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## MASTERS OF THE WAY

There is a tradition running through the pages of occult history concerning a small group of men who are very wise in spiritual matters, very learned in the sciences, very pure in their personal lives and very well disciplined in their minds and emotions. And they are, above all, motivated in all their actions by a deep compassion for humanity. These men are known as the Masters, the Adepts, the Elder Brothers; and the group as a whole is called the White Lodge, or the White Brotherhood. To it belong the Teachers of all the races of men throughout all ages.

An almost impenetrable veil of secrecy surrounds them and their activities. Sometimes in national or international crises one or more of them may appear out of the blue as it were, and lend power and talent to establishing a new direction in human thinking, to consolidating some far-flung outpost of a daring idea, or if need be, to destroying that which is inhibiting the growth of an impulse toward more complete unfoldment of the spiritual possibilities of humanity. These occasions, however, are apparently rare and it is difficult to point to any one period in history and say, "Here a Master worked." The Count of St. Germain is said to have

been such a one, and the influence of the Masters has been accepted by some students as the power behind establishing the independence of the United States of America, and the writing of its Constitution. Other Masters are said to have been instrumental in bringing about the Renaissance of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Along with the traditions of the appearance of these Adepts in political and humanistic activities, we find a great number of stories of quieter and more secluded work in establishing centres of occult teaching—schools or ashrams—where persons who in some way or another had become aware of the existence of a secret wisdom and of the Masters who held it in their care, and who aspired to join their ranks, might enter upon a definite system of occult training and discipline.

Some of these schools were religious and mystical, others philosophical, others were engaged in practical magic. The modern world is dubious about "magic" in these days of exact science, although the now commonplace applications of science would have been magical to our forefathers. The word calls to mind pictures of the wizard and witch of our fairytale days, or the thin bent

figure of some medieval alchemist vainly trying to transmute lead into gold, or to find the Philosopher's Stone by means of which he might know all things. Perhaps that is precisely what magic is—transforming lead into gold and finding the Philosopher's Stone. But the lead is not a dull, heavy metal dug from the earth; the gold is not the coin of the realm, nor is the Stone a solid precipitate found at the bottom of a crucible. The lead is the base metal of our own lower nature, the unresponsive physical body, the smouldering desire nature, the dullness and obtuseness of our minds. These are our "leads", and the Philosopher's Stone, by which we transform the body into a vessel of beauty, transmute the desire nature, and reveal the golden radiance of our godlike intellect, is Wisdom. The divine man *within us* is the great Alchemist, ever engaged in that regenerative work. This is the essence of Magic.

Many questions arise in our minds when we ponder this great subject of the Masters. What reliable evidence is there of Their existence? Did they reach their exalted status by self-discipline over years of self-determined labour and study or are they members of a gifted race, far higher in the scheme of things than the humanity which now inhabits the earth? If they are men like ourselves in essence, differing from us only in the degree of unfoldment of their inner faculties, what are the processes by which men may rise to their stature? What is the karma that produces such a flowering and perfection of man? Occultism teaches that nothing comes to anyone by chance or favour. Each man is the creator of his own destiny. If he builds well in one lifetime, the results follow in future lives. If he makes mistakes in one life, the errors are presented to him for correction. "The Adept," says an occult aphorism, "*becomes*: he is

not made." In whatever circumstances which surround the individual, he is the determining factor. He may seize upon those circumstances and become the master of them, or he may drift, as most of us do, deciding to master them tomorrow or the day after, or he may fail utterly and become an aberrant cell in the universal body.

"One ship drives east and another drives west

With the selfsame winds that blow.  
'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales  
Which tell us the way to go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways  
of fate

As we voyage along through life;  
'Tis the set of a soul that decides its goal,  
And not the calm or the strife."

The concept of self-responsibility is one of the first lessons to be learned in occultism. There is no luck nor chance in life. The hope of fortunate chance is the illusory dream of the unawakened soul. Luck is the unreasoning hope of the superstitious. In this universe of law, it is not chance that swings the stars in their courses; it is not luck which brings day and night, seedtime and harvest. And it is neither through luck nor chance that a man takes control of his own life. It is by entering upon a strict and unremitting course of self-discipline, and staying with that course until he comes to its end and finally can claim the guerdon—mastery over life's secrets. We repeat, this does not come by luck nor by fortunate chance. It comes about by that law which is embodied in the only promise made to candidates: "If you live the life, you shall know the Doctrine." A Master is a man of the same essence as all other men, but one who by self-induced and self-devised efforts over vast periods of time has graduated from earth's school of experi-

ence and become a prototype for other men.

The "man-ness" of the Masters is emphasized partly in rebellion against a worshipful attitude approaching idolatry which has grown up toward them in the Theosophical Society and allied organizations. "We are men like yourselves," They have said, and they have indicated that they welcome men of competent intellect and independent minds who carry the seeds of mastery within their own natures. Fawning and flattery are apparently as repugnant to them and as useless as an approach to them as they would be to other men of mature character. The adolescent mind which pours out adulation upon Them only creates barriers. "Man-ness" is of the essence of the relationship between Them and mankind. They are the Elder Brothers of the race—older in wisdom though not in time—and all younger brothers may grow to Their stature. The Masters are the flowers of humanity who during millions of years of human evolution have attained to the goal which is the destiny of all aspirants of The Way. Their success is promise and assurance to all who aspire.

However, the great gulf which separates Them from us has not been overlooked. True, they are men, but men who have touched Divinity. They are fully entitled to all the respect, reverence and veneration born of an understanding of their exalted rank and the selfless compassion which motivates them. They have moved so far in advance of ordinary humanity that it is little wonder They have been regarded by the ignorant as gods from another world. Perhaps there is some element of truth in this for they are no longer "of" this world although they may be living on earth. One of their messages to aspirants reads: "Is any of you so eager for knowledge and the beneficent

powers it confers as to be ready to leave your world and come into ours? Let him come by all means, as the pupil to the master, and without conditions; or let him wait, as so many others have and be satisfied with such crumbs of knowledge as may fall his way."

As to the evidence for the existence of the Masters, we are admittedly faced with a problem in assembling "evidence" which would satisfy a court of enquiry. Logical inferences are satisfying only if the basis for the inference is accepted. Assuming the truth of several basic Principles which are commonly accepted by Theosophical students, namely, the Divine Source of all Life; a continuity of experience through a series of earth lives; the law of Cause and Effect, karma, which in each rebirth presents unfinished lessons and new ones to the reincarnated self; the existence of the Path of Discipleship which leads to ever-increasing knowledge and the capacity to use it; an infinity of time in which experience may be obtained and wisdom garnered—then the existence of the Masters becomes a logical necessity. Those who accept the premises will have no difficulty in accepting the conclusion. But it would be difficult, in fact, impossible, to *prove* the Masters to those whose minds cannot accept these premises, nor would evidence of tradition and legend influence them greatly. While the one-hundred-year cycle of restatement of the ancient wisdom can be traced back through European history, the sceptic would not accept this historical fact as evidence of the work of the Masters, although Theosophical students, sympathetic toward the idea, find in this fact strong corroborative evidence.

The modern Theosophical Movement, which followed in the one-hundred-year pattern, is said to have been the result of the interest of two of

the Masters. The indications are that this Movement is of much more far-reaching importance than its predecessors. Certainly it received far greater public attention than any previous effort, and some of the ideas associated with the Movement are now definitely established as part of our modern range of thought. The broadening influence which it has had on world-thought is out of proportion to the number of members in the Theosophical Societies. It may have been that the crises which the Masters foresaw would face humanity in the twentieth century were considered to be such a potential hazard to its very existence that the traditional secrecy previously guarding the teachings was partially laid aside and a unique effort was made to awaken humanity to its latent divine powers and neutralize its materialistic tendencies.

The modern sceptic is well aware of the possibility of self-deception, even by very sincere persons and would discount all this as well as the various accounts of the personal appearance of the Masters in the early days of the Society. Nevertheless, many such accounts are on record and the personal characters of those who left such records are such as to inspire confidence—Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, for instance, Co-Founder with Madame Blavatsky, of the Theosophical Society. Unfortunately, in later years flamboyant accounts have been published and even though one hesitates to question the sincerity of the narrators, it must be stated that genuine evidence is lacking. If one chooses to believe these accounts, then one must be prepared to re-adjust his Theosophical philosophy to conform to such belief. However, there is still freedom of thought in the Theosophical Society and no one is required to accept anything on the dictum of another. Freedom to doubt is a precious heritage which must

ever be defended. "When you doubt, abstain," says the wise Zoroaster, whose prudent aphorism is found corroborated in every case by daily life and experience." (H. P. B., *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 443) An open-minded doubter will build more surely than the starry-eyed enthusiast. Bacon offers this same priceless wisdom when he says "if a man begin with certainties, he shall end in doubt; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties."

There is one body of evidence which cannot be explained away and that is the collection of letters from the Masters which are now preserved in the British Museum and are available for examination. These tangible proofs of the existence of the two writers are not only evidence of their actual existence but are also evidence of the organized group of the Masters and of the continuity of their records over thousands of years. This evidence may be disregarded but it cannot be refuted.

To Theosophical students, these letters, which were published thirty years ago and thus made available to the world by Trevor Barker in his book *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* are the strongest possible evidence of the existence of the Masters, the White Lodge and the body of teachings given to the world by their great disciple, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. While there was objection to the publication of letters which were originally intended by the writers for private reading only, the book has served the vitally important purpose of re-directing attention to the original message of Theosophy. Today it is being recognized that *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, *The Secret Doctrine* and other writing of Madame Blavatsky contain the main body of Theosophical teachings, and together form a criterion of validity.

# THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S WESTERN TRIP

I feel it incumbent on me to make an extensive report on my journey to the West when I had the first opportunity of visiting the lodges on our far flung western periphery. It was made possible by the generosity of the members of those lodges who got the idea from an article I wrote in the July issue of our magazine, in which I deplored the fact that although I had been General Secretary for nearly ten years, I had not yet visited any lodges west of Winnipeg.

Once started, the idea gained momentum, and with such an enthusiastic backing, everything was quickly arranged and on September 23 I left Toronto on a super-constellation plane for my memorable journey. Soaring up into the empyrean I seemed to be in another world, and this feeling remained for a period of ten days whilst visiting strange cities, seeing new faces and addressing new audiences until I descended from the clouds in Malton air-port and regained normalcy.

But in substance it was all very real and of great moment. I met and conversed with those who had been through the years just names and membership numerals, these I had now met in the flesh, and consequently our attitude and outlook toward each other took on a totally different aspect. But I must take it all seriatim in order to give a full and true perspective.

My first stop was Winnipeg, where, although we have no lodge there, I had a pressing invitation to meet and speak to the Wayfarer's Lodge of the Canadian Federation. On arrival, Mr. H. P. Stokes, one of our members-at-Large was there to greet me accompanied by Mrs. Bowers, President of the Federation Lodge and others, including Mr.

Gadd who was to be my host for the stay. The meeting that night was fully attended, augmented by students and others interested in Theosophy. I was struck by the general youthfulness of the gathering as well as by the intense earnestness of their attention and their quest for information regarding the Theosophical Movement in general. I will quote a few excerpts from the report of the lodge prepared after I left. "The Wayfarer's Lodge was privileged to have as its guest, Colonel Thomson who came from Toronto and stopped at Winnipeg to address a special meeting called in his honour on Thursday, Sept. 23. He very graciously gave us a talk on how he became a theosophist, and why he believes in theosophy. The important highlights of his lecture were based on a united effort of co-operation, of all members of the Society pulling together in love and harmony, rather than the present division which now exists. And why should it be divided was the question posed by our members? Colonel Thomson deserves orchids for his pioneering work in this field, and our hopes are that his magnificent dream of a united Theosophical Society will materialize, as was originally planned."

It was with deep regret I took leave of this delightful coterie, amid urgent requests that I pay a return visit, a thing I promised to do if it were at all possible. I must add that at all the places I visited on this trip, many of the Canadian Federation members attended the meetings and I found them not only keenly interested but most co-operative. This I may add has been the attitude of the Federation since I took office. I find that in essence there is very little difference in our outlooks. The pity is that

at one time for reasons which seemed adequate at the time, they broke away and formed another group, thus loosening that unity that should bind all theosophists here in Canada to the Cause. I thank all concerned in Winnipeg for having made my visit such a pleasurable and memorable one.

The next day found me in Calgary, here I was met by Mr. Lloyd Knechtel, president of the lodge there, and Mrs. Lilian Glover, the Secretary and others. To mention the names of all the delightful persons I met with would be difficult, so I must be content to name a few only, the others know how much I appreciate their hospitality and friendship. The meeting of the Calgary Lodge the same evening was also attended by members of the Federation Lotus Lodge, and was characterized by extreme cordiality. I found the same eagerness here for outside news and things relating to theosophy that I found wherever I went. This was evinced in the report by the lodge afterwards when they averred that my visit was too short and that they hoped for a more leisurely trip in the not too distant future. To this I agree and feel that the time must come when I must visit these lodges giving them time to go into questions that vitally affect them. I must mention here what has been a matter of much concern to me for some time and that is how a small lodge such as Calgary is to keep going if there are few, and in some cases, no new members to carry on when those of long standing have gone the way of all flesh. In the past few years we have lost several lodges in this way and something should be done to correct this. Next day Mr. McLean, my host, with others took me for an excursion to view Calgary, this "City of the Plain" which I found a fine and impressive centre of activity. Mr. McLean was most hospitable and is, moreover a most interesting personality,

having had a very creditable and outstanding career.

Shortly afterwards I left for Edmonton and on arrival was met by Mr. Emory Wood, a member of the General Executive and President of the Edmonton Lodge; with him were several others. That night I spoke at a meeting of the lodge augmented by members of the Mercury Lodge of the Federation. It was a large and friendly group and I was especially pleased to see so many young people in the audience. They listened intently to all I had to say and afterwards the questions were numerous and directed especially as to how to apply theosophy personally, and how the Society was progressing as a world movement. The question also of attracting and maintaining the interest of young people in theosophy was discussed with much animation. In this lodge intending members have to go through a probationary period of six months before admittance. The lodge did this, I was informed because it wanted none but bona-fide members enrolled. To me there are pros and cons to this question as there are to many others that arose during my tour, and these, after collation will be discussed by the General Executive in due course. In the home of Mr. Wood and family I was entertained during my brief stay and was charmed with their hospitality. The following day Mr. Whitbread motored Mr. Wood and myself around the city which has developed during the past few years into a booming oil centre. I was struck with its smart, orderly and up-to-date appearance. Mr. Wood was from now on to be my companion for the remainder of the trip, and right glad I was to have him with me. Boarding the plane at 10 a.m. we circled back over Calgary and then headed due west to the coast.

En route I had the strange and won-

derful experience of having lunch high above the topmost peaks of the Rocky Mountains. It seemed like a page from Jules Verne, and it may have been the altitude but I felt like a giant who had but to put out his hand, seize hold of one of those peaks, and shake the world! Strange phantasy! Having to change planes at Vancouver we descended there, and in the interim were greeted by Dr. Washington Wilks and Mrs. Kelly. Now I had two Western members of the General Executive together, one of whom I had never met before, and to whom I was mostly indebted for having made this trip possible, viz. Dr. Wilks. We had an animated conversation and touched on several important subjects which I wanted them to mull over for discussion on my return from Victoria.

Mr. Wood and I then continued the flight, which was but a short one to Vancouver Island, and eventually landed at Victoria. Here I was met by my hostess, Mrs. Dorita Gilmour, accompanied by Mrs. Lillian Hooper and Mrs. Housez, the latter who so kindly used her car on my behalf during my stay. At dinner that night one of the guests was Mr. Griffith whom I found most interesting and stimulating in his general theosophical outlook. Here I will quote the report from Victoria:

"The members of the Canadian Section in Victoria, B.C., were delighted to welcome Colonel Thomson, our General Secretary and Mr. Emory Wood, President of the Edmonton Lodge during the last week in September. The same evening Col. Thomson gave an informal talk at the house of Mrs. W. Gilmour to an interested group of members and friends. The title of his lecture was "What Theosophy means to me" and he began with a brief resume of the history of the Canadian Section for those who were not members. Some points in the Colonel's talk were especially memor-

able, for instance, the often overlooked fact that all the reading and studying in the world is of little value unless accompanied by the continual endeavour of the individual to live the life, and break through from mere instinctive personal living to the realm of the higher consciousness, there to know oneself as the entity employing all the lower powers. He emphasized that this is not a mystical experience but a very practical and understandable technique. Col. Thomson also stressed the fact that we should never be led by personalities in our spiritual life. Following his talk he was asked many pertinent questions by those present, which he answered very ably and fully. Refreshments were served by Mrs. Gilmour assisted by Mrs. Evelyn Housez, member of the Edmonton Lodge now living in Victoria and Mrs. Lillian Hooper of the Orpheus Lodge, Vancouver, who was also visiting at the Gilmour home during the Colonel's stay. The following evening Mrs. Housez entertained at a small fire-side chat for Col. Thomson, where we had the opportunity of hearing his views on a variety of theosophical subjects. We are hoping that the Colonel will be enabled to visit the West again, and look forward with pleasure to renewing the friendships already formed."

The Victoria Lodge of the Canadian Section is of course dormant, but I believe that with very little effort it could be resuscitated. Several spoke to this effect and I have high hopes that this may eventually be brought about. It was here I more especially felt the urgent necessity of stimulating theosophical interest through visiting lecturers, pertinent literature and so on in the smaller lodges of the Section. In some cases I found the necessity really pathetic.

The following afternoon Mrs. Housez motored me to see the most interesting

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local sights and I was particularly struck by the profusion of flowers and fruits everywhere in spite of the lateness of the season; enroute I was delighted to partake of tea at the house of Mrs. Chesman of the Federation, who is a leading light in that organization and who wanted particularly to talk to me. She was most gracious and said she especially wanted to thank me for what, she said, was the wonderful work I had done in the Society in bringing goodwill and better understanding between the various groups in the Movement. We had a long and invigorating talk on many aspects of the subject. In the evening I met practically the same group as the night before, for they, like Oliver Twist wanted more. I felt again

that there was a real searching for and avidity for Truth, and it brought still more to my mind that there should be an organized effort on our part to raise our dormant lodge from its ashes.

The next day we left Victoria, and I was indeed sorry to say farewell to so many newfound friends. The hop across to Vancouver took just about half an hour, whereas if one took the boat it would have taken eight hours. So with Emory at my side we landed back in that great city of the West. My new hostesses, Mrs. Boyd and Mrs. Harper were there to meet me, as was also Mrs. Kelly. At dinner one of the guests was Mr. Ernest Wilks, President of the Orpheus Lodge who was to be my Chairman at the meeting following. It was in this home that I saw one of the most beautiful pictures I have ever seen. In the dining room was a window the width of the room and probably five or six feet high; through this was a view of the Rocky Mountains across the bay, with the Vancouver suburbs in the foreground spread around like an open fan. Here Dame Nature, for she was the artist, was for ever painting the scene in constant changing pigments, from dawn to sunset and through the days and through the seasons, though I did not see them, but could well imagine them. Here was a picture no earthly artist could emulate, entralling in interest and ever scintillating colour.

The meeting was a crowded one being augmented by members of the Vancouver Lodge and others interested in our philosophy. I spoke generally on the theosophical situation and touched upon many crucial points. All this proved of intense interest as was evinced by the numerous and pertinent questions put to me afterwards. Several I will enumerate here as they prove the vital interest taken in these things. I mentioned the need of outside lecturers



for instance. These they urged should be only highly qualified and utterly sincere theosophists. I pointed out that these were not easy to obtain, to which they added "then we do not want them". Then again the question, an urgent one I considered of bringing in new members to keep the lodges going. "All-right," they replied, "But we want only sincere theosophists." "A consummation devoutly to be wished" I replied. "We want only those proven so," I was assured. "How are those to be obtained?" I queried. "Well, if that is impossible let the lodges die". Some suggested that it was not necessary to have organizations. "Then the Society itself would eventually cease to exist" I answered, and followed by "Did not the Masters want an organization?" It must not be assumed that these comments were the considered decisions of the lodges concerned. To me it showed the vitality that existed and demonstrated the fact that they are very much alive. There was much more and I finally summed up by saying "Are you so happy in your own little groups that you are oblivious of the fact that there are many looking for something to take the place of the religion they had outgrown, and like myself, for instance who would never have found Theosophy unless there had been a lodge where I was to find what I was looking for, and who took me in 'for better or for worse,' and did not know whether I was a 'good' theosophist or not." To bring the evening to a close I said that in my lecture to-morrow night I would tell them how I had found Theosophy and what it meant to me, the eternal debt I owed it, and what I considered to be the aim of a theosophist, the kind of life and example to lead and so on. This closed the meeting and the members came up to congratulate me and said they agreed with me and that I must not feel that anyone was adverse

to what I had said, but fully agreed in principle.

Up betimes next morning, feeling much rested. Taken for a drive to view the principal sights and after lunch had a discussion with Dr. Wilks and Mr. Wood on important questions which I wanted elucidated, as far as they were concerned, before the next meeting of the General Executive. In the evening before a well filled hall I spoke at the public lecture that had been arranged. Mr. Lawren Harris, the well known Canadian artist presided. The subject of my talk was "What Theosophy means to me", and I really think the audience was deeply impressed. Afterwards, as always, there were many questions, and I felt that the evening had been of value to everyone concerned.

Next day we had a delightful informal talk about things in general at a luncheon party arranged by Mrs. Buchanan, President of the Vancouver Lodge. The afternoon was spent in sightseeing, and I visited the H.P.B. Library where we had tea with Mrs. Fielding, the Librarian, and looked at the many interesting things she had there. In the evening there was a meeting of the Vancouver Lodge which was fully attended and I was besieged with questions which with their answers took up the allotted time. Refreshments were then served and I had an opportunity of talking to the members individually. It was all too short and I regret that there being so much to do, and say, there was so little time to do it. Thus ended the last evening of my tour. Here I will append the report from Vancouver:

"The members of the Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges of the Canadian Theosophical Society in Vancouver were fortunate during the last few days of September to receive a visit from the General Secretary, Colonel Thomson, the first since he came to office ten years

ago. Previously we had known him only through his column in the Magazine and through an occasional letter. During a rather hectic few days which included three meetings, one of which was a public lecture, and innumerable talks we got to know Col. Thomson and appreciate his real sincerity which under an easy articulation showed that Theosophy and the spread of its values, was the biggest thing in his life (not excepting his Art, for it appears that he is a highly successful painter, nor his talented family.) It was inevitable that the members of the Western Lodges and the Colonel should tangle over the differences in attitude between the East and the West, over the means of attracting new members. In the East where members are very important, a wide net is spread to catch all and sundry in its appeal, and the entertainment provided is an essential feature; whilst in the West, quality is emphasized at the expense of quantity, and its appeal is solely to an interest in Theosophy and its values. Colonel Thomson was especially emphatic that we should bestir ourselves to get new members for our lodges, pointing out light heartedly that most of us are getting into the sear and yellow and cannot expect to live for ever. And then what? All of which was taken very much to heart. Colonel Thomson in his address to members of the Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges gave a very interesting description of his work in the Canadian Theosophical Society covering the period immediately before and during the years he has held the position of General Secretary. He stated clearly that one of his main objectives was to do all that lies within his power to effectively offset those differences of attitude, outlook or teaching which exist between the various branches of the Adyar Theosophical Society which at present divide and separate us and con-

sequently greatly handicap the total efforts for Theosophy. Naturally he will have our whole-hearted support in this undertaking. Colonel Thomson told us he had recently found some real toleration in his contacts with many students in other branches of the Society and a recognition of our right to pursue our unique Canadian stand by the original teaching and against any substitution masquerading as Theosophy. And so a very instructive and pleasant visit came to an end."

Apropos of the above report I feel that undue emphasis has been laid on quantity and quality of new members as between East and West. By virtue of my office I can state unequivocally that all applicants for membership are "screened" as far as possible before admittance, and that quality is not sacrificed for quantity anywhere in the Section. If I gave a wrong impression I am sorry for it. This question like many others brought to a focal point during my tour will be discussed by the General Executive in due course.

Next day, the last of my trip, my indefatigable hostesses drove me to the airport where I regretfully said good-bye to them and to Mr. Emory Wood, my constant companion since leaving Edmonton, who had been such a help to me in my peregrinations throughout. Boarding the plane I was soon soaring high above those glorious mountains again, but it was accompanied by a feeling of sadness in leaving so many new found friends. This trip has been of a character I can but describe as fantastic. The travelling throughout by super-constellations has been a wonder, and the incidents encountered remind me of youthful fairy tales. The meeting with members and friends has been a revelation, both for enthusiasm and friendliness. The evident sincerity of their feelings toward me has been a veritable

stimulant. I return feeling a different person, elated and fortified with the knowledge of their approval of my work and of what I have done. It is a wonderful feeling and I am humbly proud of it. It makes me realize more than ever the responsibilities of my position and how incumbent upon me it is to do everything possible in my power to further their interests and those of the Movement.

E. L. Thomson.

### BOOK REVIEW

*Apollonius of Tyana, Founder of Christianity*, by Alice Winston, published by The Vantage Press, New York, 125 pp. \$2.75.

Once again thoughtful students are confronted with another of those flashes of intelligence out of a world where consciousness is credited with functioning in a higher dimension, purveying a message that challenges the historicity of the Gospel Jesus and the foundations of Christianity. For once more a series of communications from the inner planes of knowledge come forth with the straight declaration that the Jesus figure in the New Testament was none other than the character known to history as Apollonius of Tyana. All this—and more—is implicit in the sub-title of Alice Winston's new book, *Apollonius of Tyana, Founder of Christianity*.

This bold theme is by no means new in the literature of psychism and religion. It was heralded in the modern day by the appearance some sixty years ago of *Antiquity Unveiled*, a compilation of some 150 mediumistic messages purporting to come from the spirits of that number of prominent historical notables from Pythagoras to Pope Leo X and all testifying to the personal identity of Jesus and Apollonius. Other transcendental voices have joined this chorus. As far as history knows, Jesus

and Apollonius were born only a year apart about 1 A.D. A life of Apollonius, written about the second century, bears such close similarity to the Gospel narrative of Jesus that it has had to be sedulously discredited and kept out of sight. Such a modern work of astute scholarship as Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, digests the vast amount of eminent academic opinion that inclines to doubt the personal existence of the Gospel Jesus.

Perhaps most lucidly of all, Alice Winston's work with strong plausibility and logical consistency, deftly weaves together the narrative of the Gospels and the life of Apollonius. In the light of the interior insight which purportedly caught the truth accessible to more piercing vision, it became a matter of little difficulty to see how the life of Apollonius could be the basis of the Gospel account. Implausible as it will seem to upholders of the veridical historicity of the Scriptures, this work stands as a challenge to any religious system that concedes the possibility of man's "lower" consciousness contacting the vibrations of a divine "higher" consciousness, which can both rhapsodize his feelings and illumine his intelligence. Since every religion claims it is the incitement to this supernal elevation, by what right are the claims of such a revelation as this from "higher mind" to be scouted as unacceptable? Such disclosures are entitled to fair examination in the light of whatever incidental supporting evidence may be available. Whatever may be the degree of veridical accuracy of the spiritual vision that caught this version of the Gospel story, it was adequate to the task—one that would tax the greatest romantic genius—of blending the two streams of historical narrative into a harmonious and really beautiful agreement. An incredible number of deeply learned scholars

from Reimarus through Robertson and Drews to Alfred Loisy and Albert Schweitzer, have amassed the voluminous evidence for disbelief in the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth. In Mrs. Winston's book, through a shift of the historicity from an allegorical Christos character in the Gospels to the assumedly historical Apollonius, the way is opened to bring the beloved figure of Jesus back to living reality. If it means some loss to fundamentalist pietism, it means also much gain for historical authenticity, so lacking in the case of the Gospels.

This challenging work can by no means be said to destroy the Gospel Jesus. It, in fact, elevates him to a status of far greater realistic actuality than the Gospel Christ figure, whose historical reality appears so nebulous to deep investigators that it is found easier to explain it as an allegory than as history.

Haloed with a delightful aura of oriental beauty and brilliant colouring, the story of Apollonius here narrated gives us a vivid preview of some of the power and glory of that "higher consciousness" which man's evolution is destined to open up to him and which outdoes even the magical efficacy of the wonders of atomic fission and electronics. It reveals the wonder-power to be deployed through unfoldment of the more potent energies of consciousness. Man's progress lies always through his ability to generate and support ever higher gamuts of vibrational energies in consciousness.

Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Ph.D.

## MONTREAL LODGE

Montreal Lodge members have greatly appreciated once more having the privilege of hearing Prof. Ernest Wood lecture. His public lecture on "The Psychology of Reincarnation" was very

well received by a large audience; also, the members' meeting the next evening was a great success—many interesting questions were asked and Professor Wood discoursed upon them with great clarity. We are all grateful to him for giving us his time and knowledge—may he return again soon.

We are fortunate to have secured a good selection of speakers for the Fall session.

Rev. Dr. R. G. Katsunoff (The World Council of Churches at Evanston).

Mr. W. S. Harley (World Events in the Light of Theosophy).

Miss Jean Low (The Christ and the Cosmos).

Mr. J. Falconer (How Deep are our Roots?).

Mr. Douglas Fales (The Arts and the Cosmos).

Mr. S. G. Cooper (The United Nations at Work in India and the Middle East).

Miss Jean Low (The Bhagavad Gita).

Dr. Margaret D. Edwards (The Future of Religion in a World of Revolution).

Mr. Cedric Weaver (We, the Eternal).

Mr. Charles Bunting (Cycles, Spirals and Progress).

Mr. Keith L. Graham (The Creative Impulse).

Mr. John W. Robinson (to be announced).

We are hoping to hear some of the Toronto speakers on our platform in the Spring.

M. W. Harley, Pres.

"Nothing of that which is conducive to help man, collectively or individually, to live, not 'happily', but less *unhappily* in the world, ought to be indifferent to the Theosophist-Occultist. It is no concern of his whether his help benefits a man in his *worldly* or *spiritual* progress; his first duty is to be ever ready to help if he can, without stopping to philosophize."

*Lucifer*, Oct. 1889.

# THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The Theosophical Society was brought into existence under the inspiration of certain Adept Teachers in order that it may be an instrument of service to humanity. The significance of this step was hardly perceivable in the twilight of the early days, but in the light of the subsequent developments, both of the Society's usefulness and in the sphere of general human thought and activities, can be far better appreciated now.

The Society's mission has been, as we can now clearly perceive, to press the idea of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, so necessary for the organization of the "one world" of today, and place before the world certain root-ideas of the Wisdom called Theosophy, in order to facilitate the transformation which was to take place in the world of thought, and following it, in the world of human conduct.

The Theosophical Society is a unique constitution in the midst of a war-riven multifarious world, broken and distracted by every one of those divisions that contradict the Brotherhood of our purpose, a world in which separatism and specialization have been carried to a fine tapering point by a mind trained in analysis and identifying itself with every exclusive interest. There are other organizations whose aims to a limited extent march with those of our Society. But ours is a universal frontier, and the kingdom we are seeking to organize within that frontier is the Kingdom of God in His aspect of Wisdom, which is the Theosophy we seek.

I say "seek" advisedly, because though committed to a Theosophy by the very title we bear, it is a Theosophy in

the abstract, which is not limited by any doctrines in which we may seek to formulate it.

This does not mean that we live in a vague and indefinite future, that we are a set of transcendentalists or idealists who have no practical aims or help to offer.

The truths which we may call fundamental truths, to which by a free consensus, not by any official seal, we award the title "Theosophy" are there as the practical results of our search, and for our present purposes constitute a beautiful architecture comprehending the entire ground of our practical experience, embracing the skies on every side and by every graceful line and arch, proportion and suggestion, lifting our vision, and along with our vision our hearts, to the summit of their capacity.

It is our obvious duty as Theosophists to proclaim those truths to the world, but non-dogmatically, with respect to the hearer, giving him entire freedom to take or leave them, or respond to them in part, entirely convinced that there is Theosophy in each one's heart and it will come into its own in its own due time.

Since it is an all-embracing Society, it stands for the widest reconciliation, that of race with race, religion with religion, the East with the West, nay more, for the synthesis of what is true and good in each.

Since we are votaries of the one Wisdom, no applications of that Wisdom are outside our purview. All modes of understanding it and using it are our pursuit. The Theosophical Society stands not only for the highest idealism in every branch of human relationship and

activity—including relationship to the sub-human—but also for the implementation of those ideals.

Yet as a Society, constituting the common mind and heart of those wide extensions of its influence which we sometimes call the Theosophical movement, we must leave the application in every form to individual members and groups of like-minded members.

While every form of application is an embodiment of certain truths of the Wisdom, the Wisdom itself must transcend all applications. Out of its inexhaustible fount must spring new ways, new ideas. The present must not condition the future. No experiment or expression can stereotype Theosophy. The application is always according to conditions, circumstances, the bent and individual ideas of the person or group who is applying.

Theosophists, as students of the one comprehensive truth, can agree in statements of that truth, but are bound to differ in carrying it out. You and I may both see the truth in, say, Socialism, the social care of the individual, and in Individualism, the freedom and responsibility of the individual, yet may part in action as Socialist and Free Enterpriser. But the Theosophist attempts to see and realize the truth in both these points of view. It is in this *attempt*, which calls for a constantly open mind, that all members of the Society, whatever their individual dispositions or idiosyncracies, can be most heartily united.

In our Society there must be no Bible and no tethers. The spirit which is the spirit of the Wisdom is life, and life means growth and adaptation. We do not possess the fullness of knowledge nor of understanding. And our Society exists for the service of the world which is a changing world with varying needs and conditions. Our minds must be open to the light from whatever quarter. An

open mind, a genuine aspiration to Truth, a brotherliness for all and a determination to live that Brotherhood will ensure the growth of the Society and its usefulness through the decades, and shall I go so far as to say centuries, basing this large hope not on any prophecy, but on the depth of the vital impulse in ourselves.

Many of us who have been students of the Divine Wisdom believe that a new day is dawning for the world. We are at present in the middle ground between the forces of a retiring darkness and the rays of an incoming Light. Hence our difficulties and uncertainties. What is required by the world today is not merely a new order, new laws and regulations, a new organization which is world-wide, but even more than these we need, all of us without exception—Easterners, Westerners, and others—a new outlook, a change of heart.

Most societies in the world which have existed for a long time tend to become dull and mechanical. That is ultimately the fate of every human institution; especially, when the body grows in numbers, the quality of its thought, the intensity of its life, necessarily tends to fall and become diffused and watery. After the lapse of time the original inspiration gradually fades and people lose the spirit of the original statement, and either forget it or pursue and dissect the letter. That is a danger we can avoid only if Theosophy is to us a vital and continuous experience. Our Theosophy must not become static, but must grow along with ourselves.

There is in the world today a possibility of developing a new civilization. That civilization will not be a national but a world-wide civilization which will include the cultures developed by every single people. Surely when there is this international age, the like of which so far as we are aware has never existed

at any time in the past, a new faith, a new inspiration is needed—a common ground on which all people can stand and realize themselves as brothers. There must be a basis of fundamental truths which they share, on which they can build a happy international edifice. There is need for a cosmopolitan doctrine which would appeal equally to people of every race, every nation and every faith.

Secondly, whatever is the presentation best adapted to the present time, it must be one in accordance with the ascertained facts of Science, and even more in accordance with its general outlook and methods. What is important are not the theories of Science but the method of Science, the outlook which scientific thinking and acquaintance with scientific thought impart to the mentality of people.

Further, our Theosophy must be shown to be practical in a real sense as having an enriching effect upon individual life. Unless we show that Theosophy has a value for the individual, that individual is not likely to respond to its message. It must not be a mere theory to be studied in books under the guidance of learned professors, but must be a message which, however profound, is yet simple enough to be grasped by the average individual and put to direct use in the details of his life. If we can show that all the knowledge, all the theorizing on the vast plan of the universe, which we possess in the Theosophical literature, can be summed up in the life of an individual so as to make that life more dynamic, more peaceful, and richer than

it might otherwise be, I think we will be fulfilling our parts as messengers of that gospel.

The Theosophical Society must adapt itself to changing conditions and sound that note which is most needed at a particular time. In every institution there are periods of growth and periods of consolidation. That is an inevitable alternation. We must prepare for the time, perhaps in the comparatively early future, when the Theosophical tree will once again put on a fresh dress of foliage, when there will be a new efflorescence of the Wisdom, a new fragrance shed upon the world for its inspiration and happiness.

*A Theosophist Looks at the World*, by  
N. Sri Ram.

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## 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.—Idvll of the White Lotus.

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