

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. XXXIII., No. 10

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15th, 1952

Price 20 Cents.

The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statement in this Magazine, unless made in an official document

Christmas Greetings

“It is well from time to time to express in outward form the aspiration after brotherhood which is the keynote of our work. And so we take the opportunity . . . to send to all Theosophists throughout the world, without regard to the form of organization (if any) to which they may belong, good wishes for the success of their work. The Theosophical Movement is far too vast to be expressed by any possible Society, and in their efforts to find a method of organization suited to their conceptions of the work, workers have from time to time founded diverse associations, each designed to satisfy some particular need. Every such association is a garment, and a necessary expression, of the Universal Mind, and he who would attain to a realization of Universal Brotherhood must be prepared to accept these diversities, and to look within the many forms for the one Spirit which includes them all.”

“And inasmuch as each human being is an expression of one facet of the Universal Mind, the true Theosophist can exclude no one from his heart or from the Brotherhood to which he aspires to belong. There are no restrictions and expulsions possible in this Brotherhood, for it deals with realities, and the tendencies of the personality, be they those of the respectable and law-abiding citizen, or of the outcast and the criminal, are as indifferent to it as are the rags or broadcloth with which the body is clothed. So if a Theosophical Society is to exist in anything more than name, it must be formed upon the lines of *Universal Brotherhood*, and its members must be able to look upon even those whom the world esteems the vilest of the vile, and from their hearts greet them with Walt Whitman; ‘Not till the sun excludes you, do I exclude you’.”

The English Theosophist.

STATEMENT FROM MR. SRI RAM

I am asked by the Editor of *The American Theosophist* to make a brief statement with reference to my candidature for election to the Presidency of the International Theosophical Society.

The whole aim, proceedings, atmosphere and spirit of an election in our Society, which is meant to be a channel of the Divine Wisdom, must necessarily be very different from any electoral contest elsewhere in the world. We are seekers of the Wisdom. He who seeks Wisdom and the service of the Wisdom can seek no lesser thing, neither position nor praise. In a Society constituted for the purest Brotherhood there can be no electioneering, even of the sort regarded as legitimate in the world. Our work being what it is, the realization of Universal Brotherhood and the pursuit of the purest selfless Wisdom, there can be no room in our organization for pushing oneself forward, no advertisements or propoganda for self-advancement, no attempt to outdo or outshine a brother, or treat him as a rival.

As things are, the Society needs a President, and according to its Rules it is for the Society as a body, through its most representative workers and personalities (the General Secretaries and others of the General Council) to nominate according to their best judgment the person or persons whom they consider suitable for the tasks of a President, and later through the membership at large to confirm or reject the nominations.

Speaking for myself, if I stand as a candidate in this election, it is only because the nominations I have received are a call to me from my fellow-members to serve the Society in a particular capacity, a call which I cannot disregard. I ask no one for his vote. I shall be happy if each one votes in abso-

lute freedom according to his own individual and uninfluenced judgment. Only thus can he discharge his responsibility rightly in this matter. All that I purport to do in standing as a candidate is to place myself at the disposal of the Society, as seems to be my duty. Obviously, I can issue no election manifesto. I believe that any person who has to be judged with regard to his suitability should be judged not by what he promises or raises in the way of hopes and expectations, but solely by what the members may know of him, his life and work. Our aims being basic, namely the realization of Brotherhood in a practical and dynamic form, and the seeking of that Wisdom which we call Theosophy, the policy at any time must be oriented to these aims, and the seeking must be in an atmosphere of absolute freedom, unfettered by any creed, authority or prejudice.

I believe, along with many other members, that the Society was launched on the initiative of certain great Beings to whom there are frequent references in our literature and with whom H.P.B., our great co-founder, was, notably among others, in constant and direct communication. In the Letters received from those Beings, called variously Mahatmas, Adepts, Elder Brethren, there is a full revelation of the spirit and temper needed to make the enterprise a success. That success is not for any body of people, but for the cause of Truth, that Truth which is one and universal, yet is in each and all as his inmost reality. We need in our Society, today more than ever before, the quality of a self-sacrificing devotion to that Truth, a supreme and beneficent purpose, and along with these an all-inclusive cosmopolitan spirit, which will make it stand out in these times as a beacon of guidance.

If I am elected President, I shall, of course, do my best, according to my lights and capacities, to give the Society that direction and impetus which I think will help it to fulfil its continuing mission. If I am not elected, I shall even then do my best for the same work

—the cause of Truth, of humanity, the ideal of human progression and perfection, call it what you will—without the trammels and instrumentality of office.

With the most cordial greetings to all, irrespective of how they vote.

(Signed) N. Sri Ram.

WHAT ARE THE MAHATMAS DOING?

BY CECIL WILLIAMS

In the tremendous task of shepherding humanity the Mahatmas are aided by their knowledge of human nature, gained through ages of experience (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 3) and their visions of the future read in the Astral Light. Yet here much is uncertain, for, possessing freewill yet lacking wisdom, men tend to act irrationally. This makes for hazard. "We are playing a risky game," said the Master K.H., "and the stakes are human souls." (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

In contrast with the uncertainty caused by man, who creates causes without being able to control their consequences (*op. cit.*, p. 5), nature has its fatalistic side. This is illustrated by the so-called cycles, which require that events ensue at certain times with mathematical exactitude (*op. cit.*, p. 154). To use the science of cycles requires not only clairvoyance but calculation (*Secret Doctrine*, I, 646), which is concerned not merely with times, as in astronomy, but with occult elements, analogous to those employed by the chemist or physicist who, by experience, can predict the results of combinations of elements or forces.

These occult elements or principles, being vital, are associated with the cyclic changes illustrated by the seasons, fragments of the knowledge concerning them being preserved from the

archaic past in modern astrology. Like the farmer, who knows it is folly to plant crops except at the right seasons, the Mahatmas take advantage of rotation. That is why they act in particular ways at certain times only, activity at other periods, courting certain failure, being a waste of energy.

What are the cycles at present operating?

It is evident they are many, those governing races, nations, groups, health, economics, natural phenomena, and so on. There are two of major importance to this discussion.

One of these is the cycle of the Yugas, or ages of humanity, of which the fourth, or lowest, Kali Yuga, the Age of Iron, governs us. Its second five-thousand year period began about 1897. During it not a few accounts would be settled between the races, Blavatsky predicted (*Secret Doctrine*, I., xlv). Two world wars and the eastern conflagrations have already underlined in red this unequivocal prophesy.

The second cycle is that of the sidereal year, a period of 25,860 earth years, which about 16,000 years hence is to end in a great catastrophe, sweeping unfit races from the earth (*Secret Doctrine*, II., 330). Divided into twelve equal minor periods, corresponding to the constellations of the zodiac, the sidereal

cycle turns clockwise, in the reverse direction to the numbering of the astrological houses, each passage through a sign occupying 2,155 years.

The minor cycle of Pisces, celebrated in our Friday fish-days, began about 255 B.C. It is called also the Kabalistic (Article, "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," *Lucifer*, I., 173), being peculiarly associated with the Jews (*Secret Doctrine*, I., xli). It ended three years after the second minor cycle of Kali Yuga began, namely in 1900. Coinciding with the turn of the century, and almost with the second period of Kali Yuga, the Aquarian age began. Its sign is seen in the graphs of modern science, industry and commerce.

The characteristic of Pisces is said by some astrologers to be confinement, and the validity of this statement may be borne out by the paralyzing effect of priestcraft, particularly in the Dark Ages. The key of Aquarius is said to be altruism.

Now, in 1900, when the Aquarian cycle began, that man would have been laughed to scorn who made these predictions: "In fifty years the hours of labour will be greatly lightened; luxuries unknown to kings today, will grace the home of the plain man; to the door of every child and every old man and woman there will be brought periodically the gifts of the state; the carriages of the wealthy will be everyman's vehicle."

Yet these and other benefits are commonplace. Reflecting on these things, can one doubt that side by side with the dark cycle of Kali Yuga, the bright wheel of Aquarius is already turning.

With the coming of the Aquarian age, Blavatsky prophesied, psychologists would have new duties, and the psychic idiosyncrasies of humanity would enter upon a great change (*Lucifer*, I., 174). The latter phenomenon we may detect by its extreme manifestations, in our crowded mental institutions and the

new problem of sex and homosexuality.

Meanwhile psychology advances in 25-year cycles. Freud introduced psychoanalysis at the turn of the century, Korzybski, in 1925, propounded General Semantics and in 1950 Hubbard launched Dianetics.

These are but three of the pioneers who have changed and are changing the very ways in which we think, affecting indirectly even those who confess to no knowledge of these subjects whatsoever. Before the advance of new mental forces old creeds and powers are crumbling (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 24).

The collapse of old standards in religion, morals, art, science and behaviour, fills the mental atmosphere with the dust of atomized ideas which tend to conceal the growing form of the future. In the rapid transitions characteristic of death and gestation, the new lines of logical thought not being clearly discerned, things do not seem to make sense any more.

For we live in a twilight stage, one of the obscurations that interpose between cycles and are a part of them, a period lasting about a tenth of the whole (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 177), and therefore for this Aquarian cycle being about 200 years, of which half may be postponed to its close.

In this period of confusion, nearly all prominent thinkers of the west yearn for some manifestation of the spirit. It is the declared hope of two renowned successors of Spengler.

The spiritualization of mentality, declares Pitirim A. Sorokin (*The Crisis of Our Age*, p. 323), can save society from dissolution. Civilization, on the way to the City of Destruction, like Bunyan's Christian, may be saved, says Arnold J. Toynbee wistfully, by an encounter with Evangelist (*A Study of History*, p. 554). These writers voice fearful hope. Blavatsky wrote with authority.

There *will* be an outpouring of spirituality.

It will come at the end of the century (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 242-3), and we may expect it to be marked with some significant event, corresponding to the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875.

We may perhaps better appreciate the significance of our times if we compare the year 1952 with the corresponding date in the Piscine cycle. That would be 203 B.C.

At that time there existed a number of syncretistic societies then denominated gnostic, in which elements of the old dying religions were being mingled. They correspond to those we to-day call occult.

The existing organizations may be replaced by others, but they should tend to centre around the original Theosophical teachings, for the Theosophical Society, according to the Chohan, was chosen as the foundation stone of the future religions of humanity (*The Letters of the Masters of the Wisdom*, I, 5).

This suggestion may not smile to some, who sigh, with the Mahatma K.H., for the end of religion (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 57). But this is a consummation ages away. Babes must have their bubbles (*Op. cit.*, p. 116). Spiritual truths, like mathematics, must be unveiled by stages, and the Mahatmas use whatever religious channels are available (*op. cit.*, pp. 398, 399).

While we proceed, then, towards great changes in religion, yet, because we are in Kali Yuga, we shall not see in this cycle, the complete "abomination of desolation" spoken of through the prophet Daniel (*Matthew*, XXIV, 15), which Blavatsky quoted in her article "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels", (*Lucifer*, I., 173), for this badly translated phrase means, both in the Hebrew of *Daniel* and the Greek of *Matthew*, "the destruction of idolatry."

In view of the fact that the direction of events corresponds with the Mahatmas' expressed purpose, as I believe I have shown, we cannot doubt that their spiritual work is going on to-day all over the world, as it was a century since. In that work the Theosophical Society is only a link (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 271), though a vital one. Designed to meet the decline of Protestantism (*Theosophist*, I., 309) it stepped, as a world influence, for a time into the van of human progress.

As Roman Catholicism is becoming the dominating religious power in the west, the new Theosophical impulse in 1975 may take a surprising turn, forbidding to those with Protestant minds.

But for all its centuries of power Roman Catholicism cannot hold back the tide of change. Particularly, on this continent, a challenge is preparing for it that must end in its downfall or utter transformation.

This is the rise of woman, the coming of matriarchy, which Rome itself has fostered by the elevation of the status of the Virgin Mary, first to immaculateness then to an equality with the godhood of the Saviour.

The bull of the Pope, proclaiming the assumption of Mary, on the appeal of the Marian congress, meeting with a \$75,000 fireworks display, in Ottawa, may have sealed the doom of the papacy.

Sooner or later a goddess must have priestesses, now excluded in the Catholic religions, and, matriarchy triumphing, it will be unable to tolerate the paternalistic principle crystallized in the Pope.

The twentieth century of the Christian era may be the last of its name. (Article, "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," *Lucifer*, I., 310).

The coming of the Christos is at hand, as Blavatsky predicted, in the article just cited, (*Lucifer*, I., 173), meaning no physical teacher, but the divine truth

(*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*) in each of us, whose *presence* will be more and more manifested in human thought and actions, softening for this age, the travail of Kali Yuga.

The above then have been the directions of my thoughts, which in a desire to be brief I may have unintentionally expressed somewhat dogmatically.

As I see it, the west is not likely to be destroyed either by the atom bomb or by the east, wars will tend to be infrequent once the period of obscurity is past, at the end of this century, and a great opportunity for human happiness and spiritual progress is opening, which men, co-operating with the spirit and purpose of the Mahatmas, *can themselves enhance*.

TO BE RATHER THAN TO KNOW

Perhaps the most common form of suffering the sincere student experiences is that of the condition described in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 163), in which one thinks, "I am not progressing. I know nothing." Mr. Judge then says: "The wish to know is almost solely intellectual and the desire to Be is of the heart."

Could it be that this sort of confused, generalized suffering is one of the "checks" of the soul by Karma, spoken of in the third Fundamental? Why not? Let us consider it such, and make the most of it as a way of understanding our psychic difficulties.

What matters it how lofty and "spiritual" the utterances of our intellectual accumulations? We can reach through lower Manas as higher Manas, only by *becoming*, by transforming ideas into active and purposeful disciplines; then, only, are we fulfilling the purpose of the Cycle of Necessity—the acquirement of Spiritual Self Control. To refuse to *become* and to be content only to "know" would be to enclose ourselves in a cocoon of intellectual vanities. Instead of striving to be a Spiritual Sun we should be

choosing the role of a Moon, which "knows" many things psychically, yet is a dead planet.

We can be our own karmic agents and "check" ourselves, by forestalling disappointments and worry about our progress. We can also look carefully to see whether part of our desire to "know" is only a subconscious urge to force ourselves ahead of others, perhaps to be "spiritual" leaders. If we seek to transmit the spirit of Theosophic Teachings to others, we must, above all, be *natural* human beings. To live on the plane of higher Manas is not a groping in the endless sky. We can become both "natural" and "knowing", especially if we do not grudge the time such a joining may take.

In the *Gita*, called "the study of adepts," the godlike virtues are enumerated as fearlessness, sincerity, assiduity in devotion, generosity, self-restraint, piety, and rectitude; harmlessness, veracity, and freedom from anger, resignation, equanimity, and not speaking of the faults of others, universal compassion, modesty, and mildness; patience, power, fortitude, and purity, discretion, dignity, unvengefulness, and freedom from conceit. Theosophy is in the world that we and all others may eventually *become* beings of such nature.

—*Theosophy*, April, 1952.

* * * *

According to thine opportunity, thou must be the strength of the weak, the refuge of the sorrowful. Thou must have compassion on those within thy reach who are worn with toil. Thou must defend and cherish the young; bless and support the aged; welcome strangers who come thy way; comfort those who are distressed in mind, body or estate. Be assured if thou failest, none other—not nature, nor man, nor angel, nor Creator—will render the service or bestow the love due from thee.

—from the words of Stanton Coit.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY
THE GENERAL SECRETARY

There is published elsewhere in this issue a statement from Mr. Sri Ram, one of the two candidates in the Presidential election. There is no statement from Mrs. Rukmini Arundale as she was not able to prepare one before leaving the United States for Europe. This is unfortunate because the voting will be over before the January issue of the magazine is distributed.

This election will decide which of the two candidates will be President during the next seven very important years. The subject of the election is admirably dealt with by Mr. J. E. van Dissel, General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Europe, in an editorial which will appear in the December issue of *Theosophy in Action*, advance copy for which has just reached me:

"The election must be seen in the light of what the Society needs most and the contribution each can make towards this end.

"As to the needs of the Society, we must take a realistic view. There has indeed been a remarkably quick recovery after the war, but the Theosophical Society certainly is not yet as strong as it should be. There is a great need for renewal of life in many Lodges and Sections and also for a better adaptation to fast changing world conditions.

"We may therefore certainly not be satisfied with the situation as it is at present, especially at a time when our humanity is passing through one of the most critical periods in its history.

"The Society is also in need of a profound restatement in current terms of its larger essential teachings.

"Throughout the world, for example, there is an acknowledged demand for a new understanding of the whole nature of man, spiritual, psychological, physical. It is called for by leading scientists,

educationists, doctors, and in social reform movements, etc., etc. We need leadership in interpreting our heritage so that this demand will be met and 'the attention of the highest minds' be drawn to the ancient truths as to man's present and future possibilities.

"Seen from the above angles the first question to ask ourselves in connection with our contact with the world at large is who is the most capable to convey the vital message of Theosophy to the world, outside the Theosophical Society. This also is so important in our days.

"There is further also the problem of the younger generation, which needs training and guidance in order to be able to take over more and more the work of older members and to fill the gaps, when this present generation passes on. This is an important item in the election.

"In my opinion all these points need to be considered, though there may, of course, be other considerations as well.

"What is important in the election is that each member makes his own choice and uses his own deepest intuition."

* * * *

If any member in good standing has not received a ballot form by December 21, please write the General Secretary, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, as soon as possible.

* * * *

I take this opportunity of sending best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to the members in Canada and to Theosophists the world over. As students of the Ancient Wisdom, we share an understanding of the inner significance of the birth of the Christ Child. Let us hope that in the New Year there will be real peace in this troubled world and that being given us, we may be able to turn our minds and efforts to the betterment of humanity.

E. L. T.

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
IN CANADA

Published on the 15th day of every month.

Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.



Subscription: **TWO DOLLARS A YEAR**

OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

Dudley W. Barr, 18 Rowanwood Ave., Toronto, Ont.
Charles M. Hale, Box 158, New Liskeard, Ont.
Miss M. Hindsley, 52 Isabella St., Toronto, Ont.
George I. Kinman, 46 Rawlinson Ave., Toronto, Ont.
Peter Sinclair, 4941 Wellington St., Verdun, Quebec.
Washington E. Wilks, 925 Georgia St. W., Vancouver, B.C.
Emory P. Wood 9360 — 86th St., Edmonton, Alta.

GENERAL SECRETARY

Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O., 52 Isabella St., Toronto, Ont.

To whom all payments should be made, and all official communications addressed.

EDITORIAL BOARD, CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

All Letters to the Editor, Articles and Reports for Publication should be sent to The Editor:

Dudley W. Barr, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.
Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

Printed by The Griffin & Richmond Co., Ltd.,
29 Rebecca Street, Hamilton, Ontario.

OFFICE NOTES

Special attention is drawn to the November issue of *New Outlook*. In commemoration of the inaugural meeting of the Theosophical Society on November 17, 1895, the magazine carries a photograph of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, an article by her from the first issue of *The Theosophist*, "What is Theosophy?" and a fine editorial from *The New York Tribune* of May 10, 1891, following her death on May 8. Among the many other interesting articles is one by Mr. Ernest Wood. An article by a Japanese writer, Michio Akashi, on Asian Liberalism, discusses the problem of moving from a feudalistic or totalitarian system to a democratic one; a portion of one sen-

tence reads 'real liberals are accused of being communistic', an accusation which liberals face in other countries also. An extra supply of this issue is on hand and we would be happy to send copies to interested readers. *New Outlook* is published at 1159-61 W. Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles 15, California, price \$2.00 a year.

✧ ✧ ✧

Kitchener Lodge has resumed public meetings and has taken a room at the Y.M.C.A. where lectures will be held on Sundays at 8 p.m. The Lodge has also issued an attractive four-page bulletin which gives details of monthly activities. Mr. Alexander Watt, President, and Mr. John Oberlerchner, Secretary-Treasurer, carried on quietly and steadfastly during the 'pralaya'; we send congratulations on the Bulletin and our best wishes for the coming 'Manvantara'.

✧ ✧ ✧

Montreal Lodge is also publishing a small bulletin to keep its members and the public informed of lectures, classes and other Lodge activities. This is encouraging news; a local organ, especially in the larger cities where the members are widely scattered, does help to sustain the interest of infrequent visitors to the Lodge meetings.

✧ ✧ ✧

We understand that the displaying of *The Canadian Theosophist* in the reading room at Headquarters, London, England, has been discontinued—it is not on the 'approved' list, being judged 'too provocative'. Extraordinary people, we theosophists.

✧ ✧ ✧

Manas maintains its high standard of clean cut thinking in the application of the eternal verities to contemporary problems. Free sample copies may be had from Manas Publishing Company, Box 112, El Sereno Station, Los Angeles 32, California.

REVIEW

Practical Occultism, edited by Arthur L. Conger, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 15, Calif., 307 pp., 1951.

*This is a collection of private letters written by William Q. Judge between 1882 and 1891. Among other things, they reveal Mr. Judge's practical common sense views of Theosophical matters; the title, *Practical Occultism* is apt, even though it does not indicate the form of the contents.

Mr. Judge was one of the original members of The Theosophical Society. From his first meeting with Madame Blavatsky until his death twenty-two years later, he was her staunch and un-failing supporter; in occult matters he was closer to her and had a clearer comprehension of the heart of the doctrine than any other contemporary. His standing was well recognized and appreciated in the Society until the preferring of charges against him by Mrs. Besant culminated in the so-called 'Judge Case' which split the Society in two. To this day the writings of this competent leader, the close associate of H.P.B., are comparatively unknown in the Adyar Theosophical Society, although they are of course, well-known and deeply appreciated among the members of the Theosophical Society, Altadena, and of The United Lodge of Theosophists. Undoubtedly, adherence to Mr. Judge's 'divine common sense' influenced the latter two Societies in avoiding the pitfalls of psychism, ceremonialism and sacerdotalism which have so bewitched, bewildered and bedazzled our own Society.

The letters indicate several aspects of his life; the practical man in the handling of organizational matters and of the inevitable problems which arise in lodge work; the mystic, with his deep awareness of the oneness of all life and of 'the amplitude of time'; the occultist,

competent in and understanding well the laws and methods of the ancient science, and ready at all times to help others from the rich resources of his inner wisdom.

"An immense irresistible current drives me on" he wrote in one of the early letters; this force was his compassion for suffering humanity — the secret of Mr. Judge's enormous capacity for work lay in his negation of self for the sake of others. The truth of the Biblical saying 'He that shall lose his soul for my sake shall find it,' was demonstrated in the life of Mr. Judge.

In addition to its value because of its teachings on practical occultism, this book is of much historical interest. There are letters to many of the well-known persons in the Society of that day and these reveal many little known incidents of Theosophical history,—letters to H. P. B., Colonel Olcott, Dr. Bucke, A. P. Sinnett, Countess Wachtmeister, the Keightleys, G. R. S. Mead, Dr. Franz Hartmann, Dr. Hubbe-Schleiden, Mrs. Besant and many others.

The book should be in all lodge libraries; it is not a beginner's book but it will be a 'good companion' to all who have been in the Movement for some years and who have at times been driven to despondency and almost despair because of the disparity between the ideals of Theosophy and the practices and politics which have bedevilled Theosophical organizations. Mr. Judge, as General Secretary of the Society in America and as H.P.B.'s representative in the work of the Esoteric Section in that country, had ample opportunity to observe this, but in spite of disappointment and disillusionment he never despaired of Theosophy — for him the Theosophical Cause was life itself.

* * * * *

"Make no small plans; they have no power to move men's hearts."

MYSTICAL ELEMENTS IN AN ITALIAN NOVEL

The fair land of Italy has been disciplined by the iron fist of Fascism and despoiled by the snatching fingers of military invaders. Harassed by ubiquitous poverty that has resulted in a high incidence of disease, and confused by political changes, the Italian populace presents a sorry picture of tragedy and frustration.

All this is sombre material for the sensitively sentient novelists of the Italian neo-realist school of which Carlo Levi is a significant member. His most recent book — *The Watch** — though a farrago of theories and opinions on a variety of topics, is rich in religious overtones. From the vantage-point of the mystic's mount of vision the author sees the mobile face of life *sub specie aeternitatis*. In confronting the unholy sights of a poverty-stricken Italy; socially disrupted by the war, he speaks the language of acceptance.

Although Mr. Levi's impressionistic style, lambent and full of grace, is eminently satisfying to the æsthetic palate yet some of his reflective passages are so freighted with erudition or subtlety as to be tantalizingly obscure. The author's complicated recountal of a dream concerning a watch is a case in point. But those who refuse to be intimidated by profundity will find this book a richly rewarding adventure in the realm of ideas. Not cast in the traditional novel form, *The Watch* relies for its interest on a description of Roman scenes and a motley procession of characters.

Mr. Levi's previous novel, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, a graphic day-by-day description of the peasant folk of Luca-

nia, has received more praise from the critics than *The Watch*. The local witches and necromancers who traffic unashamedly with gnomes and demons, while worshipping madonnas that have affinities with Greek and Asian deities, are sharply etched. These humble folk with archaic features, are drawn with compassion but the mystical outlook is absent. One might add that no reviewer, as far as this writer's knowledge goes, mentioned the prevalence among them of perennial truths like the universality of the Divine, the magical potency inherent in names, and the duality of persons and things.

The Hebrew seer's ripe optimism embodied in the mystical utterance—"The Lord doeth all things well"—is the unacknowledged text underlying a number of passages in *The Watch*. For instance, Teresa, the cigarette vendor, has happiness in her eyes though she is now flotsam on the onward-rushing river of life—ill, poor, abandoned by her husband and uncertain of her destiny. Then again there is the woman of Viterbo who tells the story of her struggles and privation "without rebellion or resentment. . . as though she were talking of an accepted and unavoidable reality. . . a destiny that does not allow comparisons or envy or even complaint."

The author himself shares the same mood of acceptance with his literary portraits. He tells of standing one day in a public square idly watching a comedy of marionettes when an unwonted joy was suddenly unloosed in him. It seems as though the full tide of life flowed over him in all its satisfying completeness as he saw the familiar world of colour and form in an aura of divine approval. He records his experience in these words: "I thought that all things appeared and displayed themselves without shame: the people, the rags, the beauty, the misery. . . We are

* Carlo Levi, *The Watch* (translated from the Italian). Farrar Straus and Young, New York, 1951.

content. This is our share of things. . . it seemed to me that I should thank someone for the gift I had received, but that it was too strong for me, made out of infinite lives, and that this vortex of life was overwhelming, so intense that one could not bear it." (p. 191)

Mr. Levi experienced his first initiation into the state of incommunicable blessedness and power when he was a small child. He asserts that this preternatural heightening of the emotions synchronized with his concentrated attention on a point in the ceiling of his mother's room.

Perhaps the most impressive among the character sketches is that of the spiritual philosopher variously termed 'uncle Luca', "the mediæval sage" and "the old serpent". It was his pre-occupation with the bipolarity of cells that led him to view the variegated pattern of existence as the tension of dialectical opposites—man, woman or the yang-yin of Chinese Taoism. Equally profound are his detailed descriptions of the changes affected in the consciousness by death. As the ego nears the end of the life cycle the restriction of attention to one point or object, incidental to all thinking, no longer obtains (he says) but 'thought. . . departs from that object and expands in waves without limits". Such an observation calls to mind the notion of the body as a focusing instrument, for we know that if the senses were not limited in their range we would have no distinct impressions at all. In other words, if we could hear the heart-beat of a bird, a blade of grass growing or an earth-worm's burrowing, our world of sound would be a blurred cacophony. Death may well mean (as uncle Luca suggests) the crossing over the threshold into a world of unconfined perceptions.

One of the distinctive impressions one gleans from *The Watch* is that, in the opinion of its author, Life is more

than a driving force impelling men and women willy-nilly to obey its dynamic urge. It is tender, linking like the arms of a mother the multitudinous objects of existence together. Overflowing into every nook and cranny the Spirit is the secret pursuer both of those who nonchalantly walk in the day or furtively peer about in the night but always Incognito.

Some people, after wending their way with the author through manifold scenes of distress, might be inclined to take him to task for his bland mood and Olympian detachment. They might think that the T. S. Eliot commentary—"Life is a cheat and a disappointment"—is a more fitting reaction to sights of human misery and degradation. But since there is more than one level of reality, "futility" is not the last word, as Walt Whitman voiced repeatedly. The mystic whose awareness has deepened because the inner god has awakened (sometimes by the kiss of pain) beholds a new heaven and a new earth transfigured in the light of the Eternal.

Alberta Jean Rowell.

THE THREE TRUTHS

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.

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.

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

AN OUTLINE OF THEOSOPHY

BY W. B. PEASE

(Continued from Page 143)

Mankind is Helped: This statement, however, does not preclude the belief that the men of this earth are helped by suggestions, and guided, as far as they will accept guidance, by Beings who have attained to wisdom and powers God-like in comparison to our own. For there is a Hierarchy whose representatives are at all stages of evolution, from man, as we know him, to the highest Planetary Spirit, or Archangel. This great Hierarchy, includes all the creative self-conscious Gods, all of whom began their evolution of thought *as men* on some planet of a more or less remote past. Man is The Thinker, the vehicle for the One Universal Mind. Those of this Hierarchy who are the guardians of our terrestrial humanity, help us by broadcasting ideas in the mental atmosphere, which may be picked up by our minds and used, or rejected, as we think fit. But every choice and every effort must be made by ourselves, and only as we fit ourselves to receive suggestion, we shall receive it.

To conclude the subject of karma, I quote from *The Voice of the Silence*, translated from *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, a very ancient Tibetan scripture:

“Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. 'A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again.' The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn.”

Periodicity: Another tenet of *The Secret Doctrine* is:

“The absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.” — Proem, *The Secret Doctrine*.

There is a fine chapter on this subject in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, by W. Q. Judge, p. 119, from which I quote:

“Reincarnation being the great law of life and progress, it is interwoven with that of the cycles and karma. These three work together, and in practice it is almost impossible to disentangle reincarnation from cyclic law. Individuals and nations in definite streams return in regularly recurring periods to the earth and thus bring back to the globe the arts, the civilization, the very persons who once were on it at work. And as the units in nation and race are connected together by invisible strong threads, large bodies of such units moving slowly but surely all together reunite at different times and emerge again and again together into new race and new civilization as the cycles roll their appointed rounds. Therefore, the souls who made the most ancient civilizations will come

back and bring the old civilization with them in idea and essence, which being added to what others have done for the development of the human race in its character and knowledge will produce a new and higher state of civilization. This newer and better development will not be due to books, to records, to arts or mechanics, because all those are periodically destroyed so far as physical evidence goes, but the soul ever retaining in *Manas* [Mind principle—W.B.P.] the knowledge it once gained and always pushing to completer development the higher principles and powers, the essence of progress remains and will as surely come out as the sun shines.”

This law of periodicity or of cycles regulates the times at which great Teachers and philosophers appear upon the earth to instruct mankind; the greater among them at the beginning of the greater cycles, and the lesser at the beginning of the smaller cycles that divide the greater into a series of short periods. At the beginning of the small cycles ideas are often given out through comparatively unknown persons. Thus, on looking back, it will be found that in the last quarter of every century, men's thoughts have been turned into new channels, often leading to revolutionary conceptions.

This law also ensures that, as we travel the perplexing paths of life, ever seeking for happiness, we shall be confronted at different stages of our spiritual growth with similar problems in similar circumstances, so that, when through lack of courage or wisdom, we have chosen a wrong course and then, through the ensuing results have regretted the mistake, another opportunity at a later period will occur when a better decision may be made.

Responsibility of Choice: It must not, however, be supposed that the responsibility which the power of choice and free-will confer upon man is confined to periodical or especial occasions. On the contrary, this power is exercised at every hour of every day, and as we choose in small things, so shall we choose when the great moments of life arrive.

This responsibility should not be regarded as a burden merely, but rather as a most efficient teacher gradually impressing upon us by personal experience the truth that no mere earthly satisfaction or acquirement can for long still the inward craving of man's nature for truth and reality, until at last he need no longer be told, for he *knows*, that the only quest worth following is that of reality behind all illusion, unity behind separating forms. This is the quest of the Holy Grail. Only the knight, purified in the conquest of self, will find it.

It is only by right choosing that we can ever win to full realization of our immortality for it is in terrestrial life in which “he first saw the light,” and in which all his struggles are made and conquests won that man, after he has learnt to control his thoughts, desires and emotions, so that they have become ready servants to his higher will, shall regain the knowledge, never again to be forgotten, that he *is* his higher deathless Self.

It was by choosing aright that the Masters of Wisdom gained the strength that enabled them to forego their well-earned right to liberation from the necessity of re-birth—to turn back from the very entrance to life in the supersensuous worlds of bliss in order to help their fellow-men still struggling amid the sorrows and difficulties of earth-life. And this is the path that links us to them and by which we can, if we so will, follow in their footsteps.

The Constitution of Man and Matter: Theosophy has a great deal to say with regard to the constitution of man and its relations to that of the universe. Physical science has accepted the theory that "Matter is a mode of motion," and that different rates of motion, i.e., of atomic vibration, determine the qualities of different kinds and states of matter. Thus, if the vibratory rate of the atoms of a piece of cold iron be raised to a certain velocity by heat, the solid mass becomes a glowing liquid, and if the rate be still further increased, the liquid is transformed into vapour. This is all in perfect accord with the occult teaching of the Eastern adepts. This ancient wisdom, however, goes further and declares that the visible universe is penetrated by many grades of substance of vastly higher rates of vibration than any matter cognizable through our physical senses; that these different grades of matter form worlds, peopled by beings whose bodies or vehicles of consciousness—because they are formed of the same grade of matter as the world to which they belong—are as well adapted to contact the objects of their world as our physical senses are to feel, hear, see, taste and smell the objects of our world. We say that the physical state or plane of matter is the densest or lowest of all the planes of which we know anything; that it is interpenetrated and surrounded by the next densest plane known among occultists as the astral plane, which is likewise interpenetrated and surrounded by matter in a still less dense, or more subtle, and more tenuous state called the manasic or mental plane. So it is with each succeeding plane. Every atom in the universe, and the universe itself, thus exist on several planes of substance. Hence our earth may be regarded as the densest central globe of many concentric globes of increasing circumference and decreasing density.

Moreover, man is likewise composed of different bodies or vehicles of consciousness, each one attuned to vibrate in harmony with the grade of substance to which it is related. While awake in a physical body, however, he can, as a rule, be conscious only through his physical brain, in which vibration must be set up before sensation or thought can be recorded by the mind. Thus the brain acts not only as an instrument, but also as a barrier, which effectively prevents the sights and sounds of other planes from intruding upon this one.

Thus, the universe and all it contains—our bodies, our sensations and mental pictures—are built up of vibrations, and our awareness of any object, feeling or thought depends upon the ability of one or other of our vehicles to respond to the vibratory rate of such object, feeling, or thought.

Symbolism: Symbolism is yet another subject which, studied in connection with theosophical teaching, is found to be of the greatest importance and of fascinating interest. Such signs as the circle, the various derivatives of the cross—that adopted by the Christian churches, the Egyptian tau (a plain T), the ansated cross; the swastika (the devil's mark);* the two triangles inter-

* The frequent occurrence of the swastika in many places before the time of Christ had, in common with other forms of the cross, to be accounted for by the Christian clergy of the Middle Ages. It was, therefore, assigned to the devil, in whom belief was as unquestionably held as was belief in God. This attitude was but logical for a creator of all that is good, necessitates a creator of all that is evil—a tempter and a spoiler. The day when his satanic majesty became a joke was a bad one for dogmatic religion.

laced so as to form a six-pointed star, or Solomon's seal—such signs afford proof by their great antiquity and by their wide distribution over the face of the globe that the same arcane truths have been known from the most remote ages and in all parts of the world. "Identical glyphs, numbers and esoteric symbols are found in Egypt, Peru, Mexico, Easter Island, India, Chaldea and Central Asia." *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 323. They relate to the emergence of the cosmos from the Absolute; the development of qualities and of forms from undifferentiated substance; the involution and evolution of spirit and matter; the descent of spiritual consciousness into bodies of flesh; the triumph of soul above the cross of matter; the union of the higher with the lower self, and many other fundamental doctrines given to the early races of men by their divine teachers, who were themselves products of a previous humanity.

And of equal importance is the symbolism of natural objects. It reveals many hidden meanings of the ancient scriptures of the world and of the myths and allegories of folklore. Our own Bible is rescued by it from the contempt into which it was thrown by such caustic and unanswerable critics as Thomas Paine in *The Age of Reason*, and placed among the most profoundly interesting books ever compiled.

Thus, if we know that a serpent signifies wisdom or a sage; that a tree stands for the thinking principle, or the mind; and that the birds come and flit in and out of its foliage and fly off to other trees are ideas; a mountain, a high plane of consciousness; water, among many other meanings, material activity; and wine, spiritual activity; cattle and the beasts that perish, animal instincts and desires, etc., we shall find new meanings for many old tales.

Eve will be exonerated from having

brought down God's curse upon mankind for, as his better half—the intuitional side of man's nature—she persuaded Adam, the animal man, to partake of the fruit of the *tree* recommended her by *the serpent*. This antagonized Nature (the god, Pan) and man, after he had exchanged innocence and ignorance for the power to know and to choose, began at once to break the laws of Nature and to suffer from so doing. But his suffering is not in vain, for with the acquisition of responsibility and the power to reason, and with the development of will and creative power, he is now a self-conscious being with possibilities before him of limitless evolution.

To take other examples, the Christos, the Christ-spirit of universal love and compassion, is born a weak babe *in a stable* (among the cattle). At the *wedding feast* when reason, or intellect, is united to intuition, or spirituality, Christos turns *water into wine*. It is His first miracle. And when one goes up into a *mountain* to pray he transfers his consciousness to the higher planes of his being and communes with his father in heaven,—his higher Self.

And the statement that man was given dominion over the fish in the sea, the birds, the cattle, and every creeping thing, means that by the exercise of his will he can and ought to rule the desires and propensities symbolically represented by these creatures. It certainly does *not* mean that their God has given His Christian worshippers the right to tyrannize over and torture those animals over whom, by his superior cunning, he has gained mastery, for they are as truly vehicles and centres of the One Life, as are the lords of creation, though the life manifesting through them is on a different plane of development.

Do those who support and condone the merciless acts of vivisectors or

animal-trainers, imagine that justice extends only as far down the scale of evolution as our own race, and that an easy way of escape from the pains and penalties incurred by disregard of *physical* law can be found by violation of *moral* law; or that knowledge or amusement that has been obtained by heartless misuse of power can be enjoyed with impunity? Ignorance of the working of the One Law will not save individuals or the race from reaping the harvest they are daily sowing. Indeed, we are reaping terribly today!

Other Subjects: Theosophy also treats of the early history of man from his first appearance on this globe: of the formation of the worlds from cosmic substance, and, indeed, touches upon all the sciences of the past and present that have ever occupied the restless thoughts of men.

Christianity: To the question, often asked, is Theosophy antagonistic to Christianity, I should say that it certainly is not antagonistic to the teaching of the New Testament* nor to that of any of the great World-Teachers, but with regard to any special creed or dogma the student must decide for himself. The chief value of the study of Theosophy is that it leads logically to the conclusion that to "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is more than merely a pious duty, for it proves that "thy neighbour" is "thyself," and that until the significance of that fact be recognized and intelligently acted upon, no satisfactory solution of the world's difficulties will be found, no true knowledge gained nor lasting happiness achieved.

* See "Open Letter from 'Lucifer' to the Archbishop of Canterbury."—To be obtained from the H. P. B. Library, 750 Grand Boulevard, North Vancouver, B.C.

(To Be Continued)

CANADIAN LODGES

CALGARY LODGE:

President, E. H. Lloyd Knechtel; Secretary, Mrs. Lillian Glover, 418, 10th Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alta. Meetings at 510 Crescent Road.

EDMONTON LODGE:

President, Mr. Emory P. Wood; Secretary, Mrs. Madeline Williams, 10943, 7th Ave., Edmonton, Alta.

HAMILTON LODGE:

President, Mrs. E. M. Mathers; Secretary, Miss Edith Wilkinson, 290 Fennel Ave. East, Hamilton, Ont.

KITCHENER LODGE:

President, Alexander Watt; Secretary, John Oberlerchener, Kingsdale P.O., Kitchener.

MONTREAL LODGE:

President, Mr. G. D. Matsell; Secretary, Miss M. R. Desrochers, 1655 Lincoln, Apt. 37, Montreal, P. Q. Lodge Rooms, 1501 St Catherine Street West, Montreal.

OTTAWA:

Enquiries respecting Theosophical activities in Ottawa should be addressed to: Mrs. D. H. Chambers, 531 Bay St., Ottawa.

ST. THOMAS LODGE:

President, Benj. T. Garside; Secretary, Mrs. Hazel B. Garside, 71 Hincks St., St. Thomas, Ont.

TORONTO LODGE:

President, Mr. G. I. Kinman, 46 Rawlinson Ave., Toronto 12 (phone Mohawk 5346). Recording Secretary, Miss Laura Gaunt. Lodge Rooms, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto 5, Ont.

TORONTO WEST END LODGE:

President, Mrs. A. Carmichael; Secretary, Mrs. E. L. Goss, 20 Strathearn Boulevard, Toronto, 12, Ont.

VANCOUVER LODGE:

President, Mrs. Buchanan; Secretary, M. D. Buchanan, 4690 W. 8th Avenue. The Lodge rooms are at 151½ Hastings St. West.

VULCAN LODGE:

President, Guy Denbigh, Vulcan, Alta.

ORPHEUS LODGE, VANCOUVER:

President, R. H. Hedley; Secretary, L. C. Hanson; Copp Bldg, Vancouver, B. C.

WINNIPEG LODGE:

Secretary, P. H. Stokes, Suite 8, 149 Langside Street, Winnipeg, Man.