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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XXXVI. No. 1

17th November 1965

OUR THIRTY-SIXTH VOLUME

It is the custom among some good people to glance back at their life's path from the hillocks of time they annually surmount.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

Another cycle begins for this Magazine. With this issue it enters into the thirty-sixth year of its month-to-month labour. Neither world catastrophes nor shocks to the small world of our own personal lives have broken the periodical's record of regular appearance.

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT is the organ of and for the Theosophical student, aspirant and devotee. It is meant not only for the dissemination of the true ideas of the immemorial philosophy recorded in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, of her illustrious predecessors, and also of her true heirs and genuine beneficiaries — but more, it is a worthwhile instructor which throws light on the inner path of the mind which is learning to purify and elevate itself. Being a Magazine devoted to the living of the Higher Life, THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT emphasizes especially the application aspect of the grand teachings of Theosophy. Patient dwelling on philosophical ideas, on truths of metaphysics and of occultism, frees the mind from the petty and the personal, the narrow and the sectarian. But those abstract ideas and truths cannot be comprehended unless a sincere effort is made to elevate the personal man by a scientific and sustained application of Theosophical ethics. In this cycle, noble living ought to be normal; it is not, because men and women adopt, unconsciously to themselves, a narrow attitude towards life. Crudity and credulity hem in their thinking. Ethics related to philosophical principles not only broaden man's view and liberalize his mentality, but also deepen his faith in his own soul. They engender a new attitude toward life and offer a new basis for action. Therefore,

“the Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts.”

Application of Theosophical morality is necessary not only for freeing us from the thirsts and the pangs of the personal, but also for right promulgation. The desire to serve their fellows is natural to most men, but without knowledge people serve wrongly. Even students of Theosophy trying to serve humanity go wrong if their understanding of the philosophy is not ensouled by experience born of right practice. This Magazine tries to present facts and ideas of value to the eager and earnest practitioner, with the double object of keeping him on the path of liberation from the carnal, and on the path of renunciation on which self is sacrificed in the service of others. On the Path of Universal Brotherhood on which every student of Theosophy aspires to make progress, it becomes his duty to learn so that he may apply, and to apply so that he may serve, and to serve so that he may realize that Humanity is one and indivisible.

For the larger public also THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT contains both instruction and inspiration; for not the least of this periodical's missions is to bring about a change in the mind of the race. While those who aspire to practise Theosophy are few, the number of those who desire to see the condition of their fellow men improved is large; these latter, we hope, will lend their aid in making this monthly widely known.

It may not be possible for us to achieve what W. Q. Judge did in making his magazine, *The Path*, a channel of the Buddhi principle. But we have tried to follow his great example, have tried to put into motion the soul-satisfying teachings of the Heart Doctrine. It was customary with Mr. Judge to write, for the opening and closing numbers of each volume of *The Path*, short articles outlining its aims and objects, its policy and programme. All of these were collected together and published in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for October 1941. They contain so much of consolation, hope and energization that we reprint them here once again. Those who labour for this Magazine derive inspiration from the faith and strength of W. Q. Judge, and take to heart, in the conduct of the work, the advice contained in these *Path* editorials.

“PATH” EDITORIALS

[The following article, without heading, was the opening editorial of *The Path*, Vol. I, for April 1886.—EDS.]

This Magazine is not intended either to replace or to rival in America *The Theosophist*, nor any other journal now published in the interest of Theosophy.

Whether we are right in starting it the future alone will determine. To us it appears that there is a field and a need for it in this country. No cultivating of this field is necessary, for it is already ripe.

The Theosophist is the organ of the Theosophical Society, now spread all over the civilized world; its readers and subscribers are everywhere, and yet there are many persons who will not subscribe for it although they are aware of its existence; and furthermore, being an Indian publication, it necessarily follows, because of certain peculiar circumstances, that it cannot be brought to the attention of a large class of persons whom this journal will endeavour to reach.

But while the founders of *The Path* are Theosophists, they do not speak authoritatively for the Theosophical Society. It is true that had they never heard of Theosophy, or were they not members of the Society, they would not have thought of bringing out this magazine, the impulse for which arose directly from Theosophical teachings and literature.

It is because they are men, and therefore interested in anything concerning the human race, that they have resolved to try on the one hand to point out to their fellows a Path in which they have found hope for man, and on the other to investigate all systems of ethics and philosophy claiming to lead directly to such a path, regardless of the possibility that the highway may, after all, be in another direction from the one in which they are looking. From their present standpoint it appears to them that the true path lies in the way pointed out by our Aryan forefathers, philosophers and sages, whose light is still shining brightly, albeit that this is now Kali Yuga, or the age of darkness.

The solution of the problem, “What and Where is the Path to Happiness?” has been discovered by those of old time. They thought it was in the pursuit of Raja Yoga, which is the highest science and the highest religion—a union of both. In elaborating this, they wrote much more than we can hope to master in the lifetime of this journal, and they have had many kinds of followers, many devotees, who, while

earnestly desiring to arrive at truth, have erred in favour of the letter of the teachings. Such are some of the mendicants of Hindoostan who insist upon the verbal repetition of OM for thousands of times, or upon the practice of postures and breathing alone, forgetting that over all stands the real man, at once the spectator of and sufferer by these mistakes. *This is not the path.*

At the same time we do not intend to slight the results arrived at by others who lived within our own era. They shall receive attention, for it may be that the mind of the race has changed so as to make it necessary now to present truths in a garb which in former times was of no utility. Whatever the outer veil, the truth remains ever the same.

The study of what is now called "practical occultism" has some interest for us, and will receive the attention it may merit, but is not *the* object of this journal. We regard it as incidental to the journey along the path. The traveller, in going from one city to another, has, perhaps, to cross several rivers; maybe his conveyance fails him and he is obliged to swim, or he must, in order to pass a great mountain, know engineering in order to tunnel through it, or is compelled to exercise the art of locating his exact position by observation of the sun; but all that is only incidental to his main object of reaching his destination. We admit the existence of hidden, powerful forces in nature, and believe that every day great progress is made toward an understanding of them. Astral body formation, clairvoyance, looking into the astral light, and controlling elementals, is all possible, but not all profitable. The electrical current, which when resisted in the carbon produces intense light, may be brought into existence by any ignoramus who has the key to the engine room and can turn the crank that starts the dynamo, but is unable to prevent his fellow man or himself from being instantly killed, should that current accidentally be diverted through his body. The control of these hidden forces is not easily obtained, nor can phenomena be produced without danger, and in our view the attainment of true wisdom is not by means of phenomena, but through the development which begins within. Besides that, mankind in the mass are not able to reach to phenomena, while everyone can understand right thought, right speech, and right action.

True occultism is clearly set forth in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Light on the Path*, where sufficient stress is laid upon practical occultism, but after all, Krishna says, the kingly science and the kingly mystery is devotion to and study of the light which comes from within. The very

first step in true mysticism and true occultism is to try to understand the meaning of Universal Brotherhood, without which the very highest progress in the practice of magic turns to ashes in the mouth.

We appeal, therefore, to all who wish to raise themselves and their fellow creatures — man and beast — out of the thoughtless jogtrot of selfish everyday life. It is not thought that Utopia can be established in a day; but through the spreading of the idea of Universal Brotherhood, the truth in all things may be discovered. Certainly, if we all say that it is useless, that such highly strung, sentimental notions cannot obtain currency, nothing will ever be done. A beginning must be made, and has been by the Theosophical Society. Although philanthropic institutions and schemes are constantly being brought forward by good and noble men and women, vice, selfishness, brutality, and the resulting misery, seem to grow no less. Riches are accumulating in the hands of the few, while the poor are ground harder every day as they increase in number. Prisons, asylums for the outcast and the magdalen, can be filled much faster than it is possible to erect them. All this points unerringly to the existence of a vital error somewhere. It shows that merely healing the outside by hanging a murderer or providing asylums and prisons will never reduce the number of criminals nor the hordes of children born and growing up in hotbeds of vice. What is wanted is true knowledge of the spiritual condition of man, his aim and destiny. This is offered to a reasonable certainty in the Aryan literature, and those who must begin the reform are those who are so fortunate as to be placed in the world where they can see and think out the problems all are endeavouring to solve, even if they know that the great day may not come until after their death. Such a study leads us to accept the utterance of Prajapati to his sons: "Be restrained, be liberal, be merciful"; it is the death of selfishness.

A YEAR ON THE PATH

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. I, pp. 353-55, for March 1887.—EDS.]

The present issue of this Magazine closes the first year of its publication. It was not started because its projectors thought that they alone knew the true Path, but solely out of an intense longing to direct inquiring minds towards a way which had seemed to many persons who had tried it, to hold out the possibility of finding an answer to the burn-

ing questions that vex the human heart.

The question is always naturally asked, "What is the Path?" or "What is the Philosophy?" which is the same thing, for of course the following of any path whatever will depend upon the particular philosophy or doctrines believed in. The path we had in view is held by us to be the same one which in all ages has been sought by Heathen, Jew and Christian alike: by some called the path to Heaven, by others the path to Jesus, the path to Nirvana, and by the Theosophists the path to Truth. Jesus has defined it as a narrow, difficult and straight path. By the ancient Brahmins it has been called "the small old path leading far away, on which those sages walk who reach 'salvation'"; and Buddha thought it was a noble fourfold path by which alone the miseries of existence can be truly surmounted.

But of course mental diversities inevitably cause diversity in the understanding of any proposition. Thus it happens that Theosophists have many different views of how the path should be followed, but none of them disagree with the statement that there must be *one* Truth, and that no religion can be called higher than Truth. We therefore have pursued, as far as possible, a course which is the result of the belief that the prevalence of similar doctrines in the writings and traditions of all peoples points to the fact that *the true religion is that one which will find the basic ideas common to all philosophies and religions.*

We turned most readily and frequently to the simple declarations found in the ancient books of India, esteeming most highly that wonderful epic poem — the *Bhagavad-Gita*. And in that is found a verse that seems to truly express in powerful words what philosophers have been blindly grasping after in many directions:

It is even a portion of myself (the Supreme) that in this material world is the universal spirit of all things. It draweth together the five organs and the mind, which is the sixth, in order that it may obtain a body, and that it may leave it again; and that portion of myself (Ishwar) having taken them under his charge, accompanieth them from his own abode as the breeze the fragrance from the flower. (Chapter 15)

To catch the light which gleams through this verse, is not for mortal minds an easy task, and thus it becomes necessary to present as many views from all minds as can be obtained. But it seems plain that in every religion is found the belief that that part of man which is immortal must be a part of the Supreme Being, for there cannot be two immortal-

ities at once, since that would give to each a beginning, and therefore the immortal portion of man must be derived from the true and only immortality.

This immortal spark has manifested itself in many different classes of men, giving rise to all the varied religions, many of which have forever disappeared from view. Not any one of them could have been the whole Truth, but each must have presented one of the facets of the great gem, and thus through the whole surely run ideas shared by all. These common ideas point to truth. They grow out of man's inner nature and are not the result of revealed books. But some one people or another must have paid more attention to the deep things of life than another. The "Christian" nations have dazzled themselves with the baneful glitter of material progress. They are not the peoples who will furnish the clearest clues to the Path. A few short years and they will have abandoned the systems now held so dear, because their mad rush to the perfection of their civilization will give them control over now undreamed of forces. Then will come the moment when they must choose which of two kinds of fruit they will take. In the mean time it is well to try and show a relation between their present system and the old, or at least to pick out what grains of truth are in the mass.

In the year just passing we have been cheered by much encouragement from without and within. Theosophy has grown not only in ten years, but during the year past. A new age is not far away. The huge, unwieldy flower of the 19th-century civilization has almost fully bloomed, and preparation must be made for the wonderful new flower which is to rise from the old. We have not pinned our faith on Vedas or Christian scriptures, nor desired any others to do so. All our devotion to Aryan literature and philosophy arises from a belief that the millions of minds who have trodden weary steps before ours left a path which might be followed with profit, yet with discrimination. For we implicitly believe that in this curve of the cycle the final authority is *the man himself*. In former times the disclosed Vedas, and later, the teachings of the great Buddha, were the right authority, in whose authoritative teachings and enjoined practices were found the necessary steps to raise Man to an upright position. But the grand clock of the Universe points to another hour, and now Man must seize the key in his hands and himself — as a whole — open the gate. Hitherto he has depended upon the great souls whose hands have stayed impending doom. Let us then together enter upon another year, fearing nothing, assured of strength in the Union of Brotherhood. For how can we fear death, or life, or any horror or

evil, at any place or time, when we well know that even death itself is a part of the dream which we are weaving before our eyes!

Our belief may be summed up in the motto, "There is no religion higher than Truth," and our practice consists in a disregard of any authority in matters of religion and philosophy except such propositions as from their innate quality we feel to be true.

THE SECOND YEAR

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. II, pp. 1-2, for April 1887.—EDS.]

The first number of this magazine naturally appealed to the future, to show whether there was any need for its existence, any field ripe already unto the harvest. The beginning of the second volume may be claimed to mark the turning point of *The Path*, in its upward spiral from the regions of experiment to the plane of assured and growing success; and while the Editor tenders his hearty thanks to the friends who have loyally served it with pen and purse, he deems it proper to express his conviction that a mighty, if unseen, power has been behind it from the first, and will continue to aid it. In no other way can its phenomenal success be accounted for. Starting without money or regular contributors, treating of matters not widely known and too little understood, entering a field entirely new, and appealing, as was feared, to a comparatively small class, it has steadily grown in favour from the very first number; none of the ordinary means of pushing it into notice have been resorted to, and not ten dollars spent in advertising; yet new names are added to its list almost daily, and of the hundreds of its old subscribers only three have withdrawn. In this country its regular circulation extends from Sandy Hook to the Golden Gate, and from the Green Mountains to the Crescent City; it reaches through England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia; it is read alike beneath the North Star in Sweden and under the Southern Cross in New Zealand; it is a welcome guest on the immemorial shores of India, and has received the cordial approval of the heads of the Theosophical Society in Adyar. It would be impossible not to feel gratification at such results, even were it an ordinary money-making enterprise; how much more when it is remembered that it is devoted, not to any selfish end, but to the spread of that idea of universal Brotherhood which aims to benefit all, from highest to lowest!

The Path will continue its policy of independent devotion to the Cause of Theosophy, without professing to be the organ either of the Society or of any Branch; it is loyal to the great Founders of the Society, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion. The work it has on hand, and the end it keeps in view, are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues; yet its columns are open to all Theosophists who may desire to express their views on matters of real importance to the cause in which all should be interested. New features will be added as the need seems to arise; the first will probably be a department devoted to answers to correspondents. A large and constantly increasing number of letters of inquiry are received, and the present editorial staff finds it impossible to answer each separately; besides which, many of them naturally relate to the same or similar matters. By thus printing general replies, not only will the inquirers be answered, but others may have their unspoken questions replied to, or a similar line of thought will be suggested, or other views be elicited, to the mutual advantage of writers and readers.

In this joyous season of returning Spring, *The Path* wishes all its readers a "Happy New Year" in the fullest and best sense of the term—a progress in the knowledge of the great and vital truths of Theosophy, a truer realization of The Self, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

TWO YEARS ON THE PATH

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. II, pp. 357-60, for March 1888.—Eds.]

Twenty-four months ago this Magazine was started. It was then the second periodical devoted solely to the Theosophical Society's aims, and the only one in the Western Hemisphere. Subsequently, in France *Le Lotus* appeared, and later *Lucifer* in London; while the pioneer, *The Theosophist*, continues at Madras, India.

It has never been claimed that these journals alone knew of and expounded Truth; all that their conductors asserted for them was that they desired truth, and that they intended to remain devoted to the aims formulated by the Theosophical Society and to the Masters they believe are behind that body. There are many other magazines engaged in the search for the ultimate respecting Nature and Man; there are

other Societies which try to reform the age, but none other, we believe, can point to the same measure of success or to the same literature devoted to the one end.

When *The Path* was launched we knew not — nor asked — how long it would float, nor to whom it would reach. No capitalists or companies offered their assistance, and none could then say how it was to obtain a circulation. The suggestion to start it came from minds greater than ours, and the derivation of its name is from the same source. Nor was there a staff of writers employed or promised. No articles were on hand waiting for insertion, and, besides all that, its founders had other matters of a material nature calling for attention and occupying time. The promise of its future lay alone in supreme faith.

Its course during these two years has been for its conductors full of encouragement and instruction; letters from numerous subscribers testify that its readers have had some benefit also; none have written a word of disapproval, and those few who have stopped taking it gave reasons other than dislike.

The object before our eyes when we agreed to carry on this project was to hold Truth as something for which no sacrifice could be too great, and to admit no dogma to be more binding than the motto of the Theosophical Society — “There is no religion higher than Truth.”

In addition we intended to steadily draw all our articles and exposition towards the Light which comes from the East, not because we ourselves are of Eastern birth, but because the fathers of men living in the East ages ago went over the philosophical and scientific disputes that now engage the 19th century.

The only true Science must also be a religion, and that is The Wisdom Religion. A Religion which ignores patent facts and laws that govern our lives, our deaths, and our sad or happy hereafter, is no religion; and so last March we wrote — “The true religion is that one which will find the basic ideas common to all philosophies and religions.”

Western writers have been in the habit of pooh-poohing the idea that we could learn anything from Indian books, and such as Max Müller in no small degree supported the contention. But we believe in the cyclic theory, and it teaches us that in the ages man has been upon the earth he has evolved all systems of philosophy over and over again. The reason we turned to Indian books is that that land of all the rest has preserved its old knowledge both in books and monuments. We never for a moment intended to rely upon or be guided by superstitious

ideas that prevailed in India as they do in Christendom, but even in those superstitions can be seen the corruptions of the truth. In the Vedas, in Patanjali's Yoga System, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and hundreds of other works can be found the highest morality and the deepest knowledge. What need, then, to bother with crude beginnings of the same things put forth in Europe for the admiration of scholiasts and the confusion of the multitude?

American Spiritualism has recorded a mass of valuable facts with entirely baseless or inadequate explanations attached to them. These expositions, accepted by some millions of Americans, lead to error as we are taught. We find it denominated in the Aryan books as the worship of the Pretas, Bhuts, and Pisachas. Through many weary centuries the Aryans pursued that line of investigation to find at last the truth about the matter. What reason can we give for not examining their theories? They do not degrade our manhood, but rather raise its power and glory higher. Besides, we well know that *there is no separation of nations*. We of America were perhaps the very individuals who in those bygone ages helped to elaborate that philosophy, and the men now living there were, maybe, the then inhabitants of bodies in this continent. It is Truth we want, and not the petty glorification of either America or India.

In the same way would we have used the literature and learning of ancient Egypt, had it been accessible. But that lies buried under wastes of sand, waiting for the time to come when it shall be useful and for the man to arrive *who knows*.

Our readers are nearly all students. Some are disciples. But few are not in earnest. All are sympathetic. They have helped us with appreciation, and assisted the progress of all by striving for the calmness which comes from trying to exemplify Brotherhood. Some perhaps disagree with us upon minor points, nearly all of them resolvable to a personal basis — that is, having their root in some divergence as to particular persons.

We wish not to hide or to fail to state our attitude. As one of the founders of the Theosophical Society and as an old friend of Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott, we adhere staunchly to the Society, which we firmly believe was ordered to be founded in 1875 by those beings who have since been variously designated as Adepts, Mahatmas, Masters, and Brothers. In 1875 we knew them by the name "Brothers"; and now, as then, we pin our faith upon Their knowledge,

wisdom, power, and justice. That much mud has been thrown at these ideals makes no difference to us; we have never allowed the insinuations and proofs of fraud or of delusion offered on all hands to alter our faith in Them and in the Supreme Law that carries us into existence, governing us there with mercy and giving peace when we submit completely to it.

The Society has had, like all sentient beings, its period of growth, and now we believe *it has become an entity* capable of feeling and having intelligence. Its body is composed of molecules, each one of which is a member of the Society; its mental power is derived from many quarters, and it has a sensibility that is felt and shared by each one of us. For these reasons we think it a wise thing for a person to join this body, and a wiser yet to work heart and soul for it. And we would have no one misunderstand how we look upon H. P. Blavatsky. She is the greatest woman in this world in our opinion, and greater than any man now moving among men. Disputes and slanders about what she has said and done move us not, for we know by personal experience her real virtues and powers. Since 1875 she has stood as the champion and helper of every theosophist; each member of the Society has to thank her for the store of knowledge and spiritual help that has lifted so many of us from doubt to certainty of where and how Truth might be found; lovers of truth and seekers after occultism will know her worth only when she has passed from earth; had she had more help and less captious criticism from those who called themselves co-labourers, our society would today be better and more able to inform its separate units while it resisted its foes. During all these years, upon her devoted head has concentrated the weighty Karma accumulated in every direction by the unthinking body of theosophists; and, whether they will believe it or not, the Society had died long ago, were it not for her. Next to the Brothers, then, we pin our faith on her: let none mistake our attitude.

Readers! the third year of *The Path* is upon us; Theosophists! the thirteenth year of our Society's formation has opened; let us go on with a firm faith in the mercy and supremacy of the Law to whose fiat we bow.

Let the desire of the pious be accomplished! OM!

[The following article, without heading, was the opening editorial of *The Path*, Vol. III, for April 1888.—Eds.]

This Magazine begins its third year with the present number. While we are not sectarian, we acknowledge having a definite object in view in all the articles so far admitted to our columns. The object is to spread a knowledge of the Wisdom-Religion as we understand it, and to lay before the readers what we consider the true view of Theosophy and the aims of the Theosophical Society. *The Path*, however, while devoted to that Cause, is not an official organ; for, if it were, some responsibility for its utterances might be placed upon the Society on the one hand, and the Magazine itself limited in its operations on the other. We aspire to fulfil the wishes of the Masters who impelled the organization of the Society, that men may be led to study, believe in, and practise the immemorial doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion once widespread and now preserved in Tibet to be given to the world as it becomes ready to receive.

May the Blessed Masters guide us to the everlasting Truth! May we tread the small old path on which the sages walk who know Brahman! May we all pass beyond the sea of darkness! Hari! Om!

END OF OUR THIRD YEAR

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. III, pp. 365-66, for March 1889.—Eds.]

With this number the third year of *The Path's* existence comes to an end. The only definite rule we made in the conduct of the Magazine has been to treat all with fairness and calmness. We have not indulged in flattery of any person, and have endeavoured as much as possible to keep personalities, whether adverse or otherwise, out of our columns; and with the result of the past year's work we now have no concern, because, that work having been done, it remains in the hands of the great law of Karma and not in ours.

It is with a trace of sorrow that we record the fact that *The Path* has not been supported by subscribing theosophists, but mainly by those who are not members of the Society. This is strange but true, and resembles another curious fact, which is that the Theosophical Publication Society of London, organized by theosophists, draws its subscribers and helpers from America. We have no hope of changing

human nature now, and, knowing its tendency to materiality, we would never have brought out this Magazine did we not have supreme faith in those Beings and forces controlling the destiny of nations and individuals, well knowing that They will see that these efforts, made for the cause of humanity, shall not be devoid of fruit. That desired fruit is not money or any material profit, but solely a change in the thoughts and ethics of the people. And we would have all sincere theosophists of the same mind, to the end that they may work unceasingly for the cause of theosophy in the channel at present fixed by Masters — the Theosophical Society, without hope of profit or material reward, and, if possible, even without hope of any profit whatever.

To those who have helped us with thoughts, with means, and with pen, we extend our thanks; we may have enemies, but as yet they have not made their appearance; to them, if in existence, we tender our sympathy, for fear is not a quality we possess, and enmity we hold for none.

Some of our readers have wondered what is the end and what should be the watchwords; the end is truth and brotherhood; the watchwords, faith, courage, and constancy.

TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. IV, p. 383, for March 1890.—EDS.]

The present number ends the fourth volume of *The Path*.

All Theosophists who can afford \$2.00 per year are asked if they should not support *The Path*. The magazine is not carried on for profit, and is solely devoted to the interests of the Theosophical Society, and yet it is a fact that its subscribers are nearly all non-theosophists. Its editor and its writers all work for nothing, but for four years it has been published at a loss which is always met out of private means. Members of the Society who all know that *The Path* maintains an independent attitude, supporting no clique and pandering to no self-interest, should not keep back their support from a journal that does much to keep alive and make respected the Society and its literature. We can now point to four volumes in which will be found consistent theosophical articles, well written, by students who all have devoted years to the subject, and we ask your subscription. *The Path* will not stop even if this suggestion is not followed, because so long as its Editor thinks

he Society can be helped by it, he will publish the magazine. Nevertheless, a larger circulation aids a magazine in every way, bringing it to the attention of persons otherwise ignorant of it and of its mission, stimulating writers to their best efforts for its columns, ensuring more notice of and quotation from it by other periodicals. One exceedingly valuable assistance to both it and Theosophy is private subscription on behalf of Public Libraries. It would be well if every such Library, willing to give it a place, was supplied regularly with *The Path* by private subscription. About 13 are thus supplied at present, and no one can calculate the missionizing influence thereby exerted. Well-to-do Theosophists can order it sent to their poorer Brethren also, not as a benefaction to the Editor, but to them and to the Cause. For the *life* of a movement is largely in its literature, and its literature is epitomized in its magazines.

THE PATH'S FIFTH YEAR

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. V, pp. 1-2, for April 1890.—EDS.]

Our Magazine has turned the last corner of the square and now enters upon its fifth year. Whether it shall live ten or twenty years longer we know not, but as the future grows from the present and the past is ever being repeated in the future, so its four years of activity just ended are not dead, for they will reproduce their influence in the years that are to come until their force is increased by being swallowed up in those that are stronger.

In the third month of the first year of *The Path* its death within the year was predicted, but fate has ruled otherwise, and we have been accorded the opportunity of attempting to erect the four pillars of Sincerity, Devotion, Determination of Purpose, and Integrity. This year will decide what success has attended the attempt. For, as five is the number of *Light*, it will reveal all, and by its power as *Justice* and *Genesis* it will appropriately measure out the compensation, since its position in the centre between 1 and 9 makes of it the middle of the balance, for although the series of 9 is not completed, yet when 5 is reached the future is potentially present up to 9. We can rely then only on the Law and not upon the favour of anyone; this we do with cheerfulness.

The year just closed has been a pleasant one, revealing new earnest

hearts and willing hands. Let us press forward with new energy in the work of the next four years, for when the second fifth is reached an important era for theosophists and the world will be at hand, when the result of again being weighed in the balance of events will be more serious than it is now.

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and lost among the host — as does the evening star to those who tread their Path in darkness.

FIVE YEARS FINISHED

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VI, p. 1, for April 1891.—Eds.]

About eighteen hundred and twenty-five days have slipped away since *The Path* was started, and now we enter upon the sixth year without any prospect of having to abandon the work. If asked whether we feel satisfaction regarding the five years finished last month, the reply must be that it is too soon to look for satisfaction. A great many persons have praised and blamed the magazine and its editor; he himself never had any great concern with what people think about it, but an effort has always been made to present what we feel is true, free from bias or desire for gain. In the course of a few centuries and in other lives, it will be possible to find out just what influence *The Path* has exerted. Just now we must content ourselves with offering thanks to those who with pen or money have assisted this most obscure journal, and to direct their attention to the new American theosophical year, which, beginning in April with *The Path's*, has so much of promise and potency for the future. Let us grasp the thread once more.

SIX YEARS GONE

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VI, pp. 369-70, for March 1892.—Eds.]

Six years have gone into the void since *The Path* was started, and we are still in the middle of eternity. Doubtless other ages have had their magazines with their articles, their hopes and fears, their subscribers, their complainers, their friends. This journal has had the usual complainers, but can best and most easily remember that its friends are numerous.

The original program has been adhered to, the propelling motive is the same, the guiding object remains in view, the policy outlined has not been departed from. *The Path* has no party to placate, no ulterior aims to forward. Hence its independence is secured, since it bows the knee to no man, to no authority, although it seeks and will so seek to abide by the rules of the Theosophical Society as well as those prescribed of old for conduct and for intercourse.

In its pages attempt has been made to present the common-sense of Theosophy, because it knows that, sadly enough, many theosophists cease to use their natural commonsense when dealing with the movement and its literature. One will say, "Theosophy tells me to give up my duties and my family ties, to neglect my friends, and to live in morbid mental condition," while Theosophy looks sadly on and wonders why men and women will thus misconstrue.

These six years have witnessed the rise and fall of some men and women, but the last year now finished has had to chronicle the departure of our great leader, our friend, our champion, adept in all the noble arts of righteous war — H. P. Blavatsky. It was as if a mighty tower had fallen, causing the whole theosophic body corporate to quiver for a space. That was but momentary, for the great forces that had held the tower in place at once transferred themselves throughout the whole range of the Society, informing it with added energy, new zeal, and greater strength.

So this year, while seeing such a catastrophe, saw also but three short months afterwards the whole Society welded together under one working plan, with a single method, a Constitution in all its sections modelled on brotherhood and following the plan of the American Section which this journal always advocated. To our feelings the death of the body called H. P. Blavatsky was a shock and loss, but for our true progress, for the health of our real nature it was a gain because it makes us stand alone. Man was born alone, must stand alone, die alone — so we must needs be strong.

Thanks, then, comrades, for your help, your appreciation, your judgment and suggestions. The year is past in form, 'tis true, but still it is with us. We need no resolves for the future, for we never touch it; we need no regret for the past, for we have not lost anything, but we have the gaining eternally of experience. Adieu, twelve months, the path still stretches on and ever upward!

SEVEN STEPS FORWARD

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VII, pp. 1-2, for April 1892.—Eds.]

With this issue *The Path* starts on the seventh year of life, and the seven past years have been full of action, of work, and of results. We began without an office or capital: it might be said that the business was carried on in a hat at first. Then it moved into a cell or den on Park Row, where no man could enter by the door if the occupant within did not rise to make room for the portal to swing. Subsequently a larger room — cramped in fact — was hired and exultingly then called “commodious” by the *factotum*. Later back again to Park Row and even more commodious, as the quarters of a bee might seem so, by comparison, to an ant. Then again to larger quarters on Nassau street, until now it expects to move into the Society’s permanent house.

So to signalize the event it puts on a new cover, and were subscribers more numerous it might enlarge the number of its pages. But the penalty of independence in business conduct is frequently lack of support from a world that acts on convention and delights in pandering and being pandered to. But it may as well be known that *The Path* will pander to nothing.

Once more, too, the editor declares he sees no excuse for the existence of this or any other magazine. He wearies of the eternal printing that goes on, for there is nothing new under the sun and we are like squirrels repeating the words spoken by bodies long since dead which were inhabited by ourselves whom now we fail to recognize. But since this is the age of black on white impressed by machinery, we are compelled to publish so that the opportunity of saying the same thing once more to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation shall not be neglected.

SEVEN YEARS GONE

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VII, pp. 365-66, for March 1893.—Eds.]

The Path was started in April 1886, and with this month completes the first seven years of its life. Many things have happened here in these years.

In April 1886, we had no sectional organization here; by the next year our organization was completed and became the model for Europe

and India. No Headquarters existed then; today we have the large General Headquarters in New York, with smaller local ones in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Washington, and elsewhere. Our literature included few books; now enquirers are assisted by many works from the pens of many Theosophists. For some time after 1886 ridicule was our portion day by day; but now Theosophy is a familiar word, our books are constantly sought, our ideas have affected general literature. Even the worthless novels which stream weekly from the press try to catch readers by introducing *quasi*-occult ideas and superphysical phenomena. The newspapers which are written to sell and which used, at the most, to fill a corner with a jeer at the Theosophical cranks, now send their brightest reporters to interview any Theosophical speaker visiting their town, because their public wants to know what the Theosophist has to say. Considering the opposition, much has been effected toward the end in view, that is, to break down materialism, revive spirituality, and create a nucleus for a Universal Brotherhood.

The era of apostolic work has come in since we first opened *The Path*. Then no one was speaking for Theosophy in America. Today there is the lecturer on the Pacific Coast going up and down the land; Bro. Claude F. Wright making extended tours as far West from the Atlantic as Kansas City; several members of the New York and Brooklyn Branches lecturing in cities of adjacent States; and last, but not least, we have secured since 1886 the interest, efforts, abilities, voice, and pen of Annie Besant. Seven years have seen many things with us. We salute the Brethren!

THE SCREEN OF TIME

[The following opening Note is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. X, pp. 361-62, for March 1896.—Eds.]

There will be a change in the title of this magazine when issued next month. It will appear as *Theosophy* instead of *The Path*. This change is thought advisable for many reasons, one of which is the indistinctiveness of the present name. "Theosophy," as a word, has become familiar throughout the civilized world, and a certain definite though not always correct meaning has been attached to it. One of our chief objects will be to spread a proper understanding of its significance, as well as to remove false impressions concerning it. One of the chief results of the change will be an increased familiarity on the part of the

public with the word; and it is a word that has a power in it, sufficient in itself to change the tenor of a man's life, as experience has shown in more than one instance.

Among other important results that should follow from the change, one of which I have already touched on, a very considerable increase in the circulation will be effected, it is hoped. Each reader will doubtless help to bring this about by reading *Theosophy* on the street-cars, in the trains, and in other public places where many eyes will be caught by the well-known name on the cover of a magazine. Once seen it will not be forgotten. So as this is a Theosophical venture I invite the co-operation of Theosophists the world over in making it a success. Nothing can be accomplished without you: everything with you; and the last and apparently least of you is not always the most helpless.

He who neglects his duty to his conscience, will neglect to pay his debt to his neighbour.

Mite added to mite becomes a great heap; the heap in the barn consists of small grains.

Narrowness of mind causes stubbornness; we do not easily believe what is beyond that which we see.

A learned man without pupils, is a tree which bears no fruit; a devotee without good works, is a dwelling without a door.

He who keeps to his business, he who loves his companions, he who does his duty, will never be poor.

To feel one's ignorance is to be wise; to feel sure of one's wisdom is to be a fool.

One proof is better than ten arguments.

Every tree hath its shadow, every sorrow its joy.

The wheel of sacrifice has Love for its nave, Action for its tire, and Brotherhood for its spokes.

Man consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

—*Eastern Proverbs*

THE DIVINE VIRTUES

DANA

To tread the Paramita Path, the Path of the Divine Virtues, a certain attitude of mind and heart has to be cultivated, otherwise we start without planning, without the necessary preparation, and fail.

This is brought out in Fragment III of *The Voice of the Silence*, where we learn that the candidate must already have reached the condition when he can say to the Teacher, "I thirst for Wisdom"; and also, "Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance." This thirst, this readiness, is essential on the spiritual path. We also learn that the practice of the *Paramitas*, the glorious virtues, is not the first step. The foundation, the very purpose, of the hard struggle we have to make is — "To live to benefit mankind." Only with, or on, this foundation can we successfully practise the virtues.

The Voice of the Silence also reminds us: "Before thou wert made fit to meet thy Teacher face to face, thy MASTER light to light, what wert thou told?" So, we must get to a certain position before we can proceed. We are warned, also, that there are steps which we must pass before we can even begin to practise *Dana*, the first *Paramita*:

Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.

The latter part of this quotation is important. We so often think that we are trying to live and breathe in tune with the whole of the unified universe, but do we also try to see the other half of this idea — "as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee"? That is true brotherhood; it implies the real understanding of unity. There is no one, no thing, that is really separate from ourselves. What hurts one, hurts all, whether it is the death of a friend, our own death, or the death of a mosquito or a beetle; the ill treatment given to a fellow human being, or to ourselves, or to the lowest creature that lives, reacts on all. The animal is a part of us; the criminal is a part of us. We are a part of the animal and of the criminal. That part of us which is in the animal and in the criminal suffers when the animal or the criminal is ill treated.

That which makes for the unity of all life is the SELF. Coming down to the astral light, which affects us because of its photographic quality,

its receptivity to the thoughts, feelings and actions of all creatures and its capacity to vitalize all these, we can perhaps see how this unity is a reality. It is worth while studying this and putting the teaching into practice. But this recognition of unity has to be seen from the basis of the SELF which operates in and through even the tiniest forms and on all planes. Hence we are told that we must begin to put the idea of Unity into practice and must live in the Eternal.

Just what does it mean to "live in the Eternal"? Nothing is outside of the Eternal. Everything lives in Spirit, which is eternal; we have to learn to live in it consciously. We have to become one with the Eternal, not by jumping to It in imagination, but by seeing that we and It, and therefore we and all others, are one. If this is so, then it becomes obvious that just as we "like" ourselves and work for our own good, so we must apply the "liking" or love to all. First, we must begin to think of all as learners, as though they were our fellow pupils, "disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother." The real Teacher is the Master-Soul, the Universal Soul, a ray of which is in us and in all men. At present we think of the Universal Soul as apart from ourselves, a kind of misty background. But, before we can progress, we have to see these two as one. The practical aspect of this is to "sacrifice the personal to Self impersonal."

More practical advice is given to us, which calls to mind the letter of the Mahatma printed in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 167): "Lead the life necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge and powers, and Wisdom will come to you naturally." This concept we also find in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (VI. 32): "He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee." Elsewhere in the *Gita* (IV. 38) we are told: "...he who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time."

So, through the recognition of the one SELF and the devotion which leads to IT, we have to practise the attuning of our heart and mind "to the great mind and heart of all mankind." This is to be done by being able to "thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes."

The feeling of love that arises in the heart when we dwell on these concepts makes us sometimes forget, or transcend, the field of human life which is enveloped in pain. Therefore we are asked to cast our

glance downward from the superlative heights we may reach, and see the pain that is humanity's. "Hast thou attuned thy being to Humanity's great pain?" we are asked. The word "attuned" needs to be noted. What is needed is not a feeling-thought of sympathy, or a shrug of the shoulders with the feeling "What can I do?" It is an *attunement with*, a *suffering with* those in pain that has to be cultivated. Others' pain becomes *our own* pain. Indeed, we are further told that this attunement is not mere passive suffering but an active search for the cause of the pain, without resting until we have removed it. As *The Secret Doctrine* tells us, we have to get at the evil causes and remove them, for then and then only can we finally get rid of the evil effects. Even the suppression of one single bad cause (*S.D.*, I. 644), not even its removal, will accomplish some good, though the probationer must in time *remove* the cause. Before *removal* is possible, let us at least *suppress*! We cannot remove anger from our nature by the mere wish; we have to go through many a year of suppression, while at the same time cultivating the opposite virtue, before anger is removed beyond resurrection.

Why is it so necessary to begin to alter our whole character before stepping on the Path? The Mahatma answers this question:

Beware then, of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path, and devour the better qualities of your nature which have been springing into life.

He tells us how this is to be guarded against:

Broaden instead of narrowing your sympathies; try to identify yourself with your fellows, rather than to contract your circle of affinity.

Light on the Path gives us further aid. How can we become charitable or wipe away the tears of others if we do not see or hear the groan of mankind? Therefore we are told to "listen to the song of life," and to "learn from it the lesson of harmony." But equally we must learn to hear the cry of pain, of which Mr. Judge wrote:

O, what a groan Nature gives to see the heavy Karma which man has piled upon himself and all the creatures of the three worlds! That deep sigh pierces through my heart. How can the load be lifted? Am I to stand for myself, while the few strong hands of Blessed Masters and Their friends hold back the awful cloud? Such a vow I registered ages ago to help them, and I must. Would to great Karma I could do more! And you! do what you can.

“Armed with the key of Charity, of love and tender mercy,” we are secure before the gate of *Dana*, and we may enter. The harmony we have established between ourselves and others and the Whole makes the path “straight and smooth and green.” All is well, and with the song of the “nightingales of hope” in our heart we pass on. Let us still remember that the Path is a path of woe; let us try to keep the vision of the goal before us as we struggle on and meet and conquer the obstacles on the way. Each obstacle conquered is a gate opened. There is no return. But the thought that we are doing it for the sake of the all, not for our own sake, will inspire us. And at the end of the journey the very effort we have made to feel at one with all Nature makes it possible for the “chant of love” to arise “from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind,” heralding our return “from the other shore.”

The Master wrote:

Believe me, there comes a moment in the life of an adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge, he has no more to go through a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight into every first truth . . . the adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths — the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature, SHIVA the Creator, the Destroyer, and the Regenerator.

Once upon a time, Buddha was residing in Anathapindika's garden at Jetavana in Sravasthi, with a great number of Bhikshus. He thus addressed them:—There are five kinds of charity, of which now I will tell you. The first is abstaining from the taking of life. Bhikshus, this is a great charity. But let us see, Bhikshus, by what reason it is called a great charity. If there was no destroyer of life, all sentient beings then would be favoured with the enjoyment of fearless living; and when their mind was free from all fear, such evil as enmity, hatred, and injury would cease to make its appearance. Then all peace on earth and in heaven! This is the reason why abstinence from the taking of life is a great charity. So also of the other four great bestowments of charity, which consist of abstaining from theft, adultery, falsehood, and intoxication.

—*The Path*, January 1894

RELIGION—CLOAK OR ARMOUR ?

True religion must give us a basis for thinking, and consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a *bond* uniting men together — not a particular set of dogmas or beliefs — binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe, into one grand whole.

—ROBERT CROSBIE (*The Friendly Philosopher*)

“Religion is the best armour that a man can have, but it is the worst cloak,” wrote John Bunyan. Translating the thought, we might say that religion is the best unfolder of humility, piety, unselfishness, but it is the worst and most prolific developer of hypocrisy, humbug, cant, credulity and fanaticism. Every religion can lead its votary to the light through enquiry and honest search for truth; but every creed without exception has acted as an intellectual extinguisher because its adherents do not use their minds, and do not enquire like rational beings into the meaning and purpose of this, that or the other belief which they hold as sacred.

To take a few examples: Orthodox Christian churches contend that for some of their religious ceremonies liquor is necessary. Mohammedans, on the other hand, look upon alcohol as poison, and their great Prophet and their holy book forbid the use of liquor, not only in religious rites, but in private life also. Here is a religious injunction which is rational, wise and virtuous. From a rational point of view it is irreligious to indulge in wine-bibbing and nothing can alter the fact. Therefore the Muslims, in this matter, are using their religion as an armour against evil, while those who oppose Prohibition by shouting “Religion in danger!” are using religion as a cloak to hide hypocrisy and ignorance.

The much discussed subject of prayer affords another example. People pray in the hope of securing pardon for their sins; some say, in words they understand: “O God, forgive me this transgression”; others repeat words in a language which they do not know; others confess in privacy to a priest. Having gone through this or that form, they commit the same crime again; they repeat their sin, and they go through the ritual once more. The logical deduction as to their belief to be drawn from their behaviour is this: “What is God for if not to give us remission of our sins? Why a confessor if we are not to be free to blunder over and over again?” This is hypocrisy and all who indulge in such a useless and immoral performance are using religion as a cloak.

What kind of prayer, then, would show us religion as an armour? When a person who has blundered repents before his own conscience and in his own consciousness and resolves not to repeat such a mistake, when as a protection he seeks knowledge as to how he blundered, as to what caused him to slip into his mistake, and so forth, he is using prayer as a true power. Such a sinner, in spite of his blunder, is a religious man who uses his religion as an armour.

We could multiply examples, but the reader will very easily perceive them on every side if he keeps his eyes open and his mind active.

Turn now to the fundamental misunderstanding which causes this confusion. People fancy that a man's religion is a matter of the birth of his body, of the family and of the community to which he belongs; more, the general opinion is that a man's religion is a matter of his beliefs, of his heart, about which there need be no enquiry, no questioning and no seeking of explanations. This is wrong. Man is a thinking being and it is his duty to understand the meaning of life, of religious beliefs, of communal customs, of family habits and so on. Generally people identify religion with truth, and in their dogmatism claim their own sect or creed to be the only true one. A little reflection would clear away the fogs of superstition. It is intrinsically true that Truth agrees with Truth and does not agree with falsehood. Two plus two makes four — that is the one truth; all other answers to the sum of two plus two are false and should be unacceptable.

People must learn to apply this test to religious truths. Our serious thoughts, our rational ideas about religious matters are conspicuous by their non-existence. It never occurs to religious people to test their opinions and beliefs in the light of reason and of knowledge. To the very fact of the existence of sectarianism we should apply the test of knowledge; if any one particular religion is the only true one, then, naturally and necessarily, all men and women belonging to that creed must be virtuous and wise, healthy and happy. If, for example, the Jews are really the "Chosen People" of God, then there ought not to be among them the ignorant, the wicked, the diseased. Similarly, if Christ is the only begotten Son of God (an absurd claim which Jesus never made) and if, let us say, the Roman Church is the only true church, then all Roman Catholics and all Christians ought to be full of the faith, hope and charity of which the Apostle Paul wrote, and they ought to be loving their neighbours as Jesus taught. Christendom is, however, not a loving family; much less is it full of love for the poor heathen; nay more — periodically Christendom becomes a mighty slaughter-house

where the strong butcher the weak. Similarly, neither Hinduism, nor Islam, nor Jainism, nor Zoroastrianism, is a perfect, God-given, true religion. In the ranks of them all are liars, profligates and drunkards, as well as sober, virtuous and God-loving men and women.

We need, therefore, to turn to some other factor to ascertain the truth about religion or, to be more exact, the Truth which *is* Religion. In some words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge we come upon a line of thought appropriate to our subject: "Faith without principles is but a flattering phrase for wilful positiveness or fanatical bodily sensations." We must beware of "wilful positiveness" in the matter of our own religion. Also, we must guard against "fanatical bodily sensations" where our religious views and beliefs are concerned. Leaving emotionalism aside, we must look for the principles of religion. This is not only a matter of secular education; otherwise logical-minded men and women become fanatical in religious affairs. Ordinary university education is no passport to religious honesty or to reasoning liberalism.

Courage of mind and of heart is needed to be honest in religious habits and beliefs — courage to search for truth, courage to insist on learning the meaning of the phenomena of life which surround us. Our common humanity is a good starting point. Each one of us is beset with weaknesses, is endowed with virtues; feels joy and pain by turns; is affected by beauty of form, by moral strength, by the light of wisdom and by deeds of mercy, and each, in turn, expresses beauty in life, virtue in deed, wisdom in words. Though the same traits are common to all, yet each is different from all others. No two people are alike — not even twins. What moral law governs this diversity in unity? A wise God would not create ignorant people, nor a loving God, deformed children. Heredity does not answer the problem either. Reincarnation does clear away the confusion. The truth of Reincarnation becomes a religious principle by its logical reasonableness, by the wonderful light it sheds on the problems which agitate our hearts and puzzle our minds, problems which surround us on every side.

Religion to be true must be One, Universal and Eternal. To take again the example of two plus two making four: not only does two plus two make four on every continent today, but it has made four in every era for millions of years. So also with any other truth; it must be universally true, true everywhere; it must be eternally true, true in every age. This is the position of Theosophy which is so grossly misunderstood. Theosophy is not *a* religion; Theosophy *is* Religion itself.

Why does Theosophy proclaim as its first object "Universal Brotherhood"? Because, in the words of H. P. Blavatsky:

A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together — not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our Theosophical definition of religion.

From this definition of Religion emerges its function. However different each one of us may be from all other human beings, we are united in one grand Brotherhood. To aid others, to be altruistic, is the very first lesson we learn as we reflect upon the basic principle of the One True Religion. In this function we encounter within us, as in the world outside, the forces of good and of evil, and if we are observant we find these forces existing in our own beliefs. To eliminate the cloak-aspect of religion and to use the armour-aspect is to tread the Path of Safety. Theosophy gives us knowledge as to how to discard the cloak of religion and likewise teaches us to use its armour. Thus, the student of Theosophy retains and sustains his understanding of Universality. But what about the orthodox? They have to begin to use their own religious beliefs, asking every time — "Is my religion a cloak to hide my ignorance or my weakness or my fanaticism or my sectarian unbrotherliness, or is it an armour against the foes of ignorance, of vice, and above all of the spirit of intolerance and of exclusiveness?"

Is the sacred thread of the orthodox Hindu a cloak or an armour? Is the sacred shirt of the orthodox Zoroastrian a cloak or an armour? Is the Sunday church-going by the orthodox Christian a cloak or an armour? Are the periodic prayers of the orthodox Muslim a cloak or an armour?

In every case, if these are expressions of the cloak, hiding something, the man is irreligious in spite of his thread or his shirt, his church-going or his kneeling for *Nimaz*. If these are expressions of his armour, then soon will he pass out of his narrowness into the liberal light of Wisdom, which is universal and which knows no heathen, no *kafir*, no *durvand*, no *mlechchha*. All sectarian creeds become corpses for the man in whose heart the One Religion is born.

BE UNSELFISH

Nothing is more fascinating in life than the study of the human heart, and as human nature is the same everywhere, the study of one's own heart reveals truths applicable to all. And the first important truth that emerges is that the root of all human suffering is selfishness.

The art of living is mastered by probing the depths of the heart-mind. To do this, the right position has to be assumed and maintained. The play of opposing forces within oneself confuses the ordinary mind and, fleeing from the real plane of action, it shifts its attention from the within to the without. Ignoring its own responsibility for the confused state in which it finds itself, the lower mind tries to make excuses for itself, to justify itself. Experience shows that reliance on the without only brings greater confusion and suffering.

The only safe course must be seen to lie in turning inwards, for thus alone will the hold that outside factors have on us be released. It needs to be recognized also that what has been done cannot be undone and that regrets are useless. Reliance upon the immortal Self within breeds an optimistic attitude, and, with the help of the Inner Ruler, return to the real field of action takes place.

Then comes the realization that love and compassion imply, not self-redemption, but the redemption of all human beings. The turning point, the pivotal doctrine which will bring us to a higher course, a humane and noble one, is the full understanding of the doctrine of universal salvation as opposed to individual salvation. Arjuna's spiritual awakening as revealed through the chapters of the *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us that there has to be a conscious, daily renewed dedication. The tamasic-rajasic lower Manas will soon blur the higher vision and the once vivid goal will be lost again. Perhaps acceptance of the limitations — which are ours through the operation of Karma — imposed by the more material part of our nature will enable us not only to cope better with them but also to minimize their holding power upon us. The higher aspect of Manas should be activated, and when placed under the guidance of Buddhi, of which it is a reflection, the real strength and power of the heart-mind will be brought out and we shall understand how the real personality should live and act. The dormant qualities and capacities of the personality come to light and become the adequate channel or medium through which the high purpose of the Soul is achieved.

What is the main stumbling-block on the path of compassion? It is loneliness. The gregariousness of the lower instinctual nature is hard

to overcome and subdue — the more so as it is felt by many to be a good and desirable quality to have. It is that teaching about right loneliness which Krishna endeavours to impart to his disciple Arjuna in the following passage:

True wisdom of a spiritual kind is freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injury to others . . . it is *an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household, and a constant unwavering steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favourable or unfavourable; it is a never-ceasing love for me alone, the self being effaced, and worship paid in a solitary spot, and a want of pleasure in congregations of men.* (Italics ours)

This may prove to be difficult for many. The self-pity indulged in today by human beings who are suffering from loneliness is the result of egotism and selfishness. Why did some of the pre-eminent members of the Theosophical Society in the last century fail to carry on the work along the original lines after the death of H.P.B.? It was not due to their inability to understand the teachings, but because they were unable to stand on their own. The only one who could do it was W. Q. Judge, and the pity of it is that those who were his co-workers did not learn from his magnificent example of courage, self-abnegation and compassion, and went astray after his death. When H.P.B.'s reputation and good name were under fire in India, how many stood the test and gave her whole-hearted support? Many are the occasions when we are called upon to stand by what is true and fair, even though it means standing alone, and the price to be paid is often the loss of the love and friendship of those near and dear to us.

Selfishness, then, has many forms and is very subtle and difficult to extirpate. Its main root, when removed, tears to pieces the whole personal life of the being, but this has to be endured. The disciple must go through the burning fire of purification — otherwise he will never be reborn in the world of spirit. This explains the puzzling conduct of many a would-be disciple. When that weed of self is left to grow and to fructify, it often results in psychic unbalance or temporary madness.

What is the remedy? Is there any criterion by means of which it can be ascertained that the path of compassion is being trodden and not the opposite way taken? Let us have the firmly established conviction that truth is attainable, and maintain an inner attitude of absolute confidence in our power to perceive the right course of action, and then find within ourselves the moral stamina to carry on the task.

True vision comes only to the pure in heart, to the humble and the lowly. Let us cultivate these true qualities of the human heart and be brotherly and compassionate at all times, so that when the time of the great crisis comes it will find us ready. On the other hand, to assert and firmly believe that we are so completely in the dark that it is impossible to advance a step further is simply to acknowledge defeat by surrendering responsibility. As self-conscious beings we are self-responsible, and must feel and assume that responsibility by performing our *dharma*. There can be no other course. Practice should teach us that it is always possible to still the turmoil of conflicting views, and then let us pause and listen to the inner voice. There is never a final failure unless we work for it. None else compels; it is we who damn or save ourselves. Hence the importance of assuming and maintaining the right attitude.

Let us be watchful, calm and serene, putting our reliance upon the law of life, which is the law of universal brotherhood, and get on with the work in hand. That duty is the royal talisman is true, and will be found true by practice only. Let us also keep in our hearts the never-dying wish: "Peace be to all that lives and breathes"; and in the fullness of time selfishness will die out in our hearts, never to be revived.

People should think less about what they ought to do and more about what they ought to be. If only their being were good, their works would shine forth brightly. Do not imagine that you can ground your salvation upon actions; it must rest on what you *are*. The ground upon which good character rests is the very same ground from which man's work derives its value, namely a mind wholly turned to God. Verily, if you were so minded, you might tread on a stone and it would be a more pious work than if you, simply for your own profit, were to receive the Body of the Lord and were wanting in spiritual detachment.

—MEISTER ECKHART

“PATH” CORRESPONDENCE

DEATH—NATURAL AND UNNATURAL

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. IV, p. 194, for September 1889.—EDS.]

TO THE EDITOR:

In the August number of *The Path* is an article entitled “The Worship of the Dead,” which incidentally discusses the condition in Kama-loka of those taken off untimely by suicide or accident. Does the law affect in the same way those who die in early life of disease?

Ans.—We think that those who “die in early life of disease” may be said to have reached their natural limit of life, and that all their “principles” had been separated so as to prevent the fate of the others spoken of. The life of an individual is the expression of his Karma in action; in the case of suicide or accident — both of which are the sudden cutting off of a fixed term — the lower principles have not separated, while in death from disease the natural term of life is fixed by Karma at the limit when death occurs from the disease.—[ED., *The Path*]

MISTAKES ABOUT INDIA

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VII, pp. 124-25, for July 1892.—EDS.]

DEAR PATH:—Is it advisable for me to go to India to forward my psychic and spiritual progress? I am told there they know about such matters. Would you advise me to go?

—LEANTO

We would advise you to stay at home and find out that “the kingdom of heaven is within you,” and not in India nor America. India is the land of mystery truly, and the cradle of the race, but you will get on no more there than here in your spiritual development. The Hindus of today are not those of the past; their ancient philosophy is ours as we find it; but to go there expecting immediate efflorescence of knowledge and power would cause you disappointment. You would probably find Hindu fellows asking you for aid in the same road. H.P.B. and Mr. Sinnett report one of the Masters as writing some years ago that the Master could not stay among the Hindus of today because of their condition. Could you stand it any better? Stay here and do your duty, looking within for light; there alone — no matter where your body is — can it be found.—[ED., *The Path*]

KALI YUGA AND THE COMING RACE

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. IX, pp. 321-22, for January 1895.—Eds.]

Q.—(1) How many years are there in Kali Yuga? (2) Will the sixth sub-race begin very soon, that is, will it be at the end of the cycle of the first five thousand years of Kali Yuga? (3) Cannot a person of the fifth race come near where the sixth race shall live?

Ans.—(1) Kali Yuga is said by the Brahmins and by *The Secret Doctrine* to be 432,000 years long. We will have to accept the calculation for the present.

(2) Many thousands of years will pass before the next race will be here, and you will have died several times over before that, and also it is probable you will be one of that race unless you go to some other planet. You have made the error of supposing that the end of the cycle in 1898 is the end of the race. It is not. It is but a minor cycle, though quite important in its way. Hence —

(3) As we, including you, will be members of the new race in all probability if we take advantage of our opportunities, there is no profit in the question or its answer, for the sixth race not being due for so many centuries, and you being eligible for membership in it, there is no sequence. When the sixth race has fully come, many degenerate examples of the bodies of the fifth will be here with it and among it, but no special place will be kept for its development.

We are at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state. Plato divides the intellectual progress of the universe during every cycle into fertile and barren periods. . . . During the barren periods, the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit. We are in a barren period. . . . The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes*. And philosophizing alone, how can it understand the "SOUL DOCTRINE"?

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE NEW CYCLIC EFFORT

On the 17th of this month of November, Theosophists everywhere will celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Theosophical Movement of our era. Ten years hence we expect to see the new cyclic effort to revive the age-old truths of the Wisdom-Religion and to help men and women on their journey towards spirituality. These remaining ten years should become, therefore, a period of consolidation so that H.P.B.'s words in the closing pages of *The Key to Theosophy* may be fulfilled. She wrote that Theosophy itself will ever exist because it is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH; but as for the future of the embodied Movement of the 19th-20th century, she said that it

will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work . . . after the death of the Founders.

Those who carry on the work — and this refers to all of us today — have to have “unbiased and clear judgment.” The next impulse should find “a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of Truth.”

Apart from the purification of the characters of individual students of Theosophy in order that the work of preparation for the next Messenger may be helped, it is necessary also to have “a large and accessible literature ready to men’s hands.” Intensification of the efforts to promulgate the Teachings is very necessary if we are to “leaven and permeate the great mass of thinking and intelligent people with . . . large-minded and noble ideas of Religion, Duty, and Philanthropy.” If we can do this, then, H.P.B. tells us, “mankind will be saved from the terrible dangers, both mental and bodily, which are inevitable when the unfolding [of psychic powers and faculties] takes place, as it threatens to do, in a hot-bed of selfishness and all evil passions.”

We have much to work for, stimulated by her resounding words in her last Message to the American Theosophists in 1891:

After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never-dormant wish of my heart, “Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!” Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Every worker is an aspirant and soon or late every aspirant seeks the Upward Way to the Inner Life of Wisdom and Service, of Holiness and Sacrifice. We belong to one Great Family, and as one who has laboured in and for that Family for over half a century I am coming to you with my thanks for your past helpfulness to our Cause and my hopes for your future.

In our small army of Fortune's Favoured Soldiers every soul is occupying a vital place, and so you are right—you have a peculiar high duty to perform in——. We are a small band, but we have Faith wedded to Knowledge and our Kingdom is the most ancient and honourable. It is a great joy for me, therefore, to find in you a new recruit-helper, a new colleague.

Theosophy has two sides: metaphysical and moral. Space-Time-Motion, Rounds and Races, etc., are of the former, while Reincarnation, Karma, Cycles are of the latter. But can we do with one without the other? A bird cannot go high on one wing!

It is true, Theosophy answers every problem, and that gives us not only confidence but also power. We must be humble to seek, patient to apply what we learn, and grow as the flower grows. So, do not be timid; quiet courage is calmness itself. We do need calm courage with our own problems; we need love and sympathy for those of others.

You speak of your limited knowledge and the preparation of your talks: we learn as we teach, and as we lecture and write, our knowledge grows. It is one process, learning and teaching, and when service of the Masters is our motive an aspect of sacrifice comes into operation. Preparation of any lecture should be in two parts: (1) the gathering of ideas and substance and arrangement; (2) the inner calming of the mind and energizing of the heart by thinking about the Great Blessed and Holy Ones. Always practise that.

For your talk on animals and Karma you will find some helpful thoughts in Mr. Judge's article about the Karmic reactions between humans and animals: "The Moral Law of Compensation," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*; see also *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, pp. 4 and 5: "Uni-

versal Applications of Doctrine." Also see H.P.B.'s "Have Animals Souls?" reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. IX. Then please see "Why Do Animals Suffer?" in Vol. XIV of the same magazine. I have given too many references for a short talk; but I have done so not only for the talk but for any future use.

What you say about Christianity and Theosophy has force in it. Give straight Theosophy straight. If questions on Christianity arise, distinguish between Christ and Church and you will find yourself not only on safe ground but on a helpful one, from which your hearers will gain.

About your lecture on "Do We Stand Alone?": It is an excellent topic. Metaphysically, it is the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood (see *The Heart Doctrine* (pp. 61-69). Morally, each must ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" and the answer is "Yes." Remember the story of the Good Samaritan. What you say is true. Christmas should be made an occasion to cultivate warmth and love. Instead of killing turkey, we should sacrifice our gross animal nature and so love the animal kingdom. Instead of plum pudding we should make a "pudding" of graciousness and gratitude, love and joy, and above all gentle speech, which refers to the birth of the Soul in Man. Not independence but interdependence is required. *The Voice of the Silence* has a good verse about becoming soft as the mango pulp for the woes of others. Judge's article on "How Should We Treat Others?" (pp. 85-90 of *The Heart Doctrine*) will give you numerous good points. Prepare your talk by giving time to study these and other things, and then give a heart-warming lecture to help all.

You gave some very good points in your lecture, but I do not like your report that you were tired after the lecture because of tension. Mr. Judge mentions that ease of manner is necessary in all our Theosophical work, and that we should not be anxious or worried about it. But it is all a matter of training and I doubt not that you will acquire the power in due course.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

As science widens its horizon, scientific researchers are beginning to investigate problems which but a few years ago were thought to lie beyond their scope. One such problem is the stuff dreams are made of — their content, frequency, and their effect on our emotional stability. Investigators at major brain research laboratories are learning so much about patterns of sleeping and dreaming, and learning so fast that their findings continue to be reported from time to time. (Some of these findings were outlined in "In the Light of Theosophy" for June 1961 and October 1964.)

John E. Pfeiffer, writing on "The New Science of Dreaming" in the May-June *Think*, presents ideas based on the thinking of leading scientists in the field. These ideas will be of particular interest to students of Theosophy.

Current work [he writes] has yielded a totally unexpected "bonus" result. It seems that a phenomenon of fundamental significance had somehow eluded centuries of observation and study: the existence of a new bodily state that has certain things in common with sleeping and waking, and yet differs from both in crucial respects. Many researchers are devoting considerable effort to investigations of this "third biological state," which was discovered during the course of work on dreaming, since it may have a special bearing on the evolution of mammals, including man. . . .

On the basis of long experience with brain-wave patterns "written" by automatic pens on moving chart paper, falling asleep may be regarded as a process consisting of the following stages, each with its own pattern:

Stage 1, drowsiness: A series of fast and irregular low-voltage waves produce a "ripple" pattern.

Stage 2, light sleep: "Sleep spindles," bursts of activity, come at a rate of 12-to-14 a second.

Stage 3, moderate deep sleep: Large, slow high-voltage waves appear.

Stage 4, deep sleep: the record is dominated by the large waves.

An observer in the laboratory takes notice as the sleeping student begins to return to Stage 1, as the above steps occur in reverse order: Many large waves, fewer large waves, sleep spindles, and then to the fast ripples of Stage 1. This is the critical point, the beginning of the period during which dreams may occur. . . .

This sort of procedure, repeated many, many times, has revealed a basic dream pattern: The odds are that you have four or five dream periods a night, which take up about 20-to-25 percent of your sleeping time. . . .

Recent studies also confirm the fact that we are all dreamers, even people who tell you they never dream. . . . Contrary to some notions, dreaming is not a mere idling activity, a kind of interesting but essentially trivial cerebral recreation. It is a vital and necessary biological phenomenon. . . .

From one standpoint, dreaming may be regarded as a cathartic mechanism which helps alleviate our most deep-seated anxieties. The idea is that we use everyday experiences in dreams to re-enact our tensions in various forms over and over and over again until they somehow become more familiar and perhaps easier to live with. . . . Recent findings draw attention to the possibility that dreaming is important for biological as well as psychological reasons. . . .

Investigators are beginning to realize that a new and even more basic mystery underlies the ancient mystery of dreaming. As already pointed out, the things that go on during a so-called dream period include: rapid eye movements, body movements, irregular blood pressure, heart and breathing rates, a characteristic type of fast and irregular brain wave. There are further changes which help complicate the story. Studies of the "firings" of nerve cells, the electrical signals they emit, show that the brain is quite active during such periods. In fact, it may be considerably more active than it is during most of the day. . . . The suggested role of dreaming as a sophisticated way of rehearsing for reality takes on new meaning in the light of evolutionary trends. . . .

In this age of science, even the age-old problem of what constitutes happiness has become a subject of scientific research. One of the findings of doctors and psychiatrists, outlined by Paul Brock in the September *Science Digest* under the title "The Ingredients of Happiness," is that intelligence and happiness do not go together. Investigations reveal that intelligent people find more to be discontented about. "Clever" men and women are usually sensitive, highly-strung and nervous, and although it seems to others that they have the greatest capacity for happiness, they themselves have the keenest sense of the lack of it.

Women have been found to have a greater capacity for happiness than men. When a woman's desire for a home and family is satisfied,

she is far happier than the man who is similarly blessed. Men tend more toward restlessness and dissatisfaction.

Hard work is one of the most important factors in making a man happy. Sociologists' findings indicate that men with more leisure are likely to suffer more from boredom and frustration. Comfort and ease are less likely to bring happiness than work.

What Professor C. E. M. Joad once said has been proved again and again: "Work brings happiness, but the pursuit of wealth does not"; yet wealth and happiness are so linked in men's minds that, in a recent "happiness survey" of French men and women money ranked above everything else as essential to happiness. Good health came second, and peace third.

When a thousand elderly people were questioned in a research project sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, U.S.A., they claimed that their happiest years had been between the ages of 25 and 45. The conclusion arrived at was that both men and women were happiest during that period in life when they were working hardest and carrying the greatest responsibilities.

According to Dr. W. Beran Wolfe, psychiatrist of the Institute of Psychiatry in London, science has reached the conclusion that to find happiness we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. This expert believes that

if we live only for ourselves, we are always in immediate danger of being bored to death with the repetition of our own views and interests. . . . Choose a movement that presents a distinct trend toward greater human happiness and join it. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellow men.

The inevitable conclusion the above finding leads to is that there is an eternal bond uniting all human souls, that the individual is an inseparable part of the Whole, and that therefore it is only when the whole of humanity has attained happiness that the individual can hope to become permanently happy. Whenever we think of our own happiness, the voice of Compassion speaks to us and says: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer?" Truly has the Path of Happiness been called the Path of Altruism.

There are doctors today who believe that to understand the mind in all its fullness psychiatry will have to penetrate into realms hitherto believed in only by the "ignorant" and the "superstitious." In the *British Medical Journal*, under the general heading "Scared to Death," much correspondence has ensued following the reporting by a group of doctors of the case of a woman who had been told by a fortune-teller when she was only five that she would die at the age of 43, and so firmly was the idea fixed in her mind that she did die at that age after an operation. The majority of the letters accept the fact that people can die of fright or fear, if the emotion is planted strongly enough in the mind.

One doctor wrote to describe the case of his "first experience with voodoo" when a young Chinese woman had a normal delivery of a child in a hospital in Hong Kong, and then refused to eat, drink or suckle her baby. She explained that she had been told by a fortune-teller that she would die on the sixth day. She did die on that day, and at the inquest no reason could be given for the death. The same doctor recounts the case of a young woman in England who was having a difficult time delivering her baby. When asked if anything was disturbing her, she admitted that a fortune-teller had once told her that either she or her baby would die in childbirth. The doctors were unable to remove this *idée fixe*, so a cæsarean operation was performed. Both mother and child flourished thereafter.

Many other doctors have written from their own experience of people dying without any real cause — either from fear or because of premonitions.

Dr. J. C. Barker, of Shelton Hospital, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, recalls the case of a young Frenchman who had been told that he would die when he was 26, and who, despite the counter-hypnotic suggestion that he would live for 40 years more, did die in his 26th year. Dr. Barker makes an interesting general comment:

Previously it had been suggested that mental phenomena, such as foreknowledge and telepathy, were mediated through the "subliminal self" beneath the threshold of consciousness, a concept introduced by F. W. H. Myers around the turn of this century. It was assumed that this part of the personality was not subject to ordinary temporo-spatial relationships or laws which appertain to consciousness, much in the same way as Freud regarded the unconscious as timeless.

However, the late G. N. M. Tyrrell, a past-president of the Society for Psychical Research, maintained that it was doubtful

whether any real progress had yet been made towards the understanding of precognition.

In addition, an important but curious feature which emerges is the frivolous and irresponsible attitude of many people, including some men of science, towards this subject in general. Such was also the case with regard to hypnosis until relatively recently. What is now unfamiliar tends to be inadmissible and is, therefore, just not accepted, sometimes despite overwhelming supportive evidence. Thus, for generations, the earth was traditionally regarded as flat and those who opposed this notion were bitterly attacked.

Dr. Barker adds his agreement with those others who believe that research into paranormal phenomena may yet yield understanding in a fascinating sphere of human experience.

Apart from the investigation of genuine cases of precognition or prophesying, the dreadful depths of what fear can do to a human being have also to be fully plumbed. The first step in the development of many an ailment is fear. If faith can cure, faith can also kill. The mind-body relationship, when fully investigated, will prove of benefit in more ways than one. As H.P.B. has written:

Half, if not two-thirds of our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and give another bent to the former, and nature will do the rest.

Instances of how once widely accepted medical theories are falsified in the light of later findings go to show the caution that needs to be exercised by doctors and patients alike.

The *West Virginia Medical Journal* says in an editorial that a single blood transfusion is, without doubt, the greatest abuse of blood therapy. If a patient can be treated adequately with a single unit transfusion, there is doubt that the transfusion was needed in the first place. Such transfusions, given largely to "pep up" patients or to make them "look better" before they go home from the hospital, are not as common as in the past, the editorial points out, because it has been realized there are hazards to every transfusion. Infections such as syphilis, malaria and hepatitis may be transmitted through transfusion. According to the American Association of Blood Banks, one out of every 200 transfusions results in hepatitis.

To turn to another instance: Human tonsils, once regarded by medical men as useless, are now believed to have vital functions in developing the individual's resistance against diseases (*The Hindu*, August 30, 1965). According to Dr. Robert A. Good of the University of Minnesota in the United States, indiscriminate tonsilectomies are harmful. Tonsils should never be removed unless tonsil tissue is involved in a severe disease problem like cancer, he says.

Thus, as one scientific discovery follows another, each penetrating ever more deeply into the hitherto "unknown" realm of the life-processes, scientists may be forced from materialistic fortresses once thought impregnable. H.P.B. wrote in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 620):

They will be driven out of their position not by spiritual, theosophical, or any other physical or even mental phenomena, but simply by the enormous *gaps* and *chasms* that open daily and will still be opening before them, as one discovery follows the other, until they are finally knocked off their feet by the ninth wave of simple common sense.

It is not surprising that the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Cornelius, found no support at the Commonwealth Law Conference at Sydney for a suggestion he made for the physical disablement of criminals (*The Hindu*, August 29). The proposal he put forward as an alternative to imprisonment was that the criminal should be "deprived of the use of a hand or even a whole limb" by means of surgery or other methods. The disablement was not to be permanent. Medical science, he said, had advanced so much that it should be in a position to interfere with a nerve or muscle which would render the limb useless for as long as the law considered it necessary. When the criminal reformed, the use of the limb would be restored. In the mean time, he said, the offender would not be totally deprived of the ability to earn his livelihood.

This suggestion was dismissed by fellow members of the judiciary as impractical and inhuman. As the Chief Justice of Uganda, Sir Udo Udoma, said, "It would put us back a thousand years." Modern thinking on dealing with criminals holds that corporal punishment is not effective in making the offender realize that what he has done is wrong. It has been found, in fact, that corporal punishment produces feelings of bitterness and resentment which make the offender more anti-social, more likely to commit further offences. It can exercise no reformative

influence. In assessing the gravity of an offence, it is now felt, several factors have to be considered. Each offender has to be dealt with as an individual, and his whole environment, inner and outer, has to be taken into consideration. It is necessary, moreover, to win the offender back to a life of usefulness to himself and to society, and to enable this to be achieved the treatment accorded to him has to take on the character of a rehabilitative process. The proposal of Mr. Cornelius, which ignores this line of thinking, is impossible of enforcement in the modern world.

As a Master of Wisdom has written:

In the eyes of the "Masters" no one is ever "utterly condemned." As the lost jewel may be recovered from the very depths of the tank's mud, so can the most abandoned snatch himself from the mire of sin, if only the precious Gem of Gems, the sparkling germ of the Atma, is developed. Each of us must do *that* for himself, each *can* if he but will and persevere.

That is the message of hope the criminal needs.

The following obituary appeared in the magazine *Time* for October 8, 1965:

Died: Mayo Buckner, 75, inmate since age eight of Iowa's Glenwood State School for the mentally retarded, who received worldwide publicity in 1957 when it was belatedly discovered that he was of superior intelligence and a gifted performer on eight musical instruments, but was by then so disoriented that he was considered incapable of ever adjusting to a normal life, spent the remaining years as a patient with special privileges, teaching music and working in the print shop; of a stroke; in Glenwood, Iowa.

If Mayo Buckner's musical talent had been discovered early, he would perhaps have been acclaimed as extraordinary a prodigy as "Blind Tom." The latter, as a child, was believed to be so nearly a congenital idiot that it was almost impossible to teach him to talk or to perform the simplest tasks; but he had the good fortune of being "discovered" early in life and began his famous concert career at the age of eight.

How could "Blind Tom," or Mayo Buckner, or hundreds of other prodigies who have appeared to the world's astonishment have acquired

their talents except by personal experience in some previous existence? Reincarnation and memories of past births are presently being investigated, but it still remains to be recognized that prodigies afford instances, not of heredity, but of reincarnation.

In March last year, birds and animals in the Point Defiance Park zoo in Tacoma, Washington, signalled the great Alaska earthquake, 1,500 miles away, with a deafening din (*Reader's Digest*, Indian edition, August 1965). "I was on our veranda overlooking the zoo when suddenly there was a tremendous uproar," said J. H. McMenamin. "First it was the ducks and geese. Then the lions, coyotes and all the rest joined in. The noise was deafening. Only once before was there such an all-out hullabaloo — when we had a big earthquake here in April 1949."

Such cases of animal precognition are reported from time to time. "Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy," wrote a Master of Wisdom. H.P.B., too, refers in *Isis Unveiled* to this mysterious sympathy between all things in Nature, and gives the clue to many omens in *The Theosophist* for July 1882, in an "Editor's Note" to a letter published under the heading "Is Belief in Omens a Superstition?" "It cannot be denied," she writes there, "that there are correspondences, relationships and mutual attractions and repulsions in Nature, the existence of which scientific research is constantly making more apparent. Nor can it be contradicted that, under this law, the theory of omens and portents has some basis of truth." Animals being psychically more sensitive than human beings, it is not surprising that they should sense a natural calamity hours before it actually takes place.
