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“ WITHOUT A PARABLE SPOKE HE NOT UNTO THEM ”

MATTHEW xiii. 34.

Preachers have fallen into the habit of treating the Parables of Jesus as literal historic narratives, those timed in the future being interpreted as prophetic descriptions of what will actually occur. The cumulative effect is to build up a conception of unreality about life which is fatal to the impressive character of the lessons to be taught. Many will say this is all nonsense, that everybody knows they are parables, and cannot make any mistake. But usually this is just where a very serious mistake is made, for they are applied to the outside world objectively, and not recognized as Parables of the Kingdom which is within us and subjective. I have heard hundreds of sermons in the last eighty years and am still hearing them on the radio in which the appeal is entirely objective without any attempt to indicate the subjective nature of the field of consciousness in which all real religion has its foundation. Children are very rarely instructed on this matter, and I have vivid recollections of sermons on the Parable of the Last Judgment when, as a child, I was on one occasion, so impressed with the elaborate detail and expansion of the spectacle that as far as I was concerned our eternal destiny was settled then and there. I was quite resigned being a

Goat as I did not like the people who believed themselves to be Sheep. It was years before I began to understand that such preaching was all illusion, fabulous, or as we say today, *maya*. The whole thing is in minds, the Goat temperament, the Sheep character, with all the habits, vices and virtues, growing together, under the judgment of the Master in our hearts, impartially deciding, as our will determines, what the desires we have cherished will produce. The Prodigal Son is in each one of us, and both the Elder Brother and the Fatted Calf, as well as the loving Father whom we scarcely ever fully recognize. We pray to our Father in Heaven, but he is nearer than the firmament. The man who had not on a wedding garment may be oneself in a business suit. The five foolish virgins are all within us, and the wise ones too, but we must elect which company we are going to keep if we expect to be at the marriage feast of the Son. The Priest and the Levite are going strong in us, especially when our help is needed, but the Good Samaritan is in us too, even if he be a bit slow sometimes in getting to the spot. These familiar stories are confined to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. St. John substitutes Miracles for the Parables and with the same intention of

conveying spiritual truth in the only way that things spiritual can be given meaning in earthly terms, pictorially, or by example, dynamically. St. Paul, ever practical, treats the Old Testament as allegory, and in this way it becomes a golden lexicon by which the hidden things of the Eternal may be translated into the language of time.

A. E. S. S.

REBIRTH

VEN: PANDIT DEHIGASPE.

PANNASARA THERO, B.A. (London)

In the course of its long history Buddhism has given rise to numerous speculations and various opinions have been expressed with regard to its teachings. Some hold that Buddhism is not a religion but a philosophy, while others maintain that is no mere philosophy but a religion, and more than that, a religion that has enjoyed an enduring and widespread influence over men's minds. If, however, you would come to any decided opinion on this point, you should first of all study the subject. You will then see that Buddhism is not one alone, nor the other, but, in a certain sense, both a philosophy and a religion.

It will need but a brief examination to find that the fundamental teachings of Buddhism are the four Noble Truths, the truths namely of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the way leading to that cessation. From these truths we may form an accurate conception of life and its true nature. The Buddha stressed the fact that the whole world is subject to suffering, and showed that this suffering, since it is the product of selfish desire, can only be destroyed by the eradication of that selfish desire. Moreover he taught men the method by which that desire could be uprooted. This method, which possesses a certain beauty of its own, forms the fourth truth, the Noble Eightfold Path. This path constitutes the moral training,

which must be followed by him that wishes to win release from suffering and to attain happiness. Therefore Buddhism, seeing that it insists upon such moral training, may fairly claim to stand upon an equal footing with other religions.

It should also be remembered that Buddhism is not a mere structure of theories, elaborated from a curiosity as to the nature of the world and its processes. It is a doctrine established upon a foundation of knowledge, because true knowledge is essential for one that would attain salvation from misery. To return to a point I just made, the first of the four Noble Truths is a general statement concerning the nature of life. The second truth, that suffering has a cause, is sufficient in itself to justify Buddhism's claim to be a philosophy, if such a title were necessary. Thus it will be admitted that Buddhism contains philosophical elements, as well as others that are religious.

The Buddhist conception is that birth causes suffering to all beings, not only those living on this planet but to any form existing in the universe. Every thinking person, who really understands how transient are all existing things, must agree with this view. But, to put an end to this miserable birth into any form of existence, and to attain Nibbana, the complete destruction of suffering, is the chief aim of all true Buddhists. It is therefore worth while to enquire into the nature and manner of this rebirth and to gain some knowledge of it.

But we must first consider the question: "Is there a rebirth?" In seeking an answer to this question we shall probably find no help in ourselves, as we have no recollection of any past life. We must then turn to the history of this belief.

In the first place we should note that this conception of rebirth was not introduced into the world by the Buddha.

From time immemorial the idea, that beings, after their death, were reborn, had been generally accepted. The Buddha was familiar with it and, after due reflection, accepted it as a sound belief. Furthermore, rebirth is a conception that was accepted by the founders of all religions, although their teachings concerning it differ in details. Without this belief their moral teachings have no meaning and their ethical systems are devoid of purpose. If I were to die here and be reborn in a heaven or a hell, why should I not also die there and be reborn in some other place.

From time to time people are born who prove to be geniuses. For instance, we hear occasionally of a boy or girl, who at an unusually early age shows remarkable skill in playing some musical instrument, even surpassing adult players who have spent years in training. The occurrence of such genius is not restricted to music alone, but is found in the various departments of science and art. It is not at all an easy matter, I think, to explain the causes which lie behind any special aptitude of this kind, unless we have recourse to the belief in rebirth. But, in the light of rebirth, this problem is greatly simplified. The thoughts and activities of a man's mind form, as it were, a series; and there is a certain connection between the series of the previous life and that of the present life. It therefore follows that, if a person has undergone training in a particular subject in his previous lives, then he has a stronger grasp of that subject in his present life and takes readily to it. Thus we maintain that a genius is indebted to the knowledge of his subject which he acquired in previous lives.

There are, indeed, many stories, both of ancient and modern times, telling of people who possessed the power of recollecting their past lives, and who have even recognized their former residences. We know that the Buddha had the

power to read the past lives, not only of himself, but of others too. Pythagoras, the great philosopher, said that he knew the former lives he had lived; and there are other such stories in ancient literature. But modern examples are not lacking, of which the following is one taken from Mr. Gabriel Delane's book on Reincarnation, which was published in Paris in 1924. "Madame Laure Raynaud, living in Paris in the beginning of the present century, remembered from her childhood that she had had another life in a sunny country, in a house which she was able to describe, and that she died young. She travelled for the first time in Italy and recognized the country around Genoa as her old home. When she described to a friend the house she remembered, he told her where such a house could be found, and she knew the way by herself and found the house where she had lived." It would not be difficult today to find people who feel that they have lived other lives, although they have no exact remembrance of them.

Moreover, when we consider the widely differing characters and circumstances of individuals, surely we have in this sufficient evidence of the truth of rebirth. On the other hand, if a man were not reborn according to his previous Karma, and if he were created by a god, how could these differences among men be possible?

Now if a sensible person gathers this evidence and, without prejudice, thinks over it, he cannot fail to accept the doctrine of rebirth. But, apart from instances of the type I have given, we Buddhists have another strong reason for believing in rebirth. It is simply a matter of faith. We have numerous reasons for believing in the omniscience of the Buddha; and the fact that the Master said that there is rebirth prompts us to accept this belief. As a hypothesis it is reasonable and, as we

have seen, in accord with the evidence, so that we conclude that rebirth is a fact.

We must next consider the manner in which rebirth takes place. Rebirth, being one of the chief teachings in the Buddha-damma, naturally receives attention in our scriptures. But I do not find it an easy subject to talk about. Even the Ven. Buddhaghosa, the author of the great Pali commentaries, said that the doctrine of rebirth is as difficult to explain as to understand.

In the first place, there is a vast difference between the manner of rebirth as taught in Buddhism and that taught in some other religions. Many have held that man is created by a supreme being, and that a soul transmigrates from one life to another. The Buddha, however, denied not only divine creation but also transmigration.

When we wish to speak of death and rebirth, it will probably be desirable for us to discuss the death and rebirth of human beings; for we may more easily understand the nature of our fellow-men rather than that of other beings, because we are more intimately concerned with human death and birth.

Now the body is composed of numerous elements, which are the elements produced by kamma, the elements produced by thought, the elements produced by climatic conditions and the elements produced by food. The period during which each of these elements exists is very short. According to the Buddhist analysis of our psychological processes, the duration of each of these bodily elements is equal in length to that of seventeen thought-moments. These elements are continually dying and new elements come in their place; and so the body is always undergoing a gradual process of change. Those elements produced by kamma are so small and tenuous that they cannot be seen by the eye; and they are always existing in conjunction with the other three kinds of ele-

ments. Now just as in a lamp the flame is associated with a wick, so a series of thoughts continues in association with these elements produced by kamma.

Let us now suppose that a man has been involved in some accident, or has fallen a victim to some disease or other possible misfortune, with the result that he lies dying. In such a case it is no longer possible for the elements produced by kamma to be supported by the elements of the other three kinds. Then there will be no new elements arising in the series of those produced by kamma, and those which have already arisen exist in the manner of a flame that is on the point of extinction. The power of the sensory organs is gradually diminished, to the point at which the mind, being dissociated from them, only exists in association with the heart, which is itself very weak. At this critical moment there comes to his mind through the agency of his previous kamma, one of the three following, kamma, kamma-nimitta, or gati-nimitta. The first of these three Pali terms, kamma, means thought, good or bad. The second, kamma-nimitta, signifies the objects through which the man has done good or bad deeds. For instance, if I offer some flowers at the shrine then the flowers and the shrine are my kamma-nimitta; that is to say, they are the objects associated with my good thoughts. There is a similar process in the case of bad actions. The third term, gatti-nimitta, designates things existing in the place where he will be reborn. Thus to the mind which, as I have said, exists only in association with the weakening heart, there comes as the object of concentration either this kamma, kamma-nimitta, or gati-nimitta; and by this means previous kamma is renewed. There is no one, unless he be an arhat, who will not have one of these three in his mind at the time of his death. In the case of some people one or other of these comes to mind at the moment im-

mediately preceding death, but to others it comes as early as one, or even two days before death. According to our scriptures, one of these three comes even to a fly which dies beneath the chance blow of a hammer.

A man experiences not one, but a series of mental states. Now, as I mentioned before, the duration of a bodily element is equal in length to that of seventeen thought-moments, or mental states. Thus seventeen such mental states are associated with the last element of the heart. But if the heart has become very weak, it is not possible for all the seventeen to present themselves in time; and afterwards, since there remains nothing with which they may associate, the mind cannot survive. When this happens, we say that the man is dead. Now it may be thought that at this moment the mental series ought also to break down; but this is not the case. What actually happens may be explained as follows: when the man is dying, he is deceived by his own ignorance. This ignorance clouds his mind with illusion, causing him to misunderstand the nature of the world, obscuring its miseries from him and preventing his perception of them. Misled by this illusion and concealment, his mind is influenced by selfish desire and inclines towards the pleasures of the world. Assisted by those thoughts which come into his mind in his last moment, the mental series goes on to a new element. The mind thus leaves the old heart-element and establishes itself in the new heart-element, which is produced as the result of that kamma which became prominent.

The Pali term for this intermediate state of mind is *patisandhicitta*, signifying the mind which joins the past life with the new. It is not transferred from the past life, but arises here in the new life as the result of the previous kamma. It is therefore true to say that nothing leaves the past and enters into

the new life. If I may express myself in other words, nothing emerges from the five aggregates of the dead man and finds its way in to the new aggregates, or into the new life.

It may be supposed from these statements that there is no connection between the new mind and the late one; but such a supposition is erroneous. If in one life there is a connection between any two mental states, then there is a similar connection between the last mental activity of the past life and the first mental activity of the new life. Should a man die here in Ceylon and be reborn in England or some other distant place, the period occupied by these operations would be as brief as the interval between the passing of one mental state and the arising of another. Thus, although nothing comes from the past to the new life, the first mental activity of the new life belongs to the mental series of the past life.

The question now arises: When a man is born, is he the same person who lived the previous life, or is he another? To take an analogy from everyday life: when we look into a mirror, the reflection we see there is not the face, but, since its appearance is due to the face and similar to it, we regard it as the face. Therefore we cannot truly say that the reflection in the mirror is a face, or not a face. Similarly, the five aggregates in the new life are not the five aggregates of the past life, these aggregates would not be born in the new, and as they exist on account of the past aggregates, they are not entirely other than those. Whatever the process, there is no reason why cause and effect should be the same. The conclusion, then, with regard to the man reborn is that he is "not he, and not another." We cannot say that the two men are the same, because no aggregate has come over from the past life. On the other hand, we cannot say that they are entirely different from one another; for

by this we should imply that one man is responsible for the kamma or actions of another.

Next comes another question: If no person or soul comes from the past life, who will suffer the result of the actions of the past life? There is nobodily to suffer other than the five aggregates themselves. Just as a house is nothing but a collection of materials of different kinds, similarly a man is a collection of five aggregates. These, as they arise from the past aggregates, are themselves the inheritors of the results of past action. Thus there is neither person nor soul other than the five aggregates.

Now I hope I have made clear the Buddhist doctrine with regard to the manner in which rebirth takes place. Next we must consider whether this rebirth brings us happiness or brings us misery. It certainly brings misery, because birth itself is painful, though we are unconscious of it at the time. But birth is inevitably followed by old age and death, accompanied by sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair. Thus birth brings every kind of misery in its train, not only in this world, but in every other conceivable world, because the whole universe is transient. The only means, then, of gaining release from misery is to put an end to rebirth. We have already seen that selfish desire plays a prominent part in the process of rebirth. The Master says: "It is through not understanding and grasping the four noble Truths, O Bhikkhus, that we have had to run so long, to wander so long in the weary path of life and death, both you and I. What are these four? The noble truth about sorrow; the noble truth about the cause of sorrow; the noble truth about the cessation of sorrow; and the noble truth about the path that leads to the cessation of sorrow. But when these truths are grasped and known, the craving for future life is uprooted, that which leads

to renewed existence is destroyed and then there is no more re-birth."

Therefore the individual who accepts the doctrine of rebirth and also recognizes the miseries which follow upon birth, will naturally adopt the method laid down by the Buddha, in order that he may win freedom from these miseries. Generally speaking, we may divide this method into three parts, which are upright conduct, earnest concentration and wisdom. What is meant by upright conduct? When a disciple of the Master refrains from taking the life of any living thing, refrains from theft, refrains from drinking intoxicants which disturb the mental balance, refrains from all such ways of earning his living as involve evil, refrains from all impurity, refrains from lying, from uttering slander, from reviling and idle chattering, he then possesses this virtue of upright conduct. Giving charity, nursing the sick, honouring and serving parents, the protection of wife and children, assistance to relatives, gratitude towards benefactors, avoiding association with fools, association with the wise, honouring those who deserve to be honoured, refraining from covetousness, from hatred, continual pursuit of the truth, practice of friendliness, compassion, sympathy and equanimity, these are some of the virtues taught by the Buddha.

If a person fulfils the obligations of upright conduct, and if, in addition, he practises the virtues just mentioned, he is worthy to be called a true follower of the Buddha. This is the first part of the Master's method; it is the easiest of the three parts, and, although it cannot of itself lead an individual to Nibbana, it will cause him to be reborn in happy abodes, even if no progress has been made in the other two parts. But when a disciple of the Buddha has completed the first part of his training and no longer clings to so-called worldly happiness, and when he has recognized the

miserics of the world, then he begins to practise the second part, which is earnest contemplation or right concentration. This concentration is not possible for one who is guilty of killing, theft, or other evil-doing; therefore he who would practise right concentration must maintain upright conduct. This earnest contemplation, or Samadhi, as it is called in the Pali language, is itself a vast subject; and so I do not intend to deal with it here. But, as this second part is also unable to lead the individual to Nibbana, he must practise the third part, which is the attainment of full knowledge.

Just as the first part of the method helps a man to gain the second part, so the second helps him to gain the third part. When he is established in upright conduct and earnest contemplation, he then dwells upon the transient nature of the world, the suffering inseparable from it and the unreality of the ego. As his mental perception gradually sharpens, he will realize that the whole world displays these three characteristics. He will then come to disdain all worldly things; his mind will be free from passions and so have become quite pure. The mind of him who has attained self-enlightenment has no residue of ignorance or desire. But, until wisdom and self-enlightenment are attained, there can be no freedom from death and birth. Not only death, but also birth is suffering. Nibbana is deathless and birthless.—*From the Maha-Bodhi for May-June, 1946.*

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THE ANCIENT SAGE

BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

A thousand summers ere the time of
Christ,
From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved and honor'd him,
and yet
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his
hand
A scroll of verse—till that old man
before
A cavern whence an affluent fountain
pour'd
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and
spoke:

'This wealth of waters might but seem
to draw
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source
is higher,
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and
higher
The cloud that hides it—higher still the
heavens
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and
whereout
The cloud descended. Force is from the
heights.
I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the
hills.
What hast thou there? Some death-
song for the Ghouls
To make their banquet relish? Let me
read.

“How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard?
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy's fol
As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that
rule
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless and
 wilt dive
 Into the temple-cave of thine own self,
 There, brooding by the central altar,
 thou
 Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath a
 voice.
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be
 wise,
 As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not
 know;
 For Knowledge is the swallow on the
 lake
 That sees and stirs the surface-shadow
 there
 But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,
 The abysm of all abysms, beneath,
 within
 The blue of sky and sea, the green of
 earth,
 And in the million-millionth of a grain
 Which cleft and cleft again for ever-
 more,
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
 To me, my son, more mystic than
 myself,
 Or even than the Nameless is to me.
 'And when thou sendest thy free soul
 thro' heaven,
 Nor understandest bound nor bound-
 lessness,
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred
 names.
 'And if the Nameless should withdraw
 from all
 Thy frailty counts most real, all thy
 world
 Might vanish like thy shadow in the
 dark.
 ' "And since—from when this earth
 began—
 The Nameless never came
 Among us, never spake with man,
 And never named the Name"—
 Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O
 my son,
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou
 movest in,
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body
 alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art
 spirit alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both
 in one.
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal,
 no,
 Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my
 son,
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak
 with thee,
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
 For nothing worthy proving can be
 proven,
 Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be
 wise,
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of
 Faith!
 She reels not in the storm of warring
 words,
 She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and
 "No."
 She sees the best that glimmers thro' the
 worst,
 She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
 She spies the summer thro' the winter
 bud,
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom
 falls,
 She hears the lark within the songless
 egg,
 She finds the fountain where they wail'd
 "Mirage!"
 ' "What Power? aught akin to Mind,
 The mind in me and you?
 Or power as of the Gods gone blind
 Who see not what they do?"
 But some in yonder city hold, my son,
 That none but gods could build this
 house of ours,
 So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
 All work of man, yet, like all work of
 man,
 A beauty with defect—till That which
 knows,
 And is not known, but felt thro' what we
 feel
 Within ourselves is highest, shall
 descend

On this half-deed, and shape it at the
last

According to the Highest in the Highest.

“What Power but the Years that make
And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours
That cancel weal with woe,
And wind the front of youth with
flowers,
And cap our age with snow?”

The days and hours are ever glancing
by,

And seem to flicker past thro' sun and
shade,

Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or
Pain,

But with the Nameless is nor day nor
hour;

Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from
thought to thought,

Break into “Thens” and “Whens” the
Eternal Now—

This double seeming of the single
world!—

My words are like the babblings in a
dream

Of nightmare, when the babblings break
the dream.

But thou be wise in this dream-world
of ours,

Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy
will.

“The years that made the stripling
wise

Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;

Who clings to earth, and once would
dare

Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air

Would loose him from hishold.
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind;

The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;

The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head;

The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;

The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while”—

Who knows? or whether this earth-
narrow life

Be yet but yolk, and forming in the
shell?

“The shaft of scorn that once had
stung

But wakes a dotard smile.”

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

“The statesman's brain that sway'd the
past

Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;

The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The learned all his lore;

The changing market frets or charms,
The merchant's hope no more;

The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;

The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;

The poet whom his age would quote
As heir of endless fame—

He knows not even the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.

For man has overlived his day,
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night.”

The shell must break before the bird
can fly.

“The years that when my youth began
Had set the lily and rose

By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;

My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust—

They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.

O rose-tree planted in my grief,
And growing on her tomb,

Her dust is greening in your leaf,

Her blood is in your bloom.
 O slender lily waving there,
 And laughing back the light,
 In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
 When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs
 and graves,
 So dark that men cry out against the
 heavens,
 Who knows but that the darkness is in
 man?

The doors of Night may be the gates of
 Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf,
 and then

Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou glory
 in all

The splendors and the voices of the
 world!

And we, the poor earth's dying race,
 and yet

No phantoms, watching from a phantom
 shore

Await the last and largest sense to make
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
 And show us that the world is wholly
 fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years
 As laughter over wine,
 And vain the laughter as the tears,
 O brother, mine or thine,
 For all that laugh, and all that weep
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless
 deep

Feels that the deep is boundless, and
 itself

For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and
 set

The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music, and forget
 The darkness of the pall."

If, utter darkness closed the day, my
 son—

But earth's dark forehead flings
 athwart the heavens
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and
 yonder—out

To northward—some that never set, but
 pass

From sight and night to lose themselves
 in day.

I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, as happier than our-
 selves

And higher, having climb'd one step
 beyond

Our village miseries, might be borne in
 white

To burial or to burning, hymn'd from
 hence

With songs in praise of death, and
 crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent
 Word

Of that world-prophet in the heart of
 man.

"Tho' some have gleams, or so they
 say,

Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
 On me, when boy, there came what then
 I call'd,

Who knew no books and no philoso-
 phies,

In my boy-phrase, "The Passion of the
 Past."

The first gray streak of earliest
 summer-dawn,

The last long strife of waning crimson
 gloom,

As if the late and early were but one—
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a
 flower

Had murmurs, "Lost and gone, and lost
 and gone!"

A breath, a whisper—some divine fare-
 well—

Desolate sweetness—far and far away—
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the
 boy?

I know not, and I speak of what has
been.

'And more, my son! for more than once
when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was
loosed,

And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs,
the limbs

Were strange, not mine—and yet no
shade of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of
self

The gain of such large life as match'd
with ours

Were sun to spark—unshadowable in
words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
world.

“And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;”

The clouds themselves are children of
the Sun.

“And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of the
Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
Some say, the Light was father of the
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the
Light,

No night, no day!—I touch thy world
again—

No ill, no good! such counter-terms, my
son,

Are border-races, holding each its own
By endless war. But night enough is
there

In yon dark city. Get thee back; and
since

The key to that weird casket, which for
thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than
man,

Or in man's hand when man is more
than man,

Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-
men,

And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's
bowl,

And send the day into the darken'd
heart;

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
A dying echo from a falling wall;

Nor care—for Hunger hath the evil
eye—

To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
Nor drown thyself with flies in honeyed
wine;

Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;

Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for
harm,

Nor make a snail's horn shrink for
wantonness,

And more—think well! Do-well will
follow thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world
An evil thought may soil thy children's
blood;

But curb the beast would cast thee in
the mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-
ness,

A cloud between the Nameless and
thyself,

And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
wheel,

And climb the Mount of Blessing,
whence, if thou

Look higher, then—perchance—thou
mayest—beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and
Shadow—see

The high-heaven dawn of more than
mortal day

Strike on the Mount of Vision!

so, farewell.

BUDDHISM—AN ATTITUDE OF MIND

MADAME ALEXANDRA DAVID NEEL

Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, has not escaped the universal fate of all philosophers, expounders of a doctrine and founders of religions. Like all of them, he has been betrayed.

During his life time some of his Disciples had already attempted to "improve" in their own way—that is to say to distort—his teaching and his discipline. Buddhist Scriptures mention Devadatta as heading an attempt of that kind; he was certainly not the only one.

What did he and his likes want? They wanted more binding rules, they wanted more peremptory commands regarding what they had to believe and what they had not to believe; they revolted against freedom.

And when the Teacher was gone and centuries had elapsed dimming the memory of what he really had been, small-minded devotees, puerile, emotional *bhaktas*, metaphysicians, philosophers, small or lofty, all took part in the great betrayal of that which had been a clear, simple and bright doctrine of liberation through Knowledge.

Pseudo-dogmas appeared though the Master had rejected opinions and expressly declared:

"If you are asked, O disciples, 'what opinion does your Master hold?', answer, 'Our Master holds no opinion; he has freed himself of all opinions.'"

Ritualistic performances, worship of images and of relics appeared, though the Master had condemned them and declared that the belief in the efficacy of religious ceremonies and in all kind of cults prevented salvation.

Has not the "I", the jiva, the permanent self travelling through series of reincarnations, found a place in the beliefs of the large majority of self-styled Buddhists though the Buddha has taught the instantaneousness, the essential mo-

mentariness of all formations, of all Dharmas, the effect being produced by the destruction of the cause.

Do not the stories of the Jatakas, play, amongst the common lot of Buddhists, the same part as the "Golden Legend" the lives of the saints, play amongst the alike common lot of the Roman Catholic countries?

We must agree that the Buddha has not preached for the simpletons. Those may lead virtuous, happy lives under other Masters: Teachers for children's schools.

The Buddha has preached for the few capable of understanding him; for the few lotuses which lift their heads above the water of the pond, according to the similitude in the Mahavagga.

There are such ones; why do they not come forward to re-preach the Dhamma for the conquest of evil and suffering through Right views.

Reliance on men who stand forth as leaders of their fellow creatures; reliance on gods never freed anybody, nor mankind as a whole of the manifold ills to which they are a prey. Most of those are self inflicted and none but ourselves are capable of eradicating them.

Be your own light. Be your own refuge. Such is the advice the Buddha has given us.

Tibetans have chosen a very good term as synonym of enlightenment, it is *lhag thong*, that is to say, "to see more". It is exactly what is needed: to see more than the many who remain satisfied with a superficial look at things.

It is more needed than ever in the present political, economic and moral chaos into which men are staggering. It is needed to see more in order to detect the foolishness of attempting to build a new world with the rotten materials of the old one.

Buddhism is decidedly neither a religion, not a set system of undemonstrable theories. It is an attitude of mind. The attitude of one who chal-

lenges the man made evils of the world and knows that through Right views, Right knowledge, and only through them, these evils can be overcome.

Men who have made theirs that "attitude of mind" are wanted to promulgate again the much forgotten, genuine Dhamma of the wisest of all Masters.—*From The Maha-Bodhi, May-June, 1946.*

PRACTICAL BROTHERHOOD

The attractiveness of the co-ops for many persons lies in its elimination of the profit motive from commercial enterprise. The co-operative movement originated many years ago in England, though the efforts of impoverished weavers to work together for mutual benefit. Today, retail co-ops sell to about half the British population. Scandinavia is another stronghold of co-operation. The character of the movement there is well described by Marquis Childs in *Sweden: The Middle Way*. Co-op institutions are designed to serve the people, the consumers, rather than private owners of factories and retail outlets. They have introduced a kind of socialism without revolution, under which stores are operated on the basis of co-operation instead of acquisition and competition. While the co-op movement of necessity has many of the characteristics of private business, and some of its weaknesses, if only because it has developed within the framework of a capitalist economy, the fact remains that this form of practical brotherhood has proved of inestimable material benefit to the poor of many lands. Today, the economic strength of co-operation is beginning to make itself felt in the realm of world trade. The outcome of the struggle between Co-ops and private industry may be a measure of public morale—showing whether the popular inclination is toward private gain or the public good.—*From Theosophy for November, Page 42.*

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

In a short review of the year's work with all its warp and woof there are many things that might with advantage be taken to heart. In surveying the field from my vantage point I see much to ponder upon. In spite of the fact that we have so much to give the world it seems we may well ask ourselves whether we are making any real progress. This does not arise from undue pessimism but of an urgent desire to try and improve conditions. Our membership remains much as it was, a few here and there have come into the fold, a couple have resigned, several have passed on, and the status quo is maintained. We do not proselytize for members we go on the assumption they will come in when they are ready. It seems to me that there is a great field of endeavour for a militant policy. Some do not agree with me but others think we should be more assertive, and believe there are many people who are ready now but do not know what we have to offer. Personally, and I speak feelingly, it was by the merest chance I came to know of theosophy and cannot express my thanks for all it has meant and done for me. There is much food for thought here. Regarding the general situation I regret that during my tenure of office I have not been able to visit our Western Lodges owing to stress of circumstances and am in consequence but faintly aware of the influence each has in its own particular community, but of those I do know such as Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton it is with a feeling of pride I acknowledge the work of the small band of workers in each who are ever on the job and do their utmost to make Theosophy a living thing. I have no doubt that it is the same in the Far West and I again regret that I have not had the opportunity of visiting them. As regards myself I have made an earnest effort to arouse interest by the

distribution of literature especially in sending back numbers of the magazine to people both at home and abroad, and of course in a most voluminous correspondence on all matters concerning theosophy in general. All of us are well aware that the forces of evil are ever on the alert and make their most desperate efforts when they think we are making any progress. True to form a scurrilous attack has again been made upon the character of H.P.B. by a well known writer and her book has been avidly reported on by the New York Times and others. Much capital is made concerning the evidence being so well "documented". To me the character of an individual, especially of one who has given something of real worth to the world is of less consequence than the work he or she may have been responsible for. Would the private life of anyone no matter whom bear the searching scrutiny of a microscopical examination? H.P.B. gave us something that has stood the test for the best part of a century and now forsooth another defamator comes along with scandalous charges to defame her. Christ himself was reviled in much the same way. Blavatsky can well afford to look on with her enigmatic smile knowing full well that she has given sublime knowledge to humanity and can rest content with the truism "By their works shall ye know them." Our magazine continues to maintain its hold on the membership and I am happy to report that we have had quite a number of new subscribers. Few of its readers realize the difficulties our ageing and severely handicapped editor has in getting the successive issues into print, but in spite of all, his grip on current affairs is as strong as ever, and but for his indomitable will and determination to carry on the good work would have retired long ago. Theosophy has indeed a stalwart champion in the person of A.E.S.S. At the beginning of this new year I would

urge all our members to ponder the general outlook and perhaps by our combined efforts a resurgence of theosophical interest may make another start and our hopes and aspiration blossom and flourish like the proverbial Bay Tree.

* * * *

In view of the fact that two of the greatest wars in history have been fought for the ostensible purpose of crystallizing democracy and freedom it is a sad commentary on the times that a member of the cult known as Jehovah's Witnesses should have been subjected in a Quebec Court to such an arrogant and wicked contempt for law and human rights as that meted out by a certain minion of the Law. Without having any sympathies with the teachings, the right to express one's opinions is sacred and if that is not upheld then our democracy is a farce. If the opinions of those placed in authority are allowed to ride rough-shod over our democratic ideals then it devolves upon the people themselves to assert their rights or suffer for their pusillanimosity and their own laissez faire.

* * * *

I made a special trip to Hamilton in order to wish A.E.S.S. felicitations on his birthday which took place on the 27th December when he attained the venerable age of eighty-five years. I found him in good form, busy with the next issue of the magazine, and surrounded by his books, Christmas presents and a plethora of yuletide greetings. We had a long discussion on things both temporal and spiritual, and many of his remarks being of general interest I append herewith. In his view "The Society has made a magnificent success of the original idea." When I mentioned the apparent lack of growth he said "Our Society is more important than the number of members." As to its work "It is not intended to be a church, but welcomes all Truth Seek-

ers." "It is an instrument for the propagation of the ideas indicated by the Masters. Theosophy was intended to be the cornerstone of the religions of the future." As to its schisms, "It is to be deplored that it has broken up into three divisions, which however does not weaken it, for as long as they maintain the active and diversified activities which is their common object little harm can come from those schisms." In reference to the latest attack on H.P.B. he said "The true answer to the adverse criticisms such as the Williams' book for those who wish to know the Truth is to read Blavatsky's works including *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*, people can judge for themselves whether such classical literature could be produced by such a person as Miss Williams depicts." In relation to the spiritual outlook "Those who lay such stress on the Atomic Age are still seeking a material view of the universe." "All religions including Buddhism, Hindooism and Christianity are based on spiritual ideals. The reason Christ has not been so successful is on account of the failure of the translators of the scriptures to give the full sense of the original languages. Without going into detail Christianity is confined to one man. The blessing which the manifestation of the Divine bestowed upon mankind is not the man Jesus but the mankind of the flesh into which the Son of God descended. To use the language of scripture "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". This opens the way to a spiritual optimism which is sadly lacking in the ecclesiasticism of the day". It was with a feeling of elation that I took my departure with the fervent hope that Mr. Smythe will be spared for years to come to hold aloft the banner of Theosophy which he has done so courageously through the years.

* * *

The old year is drawing to a close and when this appears in print we shall be

well into the new one. It is customary at this time to make new resolutions in view of the clean slate that is presented to us and with the knowledge of shortcomings of the past it is a worthy and commendable thing to do. As your General Secretary this applies to me in a dual capacity and nobody knows better than myself what I have done and left undone and it is with a fervent desire that I hope to do better in the coming year of grace. All of us no matter whom are undergoing a testing and I am well aware that I am being closely watched in my Office as to how I shape up under the scrutiny. However we can but do our best and if we do that much will be forgiven us. I take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very happy and prosperous New Year.

E. L. T.

December 30th, 1946.

THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.—Idyll of the White Lotus.

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OFFICE NOTES

Isolated students and those unable to have access to Theosophical literature should avail themselves of the Traveling Library conducted by the Toronto Theosophical Society. There are no charges except for postage on the volumes loaned. For particulars write to the Librarian, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, Ont.

* * *

I cannot sufficiently thank Mrs. Campbell of Vancouver for the valuable gift of her own symbolic painting of the White Lotus, rooted in the earth, ascending through the water, and flowering in the sunlit air. Mrs. Campbell is a skilful artist and some day this painting should be hanging in a Theosophical reading room.

* * *

The Fraternization News has made an occasional appearance for December under the editorship of Mr. Clapp of Boston. It consists chiefly of articles by Cardinal le Gros, whose enthusiasm should be effective, Col. Thomson, Mr. Schoonmaker and part of H.P.B.'s Convention Message of 1888. Committees might be formed in several cities likely to be chosen for a Convention. Then the one showing the best results could be made the centre of co-operation.

* * *

The year 2490 of the Buddhist era has been distinguished by a special number of *The Maha-Bodhi* of Calcutta. This Vaishakha issue, dated May-June of last year, was delayed in the mails for many months, hence this late notice. It is greatly enlarged and its numerous articles virtually constitute a manual of Buddhism. We have drawn somewhat heavily on its contents in our present pages for it is of the utmost importance that the West should be authentically informed about the religion from which the New Testament has derived most of its ethics and ideals.

* * *

Urgent requests have reached me to review Mrs. Williams' book of muck-raking about Madame Blavatsky, but it was not obtainable in Hamilton and has not yet arrived from Toronto where a C.O.D. order was placed. I am inclined to think that the more attention we pay to such scurrility the better pleased the black forces will be. Few read the book compared with the number who read the reviews in widely circulated newspapers and magazines. Accordingly I have made some notes last month and this, on the notices appearing in *TIME* and in *The New York Times*. This is by way of ammunition for our readers.

* * *

The Editorial Committee of *The Encyclopedia Britannica* has been sitting in Chicago for some time preparing for the new edition of this standard work. We do not know if any steps have been

taken to lay authentic and incontrovertible information before the Committee regarding the Theosophical Movement. This is especially important in matters of science in which the knowledge imparted by the Mahatmas and embodied in *The Mahatma Letters*, the originals of which are now in the British Museum, has had so much to do in opening the new cycle in scientific development. In physics, chemistry and astronomy this is particularly notable. The public are entitled to know the facts.

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A recent new member of the Montreal Lodge is Rev. Dr. R. G. Katsunoff, Superintendent of the Church of All Nations, corner of Ontario and Amherst Streets, Montreal. Dr. Katsunoff is a Theosophist of long standing, having attended my Tuesday afternoon scripture class about 35 years ago in Toronto. One of my happy memories is of my visit to Montreal Lodge nine years ago when I spoke in the new Mount Royal Hotel and Dr. Katsunoff testified to the value of what he had learned so long before. My son and his wife had come in unexpectedly while I was speaking and was called upon to add his testimony which was an additional pleasure in an unusual occasion. Dr. Katsunoff is doing splendid work in his church for the masses. A special course is provided for the few, "a group in search of the deeper meaning of the Bible."

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Christmas, birthday and New Year greetings have once more poured in upon me in scores and scores of beautiful cards and tokens quite beyond any possibility of individual acknowledgement. Even my relatives must be content with this general word of thanks and appreciation. Exceptions prove the rule. Several visitors have asked me to let them have a lovely card by a Chinese artist, sent me by Mrs. Nash. Mr. Wilson MacDonald, our greatest living Canadian poet, sent me his card, beauti-

fully designed and tinted by himself, with verses which, if permitted, I would like to reprint for our readers. The Redfearne family who left Hamilton last year for California, sent me a unique souvenir, a combination paper-knife and paper-weight in the form of a dagger the handle of which is composed of a cowboy riding in control of a bucking horse, both figures full of life and action, an exceptional piece of bronze work.

✻ ✻ ✻

Dr. Shearman has written a note on Belfast for the *Evening Telegraph* of that city which may assist the residents of any city of similar size to understand themselves in relation to their environment. Why does one incarnate in one place rather than another, and what determines one's choice when he decides to migrate? It is not always business or personal factors that settle these matters and sometimes years elapse before the real reason is recognized. I can testify that it seems like entering upon a new incarnation to leave a familiar dwelling place, sever all personal ties and proceed to develop what is virtually a new personality. Till 1872 my experience was of country and village life; then till 1876 in Ballymena (12,000) town and country life; from 1876 till 1884 city life in Belfast (over 300,000). After this came some years in Chicago with happy months of Illinois farm life, two years in Edinburgh, and from 1889 till 1928, Toronto, save 18 months in 1897-98 in Ireland with visits to England and Scotland. The rest Hamilton, a fairly good mixture of all that came before. Life flowers variously but has definite roots in Love and Truth and Duty.

✻ ✻ ✻

International Karma has been playing ducks and drakes with the historic figures of the late war. What is International Karma? It is the interknitted karma of the nations, their adult, their rising generations, and of those about

to reincarnate, so disposed under cyclic Law by the Lords of Karma (or, if you prefer the collective idea, the Eternal) so that strict and rigid justice falls to the lot of every mortal. "There is a tide in the affairs of men." But there is ebb-tide as well as flood-tide, and when the ebb sets in the great cycle brings us into a strange new unexpected world with altered conditions, different standards and competing ideals which try our faith in the eternal ideals of love and peace, truth and justice, to which we have given our hearts. Near the end of his life President Roosevelt is said to have whispered confidentially that the war would be over before the end of May, so he had the gratification of knowing that his efforts had triumphed; then he was withdrawn from the struggle. A lesser man had to face the Republican majority. Hull gave place to Byrnes, a first-class man who has given sterling service. Then the Army was called upon for presidential material, and General George Marshall meets with unanimous approval. Winston Churchill finds himself in an ebb-tide world, novel and distasteful, with which he cannot articulate himself. He had better occupy himself with his History of the War and leave the new generation to work out its own destiny.

One of the privileges of living in the Twentieth century is the opportunity of allying oneself with the Theosophical Movement originated by the Elder Brothers of the Race, and of making a conscious link, however slender, with them. Join any Theosophical Society which maintains the traditions of the Masters of Wisdom and study their Secret Doctrine. You can strengthen the link you make by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility. We should be able to build the future on foundations of Wisdom, Love and Justice.

AMONG THE LODGES

Toronto Theosophical Society held its annual "Christmas Sale" on Saturday afternoon, December 7th, from two till six o'clock in their Hall on Isabella Street. The platform was decorated with a miniature Santa Claus emerging from a fireplace, and a decorated Christmas tree emphasized the Christmas motif. The large buffet table was very attractive with silver candelabra holding red and green candles, and large pine-cone clusters with red bows decorated the walls of the room. The attractive and numerous Christmas articles found a ready sale which resulted in a substantial sum being realized. General Convener of the Sale was Mrs. E. Cunningham, assisted at the Gifts and Novelties by Mrs. H. J. Cable, Mrs. L. Anderton, Mrs. R. Somers, Miss F. Kelly, Miss A. Heaps, Miss M. Butler; White Elephants, Mrs. D. W. Barr, Mrs. E. Norman; Lucky Draws, Mrs. Roy Emsley, Miss Claire Dibble; Fortunes, Mrs. E. B. Dustan, Biss M. Hindsley; Home-Cooking, Mrs. R. Illingworth, Mrs. L. Feldstein, Mrs. G. I. Kinman, Miss M. Todd; "Lucky Dip", Miss K. Lazier, Miss G. Burgar, Miss L. Gaunt; Tea Room, Mrs. W. G. Hyland, Mrs. R. Webb, Mrs. D. Watt, Miss E. Budd, Miss F. Moon, Miss I. McArthur, Miss M. Stark. The men of the Lodge undertook the work of arranging the Hall and setting up the booths for this very successful event.

Mrs. G. I. Kinman, Sec.

o o o

For the past twenty years Toronto Lodge has celebrated New Year's Day by holding "Open House" when members and friends of the Society drop in to greet one another at 52 Isabella Street. This year an afternoon tea was held from three to six o'clock when, in spite of typically Canadian wintry weather, there was a fine turnout on hand wishing one another "A Happy New Year". The Lotus Room was dec-

orated with red candles and silver bells, and the tea-table was covered with a gaily decorated holiday cloth and green candles in silver holders. The President, Mr. N. W. J. Haydon, and Vice-Presidents Miss Madeline Hindsley and Mr. G. I. Kinman welcomed the guests. Pouring tea during the afternoon were Mrs. E. B. Dustan and Mrs. E. Cunningham with Mrs. R. Illingworth, Miss Frances Moon, Miss Irene McArthur, Miss Mary Todd, Mrs. R. Emsley and Mrs. G. I. Kinman assisting in looking after the guests.

Mrs. G. I. Kinman, Sec.

NEW YORK TIMES AND H. P. B.

Another friend has sent me a copy of the *N. Y. Times* review of Mrs. Williams' *Priestess of the Occult*, and I am sorry I cannot congratulate *The Times* on its choice of a reviewer. The result is a puppy-dog style of review in which Mrs. Williams' Old Slipper is well shaken, chewed and worried over, bits and tatters torn off it with ferocious growls and a great showing made of exterminating the vermin which the Old Slipper represents. But unfortunately Mr. Haynes knows nothing about the subject with which he is supposed to deal and accepts Mrs. Williams' misleading statements without any pursuit of the truth, clumsy or otherwise. Even the title, *Priestess of the Occult*, is misleading for the Occult has no priests since every man is expected to be his own prophet, priest and king. Madame Blavatsky has pointed out convincingly that an eternal war has been waged between the prophets and the priests whose creeds and dogmas, ritual and ceremonial she continually belittled. Mr. Haynes apparently gained the impression that Madame Blavatsky was a Rabelaisian with his headline, "Gargantuan Ego." He may be surprised to hear that she was a vegetarian, ate sparingly and never touched alcoholic drinks. Time and space do not permit

the correction of all the errors into which Mr. Haynes has been led. But here is one in which he is partly correct, only wrong in his dates. He says men of science jeered at her efforts. They did, but it was two generations ago. They were men of the old line who, like modern jeerers, refused to investigate. Here are some of the things that were sneered at. These statements were made by the Mahatma K.H. prior to 1882 and were supported later in *The Secret Doctrine*. Matter is a form of Energy. Inter-stellar space is filled with highly attenuated matter. Average distances of nearest stars, and distances of more distant stars, far in excess of views then held. Magnetic poles exist above earth's surface, one of which has a cycle of several hundred years. The Sun is a magnet. Sun-spots are of magnetic character. There are invisible sun-spots. The Sun is a ball of electro-magnetic forces. The matter of the Sun is in a higher state than solids, liquids and gases. The Sun we see is a veil or reflection of the real Sun which is invisible. Science has confirmed these statements and jeers are negligible. Professor Crookes did not jeer but accepted Madame Blavatsky's suggestions and went ahead developing vacuum tubes and laying the foundation of all our modern radio-activity. I have recently read in *The Theosophical Forum* (Covina) an article by Dr. Ryan in which he details the corroborations and final confirmation by Science of truth of the assertion in one of the early Mahatma Letters—invented according to Mr. Haynes by Madame Blavatsky—that outside the regular atmosphere of the earth some 80 miles distant there is a belt of warm atmosphere hitherto unknown to science. Of course this was jeered at two generations ago, but it may help Mr. Haynes not to jeer too freely. He thinks the Book of Dzyan is an invention. It is difficult to get first hand information on really occult sub-

jects but second-hand evidence sometimes helps. Before world-War 1. I had been writing theosophical articles in the Sunday World of Toronto, and about 1911 Dr. Buchanan, then living at Beamsville, came to see me. He was an Irish surgeon and pledged me to secrecy while he lived on the matters we discussed. He said he had heard of Madame Blavatsky but discounted the stories told until he met her on one of his voyages as a surgeon on a P. & O. liner. He was at once aware of her status and genuine claims as an occultist. He had seen the Book of Dzyan, not in Tibet but in Western China, and he gave me a copy of his own translation of Stanza One. He told me of the war that was at hand and this was confirmed to me by Lord Roberts whom I met in the home of one of my cousins in 1912 in London where he was intimate. Dr. Buchanan went to Australia in 1911. His lawyer in Hamilton informs me that he died there some years ago. He had broken off correspondence with me after the war started on account of the censorship. *The Secret Doctrine* is always available, and, verily, they who seek shall find . . .

A. E. S. S.

SINS OF OMISSION

Editor, The Canadian Theosophist.—May I take a few lines to explain more fully my remark quoted in Mr. Jinarajadasa's courteous letter in the December *Canadian Theosophist*, p. 305. Instead of 'garbled' it might have been better to say "abbreviated and slightly mutilated." The complete sentence, as in the original, reads:—" . . . She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least—all intellect, and yet she hears the Master's voice when alone, sees his Light, and recognises his voice from that of D——. Judge, she is a most wonderful woman, my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America."

In *The Case Against Judge*, p. 10, and I believe elsewhere, The sentence is cut down to "She hears the Master's voice when alone, sees his Light, and recognises His Voice from that of D——." There is no mention of Judge being her *sole hope* in America, yet it was mostly, we were told, on the strength of this tribute to Annie Besant and Judge that the Council appointed them Co-Outer-Heads. The Master's message "Judge's plan is right" was read to the Council *after* the decision was made, and had nothing to do with it.

Very modestly and honorably, in writing on July 2, 1891, to certain esotericists who hesitated to accept Mrs. Besant on an equality with Mr. Judge. I should be quite content, for indeed there is no reason why you should have any confidence in me. *Only as They have put us together*, I have no power to stand aside."—*The Path*, X, 100, June 1895. (Italics mine) Between 1891 and 1893 Mrs. Besant emphatically and widely repeated to E. S. members that there could be no possible doubt about the authenticity and phenomenal reception of the Master's message of approval.

The complete sentence (and more) as quoted at the beginning of this letter, is given by the Countess Wachtmeister in her *H.P.B. and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society*, page 4. In view of what I had heard about an unpublished portion in which Judge was placed on an equality (at least) with Mrs. Besant, I asked Mrs. Keightley's permission (who had possession of the letter at that time) to examine it. And I found it correctly quoted by the Countess in her brochure. I have not seen the letter since, and it seems most probable that Mrs. Keightley preserved it.

Charles J. Ryan,
Covina.

EVOLUTION: As Outlined in The
Archaic Eastern Records

The above may be had from The H. P. B.
Library, 348 Foul Bay Road, Victoria, B.C.

WHY BELFAST PEOPLE LOVE THEIR CITY

Belfast is a city which exerts an enormous attraction over its people. Above all questions of politics, religion, economic conflict and so forth, which may engage the attention of Belfast people, their city holds a constant and powerful place in their affections.

To the visitor there will perhaps seem evident reasons for this in the beauty of the city's situation, in the ranges of open hills, the pleasant suburbs, the cliffside fir trees, the gently winding river and the broad inlet of the sea. But, even if you set all these things aside, I believe the Belfast that people love still remains. Love does not consist in liking a person on account of his nice Sunday clothes; it consists in liking him even when he is in his working clothes, when his hands are dirty and when he is in his everyday state of mind.

Dubliners boast of the graces of their city and the charms of Howth or Killiney; but when they speak from their real personal affection, they talk about 'dear dirty Dublin.' So also it is not only the beauty of its surroundings that attaches people's affections so warmly to Belfast. It is the bleak, grubby, industrial heart of the place that wins them most truly in the end.

But perhaps it is not really so bleak. It is a hard thing to describe. A mere account of industrial processes is never very exciting except to those who are technically minded, to whose company I sometimes belong, for I enjoy profoundly the insides of machines. But talk about these things fails to convey the drama and ardours of the real thing. Each must experience for himself the sight and sound of a vast spinning room full of machines all in operation, endure the tropical climate of the wet spinning room or enjoy the pleasant pattern of a great floor space covered with big, even rolls of light-coloured cable.

There are few things more poetic than the roar and rumble and vibration of factories, particularly if one does not have to endure it all day. That is an example of the curious way in which one is attracted by things which in themselves and in the abstract are by no means desirable or pleasant.

There is one noise that I miss nowadays, the noise of the shipyards. I remember as a child listening to the constant clamour that arose from the yards, while hundreds of hammers were plied upon rivets. To be close beside a ship that was being built was an awesome, dazing and deafening experience, or so it seemed to me as a child. The roar and clamour of the pneumatic riveting machine of the present day is more sharp and rapid, and lacks the great throbbing rhythm that used to run through the total volume of sound when the plates of a great ship were being riveted into place by great numbers of men with hammers.

And of course they do welding nowadays. Old Island men shake their heads over welding, will tell you that welded seams are liable to come unstuck and that good hammered rivets are the best. Nevertheless times change. But one thing always remains in Belfast, through all changes, and that is the respect, almost reverence for constructive skill.

There are many who are not used to industrial life, who perhaps prefer the sedate calm of life in a Georgian square in Dublin or in an English cathedral town or anywhere else that is old-world and quiet, or who perhaps prefer to see life in terms of a man with a horse and plough on an open hillside. But if such people can open their hearts a little to the grace of the Titans, see the beauty of the tall slender hull of a great ship before launching, feel the drama of the moment for release when thousands of Island men come flooding out from work along the bleak Queen's Road,

enjoy the intricate elegance of a complicated machine tool, or thrill to the roar and vibration of a great spinning shed, they will understand Belfast better.

The outsider, of course, may enthuse about what he sees and feels, but he will not experience these things as does the worker who spends his life among them; and it may be imagined that the outsider is romantically importing a poetry that is not really there. But it is there. And when you get to know them you find that a large number of the workers are deeply aware of it. The old Island man has known something in his work and in the produce of his work which moved him deeply. In the Belfastman who growls at his job and curses his bosses there is often an incalculable pride of achievement in the work of himself and his fellows.

I remember once standing at the top of a tall building in Belfast and looking out across a great part of the industrial portion of the city. It was a grey November day with an occasional light cold drizzle of rain. Industrial Belfast lay in front of me, grey and dim and smoky, spread up the great amphitheatre towards the hills, which were just very faintly visible. All round and below me, thousands of curt, sober, pre-occupied Belfast people were at work at bleak industrial jobs. I felt that I was at the real heart of Belfast then, and I had no wish to be anywhere else.

Hugh Shearman.

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HISTORY DOES NOT WAIT!

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

" . . . despite the agony and the sadness that we humans in our blindness feel, there is the wind of the spirit sweeping over the earth, rearranging, remaking, reshaping . . ."—G. de Purucker.

The foremost object of the modern Theosophical Movement, as embodied in the original Theosophical Society of 1875, has ever been the formation of a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

All other objects of the Society are subsidiary and therefore of lesser importance, however noble and valuable they may be.

The Founders of the Society considered its primary object of such paramount importance that the name of the organization remained for a long time "The Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood."

To appraise, therefore, the degree of success of the Society in the modern world, it is not sufficient to consider, as is only too often done, the relatively wide spread of certain ancient teachings in different parts of the globe; or to point to a radically changed outlook in modern Science, as being due to a very great extent to the presence of Theosophical concepts in the very "atmosphere" of human thought.

The question is: Has the Theosophical Society created a well-integrated *living nucleus* of a genuine Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, which stands today as a glaring example of what *can* be done for the future welfare of the human race?

With all due recognition of the fact that many honest attempts in this direction have been made, and that these have been temporarily successful on a very small scale and in a very imperfect way, it is, however, impossible to say that the Society, in any of its ramifica-

tions, has succeeded in the realization of its first and foremost object.

To be sure, there exist in the Theosophical Societies of today some men and women inwardly dedicated to the supreme Ideal of Human Brotherhood, nay, the Brotherhood or Oneness of *All Life*. Their dedication is exemplified in action and in words, often in action alone. They are little centres of light, wherein the first object of the Theosophical Movement is a *living reality*.

These men and women are very few. Their names are little known, or not known at all. Their titles and outward achievements are not blazoned forth on the pages of theosophical annals. They are not congregated in centres, communities or settlements. Unbeknown to their own mortal minds, they are the pillars of the genuine Theosophical Movement, and redeem, at least to some extent, the unpalatable record of the Societies' public destinies, as exemplified in the seventy-odd years of Theosophical history.

Were these men and women an organized unit, without losing their high qualities of inner achievement, one could perchance talk of a *nucleus* of Universal Brotherhood, in this, that, or another part of the world. As it is, they are scattered far and wide, and to speak of a nucleus in connection with them would be to use this word in a very loose and general meaning, hardly applicable to the case.

As far as *organized* Theosophical effort is concerned, history will have to record its dismal failure to form a nucleus of *genuine Brotherhood* on universal lines.

The Theosophical Societies of today are more interested in intellectual subtleties and points of doctrine than in the practical application to daily and mutual life of the noble ethical ideas, which alone can bring us to the actual realization of a living Brotherhood on whatever scale it may be.

The great majority of men and women connected with any Theosophical organized effort show themselves often to be doctrinaires first and Theosophists after. This is the royal road to the formation of a Church.

Brotherhood, whether Universal and Cosmic, or of the every-day-garden-variety, applied in the common pin-pricks of life, may be an idea difficult to define in exact and punctilious words. Yet most people, if they pause to think at all, will know *inwardly* what it means, and will recognize it *outwardly*, when they see it in action.

When a Theosophical Lodge frowns at admitting Negroes to its gatherings; when members of the Society advocate, privately or publicly, reactionary ideas of human exploitation and discrimination; when they use some distortion of ancient teachings to support the political ideas of *racialism*; when official organs of one or another Society uphold the political ideas of a portion of mankind, engaged in a war of extermination, as against the political ideas of the other portion; when the humanitarian and progressive ideas of one or another member are branded by his co-workers as being but political slogans and propaganda; and when hundreds of otherwise good men and women spend their lives mainly in the pursuit of intellectual knowledge for themselves, without the slightest regard to the problems of the Human Race in general,—Brotherhood becomes worse than the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbals of the Scriptures, nay, it becomes a comfortable and convenient screen behind which to hide the whited sepulchre of moral desolation and iniquity.

We challenge anyone within the organized bodies of the modern Theosophical Movement to tell us where we are wrong in stating this, and just exactly how!

A brief and even superficial survey of many a movement in this world

would show anyone who is not blind that brotherhood exists as a *living* reality in many of them; as a matter of fact it exists in some of them with a far greater power and vitality than it manifests today in the organized Theosophical Societies. It is a solemn thought which is worth pondering over. Today the sands of many a cycle are running out. We are all weighed in the balance. It is a time of appraisal. Judgments are daily meted out, and sentences are pronounced.

The one great Thought which is flashing today from one part of the world to another, in these opening days of the Atomic Age, is that we live in a world which is *One World*, and that we are all, everyone of us, fellow-passengers on a ship sailing the ethers of infinite Space.

We are fellow-pilgrims upon the same endless pilgrimage-road which winds through the cyclic corridors of Time, up the slopes of spiritual awakening and growth, towards heights undreamt of and future glories beyond human imagination to conceive.

In this One World inhabited by a family of humans whose nature, destinies, and characteristics are inextricably interwoven and for ever knitted together in indissoluble union, a divided Theosophical Movement made up of individual fragments is an anachronism which, if not eliminated from within the Movement itself, will be by-passed by the ineluctable logic of History and swept into some obscure corner of the human arena, onto "some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die," as eloquently pointed out by H. P. Blavatsky (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 305).

It is a habit indulged in by many members of the Theosophical Society to point out the innumerable divisions within the Christian Church, forgetting all the time that their own Movement is equally divided, and for reasons often much less plausible and fundamental

than those which gave rise to the fragments of the original Christian Movement. It is again the case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Unless a re-unification of organized Theosophy becomes an actuality in the modern era, its ramifications and subdivisions will only increase. As union, solidarity, oneness, and co-operation, are to be the key-notes of the coming era of thought, the divided Theosophical Movement will be unable to serve as a fit channel for the transmission of new ideas coming from the Centre of Light, behind the veil of outward phenomena and forms. Its own antagonistic and unbrotherly fragmentations will be the chief cause of this.

The only way out of this unfortunate predicament is to return as fast as we may to the original platform of the modern Theosophical effort, as initiated in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky, William Quan Judge, Henry Steel Olcott, and their co-workers, under the specific instructions of their own Teachers.

This original platform was primarily concerned with the formation of a *nucleus* of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity powerful enough in the *living force* of its spirituality to be the channel for true inspiration, and the example for countless men and women seeking the Light.

No intellectual studies, no beautifully-worded Lectures, no psychic investigations, no charitable activities or social work, no meditations or exercises intended to develop one's astral senses of perception, and no personal achievements along lines of purely selfish attainment, can be of any help in creating a living centre of spirituality, or in forming a matrix through which higher forces will find it possible and advisable to manifest and work.

Universal Brotherhood, if it means anything at all, means an intense and living realization of the *Oneness of all life*, of the indissoluble unity of all

evolving creatures, of the unbreakable bonds which bind and unite all things. That realization, to be of any moment in the affairs of the world, must be more than an intellectual theory. It must become a *way of life*, a *code of conduct*, a *method of living*. Its power must become felt in the 'atmosphere' of the man or woman who lives it, or the community which is based upon, and practices its implications.

To *live* a life of Brotherhood does not mean to give up Principles when these are involved in order to "keep the peace;" it does not mean to pamper to personalities when these assert themselves, as they will from time to time. It means a life based upon Principles, and based so firmly that personalities recede into an insignificant background and are transmuted in the light of the unifying bond.

Living Brotherhood means strength of character, not weakness. It means conviction, positivity, justice tempered with mercy, perspective and vision beyond the narrow confines of personal horizons. It means kindness, compassion, sympathy for the souls of men, the ability to understand and to forgive, the strength to stand alone and the ability to work collectively in joyful competition. It means courage in adversity, fearlessness in danger, gentleness in word and action, firmness in conviction, magnanimity to all and at all times, self-abnegation, forgetfulness of wrong to oneself, dauntless defence of those unjustly attacked, abiding and sincere friendship, searching penetration of the mysteries of life with the intuitive powers of an illumined mind.

Living Brotherhood means all these things and a few others similar to them, just because it means looking for the best spiritual interests of all living things, the *living* for others instead of for oneself; and without these qualities and attributes there can be no living for others, for without them one's life and

effort are directed to the gratification of one's own personal selfhood, and the forwarding of the limited and narrow interests of "*me*" alone.

If the modern Theosophical Movement is to have a future, a future full of promise and harmoniously related to the collective future of the race, in a world of united action for the welfare of *all men*, it will have to regain its unity, its internal cohesion, its position of spiritual leadership, which it has to a very marked extent lost. It has lost these because of internal dissensions, personal pulls, lack of vision, absence of inspired leadership, especially after the departure from this scene of action of those earlier grand souls which gave it its original impulse, and inspired at a later date fragments of the original Movement.

It is not enough to point out that the Movement, in all its fragmentations and sub-divisions, possesses some very wonderful people who are active in this, that or another way. Every movement in the world possesses such people; without them no movement could possibly endure. But they are not strong enough to carry the Movement as a whole, and are not able to redeem to any great extent the narrowness and selfish proclivities of others who are seeking personal powers or position or fame, or are just hanging on, like barnacles, to the organizational framework of the Societies, getting a free ride while the ship of state sails on.

There are always those who will hasten to remind us that all of this is the Theosophical Society's *karma*. Unquestionably this is true. According to the vernacular of this land of ours: "So what?" Is this a reason for students of Theosophy to lie down and wait until this phase of karma passes over? Assuredly not. It is a reason for action, for changes, for concerted endeavour to mitigate the effects of past and present mistaken notions, and of equally mis-

taken actions. It is an added reason to try and correct that which nothing in all the world will ever correct except the collective effort of the best students and workers the world over. It is time to eliminate from our midst those influences which drag us down. It is time to cleanse the Augean Stables of our own making, and to let in the light to the dark nooks and corners of the Movement where encrusted selfishness, contemptible narrowness, entrenched parochialism, and inexcusable sloth and indifference have lodged themselves. It is high time to eradicate from our midst, in whatever Theosophical Society it may be, that condition of apathy and inertia which the late Dr. Henry T. Edge—one of the most penetrating thinkers in this Movement—called “feather-bed-Theosophy.” It is either that or stagnation. It is either that or a new sectarian church-denomination made up of ill-digested doctrines worked over into some sort of “theosophical” creed, as the years go by. It is either that change, that effort, that inner transformation and rejuvenation,—or treason to the memory, the work; the sacrifice, the trust of H. P. Blavatsky and those whom she represented here.

The teeming millions of this world are engaged in a collective effort to transform their life into at least a semblance of universal harmony. They are in search of those basic foundations of thought which, ethical and enduring, would provide a firm basis for a new type of life, a civilization of solidarity and goodwill. The call for Universal Brotherhood has gone out once again. It is heard from every pulpit and from every lecture platform. It is spread through the printed page and the voice of speakers. It is feebly articulated by the uneducated but well-meaning masses in various lands of the earth. It is the clarion-call of a New Era, and its echoes are reverberating through every valley and from every mountain-range. It

finds exponents and messengers in every land and every clime, and the surging crowds of the people, whose instincts are rarely wrong, feel the urge of a new life, hear the keynote of the coming era, and, groping for words and expressions, rise in response to it. They need leaders of thought, channels through which to give imbodiment to their deepest yearnings, men and women who would become the symbols of a greater and grander life for mankind as a whole.

If the Theosophical Movement were a united body, it might be able to voice in no uncertain terms this collective yearning of the human race. It could placate the enemies of human freedom by the collective example of its *living* Brotherhood. As it is, the Movement can at best add its own voice to the collective voice of mankind, until its own ranks are cleansed of human selfishness, and its efforts are raised to the plane of universal solidarity.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the modern Theosophical Movement presented an imperious challenge to the world. Today a world in turmoil, awakening to its inherent potentialities, dimly sensing the presence of compelling Ideals, challenges the Theosophical Movement to regain its spiritual leadership among men.

It is either that, or failure before the tribunal of History. It is either that, or years of frustration. Either a transformation from within, or a disintegration from without. It is either now or never, for History does not wait! — *From Theosophia for Nov.-Dec., 1946.*

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BUDDHA IS BUDDHISM

C. JINARAJADASA

President of the Theosophical Society

The wonderfully attractive teachings of Buddhism naturally arrest the attention of many in western lands who are seeking to understand the problem of life. They try to reach the heart of Buddhism by reading such discourses of the Buddha as have been translated. I would like to put on record, however, that to me, born in a Buddhist land and brought up in its environment, Buddhism is not primarily the body of teaching given by the Lord Buddha, but the Lord Himself. Very briefly put, to me, Buddhism is the Buddha.

The exquisite and perfect personality of the Lord is little understood in the West. The Southern Church of Buddhism in Ceylon, Siam, and Burma does indeed give Him great reverence, and every temple has its shrine with the image of the Lord. The utmost reverence is always given to Him by the pious Buddhist as he offers flowers. Everyone knows that the Lord is not to be prayed to, and is not a giver of boons in response to prayers, like a Deva. The reverence they give to Him is because He held aloft a light to illumine the Way for all. In spite of all these beautiful teachings and the exquisite romance surrounding Buddhism, to be found specially in Burma, perhaps the only work that has shown the Lord in His true nature is not any Scripture, but Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*.

Long before I read *The Light of Asia* (which later when I was the Vice-Principal of the Buddhist Ananda College in Colombo I made a text book of orthodox Buddhism in its highest class), my boyish imagination was fascinated by one teaching of Buddhism, which however counts for very little in the Southern Church, but is the very powerful inspiration in Tibet, China and Japan. This is the teaching that greater than

the ideal of Nirvana for oneself is the life of voluntary self-sacrifice from life to life in order to perfect oneself to become a Buddha some day, and help mankind to tread the Way. This is the Bodhisattva ideal which has receded to the background in Ceylon, Siam and Burma, but is very much to the fore in Tibet, China and Japan.

It is the Jataka stories of the five hundred and fifty lives said to have been lived by the Lord, and other traditions which illustrated the strong determination from the day He made the Vow before Buddha Dipankara, that made the Lord Buddha real to me. In all my reading in Buddhism it is the personality of the Lord that has inspired me, just as the idealistic Christian concentrates his attention on the personality of the Lord Christ, and not on all the various ceremonies and functions that have grown up round His teaching.

I have often wondered at the way that the monkish tradition has belittled in some ways the true significance of the Lord's character. Though I was in a Buddhist atmosphere till I was thirteen, it was only one day at the British Museum that I found the wonderful incident where the Lord says, "If any desire to help me, let him help one that is sick." The story narrates how one monk, who was very troublesome and never co-operated with the others, had an attack of dysentery and was lying on the ground in his own filth, and that none of his fellow-monks came near him to help him. The Lord Buddha, going the rounds of the monks' rooms with Ananda, sees this sick monk and questions him why nobody has helped him. The monk then replies how he has been troublesome to the others, and the monks who formed the audience admit the fact, and also that they did not want to help the sick monk. Then it is that the Lord sends Ananda for water and bathes the sick monk, and the two put

him on a low bed, and the Lord turning round says the words, "If any desire to help me, let him help one that is sick," words which have their parallel some centuries later when Christ says, "For as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me".

One would have thought that this command of the Lord Buddha would have been inscribed in golden letters over every temple, so as to inspire the pious Buddhists to build hospitals, poor houses, and to take an active part in the relief of human suffering, in exactly the same way that thousands of Christians have devoted themselves to a life of service because of the words uttered in Palestine. Yet so narrow and unfeeling is the monkish tradition even today in Buddhist lands that this great mystic truth is never mentioned in the discourses to the people, and social service receives very little encouragement from the Sangha.

I think the most exquisite and true summation of the character and the Personality of the Lord and of what He did for mankind is in the concluding lines of *The Light of Asia*:

Ah! Blessed Lord!

Oh, High Deliverer!

Forgive this feeble script,

which doth thee wrong,

Measuring with little wit thy

lofty love.

Ah! Lover! Brother! Guide!

Lamp of the Law!

I take my refuge in thy name

and thee!

—From *The Maha-Bodhi* for May-June, 1946.

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IS BUDDHISM A RELIGION?

Once a learned friend of a sceptical turn of mind with a *penchant* turn for discussion said with magisterial emphasis:

Excuse me Ariyadhamma, your Buddhism is not a religion at all, it is only a system of philosophy.

A.D.: Thank you for the small mercy my friend; but pray: How do you define the word religion?

Friend: My definition in terms of the derivation of the word is: A binding or an abiding relationship between man and his God.

A.D.: I am free to admit that according to your definition, Buddhism is not a religion, as it has been put together without the concepts of God and Soul. On the contrary, I claim this very reason as Buddhism's chief merit.

Friend: Well then on your part, what is your definition of religion?

A.D.: As for myself, I define religion simply as a mode of salvation from the ills of life.

Friend: That in all conscience is wide enough to include all religions of all time, and covers even Mathew Arnold's famous definition of religion as: "Morality touched with emotion". I must now admit that in terms of your definition Buddhism is a religion *par excellence*.

A.D.: Bear with me my friend; Why do you say Buddhism is only a philosophy?

Friend: For the simple reason that you Buddhists are experts in philosophizing.

A.D.: That may be a good ground for calling Buddhists mere philosophers, but not for saying that Buddhism is only a philosophy.

Friend: Surely you can give the reason yourself better than I can hope to do. Do oblige without more ado.

A.D.: The Four Noble Truths form the basis on which, as you know, is founded the whole system. The first

Three Truths formulate the Philosophy and the Fourth Truth supplies the ethic or morality. So that all the Four Truths taken together make Buddhism a perfect system of religion.

Friend: I am afraid you are all too brief. Do you mind expatiating a little more?

A.D.: The crowning glory of the Buddha's supreme Enlightenment is without doubt the unique doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* or Dependent Genesis, with its mind-staggering corollary of *The Patthana*, containing Twenty-Four Modes of Correlation, which are elaborated with an infinitude of detail—*The Paticca-Samuppada* taken in regular order is an exposition of the philosophy of the First and Second Noble Truths of Sorrow and the cause of Sorrow. So it is aptly called *Vatta-Kata* or description of the wheel of life. *Paticcasamuppada*, viewed in reverse order explains the Third Noble Truth of the Cessation of Sorrow—

Now my friend, you will find more than enough of philosophy in Buddhism.

Friend: I have a surfeit of it already. The difficulty is to digest it all.

A.D.: *Nil desperandum*, my friend. Remember that if a thing is easy, it is certainly not worthwhile. The converse is equally true.

Friend: I prefer a thing, he who runs may lead—something less high-brow.

A.D.: I wish you better luck next time, but seek it elsewhere. You seem to be in a hurry. I will not detain you. *Au revoir!*

Friend: Cheerio!

Ariyadhamma.

—From the *Maha-Bodhi* for May-June, 1946.

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WAS THE BUDDHA

AN AGNOSTIC?

BHIKKU U. DHAMMARATANA, B.A.

The Buddha observed silence on certain metaphysical questions; such as eternity or non-eternity of the world, eternity or non-eternity of the self, existence or non-existence of Tathagata after death. Different scholars have interpreted his 'silence' in different ways. These interpretations may be brought under two headings; nihilism and agnosticism, the latter being the more prominent.

In his 'Buddhist-Philosophy' Prof. Keith puts an agnostic interpretation on the point. He says, "It is quite legitimate to hold that Buddha was a genuine agnostic, that he had studied the various systems of ideas prevalent in his day without deriving any greater satisfaction from them than any of us today do from the study of the modern systems".

Yes, it would have been quite legitimate on the part of Prof. Keith to call the Buddha an agnostic had his knowledge been confined to the study of the prevalent system only. I quite agree with him when he says that the Buddha or rather Gautama was not satisfied with the systems of his day. But then did he stop there and go home in despair? Certainly not. In course of his search after the truth Gautama had to meet with many a disappointment. They had no adverse effect on his dauntless courage. He did not take all his past experience as labour lost. He made one experiment after another until he found out the *majjhima-patipada* or the middle path. Treading this path he attained *sammāsambodhi* or the full enlightenment, under the Bodhi-tree at Buddhagaya on this very full-moon day of Vaishakh. Thus Gautama became a *sammāsambuddh* or a fully enlightened one. Then, is it legitimate to call him an agnostic?

In his monumental work Prof. Radha-

akrishnan has dealt with this point very beautifully. He says, "The 'agnostic' interpretation which makes out that Buddha refused to give answers to metaphysical questions simply because he had none to give, is hardly fair to Buddha's genius. If Buddha had himself no theory of life it would have been impossible for him to give a larger meaning and a greater depth to life. It cannot be that Buddha voyaged through life without a chart, for then his system would be unintelligible and his passion for humanity inexplicable. If Buddha had no clear conviction on the nature of the ultimate goal of all striving, if he had no light on the mystery of Nirvana, how could he say that by perfecting one's nature one attains the bliss inexhaustible? The designation of "Buddha", "the enlightened" which he assumed leads us to infer that he had . . . definite views . . . on the ultimate questions. The depth of conviction which comes out in many exhortations to his disciples to follow the norm, to reach the truth, is hardly intelligible on the hypothesis of agnosticism".

In Udumbarikasihanadasutta the Buddha says, "*Ahamanusasami, aham dhammam desemi, yathanusittaham tathapatipajjamaṇo yassatthaya kulaput-ta sammadeva, agarasma anagariyama pabbajanti tadanuttaram brahmacariya pariyosanam dittheva dhamme sayam abhinna sacchi katva upasampajja viharissati sattaham*". "Let, a man of intelligence come to me, honest, candid, straightforward; I will instruct him, teach him the norm, and if he practice according as he is taught, then to know for himself, and to realize that supreme religion and goal for the sake of which clansmen go forth from the household life into homeless state will take him seven days".

In his first serm on to the five Bhikkhus the Buddha says, "*Yato ca kho me bhikkhave imesu catusu ariya-saccesu evam tiparivattam dvadasaka-*

ram yathabhutam nanadassanam suvisuddham ahosi, athaham bhikkhave sadevake loke samarake sabrahmake sassamanabrahmaniya pajaya sadeva-manussaya anuttaram samma sambodhim abhisambuddho ti paccannasim nananca pana me dassanam udapadi akuppa me cetovimutti ayam antima jati natthidaani punabbhavoti", "When, O Bhikkhus, my knowledge and insight of these four noble truths under their three aspects and twelve modes, in their essential nature was quite clear to me, then only, O Bhikkhus! did I profess in this world among the Devas, including Maras, Brahmas, among the hosts of recluses and Brahmins including gods and mankind that I had gained the incomparable supreme enlightenment, and there arose in me knowledge and insight: "Sure is my heart's release. This is my last birth. There is no more becoming for me".

Are these the words of an agnostic? It is better to ponder over them and get rid of one's own agnosticism attributed to the Buddha, the enlightened one. —From the *Maha-Bodhi for May-June, 1946.*

LETTER OF WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBER FROM THE PRESIDENT

(Letter written by Mr. Jinarajadasa to be sent to each new member on his joining the Society)

MY BROTHER:

I address you as a brother and not as a friend, because the whole basis of the work of our Society is based upon the attempt to realize and practice the significance of the great Law of Brotherhood.

When you signed your application to join you read what are the Three Objects of the Society; but of these the first and foremost is that of Universal Brotherhood, without the various distinctions mentioned in the Object. You will remember, if you are a Christian,

that Jesus Christ taught that man's two duties are, first, to love God and, second, to love one's neighbour as oneself. If you are a Hindu or Jain or Sikh or Buddhist or Muslim or Zoroastrian or of the Hebrew faith, you will recall the doctrine inculcated there of profound charity to all mankind. In exactly the same way, our life, if it is to be effective and spiritual, must be like a medallion with two faces; one of aspiration towards the Divine, and the other of working in all possible ways of Brotherhood to alleviate the lot of mankind. If you will think over this second aspect of our lives, you will see what hundreds of ways we can all find of making Theosophy *practical*.

I would like to make clear to you that in joining the Society you have not bound yourself to any ideas generally termed by the public as "Theosophy," like Reincarnation, Karma, the existence of Adept Teachers, and so on. All these great ideas (which for some of us are intense realities) are presented to you for examination and evaluation in the light of your experiences and hopes. There is no kind of orthodoxy whatever in Theosophy, and your membership in a lodge does not commit you to believe in anything that is said or studied. The only moral obligation which you assume is that of joining in study and discussion and of being courteous where you must necessarily differ. But I would like to point out to you the difference between joining the Theosophical Society and other philosophical or philanthropical societies. We are a band of brothers earnestly seeking Truth, not for our personal salvation, but in order that we may dispel the darkness and ignorance around us. Wherever any group meets, even of two or three, for such a noble object, they do not work alone. Recall what Jesus Christ said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." That is true with every

group, of whatever faith or none, who meet as *brothers*, that is, in a bond of unselfish aspiration pledged to "try to lift a little of the heavy karma of the world." I hope you will attend as many Lodge meetings as possible; but when you cannot attend, think of the others where they are meeting, and send them your blessings, so that the joint work, yours and theirs, may come to swift fulfilment.

The Theosophical Society was organized by certain Adept Teachers of whom you will read, but in whom you are not obliged to believe. It was their purpose to bring about a great change in human relations by emphasizing once again the ideal of Brotherhood. Of course, every religion has taught this truth; but the innumerable wars of mankind, and the strife amongst the industrial and other groups in each nation are a proof that the religions have succeeded only partially. Once again there began with the Theosophical Society a great attempt on the part of those who are Elder Brothers of Humanity to bring to the forefront of man's consciousness the idea of Brotherhood. It is only insofar as you train yourself to see *brothers* on all sides of you, that you will find mysteriously that not only does your own inner life expand, but that there comes to you a greater sense of charity and peace.

Our life is composed of reactions to others every minute of the day. Some of these reactions are full of beauty and happiness, as those towards those whom we love or admire; but others cause us much trouble and misery. Whenever you have to react to someone who has troubled you or who is your enemy, then, before your reaction starts, say to yourself: "He is my brother." You will then find that your reaction towards him will be both more just and more charitable. Similarly, try to make the men and women around you less the ciphers they are now. As you sit in a

bus or a train, think of the one by your side as your *brother*. Little by little as you emphasize this thought, you will be able to discover for yourself many truths of Theosophy that will inspire you to better living and conduct.

A Theosophist *is* as a Theosophist *acts*. The only possible action is that which is irradiated with the spirit of Brotherhood. If you will try to be a brother to all that lives—human and sub-human—you will be able to know for yourself that you yourself are “the Way, the Truth and the Life” as also the Joy.—*From Theosophy in New Zealand October-December, 1946.*

A TRAGIC INFANCY

Dear little Boy—Man of our dreams—
Where are you going?

We held high hopes for you—such wondrous schemes—

Are they dust in the sowing?

Were all your laughing joyous ways
Cut short by some dark godless jest,
That you should spend your weary days
With scarce a moment's peace or rest.

And then to go, your song unsung,
Your interest in life unquenched,
Your powers untried, your beauty flung
Among the dreams that Fate has
wrenched?

Or is old Fate a kindlier crone
Than our little finite minds can know,
That you should wear so small a stone
On the chaplet of your time below?

* * * *

This little happy, awkward child,
Whose spirit far outshone its frame—
Dare we say Chance, untamed and wild,
Has shattered all our love would claim?

Or should we hold this Faith and
Creed—

The knowledge that God's laws are
just—

That while the sword may cut indeed,
Eternal Justice guides the thrust?

This may be a test, to prove a strength
Required for some great future work—
As steel within the forge at length
Gains strength so it will never shirk . .

Or, it may be, some sorrow gained
By virtue of a past offence—
We only know the end's attained
And—free at last—the Labourer's hence.

* * * *

And so, Dear One, go on your way;
Our Love is still surrounding you—
And when once more, in some new day,
Another form impounding you

You come again, all full of joy,
This sorrow will be cleared away,
And then our little laughing Boy
Will be the Man we dream today.

STANDARD THEOSOPHY

The following books have just been received from the binders, and owing to the advanced prices of material due to the war, prices have had to be raised from the moderate rates.

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by H. P. Blavatsky.

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60 cents.

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by Dr. Jerome A. Anderson.

75 cents.

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