

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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CHRISTMAS THEN AND CHRISTMAS NOW

H. P. BLAVATSKY

We are reaching the time of the year when the whole Christian world is preparing to celebrate the most noted of its solemnities—the birth of the Founder of their religion. When this paper reaches its Western subscribers there will be festivity and rejoicing in every house. In North Western Europe and in America the holly and ivy will decorate each home, and the churches be decked with evergreens; a custom derived from the ancient practice of the pagan Druids “that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain un-nipped by frost till a milder season.” In Roman Catholic countries large crowds flock during the whole evening and night of “Christmas-eve” to the churches, to salute waxen images of the divine Infant, and his Virgin mother, in her garb of “Queen of Heaven.” To an analytical mind, this bravery of rich gold and lace, pearl-broidered satin and velvet, and the bejeweled cradle do seem rather paradoxical. When one thinks of the poor, worm-eaten, dirty manger of the Jewish country-inn, in which, if we must credit the Gospel, the future “Redeemer” was placed at his birth for lack of a better shelter, we cannot help suspecting that before the dazzled eyes of

the unsophisticated devotee the Bethlehem stable vanishes altogether. To put it in the mildest terms, this gaudy display tallies ill with the democratic feelings and the truly divine contempt for riches of the “Son of Man,” who had “not where to lay his head.” It makes it all the harder for the average Christian to regard the explicit statement that—“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,” as anything more than a rhetorical threat. The Roman Church acted wisely in severely forbidding her parishioners to either read or interpret the Gospel for themselves, and leaving the Book, as long as it was possible, to proclaim its truth in Latin—“the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” In that, she but followed the wisdom of the ages—the wisdom of the old Aryans, which is also “justified of her children”; for, as neither the modern Hindu devotee understands a word of the Sanskrit, nor the modern Parsi one syllable of the Zend, so for the average Roman Catholic the Latin is no better than Hieroglyphics. The result is that all the three—Brahminical High Priest, Zoroastrian Mobed, and Roman Catholic

Pontiff, are allowed unlimited opportunities for evolving new religious dogmas out of the depths of their own fancy, for the benefit of their respective churches.

To usher in this great day, the bells are set merrily ringing at midnight, throughout England and the Continent. In France and Italy, after the celebration of the mass in churches magnificently decorated, "it is usual for the revellers to partake of a collation (*reveillon*) that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night," saith a book treating upon Popish church ceremonials. This night of Christian fasting reminds one of the *Sivaratree* of the followers of the god Siva,—the great day of gloom and fasting, in the 11th month of the Hindu year. Only, with the latter, the night's long vigil is preceded and followed by a strict and rigid fasting. No *reveillons* or compromises for them. True, they are but wicked "heathens," and therefore their way to salvation must be tenfold harder.

Though now universally observed by Christian nations as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the 25th of December was not originally so accepted. The most movable of the Christian feast days during the early centuries, Christmas was often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated in the months of April and May. As there never was any authentic record, or proof of its identification, whether in secular or ecclesiastical history, the selection of that day long remained optional; and it was only during the 4th century that, urged by Cyril of Jerusalem, the Pope (Julius I.) ordered the bishops to make an investigation and come finally to some agreement as to the *presumable* date of the nativity of Christ. Their choice fell upon the 25th day of December,—and a most unfortunate choice it has since proved. It was Dupius, followed by Volney, who aimed the first

shots at this natal anniversary. They proved that for incalculable periods before our era, upon very clear astronomical data, nearly all the ancient peoples had celebrated the birth of their sun-gods on that very day. "Dupius shows that the celestial sign of the VIRGIN AND CHILD was in existence several thousand years before Christ"—remarks Higgins in his *Anacalypsis*. As Dupius, Volney, and Higgins have all been passed over to posterity as infidels, and enemies of Christianity, it may be as well to quote, in this relation, the confessions of the Christian Bishop of Ratisbone, "the most learned man that the middle ages produced"—the Dominican, Albertus Magnus. "The sign of the celestial Virgin rises above the horizon at the moment in which we fix the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ," he says, in the *Recherches historiques sur Falaise, par Langevin pretre*. So Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, Apollo, etc., were all born on the 25th of December. Christmas comes just at the time of the winter solstice; the days then are shortest, and *Darkness* is more upon the face of the earth than ever. All the sun Gods were believed to be annually born at the epoch; for from this time its Light dispels more and more darkness with each succeeding day, and the power of the *Sun* begins to increase.

However it may be, the Christmas festivities, that were held by the Christians for nearly fifteen centuries, were of a particularly pagan character. Nay, we are afraid that even the present ceremonies of the church can hardly escape the reproach of being almost literally copied from the mysteries of Egypt and Greece, held in honour of Osiris and Horus, Apollo and Bacchus. Both Isis and Ceres were called "Holy Virgins," and a DIVINE BABE may be found in every "heathen" religion. We will now draw two pictures of the Merrie Christmas; one portraying the

"good old times," and the other the present state of Christian Worship. From the first days of its establishment as Christmas, the day was regarded in the double light of a holy commemoration and a most cheerful festivity: it was equally given up to devotion and insane merriment. "Among the revels of the Christmas season were the so-called feasts of fools and of asses, grotesque saturnalia, which were termed 'December liberties,' in which everything serious was burlesqued, the order of society reversed, and its decencies ridiculed"—says one compiler of old chronicles. "During the Middle Ages, it was celebrated by the gay fantastic spectacle of dramatic mysteries, performed by personages in grotesque masks and singular costumes. The show usually represented an infant in a cradle, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, by bulls' heads, cherubs, Eastern Magi, (the Mobeds of old), and manifold ornaments." The custom of singing canticles at Christmas, called Carols, was to recall the songs of the shepherds at the Nativity. "The bishops and the clergy often joined with the populace in carolling, and the songs were enlivened by dances, and by the music of tambours, guitars, violins and organs. . . ." We may add that down to the present times, during the days preceding Christmas, such mysteries are being enacted, with marionettes and dolls, in Southern Russia, Poland, and Galicia; and known as the *Kalidowski*. In Italy, Calabrian minstrels descend from their mountains to Naples and Rome, and crowd the shrines of the Virgin-Mother, cheering her with their wild music.

In England, the revels used to begin on Christmas eve, and continue often till Candlemas (Feb. 2), every day being a holiday till Twelfth-night (Jan. 6). In the houses of great nobles a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of un-

reason" was appointed, whose duty it was to play the part of a buffoon. "The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar and honey." . . . "A glowing fire, made of great logs, the principal of which was termed the 'Yule log,' or Christmas block, which might be burnt till Candlemas eve, kept out the cold; and the abundance was shared by the lord's tenants amid music, conjuring, riddles, hot-cockles, fool-plough, snap-dragon, jokes, laughter, repartees, forfeits and dances."

In our modern times, the bishops and the clergy join no more with the populace in open carolling and dancing; and feasts of "fools and of asses" are enacted more in sacred privacy than under the eyes of the dangerous, argus-eyed reporter. Yet the eating and drinking festivities are preserved throughout the Christian world; and, more sudden deaths are doubtless caused by gluttony and intemperance during the Christmas and Easter holidays, than at any other time of the year. Yet, Christian worship becomes every year more and more a false pretence. The heartlessness of this lip-service has been denounced innumerable times, but never, we think, with a more affecting touch of realism than in a charming dream-tale, which appeared in the *New York Herald* about last Christmas. An aged man, presiding at a public meeting, said he would avail himself of the opportunity to relate a vision he had witnessed on the previous night. "He thought he was standing in the pulpit of the most gorgeous and magnificent cathedral he had ever seen. Before him was the priest or pastor of the church, and beside him stood an angel with a tablet and pencil in hand, whose mission it was to make record of every act of worship or prayer that transpired in his presence and ascended as an acceptable offering to

the throne of God. Every pew was filled with richly-attired worshippers of either sex. The most sublime music that ever fell on his enraptured ear filled the air with melody. All the beautiful ritualistic Church services, including a surpassingly eloquent sermon from the gifted minister, had in turn transpired, and yet the recording angel made no entry in his tablet. The congregation were at length dismissed by the pastor with a lengthy and beautifully-worded prayer, followed by a benediction, and yet the angel made no sign

"Attended still by the angel, the speaker left the door of the church in rear of the richly-attired congregation. A poor, tattered castaway stood in the gutter beside the curbstone, with her pale, famished hand extended, silently pleading for alms. As the richly-attired worshippers from the church passed by, they shrank from the poor Magdalen, the ladies withdrawing aside their silken, jewel-bedecked robes, lest they should be polluted by her touch.

"Just then an intoxicated sailor came reeling down the sidewalk on the other side. When he got opposite the poor forsaken girl, he staggered across the street to where she stood, and, taking a few pennies from his pocket, he thrust them into her hand, accompanied with the adjuration, 'Here, you poor forsaken cuss, take this!' A celestial radiance now lighted up the face of the recording angel, who instantly entered the sailor's act of sympathy and charity in his tablet, and departed with it as a sweet sacrifice to God."

A concretion, one might say, of the Biblical story of the judgment upon the woman taken in adultery. Be it so; yet it portrays with a master hand the state of our Christian society.

According to tradition, on Christmas-eve, the oxen may always be found on their knees, as though in prayer and

devotion; and, "there was a famous hawthorn in the churchyard of Glastonbury Abbey, which always budded on the 24th, and blossomed on the 25th of December"; which, considering that the day was chosen by the Fathers of the church at random, and that the calendar has been changed from the old to the new style, shows a remarkable perspicacity in both the animal and the vegetable! There is also a tradition of the church, preserved to us by Olaus, archbishop of Upsal, that, at the festival of Christmas, "the men, living in the cold Northern parts, are suddenly and strangely metamorphosed into wolves; and that a huge multitude of them meet together at an appointed place and rage so fiercely against mankind, that it suffers more from their attacks than ever they do from the natural wolves." Metaphorically viewed, this would seem to be more than ever the case with men, and particularly with Christian nations, now. There seems no need to wait for Christmas-eve to see whole nations changed into "wild beasts"—especially in time of war.

Note—This article was first printed in *The Theosophist* for December, 1879.

THE THREE TRUTHS

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.

THE CREATIVE ENERGY OF THOUGHT

"Of all creative energies, Thought remains supreme".

"When will people understand the significance of thought and word? Nevertheless people lend greater importance to the spilling of a sack of worthless seeds than the spilling of destructive words. Any gnawer will pick up the seeds, but even an Arhat will not annihilate the consequences of thought and word."

Agni Yoga, Pages 11. 30.

Exactly, for Arhats will never interfere with Karma. Man reaps what he has sown, for such is the Law.

How few there are who understand the grave significance of the above words!

How few there are who care whether their heedless thoughts bring good or evil consequences to humanity!

The world is full of hatred, and every day it grows worse for all to see, not only is it so between nations, but there is hatred between brethren of the same race and nation which brings about civil wars.

Since the sinking of Atlantis there has never been such an important period in the world's history, as the times through which we are now passing. We all know that we have come to the end of an Age, and are about to enter a new one—the great Zodiacal sign of the Air, Aquarius the Water Carrier, also a new sub-race is coming on the earth, the 6th, which will first appear on the North American continent, chiefly in California and the lands adjoining the western side of the Rockies.

And what do we see? The sceptre of power is moving from Europe to North America. This is a cyclic event to do with the rise and fall of nations, and has occurred many, many times in the

world's history, for every nation has to have its turn and take over heavier responsibilities which go with leadership. When the clock strikes, North America in her turn will have to make way for another nation.

An interesting point to notice, that during the Age of Pisces, when Christianity was founded, we see the perfecting of all things to do with the sea, for Pisces is a water sign. Great Navies were constructed, the submarine was perfected and sea cables were laid, etc., and the Navy was acknowledged the senior service all over the world; you will also remember, that with a few exceptions Christ's disciples were fishermen.

Now what do we find in the Air sign Aquarius? We find that everything to do with the Air is gaining importance; the Air Force predominates over Navies, and takes precedence over all the other services. We have the Radio, wireless telegraphy, Radar and many other things, also wonderful gifts to do with the Air will be bestowed upon the New Age in the near future.

There are three types of evolution taking place in each one of us—the physical, the mental and the spiritual, and the goal was set for humanity to reach at the end of this Age. We have advanced physically and mentally, but spiritually we are far behind—hence all the trouble in the world today; we have refused the things of the spirit and become materialistic.

We have, however, to advance spiritually because the New Age demands it, for instead of entering it peacefully as we should have done, we enter with violence, chaos and anarchy such as the world has never known! Acknowledging all this what do we find? The im-

possibility of the New Age, with its immensely higher standards to function properly, under existing circumstances, for the Masters, and those who have dedicated themselves to help in Their work for reconstruction, would be hindered and handicapped at every turn! So, *all that hinders the spiritual progress of mankind has to be removed.*

The first World War came in 1914, and we saw the downfall of nations with their monarchs deposed; but not enough was removed, there were still hinderances, and so the second War came, much worse, more cruel and violent than the first. Ever since this War ended there has been nothing but confusion and strife in the world, and now, there is the ever growing threat of another War, which if it comes, will be far worse and more destructive than anything we have yet had. You will notice that each time it gets worse until all that hinders is removed, and humanity, purged through suffering, has learned its lesson and become humble and teachable as a child. Be very sure of one thing, we shall, all of us have to abandon many cherished ideas, especially on religion, for in the reconstruction period we shall be taught the Truth by Those best qualified to do so.

Thoughts create, and if we admit this, we can clearly see the danger; unfortunately, thought-forms of hate have reached such a pitch that the earth itself may be affected and bring about a great cataclysmic upheaval! We have as an example the sinking of Atlantis to show how devastating Nature can be when it gets out of control.

I am going to give some quotations to show what men of world-repute are thinking on this subject:

Dr. Nicholas Roerich in his book "Realm of Light", quotes Tagore in his article on America:—

"I know that I am as one crying in the wilderness when I raise a voice of

forewarning. At the time when the West is occupied with the organization of a machine made world, it continues to feed by its injustices *the underground forces of earthquake.*"

Dr. Roerich goes on to say:—

"Dr. Albert Einstein advises an intensified study of the hidden forces of nature. It is there that the searching glances of Millikan and Michelson are also directed. Thus on different continents and urged by different causes, the best minds turn to the factors of the *reciprocal action of the cosmic forces on the destinies of earthly peoples.*"

Coming down to more recent times, Winston Churchill warns:—

"Sombre indeed would be the fortunes of mankind if some awful schism arose between the Western democracies and the Russian people, if all future world organizations were rent asunder, and a *new cataclysmic upheaval of inconceivable violence destroyed what is left.*"

On April 19th of this year, I came across an article in our daily paper which I am going to quote in full, as it relates to the subject on which I am writing:—

"Ask 'Thought War' to reach Russians"

Washington, April 18th.

"Senator Ralph Flanders (Rep. Vt.) and Senator Brien McMahon (Dem. Conn.) today called for a thought war to convince the Russian people the United States is seeking only peace and friendship. Both took the floor in support of a psychological campaign to carry American ideas of freedom behind the Iron Curtain.

"McMahon suggested a convention in Washington of newspaper, radio, advertising and public relations leaders to devise a way of reaching the Russian people with a giant peace campaign. 'If some change in the *thinking* of the Rus-

(Continued on Page 153)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The resolution passed by the Canadian General Executive at its last meeting expressed in no uncertain manner the feelings of that body concerning the proposed transfer of the Mahatma pictures from the Society to the Esoteric School. I feel sure that this resolution will be approved by the membership at large. Since that meeting, articles and letters on the subject have appeared in our magazine and those who have read these are fully cognizant of the matter at issue. To ascertain what the other Societies thought about this subject has caused me to search all theosophical magazines with intense interest, but up to date I have failed to read a single comment on this important matter. This is inexplicable and makes me think the reason is either utter apathy or a failure to recognize what is at stake. Apropos of the subject I have just received a circular letter from Adyar addressed to all General Secretaries enclosing a copy of my letter setting out the Canadian Resolution and a copy of Mr. Sri Ram's letter to me explaining his reasons for making the original resolution and stating his willingness to withdraw it. This circular letter closes in requesting each General Secretary to state whether or not he approves of such a withdrawal. I may add that the letter implies that if any such official has not consulted his executive he should do so. To me it is incomprehensible that a General Secretary, being the servant and not the master of his section, should vote on such an important matter without consulting his executive; such an action would savour of dictatorship, or at the very least of taking upon himself too much responsibility. That Mr. Sri Ram is willing to withdraw his resolution is a welcome gesture and shows that

neither he nor Adyar is trying to force a controversial subject through against the wishes of any section. I quite agree with Mr. Sri Ram's suggestion that the pictures should not be offered to public view and that they should be adequately guarded, but feel that this should be the duty of the T.S. and not the E.S. The pictures belong to the Society at large and definitely not to a selected few. I trust the General Secretaries will reply to this circular letter in a way thoroughly representative of their members and that the result will be that the pictures shall for ever remain the property of the T.S.

* * * *

I take this opportunity of wishing Theosophists throughout the world the compliments of the season. To us Christmas, this 'Christ Mass' this symbolic birth of the 'Christ in you' is something very different from the popular version of the story of the Nativity. Although we love the story, we also know that its inner esoteric significance is of more importance than anything else in the world, and never was it of more importance to us individually and collectively than it is today with the atomic war clouds so heavy on the horizon—never was it more important to bring forth this principle into manifestation to help assuage the trials and tribulations that mankind is undergoing. Verily man is being crucified but he is crucifying himself, and not until he awakens and learns the Truth will he be free. We are told that Truth shall set us free, not only individually but Mankind as a whole—then let Theosophists wherever they be not only live the life, but exemplify it and by their conduct and wisdom hold up a lantern to guide the steps of those stumbling in darkness. We have a wonderful heritage, let us share it with all men.

*Peace on Earth—Goodwill toward
men.*
E. L. T.

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OFFICE NOTES

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



\$50,000,000 cash is a lot of money to turn down cold. This amount was offered recently as an endowment to Jefferson Military College, one of the smaller colleges in the southern States. The Trustees of the College could have

made very good use of the money as the College is in serious financial straits. But the offer had a joker attached to it—the money was to be used to incite racism in promoting the donor's ideas of "white Gentile supremacy". To the everlasting honour of the gentlemen who composed the Board of Trustees, they refused the offer. Integrity, idealism and humanitarianism were affirmed by their action. The magazine 'Life' gave considerable publicity to the story and many newspapers have commented on it. One can only speculate on the far-reaching effects of the Board's splendid action. It was an effective reply to the cynic's attitude of 'Everyone has a price' and may very well do more in the struggle for a recognition of human brotherhood 'without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour' than a thousand books or lectures on the subject. We salute the Board of Trustees of Jefferson Military College.



The famous Indian 'rope trick' which receives attention in the press from time to time, came to the fore again in a report from London which told of a performance arranged by the Indian Students' Association of Leeds University. Ten persons saw a rope thrown in the air where it remained rigid, poised on one end which remained on the platform. A small Indian boy climbed to the top and then disappeared into thin air. These ten persons saw this—or believed that they did—and their accounts agreed. Three hundred other spectators saw nothing except a stage on which were the ten witnesses and a professional hypnotist. The ten were hypnotized. Individual or group hypnosis, or the production of a 'glamour', an illusory appearance, are apparently the methods by which this 'trick' is performed.



Terrific storms, accompanied by torrential rains swept the Madras Province, India on October 27th, resulting in thousands of deaths and very heavy destruction of property. For some unexplained reason the report of this tragedy were withheld for nearly three weeks, according to the news despatches. We have not heard from Adyar of any losses suffered there; possibly the main path of the storm was to the north.



A descriptive pamphlet of the initial volume of the American Edition of the Collected Works of H. P. Blavatsky has now been received. This proposed edition was referred to at length in the article *H. P. Blavatsky in 1950* by Mr. Boris de Zirkoff which appeared in the October issue of the magazine. The preparation of the first volume has entailed much thought and labour and the work of collecting and publishing all the writings of H.P.B. in a uniform edition will take years. Advance orders for the first volume may now be placed with the Editorial Offices of *Theosophia*, 240 Western Bldg., 553 South Western Ave., Los Angeles 5, California, or with the Philosophical Research Society, 3341 Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles 27. The price in the United States is \$6.00. Canadian students will be able to obtain copies from Mr. E. B. Dustan, Book Steward, Toronto Lodge, 52 Isabella St. Toronto 5.

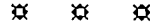


The World Fellowship of Faiths convoked a World Parliament of Religions which was held in New York City from October 25th to Nov. 4th. The aims of this organization, which has held five Parliaments of Religions, are quite Theosophical in character. It seeks to build 'bridges of understanding across the chasms of prejudice' and endeavours 'to promote *appreciation* of other faiths,

instead of the outworn 'tolerance' which implies an unwholesome assumption of superiority'.



Word of another World Convention of Religions comes from London, England where a Convention of the Foundations of Peace will be held from the 18th to the 24th of August 1950. Its aim will be the co-ordination of the moral and spiritual forces of the world in order to strengthen the foundations of peace. It is being organized on the initiative of the Vedanta Movement in co-operation with various societies and groups in sympathy with the cause.



THE CREATIVE ENERGY OF THOUGHT

(Continued from Page 150)

sian people is not brought about,' McMahon said, 'We may lose the cold war through exhaustion.' Flanders said he had hundreds of letters favouring his proposal of a thought war'.

I was agreeably surprised to find an article of this sort in a daily newspaper, for it shows that some politicians and some of the public are already aware that Thought is a Force.

Now what can we do to help? I think that all people of goodwill should individually and collectively—in groups—send out thoughts of love and benevolence to counteract the hatred, and to keep this idea constantly as an attitude of mind, and to systematically carry it out. It might help to avert the fear that the Avesta mentions:—

"During the last days the earth will be like a sheep in fear before a wolf."

It is best to be prepared, for forewarned is forearmed.

Ellen Margaret Nash.

I. Globe and Mail, Toronto, April 19th.
All Italics in above article are mine.

TRANSFER OF PICTURES

Recording Secretary's Office
Adyar, Madras 20,
10th November, 1949.

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL.

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed is a copy of letter received from Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, General Secretary of the Canadian Section, in respect of the Resolution placed before the General Council to transfer the two pictures of the Masters M. and K.H. from the Theosophical Society to the Esoteric School. Mr. N. Sri Ram, the proposer of the Resolution, has replied to Col. Thomson and copy of his reply is also attached.

You will note from this that Mr. Sri Ram is willing to allow the present position to continue and to withdraw his Resolution. You are therefore asked to signify whether or not you approve of such withdrawal. If you are a General Secretary, who consulted your Executive body on the subject of the resolution, please share this correspondence also with that body.

Please send your reply by return air-mail or, if there is likely to be delay, kindly cable your reply addressed "Olcott, Madras" to reach here not later than 15th December, 1949, so that the matter may be settled at the meeting of the General Council in Benares.

With greetings,

Faternally,

Helen Zahara,
Recording Secretary.

Mr. Sri Ram's letter above referred to appeared in last month's magazine.

Let us hope that we are now close to the end of this episode. It is unfortunate that the chairman of the meeting at which the Resolution was presented did not recognize that the proposed action was beyond the power of the Council,

and immediately declare the Resolution out of order. The Council has received no authority from the members to dispose of invaluable possessions of the Society which are held in trust not only for the present day Society but for the Society as it will be a thousand years from now.

Incidentally, there is no 'Canadian Section'; our official name is "The Theosophical Society in Canada."

In our opinion the primary point at issue is the matter of freedom of belief in the Society, a matter which has not been dealt with in the subsequent correspondence. The pictures were to be transferred, to quote from the original letter which accompanied Mr. Sri Ram's resolution, because the Esoteric School is "a group composed wholly of persons who believe in the Masters and revere Them. The T.S. is a bigger body which permits a variety of opinions on the existence of the Masters, the value of sacred pictures, etc.". Exactly so—and this freedom of belief and opinion must never be interfered with. Now that the Esoteric School is a separate corporate body from the Theosophical Society it is free to insist that its members accept a creed of belief—prior to its separation the School had no right even to demand that would-be members declare their beliefs. If belief in the Masters is now compulsory in the School, then the School has ceased to be a part of the Theosophical Movement, and all its links with the Society should be broken.

We personally believe in the existence of the Masters, but we must confess that the idea of 'sacred pictures' leaves us cold—it savours too much of the 'sacred relics' of Roman Catholicism; the pictures are priceless mementoes of the early days of the Society and as such should not be disposed of.

One correspondent has drawn attention to the story of another picture (not one of the two in question) which ap-

appears on page 184 of the *Mahatma Letters*. This picture was given to Sinnett and was drawn by G. Khool assisted by M. "The first time she brought it out it was a failure," he (G.K.) says, "with the eyebrow like a leech" . . . And it was *he* again G.K. . . . who had to make away with the 'leech' and to correct *cap* and features, and who made it look like Master' (he will insist giving me that name though he is no longer my chela in reality) since M. after spoiling it would not go to the trouble of correcting it but preferred going to sleep instead and finally, he tells me, my making fun of the portrait notwithstanding, the likeness is good and would have been better had M. sahib not interfered with it, and he, G.K., allowed to have his own 'artistic' ways." Our correspondent adds "Nothing 'sacred' about this which would have been even more sacred than the ones referred to as it was actually drawn by two Masters!"

D. W. B.

CORRESPONDENCE

805-925 West Georgia St.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Nov. 22nd, 1949.

The Editor,
Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir:—

With the resolution passed by the Executive Committee and sent to Adyar, protesting against the proposed disposal of the Mahatma portraits unconditionally to the E.S., and further demanding that these portraits be removed from the custody of the E.S., I am, of course, wholly in agreement. The problem is to back up this demand by every means at our disposal.

The position is this:—Our main task, from year to year, until it is accomplished, is to recapture the Theosophical Society for Theosophy. At present, with very few exceptions, T.S. members are

wholly nourished upon an emotional, materialized, gross distortion of Theosophy—the teaching of H.P.B. and the Mahatmas, under the illusion that it is Theosophy. This is the evil in the Theosophical Society which it is our duty to expose and try to overcome. The E.S. is an organization which is the stronghold of this spurious teaching. It was used in the first place to help foist the teaching upon the members and it is now the most powerful agency to so maintain it.

Therefore, it is our task to use the opportunity, provided by the resolution put before the General Council by Mr. N. Sri Ram, to make clear the nature of the activities of the E.S., so far as they concern the Theosophical Society, in support of our demand to have the Mahatma portraits removed from their custody.

It should be realized that there is no objection whatsoever to commentaries upon Theosophy, whether those of Bishop Leadbeater, or those of Dr. de Purucker, or Dr. Alvin Kuhn, or any other. The more the better, so long as they are sincere. Each is examined and studied on its own merit and what withstands the fire of intelligent criticism is retained.

But, when a teaching, the very antithesis of the spirit and teaching of Theosophy, is imposed upon the members with all the power and authority of self-styled infallible 'Leaders', using a powerful secret organization within each lodge,—the E.S., pledged to unquestioning obedience to said 'Leaders', and as a result this counterfeit teaching becomes accepted throughout the Society as Theosophy, to the almost total exclusion of the real teaching, then it becomes the duty of every student not caught up in this delusion, to expose and combat the evil, using every opportunity to the utmost as it arises. This is the least we can demand of ourselves.

In many lodges, I am informed, the E.S. have a room set apart into which no member, not an E.S. member, is permitted to enter. Large reproductions of the Mahatma portraits have been made, and were given to each E.S. centre for their exclusive use, without the knowledge or permission of the members of the Theosophical Society, and now an attempt is being made to obtain full, exclusive possession of the originals. It is appalling to reflect that all these years (in all probability) any T.S. member desiring to view the Mahatma portraits, and who possessed the right, was granted permission as a favour by the E.S., and was conducted to the Shrine room by some E.S. member and not left alone, and then conducted out again.

Our Canadian Magazine, *The Canadian Theosophist*, is the only Theosophical magazine which has consistently invited a free expression of opinion on all matters of vital significance to the Theosophical Movement. By keeping its pages open, not only to members of the Canadian T.S., but also to all sincere students, for the courageous expression of their views on all matters of vital importance, it has made it possible for Truth and Error to be brought into close contact, and by so doing it has contributed something of incalculable value to the Theosophical Movement. For the past twenty-five years, the Canadian Theosophist has consistently opposed the substitution of Pseudo-Theosophy for Theosophy in the Adyar T.S.

May I request that you publish this letter in an early issue, for it is not enough to take a firm stand that the portraits of the Mahatmas must be removed from the custody of the E.S.—this has been done. We have to follow it up and reinforce it by every legitimate means at our command.

Yours fraternally,

W. E. Wilks.

Member General Executive

12207 Stony Plain Road,
Edmonton, Canada,
November 13th, 1949.

Mr. C. Jinarajadasa,
President, Theosophical Society,
Adyar, India.

Dear Sir:—

In the October 15th 1949 issue of the "*Canadian Theosophist*" the organ of the Theosophical Society in Canada, appears an article under the title "Thou Shalt Not Covet," in which a resolution is quoted, on the passing of which by the members of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, they are to hand over unreservedly to the Esoteric School, a body corporate, the two pictures of the Masters K.H. and M. (painted by Herr Schmiechen in London) and taken to Adyar in 1884 by Colonel H. S. Olcott, the first President of the Theosophical Society.

As a member of Edmonton Lodge of the Canadian Section, and as a duly elected member of the National Executive of the Canadian Section, I hereby protest vigorously against the passing of this resolution by the members of the General Council, for the following reasons:

In 1884 when the pictures in question were taken to Adyar and given to the Theosophical Society by Colonel Olcott, the Esoteric School did not exist in any form. The first recorded mention concerning the proposed formation of such an organization is contained in a notice which appeared in the Magazine "*Lucifer*", Vol. 3, No. 14, for October 1888. Consequently, the Esoteric Section as it was known at first, or the Esoteric School as it was known later, can lay no claim, historic or legal, to the said pictures.

Since they can lay no claim whatsoever, the General Council as a body, and through them the Theosophical Society as a body, would be guilty of a flagrant breach of trust towards the faith

Colonel Olcott reposed in the members of the Theosophical Society, were these pictures to be wantonly given away, or sold for a consideration, notwithstanding whom the recipients or the purchasers might be. Nor have we his permission so to do. For sixty-five years past, these pictures have been in our undisputed possession, and are the treasured property of our members, whose rights at all times must be sacredly regarded. That, I believe, is one of the important duties of the General Council.

If the Esoteric School deem that they revere the Masters more than the members of the Society do, which is only a matter of opinion, and if they require paintings for any purpose in their activities as a matter of ownership, they may do as Colonel Olcott did in the first instance when obtaining the paintings in question for the Theosophical Society. The procedure followed by Colonel Olcott is a matter of history, and so far as I know, is not the property of any person or organization, hence may be followed over and over again. Indeed, those so doing have the unique privilege of taking advantage of any modern scientific techniques, and other things being equal, they should produce paintings of even better quality.

We would be very happy if they would exhaust all the possibilities in this connection before casting envious eyes on our property, which we have graciously loaned them for their uses for many years past, in the decoration of the Shrine Room. In the early days of Canadian history, a term was coined to denote a certain thing. It was called "squatter's rights." The name is significant. We think the Esoteric School has become imbued with the principle of it, and are endeavouring, after all these years, to use it for their own advantage.

I am surprised that the members of the General Council, representing the

membership at large, would countenance such a proposal, or that Mr. N. Sri Ram, the Recording Secretary of this Society, would have the presumption to suggest the transfer. By the very fact that they have entertained such ideas, they have given unmistakable proof of their unworthiness to be our representatives, and that a general house cleaning is in order. Under the circumstances, all should resign immediately. And if they have the courage of their convictions, they would do so. We cannot have men at the head of our affairs who are ostensibly trying to serve two masters. It is this species of dry rot which has ruined the efforts of the Society heretofore and which will thwart all purposive endeavour in the future. History is replete with instances in various walks of life. Either the Esoteric School will need to be disbanded in the future, or the Theosophical Society will gradually go to pieces. The latter has already demonstrated its capabilities in that direction on more than one occasion. The Esoteric School has lived by absorbing its vitality from the Theosophical Society. It has been a leech in its action, and an evil genius in its designs. History will proclaim the result. I say this without any intent to be malicious, but as an observer of facts. And so I say, we, the members of the Theosophical Society, have to face the unpleasant fact of putting our house in order, or on the other hand, going down to an ignominious defeat, for lack of the moral fortitude to do anything about it.

This matter of the two pictures may be only a straw in the wind, but it shows which way the wind is blowing, at least. Allow this resolution to pass, and in due time the Theosophical Society will have another serious shake-up. It is as inevitable as the sequence of day and night. Because I love the Theosophical Society and its grand teachings, I trust

wisdom will guide you to take such steps as will defeat the passage of this resolution.

Yours very sincerely,
Emory P. Wood.

ESOTERIC NUMEROLOGY

In the Book of Wisdom, supposed to have originated with Solomon, one finds the statement that God created the Universe by means of numbers, weight and sound. The Israelites believed that God had brought His Creative Power into manifestation by the use of the Hebrew Alphabet, which arouses the derision of those who cannot grasp that the Hebrew Alphabet is a marvellous system of numerical symbols, each of its Letters not only having a name and number attached to it, but possessing its own inner significance representing great spiritual laws which are reflected into this world of matter and act therein and thereupon.

According to the Ancient Wisdom, Divine Emanations are twice reflected before they reach us here on earth. We live in a world of reflections of reflections, but, even weakened as they are, they are still proofs of the existence of Divine Substance, for on spiritual planes as well as upon material where there is reflection there must be something to reflect. In delving into the meanings of numbers even to a small extent, one finds interesting evidence, not only of the similarity of all occult systems, but also of the eternal Unity underlying the whole structure of the Universe of both Spirit and Matter.

The number One can hardly be regarded as a number at all, being above the planes where numbers operate. The first sentence of Genesis, "in the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth", describes the first terrestrial appearance of that which was taking place in the Creative Mind, or, to use an old occult term, in the First Mind or Mind of Mind. The Beginning is Number

Two, attributed to Fire, the First Cause, the Father-God, symbolized by a point within a circle, whereas Pure Spirit is represented by an empty circle. Moving upon the Face of the Water, symbol of the Mother-God, these two together, as was said by G. R. S. Mead, "weave the web of the Universe", and produce Manifestation in Matter. One is Unity, Two is Duality, bringing forth infinite complexity. Or, according to Giordano Bruno, the Trinity is "Spirit manifesting the positive Principle of Energy making us of the Negative Principle of Matter", the Triad at the bottom of all explanations of the existence of the Universe.

Three is the first actual number, called by the ancients the simple number, holy in its essence, the number of the Creative Mother.

The circle with the point is found to have been a religious symbol in many parts of the pre-historic world. In very early Egyptian days it is said to have represented the Pole Star, becoming later the emblem of the First Logos. That the Sun has the same symbol in astrology is easy to understand when we remember that the Sun is the Life of this globe. The circle with the dot in the middle became the symbol of the Sun-god Ra. The priests of that cult cut a round patch from the hair on their heads to represent the solar disk, allowing a little dot of hair to grow within the circle, to indicate the point within it. This is supposed by some to be the origin of the tonsure.

The Triangle, the first lineal figure, represents the Trinity, or the Three Primary Aspects of Deity working in all things in the Universe, and it is also a symbol of the Element of Fire.

The number Four and the cube, also the square, symbolize Earth, and that which lies behind form, or "fourm",—the spelling adopted by one of the seventeenth century adepts. In alchemy

salt is the emblem of Earth because salt crystals are cubes, thus the cube, the square and the number indicates the form and construction of Matter.

There are several groups of Four Principles in Nature of paramount importance, the Four Elements, the Four Points of the Compass, the Four Triplicities of the Zodiac, etc. The Creative Agent, or Fire, operates in Four different ways, as Heat, Light, Electricity and Magnetism, the view held by Mesmer and his colleague Reichenbac, the first men to discover the magnetic emanations of the human body.

The Tetrahedron or Pyramid consists of Four Triangles upon a square base or the Four Elements fashioning all things under the dominion of the Spirit, indicated by the apex, in bright light, seen by clairvoyant vision. Egyptian obelisks are variants of the pyramid. Ewald calls them "petrifications of the sun-beam", and to Egyptian eyes they were "fingers of the Sun".

The number FIVE is sacred and powerful. Returning as it does in all its multiples to itself again it is called a circular or spherical number. It represents the beam of the balance, being the middle number of all others in the decade:—

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The Pentagram, or Five-pointed Star, represents, as do so many of the important symbols of the Israelites, Spirit dominating Matter, for which reason it was chosen to be the emblem of the coming of the Christ-child.

Six is perhaps the most interesting of all numbers, the first of those known as perfect, because they consist of numbers by which they can be measured without a remainder, viz:— $1+2+3=6$

There are eight perfect numbers known to mathematics:—

1. 6
2. 28
3. 496

4. 8128
5. 33550336
6. 85986056
7. 137438691328
8. 2305843008139952128.

It is remarkable that the terms all end in either 6 or 28—the first two perfect numbers. Beyond this series the mind has so far failed to penetrate.

To the five regular solids is sometimes added a sixth, the parallelepiped, a figure having six sides of three divisions of two alike, the usual example given being a brick, with its upper and lower surfaces, two sides and two ends.

Sixth in the atomic scale is the element of carbon which has six electrons. Sir James Jeans tells us that it is to the element of carbon that we owe all life in the Universe, "The reason for this," he adds, "no doubt exists somewhere in the ultimate Laws of Nature, but so far mathematical physics has failed to fathom it."

In occult teaching the number six expresses the Life Force. To the Israelites the sixth of the Ten Divine Emanations of the Holy Tree of Life is the Life Blood of the Universe. To the sphere of that Emanation they attributed the Messiah, and the early Christians regarded it as the Plane of the Christ. The Hexagram or six-pointed Star, is the Sacred Symbol of Israel.

SEVEN, expressing, as it does, the three of Spirit and the Four of Matter, symbolizes the Dominion of Spirit over Matter, and, therefore, is prominent in most religious systems. The Star of seven points was in Egypt attributed to Isis, but later it became to the Greeks symbolic of Venus, the inheratrix of much of the symbolism of the Egyptian goddess. The Tower of Babel had six steps or stages, ending at the summit in a square, which highly material figure perhaps explains its ultimate fate.

The limits of space are said to be seven—up, down, right, left, back,

front, and around.

EIGHT is the number of Justice and Balance—the Four Elements in balanced disposition and in dual aspect—four masculine and four feminine, showing the positive and negative aspects of Nature bound together. Eight is the atomic number of the element of Mercury, Dalton discovered this remarkable correspondence, as significant as the attribution of the number six to the carbon atom.

Mercury and his aspect as the Messenger of the gods came to Rome through Greece and became attached to the symbolism of the Christ, He being the Messenger of God.

The symbol of Mercury is incomplete, the lunar crescent being an unfinished circle, but the completed symbol, in which the crescent has become a circle, represents the exalted plane called the Pleroma, the Heavenly Jerusalem, a region beyond the necessity of generation, free of Matter.

NINE is referred to the Moon, and is, therefore, that of generation and reproduction. Occultly, the Moon's function is to gather all the forces together in order to shed them into the earth, just as the feminine half of humanity brings into incarnation the souls of the race.

TEN, sometimes erroneously called a perfect number, consists of the ten number of the decad:— $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$.

There is no Name of Deity of eleven Letters in the Secret Doctrine of Israel, for if a number can be evil, that number is eleven. "It is the number which abhorreth its fellows"—its parts do not combine to make an intelligible symbolology, unlike the seven, for instance. The eleven-pointed star is attributed to the curses of Mt. Ebal, which in our Bible are ten in number, but in the Hebrew Bible they are eleven. The Israelites referred eleven to evil women, cats, and unclean beasts.

There are many more interesting numbers, but space will not allow of their being dealt with. In such study as this one finds many proofs of that Unity from which arose Duality, from which sprang infinite complexity. As the gorgeous Sun, symbol of Deity, carrying its mighty system of planets with it on its course, is reflected in the complex atomic system which makes up the Universe, so also Man, infinitely small, is made in the image and likeness of God—a minute reflection of the Divine Emanations.

Olive Harcourt.

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