



THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

A publication of this kind cannot exist without your support, so we welcome all editorial suggestions and seek contributing editors for essays on a wide range of theosophical themes. And, in the true spirit of dialogue and debate we look forward to letters to the editor, comments, and suggestions for the content and themes of this journal.

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to no more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all. The editor will contact the writer prior to publication date – please include a phone number and or email address with all correspondence.

### Board Members

Lois Brisbois, President/Secretary  
104-40 Horseshoe Blvd  
Oro-Medonte, ON L4M 4Y8

Paul J. Carroll, Vice President/Editor  
304-90 Ontario St.,  
Toronto, ON M5A 3V6

Bohdan Wysochanskyj, Treasurer  
66 Brookside Ave.,  
Toronto, ON M6S 4G9

Simon Postma, Director  
3322-112C St.,  
Edmonton, AB T6J 3W8

Stan Treloar, Director  
RR#3, Burks Falls, ON P0A 1CO



# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 10 No. 2

SUMMER/FALL 2019

Price \$5.00

304-90 Ontario Street | Toronto, ON M5A 3V6 | [Paul\\_jCarroll@yahoo.ca](mailto:Paul_jCarroll@yahoo.ca)

Publication Mail Registration Number No.090794. Return Postage Guaranteed. Content ©October 2019

The Theosophical Society in Canada is not responsible for any statement in the Magazine, unless made in an official document.





THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

## IN THIS ISSUE

---

EDITOR'S NOTES ITEM 1

TSC 2019 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ITEM 2

"THE WEB OF LIFE" ITEM 3

ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY ITEM 4

THE LESSER MYSTERIES ITEM 5

BOOK REPORT ITEM 6

## QUOTATION BY W.Q. JUDGE

---

It is true that a man cannot force himself at once into a new will and into a new belief, but by thinking much on the same thing he soon gets a new will and a new belief, and from it will come strength and also light. Try this plan.

## OBJECTIVES:

---

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the Study of Comparative religion, Philosophy and Science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.



## EDITOR'S NOTES

Dues and subscription rates are currently \$20.00 per annum, to those who's payment are current, we express our thanks, others may take this as gentle reminder.

This years AGM will be held at the Cambridge Hotel at 15 Richmond Street East, Toronto, on Nov. 30th.

## TSC 2019 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

I wish to express my gratitude as to having been selected as the recipient for the Theosophical Society in Canada Scholarship; I thank the Society, and all of the members who took part in this decision very much for this generosity!

I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree of Science at the University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, majoring in Computer Science and Geographical Information Systems. If all goes well I would like to take additional courses in Computer Science, as well as a potential Mathematics minor. Receiving this Scholarship makes this task easier and helps in my endeavours. I enjoy Computer Science and Geography as subjects and as areas of study, and thus I am committed in receiving as great of an education as possible. I continue to prioritize learning and would like to gain maximal knowledge and insight in my Program of Study.

I have been a member of the Toronto Theosophical Society for a few years; receiving this Scholarship furthermore inspires me to follow Theosophical values onwards to a higher degree than before. I hope that I'll have the opportunity to give back to the society and the community soon.

– Bogdan Lyashenko





## “THE WEB OF LIFE”

By William David Gardner

(based on a presentation given at the 2009 annual general meeting of the Theosophical Society in Canada)

Perhaps the most important concept presented to mystical aspirant's is the inter-relatedness of all phenomena and life forms within the cosmos, and the ultimate unity within the absolute, most of the time we give lip service to this idea, while in practice, we act as if we were something completely separated from the world in which we live.

Indeed, certain religions encourage the heresy of separateness by defining God as thee holy other, of course, this is wholly nonsense “pun intended”. It would, therefore, be worth thinking about this concept and what it means in terms of our daily life and our spiritual evolution. In the first place, we come to the realization that deity is not definable by to intellect, Eliphas Levi, once quipped that “ Un Dudieu define est un dien fins” this in French, is a triple pun, and it can be translated into English three different ways, 1# “A defined god is finite” 2# “A defined god is dead” 3# “A defined god is obsolete.”

The most common concept of deity by mystics is that of mysti-

cal pantheism, sometimes called pantheism. This concept holds that deity is eminent in all phenomena, but is not limited thereby i.e., deity is also transient, this is the view held, for instance, by the modern Rosicrucian's. Thus, it is technically an error to assert that a mystical aspirant seeks union with God, since that union already exists, and is indivisible. What the aspirant seeks is a conscious realization of that union. That realization is commonly referred to as illumination or Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore, instead of looking for God in some remote place called heaven, the mystic introverts the consciousness and seeks the contact within, at the level on mind and soul, unity also exist.

This means that both have existed eternally and will never cease to exist. This invalidates the idea that God makes a new soul whenever a child is born. It also invalidates the hypothesis of science, that mind only came into existence when chemicals of sufficient complexity first appeared on earth. It might help to conceive of mind and soul as complex fields with multiple focus



rather than as discrete entities. There is a physical analogue that will make this plausible.

Electrons and protons, as charged particles, are surrounded by an electrical field whose magnitude falls off the inverse square of the distance from the particle but never reaches zero, except, theoretically, at infinity. Thus, it may be said that even such humble particles are ubiquitous. If, such basic particles possess such characteristic of universal presents, why should not mind and soul possess it also?

In a finite particle, there are numerous particles, each with its, electro-magnetic field overlapping the others. The apparent discreteness of such particles is an illusion, likewise, by analogy, it may be said of human beings, plants or animals, that their apparent (separation) illusory, particularly at the mental and soular level, all are interconnected. This idea may be familiar to those who have read the works of the French Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhardt de Chardin who coined the term Nousphere, derived from the Greek word "Nous" meaning divine mind to describe what he called "The Thought atmosphere of the earth." The implication of this concept will be discussed a little further on.

Meanwhile, it should be noticed that matter, mind and soul also possess another common property- all are

vibrating. This is one of the seven basic principles of Hermetic philosophy, a modern exposition of which may be found in a little book entitled "The Kybalion" It is this common property that makes possible the interaction of mind and matter, yet modern science and philosophy still have not excepted the validity of this vital key and therefore fail to comprehend how two allegedly wholly distinct phenomena can effect one another. This was the dilemma that Rene Descartes failed to resolve, how some examples of dependency and interconnectedness as experienced in daily life will claim our attention. We live in the world of physical nature. The continued presents of ideas such as the notion that humans must conquer nature, or that nature is different to human needs, still implies that nature is something apart from us when, in fact, it is not.

We have created a great deal of trouble for ourselves because we have not acknowledged our true relationship with nature. This manifests as pollution, extinction of species and (scarcity) of certain resources and most of us realize that we are affecting the earth's climate in ways that might cause aversive effects which could endanger the lives of millions and eventually those of the entire human race, albeit there are those who, blinded by narrow self-interest, refuse to acknowledge the facts of the case.



Counter illustrations of our intimate relationship with nature may be given, but for the moment, let's consider a representative sample of them, a most obvious case is our dependence to the sun. If it did not exist in the form and the place that it is and if it did not maintain a relatively steady output of heat and light, we could not exist as physical beings

For this reason, it becomes understandable as to why Solar worship was so wide spread in the ancient world. We are, likewise, closely linked to the earth, which absorbs solar rays and radiates that heat needed to enable bodily functions to occur. We are, likewise, closely linked to vegetables and animal life, they supply us with food, while the vegetation who provides the oxygen needed for us to breath. Water is another essential, we cannot do without. Similarly, we find uses for all the physical materials on earth. Some dependencies are far subtler than the obvious ones mentioned so far. For instance, we are critically dependent upon the existence of certain microbes in the soil and of earth worms. Without the work they perform vegetation would not grow and we would have nothing to eat. They may be small and normally out of sight, but they are no less important for all of that, of a similar nature are the various Flora that resides in our intestines, were they not there,

performing their essential work, we could not digest our food and thus could not survive as physical entities. In regard to physical existence, these examples should be sufficient to illustrate the multiple relationships that exist.

Now consider our social interdependence, "Margaret Thatcher" once claimed that no such thing as society exist. In other words, what we call society is nothing more than the numerical sum of the people who belong to it. Of course, this is nonsense. In a chemical world, such a claim is untrue, for instance, when Hydrogen and Oxygen combine to form water, the result is not simply weighted combination of two elements, that is something quite different. When human's congregate, the result is something more than the sum of those who belong to the group. Classic example is found in the insect world. If a few Termites are assembled in one place, they will wonder around aimlessly. If we keep adding Termites, a time will come when the random activity ceases and the Termites organize themselves to begin the process of building a nest. This exhibits the phenomenon of group mind, also notable in the case of Bee's and Ant's. More discussion of group mind will follow later on.

Meanwhile, as was done with physical phenomenon consider the many interdependencies of human life.



In reality, these interdependences are nearly endless. We depend upon others to grow and produce our food, we likewise depend upon them for other physical objects we want and need as well as essential services which include, but are not limited to, security, education institutions, medical services, garbage disposal, utilities, etc. So, which one of us, in the face of all the interconnections already mentioned, can claim that we are truly independent? Next consider some of the ways, in which we are psychologically, mentally, interconnected, reference has already been made to the concept of group mind. This is not a phenomenon that is limited to the inert world, it may be found in the higher animals also for instance, we observe it in birds as we witness them fly about in flocks.

While insect colonies, individual characteristics are scarcely noticeable, with birds the existence of individually becomes quite evident. This is especially noticeable in nesting season, when birds become territorial and focus their concerns on their families and less on the group. As anyone who like me, has raised birds knows they exhibit distinctive personalities and can distinguish between persons they like and persons they don't. In effect, the relative importance of group and individual mind changes gradually as one ascends through the evolution-

ary scale, but at neither end is either form of mind 100% dominant.

Thus group mind exists in humans as well, albeit its effects are not always easy to detect. Studies of crowds have shown that people may behave in ways that differ from their normal behaviors. There is indeed, such a thing as "Mob Mentality", however, the reality is more complex and such studies show, the reality is that we are always interconnected, but few people know how to make use of this fact. As we all know, radio, TV, and telephone signals are transmitted and received from place to place, analogously, mental signals maybe transmitted from mind to mind via the cosmic mental field. Such transmissions may take one of the forms-telepathy or projection, of the two, telepathy is the more common and more widely known. Studies have demonstrated that telepathy is not limited to human beings, it's been documented in animals and plants as well. In view of what's been previously said about group mind, it is easy to realize why this can and must be so. Perhaps humans should be embarrassed that plants and animals are more adept at telepathy than we are. We of course, have largely replaced telepathy by objective means of communication, but we have also hampered our ability to use telepathy by our ignorant denial of the very exis-



tence of the ability. While telepathy may be likened to mental radios, projection, more popularly known as astral travel, is like mental television because of visual impression is added to the audio one. There is another difference between the two process. Telepathic message may be pick up by anyone who happen to attune to it. A projection, however is normally is picked up only by the attended receiver. Thus, it more like a private line, whereas Telepathy is more like a private line, whereas telepathy is more like the old- fashion party line. There are rare cases where a multiple projection has occurred.

One such case occurred when the Sage Jetsun Milarepa died, he was seen and heard simultaneously by his pupils in several different countries. Inter-species communication is also possible, for instance, research done by Dr. Rupert Sheldrake indicates that dogs know when their owners are coming home, even when there is an unexpected change of routine. A neighbor of mine was adopted by a pair of Skunks. They accompanied him to the nearby bus stop as he left for work and returned there to meet him as he returned home. Animal trainers attune to their charges telepathically and the animals remain tame. There are of course, other phenomenon that demonstrate the inter- connected-

ness of minds, for instance, two or more scientists or inventors maybe inspired by the same idea simultaneously. A famous case of this type was the discovery of the concept of evolution by Wallace and Darwin.

Again referring to Rupert Sheldrake, arouse the concept of Morphogenetic Fields, for instance, mice in London are taught a new trick, later, in Washington, mice of the same strain, but unrelated to the London mice learned the same trick, but do so faster, as if they had somehow learned it from the other mice. The same phenomenon has been reported with regard to the synthesis of new chemicals. The first time it is tried, the reaction time is slow, but as the process is reproduced in other locations, the reaction time becomes shorter. An analysis of other mental phenomena, such as retro- cognition, pre-cognition, psychokinesis and assumption would likewise demonstrate the phenomenon of inter-connectedness.

Summing up what's been discussed so far, it was noted that unity exist throughout the cosmos, implying that phenomena is interconnected. Examples of interconnections are given in the physical world, human relationships and the inner recesses of mind, the question now to be faced; in what way does this knowledge influence our day to day activities? Might it, for instance, imply a cosmic code of ethics? Con-



tence of the ability. While telepathy may be likened to mental radios, projection, more popularly known as astral travel, is like mental television because of visual impression is added to the audio one. There is another difference between the two process. Telepathic message may be pick up by anyone who happen to attune to it. A projection, however is normally is picked up only by the attended receiver. Thus, it more like a private line, whereas Telepathy is more like a private line, whereas telepathy is more like the old- fashion party line. There are rare cases where a multiple projection has occurred.

One such case occurred when the Sage Jetsun Milarepa died, he was seen and heard simultaneously by his pupils in several different countries. Inter-species communication is also possible, for instance, research done by Dr. Rupert Sheldrake indicates that dogs know when their owners are coming home, even when there is an unexpected change of routine. A neighbor of mine was adopted by a pair of Skunks. They accompanied him to the nearby bus stop as he left for work and returned there to meet him as he returned home. Animal trainers attune to their charges telepathically and the animals remain tame. There are of course, other phenomenon that demonstrate the inter- connected-

ness of minds, for instance, two or more scientists or inventors maybe inspired by the same idea simultaneously. A famous case of this type was the discovery of the concept of evolution by Wallace and Darwin.

Again referring to Rupert Sheldrake, arouse the concept of Morphogenetic Fields, for instance, mice in London are taught a new trick, later, in Washington, mice of the same strain, but unrelated to the London mice learned the same trick, but do so faster, as if they had somehow learned it from the other mice. The same phenomenon has been reported with regard to the synthesis of new chemicals. The first time it is tried, the reaction time is slow, but as the process is reproduced in other locations, the reaction time becomes shorter. An analysis of other mental phenomena, such as retro- cognition, pre-cognition, psychokinesis and assumption would likewise demonstrate the phenomenon of inter-connectedness.

Summing up what's been discussed so far, it was noted that unity exist throughout the cosmos, implying that phenomena is interconnected. Examples of interconnections are given in the physical world, human relationships and the inner recesses of mind, the question now to be faced; in what way does this knowledge influence our day to day activities? Might it, for instance, imply a cosmic code of ethics? Con-



siderations of such questions might prove worthwhile.

Among the ideas that come to mind are the following: (1) there is a valid reason to conclude that a genuine bases exists for universal brotherhood. However, just as much fail to recognize there already existing union with the absolute, so, also, they fail to recognize their proper relationship with all other human beings. Instead, they divide the rest of humanity into them and us, thereby creating "The Heresy of Separateness". Whatever we do, and whatever we think, will eventually have some effect upon others. This last point is not generally recognized, yet the earth has a thought atmosphere (Noosphere). We are subtly influenced by it, but in turn, we also influence it, for good or for ill as the case may be. For instance, we may use the universal mind to send thoughts of healing to one who is ill, or in emotional distress. Science has been reluctant to accept the possibility of absent healing, but those who have experienced such a healing are in no have doubts about it.

(2) We are intimately related to all other life forms on the planet. We, therefore, have a responsibility to do all that we can to preserve its quality of life. The more enlightened of us have already realized this.

We all need to become "Friends of the earth". (3) We can learn to attune ourselves to the "Master Within", by which we may expand our consciousness and put ourselves in touch with the wisdom of the cosmic, by becoming intuitive and creative, we may avoid making so many mistakes and having to endure the karmic results thereof. We will become healthier, more successful and certainly happier than we are now.

(4) We may through practise, reawaken our latent abilities such as telepathy, projection and the like, for some, this is controversial advice. They argue that abilities are a distraction and that they will be misused by persons that do not exhibit high moral and ethical standards. The attainment or the latter, is, or should be, our first priority, never the less, the argument against the development and use of so-called psychic powers is a weak one. If the potential for misuse is the chief concern, then it might plausibly be argued that we should not use our bodies, our intellect, or our emotions, because we misused them also. The other point to ponder is this, why would such abilities be latent in us if they were never intended to be used?

Many young children exhibit many of them spontaneously, but are dis-



couraged from using them by adults with the result that they atrophy, it is simply not true, as the critics referred to earlier alleged, that they will manifest spontaneously when a person is sufficiently evolved to use them responsibly.

They are skills, as such, they develop through practise in the same way as any other skill with which we may be familiar. As these example show, it makes a great deal of difference to our approach to life if we recognize that we live in a participatory universe where everything is inter-related. This recognition must be more than one of intellectual assent, it must be lived, perhaps, it is not simply coincidence that the internet is called the "World Wide Web." Indeed, the symbol of the web is most appropriate for the ideas under discussion and it inspired the title of this presentation. May we all meditate on these ideas and resolve to create a state of harmony within ourselves and with the rest of the universe.



## ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

By G. de Purucker

I would like to speak very briefly on two small points of fact, and then refer to the origins of Christianity. The two points of fact first: It has been stated, and erroneously according to the writings of Origen that still remain, that he taught Reincarnation as we modern Theosophists understand this term. That is not the fact, because this term as we use it has a specific technical meaning which we understand. He undoubtedly did teach pre-existence of the human soul and of the souls of the stars and of the beasts and of all animate things; and there is a passage which I have quoted in my book, *The Esoteric Tradition*, also, where he teaches Reimbodiment on earth after a manner of his own, in which he even goes so far as to say that it is quite possible for an Egyptian in his next life to be born as an Israelite or a Hebrew, and after that as a Scythian or something else. There is just one feeble passage, I believe, alluding to this, however. Undoubtedly in his day he taught more than has come down to us; and it is likewise true that he taught some very interesting things, things that we Theosophists can perceive instantly and understand because we have ourselves received this wonderful teaching and have studied it. Our studies have given us

keys by which, as I have often said, we can understand and penetrate beneath the surface-meanings of the great literatures of past ages; but the ordinary person who has not been trained theosophically may not understand these doctrines of yore as we may understand them through the blessed gift of Theosophy that we have received.

Now the other point of fact is this: "Dionysius of the Areopagus" is a legendary figure. It has even been doubted by many people, eminent Christian scholars themselves, that such a man ever existed. All that is known about him is a statement in the Christian New Testament to the effect that Paul of the Christians one day was addressing the citizens of Athens, and speaking on the Hill of Ares, the Hill of Mars, in Greek called the Areopagos, and a man there who was deeply intent upon the speaker's words came to him afterwards, and his name was Dionysius. And Christian legend, story, myth, has it that this man became the first Christian Bishop of Athens. A legend! If anything has been proved, it has been proved that this man referred to in the Christian New Testament was not the author of those mystical writings which pass under the name of Dionysian.



After the Origenistic controversies had died down and even some time before, it was found that there were current in some of the Christian sects certain writings which attributed themselves to an author called Dionysius; and the Christians, pointing to the statement in the Christian New Testament, said: "Aha, the first Christian Bishop of Athens wrote this." There was no reason for saying so, but people were very credulous in those days; and the writings were accepted as those of the first Christian Bishop of Athens, the man who stood on Mars' Hill and listened to the Apostle Paul preaching. Undoubtedly these writings are extremely interesting and contain a good deal of what we would call esoteric fact garmented under Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic guise.

Now I want to say something about the origins of Christianity. I suppose you will agree with me that there is no controversial subject which has been so bitterly disputed, pro and con and back and forth, and so much argued about, as the origins of Christianity. The Christians of course hold the orthodox view which we all know. But scholars almost innumerable have taken exception to the orthodox Christian story. They have asked very embarrassing questions: "What proof is there in what you call profane history that this one individual that you call Jesus the Christ even lived?

There is absolutely no proof in ancient literature of any kind except in your own Christian scriptures, the four Gospels: origin unknown, origin disputed, full of contradictions themselves. Show us some proof that your Jesus Christ existed." No proof is forthcoming — there is none which is indubitable. That is an instance!

Now of course I think there is no possible doubt that the great man, semi-divine man, whom the Greeks call a man-god or a god-man, later known as Jesus called the Christos, the Christ, did live, did teach, and did do his work in the world. We Theosophists accept that; but there is not any exoteric proof of it. Not a single profane writer in Greece or Rome speaks of him until more than a hundred or two hundred years after his alleged date of birth, when his name had become familiar in the Graeco-Roman world through the labors of the Christians themselves. Then naturally the Greek and Roman historians began to talk about it. There are two passages which might seem to contradict this: one from the Jewish historian Josephus, one from the Latin historian Tacitus. But it has been proved that the reference found in Josephus is a forgery, an interpolation at some later date evidently by some Christian hand, so we can strike that out. And Tacitus falls under the same suspicion!



I have just alluded to these not to take up time in interesting historical controversy, but to point to a fact. How did Christianity arise? What was its origin? These are very difficult subjects even to speak of today. There are so many splendid people in the Christian Church that one hesitates to say a word that would seem to be unsympathetic, unfriendly to the yearnings of their hearts, the aspirations of their souls. But this is no place for sympathy alone — we are students of truth and fact; and the holiest sympathy is honor and truthful speech. You cannot heal the woes of a man's heart by lying to him — not for long!

Christianity arose in an effort on the part of the Initiates of the day to stem the tide of degeneration and immorality which had become so strong, which was running so powerfully. Original Christianity was a Sanctuary-teaching, that is a teaching of the Adytum, of the inner part of the Temple. They took the noble figure of Jesus, Yeshua, as his real name should be pronounced (a Hebrew name which means 'Savior,' by the way, which is interesting), — they took this ideal figure as a teacher and built around it as the central figure of initiation what took place in the Adyta, and gave out these teachings, these facts, in thinly disguised allegory. Result: the Four Gospels. That is why they differ among themselves to a large extent. That is why they are so

greatly alike. This is the reason of the contradictions which have been pointed out by scholars galore. They were not written as a faithful historical record of the life and work of a Jewish Rabbi, a Jewish teacher, but were written by four individual Initiates giving forth the fundamental mystery-teaching of the Sanctuary, and using the figure of the noble Avatar-Jesus as a peg on which to hang the wondrous story.

Let me remind you that no one knows who wrote these gospels; no one knows when they were written; the utmost labors of Christian scholarship have not enabled anyone to answer these two simple facts: Who wrote the gospels? When were they written? All that such scholarship can do is to point as approximations to a time-period and say: We can trace them back thus far. Beyond that. . . Who wrote them? Simple faith says: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Scholarship points out that these gospels themselves show they were written 'according to' Matthew, 'according to' Mark, 'according to' Luke, 'according to' John. Suppose The Secret Doctrine was a book whose authorship was unknown and that it simply bore on its title-page, not "H. P. Blavatsky," but "The Secret Doctrine, according to H. P. Blavatsky." Do you catch the point I am trying to state?

Now then, when these four Gospels were issued, by this time there



were Christians more or less all over the Roman Empire which then included the Greek world; and these four Gospels were accepted. Why? Answer your own question. They were accepted because some people liked them. They told a beautiful story, a mystical story, a story which had a great appeal to the human heart. Some people liked them and accepted them. Other people did not like them and would not accept them; but those who did accept them handed them to their friends; and by and by the result was that the Christian Church with all its various sects, was thus formed with its four orthodox Gospels. And let me remind you that so slightly were some of the most fundamental teachings of Christianity understood even by the Christians themselves, that some centuries later the so-called controversy of the procession of the two persons of the Trinity from the Father rent the Christian Church in twain, one being the Church of Rome, the other, the so-called Greek Orthodox Church, likewise of Russia. This was the so-called filioque controversy: filioque meaning "and from the Son," the idea being that the Church of Rome, representing the Western world, said that the Holy Ghost issued or proceeded "from the Father and from the Son"; whereas the Greek Church claimed that it held to the teaching of the early Christian Fathers in proclaiming that the Holy Ghost proceeded

from the Father, and then the Son from the Holy Ghost. In other words, the Western Church taught the procession as: Father, Son, Holy Ghost; the Greek Church taught it as: Father, Mother (Holy Ghost) originally the divine feminine parent, feminine in character; and the spirit of love, from which proceeded the Holy Ghost's Son — its offspring, the Logos or Son.

I could talk to you for ten days and ten nights, and I would still have to come back to the one fact, I believe, which interests us. It is this: That Christianity originated in a very early and very earnest effort of men and women, whom we today would call Theosophists, quasi-initiates, who endeavored to set a teaching current in the world which would give peace to men's hearts, light to their minds, and strength to meet life's problems and difficulties, and thus stem the tide of degeneration and immorality. It failed. It did its work partially and then failed, and the result was a tremendously powerful, wholly exoteric Church which today actually is going to pieces. Why? Because the spirit of its human-divine Founder Jesus the Christ, has fled; and it had fled even within 300 years from the alleged date of the life-time of Jesus — and nobody knows when he actually lived! There was absolutely no proof that he lived when he is alleged to have lived.



In other words again, earliest primitive Christianity was a movement of very earnest Theosophists and quasi-Theosophists who knew something of the teachings of the Sanctuary, such as Origen who had himself been through the rites at Eleusis in Greece. Of course, in those days the rites at Eleusis were very degenerate; they had become only a form, but there was still something; these men had learned something there. But very soon the Christian movement got out of hand. Men lost the wish to guide and teach their fellowmen along spiritual lines only; and instead they gained the wish for power, for prominence, for position, for personal property. The result is the Christian Church as we have it today, the Christian Movement as we have it today in all its various branches. I know what I speak of, Companions. My own father was a clergyman. He destined me for the Church. But I did not enter it. I could not. I dare say that I spent the years between 12 and 18 of this body in one of the most heart-searching, industrious studies of Christian origins and Christian evidence that it has ever been the lot of a poor

tortured lad to go through. When I say tortured, I mean torture of heart and mind. It cost me not a little to disappoint my father whom I worshiped. But I could not follow his wish!

But thus I found that those men who mock at Christianity are foolish. Let them mock at the hypocrisy, let them expose the insincerity. All that is perhaps proper. There have to be destroyers in the world, they are sometimes needed. But any man — and this I know from my own study — any man who looks upon Christianity merely as a system originally based upon priestcraft, deception, and imposture, is either a knave or a fool. That is my opinion. You will never find any Theosophist saying one word against the teachings of the Avatar-Jesus. How can we, how could we? He is one of our own! But his teachings are not the degenerate Church which has departed from them and forgotten them. Yet even today there dwell the gleams of the evening sunset in the so-called Church of Christ; there still remains something of the original aroma coming from that great god-



man's brain and heart — an entity at least — truly a suggestion of higher and nobler things than the merely material notions of the blind world around us!

So, to me, Christianity when understood and explained, is theosophical: I would not say that it is Theosophy, but it is theosophical; and even the Christian Church has enough in it to merit our respect and kindly thought. The mere fact that the ray streaming from its great Founder's heart even at this late day can give encouragement after a manner, and help after a manner, to the thousands, or tens of thousands — they used to be tens of millions! — who still are earnest Christians, shows that in the Christian Church yet the night is not fully fallen, the light has not absolutely failed.





## THE LESSER MYSTERIES

By Annie Besant

Chapter I.

### THE HIDDEN SIDE OF RELIGIONS.

Many, perhaps most, who see the title of this book will at once traverse it, and will deny that there is anything valuable which can be rightly described as "Esoteric Christianity." There is a wide-spread, and withal a popular, idea that there is no such thing as an occult teaching in connection with Christianity, and that "The Mysteries," whether Lesser or Greater, were a purely Pagan institution. The very name of "The Mysteries of Jesus," so familiar in the ears of the Christians of the first centuries, would come with a shock of surprise on those of their modern successors, and, if spoken as<sup>2</sup> denoting a special and definite institution in the Early Church, would cause a smile of incredulity. It has actually been made a matter of boast that Christianity has no secrets, that whatever it has to say it says to all, and whatever it has to teach it teaches to all. Its truths are supposed to be so simple, that "a way-faring man, though a fool, may not err therein," and the "simple Gospel" has become a stock phrase.

It is necessary, therefore, to prove clearly that in the Early Church, at least, Christianity was no whit

behind other great religions in possessing a hidden side, and that it guarded, as a priceless treasure, the secrets revealed only to a select few in its Mysteries. But ere doing this it will be well to consider the whole question of this hidden side of religions, and to see why such a side must exist if a religion is to be strong and stable; for thus its existence in Christianity will appear as a foregone conclusion, and the references to it in the writings of the Christian Fathers will appear simple and natural instead of surprising and unintelligible. As a historical<sup>3</sup> fact, the existence of this esotericism is demonstrable; but it may also be shown that intellectually it is a necessity.

The first question we have to answer is: What is the object of religions? They are given to the world by men wiser than the masses of the people on whom they are bestowed, and are intended to quicken human evolution. In order to do this effectively they must reach individuals and influence them. Now all men are not at the same level of evolution, but evolution might be figured as a rising gradient, with men stationed on it at every point. The most highly evolved are far above the least evolved, both



in intelligence and character; the capacity alike to understand and to act varies at every stage. It is, therefore, useless to give to all the same religious teaching; that which would help the intellectual man would be entirely unintelligible to the stupid, while that which would throw the saint into ecstasy would leave the criminal untouched. If, on the other hand, the teaching be suitable to help the unintelligent, it is intolerably crude and jejune to the philosopher, while<sup>4</sup> that which redeems the criminal is utterly useless to the saint. Yet all the types need religion, so that each may reach upward to a life higher than that which he is leading, and no type or grade should be sacrificed to any other. Religion must be as graduated as evolution, else it fails in its object.

Next comes the question: In what way do religions seek to quicken human evolution? Religions seek to evolve the moral and intellectual natures, and to aid the spiritual nature to unfold itself. Regarding man as a complex being, they seek to meet him at every point of his constitution, and therefore to bring messages suitable for each, teachings adequate to the most diverse human needs. Teachings must therefore be adapted to each mind and heart to which they are addressed. If a religion does not reach and master the intelligence, if it does not purify and inspire the emotions, it has failed in its object,

so far as the person addressed is concerned.

Not only does it thus direct itself to the intelligence and the emotions, but it seeks, as said, to stimulate the unfoldment of the spiritual nature. It answers to that inner impulse which exists in humanity, and which is ever pushing the race onwards. For deeply within the heart of all—often overlaid by transitory conditions, often submerged under pressing interests and anxieties—there exists a continual seeking after God. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth" humanity after God. The search is sometimes checked for a space, and the yearning seems to disappear. Phases recur in civilisation and in thought, wherein this cry of the human Spirit for the divine—seeking its source as water seeks its level, to borrow a simile from Giordano Bruno—this yearning of the human Spirit for that which is akin to it in the universe, of the part for the whole, seems to be stilled, to have vanished; none the less does that yearning reappear, and once more the same cry rings out from the Spirit. Trampled on for a time, apparently destroyed, though the tendency may be, it rises again and again with inextinguishable persistence, it<sup>6</sup> repeats itself again and again, no matter how often it is silenced; and it thus proves itself to be an inherent tendency in human nature, an ineradicable constituent thereof. Those



who declare triumphantly, "Lo! it is dead!" find it facing them again with undiminished vitality. Those who build without allowing for it find their well-constructed edifices riven as by an earthquake. Those who hold it to be outgrown find the wildest superstitions succeed its denial. So much is it an integral part of humanity, that man will have some answer to his questionings; rather an answer that is false, than none. If he cannot find religious truth, he will take religious error rather than no religion, and will accept the crudest and most incongruous ideals rather than admit that the ideal is non-existent.

Religion, then, meets this craving, and taking hold of the constituent in human nature that gives rise to it, trains it, strengthens it, purifies it and guides it towards its proper ending—the union of the human Spirit with the divine, so "that God may be all in all." The next question which meets us in our enquiry is: What is the source of religions? To this question two answers have been given in modern times—that of the Comparative Mythologists and that of the Comparative Religionists. Both base their answers on a common basis of admitted facts. Research has indisputably proved that the religions of the world are markedly similar in their main teachings, in their possession of Founders who display superhuman powers and extraordinary moral

elevation, in their ethical precepts, in their use of means to come into touch with invisible worlds, and in the symbols by which they express their leading beliefs. This similarity, amounting in many cases to identity, proves—according to both the above schools—a common origin.

But on the nature of this common origin the two schools are at issue. The Comparative Mythologists contend that the common origin is the common ignorance, and that the loftiest religious doctrines are simply refined expressions of the crude and barbarous guesses of savages, of primitive men, regarding themselves and their surroundings. Animism, fetishism, nature-worship, sun-worship—these are the constituents of the primeval mud out of which has grown the splendid lily of religion. A Krishna, a Buddha, a Lao-tze, a Jesus, are the highly civilised but lineal descendants of the whirling medicine-man of the savage. God is a composite photograph of the innumerable Gods who are the personifications of the forces of nature. And so forth. It is all summed up in the phrase: Religions are branches from a common trunk—human ignorance.

The Comparative Religionists consider, on the other hand, that all religions originate from the teachings of Divine Men, who give out to the different nations of the world, from time to time, such parts of the



fundamental verities of religion as the people are capable of receiving, teaching ever the same morality, inculcating the use of similar means, employing the same significant symbols. The savage religions—animism and the rest—are degenerations, the results of decadence, distorted and dwarfed descendants of true<sup>9</sup> religious beliefs. Sun-worship and pure forms of nature-worship were, in their day, noble religions, highly allegorical but full of profound truth and knowledge. The great Teachers—it is alleged by Hindus, Buddhists, and by some Comparative Religionists, such as Theosophists—form an enduring Brotherhood of men who have risen beyond humanity, who appear at certain periods to enlighten the world, and who are the spiritual guardians of the human race. This view may be summed up in the phrase: "Religions are branches from a common trunk—Divine Wisdom."

This Divine Wisdom is spoken of as the Wisdom, the Gnosis, the Theosophia, and some, in different ages of the world, have so desired to emphasise their belief in this unity of religions, that they have preferred the eclectic name of Theosophist to any narrower designation. The relative value of the contentions of these two opposed schools must be judged by the cogency of the evidence put forth by each. The appearance of a degenerate form of a noble idea may closely resem-

ble<sup>10</sup> that of a refined product of a coarse idea, and the only method of deciding between degeneration and evolution would be the examination, if possible, of intermediate and remote ancestors. The evidence brought forward by believers in the Wisdom is of this kind. They allege: that the Founders of religions, judged by the records of their teachings, were far above the level of average humanity; that the Scriptures of religions contain moral precepts, sublime ideals, poetical aspirations, profound philosophical statements, which are not even approached in beauty and elevation by later writings in the same religions—that is, that the old is higher than the new, instead of the new being higher than the old; that no case can be shown of the refining and improving process alleged to be the source of current religions, whereas many cases of degeneracy from pure teachings can be adduced; that even among savages, if their religions be carefully studied, many traces of lofty ideas can be found, ideas which are obviously above the productive capacity of the savages themselves.

This last idea has been worked out by Mr. Andrew Lang, who—judging by his book on *The Making of Religion*—should be classed as a Comparative Religionist rather than as a Comparative Mythologist. He points to the existence of a common tradition, which, he alleges, cannot



have been evolved by the savages for themselves, being men whose ordinary beliefs are of the crudest kind and whose minds are little developed. He shows, under crude beliefs and degraded views, lofty traditions of a sublime character, touching the nature of the Divine Being and His relations with men. The deities who are worshipped are, for the most part, the veriest devils, but behind, beyond all these, there is a dim but glorious over-arching Presence, seldom or never named, but whispered of as source of all, as power and love and goodness, too tender to awaken terror, too good to require supplication. Such ideas manifestly cannot have been conceived by the savages among whom they are found, and they remain as eloquent witnesses of the revelations made by some great Teacher—dim tradition of 12 whom is generally also discoverable—who was a Son of the Wisdom, and imparted some of its teachings in a long bye-gone age.

The reason, and, indeed, the justification, of the view taken by the Comparative Mythologists is patent. They found in every direction low forms of religious belief, existing among savage tribes. These were seen to accompany general lack of civilisation. Regarding civilised men as evolving from uncivilised, what more natural than to regard civilised religion as evolving from uncivilised? It is the first obvious idea. Only later

and deeper study can show that the savages of to-day are not our ancestral types, but are the degenerated offsprings of great civilised stocks of the past, and that man in his infancy was not left to grow up untrained, but was nursed and educated by his elders, from whom he received his first guidance alike in religion and civilisation. This view is being substantiated by such facts as those dwelt on by Lang, and will presently raise the question, "Who were these elders, of whom traditions are everywhere found?"

Still pursuing our enquiry, we come next to the question: To what people were religions given? And here we come at once to the difficulty with which every Founder of a religion must deal, that already spoken of as bearing on the primary object of religion itself, the quickening of human evolution, with its corollary that all grades of evolving humanity must be considered by Him. Men are at every stage of evolution, from the most barbarous to the most developed; men are found of lofty intelligence, but also of the most unevolved mentality; in one place there is a highly developed and complex civilisation, in another a crude and simple polity. Even within any given civilisation we find the most varied types—the most ignorant and the most educated, the most thoughtful and the most careless, the most spiritual and the most brutal; yet each one



of these types must be reached, and each must be helped in the place where he is. If evolution be true, this difficulty is inevitable, and must be faced and overcome by the divine Teacher, else will His work be a failure. If man is<sup>14</sup> evolving as all around him is evolving, these differences of development, these varied grades of intelligence, must be a characteristic of humanity everywhere, and must be provided for in each of the religions of the world.

We are thus brought face to face with the position that we cannot have one and the same religious teaching even for a single nation, still less for a single civilisation, or for the whole world. If there be but one teaching, a large number of those to whom it is addressed will entirely escape its influence. If it be made suitable for those whose intelligence is limited, whose morality is elementary, whose perceptions are obtuse, so that it may help and train them, and thus enable them to evolve, it will be a religion utterly unsuitable for those men, living in the same nation, forming part of the same civilisation, who have keen and delicate moral perceptions, bright and subtle intelligence, and evolving spirituality. But if, on the other hand, this latter class is to be helped, if intelligence is to be given a philosophy that it can regard as admirable, if delicate moral<sup>15</sup> perceptions are to be still further refined, if the dawning

spiritual nature is to be enabled to develop into the perfect day, then the religion will be so spiritual, so intellectual, and so moral, that when it is preached to the former class it will not touch their minds or their hearts, it will be to them a string of meaningless phrases, incapable of arousing their latent intelligence, or of giving them any motive for conduct which will help them to grow into a purer morality.

Looking, then, at these facts concerning religion, considering its object, its means, its origin, the nature and varying needs of the people to whom it is addressed, recognising the evolution of spiritual, intellectual, and moral faculties in man, and the need of each man for such training as is suitable for the stage of evolution at which he has arrived, we are led to the absolute necessity of a varied and graduated religious teaching, such as will meet these different needs and help each man in his own place.

There is yet another reason why esoteric teaching is desirable with respect to a<sup>16</sup> certain class of truths. It is eminently the fact in regard to this class that "knowledge is power." The public promulgation of a philosophy profoundly intellectual, sufficient to train an already highly developed intellect, and to draw the allegiance of a lofty mind, cannot injure any. It can be preached without hesi-



tation, for it does not attract the ignorant, who turn away from it as dry, stiff, and uninteresting. But there are teachings which deal with the constitution of nature, explain recondite laws, and throw light on hidden processes, the knowledge of which gives control over natural energies, and enables its possessor to direct these energies to certain ends, as a chemist deals with the production of chemical compounds. Such knowledge may be very useful to highly developed men, and may much increase their power of serving the race. But if this knowledge were published to the world, it might and would be misused, just as the knowledge of subtle poisons was misused in the Middle Ages by the Borgias and by others. It would pass into the hands of people of strong<sup>17</sup> intellect, but of unregulated desires, men moved by separative instincts, seeking the gain of their separate selves and careless of the common good. They would be attracted by the idea of gaining powers which would raise them above the general level, and place ordinary humanity at their mercy, and would rush to acquire the knowledge which exalts its possessors to a superhuman rank. They would, by its possession, become yet more selfish and confirmed in their separateness, their pride would be nourished and their sense of aloofness intensified, and thus they would inevitably be driven along the road which leads to diab-

olism, the Left Hand Path, whose goal is isolation and not union. And they would not only themselves suffer in their inner nature, but they would also become a menace to Society, already suffering sufficiently at the hands of men whose intellect is more evolved than their conscience. Hence arises the necessity of withholding certain teachings from those who, morally, are as yet unfitted to receive them; and this necessity presses on every Teacher who is able to impart such knowledge. He desires to give it to those who will use the powers it confers for the general good, for quickening human evolution; but he equally desires to be no party to giving it to those who would use it for their own aggrandisement at the cost of others.

Nor is this a matter of theory only, according to the Occult Records, which give the details of the events alluded to in Genesis vi. et seq. This knowledge was, in those ancient times and on the continent of Atlantis, given without any rigid conditions as to the moral elevation, purity, and unselfishness of the candidates. Those who were intellectually qualified were taught, just as men are taught ordinary science in modern days. The publicity now so imperiously demanded was then given, with the result that men became giants in knowledge but also giants in evil, till the earth groaned under her oppressors and



the cry of a trampled humanity rang through the worlds. Then came the destruction of Atlantis, the whelming of that vast continent beneath the waters of the ocean, some particulars of which are given<sup>19</sup> in the Hebrew Scriptures in the story of the Noachian deluge, and in the Hindu Scriptures of the further East in the story of Vaivasvata Manu.

Since that experience of the danger of allowing unpurified hands to grasp the knowledge which is power, the great Teachers have imposed rigid conditions as regards purity, unselfishness, and self-control on all candidates for such instruction. They distinctly refuse to impart knowledge of this kind to any who will not consent to a rigid discipline, intended to eliminate separateness of feeling and interest. They measure the moral strength of the candidate even more than his intellectual development, for the teaching itself will develope the intellect while it puts a strain on the moral nature. Far better that the Great Ones should be assailed by the ignorant for Their supposed selfishness in withholding knowledge, than that They should precipitate the world into another Atlantean catastrophe.

So much of theory we lay down as bearing on the necessity of a hidden side in all religions. When from theory we<sup>20</sup> turn to facts, we naturally ask: Has this hidden

side existed in the past, forming a part of the religions of the world? The answer must be an immediate and unhesitating affirmative; every great religion has claimed to possess a hidden teaching, and has declared that it is the repository of theoretical mystic, and further of practical mystic, or occult, knowledge. The mystic explanation of popular teaching was public, and expounded the latter as an allegory, giving to crude and irrational statements and stories a meaning which the intellect could accept. Behind this theoretical mysticism, as it was behind the popular, there existed further the practical mysticism, a hidden spiritual teaching, which was only imparted under definite conditions, conditions known and published, that must be fulfilled by every candidate. S. Clement of Alexandria mentions this division of the Mysteries. After purification, he says, "are the Minor Mysteries, which have some foundation of instruction and of preliminary preparation for what is to come after; and the Great Mysteries, in which nothing remains to be learned of<sup>21</sup> the universe, but only to contemplate and comprehend nature and things."

This position cannot be controverted as regards the ancient religions. The Mysteries of Egypt were the glory of that ancient land, and the noblest sons of Greece, such as Plato, went to Saïs and to Thebes to be initiated by Egyptian Teachers



of Wisdom. The Mithraic Mysteries of the Persians, the Orphic and Bacchic Mysteries and the later Eleusinian semi-Mysteries of the Greeks, the Mysteries of Samothrace, Scythia, Chaldea, are familiar in name, at least, as household words. Even in the extremely diluted form of the Eleusinian Mysteries, their value is most highly praised by the most eminent men of Greece, as Pindar, Sophocles, Isocrates, Plutarch, and Plato. Especially were they regarded as useful with regard to post-mortem existence, as the Initiated learned that which ensured his future happiness. Sopater further alleged that Initiation established a kinship of the soul with the divine Nature, and in<sup>22</sup> the exoteric Hymn to Demeter covert references are made to the holy child, Iacchus, and to his death and resurrection, as dealt with in the Mysteries.

From Iamblichus, the great theurgist of the third and fourth centuries A.D., much may be learned as to the object of the Mysteries. Theurgy was magic, "the last part of the sacerdotal science," and was practised in the Greater Mysteries, to evoke the appearance of superior Beings. The theory on which these Mysteries were based may be very briefly thus stated: There is One, prior to all beings, immovable, abiding in the solitude of His own unity. From That arises the Supreme God, the Self-begotten, the Good, the Source of all things, the Root,

the God of Gods, the First Cause, unfolding Himself into Light. From Him springs the Intelligible World, or ideal universe, the Universal Mind, the Nous and the incorporeal<sup>23</sup> or intelligible Gods belong to this. From this the World-Soul, to which belong the "divine intellectual forms which are present with the visible bodies of the Gods." Then come various hierarchies of superhuman beings, Archangels, Archons (Rulers) or Cosmocratores, Angels, Daimons, &c. Man is a being of a lower order, allied to these in his nature, and is capable of knowing them; this knowledge was achieved in the Mysteries, and it led to union with God. In the Mysteries these<sup>24</sup> doctrines are expounded, "the progression from, and the regression of all things to, the One, and the entire domination of the One," and, further, these different Beings were evoked, and appeared, sometimes to teach, sometimes, by Their mere presence, to elevate and purify. "The Gods," says Iamblichus, "being benevolent and propitious, impart their light to theurgists in unenvying abundance, calling upwards their souls to themselves, procuring them a union with themselves, and accustoming them, while they are yet in body, to be separated from bodies, and to be led round to their eternal and intelligible principle." For "the soul having a twofold life, one being in conjunction with body, but the other being separate from all body," it is most necessary to



learn to separate it from the body, that thus it may unite itself with the Gods by its intellectual and divine part, and learn the genuine principles of knowledge, and the truths of the intelligible world. "The presence of the Gods, indeed, imparts to us health of body, virtue of soul, purity of intellect, and, in one word, elevates everything in us to its proper nature. It exhibits that which is not body as body to the eyes of the soul, through those of the body." When the Gods appear, the soul receives "a liberation from the passions, a transcendent perfection, and an energy entirely more excellent, and participates of divine love and an immense joy." By this we gain a divine life, and are rendered in reality divine. The culminating point of the Mysteries was when the Initiate became a God, whether by union with a divine Being outside himself, or by the realisation of the divine Self within him. This was termed ecstasy, and was a state of what the Indian Yogî would term high Samâdhi, the gross body being entranced and the freed soul effecting its own union with the Great One. This "ecstasy is not a faculty properly so called, it is a state of the soul, which transforms it in such a way that it then perceives what was previously hidden from it. The state will not be permanent until our union with God is irrevocable; here, in earth life, ecstasy is but a flash.... Man can cease to become man, and become God; but man cannot

be God and man at the same time." Plotinus states that he had reached this state "but three times as yet."

So also Proclus taught that the one salvation of the soul was to return to her intellectual form, and thus escape from the "circle of generation, from abundant wanderings," and reach true Being, "to the uniform and simple energy of the period of sameness, instead of the abundantly wandering motion of the period which is characterised by difference." This<sup>27</sup> is the life sought by those initiated by Orpheus into the Mysteries of Bacchus and Proserpine, and this is the result of the practice of the purificatory, or cathartic, virtues.

These virtues were necessary for the Greater Mysteries, as they concerned the purifying of the subtle body, in which the soul worked when out of the gross body. The political or practical virtues belonged to man's ordinary life, and were required to some extent before he could be a candidate even for such a School as is described below. Then came the cathartic virtues, by which the subtle body, that of the emotions and lower mind, was purified; thirdly the intellectual, belonging to the Augöeides, or the light-form of the intellect; fourthly the contemplative, or paradigmatic, by which union with God was realised. Porphyry writes: "He who energises according to the prac-



tical virtues is a worthy man; but he who energises according to the purifying virtues is an angelic man, or is also a good daimon. He who energises according to the intellectual<sup>28</sup> virtues alone is a God; but he who energises according to the paradigmatic virtues is the Father of the Gods."

Much instruction was also given in the Mysteries by the archangelic and other hierarchies, and Pythagoras, the great teacher who was initiated in India, and who gave "the knowledge of things that are" to his pledged disciples, is said to have possessed such a knowledge of music that he could use it for the controlling of men's wildest passions, and the illuminating of their minds. Of this, instances are given by Iamblichus in his Life of Pythagoras. It seems probable that the title of Theodidakto<sup>s</sup>, given to Ammonius Saccas, the master of Plotinus, referred less to the sublimity of his teachings than to this divine instruction received by him in the Mysteries. Some of the symbols used are explained by Iamblichus, who bids Porphyry remove from his thought the image of the thing symbolised and reach its intellectual meaning. Thus "mire" meant everything<sup>29</sup> that was bodily and material; the "God sitting above the lotus" signified that God transcended both the mire and the intellect, symbolised by the lotus, and was established in Himself, being seated. If "sailing in

a ship," His rule over the world was pictured. And so on. On this use of symbols Proclus remarks that "the Orphic method aimed at revealing divine things by means of symbols, a method common to all writers of divine lore."

The Pythagorean School in Magna Græcia was closed at the end of the sixth century B.C., owing to the persecution of the civil power, but other communities existed, keeping up the sacred tradition. Mead states that Plato intellectualised it, in order to protect it from an increasing profanation, and the Eleusinian rites preserved some of its forms, having lost its substance. The Neo-Platonists inherited from Pythagoras and Plato, and their works should be studied by those who would realise something of the grandeur<sup>30</sup> and the beauty preserved for the world in the Mysteries.

The Pythagorean School itself may serve as a type of the discipline enforced. On this Mead gives many interesting details, and remarks: "The authors of antiquity are agreed that this discipline had succeeded in producing the highest examples, not only of the purest chastity and sentiment, but also a simplicity of manners, a delicacy, and a taste for serious pursuits which was unparalleled. This is admitted even by Christian writers." The School had outer disciples, leading the family and social life, and the above quo-



tation refers to these. In the inner School were three degrees—the first of Hearers, who studied for two years in silence, doing their best to master the teachings; the second degree was of Mathematici, wherein were taught geometry and music, the nature of number, form, colour, and sound; the third degree was of Physici, who mastered cosmogony and metaphysics. This led up to the true Mysteries. Candidates for the School<sup>31</sup> must be “of an unblemished reputation and of a contented disposition.”

The close identity between the methods and aims pursued in these various Mysteries and those of Yoga in India is patent to the most superficial observer. It is not, however, necessary to suppose that the nations of antiquity drew from India; all alike drew from the one source, the Grand Lodge of Central Asia, which sent out its Initiates to every land. They all taught the same doctrines, and pursued the same methods, leading to the same ends. But there was much intercommunication between the Initiates of all nations, and there was a common language and a common symbolism. Thus Pythagoras journeyed among the Indians, and received in India a high Initiation, and Apollonius of Tyana later followed in his steps. Quite Indian in phrase as well as thought were the dying words of Plotinus: “Now I seek to lead back the Self within me to the All-self.”

Among the Hindus the duty of teaching the supreme knowledge only to the worthy<sup>32</sup> was strictly insisted on. “The deepest mystery of the end of knowledge ... is not to be declared to one who is not a son or a pupil, and who is not tranquil in mind.” So again, after a sketch of Yoga we read: “Stand up! awake! having found the Great Ones, listen! The road is as difficult to tread as the sharp edge of a razor. Thus say the wise.” The Teacher is needed, for written teaching alone does not suffice. The “end of knowledge” is to know God—not only to believe; to become one with God—not only to worship afar off. Man must know the reality of the divine Existence, and then know—not only vaguely believe and hope—that his own innermost Self is one with God, and that the aim of life is to realise that unity. Unless religion can guide a man to that realisation, it is but “as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.”

So also it was asserted that man should learn to leave the gross body: “Let a man with firmness separate it the soul from his own body, as a grass-stalk from its sheath.” And it was written! “In the golden highest sheath dwells the stainless, changeless Brahman; It is the radiant white Light of lights, known to the knowers of the Self.” “When the seer sees the golden-coloured Creator, the Lord, the Spirit, whose womb is Brahman, then, having thrown away merit and demerit,



stainless, the wise one reaches the highest union."

Nor were the Hebrews without their secret knowledge and their Schools of Initiation. The company of prophets at Naioth presided over by Samuel formed such a School, and the oral teaching was handed down by them. Similar Schools existed at Bethel and Jericho, and in Cruden's Concordance there is the following interesting note: "The Schools or Colleges of the prophets are the first schools of which we have any account in Scripture; where the children of the prophets, that is, their disciples, lived in<sup>34</sup> the exercises of a retired and austere life, in study and meditation, and reading of the law of God.... These Schools, or Societies, of the prophets were succeeded by the Synagogues." The Kabbala, which contains the semi-public teaching, is, as it now stands, a modern compilation, part of it being the work of Rabbi Moses de Leon, who died A.D. . It consists of five books, Bahir, Zohar, Sepher Sephiroth, Sepher Yetzirah, and Asch Metzareth, and is asserted to have been transmitted orally from very ancient times—as antiquity is reckoned historically. Dr. Wynn Westcott says that "Hebrew tradition assigns the oldest parts of the Zohar to a date antecedent to the building of the second Temple;" and Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai is said to have written down some of it in the first century A.D. The Sepher Yet-

zirah is spoken of by Saadjah Gaon, who died A.D. , as "very ancient." Some portions of the ancient oral teaching have been incorporated in the Kabbala as it now stands, but the true archaic wisdom of the Hebrews<sup>35</sup> remains in the guardianship of a few of the true sons of Israel. Brief as is this outline, it is sufficient to show the existence of a hidden side in the religions of the world outside Christianity, and we may now examine the question whether Christianity was an exception to this universal rule.



## BOOK REPORT: JESHUA, THE UNKNOWN JESUS

Author: Bishop Lewis Keizer, M.Div., Ph.D.

Lewis Keizer states that his fictional biography of Jesus is designed to introduce readers to the forgotten world of Jewish, Messianic, Kabbalistic, prophetic, wisdom, and Merkabah mysticism that was known to the Jewish disciples of Jeshua. All this was lost to emerging gentile Christianity. It provides a simple, non-academic way for readers to understand what only profound academic study can reveal, though few scholars really comprehend.

He further states that his book illuminates historical teachings and practices of the Master Yeshua, which have little in common with modern Christian doctrine and practice, and helps serious seekers draw near to the greatest spiritual teacher who ever walked the earth.

Having read the book with keen interest I can say that it was difficult to put down. I became immersed in a fascinating life, rich in detail and illuminating of the times of Yeshua. It is fiction yes, but truth runs through it. I recommend this book to any true seeker who has a thirst for deeper insights on their journey. I especially enjoyed the author's Wild Rant at the end of the book. Here is an author passionate about his life's work. He effectively speaks

to the fact that twenty first century Christianity must reclaim not only its Kabbalistic dimensions but also its Magdalenic dimensions.

The book is available from Amazon. You can also preview a few chapters for free on Google Books.

### About the Author

Bishop Keizer has written several other books. Among them are The Kabbalistic Words of Jesus, Astral Man to Cosmic Christ, The Wandering Bishops and Mother Jennie's Garden. He is working on a book about St. Paul that will have a view of Saul that is much different from that held by traditional Christianity.

He is a distinguished independent Bishop, a scholar, lecturer and professional educator. For over 35 years he has guided

many men and women through their spiritual studies with his online Home Temple Seminary Program at [www.hometemple.org](http://www.hometemple.org).

By Lois Brisbois

## NOTES

---

## NOTES

---

## NOTES

---