

Baptism signifies a certain initiatory degree wherein the spirit of fellowship is born. Receiving the Holy Ghost represents a higher step. The true meaning of love and faith and their manifestation in the life of the disciple must be under-

stood before the full power and glory of the Holy Ghost can be received. That is why Peter and John, symbols of these powers, were present whenever this occurred. ☆

## SINS OF OMISSION

Arthur Alan Leaver

**T**he General Epistle of James contains a forceful message that clearly shows the author's concern for spiritual growth through *action* especially when life's conditions are difficult. In Verse 22 he emphatically declaims that true religion is more than faith — it is a law of action. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

James, the brother of Jesus, exhorts his readers to look upon trials and persecutions as a privilege rather than to blame God. "... let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect." *James 1:4*

Aspirants to the higher life quite properly seek to avoid errors that will mar their spiritual progress. They diligently try to stay clear of theft, gossip, violence, adultery, cheating, boasting, judging and other "sin" that interferes with spiritual growth.

Responding to the appeal for new self-knowledge, some aspirants busily soak up information during long hours of intensive study. They seek to know about their origin and future development and search for solutions to the World Mystery. This requires a great amount of time. Consequently, time to be "doers of the word" is not so readily available and may deliberately be avoided by some.

In regard to the acquisition of knowledge, Mr. Heindel states, "To selfishly set aside everything else and live solely for one's own spiritual advance, is as repre-

hensible as not to care for the spiritual life at all." (*Cosmo*, p. 469)

James in Chapter 4, Verse 17, is equally strong: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Failing to do what we should do can result in serious consequences. Sins of omission are just as significant as sins of commission in determining an aspirant's future life and development. Overcoming our sins of omission requires concentration and determination to put into action deeds of service to others. Such deeds are rewarding, for they contribute greatly to the growth of the vital and desire bodies.

Service to mankind is the very core of the Rosicrucian Philosophy, and without practical and positive use of this mystical knowledge, the aspirant denies himself vital progress that cannot be realized merely by thinking or engaging in vigorous studying.

There are so many ways to "do good." James anticipates reluctant "doers" when he states in Chapter 1, Verse 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Not everyone can, or has a desire, to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." However, it is too simple to rationalize and conclude "there are probably plenty of volunteers; I would only be in the way."

We all like to receive letters from friends and relatives, but do we respond promptly, or wait to do it later? A small matter, but a sin of omission pointing out our gratitude to receive and reluctance to be bothered to give of ourselves.

Even the bed-ridden can respond to action — action of the mind with prayers for making the Fellowship the most effective spiritual center, for world leaders struggling to achieve peace, and for local leaders trying to balance budgets and hold taxes in line while providing essential public services.

Today's world is heaving with change. Every selfless deed of service by millions of doers, every prayer for others, and every forthright action aimed at eliminating "sins of omission" will surely help hold aspirant and mankind alike on the right path of spiritual evolution.

At the end of the day, sins of commission may readily be recalled for review and forgiveness. Sins of omission may not be so easily remembered — when they are, they should be transformed into action priorities for the following day, or as soon as possible.

No aspirant can afford to be burdened indefinitely with an unfulfilled list of sins of omission. Eventually the Law of Consequence will demand that each aspirant becomes a whole individual, cheerfully responding to James' unglamorous admonition to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only. . ."

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#### WHAT WOULD WE LEAVE BEHIND?

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knowledge — that he did not make the grade the first time and is being forced to try again. This in itself can lead to a considerable sense of dissatisfaction, restlessness, unease, and discomfort. All in all, such evolutionary backtracking would not connote an enviable state.

In view of all this, the thought of having to leave behind material treasures that we

now in any case should begin to disavow becomes insignificant. Gradual abandonment of our selfish interests now is as nothing compared with the loss (even though temporary) of some of our fellow humanity later.

We also should bear in mind that *knowledge* alone of the Esoteric Teachings is no guarantee that a person will be "taken." The challenge to live the spiritual life becomes more acute when we realize that, unless we make every endeavor to do so, we indeed will be left behind. Our strength must be turned ever more energetically from physical acquisition, physical pleasure, physical lavishness and luxury, and physical comfort, to the spiritual side of life, which includes service to the race.

Our responsibility in this connection is not only to ourselves; it extends also to all others in the human life-wave. Of course, each individual alone must live so as to insure his continuing progress, and no one can do this for him. Many times, however, we can encourage or help a wavering one make the decision or take the turn that will give him the evolutionary impetus he requires. If we are forging ahead, we also must extend a hand behind us, encouraging others to climb as we have climbed.

If we truly are intent on these two pursuits — our spiritual evolution and that of our fellow men — we will find that we have very little time for material non-essentials. Our devotion to material things will lessen of its own accord, simply because we are too busy to gratify it beyond physical necessities and physical responsibilities to other individuals.

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*With the folding of hands  
There's a spreading of wings,  
And the soul's lifted up  
With invisible hands,  
And ineffable peace.*

—Evelyn Underhill