

It is not the conditions nor the circumstances, but the attitude held with regard to our own natures which gives us the power to withstand any influence whatever. According to our attitude, and according to our understanding that all things material and physical evolve from and are ruled by the spiritual, will we—the real Thinkers—receive the effect of any planet. All states are within ourselves, as we ought to understand by seeing that one gets good effects and another bad effects from precisely the same set of circumstances. So, we are not the victims of circumstances save as we make ourselves the victims.—ROBERT CROSBIE

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th February 1946.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

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# AUM THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th February 1946.

### VOL. XVI. No. 4

## **ACTIONS ARE OUR EPOCHS**

Think'st thou existence doth depend on time ? It doth ; but actions are our epochs.—Byron.

"Conflict of duties"—this is a universal complaint—what to do, what not, how to act and how to refrain from action. And arising out of these problems is the puzzling factor of compromise. John Morley presented an important exposition in his well-known volume under that title; students of Theosophy should read it and make appropriate applications. Personal desires and ignorance of Theosophy are the parents of the conflict of duties, and again of sins of omission and commission, and also of wrong or false compromises.

One classification of human actions is given in Sankaracharya's Commentary on the Gita. Four types of actions are mentioned: (1) Obligatory duties which form the routine of living. These are termed Nitya-Karmani-waking, working, resting, eating, sleeping and so forth make up this class. (2) Special duties to be performed on special occasions; these may be regular or otherwise as to place and time. These are named Naimittika-Karmani-duties which pertain to specific events and occasions. (3) Optional actions rooted in the desires, in the Kama principle. These voluntary or volitional deeds are called Kamya-Karmani. (4) Evil, and therefore forbidden, actions. Forbidden by our better nature, by right tradition and wisdom, and called Pratishiddha-Karmani.

As to the last. Each aspirant-practitioner is aware of the force of evil residing in his lower nature. The constant enemy of man is compared in the *Gita* to the smoke enveloping the fire. The prefix *Nitya*, constant, perpetual, that qualifies the word enemy is the same that is used for the first type of works—*Nitya-Karmani*. This may well be taken as a hint that the constant enemy responsible for evil deeds can be overcome by right attention to the routine small duties of life constantly to be performed; this is pointed out in his simple, inimitable way by W. Q. Judge in numerous places. He names Duty as "the one vehicle," "the royal talisman," and his whole life was one steady effort to bring the world to Duty. "If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal." In the emphasis he puts on "little things," he but clearly echoes the words of a Great Master:—

What better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of Duty? Believe me, my pupil, the man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving-kindnesses, will through these faithfully fulfilled rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice and Charity to all Humanity—what better path towards the enlightenment you are striving after than the daily conquest of self, the perseverance in spite of want of visible psychic progress, the bearing of ill-fortune with that serene fortitude which turns it to spiritual advantage—since good and evil are not to be measured by events on the lower or physical plane.

Unworthy desires constitute our constant enemy; true duties, our constant friend. It is our lower desires which take us away from our duties and very often it is Kama which presents to the personal man the problem of the conflict of duties.

In the performance of the small plain duties of life the principle of Necessity should play its important part as our sure guide. That must be done which it is necessary to do. It is written that "Man's mistaken actions are his needless actions" and that "it is unnecessary actions which 'bind' the man; the wise man engages only in necessary action." Those acts which it is not necessary to perform cannot be obligatory duties of our personal life. Actions of the third class being optional the possibility is open to us to perform actions which are not strictly duties or Karmic obligations, and which therefore are not necessary. The Rule of Necessity saves us from many a pitfall in the performance of the first type of actions and that rule is of especial value for this first class of deeds. Duties are necessities and cannot be renounced without peril to the inner man. Spiritual life is founded upon the right performance of such actions as are necessary in the environment in which the Good Law has placed us.

Dana—Charity, Tapas—Austerities, Yagna— Sarcifices—these are repeatedly mentioned as works of value to be performed from time to time. Such are approved by the Lord of the Heart. Such special actions on special occasions assist the Inner Ego in its efforts to get a better purchase on the personal man and also in manifesting Its Light through the sensorium. Further, these three types of action of the *Gita* classification are specific modes of experiencing our kinship and fraternity with a number of persons; through such actions we enhance our own sense of brotherhood while helping those others in like manner.

What is the difference between these special deeds and the third class of optional actions ? The special duties, such as Dana-Tapas-Yagna are in a real sense obligatory. Small plain duties are the Karma-Dharma of the Personality, the duties in which we are constantly engaged, and without which the life-process would not go on. Similarly the second class of actions are channels to be built by the Personality for receiving the afflatus of the Individuality. Such occasional deeds are the bridge down which the Inner Ego descends into the man of clay. No choice is left for us as to whether or not we should perform special deeds for and on special occasions. Volitional actions (Kamaya-Karmani) are different. When the first two types of actions are not correctly performed the personality tends towards lower and carnal desires, debases the human nature and animalizes it. But when the duties

mentioned in the first two classes are properly attended to, the man of flesh is purified, his brain becomes porous to the influences of the higher, and noble and divine aspirations spontaneously arise in him. He feels like understanding the meaning and purport of life; like seeking the good company of striving and sincere aspirants; he desires to know about the Holy Ones of the Earth and looks for the Path which leads to Them. So, according to a man's attitude to his karma and his dharma are his volitional actions, self-induced and self-devised, whether the inducing and devising self be the ape or the angel in man.

> Our acts our angels are, or good or ill, Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

## QUESTIONS ANSWERED

- "Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis."—H. P. B.

### चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा। गुरोस्तु मौनं ब्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु च्छिन्नसंशयाः॥

"Ah! the wonder of the Banyan Tree. There sits the Guru Deva, a youth, and the disciples are elders; the teaching is silence, and still the disciples' doubts are dispelled."

Q.—How can we reconcile H. P. B.'s injunction never to believe anything on authority with the policy of the U. L. T. never to let any one speak from the platform unless he is able and willing to repeat only what Theosophy teaches?

Ans.-To believe on authority is a very different thing from giving an accurate account of what Theosophy (or any system or person) teaches. The object of our meetings is to explain to an audience interested in the subject what Theosophy has to say on any given point. The speaker undertakes to do this. Theosophy is a system of philosophy and anybody who claims to give a talk on it must be in a position to reproduce accurately what little knowledge he may have. But this has nothing to do with belief. A man might even expound the teachings clearly and well without believing in their truth. It is not likely that any one would take the trouble to do this, or, if he did, he would probably convert himself in the course of his work. This is another matter, however, the point being that one's own conviction and the power to expound without garbling are two separate things. Furthermore, our meetings are not intended to set forth beliefs or to convert ; their object is to explain and to expound.

## H. P. B. AND TOLSTOY ALCHEMY OF SOUL

#### In his recently published book *Tolstoy—His* Life and Work, the author, Derrick Leon, makes the following remarks:—

The most interesting commentary upon On Life was written by Tolstoy's remarkable fellow-countrywoman, Mme. Blavatsky, and published in her organ Lucifer. "It may be called," she said, "a treatise on the Alchemy of the soul. For that solitary light in man which burns for ever, and can never be darkened in its intrinsic nature, though the 'animal' outside may be blind to it, is that 'light' upon which the Neo-Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rosecroix and especially the Alchemists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a mystery to most men."

The above mentioned commentary by H. P. B. was originally published in *Lucifer* for November 1887, Vol. I, p. 203, under the title "The Science of Life." We are now reprinting it below. It deals with a problem of Science, which remains unsolved now as then; it has a practical, ethical bearing and embodies truths which all earnest minds will recognize and welcome.

H. P. Blavatsky was ever keen to show that Theosophy was not her special personal possession or invention ; that her teachings were but reverberating echoes of Words of Power chanted by the Fathers of the human race, when it was young; and moreover, that there were other faithful echoes. In this article she translates the ideas of the great Tolstoi and shows how they express facts of pure and genuine Theosophy. It is the duty of every real student of the ancient Wisdom Religion to look out for and welcome Theosophical echoes in current pronouncements, just as H. P.B. did. To the student of science, of religion, of philosophy; it brings a message. Those who yearn to live the Higher Life will find in it much food for thought and many hints of a practical nature. H. P. B. remarks that the real science of life consists in transmuting baser metals-the animal mass-into gold and silver. Alchemy as an Occult Art is but a reflection of that Higher Alchemy. Of this she has written fully and students will do well to refer especially to her Theosophical Glossary.

#### THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

What is life? Hundreds of the most philosophical minds, scores of learned, well-skilled physicians, have asked themselves the question, but to little purpose. The veil thrown over primordial Kosmos and the mysterious beginnings of life upon it, has never been withdrawn to the satisfaction of earnest, honest science. The more the men of official learning try to penetrate through its dark folds, the more intense becomes that darkness, and the less they see, for they are like the treasure-hunter, who went across the wide seas to look for that which lay buried in his own garden.

What is then this Science ? Is it biology, or the study of life in its general aspect? No. Is it physiology, or the science of organic function ? Neither; for the former leaves the problem as much the riddle of the Sphinx as ever, and the latter is the science of death far more than that of life. Physiology is based upon the study of the different organic functions and the organs necessary to the manifestations of life, but that which science calls living matter, is, in sober truth, dead matter. Every molecule of the living organs contains the germ of death in itself, and begins dying as soon as born, in order that its successormolecule should live only to die in its turn. An organ, a natural part of every living being, is but the medium for some special function in life, and is a combination of such molecules. The vital organ, the whole, puts the mask of life on, and thus conceals the constant decay and death of its parts. Thus, neither biology nor physiology are the science, nor even branches of the Science of Life, but only that of the appearances of life. While true philosophy stands Œdipus-like before the Sphinx of life, hardly daring to utter the paradox contained in the answer to the riddle propounded, materialistic science, as arrogant as ever, never doubting its own wisdom for one moment, biologises itself and many others into the belief that it has solved the awful problem of existence. In truth, however, has it even so much as approached its threshold ? It is not, surely, by attempting to deceive itself and the unwary in saying that life is but the result of

molecular complexity, that it can ever hope to promote the truth. Is vital force, indeed, only a "phantom," as Du-Bois Reymond calls it? For his taunt that "life," as something independent, is but the asylum ignorantiæ of those who seek refuge in abstractions, when direct explanation is impossible, applies with far more force and justice to those materialists who would blind people to the reality of facts, by substituting bombast and jaw-breaking words in their place. Have any of the five divisions of the functions of life, so pretentiously named Archebiosis, Biocrosis, Biodiæresis, Biocænois and Bioparodosis,1 ever helped a Huxley or a Hæckel to probe more fully the mystery of the generations of the humblest ant-let alone of man? Most certainly not. For life, and everything pertaining to it, belongs to the lawful domain of the metaphysician and psychologist, and physical science has no claim upon it. "That which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which hath been is named already-and it is known that it is MAN"-is the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx. But "man" here, does not refer to physical man-not in its esoteric meaning, at any rate. Scalpels and microscopes may solve the mystery of the material parts of the shell of man : they can never cut a window into his soul to open the smallest vista on any of the wider horizons of being.

It is those thinkers alone, who, following the Delphic injunction, have cognized life in their Inner selves, those who have studied it thoroughly in themselves, before attempting to trace and analyze its reflection in their outer shells, who are the only ones rewarded with some measure of success. Like the fire-philosophers of the Middle Ages, they have skipped over the appearances of light and fire in the world of effects and centred their whole attention upon the producing arcane agencies. Thence, tracing these to the one abstract cause, they have attempted to fathom the MYSTERY, each as far as his intellectual capacities permitted him. Thus they have ascertained that (I) the seemingly living mechanism called physical man, is but the fuel, the material, upon which life feeds, in order to manifest itself; and (2) that

<sup>1</sup> Or Life-origination, Life-fusion, Life-division, Liferenewal and Life-transmission. thereby the inner man receives as his wage and reward the possibility of accumulating additional experiences of the terrestrial illusions called lives.

One of such philosophers is now undeniably the great Russian novelist and reformer, Count Lef N. Tolstoi. How near his views are to the esoteric and philosophical teachings of higher Theosophy, will be found on the perusal of a few fragments from a lecture delivered by him at Moscow before the local Psychological Society.

Discussing the problem of life, the Count asks his audience to admit, for the sake of argument, an *impossibility*. Says the lecturer:—

"Let us grant for a moment that all that which modern science longs to learn of life, it has learnt, and now knows; that the problem has become as clear as day; that it is clear how organic matter has, by simple adaptation, come to be originated from inorganic material; that it is as clear how natural forces may be transformed into feelings, will, thought, and that finally, all this is known, not only to the city student but to every village schoolboy, as well.

I am aware, then, that such and such thoughts and feelings originate from such and such motions. Well, and what then? Can I, or cannot I, produce and guide such motions, in order to excite within my brain corresponding thoughts? The question—what are the thoughts and feelings I ought to generate in myself and others, remains still, not only unsolved, but even untouched.

Yet it is precisely this question which is the one fundamental question of the central idea of life.

Science has chosen as its object a few manifestations that accompany life; and *mistaking*<sup>2</sup> the part for the whole, called these manifestations the integral total of life.

The question inseparable from the idea of life is not whence life, but how one should live that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Mistaking" is an erroneous term to use. The men of science know but too well that what they teach concerning life is a materialistic fiction contradicted at every step by logic and fact. In this particular question science is abused, and made to serve personal hobbies and a determined policy of crushing in humanity every spiritual aspiration and thought. "*Pretending* to mistake" would be more correct.—H. P. B.

life: and it is only by first starting with this question that one can hope to approach some solution in the problem of existence.

The answer to the query "How are we to live?" appears so simple to man that he esteems it hardly worth his while to touch upon it.

. One must live the best way one can—that's all. This seems at first sight very simple and well known to all, but it is by far neither as simple nor as well known as one may imagine. . . .

The idea of life appears to man in the beginning as a most simple and self-evident business. First of all, it seems to him that life is in himself, in his own body. No sooner, however, does one commence his search after that life, in any one given spot of the said body, than one meets with difficulties. Life is not in the hair, nor in the nails; neither is it in the foot nor the arm, which may both be amputated ; it is not in the blood, it is not in the heart, and it is not in the brain. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It comes to this : life cannot be found in any of its dwellingplaces. Then man begins to look for life in Time; and that, too, appears at first a very easy matter. Yet again, no sooner has he started . . on his chase than he perceives that here also the business is more complicated than he had thought. Now, I have lived fifty-eight years, so says my baptismal church record. But I know that out of these fifty-eight years I slept over twenty. How then ? Have I lived all these years, or have I not ? -Deduct the months of my gestation, and those I passed in the arms of my nurse, and shall we call this life, also? Again, out of the remaining thirty-eight years, I know that a good half of that time I slept while moving about ; and thus, I could no more say in this case, whether I lived during that time or not. I may have lived a little, and vegetated a little. Here again, one finds that in time, as in the body, life is everywhere, yet nowhere. And now the question naturally arises, whence, then, that life which I can trace to nowhere ? Now-will I learn.

. But it so happens that in this direction also, what seemed to me so easy at first, now seems impossible. I must have been searching for something else, not for my life, assuredly. Therefore, once we have to go in search of the whereabouts of life—if search we have to—then it should be neither in space nor in time, neither as cause nor effect, but as a something which I cognize within myself as quite independent from space, time and causality.

That which remains to do now is to study *self*. But how do I cognize life in myself?

This is how I cognize it. I know, to begin with, that I live; and that I live wishing for myself everything that is good, wishing this since I can remember myself, to this day, and from morn till night. All that lives outside of myself is important in my eyes, but only in so far as it co-operates with the creation of that which is productive of my welfare. The Universe is important in my sight only because it can give me, pleasure.

Meanwhile, something else is bound up with this knowledge in me of my existence. Inseparable from the life I feel, is another cognition allied to it; namely, that besides myself, I am surrounded with a whole world of living creatures, possessed, as I am myself, of the same instinctive realization of their exclusive lives; that all these creatures live for their own objects, which objects are foreign to me; that those creatures do not know, nor do they care to know, anything of my pretensions to an exclusive life, and that all these creatures, in order to achieve success in their objects, are ready to annihilate me at any moment. But this is not all. While watching the destruction of creatures similar in all to myself, I also know that for me too, for that precious ME in whom alone life is represented, a very speedy and inevitable destruction is lying in wait.

It is as if there were two "I's" in man; it is as if they could never live in peace together; it is as if they were eternally struggling, and ever trying to expel each other.

One "I" says, "I alone am living as one should live, all the rest only seems to live. Therefore, the whole *raison d'être* for the universe is in that I may be made comfortable."

The other "I" replies, "The universe is not for thee at all, but for its own aims and purposes, and it cares little to know whether thou art happy or unhappy."

Life becomes a dreadful thing after this !

One "I" says, "I only want the gratification of all my wants and desires, and that is why I need the universe."

The other "I" replies, "All animal life lives only for the gratification of its wants and desires. It is the wants and desires of animals alone that are gratified at the expense and detriment of other animals; hence the ceaseless struggle between the animal species. Thou art an animal, and therefore, thou hast to struggle. Yet, however successful in thy struggle, the rest of the struggling creatures must sooner or later crush thee."

Still worse! life becomes still more dreadful. . . .

But the most terrible of all, that which includes in itself the whole of the foregoing, is that:-

One "I" says, "I want to live, to live for ever."

And that the other "I" replies, "Thou shalt surely, perhaps in a few minutes, die; as also shall die all those thou lovest, for thou and they are destroying with every motion your lives, and thus approaching ever nearer suffering, death, all that which thou so hatest, and which thou fearest above anything else."

This is the worst of all. .

To change this condition is impossible. . . . One can avoid moving, sleeping, eating, even breathing, but one cannot escape from thinking. One thinks, and that thought, my thought, is poisoning every step in my life, as a personality.

No sooner has man commenced a conscious life than that consciousness repeats to him incessantly without respite, over and over the same thing again. "To live such life as you feel and see in your past, the life lived by animals and many men too, lived in *that* way, which made you become what you are now—is no longer possible. Were you to attempt doing so, you could never escape thereby the struggle with all the world of creatures which live as you do—for their personal objects; and then those creatures will inevitably destroy you."

To change this situation is impossible. There remains but one thing to do, and that is always done by him who, beginning to live, transfers his objects in life outside of himself, and aims to reach them. . . But, however far he places them outside his personality, as his mind gets clearer, none of these objects will satisfy him.

Bismarck, having united Germany, and now ruling Europe-if his reason has only thrown any light upon the results of his activity-must perceive, as much as his own cook does who prepares a dinner that will be devoured in an hour's time, the same unsolved contradiction between the vanity and foolishness of all he has done, and the eternity and reasonableness of that which exists for ever. If they only think of it, each will see as clearly as the other, firstly, that the preservation of the integrity of Prince Bismarck's dinner, as well as that of powerful Germany, is solely due: the preservation of the former-to the police, and the preservation of the latter-to the army; and that, so long only as both keep a good watch. Because there are famished people who would willingly eat the dinner, and nations which would fain be as powerful as Germany. Secondly, that neither Prince Bismarck's dinner, nor the might of the German Empire, coincide with the aims and purposes of universal life, but that they are in flagrant contradiction with them. And thirdly, that as he who cooked the dinner, so also the might of Germany, will both very soon die, and that so shall perish, and as soon, both the dinner and Germany. That which shall survive alone is the Universe, which will never give one thought to either dinner or Germany, least of all to those who have cooked them.

As the intellectual condition of man increases, he comes to the idea that no happiness connected with his personality is an achievement, but only a necessity. Personality is only that incipient state from which begins life, and the ultimate limit of life.

Where, then, does life begin, and where does it end, I may be asked? Where ends the night, and where does day commence? Where, on the shore, ends the domain of the sea, and where does the domain of land begin?

There is day and there is night; there is land and there is sea; there is life and there is no life.

Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between two limits. One limit is, an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only towards the gratification of one's own personality.

The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of the infinite Universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite Universe and all the creatures outside of us.<sup>1</sup>

The nearer to the first limit, the less life and bliss, the closer to the second, the more life and bliss. Therefore, man is ever moving from one end to the other; *i.e.* he lives. THIS MOTION IS LIFE ITSELF.

And when I speak of life, know that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life, nor can it be known to anyone else.

We call life, the life of animals, organic life. But this is no life at all, only a certain state or condition of life manifesting to us.

But what is this consciousness or mind, the exigencies of which exclude personality and transfer the energy of man outside of him and into that state which is conceived by us as the blissful state of love?

What is conscious mind? Whatsoever we may be defining, we have to define it with our conscious mind. Therefore, with what shall we define mind? . . .

If we have to define all with our mind, it follows that conscious mind cannot be defined. Yet all of us, we not only know it, but it is the only thing which is given to us to know undeniably:

It is the same law as the law of life, of everything organic, animal or vegetable, with that one difference that we see the consummation of an intelligent law in the life of a plant. But the law of conscious mind, to which we are subjected as the tree is subjected to its law, we see it not, but fulfil it.

We have settled that life is that which is not our life. It is herein that lies hidden the root of error. Instead of studying that life of which we are conscious within ourselves, absolutely and exclusively—since we can know of nothing else in order to study it, we observe that which is devoid of the most important factor and faculty of our life, namely, intelligent consciousness. By so doing, we act as a man who attempts to study an object by its shadow or reflection does.

If we know that substantial particles are subjected during their transformations to the activity of the organism; we know it not because we have observed or studied it, but simply because we possess a certain familiar organism united to us, namely the organism of our animal, which is but too well known to us as the material of our life : i. e. that upon which we are called to work and to rule by subjecting it to the law of reason. . . . No sooner has man lost faith in life, no sooner has he transferred that life into that which is no life, than he becomes wretched, and sees death. . . . A man who conceives life such as he finds it in his consciousness, knows neither misery, nor death : for all the good in life for him is in the subjection of his animal to the law of reason, to do which is not only in his power, but takes place unavoidably in him. The death of particles in the animal being, we know. The death of animals and of man, as an animal, we know; but we know nought about the death of conscious mind, nor can we know anything of it, just because that conscious mind is the very life itself. And Life can never be Death.

The animal lives an existence of bliss, neither seeing nor knowing death, and dies without cognizing it. Why then should man have received the gift of seeing and knowing it, and why should death be so terrible to him that it actually tortures his soul, often forcing him to kill himself out of sheer fear of death? Why should it be so? Because the man who sees death is a sick man, one who has broken the law of his life, and lives no longer a conscious existence. He has become an animal himself, an animal which also has broken the law of life.

The life of man is an aspiration to bliss, and that which he aspires to is given to him. The

We have translated this rather lengthy fragment from the Report of Count Tolstoi's superb lecture, because it reads like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true theosophy. His definition of life in its abstract sense, and of the life every earnest theosophist ought to follow, each according to, and in the measure of, his natural capacities—is the summary and the Alpha and the Omega of practical psychic, if not spiritual life. There are sentences in the lecture which, to the average theosophist will seem too hazy, and perhaps incomplete. Not one will he find, however, which could be objected to by the most exacting, practical occultist. It may be called a treatise on the Alchemy of Soul. For that "solitary" light in man, which burns for ever, and can never be darkness in its intrinsic nature, though the "animal" outside us may remain blind to it-is that "Light" upon which the Neo Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rosecroix and especially the Alchemists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a dark mystery to most men.

True, Count Tolstoi is neither an Alexandrian nor a modern theosophist; still less is he a Rosecroix or an Alchemist. But that which the latter have concealed under the peculiar phraseology of the Fire-philosophers, purposely confusing cosmic transmutations with Spiritual Alchemy, all that is transferred by the great Russian thinker from the realm of the metaphysical unto the field of practical life. That which Schelling would define as a realisation of the identity of subject and object in the man's inner Ego, that which unites and blends the latter with the universal Soul-which is but the identity of subject and object on a higher plane, or the unknown Deity-all that Count Tolstoi has blended together without quitting the terrestrial

plane. He is one of those few elect who begin with intuition and end with quasi-omniscience. It is the transmutations of the baser metals-the animal mass-into gold and silver, or the philosopher's stone, the development and manifestation of man's higher SELF, which the Count has achieved. The alcahest of the inferior Alchemist is the All-geist, the all-pervading Divine Spirit of the higher Initiate; for Alchemy was, and is, as very few know to this day, as much a spiritual philosophy as it is a physical science. He who knows nought of one, will never know much of the other. Aristotle told it in so many words to his pupil, Alexander : "It is not a stone," he said, of the philosopher's stone. "It is in every man and in every place, and at all seasons, and is called the end of all philosophers," as the Vedanta is the end of all philosophies.

To wind up this essay on the Science of Life, a few words may be said of the eternal riddle propounded to mortals by the Sphinx. To fail to solve the problem contained in it, was to be doomed to sure death, as the Sphinx of life devoured the unintuitional, who would live only in their "animal." He who lives for Self, and only for Self, will surely die, as the higher "I" tells the lower "animal" in the Lecture. The riddle has seven keys to it, and the Count opens the mystery with one of the highest. For, as the author on "Hermetic Philosophy" beautifully expressed it: "The real mystery most familiar and, at the same time, most unfamiliar to every man, into which he must be initiated or perish as an atheist, is himself. For him is the elixir of life, to quaff which, before the discovery of the philosopher's stone, is to drink the beverage of death, while it confers on the adept and the epopt, the true immortality. He may know truth as it really is-Aletheia, the breath of God, or Life, the conscious mind in man."

This is "the Alcahest which dissolves all things," and Count Tolstoi has well understood the riddle.

## SCIENCE APPROACHES THE OCCULT

The recent researches into the atom have opened up a different, and not merely a wider, field of thought, though the use to which the released power is to be put affects man "quantitatively not qualitatively"-to quote the expression used by Professor Einstein in the Daily Telegraph recently. But, apart from the use to which atomic power is to be put, people are asking questions as to a new view of Life, Time, Eternity, Matter, God. These questions are being answered for the common man in the daily press in England. In the space of two days a short while ago three articles appeared in the English newspapers; one representing the endeavour by Sir Angus Watson to keep alive the idea of a God who can "intervene" in man's affairs; the other two were by a scientist-philosopher, Lord Dunsany, and the science editor of the News Chronicle, Mr. Ritchie Calder, respectively. These articles were followed in a few days by the beginning of a series of three articles by H. G. Wells dealing with Mind and the expanding (or disappearing) Universe. Lord Dunsany dealt metaphysically with Time and Matter; Mr. Ritchie Calder with the fascinating researches into Life itself, while Mr. Wells took a very pessimistic view of the future of Man.

Both Lord Dunsany and Mr. Calder came very near to the teachings of the Secret Wisdom. Lord Dunsany pointed out that

though our telescopes grow larger and larger, and we peer ever deeper into the night, it is not they that appal us but rather our inability to comprehend two things....The human reason cannot comprehend something being made out of nothing, and our imagination cannot understand something existing without having begun. And, being unable to comprehend either of these things, we cannot understand the universe.

But The Secret Doctrine tells us that, though the human mind cannot reach to that which is "out of all relation to conditioned existence," yet, "once that we pass in thought from this (to us) Absolute Negation, duality supervenes in the contrast of Spirit (or consciousness) and Matter, Subject and Object." Though the Unknowable is beyond the range and reach of thought, yet to prove God-spirit it is only necessary to prove man-spirit.

Lord Dunsany, says further, "the perpetual existence of matter must always baffle us" and "Time, where nothing changed, would be meaningless." The Secret Doctrine speaks of Root-Matter, and the Rootless Root. "Matter is indestructible." But, he tells us, "Our imagination should not find it hard to picture a waste of gas lying still in eternity, and then beginning to harden into stars, with which change time began." But what causes the gas to begin to harden into stars, and how did it get there in the first place ? We need the Stanzas of Dzyan to explain this riddle. "The Eternal Parent wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities." Though time where nothing changed would indeed be meaningless, we can understand a condition where "Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of Duration," as the Stanzas state. Since our consciousness can appreciate changes, it must be in its essence beyond change. Is that what Lord Dunsany means when he ends by writing, "If time began, it must end, and the disturbance it has caused among the eternal stars, or that disturbance among them that produced time, will cease, and the atom be no more troubled either by time or man." Does man then still exist? If so, in what condition is he then ? Mr. Ritchie Calder writes :---

Now that the atomic-physicists have blown the master-lock of Nature's safe-deposit, scientists-cracksmen in other branches of science are going to be feverishly active. With the secret of the material Universe revealed, they are after the secret of Life itself.

He quotes the late Lord Rutherford as saying to him: "The basis of what, for convenience, we call Life is Matter. The basis of Matter is the Atom. The basis of the Atom is, well, Electricity. And don't dare ask me, What is Electricity?"

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Lord Wavell opened the Silver Jubilee session of the Indian Institute of Engineers at Calcutta and in his speech the closing touch was poetic and true :—

One last word. Be as kindly as you can to nature and disfigure her as little as possible. Public works should not be inconsistent with beauty of design.

Modern civilization's handling of Nature is that of a proficient in transforming beauty into · ugliness and in creating deformities all around us. H. P. B. has written about this in her article "Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty" reprinted in these pages in Vol. VIII, for September 1938. The cruelty of modern civilization and the hardness of its nature are rooted in false philosophical concepts about our earth and the cosmos of which it is a part. Scientific materialism denies the very existence of Spirit as an omniscient power. That Nature, Prakriti or Matter is guided from within without by Spirit, and that the world of matter is but a reflection of that of Spirit are not recognized. The nearness and the potency of the Spirit-World, active within the forms of the Matter-World, is an unperceived truth. Therefore the very existence of Angels or Devatas, Gods or Devas, God-Men or Rishis is denied and the parts played by these different classes of beings is unknown and unsuspected. Men and women are kindly by the urge of Soul-Spirit, often unconscious of the fact that the action of these in the body takes place because of the ideation-imagination of the Powers of Light, whose life-labour sustains the human Soul. These powers work to keep alive in human minds and hearts the intuitions of Spiritual Truths and these innate ideas or intuitions alone are capable of enabling man to curb and control his animal nature. Latent divinity enables the human man to grow out of bestiality into the beauty of living.

Neither engineers nor doctors nor lawyers nor other ordinary professionals will really know how to be kindly to Nature, animate or inanimate, till the right philosophy of the Ancients, re-taught in *The Secret Doctrine* is understood. And if that profound philosophy and its exposition of the Beautiful are not found attractive because of the up-to-date education of the twentieth-century academies, then at least let the moderns study Plotinus, whose essay "On the Beautiful" will teach them how to respect and love Nature, the comely mother. Students of Theosophy will do well to master the ideas of this great essay.

Under the title "Re-incarnation," Mr. W. H. Salter examines in the October Journal of the Society for Psychical Research a communication purporting to be from the late Sir Oliver Lodge which shows how undependable are mediumistic utterances. "Sir Oliver," communicating through Mrs. Leonard, had said (Journal of the S. P. R., June 1945):—

Now during the earth life I kept an open mind about this vexed question of re-incarnation....Well, now I know it is a fact. It is true, therefore I must state it as true, that, according to my personal experience, it is true; and I have had many talks with my friend Myers about it. I have asked him why he did not tell me more about it, especially during my many sittings with Feda. He said that he thought that at times the medium had had an aversion to the idea.

Mr. Salter brings out that Sir Oliver had in life indeed kept an open mind as to reincarnation. F. W. H. Myers had accepted the idea of preexistence; in a post-mortem "communication" to Sir Oliver himself, however, "he" had emphatically repudiated belief in reincarnation.

"Myers" had claimed to be communicating earlier through Mrs. Piper in America and Mr. G. B. Dorr, to test the classical knowledge of the control purporting to be Myers, had put to Mrs. Piper a question about Lethe. Sir Oliver later, to test whether the "Myers" control of Mrs. Willett knew of the question that had been put to Mrs. Piper, asked Myers through Mrs. Willett: "...What does the word Lethe suggest to you?" The reply, produced in automatic writing, had quoted from Myers's own translation of a passage from Vergil in which Lethe was mentioned, "the River of forgetfulness." The message concluded :—

 $\dots$  not re-incarnation only once does the Soul descend the way that leads to incarnation. Even so pertinent a communication may have been due to the medium's thought or been taken from the thoughts of other living persons; or the life-record in the shell of the late Mr. Myers may have yielded the views expressed, through the intervention of elementals or elementaries; real psychography, involving *rapport* between the spirit of the medium and that of the departed, being rare.

Mr. Salter admits that Myers's views might have changed since 1910, when that message was received, but finds it

exceedingly strange that Lodge, who during his life attached very great importance to Willett-Myers communications, should in communicating through Eeda make no reference to this script, and show no awareness of any discrepancy calling for explanation.

It would indeed be strange, on the ground of the style of the message as well as of the lapse of memory, if the entity communicating were the real Lodge! But the claim that this or that famous person is communicating is most often due to the intervention of mischievous elementaries who confuse and deceive the medium. Was it not claimed by mediums within a year of H. P. B.'s own death that she had absolutely changed her views and wanted her books burnt!

Discovery for October and November prints the substance of a lecture on "The Earth's Magnetism," delivered by Prof. S. Chapman, F. R. S., in July last before the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In it he traces the advance of geomagnetic science in recent centuries. He mentions the Greeks' knowledge of the attractive properties of the lodestone and the discovery, perhaps in the later eleventh century, of the magnetic compass, but not that compasses of a sort seem to have been known before that to the Chinese and the Japanese. Even the declination of the compass from due north, observed in Europe in the fifteenth century is claimed to have been known to the Chinese before the end of the eleventh. Significantly, an early dissenter from the view that the compass needle pointed truly north was the thirteenth-century Roger Bacon, whose "Knowledge," H. P. B. writes, "did not come to this wonderful old magician by inspiration, but because he studied ancient works on magic and alchemy, having a key to the real meaning of words."

Professor Chapman traces the slow further progress of geomagnetic science, describing the discovery of the dip of the magnetic needle, pointing to a centre of attraction in the earth, etc., but Dr. William Gilbert of Colchester gets the credit for the observation in 1600 that "the earth globe itself is a great magnet." Paracelsus had made that observation over half a century before. Gradually the knowledge has accumulated that the earth's magnetism varies from place to place and time to time. Magnetic surveying has made considerable progress, though a world magnetic survey, to be repeated at intervals, remains a desideratum. Yet, Professor Chapman writes,

the main fact that the earth is a great magnet remains an unsolved problem, a standing challenge to theoretical physics.

Theories associating the cause with the earth's rotation seem unsatisfactory. As to the theory that the earth is a great electro-magnet, "we have no understanding of how the necessary electric currents could be either created or maintained." "The key," he admits, to the problem of the great earth magnet and of its changes "may be beyond the present resources of theoretical physics."

Professor Chapman does not mention the eighteenth-century discovery of the association of magnetic disturbance with the aurora, which offered science a clue. For the Earth, H. P. B. tells us, is charged with positive electricity "which it evolves continuously by spontaneous action, in its interior or centre of motion," and the Aurora Borealis and Australis

take place at the very centres of terrestrial electric and magnetic forces. The two poles are said to be the store-houses, the receptacles and liberators, at the same time, of Cosmic and terrestrial Vitality (Electricity); from the surplus of which the Earth, had it not been for these two natural "safety-valves," would have been rent to pieces long ago.

Speaking recently to the adoring but undisciplined crowds at Calcutta, Gandhiji urged on them the need for discipline. India had attained a great position in the past because of her great message of Shanti. They could attain freedom only by peace and discipline. These two, peace and discipline, appear strange as parents of Liberty and yet that they are such is a fact of our Theosophical psychology. By self-discipline peace becomes possible and freedom of Soul is achieved. Discipline and peace react on each other: Some peace is needed even to practise discipline and the very fact that discipline is needed is indicative of the fact that strife exists and that the tendency to licence and rebellion has to be quelled.

Often discipline is regarded as something specially related to the army. Military discipline, imposed upon the soldier from outside, is the lowest form of discipline. It is imposed even in times of peace in preparation for war. Theosophical discipline is self-imposed by the Kshattriya soul, for applying which he seeks and secures the rules of soul-warfare. This spiritual discipline has to be practised in the midst of war; war is on when it is undertaken. Peace evoked by study and meditation aids us to discipline the unruly lower man whose egotism is not only strong but very subtle. "Pride goeth before destruction" and if any student-practitioner would avoid a fall he must seek the place of peace within, and discipline his own personal self vigorously.

Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell in his presidential address, published as Part 170 of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, analyses the reluctance of men of science to face facts brought out by psychical research. Steady neglect of a subject so important must mean

they do not wish to know the truth about these things, and for this there must surely be some deeper cause than that which is proclaimed on the surface. What is it?

He traces the common urge to force upon paranormal phenomena a normal explanation "by every possible means, sometimes by every ridiculous means" to a universal "sense of the antecedent improbability of things which are quite strange." Whether or not this instinctive tendency is a wile of Nature to keep us focussed on the world of action, as Mr. Tyrrell implies, it is true that the command and guidance over one's own psychic nature, which were innate in early humanity, have been lost to most men and are now associated, by the foolish, with the "supernatural."

"Not infrequently," Mr. Tyrrell complains, "scientific critics, in order to escape from evidence of the paranormal go so far as to jettison the fundamental principle of science, namely the appeal to fact." But have the psychical researchers themselves been quite free from the tendency that they deplore? They are willing to concede the spontaneous occurrence of paranormal phenomena, and scientific orthodoxy is not. But what has been their attitude towards the demonstration of ability to produce paranormal effects at will? Mme. H. P. Blavatsky's article "What of Phenomena?" reprinted in *Raja-Yoga*, gives the answer.

Mr. Tyrrell takes a broader view than most, insisting on the breadth of the field, the necessity for an open-minded approach and the inadequacy of petty theories for attack on major problems. But, except for the bias that produced and left unchallenged the notoriously unfair "Hodgson Report," Mr. Tyrrell would hardly in 1945 be calling the phenomena of mediumship "the most important and informative phenomena." There is not much difference in kind between pooh-poohing the occurrence of any paranormal phenomena at all and pooh-poohing the possibility of their conscious and deliberate production by " a power over perfectly natural though unrecognised forces, and incidentally over matter," a power latent in all and at present possessed

by certain individuals who have attained to a larger and higher knowledge of the Universe than has been reached by scientists and theologians, or can ever be reached by them, by the roads they are now respectively pursuing.

The same precipitate flight from the unknown back to the apron-strings of the familiar seems evident in the attempts to explain away the fairies. Jack Lindsay, in "Fairies, Blacksmiths and Werewolves" (*Life and Letters*, October 1945) elaborates a theory that leaves no locus standi to the "Little People" of universal tradition. He marshals evidence in favour of his thesis that

the Fairies are in part actual revellers, witchcovens, peasant-groups carrying on ancient ritual dances; in part they were the mythologized projection of those revellers.

He brings out impressive resemblances between the taboo language of the Malays and that of the Welsh; he shows similar "beliefs and customs associated with fairy and witch." But surely the fact that a displaced folk, often of small stature, may linger on, "with a reputation for special cunning in sorcery and magic," does not rule out the existence of the spirits of the elements !

H. P. B. demands pertinently why the earth only should be so densely populated, and fire, water and air be denied their denizens, the "viewless races." Can we assume "that the perceptive faculties of our bodies are capable of apprehending all the secret things of this and other worlds"?

The shapes the elementals wear when they become visible are always subjective, unconsciously bestowed upon them by those who see them. But the fact of their having no distinct personal form in which to reveal themselves does not mean that they are non-existent. H. P. B. writes:—

Under the general designation of fairies, and fays, these spirits of the elements appear in the myths, fables, traditions, or poetry of all nations, ancient and modern. Their names are legion...They have been seen, feared, blessed, banned, and invoked in every quarter of the globe and in every age. Shall we then concede that all who have met them were hallucinated ?

In The Saturday Review of Literature for 6th October, Mr. Norman Cousins writes a thoughtprovoking editorial on "The Paralysis of Conscience." He sees the divergence between protestations and action.

We are internationalist, all right, on paper and in the form of the thing, but something strange happens when we have to match form with substance.

He is right when he says that the reservoir of good-will that Wendell Willkie in his One World had feared was running low, is now almost dry. For luxuries are advertised, amusements sought, while millions are in want. But is the diagnosis correct? Conscience itself is only a warning voice. It has not the power to show the correct course of action. For that, a different faculty must be aroused in man—the faculty of spiritual intuition. The root of the trouble lies not so much, therefore, in a paralysis of conscience as in almost complete spiritual bankruptcy.

Morals have reached so low an ebb that studied hypocrisy and deliberate word camouflage have become the hall-marks of successful diplomacy. A war proclaimed to be one fought for freedom for all, degenerated into a war of retaliation, waged to maintain the imperialist *status quo*. The pompous phrases of the Atlantic Charter—framed when victory was not certain—have been modified, misconstrued and abandoned as the time to put them into practice has drawn nearer.

The modern nations have too long used the semblance of virtue out of expediency in hours of crisis. The need is not for barking against the bad, however. The world is starving for a new orientation. In political as in private life, it has become vital for us to know and understand the basis and the implications of human solidarity. The pedigree of man, his purpose and his destiny, have to be known for economic and political welfare as well as for spiritual progress. The answer to the modern problems is to be found in the philosophy of the Ancients. The question is. will men like Norman Cousins study it, or will they continue to wake up occasionally to register a protest against human frailties, only to slip back into the somnolence of Avidya?

## CORRESPONDENCE

### VEGETARIANISM

The answer given to the question "What is the opinion of the leaders of the T. S. in regard to vegetarianism," given by W. Q. Judge as recorded in your issue for June 1945 has shocked and grieved the three students who have mentioned it to me, myself and no doubt many others. It contains not one word regarding the cruelty of meat eating, or of the degradation and brutalizing effect it must have on all those who do the killing. This effect has been so clearly recognized in England that butchers are not permitted to serve on criminal juries. What right has any man to profit, physically or in any other way by the moral degradation of other men?

Moreover, Mr. Judge in support of his view argues that "The stomach does not digest vegetables, it is for meat; the teeth are for tearing and grinding meat." Why for meat any more than for vegetables, raw carrots, nuts etc.? Human teeth are far more like those of cows and horses than those of lions and tigers.

Then, having set forth his argument in favour of a diet of flesh he tells us that "there ought to come a time in our evolution when new methods of food production will be known, and when the necessity for killing any highly organized creature will have disappeared." That surely implies that there is something wrong about killing and eating our fellow-creatures; and what's wrong with our present method of food production? Happily, an increasing number of persons have already reached that stage of evolution as far as discarding flesh-eating is concerned, though not necessarily showing any remarkable advance in any other direction. Some have deserted the butchers for the sake of health, and some for an awakened conscience, and in so doing many of the latter have gained in physical as well as in moral health.

The defenders of butchers may remind us that H. P. B. did not wholly condemn the eating of flesh as being in itself sinful (though it is difficult to understand how anything that involves cruelty and moral degradation can be anything less) but she clearly warns us not to do anything or accept any belief merely in order to follow her example. And a Buddhist Catechism declares that "Our Lord Buddha has said that we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said ... nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them.... But we are to believe when the writing, doctrine or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness."

#### Victoria, B. C., Canada.

#### W. B. PEASE

[Theosophy does not lay down specific physical practices for its votaries and every aspirant must work out his own ascetic rules. Different persons, of whom Mr. Judge was one, gave in *The Theosophical Forum* answers to questions received, each in terms of his own insight and understanding of the teachings. Mr. Judge would have been the last to claim any authority for his views.— Mr. Judge had convinced himself by an experiment of nine years with a vegetarian diet that it was injurious to his health.

The arguments against vegetarianism which our correspondent mentions were certainly well known to H. P. B., but it may be noted that she omits them altogether in writing on the subject in the section on "Theosophy and Asceticism" in The Key to Theosophy. She brings other arguments forward but declares that she does not adopt all the vegetarians' arguments, some of which are "very weak and often based on assumptions which are quite false." We may safely assume that both H. P. B. and Mr. Judge knew far more than we do about the type of consciousness in the animal kingdom, and they apparently saw no crime in either the use of meat or the supply of it to others with the proper motive. H. P. B. writes :--

If from illness or long habit a man cannot go without meat, why, by all means let him eat it. It is no crime; it will only retard his progress a little; for after all is said and done, the purely bodily actions and functions are of far less importance than what a man *thinks* and *feels*, what desires he encourages in his mind, and allows to take root and grow there.

This is not to say that a vegetarian diet is not in her view desirable for the earnest aspirant, as having a less "coarsening" or "animalising" effect than meat or even fish. She advises "really earnest students to eat such food as will least clog and weight their brains and bodies, and will have the smallest effect in hampering and retarding the development of their intuition, their inner faculties and powers." Even the Bhagavad-Gita does not say that meat is to be eschewed. It states that a man should eat "the food which increases the length of days, vigour and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, and which is savoury, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body." -EDS. ]

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 $T_{\rm fessing\ attachment\ to\ any\ Theosophical\ organization.}$  It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable Basis for Union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

" The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge as set forth in its "Declaration" I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the Form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

Correspondence should be addressed to

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