

THEOSOPHY DOWNUNDER

**Newsletter of the Theosophical
Society (Pasadena)
Australasian Section
No: 114 December 2014**

Nothing stands still. If you watch the shadow of a building cast by the sun, you can see the shadow moving, but just. Perhaps this is the mystery -- and perhaps even the confounding nature of time -- we can perceive it as we move and change with it, but, nonetheless, at the same time, we can be fully *in the moment*.

Photo and caption by Stefan Carey, taken at Clifton Springs, Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria, southern Australia.



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LIVING IN THE MOMENT – Stefan Carey.

It is often suggested we should try to quieten our minds down and find our Centre. This way we can fully sense the power of the moment, find mental clarity, and many other health and spiritual benefits. But to me, it seems strange that we have to return to the present. Aren't we here in the present all the time anyway? Where are we if we're not here now? What is mindfulness? What is being in the present? How does it feel? Is it simple and easy to do?



Rather than simply swallow what sounds like other's advice, I decided to dissect this topic from the viewpoint of an average person's everyday experience.

The power of the moment is not always the same moment: See if you can relate your own experiences to these anecdotes about 'being in the moment':

- A three-year-old boy called Ben clutches a red toy plane, and happily rambles on in a language only he can understand. He's lost to the experience. His parents tell me he's been playing with the plane for several weeks since he went to the air-show with them. There is a quiet natural joy here without intention. He's lost in the moment and perhaps for him the moment has lasted several weeks. Who knows?
- An elderly man sits alone in the food court of a local shopping centre. As I walk past, I look into his face and see the inner man wrestling with a grim loneliness and despair. It is obvious, to me at least, that he's bored and unhappy. This daily ritual has become buried in weeks. The weeks of an unhappy solitude are gradually burying his spirit with each day's lonely vigil. Perhaps he just has indigestion and I'm misreading the signals! But he's totally in the moment. And he's suffering in it. He'll be back tomorrow.
- A Buddhist nun meditates quietly and has been doing so for years. Perhaps she smiles inwardly occasionally as she watches her thoughts like clouds form, and then drift by her meditations. In her earlier days of practice, her thoughts were like a howling gale that only sometimes dropped to a breeze. These days she's standing aside observing her thoughts, paying attention to them, rather than being overwhelmed by them. The storms are still passing through all these years later, but as her practice of mindfulness deepens, she finds quieter and quieter places from within to watch the storms pass by.

These sketches show us that we can focus our attention in various ways. Our experience, for example, can be a relaxed inner joy, sadness and despair, a quiet disciplined attention, feeling free and creative, or a feeling of fear and anxiety. Our attention can be solely on our own emotions, on our surroundings, the past or the future, or a mixture of all of these. And yet, although we see the 'here and now' through the different inner lenses of our complicated human experience, some of these states seem more desirable to us than others, more peaceful, richer and deeper.

In this regard, a wise friend asks a pertinent question in an email recently:

"... How is it that we experience a striving to an awareness of "the moment" and all the while the experiencing of any thought and/or feeling and/or sensory perception is already of "the moment"? What could this distinction be about? What is it that allows us to be filled with the beauty of a sunset? This is really a wonderful field of our nature to examine! And the paradoxes it holds" . . . "maybe are openings to a being so balanced as to draw from the voiceless depths of our nature to light the world around..."



Mindfulness: In his book *Coffee with the Buddha*, John Duncan Oliver put it this way:

"A well-trained mind is clear and aware. It isn't pulled this way or that by desires, disturbances, or delusion. Mindfulness – attentiveness – makes every experience richer and more rewarding. When you're paying attention you're living in the here and now, not the past or future... *The basis of mindfulness is*

observing what's actually happening in the mind and the body at the present moment, without judging your experience, or adding to it, or trying to change it. Unless you consciously gather your attention, your mind is likely to be all over the place, forming ideas and opinions, framing questions, passing judgements, drawing conclusions – jumping from one thing to another. There's no stability. An unstable mind wanders off into fantasy and projection, leaving reality behind. Mindfulness settles and concentrates the mind, stripping away fantasy to give you a direct experience of reality."

Orthodox medicine is starting to appreciate the value of mindfulness, for example, the Harvard School of Health lists the benefits of mindfulness meditation on their *HelpGuide* website, www.helpguide.org. On a page called the *Benefits of Mindfulness* in a section called *Ancient roots, modern applications*, they explain:

"The cultivation of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism, but most religions include some type of prayer or meditation technique that helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations toward an appreciation of the moment and a larger perspective on life".

I like that. It's a simple and balanced definition, easy for the average person to understand, but it also tells us that the practice of mindfulness has a long history across all religious traditions.

Here's a summary of the benefits of developing mindfulness:

- we feel a fresh appreciation for our surroundings and our lives.
- it's been shown as a way to treat heart disease, lower blood pressure, improve sleep, relieve stress, anxiety disorders, improves memory.
- we can worry less about the future or the past.
- it will slow us down, so we do not always react so instinctively.
- it can neutralise unhelpful habits of thought.
- it allows us to appreciate others more fully.
- we can stop and listen to what our body wants to tell us.



There are other impressive benefits. Ajahn Brahm, the Theravada Buddhist monk and current abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery in Western Australia, said that after training prison inmates to meditate, he was able to dramatically cut the chance they'll reoffend. At one prison he was surprised to see 95% of the prison population turn up for the first meditation lesson. Later he realised they were hoping to learn to levitate themselves over the prison walls!

But why do we have this problem of being unable to stay in the moment? There are several things working against us, mostly self-inflicted. They are our natural inclination to plan ahead and to worry, information and digital overload, distractions, multitasking, and the unhelpful conversations we can have with ourselves. The obstacles are different for each of us.

Anxious planning or worry- survival tools: We've thrived as a species because we can plan ahead as well as reflect and learn from the past. It's the frontal part of your brain, the most recently evolved part that is hardwired to plan for the future. It evolved from when we were a young species and we had to learn how to avoid starvation, how to survive being eaten by wild animals, and how to repel the other tribe's next attack. Probably a lot of our planning -- even then -- fell into the category of worry, or anxious planning, but it helped us survive whilst shaping our thinking abilities and habits, and set us apart from other less 'self-reflective' species. So, our capacity to plan and even worry is an important part of our survival skills.



Distractions, digital overload, and multitasking:

Losing our concentration due to endless distractions is something we all know about. But there's another side to distractions not widely known, especially those in the workplace. The evidence is that when we're deep in concentration, and a distraction breaks us out of it, it takes time to recover our focus. David Brown, an Australian workplace psychologist wrote in *The Pocket Stress Manager* in 2003, that depending on your temperament, it takes about ten minutes to recover from an interruption to re-find your concentration. And if you're interrupted every five minutes, for example, by a phone call, a text

message, an email notification, a noise; you'll spend the entire day recovering from interruptions and getting nothing substantial done. Another study found we were 20% dumber when we multitask, and those who thought they were the best at multitasking, scored the worst!

We are also saturated (if we want to be) by digital information: And there's a constant pressure to stay connected. One recent article on *The Conversation* website titled, *Approach your laptop mindfully to avoid digital overload*, said this about the trend to towards controlling our digital distractions:

"Others are turning to traditional mindfulness meditation techniques as a way of managing their digital dependence without having to switch off from their everyday lives entirely. It's seen as a way to calm the mind and help the body to cope with the overwhelming amount of data coming our way from all different directions and sources."

The authors of the article also referred the reader to *Time* magazine's main cover article of 3 February 2014, *The Mindful Revolution: the science of finding focus in a stressed-out, multitasking culture*.

So, as a result, more and more people are declaring a 'digital free Sunday' to recover something of the peace of the moment.

Simple, easy methods to get back 'here' now: Here are two methods, amongst many others, you can try to help calm the mind and bring you back to the present. That's all they do. Just remember that without effort, there is no reward, so if you are like me, doing them once and expecting life-changing results is normal -- but unrealistic.

- **Mindful observation:** from *Pocket Mindfulness website* www.pocketmindfulness.com: "Pick a natural organism within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, the clouds or the moon. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. But really notice it. Look at it as if you are seeing it for the first time. Visually explore every aspect of this glorious organism of the natural world. Allow yourself to be consumed by its presence and possibilities. Allow your spirit to connect with its role and purpose in the world. Give yourself permission to just to notice and 'be'."
 - **Slow yourself down:** and simply do one thing at a time, think about one thing at a time. Just one. It's surprisingly hard!
- *Stefan Carey, Melbourne, Australia.*

If you wish to read more of Stefan's article on 'Living in the Moment' please read: <http://www.theosophydownunder.org/library/theosophical-lectures/to-be-or-not-to-be-in-the-moment-those-are-the-questions-by-stefan-carey/>

"... If you aren't in the moment, you are either looking forward to uncertainty, or back to pain and regret..." – Jim Carrey.

STEPS TO HAPPINESS

1. Stop dwelling on the past: The past is precious because you can learn from your mistakes and learn from others' mistakes. The pain is just training; it doesn't define you. Think about what went wrong but stop dwelling on it. Decide how you will make sure that, next time, it won't happen again. Choose to remember the good times. Choose to forget the pain and the tears. Only then can the heartaches heal.



2. Stop buying possessions, start buying experiences: Instead of buying that extravagant piece of diamond, why not go on a trip to a place that has always intrigued you? No doubt buying things makes us feel better immediately, but at the end of the day it's the experiences that count. They enrich our lives and make memories that remain for years.

3. Pay compliments: Start paying compliments. If you like someone's hairdo or their shoes or their smile, go ahead, tell them. Tell them you find them beautiful, with a smile. And the moment you do that, you will feel better about yourself. The idea behind this is when you know you can make someone feel better about themselves, you automatically feel good about yourself too. Studies show this works.

4. Stop blaming, Foster forgiveness: When you blame others for a mistake they did, you, yourself, carry half the burden of their faults on your shoulders. If the loss is too great, forgiveness will take time. Know that holding onto grudges will only increase your pain.

5. Start a gratitude journal: Maintain a gratitude diary. Write down all the things you are grateful for. You saw a baby and she smiled at you at the coffee shop. It made you feel so good; write it down in your diary. Doing this exercise can calm despair and promote happiness.

6. Live your dreams: This is a very simple and easy thing to do, but we rarely we do it. Do you like reading? Sit all day at home and read those books you love. Do you like dancing but due to something or the other you never got a chance to take your dancing onto another level? I say, do it right now. Go get yourself enrolled into a dance school or dance at parties for fun. Go and try your luck in a reality show. Do it! Curbing our desires for the sake of fitting in the society or under any other pressure is no good. Do what you really want to.

7. Learn something new: Think of a subject, a country or a flower that you wish you knew more about and spend 20 minutes on the Internet reading about it. Or, if you prefer, go to a bookstore and buy a book on the subject. Pick a subject that is really close to your heart, not something that you think you 'should' know or 'need to' learn about.

8. Smile and Laugh! Indeed the simplest step to happiness. Even if you don't feel like it, fake it! Research shows that even a fake smile and laugh induces hormones that make you feel better instantly.

Learn to take these simple little conscious steps towards happiness and it will do wonders to your life. – *kindly sent to us by one of our readers.*

*Readers might be interesting in an article from one of our magazines which has some wonderful suggestions on the subject of **Happiness**, by **Elsie Barker** at: http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ub/v12n10p161_happiness.htm*

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome whilst trying to succeed.” – Booker T. Washington.

AUSTRALIAN NEWS:

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This is the last issue of Theosophy Downunder you will receive in print. From next year onwards, Theosophy Downunder newsletter will only be available via email as an attachment that you can print out, and/or for reading/printing from our website at:

www.theosophydownunder.org where you will find all back-issues to the year 2000. Please be sure to send us your email address to ensure that you can receive the newsletter regularly. Some print copies of the newsletters and meetings notices will continue to be available from our Library in Melbourne.



Meetings in Melbourne: Feb through April 2015: all meetings are held at the Theosophical Society (Pasadena) Library Centre, 664 Glenhuntly Road, South Caulfield, Melbourne, beginning at 2pm. There is no charge for entry and all are welcome:

2014

Sat. December 6th, 2pm: Fiction as Spiritual Teacher: Azlander II – Gabriele Brunsdén.

Sat. December 20th, 2pm: Study Group: Esoteric Discipline.

2015

Sat. February 7th, 2pm: Talk to the Animals? Can We Really Communicate with Animals? – Heathclyff St James Deville.

Sat. Feb.21st, 2pm: Study Group: Meditation and Yoga .

Sat. March 7th, 2pm: Auras and Halos: What Can They Teach Us? – Jennifer Pignataro.

Sat. March 21st, 2pm Study Group: The Paramitas and the Exalted Eightfold Path.

Please note: because Easter is on Sat. April 4th, the April meeting will be held one week later than usual on Sat. April 11th.

Sat. April 11th, 2pm: A New Continent of Thought – Andrew Rooke.

Sat. April 25th, 2pm: Study Group: The Initiatory Cycle .

For the Study Group we will be reading from: G. de Purucker: *The Path of Compassion* available from our Library in Melbourne or free online:

<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/fso/ptcom-hp.htm>

New Books in the Melbourne Library: the following new books have recently been added to the library collection: we have received several new books on Christian science; also: Jeremy Naydler: *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt*; M.S. Schneider: *A Beginner's Guide to the Universe: the Mathematical Archetypes of Nature, Art and Science: a Voyage from 1 to 10*; Swami Ramsakhdas: *All is God*.

'Living' Philosophy: academic philosophers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to make their subject a living reality rather than just a dry academic discussion in universities. In July, Monash University in Melbourne sponsored a seminar on just this issue. This question was explored at which leading philosophy academics and graduate students from Monash, the University of Warwick, and other Australian and international universities, discussed reinventing philosophy as a new way of life. From a current-day view, the speakers examined the classical idea of philosophy being an art of living, including the view that philosophy could cure human suffering with philosophers seen as akin to physicians or doctors. Another such seminar is to be organized next year. Currently in our Theosophical Society there is a similar emphasis in making our philosophy a living reality and not just the subject of academic discussion at meetings.

Old coin shows early Chinese contact with Aboriginal people in Elcho Island near Arnhem Land, Northern Australia: A coin hundreds of years old found on a remote island off the Northern Territory coastline may be the first evidence of contact in the 1700s between Aboriginal people and traders in China. The brass coin has been identified as coming from the Qing Dynasty and was minted between 1736 and 1795. It was found on July 25, 2014, during a week-long expedition to Elcho Island by a group of heritage enthusiasts. It certainly shows the contact between

Northern Australia and the trade with the Middle Kingdom, with China. As Theosophy and the oral tradition of local Aborigines indicate, it is further evidence of the vast extent of travel and trade in the ancient world. More information is available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-10/old-chinese-coin-found-in-arnhem-land/5660382>

For Those Interested in a Vegetarian Diet: you may wish to try the following websites: Vegetarian recipes for the Small Household: <http://www.boutell.com/vegetarian/> ; Delicious Vegetarian Recipes from Around the World: <http://www.ivu.org/recipes/latinam/> ; TryVeg .com: <http://www.tryveg.com/cfi/toc/> ; Ethical & Religious Vegetarians: <http://www.serv-online.org/> ; The Vegetarian Channel: <http://www.thevegetarianchannel.com/> ; Vegetarian Recipes & Resources: http://www.stephenknapp.com/vegetarian_recipes_and_resources.htm ; Vegan Outreach: <http://www.veganoutreach.org> ; Love Us Don't Eat Us: <http://www.loveusnoteatus.com>

If the belief in Immortality is of remote antiquity, how can the dread of Death be the oldest of all fears? – Plutarch in *On the Soul*.

REINCARNATION: A Logical Idea? – Rita Houthuijzen.

A four-and-a-half year-old boy who had just been reprimanded by his father once responded angrily: "In the past, when I was grown-up, I was your dad and you were still a child." The father told his son that he could know nothing of such things, because he hadn't yet been born. To which the boy replied: "Later, when we are grown up, *you* will be little, and when *you* are grown-up again, *we* will be little."

Reincarnation Defined: Reincarnation has always been a controversial subject. Many people nowadays are giving it serious thought and realize that in one short life it is impossible to learn everything about ourselves and the universe. They also wonder why there is so much misery in the world. They are no longer satisfied with religious explanations about heaven and hell and are searching for more inner truth.

According to ancient teachings that form the basis of later religions, the human ego returns at some point to earth after the change we call 'death' and a long period of rest in other realms, where we process our past life. Reincarnation allows us to learn new lessons on earth, where our ties of sympathy and friendship, but also of antipathy and hate, are revived.

While some people live to a ripe old age, others die very young. What is the purpose of all these lives if we are merely temporary phenomena in an immense universe? Are we here simply by chance, because now and then life originates here and there in the cosmos? Death often feels like a big hole that we fall into when we die; if reincarnation is true, however, it is something we have experienced many times. Humans die every day, as do animals, plants, stars, and whole solar systems. Do they all simply dissolve into nothing, for no reason at all?

Thinking about these issues is the only way to discover a certain logic in the idea of reincarnation. Knowledge of it enriches us because it leads to an inner change, an 'inner alchemy', and if we change the world changes too.

Some parents have said that when they look at their own newborn children, their eyes look back as if reflecting heaven. Consider the achievements of 'wonder children', such as Mozart. Such children must have brought such gifts with them from

somewhere. The purity of many children, and their unconditional love for their parents and others, indicate that they are recalling a much purer period of existence.

Reincarnation and Karma: According to the doctrine of reincarnation, everyone is responsible for everything they do and say. Thoughts are elementals, some of which are born within us, while others are drawn from the thought reservoir of the planet. All our actions, words and thoughts have consequences – our karma. In other words, what we sow we will someday have to reap, in this life or in a future life.



Our responsibility for all our actions is something we need to handle consciously. That is probably why reincarnation was removed from the Christian scriptures, though if you read between the lines, the Bible still contains statements pointing in this direction. By abolishing the concept of reincarnation, our individual responsibility for our deeds is transferred to a religious institution. This makes it possible to acquire power of those individuals, and if you add a few dogmas, this creates dependence on a particular faith.

But we humans are not dependent on any ruler. Even 'God' would never want to oppress us or act as a dictator in our lives. What's more, this innermost core of life is in essence ourselves. It is our deepest self and connects us all. We are all 'god sparks', 'sparks of cosmic fire', 'droplets in the universal ocean'. Cosmic consciousness is made up of the innermost essence of all beings, whatever their physical form.

Reincarnation is inseparable from karma. In addition to our individual karma, there is our family karma, national karma, group karma, and the karma of our earth, our solar system, and even our universe. It is through karma that we incarnate in a particular family and country with the right parents, though those who do not get on well with their parents might find this difficult to understand. Consciously, or unconsciously, we are all co-workers with the universe and possess a large measure of free-will.

Reincarnation and Suffering: Many people wonder why there is so much suffering in the world. It is sometimes hard to comprehend what people go through in their lives. There are countries where the most terrible things happen. Seeing images of such suffering sometimes causes a strong feeling of powerlessness. It is impossible to help everyone on this earth, so it is important to think carefully about what we do.

Many countries donate money, especially after major disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis. On a smaller scale, they provide clothing, medical assistance or help with building homes and schools. Seeing all this suffering is already a lesson for people who are materially better off, because our response is a deliberate act that we do for others, a deed of love and respect for our fellow human beings. But people may also need help in our immediate environment, even though it doesn't get mentioned in newspapers or on television. The important thing is not to close our eyes to the suffering of others, and do whatever we can.

The major and minor lessons in our lives apply to both those who suffer and those who see people suffering and lend a helping hand. In both cases, an inner transformation occurs, a growth in consciousness. By understanding the true purpose of our present life and subsequent lives, we acquire increasing insight into

the inner realms of life. Our freedom as human beings entails a high degree of responsibility for all the living things around us, including animals, plants and the earth as a whole.

Every choice we make, individually or collectively, will have consequences. These consequences may affect entire nations, or entire families, and either bring people together or drive them apart. It is therefore very important to think carefully about what we do. That doesn't mean we can suddenly become perfect. But every effort to improve ourselves is a step in the right direction.

Reincarnation and the After-Life: According to some religions, we only have a single life on earth and afterwards go to a sort of paradise. They also say that there is a God, a sort of personal being of the male sex, who lives in heaven, where he welcomes people who have been good, who can stay with him for the rest of eternity. Meanwhile, bad people go to hell, a place of fire and suffering, to which they are condemned for eternity, without any chance to change themselves.

This scenario raises a number of questions. What are the people in heaven going to do all that time? You might feel blissful surrounded by beauty, love and angels, but in the long run I think it would be excruciatingly boring. As for the people in hell, it would be very sad if they were never to be given a chance to change and learn. I think that belief in heaven and hell creates a real 'death', because there is nowhere else to go, and in my view that would be real suffering. In heaven you are sweetly cradled to sleep, while in hell you are consumed forever by those horrible flames.

Heaven and Hell are really states of consciousness created by our own actions. Here on earth our life is determined by our deeds, by the person that we have been and that we now are and that we will become in the future.

Reincarnation and Ethics: Another viewpoint is that when we die, that is the end of it all. People who believe this are known as Atheists. They often live that one life for all it is worth. This sometimes means they are very egocentric and believe that some people are simply lucky while others suffer misfortune. They also believe in Darwin's theory that humans descended from the apes. They believe in the law of the jungle, that those who are strong, smart and healthy will prevail. This can lead to a very competitive attitude in their personal and social lives.

If reincarnation is a fact, and if we realize that we ourselves cause many things pleasant and unpleasant, that we encounter, we would be able to create a different world together. As the old saying puts it, 'to improve the world, we must begin with ourselves.'

Perhaps it is a good idea to consult the 'child in ourselves', for that pure and receptive being is still present within us. We are in essence one with the universal primordial principle, droplets that together form the great ocean of life, and all of its splendid possibilities are therefore contained within each one of us. – *Rita Houthuijzen, Holland – published with permission of the author from Impuls newsletter June 2014.*

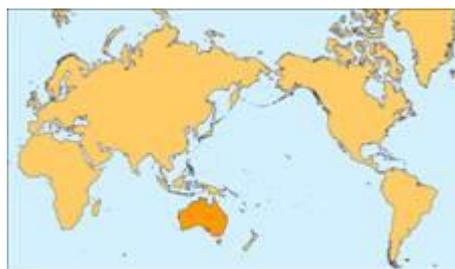
Intuition – Knowledge of the inner light inspires new ways of Being. Giving sight to things before Unseen – Julie Manning.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Websites of our Theosophical Society:

International Headquarters, Pasadena, USA:

has a comprehensive website, where an extensive selection of full text publications is available online, many in pdf format: www.theosociety.org .



American Section: The website of the American Section is www.americasection.us. Further literature can be ordered online through the Wizards Bookshelf. The newsletter of the American section is *21st Century Path* and copies of all issues are held in the Melbourne library. The latest issue to hand has a wealth of interesting articles on how Theosophy has helped and inspired many prisoners in the US with particular emphasis on the work of our former Leader, Katherine Tingley, in social service.

Northwest: June 2014 issue of the *Theosophy Northwest View*, features under news and reviews, *Interfaith Dialogue Dinner*, and under Theosophical views, *Brain Dead, part* , by Sally Dougherty. To view these go to www.theosophy-nw.org. All back editions can be viewed on line or in print in our Melbourne library.

British Section: To view back editions of the newsletter, *Compass*, please go to www.theosophical.org.uk. Various articles and newsletters of the past ten years are featured; correspondence courses as well as free online subscriptions to the *Compass* are offered. The latest issue features articles on the right to die and euthanasia.

The Netherlands Section: For our Dutch-speaking readers, the Netherlands Section's website has a wide selection of translated, online publications, where articles are collated according to topic at www.theosofie.net for easy referencing. The *Impuls* newsletter articles can be viewed at www.theosofie.net/impuls/index.html. These are listed according to authors. There is also an English translation of major articles from each issue of *Impuls*.

South Africa: Email for the South African Section: alice.yetman@gmail.com
Monthly meetings are held in the Gauteng area. For information regarding meetings in the greater Durban area, please contact Grant Halliday at: halliday@absamail.co.za. For meetings in the Western Cape, please contact Dewald Bester at: dewald_b1@yahoo.com.

Also from South Africa comes news of what appears to be a **giant human footprint** found in granite rock at least 200 million years old on a remote mountain top. This footprint is shown in amateur video taken by Michael Tellingier at the site and displayed on You Tube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRuxw-nZoJw>



in 18 distinct layers, with no streets and entrances from the roof. The rooftops were

9,500 year-old city found: joining the recent discoveries of ancient temples in Turkey comes news of the further excavation of a Stone Age city in Turkey. Catalhoyuk is the best preserved Neolithic site in the world. At the time when archaeology tells us that most people in the world were nomadic hunter-gatherers, **Catalhoyuk** was a bustling town of as many as 10,000 people. It is a honeycomb of mud-brick houses

effectively the streets with the interiors were plastered with some of them containing paintings and statues of bulls. The dead were interred in the floors of houses. The site was occupied from 7,500BC to 5,600BC at which time it was mysteriously abandoned and moved several kilometres away where it was rebuilt and occupied for another 700 years. If Stone Age peoples in Turkey were capable of building cities like Catalhoyuk, and vast temple-complexes like Gobeli-Tepi (11,600 years BC), they surely must have been a far more advanced civilization than science tells us was possible at that time. More information available at: <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/9500-year-old-honeycomb-city-atalh-y-k-00840#!bb067v>

Doctors Taking Medicinal Honey Seriously: Honey is now regularly being shown to kill superbugs in the laboratory, as scientists and doctors work together to prove honey's effectiveness in battling life-threatening bacteria. For more information please see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/28399182>

Moving Poem on Climate Change: in September, people all over the world marched in the streets to bring world leaders attention to the need for action on climate change. Perhaps most moving of all was the poem read to the United Nations assembly by a woman from the Marshall Islands now threatened with flooding due to rising sea levels – the result of climate change. Please see this moving speech which brought tears to the eyes of many hardened UN delegates: <http://gawker.com/mothers-moving-climate-change-poem-brings-world-leaders-1638746044>

“... The Hidden Reality or Hidden Knowledge. Neither a religion nor a philosophy, it is a practical way of life based on intuitive knowledge and inner guidance where everything about oneself, about others, and about matters outside of oneself is placed under constant study and observation for the purpose of mastery in all aspects of life ...” – S.D.Smith.

COPING WITH STRESS – Andrew Rooke

A reader writes that one of the biggest challenges for most people is dealing with the stresses and strains of daily life in this fast-paced modern world. Does Theosophy offer any insights into handling stress? The Editor comments:

“... One of the past leaders of our Theosophical Society, Katherine Tingley, was particularly concerned with applying Theosophy to daily life. She refers in one her books to a meeting she had with H. P. Blavatsky's spiritual teacher in the foothills of Darjeeling, India (reported in *The Gods Await*, pp. 123-9), that has much to teach us about coping with the stresses of life. As they spoke together on a hillside overlooking a farmer's field, he suggested the following amongst many other valuable ideas:

- **Purity of thought:** We may surround ourselves with contemplation on spiritual matters even when our hands are busy with everyday tasks. One of the teacher's students or chelas was plowing a field, and the Master said that the team of normally unruly oxen were always calm for the chela because they were immersed in the atmosphere of his concentration and contemplations. Further, we should not live in dread of life's experiences, but go cheerfully on our way coping with the tasks at hand rather than being overwhelmed by distant goals. The teacher said that a joy in the spiritual life could actually make the very atoms of our body lighter!

- **Try not to worry:** We should fight the tendency to let worries and anxieties of our everyday consciousness weigh us down. Blavatsky's teacher said that hopelessness and anxiety can bring our body's atoms "down halfway to death. But they can be quickened to a kind of immortality by the fire of the divine life and attuned into universal harmony. Men anywhere could get rid of all that burden of unnecessaries, and carry themselves like that young chela does, if they had the mental balance."
- **Live in the Now:** Think of the immediate moments and seconds of which the path of our lives is composed. Don't exhaust spiritual energy by worrying about what might be somewhere far along the path. Rather, we "should let the beaming thought pour itself into each arriving moment and be indifferent to the morrow. One can find in every instant of time, if one has the desire, the door into worlds of golden opportunity, the gateway to a glorious path stretching out into the limitless eternal."
- **Prepare for the day's challenges:** In the early and sacred morning hours, we should take a little time to connect with the higher self through holding a beautiful thought in our minds, reminding ourselves of our mission to help others, and pondering on overcoming our most difficult challenges for the day ahead. In this way we may bask in the sunlight of the soul before moving on to worldly duties. In particular, the teacher remarked that the first three hours of daylight provide a valuable opportunity in this regard, as he who is ready to step out with the sunrise and work with the sun "has the cooperation of a force he little knows of -- the vibrant blue light behind the sun."
- **Spend time in natural surroundings:** Nature is the great healer when the distractions and stresses of daily life crowd in. If we walk into the silence of the forest, listen to the symphony of the wind in the leaves, gaze in wonder at the stars, listen to the music of the birds, or walk by the rhythmic wash of the seashore we may free ourselves there "from old trying memories and from all anticipations of trouble," making ourselves "at one with that light in nature."

To this advice from Theosophy I would add some advice from modern psychology:

- **Access humor:** by developing the habit of seeing the funny side of every situation so that you can acquire a light-hearted attitude to conditions likely to bring you down. Watching funny videos/DVDs, listening to comedians, and being around good-humoured people can help.
- **Make friends:** and make time for other people: call them, listen to them, share interests, and develop the habit of living outside yourself. Supporting and giving to others are great healers.
- **Be happy:** Put on a bright, cheerful exterior if you can. Commit random acts of kindness and be ready to lend a hand, perhaps volunteering for a couple of hours per week.
- **Change patterns of thinking:** instead of talking negatively to yourself, look at your positive achievements at the end of each day. Events in themselves are not always stressful, but the way we think about our experiences can be.
- **Stay physically fit:** there is no doubt that we can handle stress better, enjoy life, and have a more positive attitude if we feel fit. This may involve a walk with the dog, playing with the kids, or a formal fitness program for twenty minutes three times per week. Physical fitness also promotes a sound night's sleep, another essential aspect of handling stress and depression. – *Andrew Rooke, Melbourne, Australia.*

“...From the point of view of ordinary men, enlightenment and ignorance are two separate things. Wise men thoroughly realize Mind-essence, they know

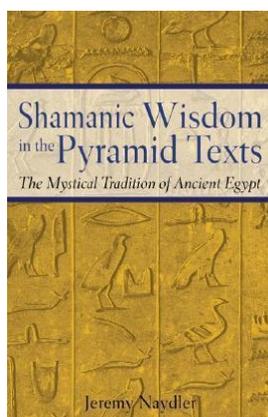
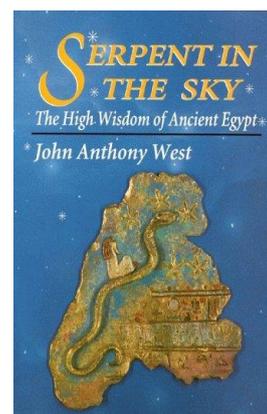
that they are of the same nature. This sameness of nature, that is, this non-duality of nature, is what is called “true nature”; neither decreases nor increases; it is undisturbed in an annoying situation and is calm in samadhi. It is neither eternal, nor not-eternal ... It is beyond existence and non-existence.”
– Hui-Neng (638-713AD), the 6th Patriarch of Ch’an Buddhism.

BOOK REVIEWS:

Two books on mystical ancient Egypt: John Anthony West: *Serpent in the Sky: the high wisdom of ancient Egypt* (1996) and Jeremy Naydler: *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: the mystical tradition of ancient Egypt* (2006) – both available from our Melbourne library.

Ancient Egypt has had an enormous influence on the modern Western world. In ancient times, Egypt was considered to be the source of the highest learning and the greatest magicians and mystery teachings were known to have existed there. It is very strange then that conventional Egyptologists tend to ignore this aspect of ancient Egypt and relegate all such discussions to the ‘lunatic fringe’ of their profession. Slowly more and more researchers are starting to realize that the very foundation of ancient Egypt was the creation of an environment for the continued teaching of ‘The Mysteries’ and the production of superior men and women who could carry such traditions forward – the ‘ankh’ or ‘living ones’. Much of the modern work in this area has built on the pioneering writings of theosophist HP Blavatsky, and those who followed such as Australian theosophist, I M Oderberg, American psychic Edgar Cayce, and French mystical Egyptologist, Rene Schwaller de Lubicz (1887-1961).

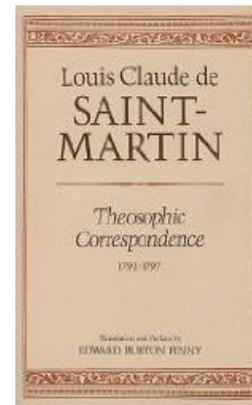
Two new books in our library reflect and build upon these earlier authors’ work, and carry their studies of the mystical tradition of ancient Egypt on into the 21st century. John Anthony West’s book is a popularization and updating of Rene Schwaller de Lubicz’s pioneering *Temple of Man* (1957). West develops many of Scwaller’s themes such as the mystical basis of Egyptian mathematics and architecture, especially the design of their temples culminating in the great Temple of Amun at Karnac. Really valuable is West’s work since the 1990s with geologist Robert Schoch to prove the vast antiquity of the great Sphinx due to water erosion of the surrounding structures and his work with police facial-recognition experts to establish that the face on the Sphinx is not the pharaoh that Egyptologists think built the Sphinx. This book is a catalogue of facts and is therefore, rather difficult to read in places. For all of this, it assembles a lot of valuable information that shows the Egyptian civilization we know has its roots in vast antiquity and that ancient Egypt possessed ‘high knowledge’ indeed.



Jeremy Naydler eloquently elaborates on this mystical tradition in the published version of his PhD thesis setting out to prove that one of the world’s oldest books – the Pyramid Texts of the Pharaoh Unas (2,375BC) – were in fact mystical accounts of initiation ceremonies and not funerary texts for the benefit of the dead pharaoh as modern Egyptologists tell us. This is simply setting out to prove in an academic fashion what HP Blavatsky, and especially Manuel Oderberg, have stated eloquently in the theosophical literature that ancient Egypt was the home of high

initiates in the ancient wisdom tradition of which theosophy is a modern expression. Naydler follows up and expands his superb study of 1996, *Temple of the Cosmos*, in a detailed analysis of the pyramid texts which is astounding in its depth of analysis and its implications for the study of ancient Egypt. In affect both Naydler and West are saying what theosophists have said for years - that in order to understand ancient Egypt we have to understand and empathize with its mystical traditions and high wisdom. How wonderful to see these ideas reaching a wider audience, especially through John Anthony West's videos, radio broadcasts, and guided tours of ancient Egyptian temples and monuments, pointing to a deeper intuitive/empathetic understanding of ancient Egypt rather than the sterile academic/intellectual approach that has dominated Egyptology since the 19th century. – *Reviewed by Andrew Rooke, Melbourne, Australia.*

***Theosophic Correspondence between Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Kirchberger, Baron de Lieberstorf
Translated by Edward Penny. Theosophical University Press Pasadena, 1982.***



This book is a compilation of the letters between Louis Claude de Saint-Martin an 18th century French nobleman and a Swiss aristocrat, Baron de Liebistorf Kirchberger, during the stormiest days of the French Revolution. We are told in the theosophical literature, that the Masters of Wisdom make a big effort to communicate as much as possible and appropriate of their teachings in the final 25 years of each century to Westerners. The formation of the Theosophical Society was such an effort in the 19th century which continues in a myriad of ways on into the 21st century. The efforts of Saint-Martin and others represent something of the 18th century effort which failed to gain a hold on world consciousness at that time.

Saint-Martin to those who knew him had all the attributes of a genuine spiritual teacher: "...he was admired for his good sense, and his simple and amiable modesty. His endearing character and communicative spirit would, doubtless, have secured to him many partisans, but he did not seek to make proselytes, he wanted only friends for disciples – friends, not only of his books, but of each other..." His letters reveal his exalted inner nature in their emphasis on character development instead of absorption in psychic phenomena or purely book learning. He says constantly in his letters to Kirchberger that all spiritual teaching must be tested in the arena of life. Saint-Martin certainly had his fair share of practical experience in the stresses of daily-life. His letters frequently refer to the horrors of the worst period of the French Revolution during the 'Reign of Terror' of the ruthless tyrant, Robespierre, which he somehow miraculously survived despite several dramatic episodes on the war-torn streets of revolutionary Paris.

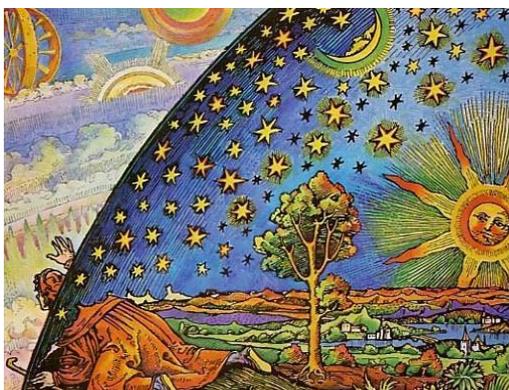
All of his letters make you realize how fortunate many of us are to live in relatively peaceful countries with the internet now available to facilitate the free flow of information between spiritual students. Saint-Martin and Kirchberger frequently mention the difficulties they encounter in securing the works of the spiritual luminaries of their time. Amongst these Saint-Martin was particularly influenced by the German mystic, Jacob Boehme, who theosophical literature refers to as a 'natural mystic' with a direct connection to his inner god but without instruction as to the exact nature of his inspirations. Others less remembered today are English Christian mystic, Jane Leade, and Anglican priest, astrologer, alchemist and mystic, John Pordage.

In the final letter of the book Saint-Martin has some good advice for spiritual students of all ages: "... On the means of an immediate union of our wills with God I will say that this union is a work which can only be accomplished by the firm and constant resolution of those who desire it; that there is no other means for this but the persevering use of a pure will, aided by the works and practice of every virtue, fertilized by prayer that divine grace may come to help our weakness, and lead us to the term of our regeneration...." This book is highly recommended to all serious theosophical students and endlessly repays the effort of wading through the antiquated style and inevitable difficulties of reading what were originally private letters, between two genuine and sincere students of the ancient wisdom. – *reviewed by Andrew Rooke, Melbourne, Australia.*

"... Truth is only One, its language also is One, and all who walk in this way must say the same things, without seeing or knowing each other; although, at the same time, some may say greater things than others, according to the distance they have travelled..." Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1792).

OUR DEBT TO THE GNOSTICS - Arthur Swan

The word "Gnostic" comes from the classical Greek word meaning "know", and what these people "knew" was the basis of man's relationship to his world and to its Creator. Such knowledge was rightly deemed to be divine wisdom, and one who sought it was a Philosopher, which latter term is a combination of two Greek words meaning "lover of wisdom". We have a modern echo of these thoughts when a person who cannot really decide what he thinks on such matters is said to be Agnostic, meaning "without knowledge".



A complete study of Gnosticism would involve tracing philosophical thought for a period of about a thousand years and, to do so in this one article, would be like trying to give an adequate account of English history from the reign of Alfred the Great (10th century) right up to the present! This being so, we will have to deal fairly briefly with earlier centuries and concentrate more on the later centuries when the Gnostics came under pressure from the Church of Rome.

Our review can begin in ancient Greece in the 5th Century B.C., which saw the flowering of Greek genius under men like Plato. Greek scholars had learned a lot from ancient Egypt, but the latter's scholarship was by then past its zenith and, indeed, was in decline, but the Greeks put their own stamp on it, so that the discourses of Plato, Pythagoras, and others, are even today still read with great respect.

In common with the rest of the ancient world, the Greeks were convinced that divine wisdom had to be preserved as a sacred trust, to be revealed only to those who had proved themselves worthy to receive it. To this end, there were the Mystery Schools, the Lesser and the Greater, but as those who attended were sworn to the strictest secrecy, our knowledge of the proceedings is necessarily rather sketchy. However, from various writings that have come down to us, we can infer that the Lesser Mysteries admitted suitable candidates who were instructed in basic teachings, on completion of which they achieved the Lesser Initiation. Thereafter, it was possible for the most outstanding candidates to progress through the Greater Mystery School

to the Greater Initiation. Such initiates were deemed to be “Seers”, because they would have seen the ‘Gods’.

The term “Initiation” is instructive here as, with us, “to initiate” means “to begin”, and we would do well to remember that this is exactly what initiation meant to the contemporary of Plato. To him, initiation was not an end in itself, indeed it was not an end, in the sense of completion, at all, but very much a beginning, in the long process of refining and sublimation of the coarse vehicle of the flesh, so that the Divinity within could more fully express itself.

The Greece of the 5th Century B.C. is sometimes depicted as an idyllic state which was the cradle of democracy. This was, in fact, true, but only to the extent that democracy applied only to the free class, and not to the substantial section of the population who were slaves. The latter were, of course, mostly illiterate, as one would expect from those days, and this fact alone, quite apart from any lack of social standing, completely disqualified the slave class from participation in any of the Mysteries, even at the lowest level.

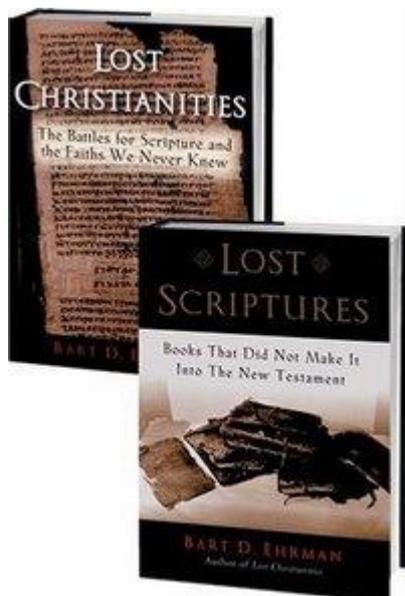
In all societies and in all ages, it has always been a problem for those wishing to disseminate some form of philosophy, how to provide ‘meat for the strong’, ‘milk for the babes’, and something adequate for those ranking in between. The ancient Greeks understood this and, for the unlettered populace, theatrical plays, pageants, etc, were provided periodically, at which the educated people attended as a matter of public policy. It is obvious, therefore, that the Mystery Schools were definitely elitist, and this probably contributed to their eventual decline.

By the time the A.D. centuries dawned, there had been a general decline of scholarship, which led to some ancient writings being interpreted literally, instead of allegorically. There had also developed a vigorous exchange of ideas between Greece, Asia Minor, the Near East, Alexandria in Egypt and even India, but unfortunately ideas received from outside were sometimes not fully understood. For example, the Jewish idea that a Messiah would come was, in our opinion, that this would be achieved when we, each of us, have graduated to a state of perfection, but it was taken by some to mean that a man would be born who would become King of the Jews and liberate Jerusalem and its temple from the conquering Romans. Poor scholarship like this brings restricted vision, and we are not surprised to find that outgrowth of many sects, who no doubt bickered among themselves about trifling points of doctrine.

About this time too, there came into use the word “Christos” and its variants, based on the word “to pour” in the sense of anointing, and adherents of these sects were generally known as Christian or ‘Chrestian’. In the Christian Bible, there are a number of epistles by the Apostle Paul to several “churches” in Asia Minor and Greece, and one would naturally assume (and is probably meant to assume) that these churches were followers of Jesus, the man born in Bethlehem, but theosophical Founder, H.P. Blavatsky, says quite specifically in her book, *Isis Unveiled*, that these churches had no knowledge of a Saviour literally born as a man.

For the first three centuries or so A.D., there was a massive ferment of ideas, and the number of writings multiplied enormously, many describing in great detail the author’s idea of what the life on earth of the Christ would have been, if he ever really came. The multitude of such sects and the amazing diversity of opinion about who Christ was and what he had taught amongst the early Christians, is described in detail in

Prof. Bart Ehrman's 2003 book, *Lost Christianities*, and companion volume, *Lost Scripture (2005)*, available from our Melbourne library. Naturally, as these people were, in my view, writing fiction, they were completely free to write whatever seemed to them to be appropriate, so the early Church had to make a selection when assembling what we now know as the Holy Bible, and it is interesting to find Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons, writing in about 185 A.D. that, out of a multitude of descriptions of the earthly life of the Saviour, only four were chosen, because there are four winds of heaven and four points of the compass. These four are still with us as the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and they were evidently chosen because they best supported the young Church's conviction that the Saviour had literally walked and preached in Judea early in the first century A.D., but even these four disagree on some points, which is perfectly understandable, given the fictional origin, in my view, mentioned above.



While these early centuries were mostly a time of poor scholarship, there was a great flowering of philosophical writing by men who, in their own times, and ever since, have been called the Gnostic Christians. They tried to revive and enlarge upon the ideas of Plato, and later scholars have called them Neo-Platonists. Their basic teaching was that the Christ, by whatever name he was known, was the ever-coming one – indeed, he was each one of us as we can and eventually will become in some future

incarnation. He was an Exemplar, to show us what we could achieve, if we would but try. They believed that the Greater Initiation was essential to our spiritual progress, and that if a really virtuous man were to die without having achieved that Greater Initiation, his reincarnating ego would be infallibly guided to rebirth in a body which would have that opportunity. Some of them said of the Saviour that he never closed his eyes – an idea which probably came from India, where it was said that the God never sleeps, but this idea hardly fits a physical body as we know it. Another description is of Jesus answering questions from a group, and most of the questions come from the women, which would be frowned upon by some churchmen, even today.

As practically all the above points are in direct conflict with orthodox Christianity, it is not surprising that when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of Rome in about A.D. 338, the Church lost no time in destroying all writings of the Gnostics that could be found. Many of these writings were hidden away from religious fanatics of the time. In 1945 two Egyptian peasants who were looking for fertilizer for their fields, found a library of such hidden Gnostic manuscripts in a cave at Naj Hammadi in Egypt, and these documents form the basis of our knowledge of Gnosticism today. Thirteen scrolls or codices, containing 52 documents had been buried there probably in the 4th century AD. As a result of this, we know something of the teachings but almost nothing of the Gnostics themselves. Before the Naj Hammadi books were found and translated under the auspices of the United Nations in 1977, we knew of their writings only from the criticisms of the Church Fathers, chiefly Irenaeus, about A.D. 185 and Hippolytus, some fifty years later. These Church Fathers all displayed varying degrees of hostility towards the Gnostics, but they did give us some ideas of their writings and beliefs which were further amplified when the Naj Hammadi documents were translated.

Fortunately, several Gnostic texts are now freely available on the internet including the amazing, *Gospel According to Thomas*, which was mentioned in the August 2014 issue of *Theosophy Downunder*. I'd like to quote from another such one, known as the, *Acts of John*, at the point in the story of Jesus where the Lord had appeared to John on the Mount of Olives, whence he had fled from the crucifixion:

"... Our Lord stood in the midst of the cave and filled it with light and said:

'To the multitude below, in Jerusalem, I am being crucified and pierced with lances and reeds, and gall and vinegar is given Me to drink; to thee now I speak, and hearken to my words. T'was I who put it in thy heart to ascent to this mount, that thou mightest hear what disciple must learn from Master, and Man from God.'

And having thus spoken, He showed me a cross of light set up, and about the cross a great multitude, and therein one form and one likeness; and on the cross another multitude, not having one form, and I saw the Lord Himself above the cross, not having any shape, but only a voice; and a voice not such as was familiar to us, but a sweet and kind voice and one truly of God, saying unto me:

'John, it is needful that one should hear these things from me, for I have need of one who will hear. This cross of light is sometimes called the Word by Me for your sakes. This is not the cross of wood, which thou will see when thou hast descended, nor am I He that is upon the cross, whom now thou seest not but only hearest a voice... the multitude of one aspect that is about the cross is the lower nature...'

This, you will agree, is both lofty and perceptive, but it also called for a good education and the breadth of vision which goes with a cultivated mind. Also, it is much more suggestive of a ritual like initiation than of an actual historical occurrence. As such, it was elitist and quite out of the reach of the illiterate masses. Indeed, this illustrates the very weakness which was mentioned earlier in our discussion of the ancient Greek mysteries. Christianity as we know it did not come to the Roman Emperors from professors or other learned men – that would have been coming in at the top. It was known by the Romans as 'the religion of the slaves'. What Christianity did was creep up from the bottom, through the soldiers' barracks, scullery, kitchen, or stables. An Emperor would probably first hear of Christianity from his barber or valet or the groom of his favourite horse.

Such underlings were regarded with disdain by educated Romans like Pliny, but those masses did need a philosophy of some kind, so Christianity rose through the social scale, gradually taking over from the so-called pagan beliefs. The father of theology as we know it today is generally conceded to have been Augustine, who, it is interesting to note, had originally been a pupil of the Neo-Platonists. His whole-hearted espousal of the new creed may to some seem like a step downward into crude fundamentalism, but perhaps we should credit him with a compassionate desire to provide a philosophical benison for the masses. Of necessity, this had to be quite simple, even simplistic, and it is a great pity that some way was not found to preserve something on a higher level of thought. About the best that has come down to us through the Church are the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, whose writings have a strongly Gnostic tone and do not seem to know a literal Jesus of Nazareth.

When the Christian Church first received recognition as the State religion, it became the first organisation in history to claim to have a monopoly of truth – a breath-taking assertion which really only proved a very limited understanding of such matters. However, the Church had the full support of the Emperor Constantine, who ordered

the closing of all the academies (similar to our universities), which eventually led to the Dark Ages that later closed over Western Europe. This was a serious blow to Gnosticism, which faded out in Rome, but continued a little longer in Alexandria, until even there it was extinguished by Christian fundamentalists and then the invading Arabs newly converted to Islam. In Europe itself, Gnosticism survived in isolated pockets such as the religion of the Cathars in southern France until it was persecuted to extinction by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

Yet Gnosticism retains an eternal fascination and relevance today with its emphasis on the responsibility of the individual to seek salvation without the need for priests and bishops to intervene between us and our inner Divinity. Never has Gnosticism been so popular in the last 2,000 years with its sacred manuscripts, pre-eminently, *The Gospel According to Thomas*, now freely available on the internet inspiring a new generation on their Journey to the Inner God. – *the late Arthur Swan, Melbourne, Australia edited and with updating comments from Andrew Rooke.*

Some books in our Melbourne library on Gnostic Christianity for those interested to read further on this fascinating subject:

Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and Faiths We Never Knew*, Oxford University Press, 2003 and companion volume *Lost Scriptures*.

Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*, Random House, New York, 2003.

Marvin Meyer, *Secret Gospels: Essays on Thomas and the Secret Gospel of Mark*, Trinity Press Int'l, Harrisburg, PA, 2003.

Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

Theosophy Downunder is issued three times per year in April, August, and December and is edited by Andrew Rooke. We can be contacted at the Theosophical Society (Pasadena) Australasian Section, Library Centre, 664 Glenhuntly Rd., South Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria 3162, AUSTRALIA. Tel: 0400942613 Email : andrewrooke@hotmail.com; World Wide Web homepage at: <http://theosophydownunder.org> Current and many back-issues to the year 2000 are available from our website. ISSN: 1835-5595 (print) and 1835-5609 (online). Our International Leader is Randell C. Grubb.

May the Blessings of the Sacred Season be with you throughout 2015 and beyond.

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from us all at *Theosophy Downunder* in Melbourne, Australia.



