

The Indian Institute of World Culture

6, Shri B. P. Wadia Road

Bangalore-8, India

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

DO NOT
PROF: L.S.S. KUMAR
SRIMATHI KANTHIMATHI K
1976

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XXXVII. No. 8

17th June 1967

OUR RETROSPECT

[All Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists everywhere will celebrate U.L.T. Day on Sunday, June 25. It is appropriate to consider in connection with that celebration what the Founder of the U.L.T., Robert Crosbie, has said about the work of the Theosophical Movement of our era. The inauguration of the U.L.T. in 1909 may well be regarded as having brought to its zenith the Theosophical Movement, however obscured it still may be by worldly feelings and thoughts, however poorly recognized the fact of that accomplishment. What Robert Crosbie wrote about the policy and programme of the U.L.T. — "the work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view" — in retrospect and in prospect, seven years after its founding, is worth reading and is reprinted here from the magazine *Theosophy* for January 1916, where it appeared under the title "Thoughts on the New Year."—Eds.]

Our retrospect begins with the purpose of The United Lodge of Theosophists and the magazine *Theosophy*. That purpose is the study, application, and promulgation of Theosophy as it was given by Those who brought it.

By every means in our power we have drawn attention to the indisputable fact that there is a body of knowledge given to the world by H. P. Blavatsky and named by her "Theosophy." We have put forward as a matter of justice to the Message and gratitude to the Messenger that *only that which She gave and so named should be entitled to the name "Theosophy"*; for any other course beclouds the meaning of the title, and permits any theosophical student to call his own peculiar conceptions by that distinctive name, and thus perpetrates an injustice upon all students and enquirers present and to come. To conserve that Message in its purity has been and will continue to be our earnest endeavour.

We have repeatedly called attention to the fact that without a recognition of the existence of Masters of Wisdom there is no assignable reason for the existence of such a body of knowledge. The existence of Masters was shown and proven by H. P. Blavatsky. She was Their Messenger; hence They chose her to deliver Their Message. Their wisdom in so doing may not be questioned, any more than the wisdom and completeness of the Message itself. From this it follows that the sign manual of Theosophy is H. P. Blavatsky; her attest, the only visible means by which the genuine may be distinguished from the counterfeit.

It is for these reasons that we speak with reverence, love and gratitude of the name that stands for Theosophy pure and simple, and defend that name from any and all aspersions cast upon it; and we utterly repudiate the charge that in so doing we deify or follow a person; we simply recognize a fact and govern ourselves accordingly.

The recognition of H.P.B. as the accredited Agent and Messenger of Masters, carries with it her estimation of Wm. Q. Judge, her colleague from first to last. A study of the writings of both will show their full accord and complementary nature. H.P.B. presented the philosophy as a whole; Wm. Q. Judge exemplified its practical use in daily life; his writings for the most part are devoted to that purpose, hence their incalculable value. Therefore we have taken upon ourselves the task of rescuing from the obscurity with which theosophical schisms have covered them, his name, nature, mission, work and intimate relation with the founding and progress of the Theosophical Movement.

But to what end? That personalities may be exalted and worshipped? Perish the idea. The sole end in view is that a right appreciation, understanding and use of the philosophy as given by the Teachers may become more general. There is sore need of this. There has been a failure on the part of theosophical exponents and their adherents to make broad or universal applications of the Teaching. For instance, the universal application of the law of Karma has not been followed; it applies to all beings, to all circumstances and conditions. The Masters became such under Karma; H. P. Blavatsky became the transmitter of Their Message under Karma; the Message delivered to the world was all that the world's Karma permitted; better conditions would have permitted more. In regard to this, note the following. In the closing paragraph of Vol. II, *Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. wrote:

These two volumes should form for the student a fitting prelude for Volumes III and IV... it entirely depends upon the reception with which Volumes I and II will meet at the hands of Theosophists and Mystics, whether these last two volumes will ever be published, though they are *almost* completed.

H.P.B. did not publish them, and strange to relate, later editions published in London show the above original statement so changed as to entirely obscure the author's meaning. Students who are entitled to the unmutilated text may well ask why this fact was concealed. Nevertheless, the manuscripts must be in someone's hands, and no doubt will be published when the tendency to put the Messenger in the background is destroyed, and when the practice of making universal applications of the doctrines is prevalent among theosophists and mystics in general. All of which is Karma.

So again with the doctrine of Cycles — the Law of Periodicity given in the Second Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine. The advent of the Messenger of Theosophy was in accordance with the law of cycles. That Messenger stated explicitly that the Masters would not come Themselves nor send anyone until 1975; thus giving an exemplification of the hundred year cycle many times stated. If this had been understood and applied by theosophical students in general, no such folly as the early coming of "a Christ" would have obtained a moment's credence.

Applying the doctrines to the form of Man, we find that it is a collection of molecules, or *lives*, each striving with the other, and all affected for good or evil by the spiritual aspirations, or want of them, in the man who is the guide, or god, so to say, of his little universe. When he is born, the molecules or lives that are to compose his physical and astral forms are from that moment under his reign, and during the period of his smaller life, they pass through a smaller manvantara just as the lives in the universe do; and when he dies he leaves them all impressed with the force and colour of his thoughts and aspirations, ready to be used in composing the houses of other egos.

During a period of manifestation, or manvantara, the egos incarnating must use over and over again in any world upon which they are incarnating, the matter that belongs to it. So, therefore, we are now using in our incarnations matter that has been used by ourselves and other egos over and over again, and are affected by the various tendencies impressed upon it. And similarly, we are leaving behind us

for future races that which will help or embarrass them in their future lives.

How enormous then is this responsibility, that we not only are to be judged for what we do with ourselves as a whole, but also for what we do for those unseen beings who are dependent upon us for light.

THE COMING YEAR

What then of the coming year? The cycle for the settlement of karma between nations is upon us, a karma in which we of America are involved. Were our principles not those of self-interest, we might hope to escape much of the pain of re-adjustment, but unfortunately our policies exhibit nothing else, and we will not be able to avoid the consequences. Much of these might have been mitigated had the theosophists in Europe and America taken Theosophy as the message of Masters and given it all the consideration that such acceptance demanded, for the object of Theosophy is to so change the mind of the race that strife will give place to friendly emulation, unbrotherliness to mutual helpfulness. So, let all who realize this, resolve to study and promulgate the teachings of Theosophy in every possible direction; making a universal application of all the doctrines to ourselves, our surroundings, our peoples, the world in general and to all beings, while taking advantage of the rising cycle of the New Year to give strength and persistency to our aspirations and efforts.

Applied Theosophy is a sincere following out in our lives of every Theosophical doctrine and precept, a determined, constant promulgation of those doctrines of Reincarnation, Karma, and the Spiritual Identity of all men, that our Founders directed us to bring forward; a constant endeavour to realize Universal Brotherhood within ourselves, in order that we may be fit units in the nucleus of that Brotherhood which the Society was formed to bring about; it is the endeavour to carry out in all things the divine will which can only be done by that one who is truly devoted.

—W. Q. JUDGE

REINCARNATION—A CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Although the doctrine of reincarnation has always been regarded as originating in the East, and is even now believed in more by Easterners than by Westerners, yet the fact remains that from the early days of Christianity it was believed in by many adherents of what we might term philosophical Christianity as opposed to orthodox Christianity. Theosophically speaking, events occur in cycles; a movement has its beginning, its rise, and its fall, and then it rises again. The doctrine of reincarnation is no exception to this rule; it was believed in by the early Christians, died out from the public world, as did all knowledge and free and independent thinking, during the Dark Ages in Europe, and is once again arousing interest. This present interest is due in a large part to the work of H. P. Blavatsky and of the Theosophical Movement which she founded in 1875 for our present era and generation.

If we look back in time to the first century B.C., we find that the wider Theosophical Movement and Christianity were then *one*; but from the first century A.D. onwards they gradually separated. The period in history from the first century B.C. down to the beginning of the fifth century A.D. is an important one, because during those 500 years certain causes were set in motion, the effects of which we are still reaping at the present day and will continue to reap for some time to come. This period contains not only the life record of Jesus, but also the story of a Church that grew, in that comparatively short space of time, from a single individual to a powerful political organization. It also witnessed the beginning, the growth and the final destruction of one of the greatest Theosophical Schools in history, marked the death of the Mysteries, and sealed the doom of old religions, sciences and philosophies for many centuries.

It is difficult to trace specifically the idea of reincarnation in the teachings attributed to Jesus which have come down to us. As far as secular history goes, there seems to be no accurate record of Jesus. However, as H.P.B. says in *Isis Unveiled*:

As an incarnated God there is no single record of him on this earth capable of withstanding the critical examination of science; as one of the greatest reformers, an inveterate enemy of every theological dogmatism, a persecutor of bigotry, a teacher

of one of the most sublime codes of ethics, Jesus is one of the grandest and most clearly-defined figures on the panorama of human history. (II. 150)

And again in the same book we read:

...if he was an initiate of either the Pythagorean Essenes, the Chaldean Magi, or the Egyptian Priests, then the doctrine taught by him was but a portion of the "Secret Doctrine" taught by the Pagan hierophants to the few select adepts admitted within the sacred adyta. (II. 94)

He is also referred to by H.P.B. as the "Prophet of Nazareth, by whose mouth the spirit of truth spake loudly to humanity" (*Isis*, II. Preface). So the position H.P.B. accorded to Jesus was that of an Initiate, a man of knowledge and authority.

Like all teachers, Jesus had his exoteric and esoteric message. His real esoteric message is contained in the *genuine Gospel of Matthew*, originally written in the Chaldaic language, but with Hebrew characters, by an evangelist who had been the friend and companion of Jesus (*Isis*, II. 182-83). The *Gospel of St. Matthew* used today, however, is, as H.P.B. says, spurious. To accept the original Gospel would have been "equivalent to reading the death-sentence of the established Church," for in that Gospel it was not the divinity of the *man* Jesus that was proclaimed, but the divinity of the *Christos-principle* that lies latent in every man.

In the first century A.D., however, there was one who did understand the real, esoteric message of Jesus. He was not only a learned scholar, but an Initiate as well. His name was Paul. As Alexander Wilder has proved in a series of able articles, it was not Jesus, but Paul who was the real founder of Christianity (*Isis*, II. 574). He was the only apostle worthy of the name, and was

brave, outspoken, sincere, and very learned... That Paul had been, partially, at least, if not completely, initiated into the theurgic mysteries, admits of little doubt. His language, the phraseology so peculiar to the Greek philosophers, certain expressions used but by the initiates, are so many sure ear-marks to that supposition. (*Isis*, II. 89)

Further on in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 90), H.P.B. quotes Paul as saying, "We speak wisdom among the perfect or initiated... not the wisdom of this world, nor of the archons of this world, but divine wisdom in

a mystery, secret — which *none of the Archons of this world knew.*” This could only mean that he belonged to the *mystæ* (initiated) and spoke of things explained only in the Mysteries. He described himself as a “wise master-builder” (*I. Corinthians*, iii. 10). This particular expression, according to H.P.B., is “used only *once* in the whole *Bible*,” and may be “considered as a whole revelation.” For, “when Paul entitles himself a ‘master-builder,’ he is using a word pre-eminently kabalistic, theurgic, and masonic, and one which no other apostle uses. He thus declares himself an *adept*, having the right to *initiate* others.” (*Isis*, II. 90-91)

The heritage of both Jesus and Paul indicates that as Initiates into the Mysteries they must have known of the doctrine of reincarnation, which was one of the basic tenets of the Mystery Schools. It is implicit in some of the sayings attributed to Jesus and Paul. Jesus spoke of the possibility of perfection when he told his disciples they could perform greater works — or “miracles” — than he did. To do these works one has to have great knowledge and power. He directed his followers to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is, and they could hardly become so unless they had the power to reach up to that high state. He also referred to reincarnation when he said that John the Baptist was the precursor of Elias, the ancient prophet.

As mentioned before, from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. the Theosophical Movement and Christianity might be said to have been one. In the first century A.D., Christianity was split into two broad divisions, represented on the one hand by the followers of Peter, and on the other hand by the followers of Paul. Then came the Gnostic Fathers, who played such an important part in the Christian world for full three centuries.

The Gnostics all believed in the doctrine of reincarnation or metempsychosis, as it was then called. These inspirers of primitive Christianity are unhesitatingly proclaimed by history as a body of “the most cultured, the most learned and most worthy of the Christian name.” In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. says that their “various teachings are the many echoes of the one primitive and universal doctrine.” They drew their teachings from the *Gnosis*, the Wisdom-Religion. The *Christian* Gnostics came into existence in the second century. They came from the three great Gnostic Schools of that day, Schools which had been in existence for centuries. The first of these Schools, located in Alexandria, was one of those in which Jesus himself had studied

during his residence in Egypt. The second, the great School of Ephesus, may have been the one in which Paul obtained his initiation into the *Gnosis*. The third, also situated in Alexandria, was the one which most powerfully influenced the thought of two of the great Gnostic Fathers of the second century — Basilides and Valentinus. In *The Esoteric Character of the Gospels* and *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. has much to say about these Schools.

The most famous of the second-century Gnostics was Basilides. "All the founders of other Gnostic sects group round him, like a cluster of stars borrowing light from their sun" (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 155). He maintained that he had all his doctrines from the Apostle Matthew himself. According to Eusebius, the father of Church history, Basilides published 24 volumes of *Interpretations upon the Gospels*, which were later burned. But from the fragmentary remains of his works it is evident that he was a true Theosophist and that he taught the three fundamental propositions of Theosophy, including, of course, the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. The present, he wrote, is but the effect of the past.

Men suffer from their deeds in a former life. The soul of the elect suffers honourably, while the souls of a lower nature are made to pay their debts through appropriate punishments.

Another of the Gnostic Fathers, Valentinus, described by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* as "the profoundest doctor of the Gnosis," said that the Soul is an Immortal Entity: "From the beginning have ye been immortal and the Children of Light." And again in another place: "As ye dissolve the world and are not dissolved yourselves, ye are the Lords of creation and destruction."

Valentinus, like Basilides before him, was excommunicated from the Church for such teachings, and his works were destroyed. The *Pistis Sophia*, "Knowledge-Wisdom," a sacred book of the early Gnostics, is the most precious relic of Gnostic literature that we possess today. According to it, "The discarnate soul which has not solved the mystery of the breaking of the bonds of the seals is brought before the virgin of light, who, after judging it, hands it over to her agents.

Because the Gnostic Schools and the teachings of the great Pagan philosophers were flourishing in spite of the opposition of the Church, it was decided by the latter, early in the second century, to begin a Christian School of its own in Alexandria, to refute the Pagan doc-

trines. One of the teachers who taught in this school was Clement of Alexandria, whose study of Greek and Egyptian philosophy had convinced him that truth could be found even in the heathen systems. He believed in reincarnation, as we can see from this quotation from his *Exhortation to the Pagans*:

We were in being long before the foundation of the world; we existed in the eye of God, for it is our destiny to live in Him. We are the reasonable creatures of the Divine Word; therefore, we have existed from the beginning, for in the beginning was the Word.

It was because of such eclectic teachings that Clement was deposed by his superiors and replaced by his pupil Origen, who was only 18 years old at the time. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that Origen was "the most prominent of all the Church Fathers with the possible exception of Augustine."

In the third century, it is to Origen, and the Neoplatonic School founded in Alexandria just before he replaced Clement, that we must turn, because it was they that kept the idea of reincarnation alive during that century and for several centuries to follow. It was not until 543 A.D. that Origen's teachings were anathematized by the Church. Therefore, for nearly three hundred years his teachings were alive and known. He taught:

Is it not more in conformity with reason that every soul for certain mysterious reasons (I speak now according to the opinion of Pythagoras and Plato and Empedocles, whom Celsus frequently names) is introduced into a body, and introduced according to its deserts and former actions?

Is it not rational that souls should be introduced into bodies, in accordance with their merits and previous deeds, and that those who have used their bodies in doing the utmost possible good should have a right to bodies endowed with qualities superior to the bodies of others? . . .

The soul, which is immaterial and invisible in its nature, exists in no material place without having a body suited to the nature of that place; accordingly, it at one time puts off one body, which was necessary before, but which is no longer adequate in its changed state, and it exchanges it for a second. (*Contra Celsum*)

Origen's fearless attitude towards the Church and the accepted

Scriptures of the Christians, as well as his openly-professed interest in Neoplatonism, aroused the wrath of the Patriarch of Alexandria, and as a consequence he was banished from the city.

Thus we see that in the first three centuries of our era, and even earlier, reincarnation was believed in by the adherents of philosophical Christianity. What of orthodox Christianity? Did reincarnation ever find a footing there? To find the answer we must look back a little into the formation of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church claims that Jesus chose Peter to be the "Rock" upon which the Church was to rest. What did Jesus really say and mean? Jesus was an initiate into both the Chaldean and Egyptian Mysteries. In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. describes Peter, in contradistinction to Paul, as "cowardly, cautious, *insincere*, and very ignorant." How could Jesus have chosen Peter, the man, to be the foundation of his work? H.P.B. explains that when Jesus declared, "Upon this *petra* I will build my Church," he was not referring to the man Peter, but to something deeper, for *petra* meant "rock-temple, and by metaphor, the Christian Mysteries" (*Isis*, II. 30). Jesus, therefore, meant that the Rock upon which his work was founded was the Mysteries. During the final initiations into the Mysteries, a double set of stone tablets, called the *Petroma*, was used by the Hierophants. The combination of the two words *Peter* and *Roma*, forming the word *Petroma*, gave the Church still another opportunity to profit by the name of the disciple and to build up the whole legend of Peter and of the foundation of the Roman Church.

The Church, therefore, has built up its whole structure, as H.P.B. states, "*not upon proof, but upon assumption*" (*Isis*, II. 329). "Having helped herself to what had never belonged to her," (*S.D.*, II. 562), and having no sound philosophical basis, as Paul and the Gnostics had, she resorted to forgery of the Gnostic and other Pagan teachings, and what she could not forge and use she anathematized. However, enough of the Gnostic and other true teachings has survived to show that they were the offspring of the Wisdom-Religion.

Belief in the doctrine of reincarnation could never find a place in the Church. St. Jerome has said, according to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, that though "metempsychosis was a secret doctrine of certain sectaries in his day... it was too evidently opposed to the Catholic doctrine of Redemption ever to obtain a settled footing. It was held,

however, in a Platonic form by the Gnostics, and was so taught by Origen. . . .”

In the first centuries of our era there existed a vast body of literature, so that in addition to the teachings of Jesus, the early Church Fathers had access to Chaldean, Egyptian, Greek and Oriental scriptures, a comparative study of which was pursued within the precincts of the Church. But many of these old works later came to be considered dangerous to the temporal power of the new faith, so that in the fourth century A.D., Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea and so-called “father of Church history,” took upon himself the task of censoring and editing the entire body of Holy Writ, Pagan as well as Christian. As a result of this, many valuable treatises were destroyed and others perverted beyond recognition. We have seen that all that remained of the Gnostic teachings is contained in *Pistis Sophia*. The Gnostics themselves, as also many other scholars, owing to the persecution of the Church, sought and found refuge in Arabia, and it was there that the Wisdom-Religion flourished for a time. As H.P.B. remarks in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. xl):

However superhuman the efforts of the early Christian fathers to obliterate the Secret Doctrine from the very memory of man, they all failed. Truth can never be killed; hence the failure to sweep away entirely from the face of the earth every vestige of that ancient Wisdom, and to shackle and gag every witness who testified to it. Let one only think of the thousands, and perhaps millions, of MSS. burnt; of monuments, with their too indiscreet inscriptions and pictorial symbols, pulverised to dust . . . and he will then see plainly how it is that so little has remained of the records of the Past.

The fourth century marked a turning point in the history of the Western world, because it was then that the Church became a strong political organization. It was also at this same time that it had to decide which of the many Gospels then in circulation were to be accepted as authentic. Origen’s teachings, as also those of the Neoplatonic Schools, were then still known, and so long as Pagan schools and books existed, the Church could not maintain her claim of uniqueness, or have the Bible accepted as the only word of God. It was well known to the Pagan world that every dogma and ritual of the Christian Church had its Pagan counterpart. The Church *had* to destroy all evidences of her plagiarisms by wiping out the Pagan schools, their records and their philosophers.

It was the beginning of the end for freedom of thought, as two events occurred which were to set in motion causes the effects of which we are still reaping today. It began with the destruction of everything that stood in the way of the Church, leading to the murder of Hypatia in A.D. 415, which brought the Neoplatonic movement to an end. The other event occurred in A.D. 553, when Origen's teachings were anathematized by the Emperor Justinian at the Council of Constantinople. He was not content merely with anathematizing Origen; the anathemas were directed also against "whomsoever there is who thinks thus, or defends these opinions, or in any way hereafter at any time presumes to protect them."

It is of interest to note that Catholic scholars are beginning to disclaim that the Roman Church took any part in the anathemas against Origen. As is brought out in *Reincarnation — An East-West Anthology* (The Julian Press, New York, 1961), *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. 11, p. 311 under "Origen," and Vol. 4, pp. 308-309 under "Councils of Constantinople") gives information which permits the conclusion, on at least technical grounds, that there is no barrier to belief in reincarnation for Catholic Christians. It is maintained that Pope Vigilius was in Constantinople at the time of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, but that because of intense conflict between him and Justinian, the Pope refused to attend the Council. The President of the Council was the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the *Columbia Encyclopedia* (under "Orthodox Eastern Church") remarks: "From the time of Justinian the emperor controlled the patriarch absolutely." Inasmuch as neither the Pope nor any representative from Rome was present, the Council, according to present-day Catholic authorities, was not an official one. However, whatever may be said by Catholic scholars, the doctrine of reincarnation forms no part of the Christian teaching even today, for with the denial of the pre-existence of the soul, reincarnation is by implication also denied.

The fifth and sixth centuries marked for the Western world and Christianity the end of the cycle of belief in reincarnation. H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. xlv-xlv) comments on this period of history:

The days of Constantine were the last turning-point in history, the period of the Supreme struggle that ended in the Western world throttling the old religions in favour of the new one, built on their bodies. From thence the vista into the far distant Past, beyond the "Deluge" and the Garden of Eden, began to be forcibly and relentlessly closed by every fair and unfair

means against the indiscreet gaze of posterity. Every issue was blocked up, every record that hands could be laid upon, destroyed. Yet there remains enough, even among such mutilated records, to warrant us in saying that there is in them every possible evidence of the actual existence of a Parent Doctrine. Fragments have survived geological and political cataclysms to tell the story; and every survival shows evidence that the now *Secret Wisdom* was once the one fountain-head, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets — the later religions of all nations — from the first down to the last. This period, beginning with Buddha and Pythagoras at the one end and the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics at the other, is the only focus left in History wherein converge for the last time the bright rays of light streaming from the æons of time gone by, unobscured by the hand of bigotry and fanaticism.

Even during the Dark Ages in Europe the doctrine of reincarnation was preserved from oblivion by some so-called heretical Christian groups.

Turning to the 10th century, we find that it marked the end of the first 1,000 years of Christianity and the beginning of the Crusades. In the ensuing centuries the Western world began gradually to awake once again to freedom of thought, and the ideas of the Wisdom-Religion again began to see the light of day.

In the 11th century we come across the Knights Templar, who inherited their knowledge from the Druses. This anti-Catholic Order was founded in 1119, and while on the surface their purpose was to escort pilgrims to the Holy Land, their real object was to restore freedom of thought, thereby bringing to the fore once again the one Universal Religion. They were sworn to obedience, poverty, and chastity. The vestment of their Order, the red cross on the white mantle, "had the same significance as with the initiates in every other country. It pointed to the four quarters of the compass, and was the emblem of the universe." (*Isis*, II. 382)

The Order functioned in secret, but in the early part of the 14th century the French King Philip IV, assisted by Pope Clement V, brought false charges of heresy against them, and the head of the Order and many other Knights were burned at the stake. They were the last secret organization in Europe which as a body had in its possession some of the mysteries of the East. For long centuries the depositories of the secrets of the true Knights Templar worked in secret and gathered to-

gether from various points of the earth for their meetings held once every 13 years, at Malta. Many among them were crowned heads who planned together the future religious and political fate of the nations. A spurious Order, using the same name, arose later in France, but this was under the guidance of the Jesuits and was the antithesis of the original Order.

Yet for all this, knowledge began to spread, at first in secret, and then in the open. Europe was beginning to awake, and the Church to lose her power. Coincident with the beginning of the revival of knowledge in the Western world, another event occurred in the Eastern world, in Tibet. This event was to bring about a change not only in Tibet, but in Europe as well. It was the appearance of the great Adept, Tsongkha-pa, regarded as an Avatar of Buddha. Among his commandments there is one that enjoins those concerned to make an attempt to enlighten the world, including the "white barbarians," every century, at a certain specified period of the cycle. It meant that the time was ripe for the Wisdom-Religion to be proclaimed publicly once again. From that time onwards, Europe breathed a new spirit, and as knowledge began to grow and spread, so also the doctrine of reincarnation once again began to see the light of day.

Many were those who were to take part in this awakening, as will be seen in another article, to appear next month.

Christians should remember that Jesus was a Jew who thought his mission was to Jews, for he says in St. Matthew, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He must have well known the doctrines held by them. They all believed in reincarnation. . . . Indeed, the theosophist holds that whenever a professed Christian denies the theory he thereby sets up his judgment against that of Jesus, who must have known more about the matter than those who follow him. It is the anathema hurled by the church council and the absence of the doctrine from the teaching now that have damaged Christianity and made of all the Christian nations people who pretend to be followers of Jesus and the law of love, but who really as nations are followers of the Mosaic law of retaliation. For alone in reincarnation is the answer to all the problems of life, and in it and Karma is the force that will make men pursue in fact the ethics they have in theory. It is the aim of the old philosophy to restore this doctrine to whatsoever religion has lost it; and hence we call it the "lost chord of Christianity."

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE FOURFOLD BLESSEDNESS

Blessed is the birth of the Buddha; blessed is the teaching of the Good Law; blessed is concord in the Order; blessed is the austerity of those who live in concord. (*The Dhammapada*, Verse 194)

Master, why should the birth of the Buddha be a blessed event? He was born, he worked, he died, and his Teachings as known today are so elaborate that the Way of Life he taught seems to be neglected. So why should such a birth be considered blessed?

Friend, we know that a birth is the descent into human form (the vehicle) of an individual Manasaputra. We also know that some babies are defective in body even at birth; others develop disagreeable traits of character as they grow, and when still older, turn their minds to evil. We know this happens because of past actions, and the glorious Manasaputra (a Christ or a Buddha) is unable to shine through such a defective or impure vehicle.

When the Manasaputra can shine through a perfect vehicle, he brings with him a purifying element which uplifts not only all those with whom he comes in contact, but the whole world, visible and invisible. Hence, not only men, but the whole of Nature is helped, though unconsciously as to how and why. Remember the description of the effect on Nature at the time of the Buddha's enlightenment.

As for the statement, "Blessed is the teaching of the Good Law," have you thought what a difference knowledge of such teaching makes in our attitude to life? Supposing you had never heard, say, of Karma, Law, of the strengthening aspect of self-responsibility, or had never had the wonderful glimpse of the Oneness of Life?

I understand, Master, but these teachings had been known for ages before the Buddha came.

Truly, Friend, but all those teachings were given by Those who knew them, and though all were not Buddhas, yet there have been many Buddhas before Gautama and many will follow. As Mr. Judge points out in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, they work along different lines at different times — some as rulers of men, some as teachers, some as great philosophers, while others work in the utmost secrecy and are known but to a few. Without the constant repetition of the same teach-

ings, given in the form most appropriate to the conditions of the times in which the teachers came, those teachings would die out and an era of darkness would descend. Life and its purpose would remain a mystery; aspiration and devotion would be misdirected.

Why, Master, should "concord in the Order" be blessed?

Friend, can any teaching be preserved and promulgated without concord among those pledged to preserve and promulgate it? Look at the Theosophical Movement of our age. Had those who followed H.P.B. kept to the Original Lines laid down by her, had they not departed from the Original Teachings, had there been concord among the students, *i.e.*, in the Order, Theosophy might have been much better known in the world today — and who knows, its life-giving message might have changed the face of the earth. Any attempt to add to or alter the teachings that the teachers have given us is only possible when there is discord.

Master, why should the "austerity of those who live in concord" be blessed?

Friend, what do you mean by austerities? Instead of being vague in the terms used, look at what is meant by the word in the *Dhammapada*. Buddhism lays down different austerities to be practised at different stages of development, but the fundamental ones are those to be practised at the early stages — austerity of speech, of feelings, of actions. For student-promulgators, these austerities are vitally important, for they alone will lead to concord and fellow feeling among them. Similarity of teachings, of purpose, of aim, should be and is the binding force, the basis of concord among Theosophists. Dissensions or differences of individual opinion are of no account. If with the austerity of accuracy in repetition of the teachings goes the brotherly feeling of those who work for the same Cause, enduring the same difficulties, then nothing can stop the spread of those life-giving Teachings. Individual opinion is precious to the individual who holds it, but we are out to spread the actual teachings, simple yet fundamental, as handed down through the ages, not our own opinions.

Keeping in mind this saying of the Buddha as pertaining to us and the Theosophical Movement, harmony will be established within and without, and the world will have a nucleus of brotherhood for the spreading of the message of Truth far and wide.

CONSCIOUSNESS

[Some Statements from *The Secret Doctrine*]

Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is CONSCIOUS: *i.e.*, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception. We men must remember that because *we* do not perceive any signs — which we can recognize — of consciousness, say, in stones, we have no right to say that *no consciousness exists there*.

Nature, taken in its abstract sense, *cannot* be “unconscious,” as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals a *consciousness of their own*? All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension.

To know itself or oneself, necessitates consciousness and perception (both limited faculties in relation to any subject except Parabrahm), to be cognized. Hence the “Eternal Breath which knows itself not.” Infinity cannot comprehend Finiteness. The Boundless can have no relation to the bounded and the conditioned. In the occult teachings, the Unknown and the Unknowable MOVER, or the Self-Existing, is the absolute divine Essence. And thus being *Absolute* Consciousness, and *Absolute* Motion — to the limited senses of those who describe this indescribable — it is unconsciousness and immovableness. Concrete consciousness cannot be predicated of abstract Consciousness, any more than the quality wet can be predicated of water — wetness being its own attribute and the cause of the wet quality in other things. Consciousness implies limitations and qualifications; something to be conscious of, and someone to be conscious of it. But Absolute Consciousness contains the cognizer, the thing cognized and the cognition, all three in itself and all three *one*. No man is conscious of more than that portion of his knowledge that happens to have been recalled to his mind at any particular time, yet such is the poverty of language that we have no term to distinguish the knowledge not actively thought of, from knowledge we are unable to recall to memory. To forget is synonymôus with not to remember. How much greater must be the difficulty of finding terms to describe, and to distinguish between, abstract metaphysical facts or differences. It must not be forgotten, also, that we give names to things according to the appearances they assume for ourselves. We call absolute consciousness “unconsciousness,” because it seems to us that it

must necessarily be so, just as we call the Absolute, "Darkness," because to our finite understanding it appears quite impenetrable, yet we recognize fully that our perception of such things does not do them justice. We involuntarily distinguish in our minds, for instance, between unconscious absolute consciousness, and unconsciousness, by secretly endowing the former with some indefinite quality that corresponds, on a higher plane than our thoughts can reach, with what we know as consciousness in ourselves. But this is not any kind of consciousness that we can manage to distinguish from what appears to us as unconsciousness.

There can be no manifestation of Consciousness, semi-consciousness, or even "unconscious purposiveness," except through the vehicle of matter; that is to say, on this our plane, wherein human consciousness *in its normal state* cannot soar beyond what is known as transcendental metaphysics, it is only through some molecular aggregation or fabric that Spirit wells up in a stream of individual or sub-conscious subjectivity.

Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

The "Absolute Consciousness," they tell us, "behind" phenomena, which is only termed unconsciousness in the absence of any element of personality, transcends human conception. Man, unable to form one concept except in terms of empirical phenomena, is powerless from the very constitution of his being to raise the veil that shrouds the majesty of the Absolute. Only the liberated Spirit is able to faintly realize the nature of the source whence it sprung and whither it must eventually return. As the highest Dhyān Chohan, however, can but bow in ignorance before the awful mystery of Absolute Being; and since, even in that culmination of conscious existence — "the merging of the individual in the universal consciousness" — to use a phrase of Fichte's — the Finite cannot conceive the Infinite, nor can it apply to it its own standard of mental experiences, how can it be said that the "unconscious" and the Absolute can have an instinctive impulse or hope of

attaining clear self-consciousness? A Vedantin would never admit this Hegelian idea; and the Occultist would say that it applies perfectly to the awakened MAHAT, the Universal Mind already projected into the phenomenal world as the first aspect of the changeless ABSOLUTE, but never to the latter.

The principle MAHAT, or Intellect, the "Universal Mind" (literally "the great"), which esoteric philosophy explains as the "manifested Omniscience" — the "first product" of Pradhana (primordial matter) as *Vishnu Purana* says, but the first Cosmic aspect of Parabrahm or the esoteric SAT, the Universal Soul, as Occultism teaches — is at the root of SELF-Consciousness.

Cosmic Ideation focused in a principle or *upadhi* (basis) results as the consciousness of the individual Ego. Its manifestation varies with the degree of *upadhi*, e.g., through that known as *Manas* it wells up as Mind-Consciousness; through the more finely differentiated fabric (sixth state of matter) of the *Buddhi* resting on the experience of *Manas* as its basis — as a stream of spiritual INTUITION.

"The 'First-Born' are the LIFE, the heart and pulse of the Universe; the Second are its MIND or Consciousness." This "Consciousness" has no relation to our consciousness. The consciousness of the "One manifested," if not absolute, is still unconditioned. Mahat (the Universal Mind) is the first production of the Brahma-Creator, but also of the Pradhana (undifferentiated matter).

There is no potentiality for creation, or self-Consciousness, in a *pure* Spirit on this our plane, unless its too homogeneous, perfect, because divine, nature is, so to say, mixed with, and strengthened by, an essence already differentiated. It is only the lower line of the Triangle — representing the first triad that emanates from the Universal MONAD — that can furnish this needed consciousness on the plane of differentiated Nature. But how could these pure Emanations, which, on this principle, must have originally been themselves *unconscious* (in our sense), be of any use in supplying the required principle, as they could hardly have possessed it themselves? The answer is difficult to comprehend, unless one is well acquainted with the philosophical metaphysics of a beginningless and endless series of Cosmic Rebirths; and becomes well impressed and familiarized with the immutable law of Nature which is ETERNAL Motion, cyclic and spiral, therefore progressive even in its seeming retrogression. The one divine Principle, the nameless THAT of the Vedas, is the universal Total, which, neither

in its spiritual aspects and emanations, nor in its physical atoms, can ever be at "*absolute rest*" except during the "Nights" of Brahma. Hence, also, the "first-born" are those who are first set in motion at the beginning of a Manvantara, and thus the first to fall into the lower spheres of materiality. They who are called in Theology "the Thrones," and are the "Seat of God," must be the first incarnated men on Earth; and it becomes comprehensible, if we think of the endless series of past Manvantaras, to find that the last had to come first, and the first last. We find, in short, that the higher Angels had broken, countless æons before, through the "Seven Circles," and thus *robbed* them of the Sacred fire; which means in plain words, that they had assimilated during their past incarnations, in lower as well as in higher worlds, all the wisdom therefrom — the reflection of MAHAT in its various degrees of intensity.

Observation of human modes and objects of life indicates three classes of consciousness. In other words, there are three modes of existence which the consciousness of an individual may fall into, or work itself into, and the adoption of the particular mode, knowingly and deliberately, or the contrary, determines the character and intrinsic value of the consciousness. . . .

The first-named form of consciousness we should term sensuous, or that which operates merely through the senses and the nervous system; the second form we should call the intellectual or inner-sensuous; the third form is the spiritual or super-sensuous.

Sensuous consciousness delights merely in the external forms of objects and receives impressions only from those forms as they are found.

Intellectual consciousness finds its exciting cause not so much in the forms of external objects as in their movements and the effects of those movements upon the objects themselves.

The spiritual consciousness moves amidst the *hidden causes* of the sensuous and intellectual.

—*Lucifer*, October 1888

REPLIES TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

[In this series, Questions VII and VIII relating to Lord Buddha and Sri Shankaracharya were answered by T. Subba Row, a man of extraordinary learning, whom H.P.B. referred to as "one of the best metaphysicians and Vedantie scholars in India." He had chosen to answer Question VIII before taking up Question VII, and we have preserved that order. The first part of the reply to Question VIII is reprinted here from *The Theosophist* of September 1883. The concluding part will appear in our next issue. Readers may be reminded of the particular formulation of this question:

Shankaracharya's date is variously given by Orientalists, but always *after* Christ. Barth, for instance, places him about 788 A.D. In *Esoteric Buddhism* he is made to succeed Buddha almost immediately (p. 149). Can this discrepancy be explained? Has not Shankaracharya been usually classed as *Vishnuite* in his teaching? And similarly, has not Gaudapada been accounted a *Shivite*, and placed much later than *Esoteric Buddhism* (p. 147) places him? We would willingly pursue this line of inquiry, but think it best to wait and see to what extent the Adepts may be willing to clear up some of the problems in Indian religious history on which, as it would seem, they must surely possess knowledge which might be communicated to lay students without indiscretion.

—EDS.]

QUESTION VIII

SRI SHANKARACHARYA'S DATE AND DOCTRINE

It is always difficult to determine with precision the date of any particular event in the ancient history of India; and this difficulty is considerably enhanced by the speculations of European Orientalists, whose labours in this direction have but tended to thicken the confusion already existing in popular legends and traditions, which were often altered or modified to suit the necessities of sectarian controversy. The causes that have produced this result will be fully ascertained on examining the assumptions on which these speculations are based. The writings of many of these Orientalists are often characterized by an imperfect knowledge of Indian literature, philosophy and religion, and of Hindu traditions, and a contemptuous disregard for the opinions of Hindu writers and pundits. Very often, facts and dates are taken by these writers from the writings of their predecessors or contemporaries on the assumption that they are correct, without any further investigation by themselves. Even when a writer gives a date with an expression of doubt as to its accuracy, his follower frequently quotes the same date as if it were absolutely correct. One wrong date is made to depend

upon another wrong date, and one bad inference is often deduced from another inference equally unwarranted and illogical. And consequently, if the correctness of any particular date given by these writers is to be ascertained, the whole structure of Indian Chronology constructed by them will have to be carefully examined. It will be convenient to enumerate some of the assumptions above referred to before proceeding to examine their opinions concerning the date of Shankaracharya.

I. Many of these writers are not altogether free from the prejudices engendered by the pernicious doctrine, deduced from the Bible, whether rightly or wrongly, that this world is only six thousand years old. We do not mean to say that any one of these writers would now seriously think of defending the said doctrine. Nevertheless it had exercised a considerable influence on the minds of Christian writers when they began to investigate the claims of Asiatic Chronology. If an antiquity of five or six thousand years is assigned to any particular event connected with the ancient history of Egypt, India or China, it is certain to be rejected at once by these writers without any inquiry whatever regarding the truth of the statement.

II. They are extremely unwilling to admit that any portion of the Veda can be traced to a period anterior to the date of the Pentateuch, even when the arguments brought forward to establish the priority of the Vedas are such as would be convincing to the mind of an impartial investigator untainted by Christian prejudices. The maximum limit of Indian antiquity is, therefore, fixed for them by the Old Testament; and it is virtually assumed by them that a period between the date of the Old Testament on the one side, and the present time on the other, should necessarily be assigned to every book in the whole range of Vedic and Sanskrit literature, and to almost every event of Indian history.

III. It is often assumed without reason that every passage in the Vedas containing philosophical or metaphysical ideas must be looked upon as a subsequent interpolation, and that every book treating of a philosophical subject must be considered as having been written after the time of Buddha or after the commencement of the Christian era. Civilization, philosophy and scientific investigation had their origin, in the opinion of these writers, within the six or seven centuries preceding the Christian era, and mankind slowly emerged, for the first time, from "the depths of animal brutality" within the last four or five thousand years.

IV. It is also assumed that Buddhism was brought into existence by Gautama Buddha. The previous existence of Buddhism, Jainism and Arhat philosophy is rejected as an absurd and ridiculous invention of the Buddhists and others, who attempted thereby to assign a very high antiquity to their own religion. In consequence of this erroneous impression, every Hindu book referring to the doctrines of Buddhists is declared to have been written subsequent to the time of Gautama Buddha. For instance, Mr. Weber is of opinion that Vyasa, the author of the Brahma Sutras, wrote them in the fifth century after Christ. This is indeed a startling revelation to the majority of Hindus.

V. Whenever several works treating of various subjects are attributed to one and the same author by Hindu writings or traditions, it is often assumed, and apparently without any reason whatever in the majority of cases, that the said works should be considered as the productions of different writers. By this process of reasoning they have discovered two Badarayanas (Vyasas), two Patanjalis, and three Vararuchis. We do not mean to say that in every case identity of name is equivalent to identity of personality. But we cannot but protest against such assumptions when they are made without any evidence to support them, merely for the purpose of supporting a foregone conclusion or establishing a favourite hypothesis.

VI. An attempt is often made by these writers to establish the chronological order of the events of ancient Indian history by means of the various stages in the growth or development of the Sanskrit language and Indian literature. The time required for this growth is often estimated in the same manner in which a geologist endeavours to fix the time required for the gradual development of the various strata composing the earth's crust. But we fail to perceive anything like a proper method in making these calculations. It will be wrong to assume that the growth of one language will require the same time as that of another within the same limits. The peculiar characteristics of the nation to whom the language belongs must be carefully taken into consideration in attempting to make any such calculation. The history of the said nation is equally important. Anyone who examines Max Müller's estimation of the so-called Sutra, Brahmana, Mantra and Khanda periods will be able to perceive that no attention has been paid to these considerations. The time allotted to the growth of these four "strata" of Vedic literature is purely arbitrary.

We have enumerated these defects in the writings of European

Orientalists for the purpose of showing to our readers that it is not always safe to rely upon the conclusions arrived at by these writers regarding the dates of ancient Indian history.

In examining the various quotations and traditions selected by European Orientalists for the purpose of fixing Shankaracharya's date, special care must be taken to see whether the person referred to was the very first Shankaracharya who established the Adwaitee doctrine, or one of his followers who became the *Adhipatis* [heads] of the various *Mathams* [temples] established by him and his successors. Many of the Adwaitee *Mathadhipatis* who succeeded him (especially at the Sringeri Matham) were men of considerable renown and were well known throughout India during their time. They are often referred to under the general name of Shankaracharya. Consequently, any reference made to any one of these *Mathadhipatis* is apt to be mistaken for a reference to the first Shankaracharya himself.

Mr. Barth, whose opinion regarding Shankara's date is quoted by "An English F.T.S." against the date assigned to that teacher in Mr. Sinnett's book on *Esoteric Buddhism*, does not appear to have carefully examined the subject himself. He assigns no reasons for the date given and does not even allude to the existence of other authorities and traditions which conflict with the date adopted by him. The date which he assigns to Shankara appears in an unimportant foot-note appearing on page 89 of his book on *The Religions of India*, which reads thus: "Shankaracharya is generally placed in the eighth century; perhaps we must accept the ninth rather. The best accredited tradition represents him as born on the 10th of the month 'Madhava' in 788 A.D. Other traditions, it is true, place him in the second and fifth centuries. The author of the *Dabistan*, on the other hand, brings him as far down as the commencement of the fourteenth." Mr. Barth is clearly wrong in saying that Shankara is generally placed in the eighth century. There are as many traditions for placing him in some century before the Christian era as for placing him in some century after the said era, and it will also be seen from what follows that in fact evidence preponderates in favour of the former statement. It cannot be contended that the generality of Orientalists have any definite opinions of their own on the subject under consideration. Max Müller does not appear to have ever directed his attention to this subject. Monier Williams merely copies the date given by Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Weber seems to rely upon the same authority without troubling himself with any further

inquiry about the matter. Mr. Wilson is probably the only Orientalist who investigated the subject with some care and attention; and he frankly confesses that the exact period at which "he (Shankara) flourished can by no means be determined" (page 201 of Vol. I of his *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*).

Under such circumstances the foot-note above quoted is certainly very misleading. Mr. Barth does not inform his readers wherefrom he obtained the tradition referred to, and what reasons he has for supposing that it refers to the first Shankaracharya, and that it is "the best accredited tradition." When the matter is still open to discussion, Mr. Barth should not have adopted any particular date if he is not prepared to support it and establish it by proper arguments. The other traditions alluded to are not intended, of course, to strengthen the authority of the tradition relied upon. But the wording of the foot-note in question seems to show that all the authorities and traditions relating to the subject are comprised therein, when, in fact, the most important of them are left out of consideration, as will be shown hereafter. No arguments are to be found in support of the date assigned to Shankara in the other portions of Mr. Barth's book, but there are a few isolated passages which may be taken either as inferences from the statement in question or arguments in its support, which it will be necessary to examine in this connection.

Mr. Barth has discovered some connection between the appearance of Shankara in India and the commencement of the persecution of the Buddhists, which he seems to place in the seventh and eighth centuries. On page 89 of his book he speaks of "the great reaction on the offensive against Buddhism which was begun in the Deccan in the seventh and eighth centuries by the schools of Kumarila and Shankara"; and on page 135 he states that the "disciples of Kumarila and Shankara, organized into military bands, constituted themselves the rabid defenders of orthodoxy." The force of these statements is, however, considerably weakened by the author's observations on pages 89 and 134, regarding the absence of any traces of Buddhist persecution by Shankara in the authentic documents hitherto examined, and the absurdity of legends which represent him as exterminating Buddhists from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin.

The association of Shankara with Kumarila in the passages above cited is highly ridiculous. It is well known to almost every Hindu that the followers of Purva Mimamsa (Kumarila commented on the Sutras)

were the greatest and the bitterest opponents of Shankara and his doctrine, and Mr. Barth seems to be altogether ignorant of the nature of Kumarila's views and Purva Mimamsa, and the scope and aim of Shankara's Vedantic philosophy. It is impossible to say what evidence the author has for asserting that the great reaction against the Buddhists commenced in the seventh and eighth centuries, and that Shankara was instrumental in originating it. There are some passages in his book which tend to show that this date cannot be considered as quite correct. On page 135 he says that Buddhist persecution began even in the time of Asoka.

Such being the case, it is indeed very surprising that the Orthodox Hindus should have kept quiet for nearly ten centuries without retaliating on their enemies. The political ascendancy gained by the Buddhists during the reign of Asoka did not last very long; and the Hindus had the support of very powerful kings before and after the commencement of the Christian era. Moreover, the author says on p. 132 of his book that Buddhism was in a state of decay in the seventh century. It is hardly to be expected that the reaction against the Buddhists would commence when their religion was already in a state of decay. No great religious teacher or reformer would waste his time and energy in demolishing a religion already in ruins. But what evidence is there to show that Shankara was ever engaged in this task? If the main object of his preaching was to evoke a reaction against Buddhism, he would no doubt have left us some writings specially intended to criticize its doctrines and expose its defects. On the other hand, he does not even allude to Buddhism in his independent works. Though he was a voluminous writer, with the exception of a few remarks on the theory advocated by *some* Buddhists regarding the nature of perception, contained in his commentary on the Brahma-Sutras, there is not a single passage in the whole range of his writings regarding the Buddhists or their doctrines; and the insertion of even these few remarks in his commentary was rendered necessary by the allusions contained in the Sutras which he was interpreting. As, in our humble opinion, these Brahma-Sutras were composed by Vyasa himself (and not by an imaginary Vyasa of the fifth century after Christ, evolved by Mr. Weber's fancy), the allusions therein contained relate to the Buddhism which existed previous to the date of Gautama Buddha.

From these few remarks it will be clear to our readers that Shankaracharya had nothing to do with Buddhist persecution. We may here quote a few passages from Mr. Wilson's Preface to the first edition

of his Sanskrit Dictionary in support of our remarks. He writes as follows regarding Shankara's connection with the persecution of the Buddhists: "Although the popular belief attributes the origin of the *Bauddha* persecution to Shankaracharya, yet in this case we have some reason to distrust its accuracy. Opposed to it we have the mild character of the reformer, who is described as uniformly gentle and tolerant; and, speaking from my own limited reading in Vedanta works, and the more satisfactory testimony of Ram Mohun Roy, which he permits me to adduce, it does not appear that any traces of his being instrumental to any persecution are to be found in his own writings, all which are extant, and the object of which is by no means the correction of the *Bauddha* or any other schism, but the refutation of all other doctrines besides his own, and the reformation or re-establishment of the fourth religious order." Further on he observes that "it is a popular error to ascribe to him the work of persecution; he does not appear at all occupied in that odious task, nor is he engaged in particular controversy with any of the *Bauddhas*."

From the foregoing observations it will be seen that Shankara's date cannot be determined by the time of the commencement of the Buddhist persecution, even if it were possible to ascertain the said period.

Mr. Barth seems to have discovered some connection between the philosophical systems of Shankara, Ramanuja and Anandatirtha, and the Arabian merchants who came to India in the first centuries of the Hejira, and he is no doubt fully entitled to any credit that may be given him for the originality of his discovery. This mysterious and occult connection between Advaita philosophy and Arabian commerce is pointed out on p. 212 of his book, and it may have some bearing on the present question, if it is anything more than a figment of his fancy. The only reason given by him in support of his theory is, however, in my humble opinion, worthless. The Hindus had a prominent example of a grand religious movement under the guidance of a single teacher in the life of Buddha, and it was not necessary for them to imitate the adventures of the Arabian prophet. There is but one other passage in Mr. Barth's book which has some reference to Shankara's date. On p. 207 he writes as follows: "The Shiva, for instance, who is invoked at the commencement of the drama of *Shakuntala*, who is at once God, priest and offering, and whose body is the universe, is a Vedantic idea. This testimony appears to be forgotten when it is maintained, as is sometimes done, that the whole sectarian Vedantism

commences with Shankara." But this testimony appears to be equally forgotten when it is maintained, as is sometimes done by Orientalists like Mr. Barth, that Shankara lived in some century after the author of *Shakuntala*.

From the foregoing remarks it will be apparent that Mr. Barth's opinion regarding Shankara's date is very unsatisfactory. As Mr. Wilson seems to have examined the subject with some care and attention, we must now advert to his opinion and see how far it is based on proper evidence. In attempting to fix Amarasimha's date (which attempt ultimately ended in a miserable failure), he had to ascertain the period when Shankara lived. Consequently his remarks concerning the said period appear in his preface to the first edition of his Sanskrit Dictionary. We shall now reproduce here such passages from this preface as are connected with the subject under consideration and comment upon them. Mr. Wilson writes as follows:

The birth of Shankara presents the same discordance as every other remarkable incident amongst the Hindus. The Kudali Brahmins, who form an establishment following and teaching his system, assert his appearance about 2,000 years since; some accounts place him about the beginning of the Christian era, others in the third or fourth century after; a manuscript history of the kings of Konga, in Colonel Mackenzie's Collection, makes him contemporary with Tiru Vikrama Deva Chakravarti, sovereign of Skandapura in the Dekkan, A.D. 178; at Sringeri, on the edge of the Western Ghauts, and now in the Mysore Territory, at which place he is said to have founded a College that still exists, and assumes the supreme control of the Smarta Brahmins of the Peninsula, an antiquity of 1,600 years is attributed to him, and common tradition makes him about 1,200 years old. The *Bhoja Prabandha* enumerates Shankara among its worthies, and as contemporary with that prince; his antiquity will then be between eight and nine centuries. The followers of Madhwacharya in Teluva seem to have attempted to reconcile these contradictory accounts by supposing him to have been born three times; first at Sivuli at Tuluva about 1,500 years ago, again in Malabar some centuries later, and finally at Padukachaytra in Tuluva, no more than 600 years since; the latter assertion being intended evidently to do honour to their own founder, whose date that was, by enabling him to triumph over Shankara in a suppositious controversy. The Vaishnava Brahmins of Madura say that Shankara appeared in the ninth century of Salivahana, or tenth of our

era. Dr. Taylor thinks that, if we allow him about 900 years, we shall not be far from the truth, and Mr. Colebrooke is inclined to give him an antiquity of about 1,000 years. This last is the age which my friend Ram Mohun Roy, a diligent student of Shankara's works, and philosophical teacher of his doctrines, is disposed to concur in, and he infers that "from a calculation of the spiritual generations of the followers of Shankara Swami from his time up to this date, he seems to have lived between the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era," a distance of time agreeing with the statements made to Dr. Buchanan in his journey through Shankara's native country, Malabar, and in union with the assertion of the *Kerala Utpatti*, a work giving an historical and statistical account of the same province, and which, according to Mr. Duncan's citation of it, mentions the regulations of the castes of Malabar by this philosopher to have been effected about 1,000 years before 1798. At the same time, it must be observed, that a manuscript translation of the same work in Colonel Mackenzie's possession, states Shankaracharya to have been born about the middle of the fifth century, or between thirteen and fourteen hundred years ago, differing in this respect from Mr. Duncan's statement — a difference of the less importance, as the manuscript in question, either from defects in the original or translation, presents many palpable errors and cannot consequently be depended upon. The weight of authority therefore is altogether in favour of an antiquity of about ten centuries, and I am disposed to adopt this estimate of Shankara's date, and to place him in the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century of the Christian era.

We will add a few more authorities to Mr. Wilson's list before proceeding to comment on the foregoing passage.

In a work called *The Biographical Sketches of Eminent Hindu Authors*, published at Bombay in 1860 by Janardan Ramchenderjee, it is stated that Shankara lived 2,500 years ago, and that, in the opinion of some people, 2,200 years ago. The records of the Combaconum Matham give a list of nearly 66 Mathadhipatis from Shankara down to the present time, and show that he lived more than 2,000 years ago.

The Kudali Matham referred to by Mr. Wilson, which is a branch of the Sringeri Matham, gives the same date as the latter Matham, their traditions being identical. Their calculation can safely be relied upon as far as it is supported by the dates given on the places of Samadhi (something like a tomb) of the successive Gurus of the Srin-

geri Matham; and it leads us to the commencement of the Christian era.

No definite information is given by Mr. Wilson regarding the nature, origin, or reliability of the accounts which place Shankara in the third or fourth century of the Christian era or at its commencement; nor does it clearly appear that the history of the kings of Konga referred to unmistakably alludes to the very first Shankaracharya. These traditions are evidently opposed to the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Wilson, and it does not appear on what grounds their testimony is discredited by him. Mr. Wilson is clearly wrong in stating that an antiquity of 1,600 years is attributed to Shankara by the Sringeri Matham. We have already referred to the account of the Sringeri Matham, and it is precisely similar to the account given by the Kudali Brahmins. We have ascertained that it is so from the agent of the Sringeri Matham at Madras, who has recently published the list of teachers preserved at the said Matham with the dates assigned to them. And further, we are unable to see which "common tradition" makes Shankara "about 1,200 years old." As far as our knowledge goes there is no such common tradition in India. The majority of people in Southern India have, up to this time, been relying on the Sringeri account, and in Northern India there seems to be no common tradition. We have but a mass of contradictory accounts.

It is indeed surprising that an Orientalist of Mr. Wilson's pretensions should confound the *poet* named Shankara and mentioned in *Bhoja Prabandha* with the great Adwaitee teacher. No Hindu would ever commit such a ridiculous mistake. We are astonished to find some of these European Orientalists quoting now and then some of the statements contained in such books as *Bhoja Prabandha*, *Katha Sarit Sagara*, *Raja-tarangini* and *Panchatantra*, as if they were historical works. In some other part of his preface Mr. Wilson himself says that this *Bhoja Prabandha* is altogether untrustworthy, as some of the statements contained therein did not harmonize with his theory about Amarasimha's date; but now he *misquotes* its statements for the purpose of supporting his conclusion regarding Shankara's date. Surely, consistency is not one of the prominent characteristics of the writings of the majority of European Orientalists. The person mentioned in *Bhoja Prabandha* is always spoken of under the name of Shankara *Kavi* [poet], and he is nowhere called Shankaracharya [teacher], and the Adwaitee teacher is never mentioned in any Hindu work under the appellation of Shankara *Kavi*.

(To be concluded)

THE GREATER SYNTHESIS

The Times of India of April 16 quotes the U.N. Secretary-General U Thant as saying, "My reading of history leads me to one conclusion among others: Humanity is marching toward a great synthesis." This is "a synthesis in which differing ideologies will coalesce rather than conflict."

Is this not a conception of Universal Brotherhood? The word "synthesis" means, the Dictionary tells us, "building up; putting together; making a whole out of parts; the combination of separate elements of thought into a whole; reasoning from principles to conclusions." These definitions seem to give us the basis — apart from that of the spiritual oneness of humanity and the One Self — on which to begin to build this much-sought Brotherhood.

"Making a whole out of parts": What makes the parts in the first place? Evolutionary progress, *plus* the ideologies of different peoples living on the same earth and at the same time. We should try to understand that if there are "parts" there must also be the sum-total of the parts making one whole. If we get this idea, we see that there is oneness at the *root*. There is first the whole, which splits up into parts; each part is contained in the whole, and therefore all parts are interconnected. All, as *Transactions* tell us, are links in the chain, or cells in the body.

Therefore we come to "the combination of separate elements of thought into a whole." Let us not ignore or cast away any element of thought, any part of the one whole. Each can be analysed and judged on its intrinsic merit as part of the fundamental truth. This cannot be done unless we start with the Platonic method of proceeding from universals, basic principles, to particulars, *i.e.*, conclusions. Unfortunately, we judge the conclusions; if we can trace our own conclusions back to principles, we can the more easily judge another's conclusions. If we have understood certain fundamental universal principles — simple and obvious — then we can see how our conclusions have been arrived at.

Following these lines of thought we shall come to the stage when we look upon human beings (and later, upon all aspects of life) as examples of "conclusions" in time and space of a "principle." We speak of principles of conduct, but do we trace these back to the fundamental principle of the relationship of the parts to each other and to

the whole? If there are as many ways to the goal as there are men on earth, then what is required or aimed at is not sameness but a synthesis of all the varying thoughts or ideologies.

If this is done then those things that have no real principle at their base will be rejected by consensus of opinion. For example, all religions will be seen as different ways of achieving the same purpose. But at the same time each must be traced back to its source, and then the source must be followed through all the changes and adaptations and alterations that have taken place in the course of time. These can be cast away, and it is these that separate man from man, for they give an ideology of separation. At the root all religions started with the demonstration of the truths of life, but these have been coloured by opinions. Let us get back to the principle and cast out our wrong conclusions. We must realize that if we do not change our conclusions when we gain further knowledge, we shall stagnate and die.

It has often been thought a strange thing that there are no dogmas and no creed in Theosophy or Occultism. Is Theosophy a religion? is often asked. No, it is *religion*. Is it a philosophy? No, it is *philosophy*. Is it a science? No, it is *science*. If a consensus of religion, philosophy, and science is possible, and if it has ever been reached in human thought, that thought must long since have passed the boundaries of all creeds and ceased to dogmatize. Hence comes the difficulty in answering questions. No proposition stands apart or can be taken separately without limiting and often distorting its meaning. Every proposition has to be considered and held as subservient to the synthetic whole.

—U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3

“LUCIFER” CORRESPONDENCE

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, Vol. VI, pp. 335-36, for June 1890.—Eds.]

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Having read with much interest in “Theosophical Siftings” the article by Dr. Franz Hartmann on “Capital Punishment,” I venture to ask your opinion on the subject. I have long been sure that it is both useless and wrong to put murderers to death—convinced by the same reasons which Dr. Hartmann puts so cogently. Moreover, I have often maintained that since two wrongs do not make a right, matters cannot be mended by killing the man who has taken the life of another. Hence I feel that should I be called to serve on a jury in such a trial, I must either declare my views at the outset, which might result in the choice of a “hanging” juryman in my place, or serve with the intention of not convicting the accused of wilful murder, no matter how guilty he might be proved. If that course were only to result in keeping the criminal in custody for the rest of his natural life, my conscience would be clear; but, as it might easily set him again at liberty, I feel in a dilemma. Will you kindly say in your next issue what your opinion is, and help perhaps more than one

PUZZLED STUDENT

We are equally with yourself opposed to capital punishment, so that your difficulty becomes our own. In the first place the “head” only of the jury has to decide whether or not the accused has committed murder, and this is all the so-called “law” requires of him. Practically, however, since the juryman has, or ought to have, a “heart,” the law neglects an important factor in the problem, for if it punishes murder with death, the juryman, in deciding for a verdict of guilty, of necessity becomes an accessory in a fresh murder. But the “heart” of the people is beginning to protest against this “eye for an eye” code and is refusing to render evil for evil. Capital punishment is nothing but a relic of Jewish barbarity. So that we are of opinion that this feeling should be fostered by open protest on every occasion, and by a refusal to participate in such half-human proceedings. The true physician cures the disease, and does not kill his patient. But we are afraid that the murder-doctors are in the majority for the moment, so that we can only *protest*.

—Eds. [*Lucifer*]

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Can any explanation be given, compatible with justice, as to why animals should suffer such terrible agonies as in a recent fire in the South of England, which destroyed some stables with sixteen horses? Such incidents are not uncommon. These poor creatures have none of the consolation arising from the powerful instinct possessing almost all human beings, with regard to the temporary nature of, and also the *surviving* torture and destruction, and therefore suffer the more acutely, their consciousness being centred in the present moment. I have read allusions to this subject, but in no case has any clear and intelligible explanation been given, compatible with that justice which is the corner-stone of Theosophy. Transmigration is rejected, and even if it were true, it would not furnish a valid reason why creatures deprived of higher principles should thus suffer, since responsibility ceases with such a severance. And on the other hand, if we once admit the possibility of useless or *undeserved* suffering, we open the door to what would undermine the philosophic views of Karma so gladly accepted by thinking persons who have been saddened by realizing the varied vicissitudes of life, and the tragic fate of countless human beings, year after year. *Why should a harmless creature be burnt alive, or vivisected?* Whatever light, in the plainest language, can be thrown on the mystery of pain in the animal world, would be thankfully accepted by many, as well as by

ENQUIRER

Animals do not suffer so keenly as human beings, and do not remember suffering, unless reminded by the sight of the instruments of their pain, as for instance when a thrashed dog sees a whip. Animals again are almost immediately reincarnated in higher animal organisms. *Suffering, moreover, is the cause of knowledge*, so that the incarnating entity gains experience, although the organism is tortured to death. Again physical suffering is on the lowest and most Mayavic plane, so that the animals although often suffering tortures physically, are free from the deeper miseries, with which sometimes man, even supposing him in perfect health and in the midst of luxury, is crucified unceasingly. Indeed, when reflecting on such problems and on the awful horrors of vivisection, we may sometimes be inclined to feel more sorrow for the vivisector than for his pain-racked victim, for the awful pangs of remorse that sooner or later will seize on the former will outweigh a thousand times the comparatively momentary pain of the poor dumb sufferers.—Eds. [*Lucifer*]

THE SOURCE OF RELIGIONS

It is sometimes asked: Is Theosophy in the world as an attempt to end all traditional religions or to break down the historical religions? Is Theosophy an amalgam or a mixture of these, or is it a new religion?

The word "Theosophy" means "Divine Wisdom" ("Theos" = God-like, and "Sofia" = Wisdom, in Greek). It is the knowledge or wisdom about God, Nature, Man — all-inclusive and complete in its comprehensive totality. Knowledge, as we observe today, has been compartmentalized into various categories, such as Science, Religion, Philosophy, Economics, Sociology, etc. All these branches of knowledge exist for our understanding of life, and are generally of academic interest only. We often find them conflicting one with the other. Science and religion or theology are at loggerheads; philosophy is considered as mere idle fancy by materialistic scientists. There is no common ground among them, standing on which an intelligent student of life can survey the panorama of life and understand its meaning and purpose, like a mountaineer at the top of a hillock taking a panoramic view of the plains below. Theosophy provides this common ground, the link that binds all systems of thought, in all fields of human endeavour, into a related, coherent, integrated, synthetic philosophy of life, which is at once scientific and religious. It is the "synthesis of science, religion and philosophy," a "religious science" and a "scientific religion." It breaks down all artificial barriers between knowledge of one kind and another, and points to their underlying unity. It is Truth itself, the goal and aim of all quest and research in life, and brings soul-satisfaction to him who seeks it.

Theosophy is not a mixture or an amalgam of religions; nor is it a "new" religion; but it is "RELIGION" itself, the bond that unites all men and all beings in the whole Universe into a grand whole, a mighty brotherhood. The word "Religion" means to "bind back" (*re* = again, and *ligare* = to bind); it binds back beings to beings, and beings to their source. Hence, it is that which points towards the ultimate Unity of all life, towards the Absolute Reality which man crudely terms "God," and towards the way to Its Realization. Theosophy, therefore, is the science of life as well as the art of living, which helps us to perceive Truth within our own consciousness, only through self-effort, and not otherwise. The Kingdom of Heaven has to be "taken by violence." Divinity cannot be endowed.

Theosophy is age-old and is the very root, the basis, the fountain-head, the origin and the substratum of all thought, whether religious, scientific or philosophical. From it have sprung all the historical faiths of humanity, through the agency of the Prophet-Reformers in human history, like the sprays from a single fountain or the rays from the central Sun. The ever-flowing waters of Divine Wisdom running underground periodically find their expression on the surface of human understanding, under the impulse of the Cyclic Law in Nature.

Just as the white ray of Light on passing through the prism breaks up into different colours of the solar spectrum, so also the white ray of Truth, on its way down from supernal heights, traversing through the three-sided prism of man's triple nature, breaks up into different fragments called "religions." Every religion that exists today was pure and true at its root and origin, under the living influence of its Founder. As time rolls on, the influence of the Founder wanes, and the Teachings lose their original pristine purity and become disfigured, distorted, desecrated; nay, even materialized and anthropomorphized. All creedal religions are, therefore, false on the surface, withered and dried up owing to lack of nourishment, having been cut off from the source that once fed them. They are mere shells, mere accretions and accumulations of human dogma and ritual — the spirit of religion, *i.e.*, Theosophy, having departed long ago, along with the Prophet-Reformer.

As has always happened, man remembers the Messenger, but forgets the Message. And so, time comes once more under the Cyclic Impulse to reiterate the Ancient Truths. In the last century, this was done under the label of "Theosophy"; the silence of centuries was broken. What is known today as Theosophy is, however, but a fragment of "THEOSOPHIA" or Wisdom-Religion, which is "that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child." Though a fragment, it is still enough for our generation and era.

Theosophy, therefore, is not a bringing together of existing religions, but the essence of each and all, the central core of Truth itself, divested of the superficial garb of ritual and dogma. It is the ocean, a drop of which alone underlies every religious creed. It is universal, impersonal, non-creedal, non-sectarian. "The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all." Theosophy is the very

spirit of Religion *per se*, round which formal religions have been organized. The former is the spiritual experiences of generations of Seers and Sages, their record of the truths and facts of Life and of the Universe — universal, impersonal and self-evident, capable of being applied in daily life, and possible of being realized by any individual within himself, who chooses to probe the mysteries of Life and to seek its meaning. Spiritual discipline is a *sine qua non* of all research in this direction. He who seeks gold must dig; the rest must content themselves with straw. Sift the “grain” from the “chaff”; the “flour” from the “refuse.” The “grain” and the “flour” — this is Theosophy; the “chaff” and the “refuse” are the formal religions. Theosophy is the parent trunk of the Tree of Knowledge, with its branches and twigs and leaves spreading far and wide. Often the latter become disconnected from the parent trunk by the mighty hand of Time, only to wither and die.

Theosophy, then, is the central core of Truth in all religions, the kernel. But, one has to dig beneath the surface of religions, strip them of all falsehood, to get at the central Truth and understand the symbolic language or garb of these religions. Theosophy provides the Key for the interpretation of Universal Symbolism in all religions. Having survived all the religions in the past, it will survive all the religions throughout the future, for Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH.

Theosophy, then, is the inveterate enemy of all falsehoods and bigotry and fanaticism, whether in religion or in science or in philosophy. It inculcates tolerance of all faiths, for all falsehood dies a natural death with the passage of time; Truth alone remains supernal. It certainly is iconoclastic in that it breaks down the false idols of human beliefs and dogmas, the anthropomorphic god of theologies, and all falsehoods masquerading as religion. Yet, in breaking down these false idols created by human fancy, it points to the hidden gold of central Truth, buried deep within the heap of superficial rubbish in all religions. Theosophy is the underlying thread that runs through all religions; the latter are woven round it in different colours like beads upon a string. It reconciles conflicting creeds and ideologies, which vie one with the other, and in whose name even wars have been fought in history. It presents the rational view of life, all inclusive and all embracing, provides the rationale of promulgated ethics, the common denomination of all religions; and offers clues to the solution of all problems of life, individual and collective. It vigorously encourages the comparative study of religions, philosophies and sciences, with a view

to getting an inner conviction of their underlying unity and their common source, from which have emanated all the diversified streams of thought in all fields of human activity.

Theosophy, in its practical bearing, is purely "Divine Ethics," based on sound Metaphysics, which provide the rationale for their practice in life. Metaphysics and Ethics are inseparable twins, like the two wings of the bird (the human soul), necessary for its flight towards the Divine, through this life pilgrimage. Theosophy emphasizes virtuous living, for virtue and knowledge must go hand in hand, along parallel lines. It is not an ivory-tower philosophy, nor an arm-chair philosophy either. It is eminently practicable in daily life and must be made so by an earnest student, if progress is sought. By mere intellectual acceptance we can make no headway. The mind and heart of man must both be exercised. Purification of the lower nature is the first requisite. Theosophy helps to purify the lower mind, and allows the divine intuitions in man to unfold gently, smoothly, and in a harmonious manner, without the jerks and jolts of the lop-sided development which occurs when partial philosophies are followed. Its function is to make the animal man human, and the human man divine, for man is a "potential god" in the process of becoming an active "divine potency" in embodied life. Such have been the Great Teachers and Masters of Wisdom, the finished products of evolution, whose gift Theosophy is to the world at large. Having perfected themselves, they remain with us out of compassion and sacrifice, helping Nature in her cyclic task of cosmic evolution. They are our Friends, Guides and Philosophers, the solace and the comfort of suffering humanity. They hold aloft the Torch of Truth across the ages, to guide us through this valley of sin, sorrow and suffering.

In our humble opinion, the only "Essentials" in the Religion of Humanity are — virtue, morality, brotherly love, and kind sympathy with every living creature, whether human or animal. This is the common platform that our Society offers to all to stand upon; the most fundamental differences between religions and sects sinking into insignificance before the mighty problem of reconciling humanity, of gathering all the various races into one family, and of bringing them all to a conviction of the utmost necessity in this world of sorrow to cultivate feelings of brotherly sympathy and tolerance, if not actually of love.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

One of the characteristics of our age is the rapidity with which changes take place, and perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of science. A new voice of science is emerging.

As the 17th century had questioned geo-centricism, the 18th century had questioned divine control of the universe, and the 19th century had questioned the mechanistic concept and the existence of the ether, so the 20th century has questioned conservation of mass-energy, the atomicity of matter and any and all concepts of objectivity as concerns scientific "truth" (preferring to judge hypotheses by how well they serve specific problems).

Every age seems to take fiendish delight in pulling the rug from under the theories that gave comfort to the preceding age.

Scientific advance has robbed us of our cosmos-origin myths, of absolutes in space frameworks and time scales, of up and down, of the immutability of laws we extract and finally of our very quest for scientific truth....

We are suddenly the aging Don Quixote confronted with foes holding not weapons but mirrors. We must now face ourselves and we'd rather not. In any case, we may soon have to learn that there is nothing "out there" — God, nor principle, nor laws, nor any Imperishable External to cling to and on which to hang hope or blame — responsibility or excuse. And from this painful encounter something new and immense is taking shape....

Weary and confused as we may be, we are now told by the new voice of science that we have to shoulder the whole universe and the whole complex pattern of evolution from this moment on, with full responsibility for its continuance.

Perhaps the most terrible thing of all is that we appear to have a choice: We can work toward great goals, an exalted condition, or we can let the whole thing drop. But at least today's scientists, unlike their predecessors, are not moaning about fate, the hostility of the universe or the impotence of mankind.

"The Hugh Downs Column" in the March *Science Digest*, from which the above is extracted, illustrates the change of voices in a generation by means of actual quotations. Today, man is no longer content to rely on externals. Man, says John Platt, professor of physics at the University of Michigan, in *The Step to Man*,

is showing a new level of will and purpose and design, a new

feeling that he is the one responsible for himself. . . . We thought we were disinherited. Now we discover that we have been given power and resources beyond imagining—the power of the sun itself—to do what we want with.

We thought we were helpless, bounded by our animal inheritance, or by the darkness of our twisted subconscious, to irredeemable social organizations or to irrational follies and wars. Now we discover it is culture that shapes our minds and actions, and that better education can lead to better actions. . . . We will move, if we survive the strain, to a wealthy and powerful and co-ordinated world society reaching across the solar system, a society that might find out how to keep itself alive and evolving for thousands or millions or billions of years, a time as long as all of evolution past. . . . It is a quantum jump. It is a new state of matter. The act of saving ourselves, if it succeeds, will make us participants in the most incredible event in evolution. It is the step to Man.

The Secret Doctrine (II. 360) teaches that the poles shift at regular cyclic intervals, causing “the displacement of the Oceans, the submerision of the polar lands, and the consequent *upheaval* of new continents in the equatorial regions, and *vice versa*.” H.P.B. refers to three inversions of the poles, which have changed the face of the Zodiac. (*S.D.*, II. 436)

Scientists are now veering round to the opinion that there have been in the past repeated reversals of the earth’s magnetic field. Two geophysicists and a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, Allan Cox, G. Brent Dalrymple and Richard R. Doell, writing in the February *Scientific American* outline the latest scientific position on the subject:

When molten volcanic rocks cool and solidify, the magnetic minerals in them are magnetized in the direction of the earth’s magnetic field. They retain that magnetism, thus serving as permanent magnetic memories (much like the magnetic memory elements of a computer) of the direction of the earth’s field in the place and at the time they solidified. In 1906 the French physicist Bernard Brunhes found some volcanic rocks that were magnetized not in the direction of the earth’s present field but in exactly the opposite direction. Brunhes concluded that the field must have reversed. Although his observations and conclusion were accepted by some later workers, the concept of reversals in the earth’s magnetic field attracted little attention. In the past

few years, however, it has been definitely established that the earth's magnetic field has two stable states: it can point either toward the North Pole as it does today or toward the South Pole, and it has repeatedly alternated between the two orientations. . . .

The magnetic memory of volcanic rocks, together with the presence in the same rocks of atomic clocks that begin to run just when their magnetism is acquired, has made it possible to draw up a time scale that shows no fewer than nine reversals of the earth's field in the past 3.6 million years. This time scale is a valuable tool for dating events in the earth's history and may help earth scientists to deal with such large questions as how much the continents have drifted.

Investigators admit that "after centuries of research the earth's magnetic field remains one of the best described and least understood of all planetary phenomena." For the present, scientists are in a position only to state the facts they have observed. The mechanism of field reversals and the extent to which these reversals may have affected life on the earth are, on their own admission, still far from being understood by them.

Answering a question regarding the causes of magnetic variations, a Master of Wisdom wrote in 1882:

They [the men of science at that time] are determined to ignore and thus reject the theory suggested to them by Jenkins of the R.A.S. of the existence of strong magnetic poles *above* the surface of the earth. But the theory is the correct one nevertheless, and one of these poles revolves around the north pole in a periodical cycle of several hundred years. . . . Study magnetism with the help of occult doctrines, and then that which now will appear incomprehensible, *absurd* in the light of physical science, will become all clear.

In the writings of Madame Blavatsky can be found the precise occult records of the shifting of the poles and the consequent cataclysms that changed the face of the world.

Astronomers may pooh-pooh the idea of a periodical change in the behaviour of the globe's axis . . . nevertheless . . . there is a secular change in the inclination of the earth's axis, and its appointed time is recorded in one of the great Secret Cycles. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 726)

When the Wheel [earth] runs at the usual rate, its extremities (the poles) agree with its middle circle (equator), when it

runs slower and tilts in every direction, there is a great disturbance on the face of the Earth. The waters flow toward the two ends, and new lands arise in the middle belt (equatorial lands), while those at the ends are subject to pralayas by submersion. (S.D., II. 324-25)

The fourth change of the poles destroyed Atlantis. Says an Occult Commentary:

When the Poles moved (for the fourth time) this did not affect those who were protected, and who had separated from the Fourth Race. Like the Lemurians — alone the ungodly Atlanteans perished, and “were seen no more.” (S.D., II. 350)

Such occurrences as “epidemic dancing” and “epidemic laughter” have been noted in this magazine in the past. A recent instance of epidemic hysteria, affecting nearly a third of the 550 pupils of a Church of England girls’ school in Blackburn, Lancashire, has been reported to the *British Medical Journal* by Peter D. Moss, a pediatrician at the local hospital, and Colin P. McEvedy, a London psychiatrist. On the first day of the epidemic, a Thursday, 141 girls complained of dizziness, fainting, shivering, tooth-chattering, headache, nausea and similar symptoms. Eighty-five of the girls were hospitalized and school was dismissed for a long weekend. When classes resumed on Monday, 79 girls made similar complaints and 54 were hospitalized; school was then dismissed for the rest of the week. The next Monday, 11 days after the initial outbreak, 58 girls made the same complaints; none were hospitalized and the day’s episode was the final event in the waning epidemic.

Moss and McEvedy report that in spite of intensive studies no possible physical basis for the incident could be discovered. The investigators learned, however, that on the day before the initial outbreak the student body had constituted the audience at a ceremony under royal patronage performed at the Anglican cathedral in Blackburn. The ceremony was notable for a three-hour delay, during which 20 of the schoolgirls fainted. On the school bus the next morning an air of excitement prevailed and there was much discussion about who had fainted and how often. “The stage,” Moss and McEvedy write, “was set.”

It is not surprising that the investigators could not discover a physical basis for this form of epidemic hysteria. The seeds of all epidemics

lie on planes other than the physical—the invisible psychic atmosphere. Robert Crosbie touches the root of the matter when he says:

Theosophy shows that there is a state of subtle substance that surrounds our earth, as it does every other, an envelope as it were, which is the receiver and container of the moral and physical emanations of the earth and its inhabitants; these are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming *epidemics*—moral, psychic and physical. Persons subject to epidemics, or any disease, are the very people who had a hand in producing them, either in this or a previous life.

Considering these facts, it would hardly be correct to assume that fear in itself is a predisposing cause. I think it will be found that many who fear and many who have no fear at all are overtaken by epidemics. . . .

Another angle to the question lies in the fact that every human being contains in germ every defect that exists anywhere in the race, any one of which may spring into activity under favourable conditions; in this the imagination or image-making power of the Thinker may at any given time fertilize a germ that otherwise would remain latent. . . .

For further light on epidemic disorders, mental, moral and physical, readers are referred to *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, pp. 274-279.

What is “the pill” doing to the moral patterns of present-day society? A report appearing in *U.S. News and World Report* is based on extensive inquiry into birth-control pills of the present and the future, and on what leading authorities are saying about the pill’s impact on our culture.

An era of vast change in sexual morality is now developing in America—and indeed in all other countries where contraception is widely practised. Fear is being expressed by sociologists, educators, churchmen and others that our society may be heading towards “sexual anarchy.” Today, six years after the birth-control pill has been in the market in the U.S., six million American women are using it. Among them are many teen-age girls in colleges and even high schools. In some cases the pills have been supplied by their parents. “Sex clubs” at high schools are reported from time to time. City after city is pushing distribution of the pill to welfare recipients, including unmarried women.

It is not just the young and the unmarried who regard the pill as a licence for promiscuity. Marital infidelity is coming to be accepted by many Americans as being of little importance.

These and other trends are expected to accelerate in the future as laboratories devise ways of making birth control more and more easy and effective. The question is being asked: "Will mating become casual and random — as among the animals?" Many are voicing concern over this trend. Unchecked, they say, it could lead to official endorsement of the idea that sexual promiscuity is acceptable as long as pregnancy does not result.

Have the family-planning enthusiasts in India considered the moral consequences of the methods they advocate? •

The television in Holland organized on April 15th a show by the British hypnotist David Berglas, during which he hypnotized about 16 young people. He made them obey all his orders, and they went through the typical actions of entranced subjects, including the execution of post-hypnotic orders. Two spectators watching this television show from their homes fell in a trance and had to be dehypnotized by Berglas by telephone. He had great difficulty especially with one of the two victims, who, after two days of constantly recurring trances, had eventually to be hospitalized. The victims had been hypnotized before in their youth.

The public reacted very strongly to these happenings; letters of protest were sent to the newspapers, and organizations such as the Society for Prevention of Quackery and the Dutch Society for Medical Hypnotism sent in a protest to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. They particularly emphasized the point that the use of hypnotism as an attraction in show business should not be allowed, and that such programmes should be forbidden.

As Theosophy has so much to say on hypnotism and its dangers, the U.L.T. in Amsterdam organized a special public meeting on the subject on April 30th, to which publicity was given in the papers. A lecture was delivered on "Hypnotism — a Danger," in which, besides the Theosophical teachings on the subject, particular emphasis was laid on the medical aspect, and on the need to refrain from the use of hypnosis in cases that can be healed otherwise.
