

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Manly P. Hall, President and Founder
Dr. John W. Ervin, Vice President



CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN

December, 1981

ST. JOSAPHAT

Dear Friends:



One of the most important hagiologies dealing with the lives of sanctified persons is the Golden Legend written in the thirteenth century by Jacobus de Voragine. He definitely refers to Josaphat as a saint worthy to receive veneration on November 27. It all began with the ministry of St. Thomas. It is rather well established that he preached in southern India and converted many of the inhabitants to Christianity. After a certain time, one of the local rulers began to persecute the church. This feudal monarch had a son, a young man of high character, who in due time was to inherit the kingdom. A soothsayer predicted, however, that the young man would renounce his royal destiny, become a Christian convert, and become a great teacher among his people. To prevent this from happening, the king created a beautiful palace and did everything possible to prevent his son from becoming aware of the sorrows of mankind.

His father also arranged a marriage for his princely son to a very beautiful and virtuous young woman who later bore him a son. By miraculous and mysterious circumstances, the soothsayer's prophecy was fulfilled, and Josaphat secretly left the palace and became a holy man. Later he converted his father, and even returned to his own kingdom as a great sage. He had a long and useful life, and after his death many monuments were built in his memory. The story was widely circulated in both the Latin and Greek churches and is to be found even in Ethiopian and Arabian legendry.

The Catholic Encyclopedia states frankly that the story of St. Josaphat is derived directly from the career of Gautama Buddha. It was first disseminated at a time when the life of Buddha was unknown in the West. It should be noted that as late as the twelfth century A.D. Buddhism did not differentiate between Buddhist and non-Buddhist monks. They were all regarded as holy men and in large measure they exchanged their religious beliefs on friendly terms. The Nestorian monument in China proves conclusively that Christian missionaries were laboring industriously in central Asia as early as the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. It is quite possible that it became assumed that Josaphat was a Nestorian religious teacher.

It is rather inspiring to realize that somewhere along the way the Christian communion decided to canonize Gautama Buddha. It is obvious that they were not aware of his exact teachings, but recognized him as a virtuous and dedicated servant of God. It was his character and his conduct that justified the canonization of Josaphat. Perhaps this should be accepted as a valuable precedent. Why should not the world recognize and honor its great teachers regardless of the sect or creed to which they belong? Why should not those who have served humanity well be worthy of respect and admiration by all persons of upright spirit and genuine piety?

As we come to the Christmas season, therefore, let us be moved to honor those who have served us well regardless of race or school of belief. It seems rather sad that we should feel that only those who share all our exact convictions are worthy of our gratitude. After all, all nations have contributed to the advancement of the human state. We are happy to accept the scientific discoveries of the Arabs and the mathematical formulas of the Greeks. We admire Egyptian architecture, Hindu poetry, Chinese art, and Japanese disciplines of living. In secular matters we are quite tolerant, but in religion we have overlooked the contributions of three-quarters of the population of the earth.

In recent years, a number of Christmas cards have been issued bearing the symbols of the major world religions. This is certainly a step in the right direction. It indicates clearly that many streams of constructive idealism have flowed down through the ages and have large followings in the world today. All these faiths have their golden rule. Each one inspires its followers to love the Divine Power at the source of life, serve each other with kindness and charity, and live by an enlightened code of morality and ethics. The goodness in the hearts of others should bring gladness to our own hearts, so that we can take proper notice of the one religion that underlies the faith of all peoples. It is not a matter of converting others, but of appreciating them and helping them to sustain those simple truths that are necessary to the survival of us all.

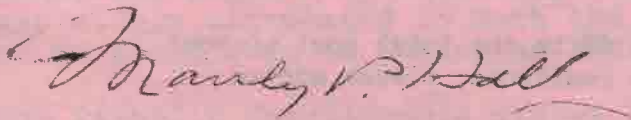
Division has corroded away much of the influence and prestige of religious organizations. If we assume that the earth's population numbers approximately four and a half billion human beings, it is also interesting to notice how few troubled mortals actually have accepted atheism as a way of life. For some years, vital statistics have been unable to decide, however, how many Chinese are Buddhists. It was assumed that perhaps a hundred million were at least secretly following the ancient life way. Now that religion is tolerated in China, a number of religious scholars have been questioned as to the numerical strength of their faith. They are of the opinion that the three religions of China, all of which have become intertwined, are still held firmly by nearer to five hundred or six hundred million devotees. The Russian situation is not dissimilar as conditions in

Poland indicate. Considering primitive tribal beliefs, the nominal allegiances of average persons, and the dedicated members of advanced religious groups, it is unlikely that one out of a hundred persons in this world is a convinced atheist. All the rest lean heavily upon faith for courage and strength with which to face the dilemmas of our time.

On Christmas then, whether we know it or not, we are sharing the hopes of sincere men and women throughout the world. They are with us in spirit though they may not speak our language. They hold priceless the same sacred truths we prize. They long for peace, security, and friendship. How does it happen that this vast majority has never been able to unite its resources and establish civilization on foundations of integrity and united effort? Perhaps it is because we have not actually realized what the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten realized over three thousand years ago. The Divine Spirit recognizes neither race nor creed. The Light of Heaven shines upon us all. The same earth nourishes us; and the same hopes are shared by the great and the humble, the wise and the simple, the rich and the poor. If One Life sustains us all, is it not time to recognize this eternal truth? The energies and vitalities by which we achieve our various purposes are conferred upon us by One Sovereign Life--the Ruler of all things. We must all keep the same rules or suffer. We must keep the peace or be listed among the dead. We must keep the rules which are unchangeable in space if our governments are to endure. Is it not time to recognize the oneness of all that lives and keep the rules and follow the Way of Heaven?

At this Christmas, therefore, let's send a blessing to all true believers everywhere in the world. They may not be able to understand our words and we may not accept their beliefs, but love is above and beyond language--kindly thoughts cut through all barriers reaching into the secret places of our souls. By cherishing the good and by practicing with proper diligence the teachings of our own religions, we can add a new dimension to our gratitude this year. Let us give thanks that there are many paths that lead to the same goal, and that along these paths hundreds of millions of pilgrims are seeking the experience of the unity of life in the heart of God.

May the blessings of Christmas be with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Manly P. Hall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Manly P. Hall

The following list of books is recommended reading. They are all among the best sellers during 1981 in the PRS Gift Shop.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| Allen, James | As a Man Thinketh | (C) | \$ 2.95 |
| Blofeld, John | Bodhisattva of Compassion | (P) | 3.95 |
| Chaplin, Annabel | Bright Light of Death | (P) | 3.95 |
| Davidson, Gustav | Dictionary of Angels | (P) | 9.95 |
| Dobyns, Z. P. | Finding the Person in the Horoscope | (P) | 7.00 |
| Goethe, J. W. von | Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and Beautiful Lily | (P) | 3.50 |
| Grimm, Brothers | Complete Fairy Tales | (P) | 5.95 |
| Heline, Corinne | Color & Music in the New Age | (P) | 3.95 |
| Johnson, R. A. | He; Understanding Masculine Psychology | (C) (P) | 5.00 1.95 |
| Johnson, R. A. | She; Understanding Feminine Psychology | (C) (P) | 5.00 1.95 |
| Jung, C. G. | Memories, Dreams, Reflections | (P) | 4.95 |
| Lau, Theodora | Handbook of Chinese Horoscopes | (P) | 4.95 |
| Loomis, Evarts | Healing for Everyone | (P) | 5.95 |
| Muller, Robert | Most of All They Taught Me Happiness | (P) | 8.95 |
| Pagels, Elaine | Gnostic Gospels | (P) | 2.95 |
| Shealy, C. Norman | 90 Days to Self-Health | (P) | 2.50 |

For shipping and handling, please add 6% to the total cost of your order with a 75¢ minimum. California residents, please add an additional 6% for sales tax.

Make checks or money orders payable to:

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