

BROSICRUCIAN BEACON



March 2013



Find the Deeper YOU

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT that you were no longer here, no longer a living person seated on a comfortable bench before a wooden path leading through a beautiful botanical garden. No calm silence; no feeling of serenity among the living, breathing plants and creatures all around you; no dappled light streaming in through the foliage; no birds curious to see what you have brought them; indeed none of the things you normally treasure, none of things that bring you peace simply by their existence! All that we value, everything we care about, is here in our world. What intense longing we would feel if we could no longer share the small part of it we know.

It takes little to understand the privileged state of our existence on earth, and how precious our planet is to all creatures calling it home, not only human beings. Realising our connectedness with all living things, indeed

our vital dependence on them, we can experience states of blissful attunement with everything around us. If happiness, peace and fairness for all the inhabitants of the world is what you seek..., then learn first to commune with your inner self; begin within, find the deeper you, and through it find the Consciousness of the Cosmic itself expressed through the myriad forms of life on earth.

By reading this magazine you have an open mind, you seek deeper values, shun the superficial, and value all life. And maybe this message was meant just for you! To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order, its mission and purpose, visit our website www.amorc.org.uk or contact us for a free copy of our introductory booklet *The Mastery of Life*.

Tel: +44-(0)1892-653197

Fax: +44-(0)1892-667432

Email: info@amorc.org.uk



ISSN 0966-33X

Published quarterly by the
English Grand Lodge for Europe,
the Middle East and Africa of the
ROSICRUCIAN ORDER AMORC
Greenwood Gate, Blackhill,
Crowborough TN6 1XE
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: 01892-653197
Fax: 01892-667432
Email: RCBeacon@amorc.org.uk
Web: www.amorc.org.uk



English Language Magazine
of the
ROSICRUCIAN ORDER
Europe, the Middle East
and Africa
Issued free to members of the
Rosicrucian Order AMORC

EDITOR
Bill Anderson

Design and Layout
Richard Bonwick

Statements made in this publication
are not the official expressions of
the Rosicrucian Order or its officers
unless specifically declared to be so.

All material published in this
magazine is copyright of the Supreme
Grand Lodge of AMORC and may
not be copied or reproduced in any
form without the prior consent
of the copyright holder and the
individual contributors.

Changes of address must reach us
by the first of the month preceding
publication.

ROSICRUCIAN BEACON

March 2013, Vol 22, No. 2

CONTENTS

- 2 **The Biological Roots of Trust, Generosity
and Forgiveness** - by Sarah Kraak, SRC
- 8 **Life Is A River** - by Abaan Abu-Shumays
- 10 **Benjamin Franklin - Part 2** - by Joel Disher, FRC
- 14 **Chrysalis** - by Frances Ono, SRC
- 15 **Our Missions and Talents** - by Sally Michaels, SRC
- 20 **Unnecessary Burdens** - by Edgar Wirt, FRC
- 22 **True Reality** - by Richard Beardsley, FRC
- 23 **Agassiz: Father of Natural History** - by Raymond Schuessler
- 26 **A Shadow Light** - by Merle A Allison, SRC
- 28 **Celestial Light** - by Colin Palmer
- 30 **The Magic of Touch** - John Palo, FRC
- 34 **Salvation: The View of a Mystic** - by Walter J Albersheim, FRC
- 37 **The Benevolent Dandelion** - by Jack Coggins
- 40 **Goethe and His Dramatic Story of Faust**
- by Gustav Siekmann, FRC

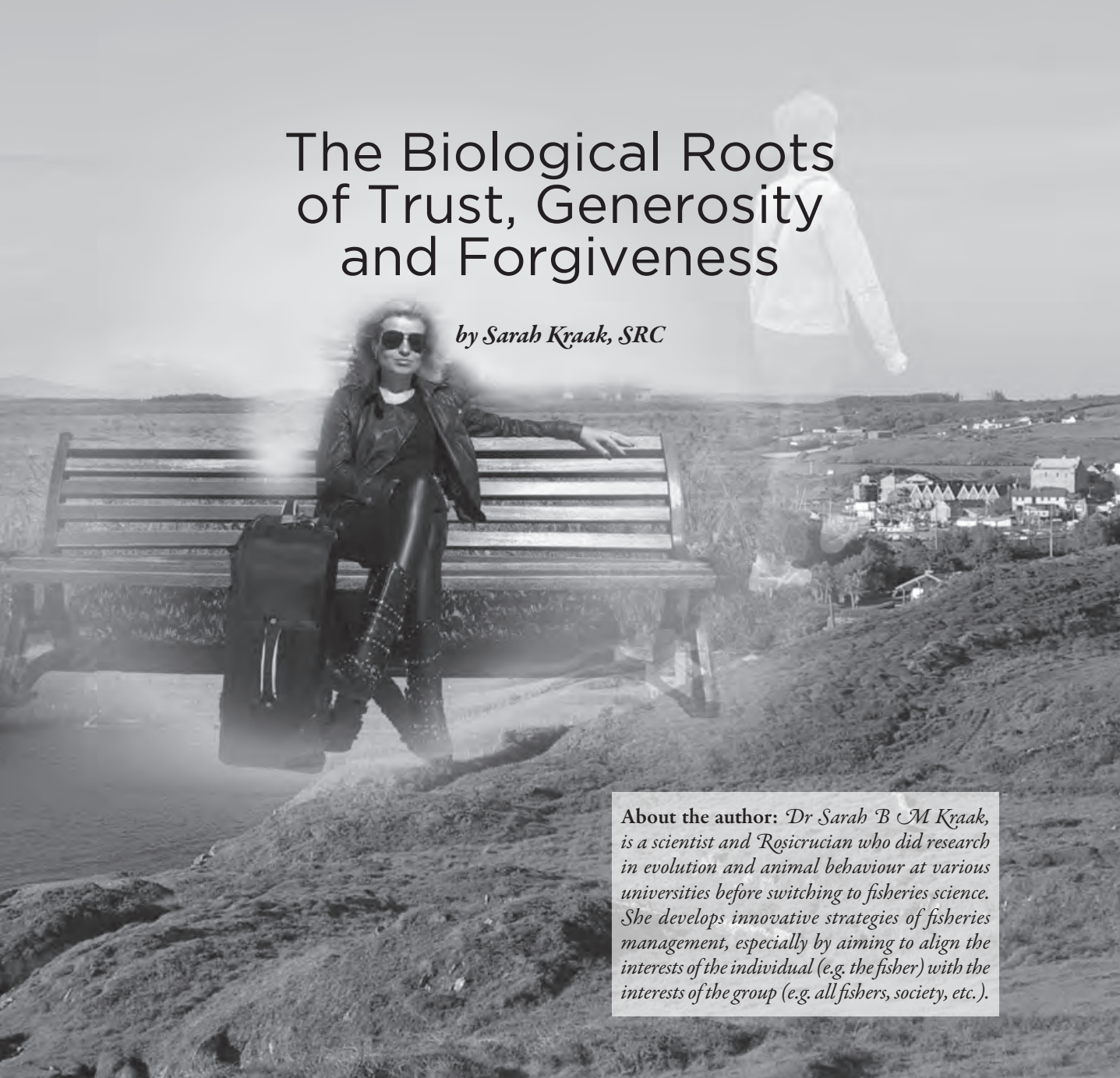
COVER SPREAD

“Bluebell Walk”



The Biological Roots of Trust, Generosity and Forgiveness

by Sarah Kraak, SRC



About the author: *Dr Sarah B M Kraak, is a scientist and Rosicrucian who did research in evolution and animal behaviour at various universities before switching to fisheries science. She develops innovative strategies of fisheries management, especially by aiming to align the interests of the individual (e.g. the fisher) with the interests of the group (e.g. all fishers, society, etc.).*

LAST YEAR I was on the long-distance bus to Cork in Ireland where I lecture a few times per year on the evolution of animal and human behaviour. During the three-hour bus trip the driver made a break, and he told his passengers that they could leave the bus for a few minutes to go and stretch their legs if they would like to. A young girl wanted to leave the bus, and looking around, she spotted me and asked if I would mind guarding her bag while she was away.

There are a few things one can remark about this scene. One of them is that, apparently, this young girl

thought that there might be thieves around who could steal her bag, and also, apparently, that I was not one of them. Another thing I noticed during the events was that her asking me flattered me, and made me very keen in wanting to guard her bag for her; I liked the responsibility awarded to me.

Inspired by the contents of the lecture I was about to give, which I will explain later, I made a speculative reconstruction of what had happened: Her request indicated to me that she trusted me and the experience of being regarded with trust triggered the release of oxytocin, and, in turn, the oxytocin flowing around in my body



made me very eager to be helpful and filled me with loving happiness. Unknowingly, the girl had actually made me more trustworthy than I might have been otherwise, by expressing trust.

Non-biologists tend to think that behavioural traits and mental attitudes that have biological roots are the self-centred ones, such as foraging, competing and mating. The more altruistic behavioural traits and mental attitudes, such as sharing and helping, are thought to be determined by non-biological, more spiritual, processes. However, research of the last decades has made it very clear why and how these behaviours and mental attitudes have evolved in our species, what their genetic determinants are, and also how they operate physiologically and neurologically. In actual fact, it has become clear that mental processes run on a biological substrate; there is no separation of mind and body.

Evolutionary scientists try to explain traits of animals, behavioural traits included, by understanding how individuals expressing the trait could have been favoured by natural selection relative to individuals not expressing the trait. For this we have to assume that the traits are coded for by genes through a chemical pathway, and that individuals expressing traits that make them successful in survival and reproduction will pass on more genes to future generations than individuals that do not have those traits. The phrase 'the selfish gene' comes to mind. This phrase was coined by Richard Dawkins to express that those genes that code for (read: through a chemical pathway result in) traits whose bearers outcompete individuals with alternative traits will increase in abundance through time.

Metaphorically speaking, it seems then that genes are selfish, as if they are 'interested' in outcompeting others to replicate themselves at the highest rate and become most abundant. Although this accurately describes the process of natural selection as it is nowadays understood

by scientists, the phrase 'selfish gene' is unfortunate for two reasons. The first is a trivial one: it attributes a mental state of selfishness, an interest, to a gene, which is only a molecule and can therefore neither have a mental state nor an interest. The second reason is that the phrase promoted the view that nature is "red in tooth and claw", that animals and humans are ruthlessly selfish by nature. However, interestingly, Richard Dawkins' view of natural selection increased our understanding of exactly the opposite, namely of altruistic behaviours, generosity and trust.

For a better understanding, scientists often work with simple models of the truth. In the case of understanding the evolution of altruistic behaviours scientists use a model called the *The Prisoner's Dilemma*. Picture a situation of two accomplices in crime that got caught by the police and are being questioned. Both of them deny having committed the crime. The police do not possess enough information for a conviction. Following the separation of the two men, the police offer both a similar deal: If one testifies against his partner and the other remains silent, the betrayer goes free whereas the one who remained silent receives the full one-year sentence; If both remain silent, both are sentenced to only one month in jail for a minor charge; If each 'rats out' the other, each receives a

It has become clear that mental processes run on a biological substrate; there is no separation of mind and body.

three-month sentence. Each prisoner must choose either to betray or remain silent; the decision of each is kept quiet. What should they do?

In this situation, the sole worry of the prisoners seems to be lessening his time in jail. The tragedy of the situation is that for each of them, the most rational option is to betray the other; but because this is similarly true for both, the most likely outcome will be that both of them will betray the other, in which case the outcome for each of them is worse than if both had cooperated with each other and remained both silent. Thus, the outcome that is optimal for both of them cannot be achieved if both of them choose the option that is rationally best.

The *Prisoner's Dilemma* is an abstraction that can be used by scientists as a model for any situation where two people each have two behavioural options: (i) to be helpful and cooperate with the other person (in the case above, to remain silent, although I have to admit it is strange to illustrate 'good' behaviour with non-confession of a crime) or (ii) to cheat and betray the other person. The two options are called 'cooperate' and 'defect' (or 'cheat') respectively in the jargon of this field of research.



Richard Dawkins



Ingrid's Choices

		<i>Ingrid's Choices</i>	
		Work Hard	Loaf
Edward's Choices	Work Hard	1 Hr Work b	a Do 1/2 Hours Work in 1 1/2 Hrs
	Loaf	d Do 1 1/2 Hours Work in 1 1/2 Hrs	c Do 1 Hours Work in 3 Hrs

The Prisoner's Dilemma Revisited

Remember that these represent 'nice' and 'nasty' attitudes respectively. Situations not involving prisoners, but more common in our daily lives, are the investment into helping someone while not knowing whether that person will help you in return. Paying in advance for goods or services as well as providing goods or services in advance of payment are examples.

Scientists have discovered that if two persons know that they will encounter each other again and again in similar dilemmas (a situation which is called *The Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma*), the strategy which is unbeatable, in the sense that it gives better results than any other strategy, is one which is called *Tit-For-Tat*. This strategy,

The implication of scientists' explorations of these models is that it is entirely possible that natural selection gives rise to a mental attitude combining trust, punishment and forgiveness.

and we must bear in mind that we are still referring to the simplistic and abstract model situation, prescribes that on the first encounter, one should cooperate, and on each following encounter, one should choose the behaviour that the opponent chose on the previous occasion. Thus, if the opponent cheats then one must also cheat on the next occasion, but if the opponent cooperates then one must also cooperate on the next occasion.

The *Tit-For-Tat* strategy is characterised by trust, punishment and forgiveness: *Trust*, because on the first encounter one should cooperate without knowing anything about the other; *Punishment*, because cheating is immediately answered by a reciprocation of the cheating; *Forgiveness*, because if the other person cooperates again, the relation is restored. The implication of scientists' explorations of these models is that it is entirely possible that natural selection gives rise to a mental attitude combining trust, punishment and forgiveness. This 'strategy' has been proven to be more successful than any other strategy.

An important aspect of this evolutionary view is that it does not require that the organism, be it animal or human, is making rational decisions. The individuals involved do not need to make calculating decisions based on trade-offs and ultimate probabilities of outcomes.

They need not be aware of anything. All that is required is a mechanism, for example a chemical pathway, giving rise to a mental state combining trust, punishment and forgiveness. Any gene that is at the basis of such a pathway would be favoured by natural selection, because bearers of that gene would be likely to deploy the *Tit-For-Tat* strategy in encounters and therefore often achieve cooperation and be successful; more successful than individuals who would always defect and then be met with defection.

An example of behaviour that usually results in success, despite the fact that the individual involved is not aware of anything, is parental behaviour, which is expressed in many animal species, for example in birds. The genes in the cells of birds trigger a chemical pathway that results in a plethora of parental behaviours: incubating eggs, feeding young, and defending them against dangers. The parent birds are not aware that the recipients of their altruistic behaviour are their offspring, and that these will pass on their genes. They just do what

they are programmed to do: perform these behaviours toward any eggs or young that happen to find themselves in their nest. The programmed mental attitude directly giving rise to the behaviour may (or may not – we do not know this for sure in the case of animals) feel to the individual as love. To the individual it has nothing to do with calculating interests of genes; it's just good old love. In other words: this is the stuff love is made of.

It is well known that the cuckoo exploits this fact. Cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of other species, the host species. The host species will then treat these eggs as if



they are their own, and therefore enhance the reproductive success of the cuckoo at the cost of their own; their own reproductive success will be lowered not only because energy is redirected from being invested in their own offspring towards the young cuckoos, but also because young cuckoos actively kill their rivals by throwing the eggs of the host out of the nest. What I try to make clear here, is that the rule “treat any egg or young in your nest as if it is your own offspring” usually results in enhancing offspring survival and thereby promote the genes that code for the rule. Only sometimes it has an unanticipated effect, and this actually proves that the rule operates without awareness. A similar example is the fact that, in our own species, brothers and sisters that grew up together usually love each other similarly, regardless of whether they are biologically related, or one or both have been adopted. Again, sibling-love, as a rule, usually results in helping an individual that is likely to carry the same genes. But the fact that it also operates when the recipient of the altruistic behaviour is no relative at all, proves that no conscious calculations are involved.

The theoretical construct described above provides insight into why and how a psychological inclination towards trust, fairness, social justice and forgiveness could have evolved and become hardwired into our brains. When stating that behaviour is hardwired, I do not mean that particular behavioural rules such as *Tit-For-Tat* are hardwired literally in our brains and inherited as such; the situation is more subtle. It is our emotional sensitivity towards social rewards and penalties as well as justness and fairness that is inherited and has evolved

There is no contradiction between asserting that altruistic behaviour is innate and that it is learned.

because it has the potential to elevate the likelihood of cooperation, which in turn enhances biological fitness (the passing on of genes). In the same way, our language instinct is hardwired, notwithstanding the fact that no grammar rules or vocabulary of any particular language are transmitted through our genes.

Similar to the case of language, given our innate sensitivity for social behaviour, we need to be socialised by parents, peers, teachers, business partners and society at large for the appropriate behaviour to develop and be expressed. There is no contradiction between asserting that altruistic behaviour is innate and that it is learned. The genetic variation as well as variation in social background leads to variable expression of altruistic behaviour. In turn, variation may play a role in the evolution of the personality differences observed.

The evolutionary roots of human altruism are evident from the fact that chimpanzees display similar behaviour, but to a lesser extent than humans. The hardwiring itself, namely the physiological and genetic basis of trust, cooperation, and generosity, is being



unravelling by scientists: the neuropeptide oxytocin appears to play a role, and neural correlates in the brain have been uncovered. For example, the satisfaction that humans derive from punishing norm violations has been shown to have a neural basis. Scientists scanned

the brains of people while they learned about a defector’s abuse of trust and determined the punishment (in an experimental setting); punishment activated a brain region that plays a role in the processing of rewards. In another study, an actual gene has been found of which the alternative forms (alleles) correlate with individual variation in levels of trust, cooperation, and generosity. In the case of this particular gene, people are classified according to three genetic types (having two long variants, one long and one short variant, or two short variants of the gene). It turns out that the amount of money that people are willing to give to an anonymous stranger in controlled experimental settings is dependent on the genetic type.

Many experiments have investigated under what conditions levels of cooperation among humans are enhanced. Conditions that increase cooperation include familiarity, non-anonymity, face-to-face communication, and physical contact (touch). These effects are quite likely deeply rooted and hardwired in our biology; in an experiment, monetary sacrifice among strangers has been found to be mediated by endogenous oxytocin release after physical



Conditions that increase cooperation include familiarity, non-anonymity, face-to-face communication and physical contact (touch).



contact. A similar experiment distributed human subjects over two groups; both groups were asked to use an inhaler spray, but for one group this spray contained oxytocin while for the other group the spray contained nothing but water. The subjects however did not know to which group they had been allocated. In the experiment the subjects were given an amount of money, let's say £20. They were subsequently given the choice to keep it all for themselves or to give a portion of it, any amount between £0 and £20, to a stranger. They would never meet the stranger, the stranger would never know who had given or denied him/her the money, and even the experimenter did not know, because the choice would be entered anonymously into a computer. Thus their choices had no repercussions.

Our biology coincides with religious imperatives such as 'love thy neighbour' (Christian) or 'feel loving kindness towards all beings' (Buddhist).

The remarkable result of this experiment is that few people gave nothing at all, and few people gave all of the money, and the majority gave around half of the money to the stranger. The major finding however is that the people who had inhaled oxytocin were significantly more likely to give more money than the people who had inhaled only water. Thus, the oxytocin triggered generosity, as the biological mediator. When asked why they had given money the subjects of course gave answers such as "I am a generous person", "I was in a generous mood", or "I believe that I have to do this in order to be a good person". In fact, they all believed that it had been their own free will giving rise to their generous behaviour, rather than something coming from the inhaler. I think there is nothing wrong with the fact that our behaviours or the accompanying mental states, even the highly spiritual ones, are rooted in a 'material' biological substrate and have physical causes. Knowing this does not make the behaviour or the mental state less admirable or awe-inspiring.

Another very strong biological driver of 'good' behaviour that has been shown to operate in theory as well as in practice is reputation-building and indirect reciprocity. If reciprocity can be summarised as "if you scratch my back I'll scratch yours" (as in *Tit-For-Tat*), indirect reciprocity is more like "if you scratch someone else's back [indicating your 'goodness'] I'll scratch yours" or "if you see me scratching someone's back, you'll scratch mine". This is where gossip and non-anonymity come in. It has been shown in experiments, similar to the ones described above, that people are more generous when being watched than when decisions are made unseen. A reluctance to betray

trust or behave selfishly when being watched appears to be biologically hardwired in humans as well: there are indications that humans even behave more altruistically in the presence of mere pictures of eyes, although they know rationally that the eyes are not real. Apparently, human beings cannot help taking into account signs of others watching: "don't lose your good reputation" is an unconscious imperative that guides our behaviour. The threats of public punishment or of social exclusion are more strongly driving human behaviour than monetary fines. Religious belief in a God who is watching you and will punish wrong doing can be understood in the context of evolutionary biology as well.

Just as we like the satisfaction of eating when we have been somewhat hungry (associated with the biological fact that we need nutrition to maintain our functions), behaving 'nice' makes us happy: this is a biological mechanism that evolved because it has been essential for our survival and reproduction. We simply love - no, even crave - to be loving and generous persons. Our biology coincides with religious imperatives such as 'love thy neighbour' (Christian) or 'feel loving kindness towards all beings' (Buddhist). Doing so causes us to be happy. The Buddhist notion that compassion is the way to happiness is grounded in our biology. We all feel liberated, like Scrooge or Raskolnikov, when brought back to the path of 'goodness'.

The implication of knowing scientifically which conditions enhance 'good' behaviour is that we could make use of this knowledge to create a nicer society: small differences in societal design may lead to very different outcomes in terms of 'good' behaviour. Human nature displays both self-interest and altruism, depending on external conditions, which can be manipulated. Thus, self-interested cynical people may become responsible moral agents under the right conditions. In my work I am promoting these views in the domain of fisheries management, where the aim is to get fishers to fish our common resource sustainably.

Small differences in societal design may lead to very different outcomes in terms of 'good' behaviour.

I would like to conclude with another anecdote where I clearly felt driven by these strong biological mechanisms. I was walking over the Christmas market with three colleagues. Suddenly an older lady approached us..., she seemed to want to ask something. It turned out that she needed some help with closing the heavy shutters of her wooden stall. Naturally the four of us helped her.





While we were doing this I felt overwhelmed by the warm glow of love, togetherness and gratefulness; I was

“The whole purpose of religion is to facilitate love and compassion, patience, tolerance, humility and forgiveness.”

-- Dalai Lama XIV --

grateful that this stranger was giving us the opportunity to cooperate and help. It felt as if she had given *me* something rather than the other way round. I realised that this glow was no more and no less than the effect of hormones and neurotransmitters; this is how it feels, I thought, when these particular hormones and neurotransmitters are released in my body and brain; this is how it feels to be the subject experiencing this physiological state of affairs. And the reason why evolution gave rise to this physiological state of affairs being triggered in a particular situation, urging us to behave in a particular way, is that in the long run it made the genes coding for it being passed on at a higher rate than any alternative genes; in other words, because it helped us survive and reproduce. The biological mechanisms making us into loving

and generous human beings have been perfected over enormous lengths of time. I find it comforting that I can rely on my biology to be a good person...

References

Scientific references can be found in the following scientific article by the author:
Kraak, S. B. M. 2011. “Exploring the ‘Public Goods Game’ model to overcome the Tragedy of the Commons in Fisheries Management” -- *Fish and Fisheries*, 12, 18-33.

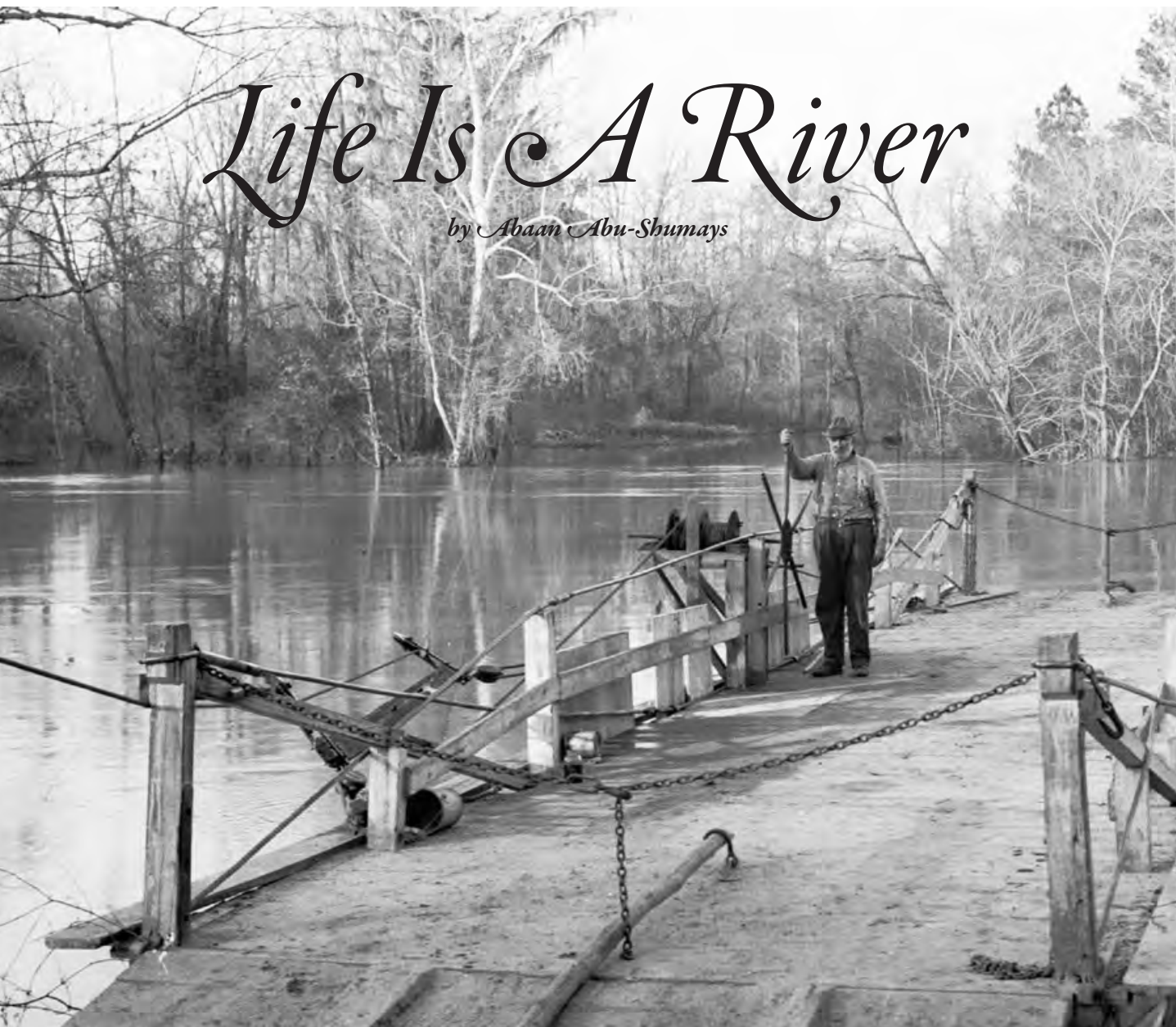


Watching eyes on the Buddhist temples of Swayambhunath, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Life Is A River

by *Abaan Abu-Shumays*



L

IFE IS A self-sustaining river. Such a comparison between life and a river may sound superficial, but let's look more closely at the sojourn of the river and the sojourn we call life. Like life, the river is a teacher who holds many answers for those who observe, listen and learn from its rushing waters.

The classic story *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse, illustrates this point in a vivid manner. It relates the story of a young man called Siddhartha (based on the life of Gautama Buddha) who meets a ferryman living by the river. Siddhartha has spent years searching for the answers

to life's truth and purpose. The ferryman encourages him to listen to the river and find its secrets. Siddhartha learns from the river *"how to listen, to listen with a still heart, with a waiting, open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgement, without opinions"*.

He once asked the ferryman: *"Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?"* The ferryman replied: *"Yes, the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and in that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, not the shadow of the future."*



To this philosophical statement Siddhartha responded: *“That is it, and when I learned that, I reviewed my life and it was also a river, and Siddhartha the boy, Siddhartha the mature man, and Siddhartha the old man, were only separated by shadows, not through reality. Siddhartha’s previous lives were also not in the past, and his death and his return to Brahma are not in the future. Nothing was, nothing will be; everything has reality and presence.”*

The river holds many other secrets. It begins its lonely journey at the fountainhead and meanders through unknown terrain. It gathers soft petals as well as hard debris. It overcomes resistance and finally reaches its destination, the ocean. Life’s odyssey is also solitary. Individual souls come to planet Earth, travel on strange roads, strive to conquer obstructions, and depart from this world alone. During this journey, life accumulates happiness as well as sorrow. Many have tried to solve life’s mystery. Most never stop searching for a purpose, an identity and an ultimate goal.

The Youthful River

At its source, the trickling water making up the rivulet’s life force is as pure, clean and beautiful as an innocent child. The stream grows fast, quickening its flow. It struggles over big boulders or finds a route around them. The gushing overflow of the youthful river reminds us of life’s enthusiasm and vibrancy. Occasionally, the water brims over, depicting life’s excitement and intensity. But the stream never gives up. It is always looking for ways to continue on its mission.

The mature river runs deep and remains clear and fast flowing. It nurtures the earth and the vegetation. Animals, birds and humans come to its banks to quench their thirst, thus partaking of its life-sustaining qualities. Colourful fish take refuge in its bosom. The beauty of the river lies in its secret of never expecting or asking anything in return, and enjoying the pleasure of such unselfish giving.

The river is as ever changing and colourful as life. Its many hues of aquamarine blue, emerald green, deep mysterious purple, crystal white and muddy grey all seem to reflect the many moods of life itself. The river glows from within, but it also absorbs the colours of its environment and grows more beautiful with fiery red sunsets and tranquil silvery moonlight. Then, too, the sounds of life’s music emanate from the river. Its waves flow in harmony with its surroundings. They virtually

dance to music, moving from a slow stately larghetto to the moderate tempo of andante, to the brisk allegretto and the rapid prestissimo.

The Turmoil of Life

Yet a river may depict another side of its nature; an aspect that can be frightening. The rapids epitomise the daily hustle and bustle on the racetrack of life. The whirlpool indicates confusion that plagues life from time to time. The torrents of a flood or deluge reflect life’s anger and frustration. Sadness, loneliness and tears are revealed in a river that loses its way in a desert. Then, there are the backwaters that caution against the stagnation that sets in with pollution of body, spirit and mind.

Yet, even though the river uncomplainingly carries its burden of debris and pollutants, it does not want to remain sluggish with its burden for too long. It leaves this burden behind when it realises that its energy is being drained, resulting in a reduced flow.

The river has a goal to reach the sea. It does not let the negative aspects of the environment deter it from its goal. Even when trapped within the boundaries of a man-made



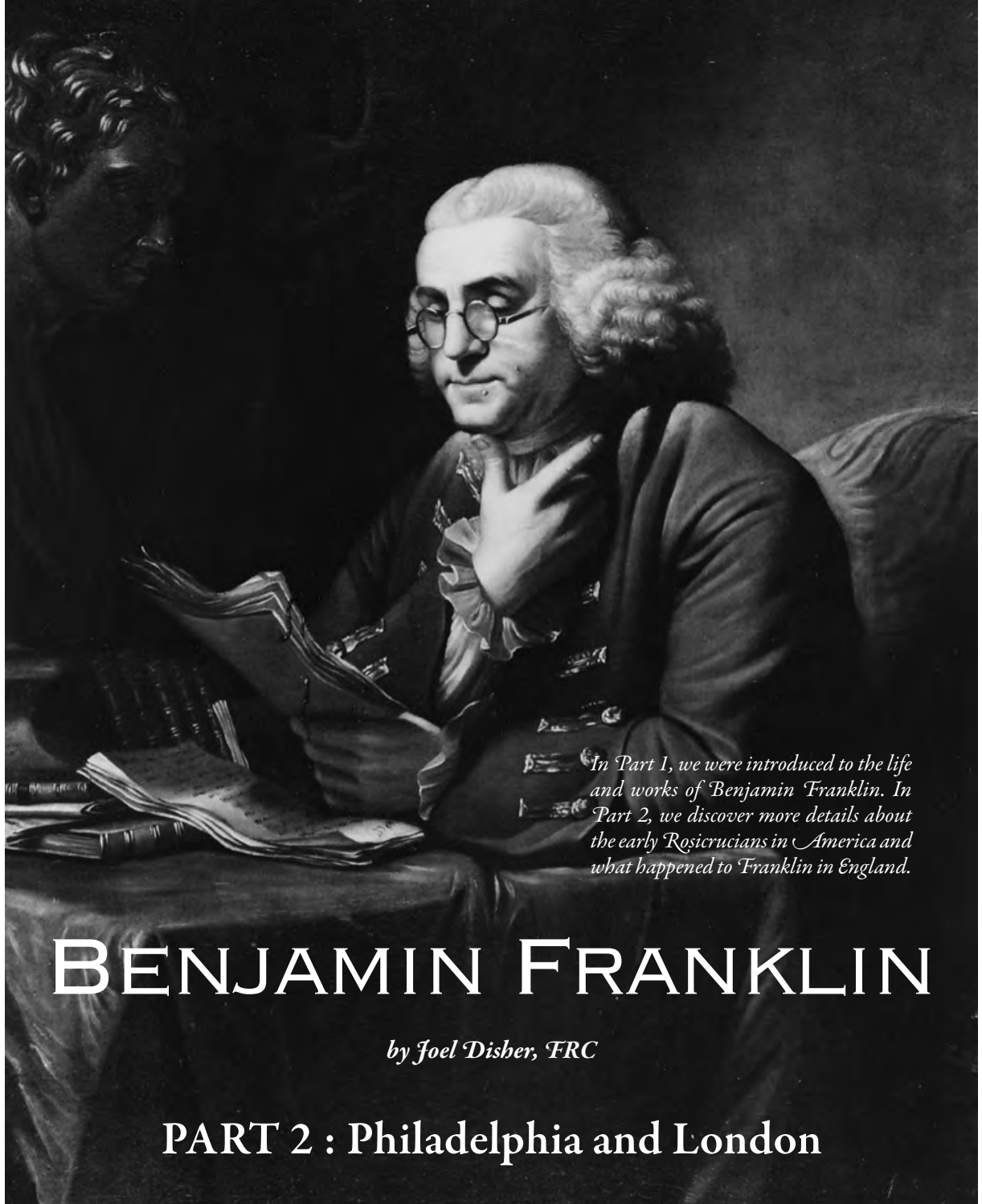
dam, the river continually looks for weaknesses in the structure so that it can gain its freedom and continue on its course towards its destiny. Contained too long, the river will grow increasingly angry and frustrated, its gentle flow changing to a terrifying flood if it can find release. It does not wish destruction, but is unable to contain the energy that seeks free movement.

Exhilaration

The river seems to feel the exhilaration that awaits it when it is united with the sea. It knows that the union with the ocean is not its end, but a new beginning. The water will change to rising vapour, become rain and fall again to form a new river. The river recognises and understands that in the universe, unity for all life exists.

The river instils the art of giving without expecting, and knowledge about self as it relates to the entire universe. It teaches self-reliance and perseverance in reaching a goal. It emphasises the importance of freedom and self-expression. Most importantly, the river is a constant reminder that all should rejoice in the thought that at the end of life’s journey, there exists a promise of a magnificent union with the Creator. The river strengthens belief in eternal life and in the universal law of change.





In Part 1, we were introduced to the life and works of Benjamin Franklin. In Part 2, we discover more details about the early Rosicrucians in America and what happened to Franklin in England.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

by Joel Disber, FRC

PART 2 : Philadelphia and London

WENJAMIN FRANKLIN left Boston at seventeen. He was a young man of great promise; industrious, serious-minded and mentally inquisitive. He was also ambitious for both material success and self-improvement, and Philadelphia provided an agreeable opportunity for both.

“No single thread of narrative can give a true account of Franklin’s life during the years 1726-32,” writes Carl

Van Doren, *“for he was leading three lives and, most of the time, something of a stealthy fourth; each one distant enough to call for a separate record and yet all of them closely involved in his total nature. There was his public life, beginning with his friendships in the club he organised in 1727, and continuing with larger and larger affairs as long as he lived. There was his inner life, which was at first much taken up with reflections on his own behaviour, and, after he had more or less settled that in his mind and habit,*





Germantown just north of Philadelphia

grew to an embracing curiosity about the whole moral and physical world.²¹

But no single thread of narrative can give a true account of the differences then generally prevailing in the several departments of life between New England and the Proprietary Settlement of Pennsylvania. These differences ran the full gamut: religious, civic and social, even racial.

It is inadequate to say that the practical and useful character of life in Philadelphia was more agreeable to the young Franklin than the more inhibited one of Boston. But the differences themselves were great enough to be the subject of a small story. The need here is to deal mainly with the philosophic, religious and fraternal background of the country into which Franklin came, in order to show how inevitable it was that he should have been influenced almost immediately by the Rosicrucians, and subsequently by the Masons whom he would have contacted in Boston only much later, if at all.

A little over a hundred years before, the Rosicrucians had gained public attention and some acclaim on the Continent, especially in Germany. *The Universal Reformation of the Whole Wide World* and *The Fama Fraternitatis* played their part in extending Protestantism, in gathering together non-sectarian philosophers, and in encouraging generally the idea that a New Age was at hand.

Religionists took heart and renewed their efforts to bring the true spirit of Christian living into daily life; but the situation, religiously and politically, had deteriorated too far. The Evangelical Union of the Protestants of 1608, matched by the Catholic League of 1609, the Counter Reformation of 1612, and the Protestants' violent refusal to accept the Hapsburg Emperor Ferdinand in 1618..., culminated in the Thirty Years War, dimmed millennial hopes, and presented convincing evidence to many that the 'last days' were at hand.

The Quakers in England under Penn were successfully waging a war for their rights, and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* had become another name for the New World. Penn had visited Holland and Germany, being well

received there by various sects who could not agree with one another. Inspired by the idea of a refuge in the New World where they could either await the end or begin life anew, little groups of dissenters made ready to start for the New World.

The followers of Menno Simons founded Germantown just north of Philadelphia in 1683. German Pietists and Rosicrucians came in 1693 to establish the colony of "*The Woman in the Wilderness*" in the valley of the Wissahickon. The Lutherans had already been established in Delaware country since 1637. Ten years after Franklin's first Philadelphia visit, religious refugees, Schwenkfelders and the Bohemian Brethren most notably, found refuge in the Proprietary Colony.

Rosicrucians in Europe had previously worked secretly, outwardly losing themselves in whatever organisation best served their liberal and humanitarian purposes. Those who came to Pennsylvania were university men, bent not so much on spreading their knowledge of mysticism as on finding a place where they could individually ready themselves by study and meditation for the new era which according to their calculations was at hand.

Their settlement, considering their desires and habits of thought fresh from their warring and bickering homeland, was of a retiring nature. In spite of their withdrawal, their impact on the community was a dignified and compelling one. Their leader, Johannes Kelpius, became widely known and revered. After Kelpius' death, the community dwindled, becoming almost nonexistent before Johann Conrad Beissel, a young brother, came from Germany to found a second community at Ephrata on the Cocalico. Rosicrucian philosophy and practice thus had been a thing known and respected in the Pennsylvania colony from 1693 or shortly thereafter.



Valley of the Wissahickon



The Freemasons had proclaimed themselves in much the same manner as the Rosicrucians, stepping onto the world stage full-fledged as though they had always been there. The Grand Lodge of England was organised in 1717 and the *Book of Constitutions* published in 1723. Within ten short years, Freemasons were in Pennsylvania, establishing the first lodge in Philadelphia (St. John's). Its earliest records are dated to 1730.

When he arrived in Philadelphia in September of 1723, Benjamin Franklin was 17; and only a little more than 18 when he returned to Boston at the end of April, 1724. During this time he was getting acquainted. Says biographer Van Doren: "*In the more tolerant town [Philadelphia] Franklin relaxed and expanded. If he read as hard as he had done for years, he does not say so. About Boston he speaks chiefly of his studies. About Philadelphia he speaks chiefly of his friends. And while he was charming them he was impressing them by his hard work and cool head.*"¹

He speaks mainly of three friends at this time: Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson and James Ralph, with whom he spent many hours that summer after his return

And while he was charming them he was impressing them by his hard work and cool head.

from Boston while marking time to leave for London. Governor Sir William Keith was ostensibly financing Franklin's establishment of a printing house, and the necessary type had to be bought in England. These four young men were mainly associated because of their interest in poetry, Franklin only once hinting that more serious matters ever entered their discussions in their Sunday walks along the wooded banks of the Schuylkill River.

In speaking of Osborne's later career and death in the West Indies, he says: "*He and I made a serious agreement, that the one who happen'd first to die should, if possible, make a friendly visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that separate state. But he never fulfill'd his promise.*"¹

New Experiences

On 5th November 1724, the *London Hope* sailed with young Franklin aboard. His friend, James Ralph, was with him, having decided to escape irksome home ties and seek a fresh start in London. Franklin and Ralph were steerage passengers, but there were passengers in the great cabin too: Mr Onion and Mr Russell, ironmongers, and a Quaker merchant of Philadelphia, Thomas Denham.



Franklin's print shop

These gentlemen invited Franklin and Ralph to join them, and the voyage was congenial in spite of rough weather.

Thomas Denham's interest in Franklin was immediate. He advised him of the true character of Governor Keith and so prepared him for the governor's failure to fulfil any part of his promises as to underwriting the establishment of a printing house. He must also have offered other encouragement to both these young strangers on their arrival in London the day before Christmas. This was the beginning of a significant friendship.

Franklin's experience gained him immediate employment in London at the well-known firm of Palmer's of Bartholomew Close. Here he was shortly engaged in composing an edition of William Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated*, some parts of which he disagreed with. Franklin now had had a year of freedom from parental restraint, had reached a certain maturity of thought, and had acquired some experience with the vagaries of human character, examples of which ran from his brother James, his friends Collins and Ralph, his employer Keimer, to Governor Keith.

His earlier acquaintance with the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Collins was now recalled in more serious fashion. He began to believe himself a sceptic, perhaps even a hedonist since he had begun to experience pleasure in things he might earlier have thought vices. His broken engagement to Deborah Read back in Philadelphia and his hinted freedom with some of the opposite sex in London might be cited as examples. Van Doren suggests that "*he was a young Bostonian trying to find reasons for doing as he liked in London.*" Franklin would no doubt have agreed, for he says in his *Autobiography*: "*So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do.*"

Franklin vs. Wollaston

In this state of mind, he completed a 32-page pamphlet, anonymously printed, against the propositions of Wollaston. This he called, *A Dissertation on Liberty*



and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain. It brought a small amount of notoriety, but in his *Autobiography* he set it down as an erratum since he had stated “that nothing could possibly be wrong in the world; and that vice and virtue were empty distinctions, no such things existing.”

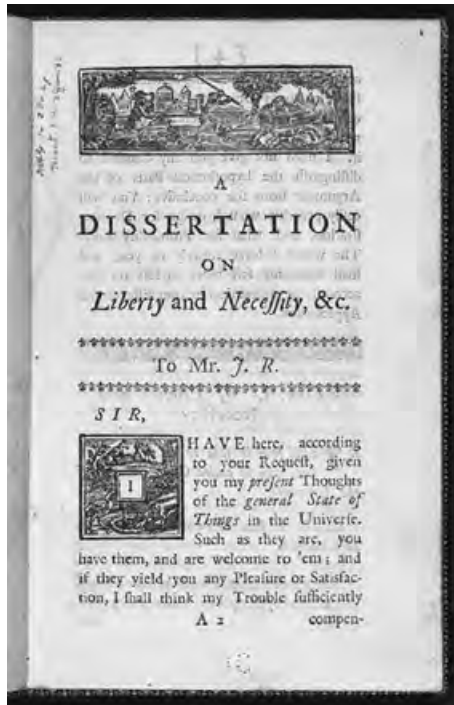
Experience was raising obstacles against theoretical speculation; nevertheless, the *Dissertation* indicated a genuine wrestling with significant questions about the purposes of life. Franklin was filled with compelling instincts and contradictory opinions. How was he expected to resolve them? Was there free will, or was man moved instinctively to avoid pain and to choose pleasure? An old Rosicrucian axiom runs that “*appetite is the solicitor of the will and the will the controller of the appetite.*” Franklin had not yet been instructed in the end desired: to make them serve one another. But he seems to have been readying himself for that instruction.

Still another dictum of the old Rosicrucians was that experience, which brings about thought, also brings about knowledge. Experience was causing Franklin to think, and he continued to turn the question over and over in his mind until the knowledge came, months later when he was bound again for Philadelphia. The needle was wavering because of inner disturbance, but it eventually steadied to true north.

Designing a Life Plan

On board ship, Franklin began to see that a plan for regulating his life was a necessity. Sparks, in his *Works* quotes him as writing: “*Those who write of the art of poetry, teach us that if we would write what may be worth reading we ought always, before we begin, to form a regular plan and design of our piece; otherwise, we shall be in danger of incongruity. I am apt to think it is the same as to life. I have never fixed a regular design as to life, by which means it has been a confused variety of different scenes. I am now entering upon a new one; let me therefore make some resolutions, and form some scheme of action, that henceforth I may live in all respects like a rational creature.*”

His *Autobiography* shortens the account thus: “*We sail'd from Gravesend on the 23rd of July 1726. For the*



incidents of the voyage, I refer you to my journal, where you will find them all minutely related. Perhaps the most important part of that journal is the plan to be found in it, which I formed at sea, for regulating my future conduct in life. It is the more remarkable, as being formed when I was so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite thro' to old age.”

Further along in the *Autobiography*, summarising his thinking on the several experiences of this period, including his “erratum” of the *Dissertation*, Franklin says: “*I grew convinc'd that truth, sincerity, and integrity in dealings between man and man were of the utmost importance to the felicity of life; and I form'd written resolutions, which still remain in my*

journal book, to practice them ever while I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me, as such; but I entertain'd an opinion that, though certain actions might now be bad because they were forbidden by it, or good, because it commanded them, yet probably those actions might be forbidden because they were bad for us, or commanded because they were beneficial to us, in their own natures, all the circumstances of things considered.”

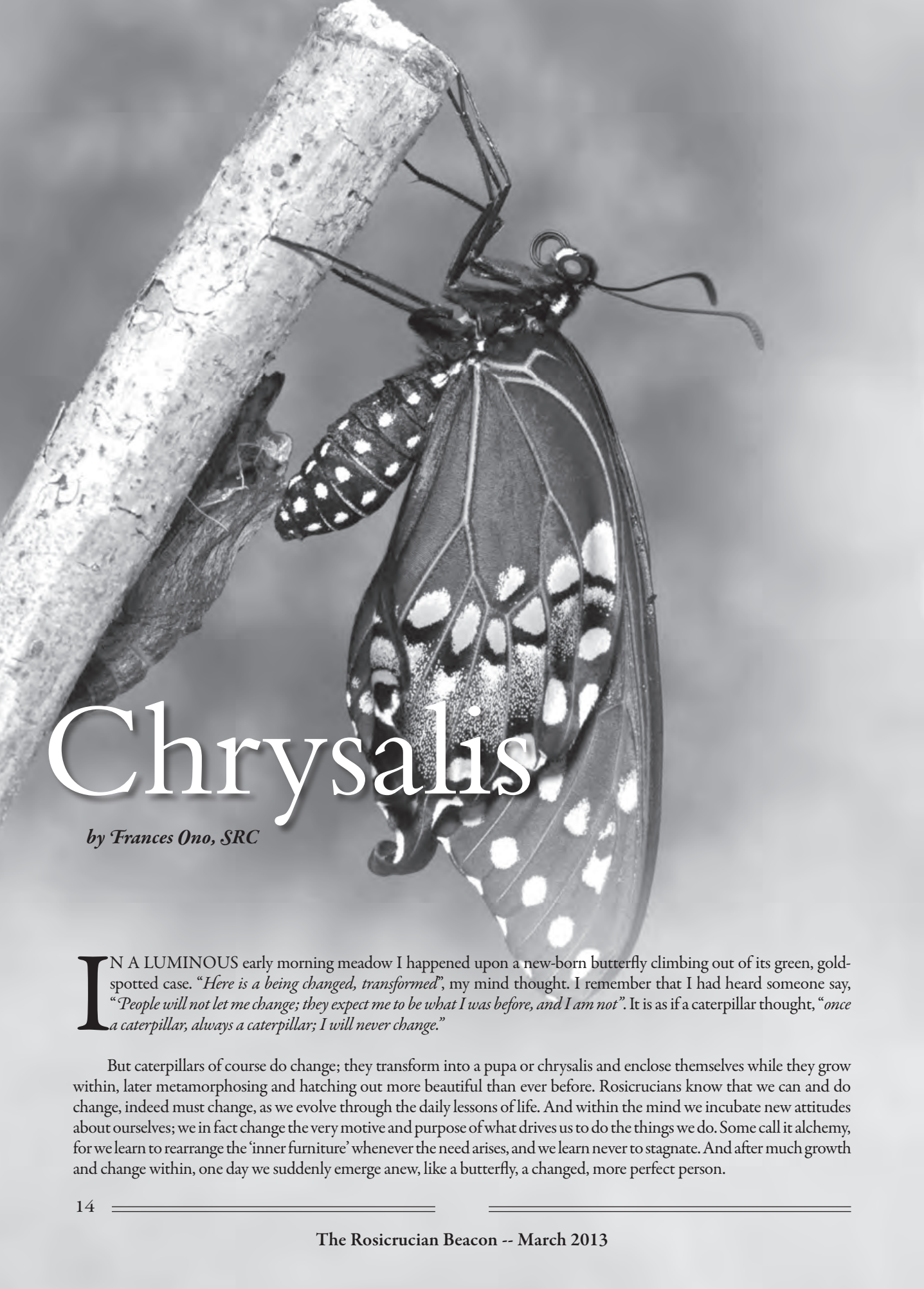
An old Rosicrucian axiom says: “*appetite is the solicitor of the will and the will the controller of the appetite.*”

“*And this persuasion, with the kind hand of Providence, or some guardian angel, or accidental favourable circumstances and situations, or all together, preserv'd me, thro' this dangerous time of youth, and the hazardous situations I was sometimes in among strangers, remote from the eye and advice of my father, without any wilful gross immorality or injustice; that might have been expected from my want of religion. I say wilful, because the instances I have mentioned had something of necessity in them, from my youth, inexperience, and the knowing of others. I had therefore a tolerable character to begin the world with; I valued it properly, and determin'd to preserve it.*”

1 Benjamin Franklin, by Carl Van Doren, Viking Press, 1938

In Part 3, the final article in this series, we will read about Franklin's great mentor Thomas Denham.





Chrysalis

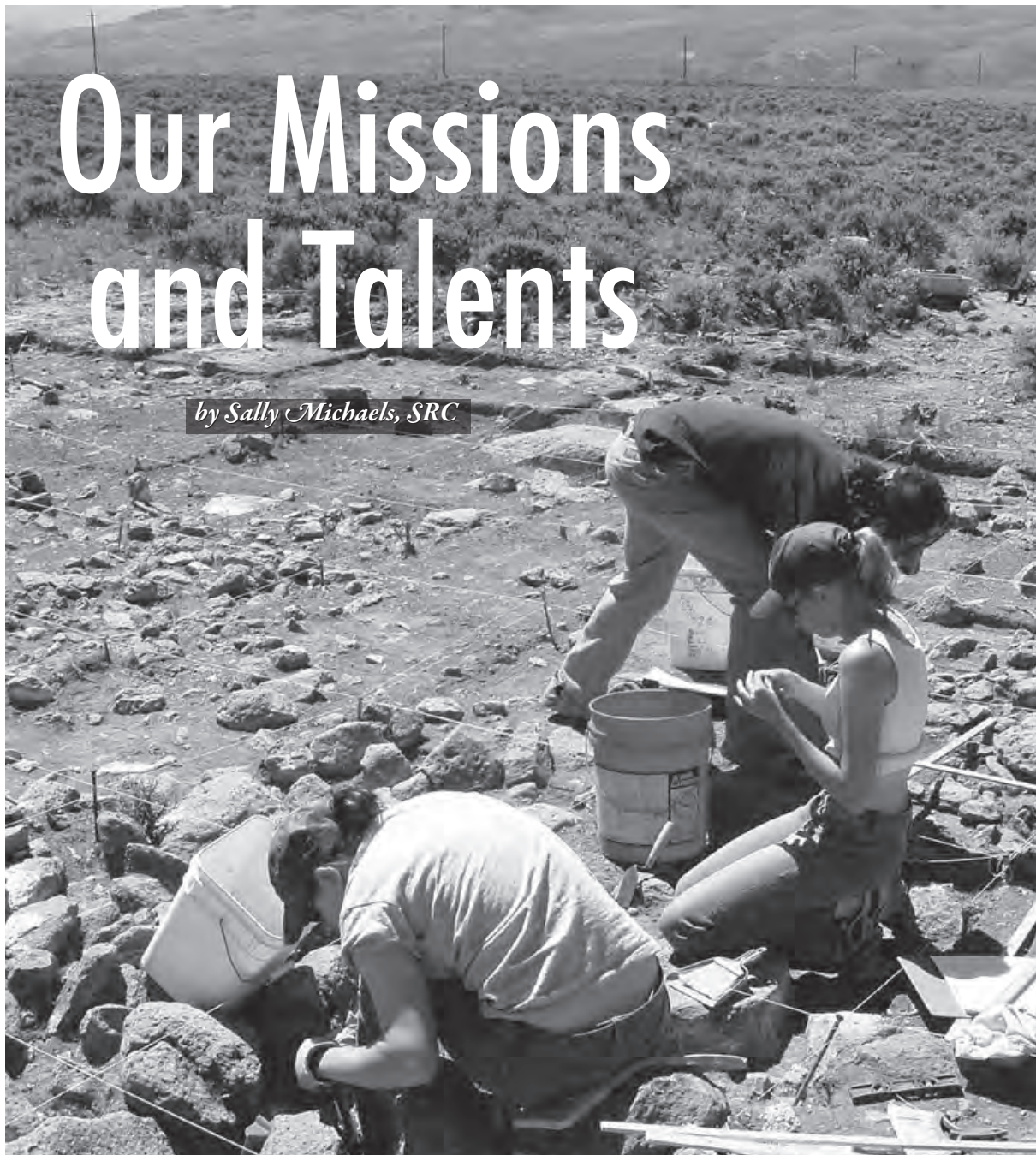
by Frances Ono, SRC

IN A LUMINOUS early morning meadow I happened upon a new-born butterfly climbing out of its green, gold-spotted case. *“Here is a being changed, transformed”*, my mind thought. I remember that I had heard someone say, *“People will not let me change; they expect me to be what I was before, and I am not”*. It is as if a caterpillar thought, *“once a caterpillar, always a caterpillar; I will never change.”*

But caterpillars of course do change; they transform into a pupa or chrysalis and enclose themselves while they grow within, later metamorphosing and hatching out more beautiful than ever before. Rosicrucians know that we can and do change, indeed must change, as we evolve through the daily lessons of life. And within the mind we incubate new attitudes about ourselves; we in fact change the very motive and purpose of what drives us to do the things we do. Some call it alchemy, for we learn to rearrange the ‘inner furniture’ whenever the need arises, and we learn never to stagnate. And after much growth and change within, one day we suddenly emerge anew, like a butterfly, a changed, more perfect person.

Our Missions and Talents

by Sally Michaels, SRC



WE ENTER the world through the miracle of birth, live a short while on Earth, and then experience the mystery of transition or change again. Many people waste their lives steeped in self-indulgence, pursuing the desire for power, material riches and the respect or even adulation of others. But for those of us who pursue more spiritual lives, several questions are important, even if we haven't yet found satisfying answers to them: *Why*

am I here? And as I indubitably am here, what can I do to justify my existence? what talents do I have that can benefit others? And do I have some special mission in Life, something I'm 'meant' to do? and if so, what is it?

A *talent* is simply a special natural aptitude or ability, something innate that we are born with. A *mission* on the other hand is a divinely ordained or self created task; it is at the very least something that spiritually moves us to act. Unless we have devoted at least a part of our lives to using





our talents or working towards a mission, we can lose our spiritual way. We can become *human doings* rather than *human beings* filling our time with endless activity but still feeling exhausted and unfulfilled at the end of the day. There comes a time in all our lives where we need to take stock and realise the importance of devoting ourselves to spiritual growth on a higher level, and this happens only when we begin attempting to work in harmony with the Cosmic and cooperate with natural law.

There are as many missions in life as there are fields of endeavour. Rosicrucians seek knowledge from as many avenues as possible, whether in the arts, anthropology, history, religion, philosophy and of course all the sciences. This is not a scatter-gun approach but a quiet and methodical searching for the best avenue to pursue in life. Eventually, through the broad spectrum exposure they get to the latest available knowledge in many fields, they are able to identify what areas they are best suited to, and wherever possible, they go on to specialise in those fields. There is nothing new in this and is the way most other serious students of life go about planning their lives; but the difference is that Rosicrucians do it not merely for themselves, but do it in order to return a level of service to humankind and the world at large.

Rosicrucians come from all walks of life; they have different upbringings, different exposures to education, are of different ages and temperaments, and live sometimes continents apart under very different cultures. What they have in common though is a desire to grow spiritually outside the sometimes stifling confines of organised

religions, and to find within themselves levels of mastery of life situations that go beyond the average. Given the mind boggling size of the universe, the human species must be but one form of intelligent life in existence, and there are undoubtedly many more, some (maybe very many) of them far advanced of where we are today. Although we have learned so much as a species, there is still so much more to be learned, and unfortunately so many lessons we still fail to learn from. The mystic takes this on board, and for every failure, there is a quick and firm resolve to do better, get up and continue with the learning experience.

Rosicrucians speak of an allegorical path, a spiritual path they consider to be their highest calling to seek out and find. And once found, they enter into productive work and inner development not only for their own benefit but for the benefit of their beloved planet Earth especially. In other words they work for the collective as much as or possibly more than for their individual needs. The path they tread at any given time can be arduous, but they realise that the harder the journey, the faster the lessons of life need to learnt and mastered. And where does the path lead to? It leads to mental and spiritual realms of Light, great achievement and ever higher forms of spiritual awareness.

Many people are drawn to the Rosicrucian Order because they hunger for greater enlightenment in their personal affairs; they have deep rooted yearnings for greater meaning and purpose in their lives, and often they have pressing problems that have evaded resolution so far. Through serious study, meditation, periods of visualisation and focused, concentrated awareness, Rosicrucians find their specific paths of activity and progress steadily on their respective inner journeys. By learning to listen with clarity and alertness, the wisdom of the divine inner self

The path they tread at any given time can be arduous.

is imparted. And in this process, they become aware of what talents they already possess, what talents they could develop, and what their individual contributions to life could be if they tried just a bit harder.

A great master once said: "*Seek, and ye shall find.*" And so true this is, for where there is a will there is always some way forward, and a corresponding ability within that can be developed in order to follow that 'way'. Whatever talent or ability we need, it is almost certainly in us already, merely sleeping, waiting to be aroused and brought into action. Becoming aware of those latent abilities is usually half the problem. The human mind



is always part of whatever solution finally emerges; and that solution is already partially formed in the mind, if only we could retrieve this valuable information. We are part of a great 'Cosmic Awareness' from which answers to all questions ultimately arise, and it is merely a matter of learning how to tap in to that great storehouse of knowledge and experience. It seems simple doesn't it? Yes it is in reality, but virtually no one believes it, and it therefore becomes hard.

When we focus our full attention inwards during meditation, the answer will always eventually come, if we have the patience for it to ripple up to the surface of objective conscious awareness. In meditation we find our lost connection with the universe and its Creator, and it is merely a matter of waiting for the answers to mature and form into patterns that we can recognise and put in concrete terms. Is there a so-called 'divine plan' for humankind. Undoubtedly there is, but its details are revealed only incrementally and only to some. The divine great plan for us is more beautiful than anything we could conceive, but it is also right there for the taking, waiting to be found, understood and accepted.

True Expression

A sincere, spontaneous expression of the inner self is vital for both our mental and physical health. If we are constantly anxious about things, our chances of finding happiness and accomplishment are limited. We can't be aware of the beauty and wonder of creation if there is no joy in life and all we do is worry about our circumstances. If we keep your eyes fixed on the dust on our shoes, how can we see the glory overhead? Small miracles occur daily when we do what is right. Miracles occur especially when

we love others unselfishly, giving of ourselves for the welfare of others, and especially when our inner self is in harmony with the deepest part of our being, known to Rosicrucians and many other mystical traditions simply as 'the Master Within'.

The Rosicrucian Order unfortunately occasionally arouses opposition, suspicion and criticism by people who have false conceptions as to its whole purpose and mission is. By being strong though and holding fast to the high moral standards and spiritual principles of their Order, Rosicrucians do not compromise themselves or dilute their yearnings for a higher life, simply because

If we keep your eyes fixed on the dust on our shoes, how can we see the glory overhead?

of the lower modes of thought and action that others indulge in. Doing anything less, would compromise the integrity of the paths they have chosen to follow, and would lead them swiftly away from the happiness and accomplishment they have found. It's so easy to say "been there, done that" and then wonder why some people can't keep up with us. Well, some have not "been there, done that" and we can be certain that we too have not "been there, done that" in many circumstances where others have "been there, done that". So, patience and tolerance are the watchwords of any mystical path, especial one upon which Rosicrucians tread.

The activities, thoughts and verbal expressions of Rosicrucians are ideally always motivated by an optimum blend of spiritual ideals and physical realities. Ideals are fine but not always achievable. Sometimes the material realities of life are so overpoweringly important that we have to give ear to them a lot more than to our higher ideals. But don't ever forget those ideals in the heat of the moment, even if they can't be acted upon fully for the time being. Rosicrucians seek a balance to every situation and act accordingly, but always with patience and tolerance. Accomplishing such responses to the world around one requires a keen alertness and vigilance to what one is saying, thinking and doing that goes quite far beyond the norm. And it is this vigilance and frankly our awareness of our awareness that becomes so important when we seek to live the life of a Rosicrucian mystic.

A mystically led life requires obedience to natural and esoteric laws. We can't break natural law but we can certainly wear ourselves out trying to. Why try when it is clear we can never succeed. Better then to understand the natural



and spiritual laws under which we must live and try our best to understand why they are as they are, and then willingly and with a smile cooperate with them. Life is a blend of the practical necessities of the physical world intermingled with the spiritual ideals of one's deeper self. And just as becoming a highly educated scientist requires a tremendous amount of intellectual work and many sacrifices to put oneself through university, so too does the process of finding one's true inner self and its innate divinity require much applied effort and sincerity of purpose. In fact taking up one's burdens and entering on a proper path of spiritual discovery is virtually the opposite to most ways of thinking, speaking and doing that involve a true mystic. Anyone aspiring to deeper spiritual awareness, namely every aspiring mystic, must dare to be different and be true to his or her inner self. We need to walk in the sunlight and remain tolerant of others always.

Each stage of our inner growth has given us a higher concept of what is right, and has in the process evolved for us a higher ideal. And the light of awakened consciousness illuminates our path indicates clearly the best way forward for us. Let us aim always therefore to bring this sunny disposition into the innermost recesses of our being, and allow its Light to lead us ever forward. The way will open up before us. Obstacles will be pushed aside. The purpose of every sound we hear, every person we meet, every book we read and every mission we accomplish will be revealed



Nikola Tesla

to us in some way. Our inner urge to progress will be ever-present until the work is completed and valuable lessons have been learned.

Genius always heeds the voice of the inner self and offers itself as a willing channel for divine manifestation. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the 'Sage of Concord', startled New England when he became a free spirit and resigned his pastorate. He then devoted the rest of his life to travel, lecturing and writing, and bringing a form of free spiritual enquiry into the minds of many who would have been able to acquire it in no other way. His works stressed the importance of a strong reliance on the inner person and the freedoms that this inner self already has and wishes

A mystically led life requires obedience to natural and esoteric laws.

to share with the much smaller, less refined outer being of day-to-day life. If Emerson had not found his own niche and talents, our world would have lost a literary genius of great sophistication and value to the world.

Nikola Tesla

The American-Yugoslav scientist Nikola Tesla gave up the joys of love and family life, and lived for his experiments and inventions. He conceived the alternating current method that brought about new uses for electricity. The idea came to him in a flash one day in his youth while admiring a sunset. His greatest achievement was the discovery of the rotating magnetic field and the alternating current or AC. This invention would effectively lead to the production and transmission of electricity over miles of wire that could not be accomplished through the transmission of direct current or DC.

Anna Pavlova, the Russian dancer who popularised ballet, knew at the age of eight what her mission in life would be after attending a performance of Tchaikovsky's ballet *Sleeping Beauty*. She was physically frail but very determined in her quest to become a great ballerina. She knew that God meant her to express beauty through dance so she instilled a love of ballet in anyone who came to see her, and contributed greatly to beauty in the lives of so many.

The famous Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo did not belong to any art movement of the time and his work was truly original. His creative energies came by attuning directly with the Divine Mind, and those energies were eager and willing channels of expression of the holiness he saw. His '*Pietà*' raised him to the rank of Italy's greatest sculptor. He decorated both



the Sistine Chapel in Rome and the Medici Chapel in Florence, the latter of which ranks as his architectural and sculptural masterpiece.

These are just a few examples of great minds who were spiritually inspired, who used and developed their talents, and fulfilled their missions in life. However, not everyone can occupy the centre stage. Not everyone can attain fame, power and glory. There are other tasks and missions more humble but just as important in the cosmic scheme of things. Worthwhile, purposeful living is the key to the life of a mystic. Humble service performed with love and dedication is always blessed. In the eyes of our Creator there is no difference between the street cleaner, the dishwasher, the scientist or the physician. Knowing this, each person must find his or her own place in life. We must use our time in such a way that at the end of life, we will have something constructive to show for the time we were privileged to be on our beloved planet Earth.



Pavlova

She was physically frail but very determined in her quest to become a great ballerina.

Just as different instruments of a symphony orchestra combine to produce perfect harmony, we all have a role to play in creating harmony in the Cosmos. The all-important thing is to care, to love and to help one another. When we do this we become a part of the flow of life and energy that has neither beginning nor end. We are no longer alone and separate but become an involved and integrated member of humankind. No one becomes great until they give themselves to something greater than themselves. The inner urge to serve is sacred and must not be disregarded or suppressed. It is an innate need of our deeper self to express itself as widely as it can, and it does so through service to causes greater than the individual self. Let us therefore spread light and love where there is ignorance, hatred or darkness. Let us speak of peace and reconciliation wherever there is talk of war and strife. We must all become involved in some way, whether it be at home or at work, in some higher purpose. By serving others, we help

ourselves, and what we are and what we do flows out and helps to determine what others will become.

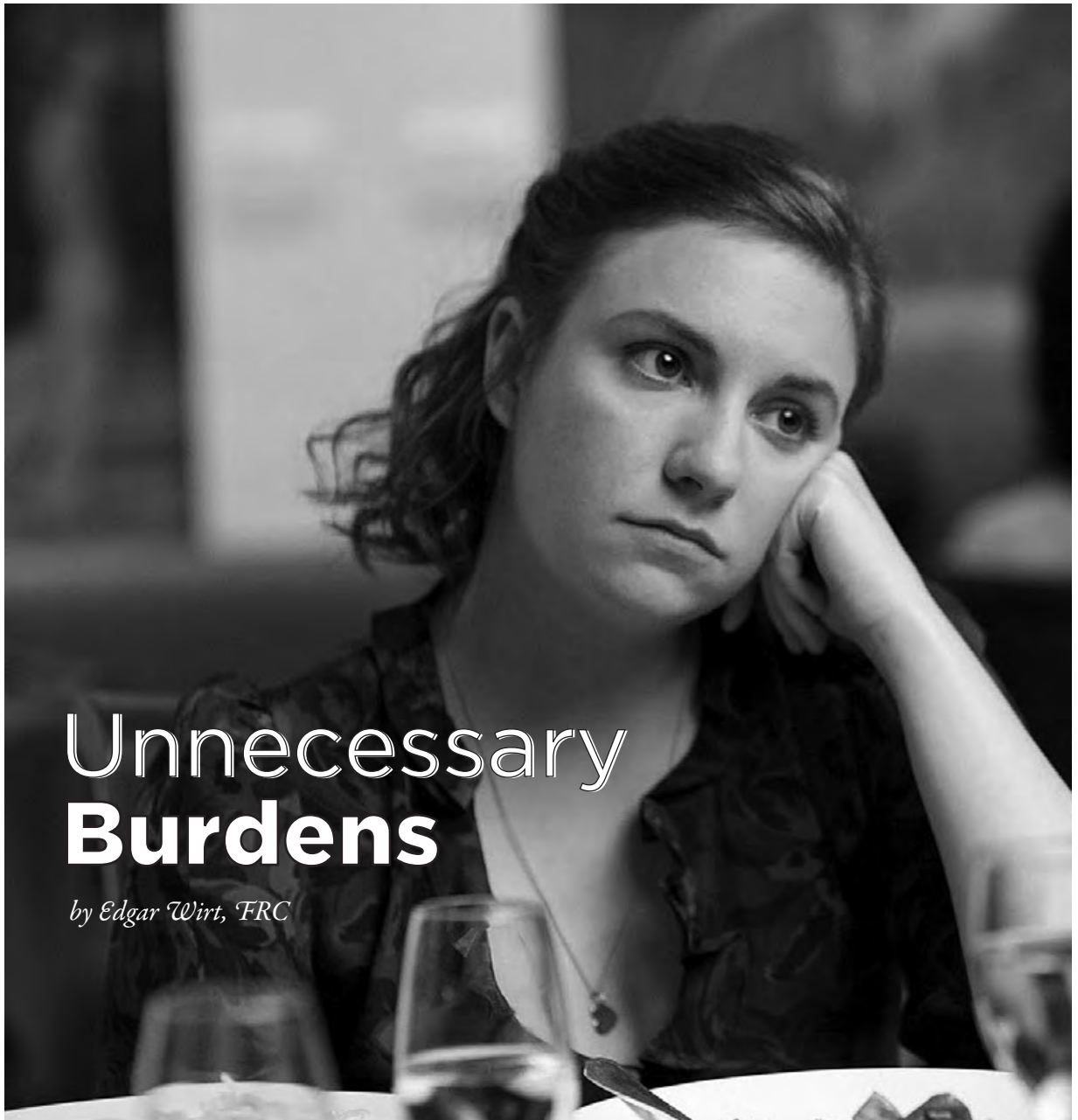
Whenever you can, extend a friendly hand to those who are not yet on a path; help them to enter a path meant for them; help them to open doors to new understanding. We can never know how far-reaching our words and actions can be to those who are striving to better themselves. And it is often the simplest expressions of humility that carry the greatest weight. At times all we have to do is to listen with a loving heart, and then we can look with compassion upon our troubled friend and say: *"I know, I understand, I have been there too."*

Our journey on the path of spiritual evolvment will be smoother and present fewer obstacles if we just keep our hearts and minds free from resentment, intolerance and impatience. We may have "been there, done that", but many have not..., yet. Therefore open yourself to the divine inflow, so it can work freely through you. Become enriched by the spiritual action of reaching out to others in need. Rosicrucians especially find it their duty and privilege to raise the vibrations of their environment with positive thoughts and emotions, even if in very subtle and humble ways. They experience the joy of fellowship as they love and serve wherever they are needed. And then, when the mission has been accomplished, with the great joy, gratitude, and tranquillity they say: *"To this end was I born. For this cause I came into the world."*



Michelangelo's roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.





Unnecessary Burdens

by Edgar Wirt, FRC



ONE WAY to lighten the burden of karma, the law of cause and effect, is simply to step out of its radius. This may be a big step, a small step or several steps. If you think about it, it took only one step to get into a shadow; it may well take only one step to get out of it.

Such action suggests that we accept karma as our own doing, not limiting it to long-term penalties for actions long past. The statement, "*As I sow, so shall I reap*," may be more appropriate, as this metaphor implies that there's a growing season and therefore a cycle between

cause and effect. No doubt there are such delayed effects, some of which we may not have foreseen. However, there are also immediate effects; karma can also manifest in the immediate present. Karma is what we're doing to ourselves right now, whatever is promoting or stunting our growth, creating harmony and happiness, or loading on us unnecessary burdens. For example, if we close a door, we cannot pass through it until it has been opened again. If we fall down we can only crawl until we stand up again. To pound on the door, or to moan while crawling about, not only misses the point; it means we're accepting



results (karma) that aren't mandatory. We needn't endure this discomfort!

Our religious traditions have been rather heavy-handed regarding the concept of *sin*, a word whose background is surprising. In Jewish scripture the Hebrew word *chet* comes from archery and means 'missing the mark', or, by metaphoric extension, falling short, not coming up to specifications in some way. In Christian scripture, the Greek word *hamartia* also comes from archery and has the same meaning. In English scripture however, these words are occasionally translated as *fault* or *offense*, but most often as *sin*. The hundreds of references to *sin*, *sinner* and *sinning* almost exclusively originate from these roots that mean *missing the mark*.

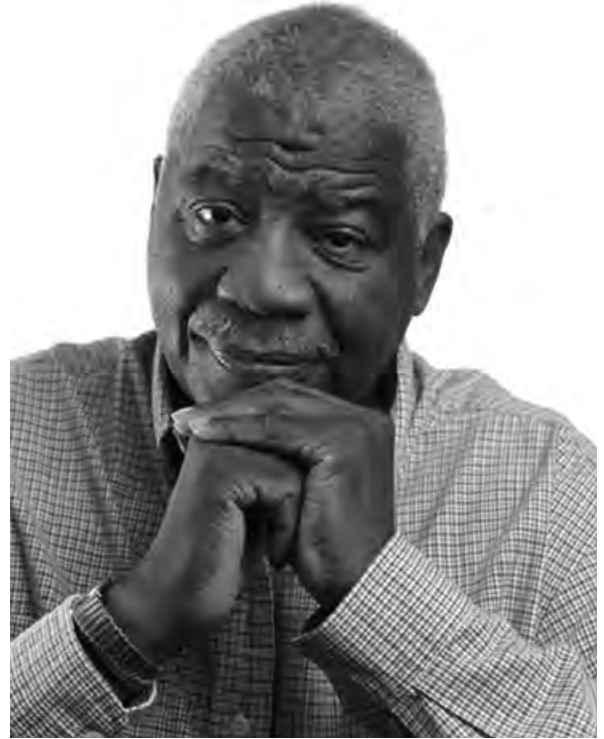
In a similar way, words whose roots relate to *wandering* are translated as *error*. In both cases, the connotation of the source words is *failure in relation to some purpose*, rather than a violation that calls for extraneous penalties. The penalties for error are its built-in results, the inescapable effects of a cause. Sin and failure are emotionally loaded words in our present-day culture. We brand someone a failure, not necessarily in terms of their purpose, but in terms of purposes *we* expect of them. We imply guilt (rather than simply error) to a failure or a sinner, and our society most unfortunately emphasises guilt where nothing of the sort should exist.

Applications of psychoanalysis several decades ago demanded the acceptance of guilt for a person's childhood emotions. Some religious conversions, in recognising the importance of accepting 'divine grace' and guidance, ask postulants first to accept their own guilt, even to magnify it. The theological doctrine of original sin implies that human error, failure and guilt are inescapable and that

However, there are also immediate effects; karma can also manifest in the immediate present.

we are born ready-made sinners. We have been developing our guilt-ridden society for thousands of years, but is this aspect of it is not worth keeping is it?

For many acts, retribution comes through our civil laws and courts. We also know that through karma, we will meet retribution for other acts, either of omission or commission, not covered by civil law. We usually think of these acts as harmful to others, not recognising the harm also done to ourselves. Civil laws have tried to recognise this, forbidding acts that are deemed destructive or harmful to our own wellbeing or future rewards. Laws against blasphemy are examples. These are victimless crimes, where no one but the offended feels that they have been adversely affected. Today, it seems increasingly



An excellent exercise at the close of each day is to review the day's events.

futile, if not improper, to legislate such personal morality.

When harm is done to others, there are sometimes opportunities for restitution or compensation. Feelings of guilt may impel us to make amends, which can be accomplished without beating ourselves up about it. When harm is done to ourselves, there's no such alternative. Any burden of guilt, of itself, makes no amends; it's crippling and destructive, not constructive. At best, it helps to prevent the repetition of an act. At worst, it spills over into other matters and poisons the well from which we draw spiritual sustenance. It makes us forego some Cosmic benefits that might disclose opportunities for compensating and helping others, as well as bringing about personal growth and spiritual maturity for ourselves.

Experiencing guilt then, is one aspect of immediate karma; it's something in which we indulge that causes us present woe as well as present and future limitations. However, it's not so easy to lay aside this burden once we've taken it up. For one thing, we don't want to think of ourselves in the same class as those we call immoral, those who seem to feel no compunction or guilt in what they do. But, until we can with compassion and humility forgive ourselves for missing the mark or falling short of our purpose and ideals, we continue to limp along, thereby compounding the woe.



Atonement

An excellent exercise at the close of each day is to review the day's events, particularly those in which you took some action or made a decision, or in which you could have done so, but didn't. It will be encouraging to remember that you handled some situations pretty well; but in others you fell short. What could you have done better, more in line with your overall purpose and ideals? This kind of review isn't meant to castigate yourself for your errors, but to anticipate how to do better the next time. We learn from our shortcomings only when we recognise them as shortcomings; and that in itself is the principal ingredient of atonement.

Atonement, which means putting ourselves right, isn't the same as punishment or expiation. What about those errors or offenses of which we aren't even aware? We're not immune from their results are we? The

Atonement, which means putting ourselves right, isn't the same as punishment or expiation.

ancient idea of a *sin offering* was not meant as expiation, but as a token of acknowledgment that we have other shortcomings of which we aren't aware, and also that redress has not always been possible for those of which we are aware. In fact, we don't perceive fully the divine law of cause and effect, what we call Karma. Acknowledging this is the first step in asking for more enlightenment.

It's not our further responsibility to punish ourselves; that has been decreed otherwise: "*Retribution (not vengeance) is mine, saith the Lord*"; which is to say that retribution is built into the Cosmic system. Expiation, when we've harmed or offended someone, depends on redress or restitution to them, or alternative deeds of merit that can balance the scales to some extent. Asking

further that our errors be remitted to us, that means be handed back to us, isn't asking for punishment 'in kind', but rather that we may have the opportunity to do it over, this time correctly or to make adequate amends. This is fulfilling the law.

Negation

There are other ways where we stand in our own light, or stand in shadow when we could be in the sun. These ways are many, but it may help to point out one rather common element. We have had a tradition of self-denial, of foregoing things we want, and especially things that are pleasurable. It's surprising what we can do without when everything we think we need, must be carried or pulled in carts. However, it's also been fostered in other circumstances as self-discipline. On the plus side, at least in theory, self-denial compels people to reshuffle their priorities and discover what's most important and most enduring. But, it has also been used as punishment, and it can become a fetish.

Most of us have done without something when we couldn't afford it. But there are other things we do without out of choice, or omit intentionally, not knowing what we're missing. Negative thinking shuts many doors to us that positive thinking would open. True, we're beset by a barrage of negative expectations, such as health hazards, inflation, corruption in high places, and so on. But not exercising whatever spiritual competence we have, and not counteracting these negative expectations, we only leave ourselves in want, not enjoying the available Cosmic benefits of health, happiness and achievement.

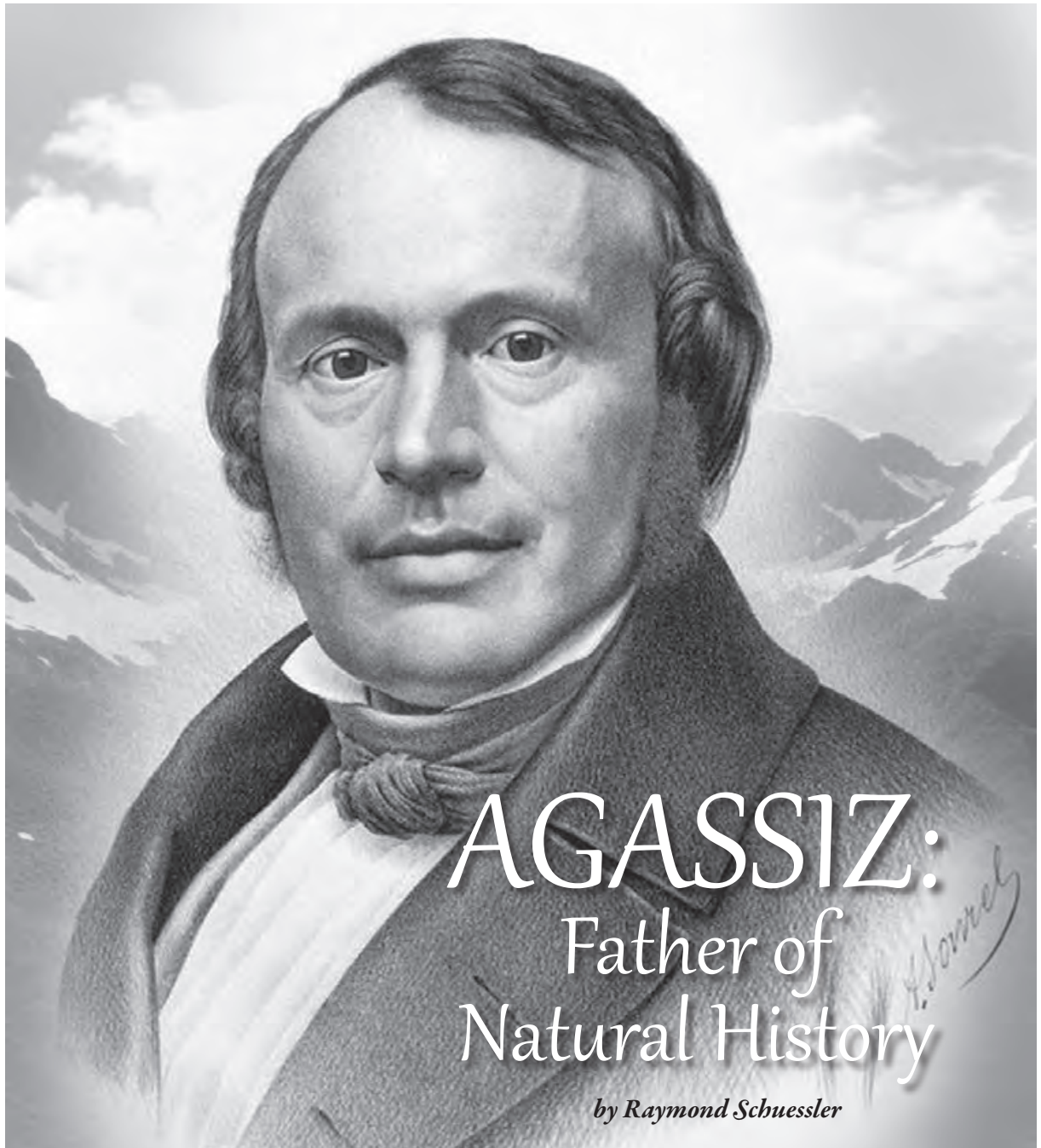
If we stand in the shadow, how can we be warmed by the sun? If we turn away from the fountain, how can we quench our thirst? In these ways, unwittingly, we create sombre karma *now*, while brighter karma is only a step away.

True Reality

by Richard Beardsley, FRC

*If I walk alone
Without a friend
In search of Truth,
Along the path of life
Which has no end;
How can I be sure
That what I find is real?
Unless my inner self can feel
And Cosmic Consciousness reveal
The true reality of Truth?*





AGASSIZ: Father of Natural History

by Raymond Schuessler

IN 1836, Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz, a young professor of natural history, began to investigate glaciers in his native Switzerland. Camped on the ice of the Aar Glacier in the Jura Mountains, he noticed stones and massive boulders alien to that locale and wondered how they could have got there. They were larger than a river could possibly have carried down; nor could a river place some so high up.

He wondered too, why when a man fell to his death

in a glacial crevasse, his body would be found emerging at the melting end of the glacier at some future, almost predictable date. Could the huge glaciers move and be responsible for depositing these boulders, and could they have moved great distances in the past? To test his theory he placed stakes in the snow in the valleys and matching stakes in the snow on the mountainsides. Checking them every few days, he discovered that the valley stakes had moved! From this observation was born



the theory of ice ages.

The following year Agassiz not only confirmed the theory of moving glaciers but suggested that during an ice age, not only Switzerland but all of northern Europe and probably half of America had been covered by a veritable ocean's worth of ice. When Agassiz first published a paper on the subject, many scientists ridiculed his theory. His mentor, the famous naturalist Alexander von Humboldt told him to abandon such nonsense, and the eminent Charles Darwin was sceptical at first. But they would soon change their minds about *God's Great Plough* as Agassiz called the glaciers. He wrote: "*What was the use of this great engine set at work ages ago to grind, furrow and knead over, as it were, the surface of the earth? We have our answer in the fertile soil which spreads over the temperate regions of the globe. The hard surface of the rocks was ground to powder, the elements of the soil were mingled in fair proportions, granite was carried into the lime regions, lime was mingled with the more unproductive granite districts and a soil was prepared fit for the farm use of man.*"

Agassiz in America

In 1845, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, patron of the composer Felix Mendelssohn, granted Agassiz money to finance a search for glacial evidence in America. Here he found plenty of evidence of glacial movement. Lecturing to spellbound audiences he convinced the most learned men to accept his theory of ice ages and he was soon the most talked-about man in America. Agassiz so impressed the Americans that Harvard University offered, and he accepted, the chair of Zoology and Geology.

Louis Agassiz dominated the American scientific

Could the huge glaciers move and be responsible for depositing these boulders?

scene from the time he started teaching at Harvard in 1847 until his death in 1873. For over 50 years he carried on a romance with nature, dedicating his life to educating people into the mysteries and wonder of the outdoor world. "*Nature*," he said, "*brings us back to absolute truth; the study of nature is discourse with the Highest Mind.*"

Before Agassiz went to the United States in 1846, there were very few classes in natural history. Schoolchildren knew little about rocks, birds or fish. And if they wanted to look something up there were no reference books. But, by 1873, virtually every large city had a natural history museum, most of them directed by Agassiz-trained men. "*A museum is an apparatus as indispensable for the progress of modern civilisation*

as a chemical laboratory," he said. "*But it must be ever progressing and improving. The moment it is allowed to stand upon its own merit, it will go down and soon take, irretrievably, a subordinate position.*"

Early Life

Agassiz was born on 28th May 1807, in Switzerland, the son of a pastor and a gifted mother who taught him to love plants and animals. Until he was ten his father was his only teacher. At nine he could read and write in Latin and was learning to read Greek. That he was a most gifted child was clear.

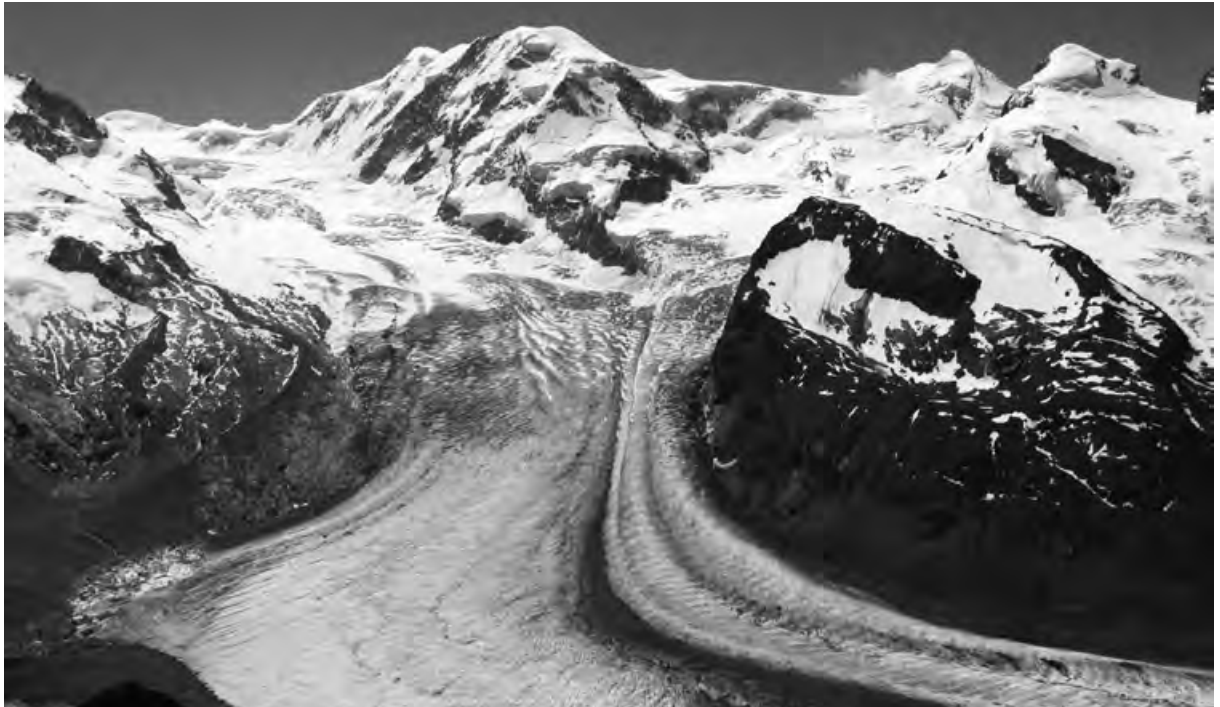
In his room he had snake skins, bird's nests, dried frogs, caged field mice, odd assortments of pebbles, some round and smoothly polished, a puzzle he would soon unravel, and perhaps a few fish he was preparing to have his sister draw accurately down to the last scale. When he went fishing he was more interested in the name of the fish he caught than its edibility. His educational career was a brilliant one. He attended several Swiss and German universities, and received doctorates in philosophy at Erlangen and in medicine at Munich. When he was 22 years old, he inherited a collection of Brazilian fish collected by two eminent naturalists and classified them for publication. For this he won great renown in scientific circles the world over. He gained the notice of Alexander von Humboldt, who used his influence to secure a professorship for Agassiz at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where Friedrich Wilhelm IV also ruled as sovereign prince of the Principality of Neuchâtel.

When Agassiz turned to the movement of glaciers he was aware that there were predecessors in the field. In 1821, J Venetz, a Swiss engineer, presented a paper declaring that Swiss glaciers had once expanded on a great scale. And in 1832, A Bernhardi had championed this theory.

In 1834, when Jean de Charpentier presented a similar thesis before the Helvetic Society, most of the scientists opposed the idea, one of them being Agassiz himself. Hoping to show Charpentier what the flaws in his theory were, Louis spent the summer with the glaciologist, and later admitted his mistakes, just as Darwin and Humboldt would later.

Agassiz's influence in American scientific circles was immense. His dynamic and captivating personality induced people to give him the means to make his work easier. "*His face was the most genial and engaging that I had ever seen and his manner captivated me altogether,*" said one student. "*It has been my fortune to see many men of engaging presence and ways but never have I known his*





Glacier next to Monte Rosa, Switzerland's highest mountain.

equal." The secret of his amiability, they said, was that "he was content with himself and everyone else." Idealised by the great intellects of America and much of the world, he was given whatever he wanted. When he needed an outdoor laboratory, he was given an entire island. When he wanted a museum to store and catalogue his work, Harvard built it for him. So intimate was his fame with museums that the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard is known today as the 'Agassiz.'

His home in Cambridge, across the river from Boston, became just like his childhood room: full of rocks, turtles, rabbits, opossums, and even a tame bear in the cellar. His method of teaching was from the book of nature. "If you study nature in books, when you go outdoors you cannot find her. It's not textbooks we want but students. The book of nature is always open. Strive to interpret what really exists." When taking his students on field trips he would give open-air lessons, always encouraging everyone to observe on their own. He insisted on patient, unending attention to precise individual facts, and then comparison of facts to discover a pattern.

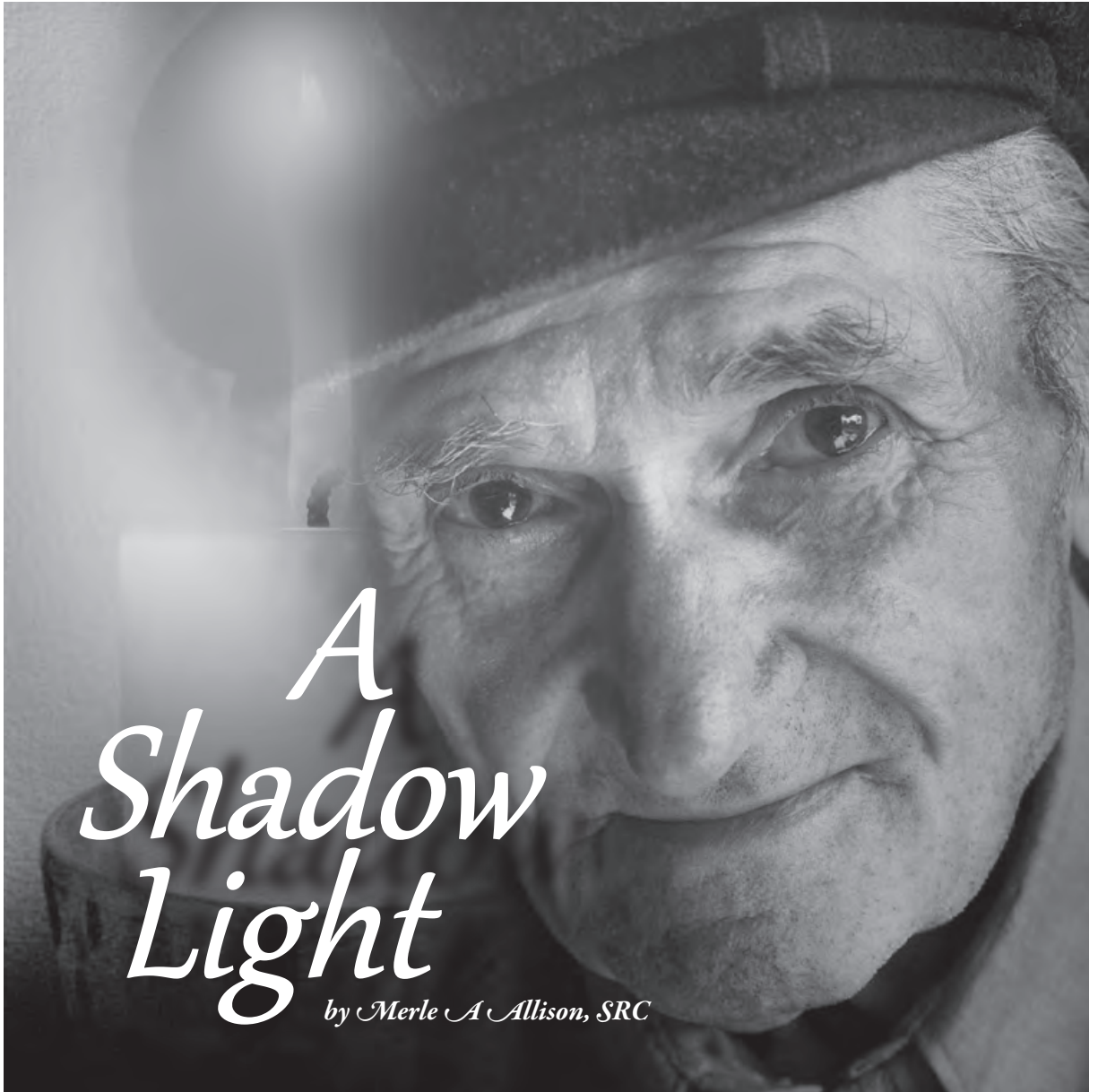
Many city students could see nothing around them at first, but slowly they began to notice that the soil, rocks, trees and wildlife were different in each locality. The world suddenly began to open up before their eyes and reveal its innermost secrets. "If I taught my students anything, I have taught them to observe," Agassiz said proudly. In time, every outstanding teacher of natural

history in America from 1850 onwards was at one time a pupil of Agassiz, or of one of his students. No one wrote science with such clarity and beauty as Agassiz: "The exact description of things seen," said Hugh Kenner, "on which so much 20th century writing is founded, was a craft developed as recently as the 19th century, and not by men of letters, but by scientists. Agassiz was quite possibly the greatest master of this art who ever lived."

If there was any glaring error in his life, it was his jealous fight with Darwin's theory of evolution, which some historians believe limited the value of his later work. Disturbed at Darwin's audacity, he wrote an essay arguing that God created all the species separately in the form in which we find them, and were destined to remain unchanged. Later, in private, he admitted that in his studies of fossils he was "on the verge of anticipating Darwinism," but he hesitated because "we had the higher fishes (brains of sharks) first."

For posterity, Agassiz envisioned education as the panacea for humankind's ills: "Every dollar given for higher education, in whatever department, is likely to have greater influence upon the future character of our nation than even the millions which have been spent to raise the many to material ease and comfort." Louis Agassiz lies buried at Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts. By his grave stands an unshaped boulder from the Aar glacier field of Switzerland inscribed, *Louis Agassiz, teacher.*





A Shadow Light

by Merle A Allison, SRC

IT'S BEEN written that "*A glass of wine once lost a kingdom; a nail turned the tide of a mighty battle, and a woman's smile once destroyed the homes of a million people.*" So it happens that little things have, at times, changed the course of human history. And a legend also relates that the untiring determination of a tiny spider spinning a web in an old hut gave King Robert the Bruce of Scotland renewed courage to return to battle and thus succeed in his mission.

But the majority of us are not earmarked for such historical destinies, and the role we play upon the stage of life may make little impression upon the course of history.

Yet who can say how much the little things we do today may deeply affect the tomorrow of someone we may never know? Greatness does not always mean fame, wealth or power. Greatness requires more than these trappings. It's that subtle something in the innermost recesses of the self which glows like a ray from an invisible candle shedding the light of illumination into the dark night, and leaving, in its wake an unforgettable essence only the heart can comprehend.

This happened to me many years ago when I met someone I saw for just a moment; someone whose name I didn't know, and whose face I cannot remember; yet in his passing, there was printed indelibly upon the fabric



of my consciousness the beauty of the shadow he left behind. It was one of those mornings I am sure we have all experienced; the kind of a morning when necessity demands you go to work no matter how badly or how sick you might feel. So it was with me. I had a miserable cold, and like many other winter mornings in Edinburgh, it was windy and bitterly cold.

I stood at my bus stop with a dozen or more other people shivering, my face half buried in the turned-up collar of my coat. I was ill in both body and mind. I had missed my first bus, and a red light had caused me to miss the next one. I couldn't pretend, I was miserable and I didn't care who knew it, and my misery was made worse by the fact that I would have to wait another 15 minutes in the wind and cold for the next bus. Silently, I felt extremely sorry for myself, growing hostile against the weather and the bus company in particular, upon whom I took great pleasure in blaming the discomfort I felt.

I was frowning gloomily and my jaw was clamped shut to keep my teeth from chattering. I'm sure my expression was anything but pleasant and my red nose would surely have made me a perfect substitute for the well-known red-nosed reindeer. I pulled my chin out from under my coat collar long enough to glare down the street hoping for some glimpse of the next offending bus. That was when I saw him.

I hadn't deserved his kindness, yet he gave it without hesitation.

He seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. He was poorly dressed, in fact, quite shabby really. Neither this nor the fact that he was an elderly man softened my frame of mind. I immediately thought that he must be some down-and-out, but his strange actions mystified me. I found myself watching him with a growing interest. He picked his way carefully through the waiting crowd, stopping for just a moment in front of each lady at the bus stop. He spoke to each one for just the fraction of a moment, tipped his hat, and passed on to the next. After he left, each lady had a smile on her face, yet no one gave him anything nor acted in any way to give the impression that he had asked for anything. The men he ignored completely.

Intrigued, I couldn't help wondering about this and feeling curious about his actions, yet as he came



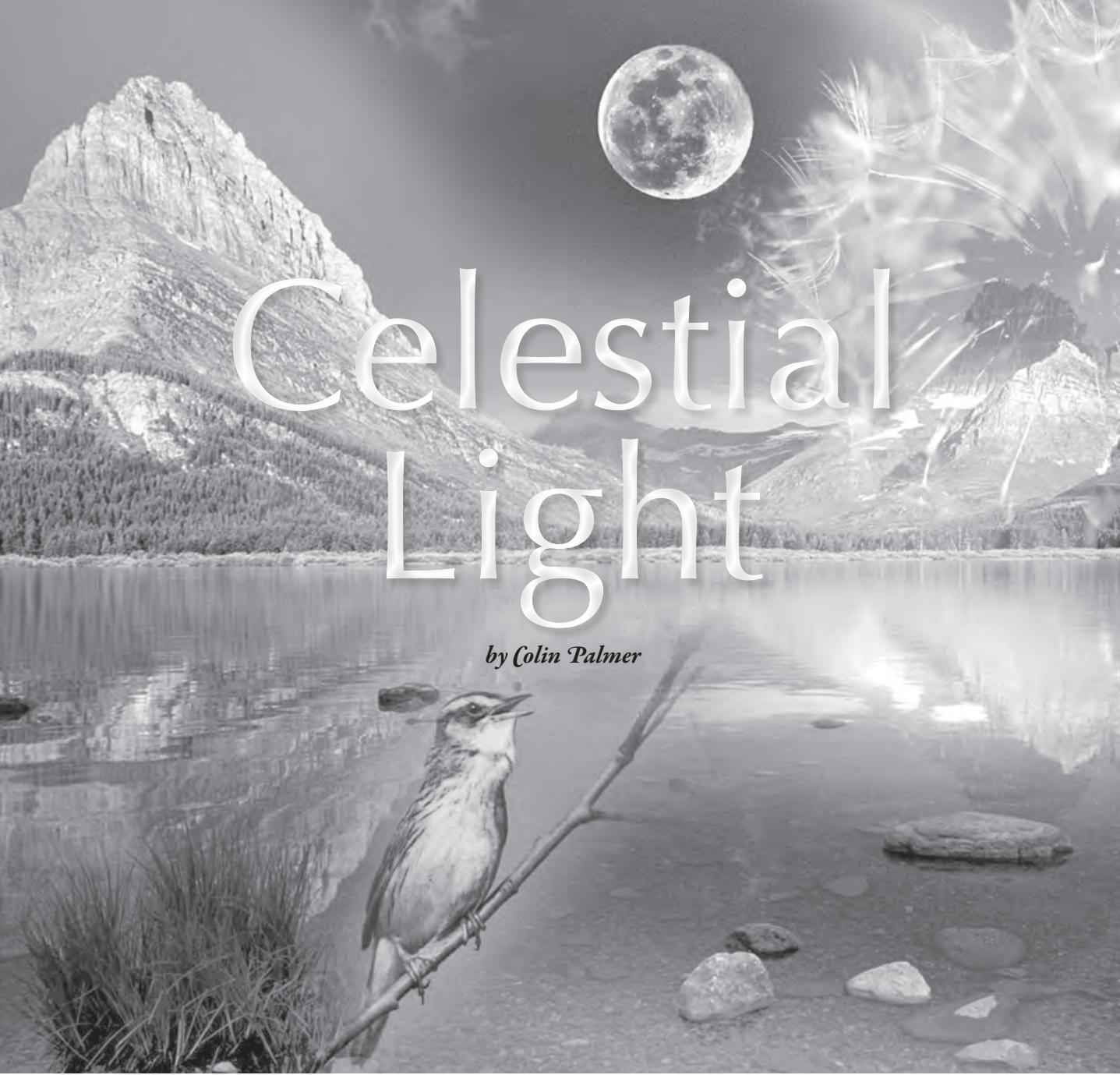
A glass of wine once lost a kingdom.

toward me, I instinctively stiffened against his approach, muttering inwardly, "*probably some nut trying to be a comedian.*" I was in no mood for funny remarks and tried very hard to look it. I glared at him with what I thought would be a most discouraging scowl, and was ready to cut him short with whatever curt response I could think up. He stopped within a couple of feet of me, looked straight into my red-nosed, scowling face and said, "*My dear, you look very beautiful this morning.*" He tipped his hat, smiled and bowed slightly in a manner that would have done justice to a prince himself.

I was so stunned that before I could recover, he had passed on down the street. I stared after him like someone in a hypnotic trance. If I had been slapped across the face I couldn't have been jolted any harder. He couldn't help seeing my red nose and the bad temper in my face, yet in spite of this he gave kind words and a friendly smile. I hadn't deserved his kindness, yet he gave it without hesitation. It was only after I got to work that I realised I had completely forgotten my own misery and bad temper. I could think of nothing else but this strange little man who had passed like a shadow yet had changed my whole morning and left me with something to think over for the rest of my life.

More and more he began to seem like an angel disguised as a very humble soul, perhaps even alone in the world with nothing to give to anyone but a beautiful philosophy that he believed in living. Whether the sun was shining or not made no difference to him. He seemed to know that with a few kind words and a smile he could spread sunshine wherever he went. Yes, he came like a shadow out of nowhere, and drifted back into nowhere, a nameless, faceless shadow, giving to many that unforgettable something that all the money in the world could never buy, and left in his passing a little part of the light that burned within his soul.





Celestial Light

by Colin Palmer

W

HEN William Wordsworth wrote the ode, *“Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,”* he could never have known that he was writing it for me. If he had known, he would have said more about *“the glories he hath known”* and he might have been more specific about that line, *“Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”*

Somewhere in my teens I stumbled upon, or was guided to, this poem and I knew immediately the things he was speaking about. And if I remember rightly I said a prayer that hoped fervently that this man I was beginning to be would never *“perceive it die away, and fade into the*

light of common day.” Of all my prayers, this one has been most kindly and very obviously answered, time and again. I wouldn’t have it otherwise. What happens to someone whose perception in certain areas is frozen or had stagnated at the age of five or eight or ten? Can they grow? Must they then enter the prison to arrive at a maturity which would allow them to *“Forget the glories he hath known, and that imperial palace whence he came?”* Must our birth become *“a sleep and a forgetting?”*

For me, the answer to my prayer has been that I was allowed to retain many of the glories that a child can see, and so to enjoy the wonder of it all. I didn’t mature to the point of forgetting the glory of sunlight flashing upon water,



or the mirrored wonder of reflections in a lake. I still enjoy the bubbling music of a cataract, the miracle of the 'light' in the night sky which we call the moon and the mystery of a gaudily coloured butterfly fluttering by. Many of us can remember feeling affinity for the ants, and sympathy for the worm the robin is swallowing. We might also feel possessiveness for a flower whose beauty tantalises, for we know that all of creation was built upon a divine plan, to give us the enjoyment of its beauty.

Beauty in Nature

Recently, I met a nettle, and was warned not to touch it, for it would cause me misery. As it would intrigue a two-year-old, so it did me, and I grasped the nettle for the joy of touching it and being better acquainted. Naturally its spines pierced my fingers and irritated my skin for many hours afterward. As I pulled the spines out I was glad of the experience, for now I have known the nettle and understand that it only harmed me in self-preservation. I might never touch another one, but I know now the nature of the plant intimately, as I couldn't have done without that moment of contact.

I still look at a dandelion and see its beauty, in spite of the years people have been maligning it.

To me the beauty of roving clouds in a deep blue sky is as great as it was when I found time to lie in the shade of an oak tree and watch those clouds drift by. A mica-filled stone can catch my eye and invite my enjoyment the moment it flashes to let me know it's there. Birdsong is the friendliest of music and the wonder of a firefly at even-time is no less than it was when I was five. Finding a new kind of beetle that I can examine is still exciting, and I often carry a magnifying glass that will let me see the detail of structure and colour of the smallest flower.

Wordsworth said, "*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting*," and I agree, but I would also add that our time on Earth is a kind of dream during which we can enjoy the wonders that we find. I don't thrill with wonder as I watch a TV programme, or while I wash a sink full of dirty dishes. Necessary activity, yes, but such prosaic acts contribute nothing that will inspire my day, or add a bit of glory to tomorrow. As one poet said, "*What is this life, if, full of care, we take no time to stand and stare.*" For me, the important moments are those when I must stare at the murderousness of little things.

Does any or all of this represent growth? That depends upon the direction you would have growth take. If you want to be rich, work every moment for gain, and don't be bothered to look at a rose. If you want to put on weight, indulge yourself in gourmet delights. If you want to be wise, read all the books in the library. If you want to grow

strong, work with weights or take up a sport. If you want to be hated, do all you can to make those who should love you, hate. If you want to be content, have some time each day when you can marvel at the things of our world that no human can make, or fully understand.

Wordsworth wrote, "*Whither is fled the visionary gleam? Where is it now, the glory and the dream?*" It could be locked in the darkness of our eyes that have grown blind through the years. It could be lost in the preoccupation we all have with life's processes that drain our time and energy. I don't claim to know whether the glory and the dream can be reclaimed after 30 years of misuse and neglect. When the "prison" door has closed, can we ever escape? I would guess that it would be more trouble for most of us than the vision of glory is worth to the adult mind. We will remain blind to those wonders we knew as children, forever.

When Wordsworth asks "*Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke the years to bring the inevitable yoke?*" he must have thought it was too late to reverse direction. He adds, "*Nothing can bring back the hour of splendour in*

"What is this life if, full of care, we take no time to stand and stare."

the grass, of glory in the flower." But he also writes, "*Those shadowy recollections, which, be they what they may, are yet a master-light of all our day.*" And a bit farther on he mentions "*truths that wake, to perish never.*" I doubt if he thought it was easy to retain that spiritual bloom of earliest childhood, but I feel sure he believed that it could be preserved by hard work and attention to those earthly values that are "*apparelled in celestial light.*"

I really believe that keeping, or recapturing, this feeling of wonder at our world and universe is as important to us as is the heartbeat of life. As the trunk is important to the tree and the root to the plant, so is this spiritual awareness is vital to everyone. We can live without it, but how sordid and how commonplace will be all of our days. Childlike wonder is something to seek earnestly, if we've lost it, and something to hold onto firmly when in the confusion of life it tries to escape. So, take note of the simple marvels all about you. Watch a puppy play, study a captive worm, enjoy the changing pattern and colours of sunset, with a glass study the glorious structure of any flower, marvel at the thousands of leaves upon a tree, for none are the same, and bid the birds good night as they settle at dusk in an evergreen.

Soon you will find these things of earth verily are "*apparelled in celestial light.*" Suddenly you will find in yourself a new person, and your life will forever be richer and more fulfilling.





The Magic of Touch

John Palo, FRC



STRANGE diseases were attacking children at an orphanage. The doctors were puzzled. If you walked through the rooms you'd see these tiny tots gaze at you with a haunting stare. How odd they looked, more like shrivelled up old men and women. You heard no laughter, no sounds of children at play. They were slow to learn to stand and walk. Deep moans and long sighs were common. They had little appetite for food, became ill and died easily. The puzzled doctors did not know what was

wrong, so they did not know what to do.

Then, some wise soul with a healthy mothering instinct made a suggestion. She suggested some teenage girls from the local high school be invited to visit the orphanage. She told the girls to become friendly with the children, to pick them up and cuddle them; hold them and love them. As if by magic, a miracle happened. The cuddling brought about a dramatic, healthy change in the children. It was so obvious at the first session, that the girls were invited to revisit the orphanage again and



again. Again and again the tots were held and cuddled, and again and again the results were clear to see. With every visit the beautiful transformation continued. The children's posture improved, they lost their look of old age, they began to eat and now they smiled, gurgled and laughed. They no longer became easily ill and started to sparkle with life. It was apparent these children had been starving for simple human physical affection.

This story makes me wonder: What is there about the sense of touch that can bring about such a miracle? Why is it that makes our lives so empty, hard, sick and indifferent without the touch of someone we love? Why do we seem to lose our sense of will and purpose without this loving touch? Some experiments in sensory deprivation have been performed with human volunteers. While physically confined, they were subject to no sounds, sights or temperature changes, and this deprivation of normal sensory input led their minds to wander. They entered a world of fantasy and began to hallucinate. Extensive and intensive sensory deprivation is not healthy for grown-ups; how much worse it is then for infants and children. The world of sensory input is vitally important for all of us.

Touch is probably the least explored of our senses. Yet, it may be the most important to our well-being. Significantly enough, there is a close relationship between our skin and our nervous system. In the early days, in our mother's womb, our body-to-be is composed of three sets of special cells. One set (mesoderm) will form our muscles and bones. Another set (endoderm) will form our inner organs such as the stomach, intestines and lungs. The third set (ectoderm) forms our nervous system and our skin. Thus our skin arises from the same tissue as our brain and skin can therefore be looked upon as the outer brain or an extension of the brain. Its profuse sensory receptors are in full support of this idea. The skin is so full of nerves and sensory end organs that if we could see only a person's nervous system we'd have no trouble outlining



the complete shape of the body. We may wonder which has the most nerve tissue. Is it the cortex which covers the brain? Or is it the skin which covers the body?

Doors to Our Consciousness

The skin contains millions of sensory receptor organs. They are the doors through which the physical world enters our consciousness. How many types of these sensory receptor end organs do we have? We believe we have, all told, five senses. Actually it's more like 19.

The more obvious of these message receivers are our eyes, ears, nose and tongue. Even these four are really more than four. The eyes have rods in the retina to detect dark and light. They also have cones in the retina to detect various colours. The tongue has sensory receptor organs for sweet, bitter, salty and sour, but undoubtedly one or two more. Our ears are able to hear a range of pitches and various intensities of sound. Yet, we are oblivious to very high pitches which can be heard by animals.

While humans are inferior to some animals in the realms of sight, hearing, smelling and tasting, they more

The world of sensory input is vitally important for all of us.

than make up for it in imagination and intellect. Humans have a sensory edge over animals through the inventions of the telescope, microscope, radio, television and so on. Smell may be the last frontier in our drive to surpass. It's been estimated a German shepherd dog has one million times more sensitivity to odours than humans do. Touch, the so-called fifth sense, may be the most complex. There are at least 11 distinct senses that compose touch. Under touch there are millions of sensory end organs in the skin. Yet, any one square inch of skin is different from any other square inch. The number of pain, heat, cold and other touch detectors will vary from one spot on the skin to another. Certainly the sensitivity of our fingertips exceeds that of the back of our thighs.

There are some four varieties of the strictly tactile senses of touch. They range from light touch to deep pressure to pain. Again, their distribution in the skin varies as to type and quantity. If you place two fingers an inch or two apart on a person's back, the person may not be sure whether you have placed one or two fingers. The human back has less light touch end organs than other skin areas. This is why patients are often very vague as to the exact location of a back pain. Oddly enough, it's in this lack-of-touch end organ areas of the back that we seem especially receptive to psychic impressions. Our intuitive





Tender Loving Care

We should not overlook the benefit to a bedridden patient of tender loving care. I refer to the turning and rubbing down of the patient, propping a pillow, changing bed sheets, as well as giving a gracious, caring smile. Sometimes a sympathetic hand on a fevered brow is remembered longer and more endearingly than the most sophisticated treatment.

Aside from the therapeutic touch of others, your body sense of touch can be an avenue for you to help yourself. Stretching is a tonic to certain touch organs. A rocking chair is good for your nervous system. So is a bath, shower, towel rub, hair brushing as well as the grooming of the face and body. Applying deep pressure on your cramping muscles will relax them. We should find the time to expose our skins to the four elements: earth, water, air and sun.

We need to seek out those experiences that are most wholesome, most uplifting, most creative and most beautiful. This includes being 'touched' by beautiful sights, mellifluous sounds, delectable tastes, fragrant aromas, as well as the palpable touch of love. We need the human relations side to touch. A friendly hand on a shoulder during a crucial time is a fine, helpful gesture. Despair and great tension lock those shoulder muscles tight. A sincere friendly hand helps the muscles relax. Similarly, how welcome is the firm, heartfelt handshake of a friend!

Talking and exchanging ideas is good, but friends and loved ones need more. They need the occasional physical touch generated from sincerity, genuineness and love. Even in business these principles apply. A recent survey of customers showed the branch of a bank where

flashes seem to come from the part of the backs between our shoulder blades, directly behind the heart.

We find a more profuse distribution of tactile sense organs in areas where our outer skin meets our inner skin (mucous membrane), such as our lips and nose openings. Also, our fingertips are rich with tactile end organs. Aside from being marvels of dexterity, our hands are our main medium of literally keeping in touch with the physical world. Hands thrive on activity and doctors must take care not to bandage them for long, as they are quick to stiffen under constriction. In a sense, hands represent our life's work. The use of our hands often marks our talents, our character and our culture. They have come to symbolise life itself. Through human hands have come our great paintings, sculptures, writings, music and so on. In science, hands have built the car, aeroplane, spaceship, radio, television, printing. And yet, perhaps the most noble use of the hand is to extend it in kindness to a fellow human being.

The use of the human hand for therapeutic purposes goes back to ancient Egyptian times where they wrote about feeling a therapeutic energy (*sa ankb*) flowing from their fingertips. The Pharaoh or his high priest held daily morning healing sessions during which he made vertical passes, with his fingertips, up and down a patient's back. This was the beginning of hand therapy. The highly sensitive fingertips were approximating the insensitive human back. The Greek Epidaurus tablets showed how the Ancient Greeks manipulated the spine of patients. Hippocrates, Galen, and Soranus fostered this therapeutic approach. Hippocrates said: "*In all disease look to the spine.*" This is the early legacy of modern chiropractic practice.

The chiropractic doctor finds an area of spinal irritation and then manipulates the area to reduce the irritation and normalise nerve impulses from the spine. The osteopathic doctor will do soft tissue manipulation of these lesioned spinal areas. The Rosicrucian technique is to apply the fingers and body's electromagnetic energy to the sympathetic chain ganglia that lie on either side of the spine. Massage, digital acupressure and trigger point, are other hand techniques that are used to improve human health.

The use of our hands often marks our talents, our character and our culture.

the employees managed a brief touch was considered the friendliest. A father should occasionally get down on the living room floor and play with his children. Most animals follow their instincts and play with their young ones. It's fun and it's healthy. Even the most ferocious of animals have been known to become domesticated pets through large doses of petting and affectionate care. Infants in particular are in special need of wholesome fondling.

Probably the most helpful thing to do to a withdrawn, frightened or badly disturbed child is to hold them, hug them and talk softly to them. In this way the boy or girl knows you are concerned. Such human contact through the loving touch can heal. A judge who had hundreds of juvenile offenders and their parents before him made



an observation that bothered him. In all these cases he never saw a parent put a loving protective arm around a youngster's shoulders. How different from the Biblical prodigal son, where the father "*ran, and fell on his prodigal son's neck, and kissed him.*"

Is part of our trouble with today's youth due to a 'no touch' society? Does the lack of the loving touch in our early years lead to emotional instability in our later years? We should seek ways of applying the loving touch. This should be done with a genuine concern for another's welfare. Have you ever tried helping your partner with his or her coat? Do you then gently press or tap their shoulders? This is a way of saying I love you.

When is the last time you firmly hugged your partner as if he or she were your whole life to you? Your spouse or partner may well be just that. The protective sense is no small matter. An evil person will think twice before interfering with a parent protecting a child. The protection of others brings out powerful forces in us for good. Have you held any infants lately? Have you cuddled them? They need so much loving physical contact in those early years. Have you ever unashamedly hugged a good friend?

When is the last time you firmly hugged your partner as if he or she were your whole life to you?

Some people may frown at the sincere embrace of friends in Latin countries, but we may be wise to do it ourselves. It's friendly and it's healthy. Make your handshake warm, sincere and definite as you extend it in friendship.



Have you ever unashamedly hugged a good friend?

Psychologists know that a 'no touch' society is a sick society. It certainly is out of touch with the needs of our psychic and nervous systems. All this is not to say we should go around touching everyone indiscriminately. The protocol of our particular society will dictate the proper social limits of the physical touch. However, within those limits we can place a greater genuineness in our contacts.

We can also touch people with our eyes, posture, voice, dress and good manners. We can particularly touch people with kind, sympathetic, understanding words; words that encourage and give strength. Such words help bring to fruition the seeds of greatness we see in each other. We can be touched by beautiful music or the sound of a voice from the heart. We can be touched by beautiful sights, by the smells of nature and the taste of good food.

The greatest handiwork of humankind has been rendered through the heart. Great writers put their hearts on paper with their hands. Great artists put their hearts on canvas with their hands. Try to put your heart into whatever you do with your hands. To work the magic of touch there is one guide for all of us. Let it always be from the heart. Let your heart touch people. We're most wholesome when our heart is expressed in our handiwork and when our heart is touched by the handiwork of others. Our birth from our mothers leaves us with no apparent physical attachments. But let's not fool ourselves. We all still need occasional wholesome elevating physical contacts. Our nervous systems, our emotions, our hearts thrive on it. We need to touch those we love and care for. They need our heart-felt touch. For, wherever there is genuine love and true concern, there is magic in the human touch.



A dramatic black and white image of a person with arms raised in a starry sky with a bright light source.

SALVATION: The View of a Mystic

by Walter J. Albersheim, FRC

WITH THE current surge in some countries of fundamentalism, many Christians believe that the concept of redemption or salvation is essential not only to their faith but to all other religions as well. But is this necessarily so? Early religions seem to have consisted mainly of magical rites designed to propitiate or coerce nature spirits. Even in Judaism, from which

Christianity sprang, there was initially no thought of redemption. It was believed that Yahweh could become angered and punish individuals or entire nations; that he could be appeased by repentance, by obedience, by right living and right faith. There was no official belief in personal survival; neither in eternal bliss nor in an eternal damnation from which you had to be 'saved.' Survival was not an individual matter, but consisted in





continuance of the nation, the tribe and your children and children's children.

The inner need for salvation arose usually under conditions of widespread suffering and despair. Conditions like this were rife in the Middle East under Roman rule and in war-torn ancient India, where life was hard for all but a few rulers, and even more so for the lower castes. When times were really hard, salvation, either in the negative form of liberation from suffering, or in the positive form of heavenly bliss, was hoped for in some transcendental Beyond. This came to be considered as a special grace reserved for those who had the right knowledge and faith; and all others, by implication, were eternally damned.

Christianity, and to a greater degree Islam, depicted the rewards of the faithful and the tortures of the disobedient in crude, material terms: streets of gold, jewelled garments, rivers of milk and honey and sensuous female companions for the Good, with serpent fangs and hellfire reserved for the Wicked.

The concepts of original Buddhism were more sophisticated. The illusion of individual, personal existence itself was regarded as the prime evil that you had to overcome in order to become free. Final liberation could only be attained by renouncing all desires and cravings, because these were the chains that tied all living beings to the wheel of rebirth and new suffering. Every selfish thought, every passionate action brought its own automatic punishment by forging new links to the chain of Karma. According to the original texts, the Buddha, meaning the Awakened One, the One who had attained full insight, was merciful enough to teach his noble truths to personal followers and to found an Order that could perpetuate them and to help many to become free like himself; but after one lifetime of teaching he withdrew from this world and attained the final liberation of Nirvana in Death.

This initial version of Buddhism was too austere for

the downtrodden, unlearned multitudes. So, his followers created the new image of a "Compassionate Buddha" who renounces his own Nirvana and voluntarily returns to earth, time and time again, to preach his message until every last living creature is saved.

Who Is To Be Saved?

Comparing the two interpretations of salvation, with that of Christianity and Islam on the one hand and Buddhism on the other, both ask: Who shall be saved, and how? The monotheistic religions of Jerusalem and Mecca have their own particular answer: *only those human beings who believe in a particular personal God and obey his commands will be saved.* These commands include belief in certain articles of faith: In Christianity, literal belief in the *Bible* and in

Early religions seem to have consisted mainly of magical rites designed to propitiate or coerce nature spirits.

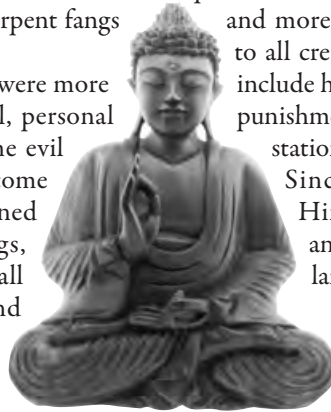
Jesus, through whom alone salvation comes. In Islam, this comes through belief in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, as laid down in the *Koran*.

Both these religions believe in only two lives: this earthly one and an eternal afterlife. They exclude animals; the Roman Catholic Church, at least, goes out of its way to state that animals have no souls. From the mystical point of view, Buddhism seems to be more inclusive and more merciful. It promises ultimate salvation to all creatures. Even in the popular versions that include heavens and hells, these places of reward or punishment are regarded only as interludes or way stations in the long journey toward liberation.

Since Buddhism, like the closely related Hinduism, believes in transmigration, all animals must also be saved: the tiger and the lamb, the ant and mosquito!

The difficulty of this all-encompassing hope is obvious when you think about it.

If you need untold eons even for humans to overcome all their selfish passions, what eternities must pass before every microscopic insect attains human nature and perfection! The problem becomes even greater when we realise, as mystics, that life has no lower limit. There is life in plants, in viruses; in every one of the hundreds of billions of cells in each human or animal body and in every one of the countless atoms and sub-atomic particles that compose our oceans, primeval rocks, and the fiery interior of the stars themselves.



Must every one of these be saved just to vindicate the goodness of God and of the Cosmic? Even if we believe that the world will exist long enough to accomplish universal salvation, the problem of suffering cannot be solved in this way. We know that even among advanced mystical students, the fraction attaining Cosmic Consciousness in any one lifetime is small. If life is really a "vale of tears", if suffering prevails, is it fair that most creatures must undergo eons of life's suffering before attaining ultimate peace?

Now, let us re-examine the foundations of this gloomy view! As mystics, we believe that divine consciousness pervades the universe and all life within it, "from atom to archangel". If this is true, and this is an important point, no one needs salvation because no one is, or ever was, separate from God or the Cosmic. We know that there is suffering and death all over the world, but we believe that the joy of living is stronger than death. Every living thing clings to life, except some self-conscious humans.

Each vibrating atom dances to the music of the spheres, in ignorance of the certainty that it will be destroyed by collision or transmutation. Numerous fish swim throughout the seas and lakes. They breathe, feed and procreate up to the instant that they are swallowed by a bigger fish or caught to feed the human population. As the round of life goes on through joy and fear, through birth and death, who would dare to call that, which Nature and the Cosmic made so universally and so passionately desired, undesirable?

The feeling of alienation, of being forsaken by God, arises only in the self-conscious mind of humanity. We should accept this soul-suffering as a badge of honour: It proves that the Cosmic Mind is using us as its instrument; that by realising and knowing our own Self we have



become mirrors of the glories and the imperfection of the ever-evolving universe.

In the midst of suffering, the mystic is free at any moment to achieve Peace Profound by recognising the Divine Mind within him or her and surrendering their little personal self to that Greater Self.

What Then of Salvation?

At the end of their age-long quest, master mystics who have attained permanent illumination may at last outgrow the need for personal, individual existence. They may become entirely submerged in the Cosmic Consciousness just as a drop of water will be re-absorbed in the boundless ocean.

But this is not something to be proud of! They will only achieve consciously what countless real raindrops over the oceans are doing, and have done through the ages, without conscious effort. Our need therefore is not to be saved, it is only to realise that salvation was and is ours since the day of creation.



The Benevolent Dandelion

by Jack Coggins



NATURE IN its wisdom made the dandelion one of the most abundant of all the herbs. The temperate and cold regions of both hemispheres are its habitat: Europe, Central Asia, North America, and the Arctic and south temperate areas. We find them everywhere; in meadows, fields, lawns, along roadsides and pavements and almost any other place not shaded from the sun.

The dandelion is nearly impossible to eradicate. Anyone who has tried to remove a dandelion from their lawn must have thought that nature erred by allowing this “nuisance weed” to overrun almost the entire populated world. Still, it exists, so there must be a special purpose for the lowly dandelion. In reality, the dandelion is a veritable

ruler in the plant world, for it belongs to the Composite family, “*the highest of all plant families, the culmination of the plant kingdom.*” I hope that this article will give you added respect for it.

As Food

In times of need, food is where you find it. Since the dandelion is found almost everywhere it is one of Nature’s means of assuring a constant food supply for man, animals, birds and even bees. Actually, its scientific name, *Taraxacum*, is an Arabian version of the Greek word, *Trogemon*, meaning edible. Once, when insects destroyed the entire harvest on the island of Menorca, the inhabitants



lived on dandelion roots instead of their customary bread. Still, as a nourishing food, in many countries it has for centuries been wisely employed as a food source.

Both wild and cultivated varieties are used. The young, tender leaves, abounding in vitamins and minerals, are excellent for making delicious green salads. Often they are cooked like spinach and served with butter or vinegar; mixed with other greens they are less bitter-tasting. Also, finely chopped dandelion leaves can be used in sandwiches. Here are some reasons why it might pay us nutrition-wise to include dandelion in our daily intake of food:

In an experiment for the *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, H. B. Stiebling discovered that, of those plants tested, the least iron was found in melons and apples. Dandelion, watercress and spinach contained the most. Iron helps fight that "tired feeling" in our bodies, as well as the sensation of breathlessness. It is an all-important factor in the manufacture of red blood cells which carry oxygen to vitalise tissue and help carry off waste carbon dioxide.

According to doctors, iron deficiency is a major health problem throughout the world. In the United States alone, for example, it is estimated that between 10 and 25 percent of people admitted into hospitals have insufficient amounts of this vital, and vitalising, mineral. In countries where food is less abundant the percentages would be higher.

Simple anaemia is the medical term meaning inadequate amounts of iron in the body-system. Established cases should always be given medical treatment, of course. When we eat dandelion for a source of required iron, however, we are taking a definite step toward preventing the debilitating symptoms of anaemia. We are also enabling our bodies to make use of the wonderful energies we associate with oxygen, energies that keep us healthy, vibrant and active.

Iron is also directly related to the proper functioning of plant chlorophyll which, in conjunction with light, manufactures the plant's food supply. When a plant is deprived of adequate iron, its leaves turn abnormally yellow and its value as human food degenerates. It is logical, therefore, to believe that when iron content is high, as in the dandelion, there will be a superabundance of plant food that will become human nourishment when assimilated.

Another reason for the excessive vitamin and mineral content of dandelion may be its long, tapering taproot which often penetrates deeply into the earth. Experiments indicate that some plants absorb minerals from different soil levels. The peanut, for example, absorbs calcium near

the surface; other minerals are taken in at deeper points. The dandelion's long taproot naturally gives it access to more elements and may very well enhance its absorption of them, especially those that can be obtained best from deeper levels.

The root itself is a unique form of food. Sliced, it is a tasty contribution to salad. It is also used to flavour soups and stews and to make broth. When fried like parsnips the roots should be young and succulent and gathered preferably in winter when their ordinarily bitter sap becomes thick and sweet. Other uses for the root include the making of a health drink and as an adulterant for coffee. For these purposes, the root is dried, ground and usually roasted. It affects the flavour of coffee much in the same way as chicory.

There are numerous reasons for the belief that dandelion roots are uncommonly nourishing to humans. For one thing, they are the storehouse for energy that enables the dandelion to make its early appearance each spring. This energy-material is manufactured during one growing season, saved throughout the winter, and then used the following spring for early flower-production. For this reason, it is generally believed that dandelion roots are a double-charged source of human nutrition. Greek Mythology relates that Theseus, who had energy and strength to slay both the bull of Marathon and the monstrous Minotaur, was fed this food by Hecate, the moon-goddess.



Iron helps fight that 'tired feeling' in our bodies, as well as the sensation of breathlessness.

Called by some modern scientists "a weird substance" this food is neither starch nor sugar. In many respects it is like both; for, although it possesses characteristics of starch, it is still soluble like sugar. It is readily transformed into fructose, a form of sugar. Actually, every part of the dandelion plant can be eaten for food and is considered a tonic as well as nutritious. Even the flowers are used to make wine, or they may be added to any salad to beautify and increase food value.

Medicinal Qualities

Dandelion is also used in medicine as (1) a means to increase the secretion and discharge of urine from the body, (2) a strengthener of the stomach, (3) a promoter of the discharge of bile from the system. It is excellent for the prevention and cure of scurvy which is caused essentially



by a lack of Vitamin C. Dandelion is considered one of the safest and most useful herbs for liver malfunctions. It is also thought to be valuable to the heart.

A Dutch physician and chemist, Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738), claimed that daily eating of dandelion will remove the severest and most obstinate obstructions of the viscera. This is also a very old remedy for curing indigestion when caused by a torpid liver. In her book, *Green Medicine*, C. F. Leyel states that dandelion as part of the diet can dissolve chalky deposits symptomatic of rheumatoid arthritis.

According to the Macmillan Medical Encyclopaedia, the fresh milky substance in the flower stalks is used for the treatment of warts. Generally, the beneficial actions of dandelion are described as (1) alterative, changing for the better, (2) aperients, mildly laxative, (3) hepatic, increasing bile secretion, (4) stimulant, increasing organ activity, (5) diuretic, aiding in secretion of urine, (6) tonic, strengthener.

Naturally, the wisest way to use dandelion for medicine is preventatively, that is, by eating it in small amounts daily, for its valuable health factors, before we have any specific need.

Industrial Value

Acting as food and medicine does not end dandelion's valuable services to us. It has also met the needs of modern production. In Russia and Argentina, for example, dandelions of a particular variety were cultivated for their latex which was made into rubber. In silk-producing countries, dandelion leaves are sometimes substituted for mulberry leaves as food for silkworms.

Probably one of the most important, but little-known functions of the dandelion is that of its supplying large amounts of nectar and pollen to bees during the crucial time when they are rearing their brood. For this reason, its appearance in early spring is of the greatest importance to beekeepers and the honey industry.

Above Duality

In a plant contributing so much to human welfare, yet appearing so unpromising, it is not surprising that we find a set of unique characteristics. For instance, the dandelion has given up sex altogether. Its ovaries are in no way fertilised; every fruit and every new generation are wholly products of virgin birth. Without sexual processes there can be, of course, no mixing of hereditary factors. Therefore, scientists tell us that in a hundred million years from now the dandelion will be very much the same as it is today. Nature has, in essence, said to the dandelion:



Greek Mythology relates that Theseus, who had energy and strength to slay both the bull of Marathon and the monstrous Minotaur, was fed this food by Hecate.

"You are fine as you are. There is no need for any change or improvement. I'm satisfied!" She shows every evidence of seeing to it that her 'perfect' plant survives, too.

Many kinds of other plants, for example, would vanish if the wind or insects to carry fertilising pollen were suddenly not available. The dandelion, being sexless, requires neither one for reproducing itself. Slicing off the leaves just beneath the earth's surface in an attempt to destroy the plant merely encourages it to grow. Nature seems to have tried to make it as independent of outside factors as possible. Even its seed distribution is largely autonomous.

The flower, which is really not a single flower but many tiny flowers, develops into the commonly-known blow ball. These are very beautiful, but they serve a more practical purpose. If you take one apart carefully and examine it, you will observe that it is composed of many, individual parachute like parts. There is a sort of shaft with a tiny fruit at one end and tufts of hair at the other. Each fruit contains one seed which is sometimes carried for miles in the wind by its tiny, natural parachute. The slightest breeze gives it motive power. Most plant seeds simply drop to the ground, but the self-sufficient dandelion gets around on its own.

Even its long taproot seems intentionally designed to give it additional hold upon the earth. Many have despaired of ever completely removing it from their lawns. Even when the lawn fails, the dandelions continue and thrive. The truth is, this humble plant is better prepared to survive than we are! We may not have unravelled the whole mystery wound up in the common dandelion. One thing, however, is certain: this meek-looking citizen of the plant kingdom has truly inherited the earth!





Goethe and His Dramatic Story of Faust

by Gustav Siekmann, FRC



GOETHE'S enigmatic drama, *Faust*, might be described as a symbolic allegory of humanity's way of evolution from primeval beginnings through all the earthly and unearthly forms of life's experiences, toward Cosmic Unity, the ultimate purpose of Creation. Viewing Goethe's works from the vantage point of a mystic, we find that his presentation of the medieval story of Dr. Faust is similar to the literature of the Quest: mankind's search for a lost treasure which,

when found, will endow us with a sacred power to cope with all adversities and attain the mastery of life. It is a search for guidance along the cosmic path which, as we know, demands the unceasing effort of expanding our consciousness of the world around us in many forms, both tangible and intangible.

The same theme appears in ancient mythologies of Egypt and Greece; for instance, in the legends of Isis and Osiris, Orpheus and Eurydice, and especially in the Eleusinian Mysteries where Demeter, Mother of Earth, is



in search of her lost daughter Persephone. In psychology, ideology or matters of the soul, faith, hope and love, we have the “Quest of the Holy Grail,” and in Rosicrucian tradition the finding of the Lost Word.

Goethe’s *Faust*, similarly, is an analogy of mankind’s search for Universal Harmony, our inherent urge to “*detect the inmost force which binds the world and guides its course.*” Through his experiences of life on Earth in its complex totality, Dr. Faust learns to understand the mysteries of nature manifest within his own Self. His story, therefore, is one of sequential initiations from lower to ever-increasing higher levels of consciousness.

Goethe’s works are, on the whole, profoundly mystical and worthy of the attention of students of mysticism. For in the present time, when materialism seems to reign supreme, humanity’s awareness of the non-material facts of life is also expanding. Within the over-all functions of the cosmic law of cause and effect, this awareness must expand in parallel with materialism, thus maintaining a harmonious balance between the physical and metaphysical structures of the world which is the indispensable and divinely ordained presupposition for Creation’s convergence in the direction of a Cosmic Totality.

Expansion of Awareness

This expansion of awareness progresses slowly, and at present only subconsciously, among the masses, but consciously within those who have already found the right and true way. Goethe tells us this at the very beginning of *Faust*, in the “Prologue in Heaven” where the voice of the Lord God appears in conversation with Mephistopheles, the Devil’s agent, who laments that

Goethe’s *Faust* similarly is an analogy of mankind’s search for Universal Harmony.

humanity, the world’s “little god,” as he calls man, has not evolved since the beginning and is not worthy even of his diabolical attention, being sufficiently involved in his own senseless devices. Though gifted by the Grace of God with a glimmer of heavenly light called Reason, mankind only uses it to be more beastly than the lowest beast.

“*But there is Faust, the doctor, my servant,*” injects the Lord. In this opening scene, through a few words only, exchanged between the Lord and the Devil, Goethe the master of German literature, projects a flash view of humanity’s position in the Cosmic. Placed between the two extreme poles, God and Devil, Heaven and Hell, Light and Darkness, positive and negative, and being dual



in his own nature, man appears, as it were, suspended like a mass of electrically charged particles in a field of anodic and cathodic attraction. And the view is focused upon one who represents the archetypal qualities of the mystic clearly specified through Mephisto’s answer:

“*Indeed! Faust serves you after strange devices; no earthly drink or meat the fool suffices. His spirit’s ferment far aspires; half-conscious only of his craziness, from Heaven he demands the fairest stars and from the earth the highest raptures and the best. And all the Near and Far that he desires fails to subdue the tumult of his breast.*”

Now the cosmic forces are set into action upon this mystic man. The immutable principle of unidirectional cosmic evolution by which man, through all his earthly ups and downs, inevitably raises his soul personality to ever-expanding consciousness, the process of individuation of C.G. Jung’s terms, is assured in the Lord’s words: “*Though still confused his service is to me, I soon will lead him to a clearer morning; sees not the gardener in the budding tree flower and fruit the future years adorning.*”

The Spirit Who Ever Denies

But Mephisto, ‘the spirit who ever denies,’ feels sure “*that there is still a chance to gain him*” and requests the Lord’s permission “*gently upon his road to train him.*” Granting his permission, the Lord replies: “*So long as he on earth shall*



live, so long I make no prohibition; man's errors urge his striving aspiration. Enough! What thou hast asked is granted; turn off this spirit from its fountainhead; to trap him, let thy snares be planted and he with thee be downward led. Man's active nature all too soon can weaken, unqualified repose he learns to crave. Thus willingly the devil I let tempt him, who works, excites and serves him like a slave; and who then stands ashamed and forced to say: A good man, through obscurest aspirations still has an instinct of the One True Way."

Goethe's works convey every conceivable thought about humanity's being on Earth, the purpose of life, its fundamental laws, and the divine and mundane influences conflicting in the human mind. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in 1749 in Frankfurt am Main in Germany, at that time an Imperial City directly subordinate to the Holy Roman Emperor and not to a regional ruler or a local nobleman. He combined within himself the stern realism of his father Johann Kaspar, a lawyer and City Counsellor, with the sense for harmony and beauty of his lively and imaginative young mother Elisabeth.

Both parents had been highly educated but were of totally opposite natures. The distance between his father's intellectual and his mother's intuitive qualities was the cause of much inner emotional distress in young Goethe, which bothered him far into mature age and was the cause of severe illness in his younger years.

Storm and Stress

The literary climate in which young Goethe grew up has been described as one of "*Sturm und Drang* or storm and stress," an expression of the emotional gap between factual knowledge and intuitive feeling amongst the intellectuals of the time who were torn between old dogmatic teachings of the church and the new knowledge which came in the wake of the Renaissance and of Martin Luther's Reformation.

This contrasting duality is presented in the character of Goethe's Dr. Faust with whom he identifies much of himself: "Two souls, alas, reside within my breast, and each withdraws from and repels the other." To some extent this conflict in Goethe's nature was reconciled by the influence of his maternal grandfather, also a lawyer and distinguished magistrate, who possessed the gift of second sight.



Goethe's house in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

To young Goethe's delight, his grandfather's library contained books of travels, discoveries and natural phenomena. Through these books and the experience of his grandfather's psychic gift, Goethe came early into contact with the occult or hidden mysteries of life and with all the immaterial qualities in which the mystic sees the true value of being. He had been described as the last man on Earth who comprised within himself the total knowledge, physical and metaphysical, that was available to mankind of the 18th century. No human being after Goethe could or can possibly hope to be endowed with that title, because the factual knowledge available to us has since multiplied beyond human comprehension.

The Search for Unity



Philipp Melancthon

Goethe knew all that was worth knowing in his time; moreover, he made every effort to convey his knowledge as a whole to his contemporaries and to posterity. To become whole, "*ganz werden*," was the basic purpose of his life, to find the unity of being out of the triplicity in himself; an emotional triplicity in which he saw the basic cause of all human troubles. And the search for this unity is the theme of Goethe's mystical drama *Faust*. Ever since publication of the work as a whole,

scholars of literature have tried to define this unity.

To present his views of humanity's evolution or of the sequential stages of initiation which lead along the way to Cosmic Unity, Goethe needed a background story and a villain. He found them in the medieval legend of the historical Dr. Johannes Faust, as related to us by Philipp



Melanchthon, the reformer and friend of Dr. Martin Luther. Melanchthon had personally known the real Faust and depicts him as a most sinister character, a charlatan who had acquired the knowledge of some strange tricks by which he would impress the public and who made a business out of it. And the public of his time saw in him a man who was in contact with the devil. Legend soon took over and proliferated into numerous versions.

In these legends, Faust is inevitably doomed to perdition, having signed his soul to the devil in payment for Satan's services. Goethe has used this story as a demonstration of our earthly desires and struggles, the joys and the inevitable trials of our mundane existence. But as a mystic he could not be content with the idea of final perdition; he had to convey the message of salvation, the message that our unceasing efforts against all adversities, urged on by faith and hope and the light of expanding consciousness, will lead us up and on, through love to everlasting life.

Goethe needed all of 60 years to complete the two parts of his drama *Faust*. It is called *A Tragedy*, of which Part I was first performed in 1808. It was at once a great success, although it is a sad story of human misery caused by our own evil inclinations. If viewed from a mundane point of view, the first part on its own could leave the reader or spectator in a state of hopeless frustration, for it is a diabolical mixture of sensations, emotions, temptations and inspirations; and yet it has a symbolic structure balancing wisdom against stupidity, sanctity against magic, knowledge against ignorance, love against hate. All this occurs on terrestrial and sub-terrestrial levels, that is, in the world and underworld.

But from the *Prologue in Heaven* we have been made aware, right at the beginning, that Part I is merely the introduction to a greater whole, and that a second part was to follow. This second part was Goethe's life-aim, which he reached 26 years after the publication of Part I, in 1831, only a few months before his own Great Initiation.



Prologue in Heaven.

Futility of Knowledge

Following the *Prologue in Heaven*, we find Faust in his medieval study, appropriately decorated with signs of astrology, alchemy and magic. In his famous first monologue he meditates upon the futility of all his learning: Having studied philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine, and, alas, even theology, he feels just like a fool, no wiser now than he was before; and he laments, "I see that nothing can be known; that knowledge cuts me to the bone." In his initial monologue, Faust is not only

In his untiring striving toward perfection, he develops an ever-increasing resistance to diabolical temptations.

dissatisfied with the results of his scholarly learning but also reflects his passionate longing for direct and intimate communion with nature and for an understanding of nature's strange phenomena in which his contemporaries saw manifestations of frightening supernatural powers.

Faust, not afraid of hell or devil but disillusioned by his recognition that mundane knowledge alone brings no joy or satisfaction, now takes to magic sources of learning. He opens "this one book of mystery from Nostradamus' very hands' to guide him through spiritual lands," and soon he is enraptured by the *Sign of the Macrocosm*: "Was it a god, who traced this sign, with impulse mystic and divine? In these pure features I behold Creative Nature to my soul unfold."

Cosmic Totality

Thus we are drawn to visualise a symbol of cosmic origin designed to create in us a view of the Cosmic Totality, a guiding plan for our own spiritual evolution. This view of a symbolic map of Creation as a whole will help us find our position within it, to take our bearing on the Way, and to recognise our own Self as a part of the Whole.

We are all somewhat like Goethe's Dr. Faust; we are only too aware of our ignorance and failings, and the more we work and study, the greater becomes this awareness. As students of mystical teachings we know very well that work and study will lead to nothing unless we also spend time in meditation and experience its results. And here a symbolic image of Cosmic Totality can help to put us into a harmonious state of mind, capable of creative thought.

Part I ends tragically, leaving Faust heavily



loaded with karmic debts. The unloading of these debts is the allegorical theme of Part II. Analogous to the theme of the Quest, Faust, still served and guided by Mephisto, is now in search of his soul, his true personality, which is so deeply hidden beneath the memories of his misdeeds and so difficult to reach while Mephisto dominates his emotions. Now we find a different Dr. Faust. No longer is he just the scholar in search of deeper knowledge of nature's mysteries; he no longer craves just for "the detection of the inmost force which binds the world and guides it in its course", as he had expressed it in his initial monologue. This is far behind him. Now he has become a man of the world in the widest sense.

Faust appears a changed man who has conquered the exuberance of his "storm and stress" period. The inexhaustible cosmic forces, manifest through sun and Earth, awaken his own innermost strength and urge him toward a creative activity that needs none of Mephisto's magic. Now he consciously makes deliberate and rational use of Mephisto's resources. In his untiring striving toward perfection he develops an ever-increasing resistance to diabolical temptations; but he still allows Mephisto to lead him through the world, in space and time.

We find him at the Emperor's Court amongst the highest nobility; disgusted with these selfish, narrow-minded, and all but noble people, he longs for contact with that truly pure and beautiful part of humanity that once before had been alive on Earth, the wonderful culture of ancient Greece.

Chymical Wedding

Goethe allows his Faust to experience that culture in those scenes where Mephisto's magic materialised Helen of Troy, the classical prototype of feminine beauty and human dignity. Through Faust's passionate love for Helen and their symbolic union, Goethe presents to us the mystical meaning of the Chymical Wedding, the alchemical concept of the "Mysterium Conjunctions" to which Jung has often referred, symbolising the reconciliation of opposites and harmonisation of disunities in the soul. The result of this union of Faust and Helen is Euphorion, their



Goethe presents to us the mystical meaning of the Chymical Wedding.

winged son. He represents the genius of poetry in its perfection, romantic passion, enthusiasm for worthy activities and classical beauty, and humanity's sacred right of freedom.

In Euphorion we see the desirable qualities humanity can attain when intellect, knowledge and wisdom are united with a sense for beauty and dignity to a harmonious whole of the highest aesthetic and ethical values.

In another scene we meet Homunculus, an artificial human replica made in a laboratory once belonging to Faust. Homunculus personifies our inherent striving for physical perfection, mundane knowledge and the sensual part of human life. Totally lacking a soul of his own, Homunculus represents Faust's subconscious mind expressing his unconscious

longing for the highest ideals of beauty in poetry, art, science and the splendours of nature.

In these scenes we see Faust steadily growing up and away from Mephisto's suggestive attempts; we see how these experiences mature his urge for active contribution to humanity's wealth and happiness. Having found harmony within himself, he now strives to bring himself into the service of a great idea. He still needs Mephisto's assistance to acquire a vast area of wasteland, but through the energy within himself he now tries to really deserve and own what he has acquired: "What from your father's heritage is lent, earn it anew, to really possess it!"

Now Faust has grown to emulate this maxim. Under his guidance a great project on its way; his wasteland will become a fertile district populated with happy people. Not affected by want and need, and no longer even by guilt, Faust's only concern now is care. Blinded at the end of his life, care alone remains with him, care for the welfare of other people.

And so Faust's earthly life comes to an end. Mephisto still hopes to catch Faust's soul; but through his own spiritual evolvment Faust has created the condition the Lord has predicted in the *Prologue in Heaven*: "A good man, through obscurest aspirations, still has instinct of the One True Way." Through his own efforts Faust has conditioned his soul personality to that level where the powers of divine love are stronger than mundane attractions.



<http://www.amorc.nl>

Unity in Diversity

THE NEXT *European Convention* will be held from 7th to the 9th June 2013 in The Hague. The Convention theme is 'Unity in Diversity' and a number of Rosicrucians will explore this theme. If you remember the Rosicrucian European Convention in Barcelona a few years back, you will recall what a beautiful and professionally arranged event it was.

For all who live in Europe, please make a point of attending this exclusive Rosicrucian event. Conventions involving many hundreds of members, possibly in excess of a thousand this time, are very special times of reinforcement of the bonds that unite Rosicrucians of many different backgrounds and cultures, and especially so in Europe with its wealth of different languages and customs. For members living much further afield, as your travel costs will be an important factor, please prepare well in advance, and start planning now.

Visit the Dutch Grand Lodge website: www.amorc.nl and select English as your language of choice.



The Rosicrucian Collection is a growing catalogue of books devoted to spiritual and philosophical Rosicrucian mysticism. All books in the collection focus on metaphysical, spiritual and philosophical topics aimed at serious students of mysticism and others seeking enlightenment. The above four books represent a small selection of the many titles either in print or about to be published. If you wish to purchase any of these, contact us using the address details to the right.

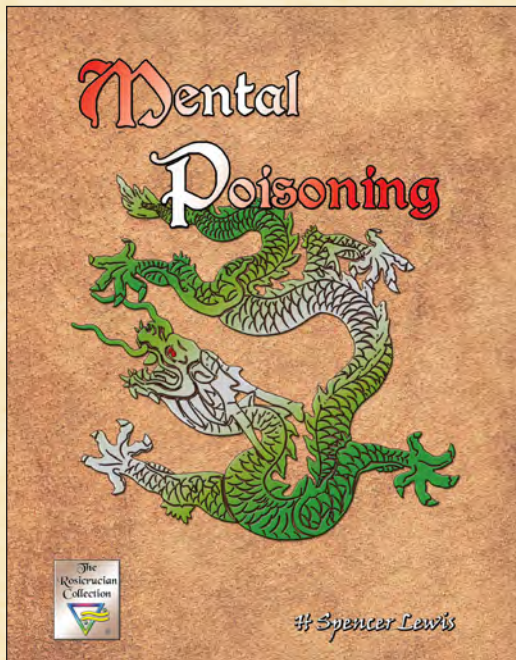
AMORC Services Ltd
Greenwood Gate, Blackhill
Crowborough, TN6 1XE
Tel: 01892- 653197
Fax: 01892-667432
email: sales@amorc.org.uk

<http://www.amorc.org.uk/collection>

Mental Poisoning

by H Spencer Lewis, FRC

124 pages / softback -- Code: 117 -- £9.95



WE ARE what we think! Our thoughts control our mental and physical health. Uncontrolled and irrational thoughts based on misguided faith or dark suspicions, harm us more than we know. The darker and more unfounded our beliefs, the more serious the consequences are for us. Our refusal to go the extra mile to get the true facts behind our beliefs, can act as a very real poison to our system; and the consequences for us and our loved ones can be devastating.

Negative thoughts or false beliefs bring about concrete, harmful physiological effects, both in the mind and the body. What starts as a seed of irrational doubt, is watered and fed by ill will, and eventually germinates into a cacophony of confused thoughts, doubts and suspicions. This is the true source of *Mental Poisoning*. Read carefully with an open mind and remember: *What you think..., that veritably you will become!*



