.

ART OF NON-IDENTIFICATION

"Each soul has its own troubles and its thoughts turn chiefly around itself."
—*At The Feet Of The Master*

On the Buddhic plane—the world of unity—every individual knows himself to be one with every other individual, with every thing animate or seemingly inanimate and with God. When he thinks of a person or thing, he becomes until he changes his thought one with the consciousness of that which he thinks of. Only an Adept functions at that level as yet, but it is a goal for which we are all bound and which one day we shall all attain.

But as there is a reflection of the Buddhic at the far lower level of the astral, such fleeting identification may at rare moments come through to us even now where intense unselfish love exists for another person or even for something which is not a sentient being, such as a great work of art, a grand musical composition or some piece of one's own handicraft which is the product of loving creative toil.

The higher is always subject to the distortion of the lower if it must pass through astral channels to reach someone living on the physical plane. And the astral body itself may cause us to do a grotesque caricature of the high identification to which reference is made above by identifying ourselves with that which is base or injurious or both. The good always has its reverse counterpart, temporary though it be; and difficult though it is for many to accept this hard saying it is none-the-less a fact that this reverse side which we mistakenly call evil is both necessary and right. Without it we might be little angels but we should be very ignorant and useless angels because we lacked any experience that would give us wisdom and judgment.

One of the very important lessons karma is constantly trying to hammer into us is the art of non-identification with the wrong things. A great many of our miseries come from doing just that. Even at the dentist's as he applies the drill, the nervous patient virtually centers his entire consciousness in his hollow tooth, intensifying the pain by many degrees. In India cases have been recorded of a native permitting his leg to be amputated without an anesthetic, failing to show the slightest sign of pain. In one such instance when inquiry was made as to how such heroic indifference was possible the reply was, "I centered my consciouness in another part of my body."

The feeling aroused in some people by a hostile look or an angrry word directed toward them is so intense and long-lasting that they virtually identify themselves with it. They "become" the hostility or the anger, exemplifying the ancient Eastern adage, "Man becomes that upon which he meditates." They center their consciousness in that part of the astral body which is vibrating with fury, and these vibrations reproduce themselves in the etheric double and the nervous system. All this, of course, does not the least good but an immense amount of harm. The after-effects may be a feeling of exhaustion, a bad headache, an attack of indigestion or some other adverse physical manifestation. Prolonged indulgence in such negative identifications may result in far worse disabilities. We offer a remedy.

The central technique of this remedy—preventive would be a better word—is *lightning speed of application.* The slightest hesitation in applying it renders it almost useless. The instant—the very instant—the urge to resentment, anger, vexation, rage or other "astrality" shows its head, it is firmly and decisively rejected by the mind. It is not fought, not stamped on, not violently put down. That way trouble lies from buried repressions. It is merely, with utmost coolness, shown the door. With Lady Macbeth, but without her fearful vehemence, one may command, "Out, damned spot," and if the right technique is followed the "damned spot" will out.

It is easier to put the method into practice than it is to describe it. Everything depends on (a) speed and (b) complete dispassion. The latter is a feeling of utter indifference which inhibits the astral body, always eager for the wrong kind of vibrations, from stepping on the starter.

Once the surge of wrong feeling takes hold, it is too late to use the non-identification system. The mischief has been done. Thereafter other means, with which we are not here concerned, must be employed to kill off a noxious weed that should never have been allowed to take root. But the preventive technique is one-hundred percent efficient. It never fails. The catch is that one has a split second and no more to put it into effect. Also there must be no strain, no effort, a complete unconcern with what has been said, done or even thought. If a feeling of goodwill can be conjured up toward the person responsible, that is definitely a clincher. Non-identification plus goodwill is more than an inhibitor, it is a tonic.

It's quite a game, once you learn to play it. You will almost welcome incidents which before you dreaded. And your growth in spiritual stature will be a thing at which to marvel. You can adapt the technique to any and all undesirable feeling or thought, whether aroused from the outside or from within.

Hidden beneath this rationale of killing out that which is negative lies the mystery of so-called evil. By learning to reject it—not to struggle with it but to kill it at birth—we strengthen our spiritual muscles, increase our spiritual stature, hasten our spiritual perfecting.

And all it is, in the final analysis, is really reacting to negative impulses of all kinds by merely doing . . . absoluely nothing; except—if you can—thinking a friendly thought.

PSYCHOLOGY OF RESTRAINT

The good readers who send us impassioned protests against our campaign to help the cause of Brotherhood —by ceasing to employ the word so indiscriminately — seem to miss the point completely.

We will make one more try at getting it over with the few who either cannot or will not see it, and if this fails, then they will have to go on misinterpreting what we are endeavoring to accomplish and we will meekly submit to their disapproval, bearing up under it as well as we can.

There appear to be two schools of thought in matters of propaganda, one of which feels that beating the drum constantly for the advocated cause is the best way to carry conviction. The other recognizes the importance of restrained and intelligent presentation. It may be just as insistent as the monotonous repetition of School No. 1, and just as continuous; but, it avoids the deadly mechanical reiteration which is the main stock-in-trade of the repetitionists. In writing or lecturing on Brotherhood, for example, deep thought is used to find new and appealing ways to present the idea, and the word itself scrupulously avoided wherever possible. And this, not because the idea the word is intended to express is not a grand and noble one, but because the word has long since been drained dry of its capacity for expressing anything.

For an individual here and there, who is able to penetrate beneath the commonplace term to its true meaning, it may still hold its ancient fire and inspiration. An occasional correspondent tells us that it does. Most of those from whom we hear infer that they are sick of the very sound and sight of it and it should be borne in mind that these are Theosophists, committed to the idea behind the word as is ANCIENT WISDOM.

If that be so, what must be the reaction of non-Theosophists? The Society does not exist solely or mainly to bring our teaching to those who already have it, whether in whole or part. Our work is with the seeker—one who looks for explanation and understanding of the seemingly crazy world in which he lives. And there is no truer brotherhood than to offer to him that which he seeks. What is he too often given? A gooey, syrupy, nauseating dose of vague sentimentality labeled not once but a dozen or more times "Brotherhood — Brotherhood — Brotherhood." This is not Theosophy. He does not need to come to us for that sort of baby food. He can find it just as vaguely and wordily express in magazines of cults which specialize on unimplemented goodness. From us he has the right to expect that definite, precise and *restrained* presentation of cosmic truths which the word Theosophy is supposed to mean.

It is impossible to explain Reincarnation, Karma, the Path, the Masters, any of our specialized teachings without implying Brotherhood. It is there, implicit in all of them, and the word need never be used. Why make the inquirer recoil by hammering it at him platitudinously as though it were the only piece of goods we have in stock. His reaction? "There's that Brotherhood thing again. I don't want any part of the organization if that's the stuff it puts out."

The writer, as Lodge President, mentions Brotherhood to inquirers just once, as an essential belief requisite to membership, being always careful to inform them they may put their own construction on it. Then he passes to the other and specialized phases of

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THEOSOPHICAL TOLERANCE

By Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Ph.D.

(Continued from April)

In spite of the "Irish" observation that the only thing we have ever learned from history is that we have never learned anything from history, any student of history is aware that one of the few things that it has drummed into our forgetful minds is that, by and large, humans are inclined to tolerate hurtful influences and evil conditions as long as forbearance is possible without too severe consequences. Then when these reach a point of "saturation," so to say, of the cup of patient endurance, tolerance gives way to action and the sufferers "take arms to end a sea of troubles," as Shakespeare phrased it. When that point is reached, whatever in the way of moral principle it was that staved off earlier decision is cast to the winds. And this point is usually located about at the juncture where a nuisance that needed only a mental posture to tolerate its offensiveness begins to impose inconvenience or discomfort on the *physical* side of life. This thing called life has a most effective way of getting us, its children, to obey its laws and follow its beneficent ways by suddenly changing the venue of its trial of our character from our minds to our bodies. It exerts itself to the last limit of pedagogical patience to reach us for a correction of conduct through our reasoning minds; but when it sees it can not budge our stupidity through moral wisdom, it holds an effective reserve methodology up its sleeve: it can always give us an awakening jolt through the body. It is not too far afield of the subject to speculate that indeed this birch-rod tactic is one of the reasons life puts souls in bodies. The great ancient Theosophists, chiefly Plotinus, directly state that souls could not master their evolutionary lessons in the spirit-world without bodies.

All this lends some cogency to the asseveration that Theosophists practice tolerance mainly in the long-range mental and bodily comfortable manner, without suffering anything but a nebulous intellectual query or two, which is quickly silenced by the pride felt as the result of conscious great magnanimity and condescension. It remains to be seen what might happen to much Theosophic tolerance if it came to the case of actual physical annoyance or damage inflicted by offensive religionism. In this sense tolerance has not often been put to any revealing trial. It is easy to flaunt when it costs nothing; how far might it carry if its exercise really cost its practitioners something?

I do not forget that, as a matter of fact, it has suffered this form of trial and has borne real testing against actual and body-affecting conditions. This has been the case when members of the Society cherish Theosophy in the home while all the other members of the household are unsympathetic or hostile and make it decidedly unpleasant for the one who has stepped into Theosophy. I pay my respects to those of our members who have borne with tact, love and longsuffering this sort of testing of their tolerance. But this is not the frequent thing or the type of trial I was holding up for criticism. It still remains that nearly all Theosophical tolerance is simply an ideal mental posture, a sheer disposition of non-action against any religious group or system, if not really an indifference to all religionism outside their Society. I don't think it can be shown that it is in any real sense a virtue that is challenged to be upheld with fortitude under any real test. Stolidity and stupidity can win it equally with the most valiant heroics. It is won at the price of just letting other religions alone.

If this is what Theosophical tolerance fully connotes—and one sees little else to entitle it to a nobler definition—it is very questionable whether the word "tolerance" is the proper term to designate it. It is simply a religious pacifism, a posture of non-antagonism combined with a shallow pretence or affectation of religious friendliness, activated by the Society's first principle of brotherhood.

Now there has always gone with this the feeling in the minds of Theosophists that this attitude can be extended in its application to cover the whole area of human relations and hold under any and all circumstances that can arise. In brief, it is held to be a universal and unfailing principle. There could arise no situation where its moralities would not be fully pertinent. I think this is utterly a false presumption.

It is built on the unfounded assumption that life here is securely safeguarded and is pretty much a pink tea affair, or a jolly adventure, entirely free from peril. In short it is grounded on the belief that it is always *safe* to tolerate any and all sorts of religious fanaticisms. It will cost nothing to be tolerant; so why not let religions ride undisturbed?

The truth and the reality of the matter is decidedly at variance with this notion. Many forms of religion flourish that are a positive menace to society and cost us much in the way of threat to our free institutions. Given just a little more power, certain religious movements will put an end to the democratic freedom of religion itself, not to mention curtailing our civil liberties as well. They use constitutional immunities and democratic freedoms for the ultimate purpose of ending religious tolerance forever. Instead of appreciating the magnanimity of our Theosophical tolerance, they slyly use that very tolerance for an easier and quicker strangulation of all tolerance. Thus, instead of overcoming tolerance in the world, the Theosophic attitude is actually contributing some substantial influence in aid of the movement to end all tolerance. Where magnanimity is bound to be abused, it were folly to continue it. We can safely grant the children freedom to range as they will about the cabin when there are no Indians and wolves on the prowl. But, morally and spiritually considered, there is hardly ever such immunity from danger in our world life. A thousand weird and eccentric, fantastic and superstitious religionisms are bred among ignorant religious groups, and they infest the very atmosphere of the communal life and tend to affect harmfully ourselves and our children. As an organic society we take measures, sometimes violently arresting and limiting the freedom of the individual, when his actions or his habits or his maintenance of nuisances or dangerous conditions menace the health or the welfare of the community. Would we be less justified in curtailing some of the arrant and preposterous superstitions and bigotries of his religionism as a defense against psychological contamination from the poisoned well of his mental processes, to protect the community against corruption!

All this brings us to the point of perhaps the critical juncture in the discussion. In spite of all idealism, tolerance yields in the end to the same thing that sets a limit to any operative principle which we attempt to apply in human life. We have referred to it before as the point of saturation. We tolerate bad things as long as they do not affect us too severely, or short of filling our cup of annoyance or damage to overflowing. The air tolerates a certain amount of moisture in its expanse without precipitation; but when it can hold no more in suspension, it ceases to "tolerate" the moist admixture. It rains. It is the same—and why pretend it is not?—in human efforts and polities. It is a more or less hypothetical and academic, or idealistic maxim that religion in general advocates pacifism and tolerance. And it does so—up to a point. How many hundreds of times in even the history of Christianity has the Church turned from tolerance of the status quo toward blessings on wars fought against opposing religious groups, when its own security was closely involved! Nearly every war has had the prayers of religion on both contending armies!

The motives here exemplified may be questioned for sincerity; but in all sincerity there comes a time in the course of affairs when the dangers imminent in religious situations demand the end of tolerance and the waging of a valiant fight for vital values. Tolerance holds little of the noble and the heroic to feed the soul. And the soul of man cannot grow without the re-

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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

(Continued from Page 25)

the institutions that would promote such cause.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) JAMES S. PERKINS
National President

* * * *

April 26, 1951

Mr. James S. Perkins,
National President
Theosophical Society in America
Olcott, Wheaton, Ills.

Dear Mr. Perkins:

I will be glad to publish your letter of April 24th in June ANCIENT WISDOM as you request. I will also publish a copy of this reply as I can hardly let some of your statements go by default, seeing that, in the friendliest spirit, I am unable to agree with them.

You center your objection to the Election Supplement in the May issue on the following points which I will answer as I cite them:

(1) *That it is regrettable that a journal devoted to Theosophy should engage "vociferously" in an electioneering campaign.* While I hardly think the adverb "vociforously" is justified I will pass that for the moment. That ANCIENT WISDOM has a perfect right to present its views there can be no manner of doubt. I need only call your attention to the FREEDOM OF THOUGHT declaration which appears monthly in *The American Theosophist,* particularly to the closing words: "The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member . . . fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others."

I do not think our appeal violated the limits of courtesy and consideration.

Also this presentation is not I think any more of an "electioneering campaign" than the publicity given to Mr. Lord's candidacy over the National President's signature in the January *American Theosophist.* The prestige of the presidential office when used in favor of a candidate, is virtually an electioneering campaign in itself. Those with opposing views have no such official advantage to aid them and must offer the facts in the most complete and precise way possible, which ANCIENT WISDOM tried to do.

(2) *Your criticism of the type and the border in which our statement of the facts at issue are set forth.* This seems so trifling a point as hardly to call for notice. The black type and heavy border are used in all our special announcements and have been for years —and this certainly *was* a very special announcement. The use of capital letters to emphasize important points is for the benefit of the reader so that in a hurried perusal he may readily grasp the facts at issue. To say that these "can only confuse our members and bewilder inquirers after the Wisdom," seems to be confusing in itself. How *can* clearness of expression confuse or bewilder anyone?

But that confusion and bewilderment *did* exist among the membership *before* ANCIENT WISDOM's explanation is plainly shown by a letter I received only three days ago from a member of a Southern Lodge. As it is pertinent to the question of "confusion and bewilderment" I will quote it fully:

"I am indeed grateful for the extra sheet of information contained in this month's issue of ANCIENT WISDOM.

I was under the impression some one else would *run* for Treasurer when I voted for Mr. Lord. He has served so long as Treasurer I was only giving him what I thought was due him. Had no idea he expected to hold *both* offices at the same time. This is absurd."

(3) *That statements requiring such excessive emphasis in order to impress imply an immaturity of discrimination on the part of readers.* Obviously no such implication is present. The statements made are factual and the opinions drawn therefrom justified by the facts. There was nothing sensational in either the editorial endorsement or the letters from some of the Society's most prominent workers and nothing that implied other than sound and mature reasoning on the part of those who would read them. The problems of the Section will not be solved by rhetoric but by objective study and for that reason the clearest and most readily grasped presentation of them must be made.

(4) *That any inadequacy felt to be present in the conduct of affairs of the Society should be brought to the attention of the membership through the pages of its established journal.* But would you have printed my plea for Lois Holmes, even in small type and without a black border, in the pages of the *American Theosophist?* There was ample opportunity to publish the letters, or at least part of them, issued by the Eastern and Western Group taking exception to Mr. Lord holding two offices, but not a line has to date appeared. It is difficult therefore, to take this suggestion seriously.

I will leave it to any impartial person to say whether our presentation of the issues was, to use your words, "a thoughtful and balanced presentation of the truth" or otherwise. But I will add that while I think —and have a right to think—that your stand in this matter, while undoubtedly sincere and from high motives, is mistaken (as I wrote you in two personal letters before publishing the Election Supplement) I still hold the highest regard for you personally both as a Theosophist and as an individual. We are on opposite sides of this particular fence but still, I hope, the best of friends and well-wishers.

Sincerely,
(Signed) CHARLES E. LUNTZ
Editor

PSYCHOLOGY OF RESTRAINT

(Continued from Page 27)

Theosophy.

Restraint! Restraint! It's so important in carrying conviction, and so few there be that recognize its value.

So here, Brethren and Sisters, who disagree with us, we rest our case. Either your method or ours is the best for advancing the cause of Brotherhood to which both you and we are so wholly committed. Our aims are identical. One of us takes the high road, the other the low road. It is, after all only a friendly—shall we say "brotherly"—rivalry as to which of us reaches destination the sooner.

MEMORY

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past to attain this exact refusal by our mental-elemental to take up its time and energy in retaining names of multitudes of casual persons contacted daily never to be met with again, people with whom we have nothing in common and whose names are valueless to us. Long practice of withdrawal of attention when names are announced produces precisely this result. Such habits of protective non-attention were probably founded in many previous lives and have grown upon us cumulatively. When changed conditions require changed habits, as when the person so handicapped turns to new fields of evolutionary effort and enters political life or social work and must meet the public successfully, he will quickly amend his habit of non-attention and will give heed to names in full measure with their importance. Nature again responds according to the Great Plan and the training provided by the Ego. Memory-training systems profit few people other than the training-schools. When we have to remember names we will do so because we must.

A learned judge, noted for his power to recall dates of historic consequence, explained his system thus: "Upon learning a date, or any number you desire to memorize, make a mental picture of the numbers in a row before you in the air, as if projected there upon a screen. Make them clear in outline, and large, I make them about a foot high. Then when you turn again to the subject under consideration, this associated image of numbers arises again before your view to be read." This is such excellent Theosophy we feel sure the gentleman must have been one of us. His creation of a distinct and powerful thought form for a useful purpose, and his understanding of the process, were perfect. "Do not expect to be successful in this at once," he continued, "but keep on practicing it until you acquire the faculty, which is

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WHEN L. W. ROGERS FOUNDED ANCIENT WISDOM

It was to be a journal devoted, as its subhead still declares, to "teaching theosophical and occult truths."

Most publications, if they weather the years, evolve into something perhaps far removed from the original intent, even though they may retain in a measure their primary characteristics also.

ANCIENT WISDOM is no exception. For over sixteen years it has vigorously taught theosophical and occult truths but it has done much more. It has championed causes not always popular in the Theosophical Society when it felt that this was the right thing to do. It has not been sparing of constructive criticism of official policies when convinced that these policies were detrimental. It has accorded prominent space to theosophical writers unable to obtain publicity for their views through other channels because not in the good graces of the governing powers.

It has been outspoken against what it believed to be mistaken sentimentalism in the Society such as the wearying emphasis on an undefined and indefinable "Brotherhood," usurping the space, time and effort which could far more profitably be devoted to defined and implemented theosophical teaching.

All this has made ANCIENT WISDOM greatly loved in many quarters and not too well loved in others. It has given it influence and prestige in theosophical circles, and a large circulation which certainly has never been approached by any other non-official theosophic publication.

Now ANCIENT WISDOM is an institution, firmly established in the affections of most of its readers, who have loyally and generously supported it through all the years and continue to do so without stint. It has done its job, as its Editor envisions its job to be. If it has made mistakes—it probably has—they were of the head, not of the heart. It will go on so long as its readers help it to go on and so long as its Editor is physically and mentally able to carry it on, in the lines which have now become traditional with it—never criticising for the sake of criticism, but only for the improvement the criticism might bring about—never intolerant of people doing their best, but bitterly intolerant of harmful beliefs and practices—never looking either for credit or gain, but concerned only with its vital function of bringing Theosophy—which is UNDERSTANDING—to the greatest number for their greatest good.

That is our platform and has been so all along. We think it is a good platform. If you who read this think so, send us your strong and helpful thought that we may be aided to carry on this needed work for the greater good of Theosophy and of the world.

MEMORY

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not difficult but requires patience." More Theosophy, perfectly defined. No better memory-training system was ever devised, and it costs nothing per lesson.

Our personal method of recalling a lost thought is also derived from Theosophical study. It is exceedingly simple. When we lose some object recently in use, we naturally go back to the place where we last had it in use to seek it; it will be where we last placed it. Likewise, in daily household operations, a cook goes to the pantry to get a potato but neglects to keep her mind on her purpose, and upon arrival she cannot remember what she came for. Her attention being lax, she simply dropped the previously formed "potato" thought-form and walked away from it, leaving it behind hanging in the air. The remedy is as simple as the ailment. Let her step back to the exact place where she stood while making that lost thought-form, and it will hit her again almost violently. Being her own creation, its magnetic forces attract it again to her own mind and it will come home the moment that mind is quiet enough to let it enter. This trifling exploit in gray magic may be practised by anyone. It shortens a busy day and saves energy.

When newly introduced to Theosophy, many people trouble themselves by wishing for memories of past lives and cannot reconcile a lack of them with the idea of reincarnation. Again, we must recite the simile of the cluttered filing-case and the need of keeping it cleared of obsolete paper; moreover it is needful to point out that our young student does not now have the same file in use at all, but another and more modern one devoted entirely to business connected with the present life. His brain and mental, astral and etheric bodies are all new and better than those previously used. How can he expect to refer to data never stored in them at all? All past life-experience has been digested in the long interlude between earthly lives. His experiences have been transformed into faculties and therein the deathless Ego has attained the jewels of price sought for and garnered at great labor. Faculty by the grain is worth more than undigested memories by the carload. Faculty is memory in apotheosis, the godlike measure of a growing son of God. To value memory of casual incidents in past lives, would be not unlike a wish to preserve a once-useful scaffolding erected by masons in a remote time to stand upon while constructing a church, an edifice of beauty and harmony and a blessing to the world. Why return to the ugliness of its years under construction, the dusty planks, the spattered mortar, shards of rock and sweating labor raising weights up ladders? Who cried this question aloud most clearly to all Christendom in His last breath as He exclaimed, "IT IS FINISHED!"?

(The End)

Definition

CLICHE: A hackneyed literary phrase; trite saying or expression, commonplace word or words, banality, bromide, platitude, chestnut, retold story, "warmed over cabbage."

We are writing about a *cliche* in this issue.

ASTROLOGY AND THE WAR SITUATION

Because of the pressure of other work it has not been possible to complete the research needed for the next instalment in time for this issue. It will appear in July.