

READERS' QUESTIONS

Dealing with Evil Thoughts; Inheriting Parental Characteristics; Predicting Death by the Horoscope

QUESTION: IF A PERSON is constantly bothered by evil thoughts which keep coming into his mind, although he is constantly fighting them, is there any way in which he can cleanse his mind so that he will think only pure and good thoughts?

Answer: Yes, there is, and a very easy way at that. The inquirer has himself suggested the chief difficulty in his question, when he says that he is constantly fighting these thoughts. If we take an illustration we shall see the point. Suppose we have a particular dislike for a certain person whom we meet every day upon the street, perhaps a number of times. If we stop each time we meet that person and berate him for walking upon the street, for not keeping out of our sight, we are each time adding fuel to the fire of our enmity, we are stirring him up, and for pure spite he may seek to waylay us so much the more.



A Choir of Angels (detail), Simon Marmion (died 1489), National Gallery, London

Both like and dislike have a tendency to attract a thought or an idea to us, and the added thought force which we send out to fight evil thoughts will keep them alive and bring them to our mind the oftener, in the same way that quarreling will cause the person we dislike to waylay us for spite. But if, instead of fighting him, we adopt the tactics of indifference, if we turn our heads the other way when we meet him upon the street, he

will soon grow tired of following us. On the same principle, when thoughts of evil come into our minds, if we will but turn away with indifference and apply our minds to something that is good and ideal, we shall find in due time that we are rid of their companionship and have only the good thoughts we desire to entertain.

Question: How do you explain the fact that a child so often inherits the bad characteristics of the parents?

Answer: We explain by saying that it is not a fact. Unfortunately, people seem to lay their bad traits to heredity, blaming their parents for their faults, while taking to themselves all the credit for the good. The very fact that we differentiate between that which is inherited and that which is our own, shows that there are two sides to man's nature, the side of the *form* and the *life* side.

The man, the thinker, comes here equipped with a mental and a moral nature, which are entirely his own, taking from his parents only the material for the physical body. We are drawn to certain people by the law of causation, and the law of association. The same law which causes musicians to seek the company of one another in concert halls, gamblers to congregate at the race tracks or in pool rooms, and people of a studious nature to flock to libraries, also causes

people of similar tendencies, characteristics, and tastes to be born in the same family. Thus, when we hear a person say, "Yes, I know I am thriftless, but then my people never were used to work, we always had servants," it shows that similarity of tastes and nothing more is needed to explain it. When another person says, "Oh, yes, I know I am extravagant, but I just cannot help it, it runs in the family," it is again the law of association, and the sooner we recognize that instead of making the law of heredity an excuse for our evil habits we should seek to conquer them and cultivate virtues instead, the better for us. We would not recognize it as a valid excuse if the drunkard should say, "No, I cannot help drinking, all my associates drink." We would tell him to get away from them as quickly as possible and assert his own individuality, and we would advise people to cease shielding themselves behind their ancestors as an excuse for bad habits.

Question: Our time of dying is given in our horoscope. What if we alter our manner of living—can we then make our time on earth longer or shorter?

Answer: The time of dying is *not* given in the horoscope. That is a common delusion. The horoscope merely indicates the periods during which a person will be under heavy physical or nervous strain, but it positively does not indicate whether or not he will succumb to it. There are numberless incidents where the horoscope showed what appeared to be almost overwhelming influences brought to bear at a certain time apparently indicating death and through which the person lived quite comfortably. There are numberless other instances where people died at periods when the horoscope, according to the ordinary rules, showed comparatively little strain. Of course the fact is that only a comparatively few of the rules of astrology have been given out by the Masters of evolution, because if full information were given out, it would put too much power into the hands of the masses, which in their present undeveloped moral state they would use for destructive purposes relative both to themselves and others.

As regards changing our tenure of life by altering our manner of living, this can be done only to

Faith

Does the Moon question whom it is serving
When it brings us its soft, mellow light?
Does it pause lest some soul, undeserving,
May rejoice in the beauty of night?

When the evening stars are appearing
And our toil-weary hearts are made glad,
Does God dim the stars' brightness, fearing
That a few of those hearts may be bad?

Before drenching our Earth in beauty
Does He ask us to believe or care?
Must we prove devotion to duty
'Ere the Father will grant us our share?

If we pause a moment and ponder
Such a love for the children of men,
Can we doubt that somewhere out yonder
He will bring us all beauty, again?

Then, why conjure a Future unpleasant,
Or despair o'er the path we have trod?
Let us play our part in the Present
While we trust the veiled Future to God.

—L. Paul Roberts

a very small degree. The archetype at birth is wound up, so to speak, and set to terminate its vibration at a certain time, at which time death ordinarily occurs. If a person lives a very careful life and conserves the energy of the archetype, he may to a certain limited degree prolong his life. On the other hand if he uses his energies up in a profligate manner, the archetype will be exhausted somewhat sooner than the allotted time. We are also told that in those cases where the ego departs radically from the plan which was outlined for it and refuses to make the progress which it should, the Lords of Destiny terminate the life for the sake of the conservation of energy and stop the vibration of the archetype. Similarly, the Lords of Destiny can prolong the vibration of the archetype beyond the allotted time when a person is doing particularly good or important work. □