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PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY

The Science of Wise Living

The nature of Theosophy, as of any truly spiritual teaching, is such that it has, of necessity, always to be presented as a challenge to free, impartial criticism; never as something to be blindly accepted.

In the Orpheus Lodge, ideas are sometimes put forward which, because of their self-evident truth, become un-animously accepted by the members. One such idea might be formulated thus:—The Mahatmas made their move and did their part. They made Theosophy available. Then it was our move. Our part, the part of the students of Theosophy was, amongst other things, to discover the implications of the philosophy and how to apply them in the life of the individual, and in all human problems. The task of making Theosophy available to the world once again was a dual effort. The Mahatmas and their Agents and assistants planted the theosophical philosophy so firmly in the Western mind that nothing could destroy it, nor could it be lost sight of. This was their part. Our part was not only to keep this teaching alive as a vital spiritual philosophy, available for the study and use of men the world over, but our creative part was to apply it ourselves and to show its application to human life in all its departments. Con-

sequently the success of the Theosophical Movement has depended, and still depends, very largely upon the students of Theosophy.

The Mahatmas can always be depended upon to do their part to the fullest extent that would be wise; not so our part. This dual activity is analogous to Man himself; the divine in man is always there ready to do its part, but unless it is called forth, unless the man of earth invokes the latent powers of his divinity and gives them expression, they must remain largely impotent.

There is something in the nature of things, which makes it imperative that unregenerate mankind should do its part and make its positive contribution to this theosophical effort. It would have been easy for the Mahatmas to have explained in detail the application of their philosophy, but if we aspire to become men, and not dependents, it is fitting and necessary that we do our part. A spiritual teaching is of little real use unless it is put to work. To do this, to put Theosophy to work, has been, and still is, our contribution to this dual effort. Individual students and groups of students in various parts of the world, and at different times during the last half-century, have made invaluable contributions to the practical

application of Theosophy; but nowhere today, is there any sign of a concerted effort being made to make this knowledge of applied Theosophy available, or to carry this practical work further.

At the end of the Maha-Chohan's letter, which sounds the key note for the modern Theosophical movement, we read—"To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem . . . The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles—right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism—are as impossible to them (the religions and philosophies of the West) now as they were 1881 years ago . . . and if our doctrines prove their competence to offer it, then the world will be quick to confess *that* must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the truth."

And yet, the more thoughtful members of our western world, during the last two or three decades, finding themselves and their civilization in the toils, with a future looking ever more desperate, fearing that they had somehow lost their way, that somewhere they had taken a wrong turning, and casting about for light in their darkness, found nothing better in their desperation than to turn back once more to their discarded, out-moded, and almost spiritually lifeless religion, for direction, for light. And we, the temporary custodians of that Light, knowing that in Theosophy we have a sure and certain sense of direction for human effort, and a true guide to provide for just such a condition of bewilderment, must realize that we have a great work before us still, in making clear the application of Theosophy to the immense problems which confront humanity.

In order to live wisely, the nation, the group, the family, and the individual must know to some extent the ultimate, and very clearly and exactly the immediate objectives before them, and how to achieve them. To build a civilization which will serve its purpose, we must know what a civilization is for, what its function is; the statesman must know what is the real objective of statecraft, and the educator must know the real purpose of education. A study of Theosophy (under whatever name) alone can supply this knowledge, because Theosophy goes back to the root of all these problems—Man himself—and presents *the knowledge of the true nature and function of man*. This practical aspect of the teaching, remains an ever-present challenge to our intelligence, our enterprise, and our courage.

The application of the principles of Theosophy to the life of the individual, the most important aspect of practical Theosophy, will supply the student with clear knowledge of the means he can use and the steps he can take, to get some permanent gain from his life; knowledge which he can apply at the place at which he finds himself in the ladder of life—strong in some things, weak in others. Man has a function to perform on this planet, and nothing in life can give the deep inner content, and greater grasp of life except the consciousness of working at it. To the student, is added the realization that by this discipline he is fitting himself to do his part in a spiritual work such as the Theosophical Movement.

This practical theosophical philosophy, by means of which anyone so minded can obtain the greatest return for his life, and the passing days, has been called "The Science of Wise Living". Many isolated practical ideas along these lines are available, but there is real need for a book or treatise, which clearly enunciates a system which can

be grasped as a consecutive, scientific whole, which will enable us to put Theosophy to work in moulding our lives to our heart's desire. We have, of course, such books as *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, *Through the Gates of Gold*, etc., and valuable as these great theosophical classics are in supplying hints and the true theosophical atmosphere, they are still all mainly written for the direction of disciples,—for those who have entered 'the path of no-return'. What is needed is practical knowledge, 'know-how' the engineers call it, which will enable the individual (men and women such as ourselves, who are still enmeshed in the life of the world and the strong attractions it still holds for us) to use Theosophy to make the greatest use of his efforts, and to steer a course in the direction of his ultimate destiny, and to make the most of his life.

Human life as ordinarily lived, vague, without definite aim or purpose is so constituted, that the good and the bad in a man at the end of his life, usually pretty well cancel one another out, and little, if any, permanent gain is made. So does the march of evolution advance at a pace so slow as to be observable at all only in periods of hundreds of thousands of years. With the help of practi-

cal Theosophy, the individual, knowing what he seeks and how to get it, deliberately steering instead of drifting, can achieve in permanent gain a hundred-fold what aimless living can produce.

For many years, it has been remarked that theosophical lecturers frequently treat of anything but Theosophy itself. This is due, we think, to the feeling that both the public and the lecturer are tired of hearing an endless repetition of routine, merely intellectual, theosophical teaching. With the deliberate search to uncover and make available clear and definite practical applications of Theosophy to various avenues of human activity, and especially to the endeavour of the individual to use the teachings to mould his life, a new area of theosophical lecturing of almost unlimited extent, variety and value, will open up. Without doubt, it will be difficult, demanding the best we have to give, but this is the challenge still confronting us. The Mahatmas made their move and gave us the philosophy, and retired, leaving us to discover its application to human life. When our reciprocal move is completed, it may determine what the future has in store for the Theosophical Movement.

Orpheus Lodge,
C.T.S.

WHAT IS OCCULTISM?

BY ROY MITCHELL

Occultism is a word that has suffered many malicious misinterpretations on the part of its enemies and many degradations from the low ideals of its friends. It was originally used—and still is in its fine sense—to denote the investigation of that which is hidden from the ordinary senses of man and had special reference to the study of latent powers of the hidden and mysterious centre of being which we call "I". Of course in its lower aspects it is a rela-

tive word that shifts with every generation. What was profoundly occult a few centuries ago has in many cases been brought in our own time into the light of common knowledge. Conversely much of what is occult today may have been generally known to the civilizations of previous centuries.

A notable example of what I mean may be found in the ruins of ancient temples. The three immense stones in the ruins of Baalbek in Syria, each

sixty-three by thirteen by thirteen feet and weighing over 1500 tons were brought from a quarry half a mile away. How it was done is the despair of modern engineering. One noted engineer declared that in spite of all our advances we have today no known man, steam, hydraulic or electrical power capable of lifting it to the twenty foot height from the earth in which it is now fixed, much less to transport it the distance from the quarry. Stonehenge is another mystery of the sort, so are the dolmens and cromlechs of Europe and the Pyramids of Egypt the greatest mystery of all.

Only recently have our scientists recovered a knowledge of hypnotism, so long known to earlier peoples as "the evil eye" and so widely developed in the Orient. The experiments with flame which Tyndall made, astonishing as they were, scarcely ruffled the surface of what is evidently an ancient occult art still extant in the recorded phenomena of singing and talking flames in Asia. In the radio we have turned to account forces which by all indications have been used before but the knowledge of which was so effectually lost for centuries that it would have been laughed at in Dalton's time. A few years ago an American artist, Jay Hambridge, brought to light from a study of Greek remains, a canon of artistic proportion that has been for centuries a subject of occult research and knowledge.

It is our custom to say that Galileo discovered the movement of the earth around the sun. Galileo never said so. He said merely that he was restoring to common knowledge a fact that had long been in the custody of secret societies and had been well known to the ancients. We know now that the ancients did teach the heliocentric system and founded their calculations of cycles upon it.

Our notion that they did not, and also the mediæval belief in the earth as the centre, come from Ptolemy's chart, which was not astronomical at all but astrological. For purposes of astrological calculations it doesn't matter which way it goes. The geocentric chart makes calculation easier.

These are only the lesser aspects of occultism. The great, central quest has always been for the knowledge of the soul and its powers. Even when the occultist's direct research has been into external things it has only been because of his belief that things outside man mirror his nature, and offer clues to the origin of man, his relation to the earth, the cycles of his appearance upon it, his continuance after death and his ultimate destiny.

This is why the absorption of the alchemist in the physical transmutation of metals was always described by him as a spiritual work. He saw in physical chemistry an analogy to that spiritual alchemy by which the occultist has believed men attain to everlasting life. The true Alchemist's Sun was the Ego; his moon, the animal soul; his elixir a spiritual energy that could bring about a transmutation of dross in the *vas alchemicum* or subtle body of man, and release spiritual powers. At least that is what the greatest alchemists said. The mere making of gold was imputed to them by their ignorant enemies and detractors. We must decide which we will believe.

The astrologer's preoccupation with cyclic recurrences of conditions in life, which he determined by using the stars as a gigantic clock or calendar has been indeed used for telling fortunes but that is only its lower, greedy aspect. The great astrologers believed, as the alchemists did, in the Hermetic aphorism "As above; so below." Whereas the alchemists sought analogies for the operations of the soul of man in the

atoms, the astrologers sought them in the mathematically precise, and spiritually governed relations of the planets as they moved through the spaces marked by the fixed stars. Those things in the heavens were not influences, the best of them said, but markers. The zodiac or girdle of the animal is inside the body of man.

Our own physicists have come to realize the mathematical analogies between the parts of a solar universe and the atoms in a grain of sugar and the inevitability of their obedience to the same laws. They have not yet gone so far as the early philosophers did in insisting on the relation of planets and atoms to the soul (or Sun) to the similar planetary forces in man. Our experiments with the glandular system may bring this also out of the realm of the occult.

Another of the occult sciences was the development of clairvoyance, or as the occult philosophers have preferred to call it, interior vision. They had an idea that the purer a man is and the more austere his life the better he will be able to perceive truth. If his mind is rendered turbid by liquor or food or by greed or envy or passion he will not be able to think so well. We can all subscribe to that. The occultist went further. By means of austerity he sought to purify his powers of discernment to the extent of developing new ranges of vision. It is recorded of many occultists that they succeeded in doing so. The lesser grades of scientists scoff at such assertions but it is certain that Democritus developed his heliocentric system of the solar universe, the Hindus worked out their vast chronological cycles and the Egyptians and Babylonians oriented their temples and related them with marvellous precision to the movements of the planets and to the slowly changing positions of the fixed stars, and left never a trace of an equatorial or a telescope. It is a living fact

also that the Hindu developed his theory of the etheric waves underlying sensation, Leucippus, Epicurus and Lucretius their theories of atomic motion, and the Egyptians their symbolism of the generative cells, and left never a microscope.

With occultism at its highest went another ancient art, mysticism, the means by which the occultists of all ages have kept in mind the purpose of their search, and insured that their powers would be used for noble ends.

Our science does not value mysticism as necessary to the march of knowledge. If it did we might have been spared the sight of science toiling so hard during the war to make war the horrible and destructive thing it is.

No one can tell what effect his words may have on another, or many others. If one person is helped on the way, is enlightened on a particular point, or obtains a clearer perception of something erstwhile but dimly seen, and thereby becomes imbued with a deepening awareness and understanding as though a veil had lifted and one had, for the fleetingest moment, a glimpse of the knower and the known—then, the person through whom this awareness, this quickening of the spirit has been channeled, has been the instrument for the performing of a miracle.

It is an inexpressible thing—a gift for which a recipient does not give thanks, nor express appreciation. One accepts, takes and trusts that the inspiration received—the detached spark of the flame luminated for the instant with a great brightness—may be a torch to some other waiting soul or souls.

* * *

Whatever is glorious, orderly, illustrious or great—understand that it has origin in a share of My splendour.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

BRIDEY MURPHY FOUND?

The Search for Bridey Murphy, by Morey Bernstein, quickly became a best-seller and then almost as quickly, declined in popular interest. It aroused many arguments as to whether or not the story of the alleged 19th century existence of a woman who is a Colorado housewife in this life, could be accepted as evidence of reincarnation, and on the primary question of whether or not reincarnation is a fact. Theosophists generally were dubious on the first point, but, of course, were on the side of the angels on the second and vigorously defended the theory of reincarnation as being fundamental. The book was reprinted in serial form in many newspapers, magazines carried long articles on the subject, other experimenters in hypnotism began to unveil the 'past lives' of persons who were concerned in tracing their former lives, and reincarnation in a few months received more publicity than ever before.

In a series of articles which ended in June of this year, the magazine *American* revealed incidents in the early childhood of the 'Ruth Simmons', the hypnotized subject in *The Search for Bridey Murphy*, which indicated that the search for 'Bridey Murphy' has ended. Mrs. Simmons' childhood years were spent in Chicago, where for a time she lived across the street from Bridey Murphy Corkell; she gave Irish recitations, with brogue; she learned to dance an Irish jig; she herself had scratched the paint off her own metal bed and had been spanked for doing so. Our readers will recall that under the trance condition of hypnosis, Mrs. Simmons said that Bridey Murphy was her name in her former life in Ireland, she spoke with a brogue, she danced a jig, and one of the early memories of her alleged former life was scratching paint off her bed and being tanned for it. (According to in-

vestigators there were no metal beds in Ireland at the time of the former incarnation.)

Not all the details which Mrs. Simmons gasped out under hypnosis can be linked with her early childhood in Chicago. Much that she told about Irish life is accurate—some of it is not—but she had been closely associated with persons from Ireland and a sensitive, receptive child could pick up unconsciously a great store of unremembered sayings, place names, family names, and other details.

It now seems certain that a high percentage of the revelations given under hypnosis can be ascribed to Mrs. Simmons' "forgotten memories" of her early childhood in this incarnation. This does not indicate that there was any wilful deception either by her or by Mr. Bernstein, the hypnotist. He was performing his first experiments in hypnosis and he failed to take the basic precaution of not making suggestions to the subject. In the article "Hypnotism" in our May-June issue, it was said: "The susceptibility to suggestion is referred to by many writers on the subject (it should be noted that in *The Search for Bridey Murphy* the suggestion of a previous life was implanted in the consciousness of the subject by the operator); the suggestion need not be given orally, the intent of the operator can be communicated to the subject and will be acted upon, even if not in conformity with his spoken words."

Also in that article, attention was drawn to Roy Mitchell's book *The Exile of the Soul*, and to the section relating to hypnosis. Mr. Mitchell wrote, "What active and efficient consciousness can exist in a man of which he is not conscious? . . . This lower consciousness that stands between Ego and body is one

of which the Ego is unconscious, because *it is not his consciousness*. It is the consciousness of a separate and lower entity."

Further; "This idea of a duality is the very foundation of the most fertile of all psychological departments of research—hypnotism. In no other field can the psychologist gather the unequivocal data he does in hypnotic experiment—ugly and all as it is in its method. It is now an axiom of hypnotism that the one essential characteristic of hypnotic states is that the Ego must be unconscious of what is occurring. That is, after the somnambulistic period he should have no memory of what has occurred. The only possible explanation of all the phenomena of such conditions is that the conscious Ego, by consent, surrenders the entity of whose activities he is unconscious, to the will of the operator. He does not merely surrender himself. If he did he would be conscious of it and would prove that consciousness by retaining a memory of it. Neither does the Ego merely surrender the body. The subject in a hypnotic state is a going organism possessed of all automatic and involuntary functions, reflexes and all instincts. For the duration of the trance state, this lower entity obeys the operator as he would his own Ego. Perhaps a little better."

"We come now on a curious thing. It is as illuminating for the occult student as it is confusing for the scientist. The entity whom the hypnotist controls, possesses mind. Not all functions of mind. There are certain ones it does not possess, but on the other hand it uses those it does possess, to a higher degree of efficiency than is manifested by the subject of the experiment in his normal state."

While the recent *American* articles have provided facts to think about, the search for Bridey Murphy has not yet

ended. She will not be found as an incarnate entity in 19th century Ireland. The book has raised a deeper problem than that of reincarnation, which, after all, if it be a fact, is a fact concerning a process only. The search turns inward. If the theory put forward by Mr. Mitchell is true (and he left notebooks full of *Secret Doctrine* and other references to support this theory) there is, hidden deep within the highly complex being called man, an elemental being possessing the instincts and psychic capacities of the animals together with a measure of mind superior to the animals. This entity is intimately linked with a higher being whose field is mind. Man, the thinker, is the alter ego of the elemental being: he can train it, subdue it, suppress it, care for it, raise it,—but he cannot eliminate it—"we, too, are of the army of God."

In one of her many references to hypnotism, H.P.B. wrote, "A good clairvoyant, moreover, if he had an opportunity of seeing a Yogi in a trance state and a mesmerized subject, side by side, would learn an important lesson in Occultism. He would learn to know the difference between self-induced trance and a hypnotic state resulting from extraneous influence. In the Yogi, the 'principles' of the lower Quaternary disappear entirely . . . On the other hand, in a subject in an artificially produced hypnotic or mesmeric trance, an effect of unconscious when not of conscious Black Magic, unless produced by a high Adept, the whole set of principles will be present, with the Higher Manas paralyzed, Buddhi separated from it through that paralysis, and the red-violet Astral Body entirely subjected to the Lower Manas and Kama Rupa (the green and red animal monsters in us)."

The 'Bridey Murphys' of hypnotic experiments 'with the higher Manas paralyzed' furnish clues to the nature of the elemental animal soul in man.

THE SPECIAL AIMS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY MRS. R. H. GRIFFITH

When I first joined the Theosophical Society a good many years ago there were far fewer lecturers on philosophical and ethical subjects coming to our big cities, and those who did come were assured of far better audiences. Today it must be extremely confusing to those who are seeking to find some answer to the questions continually posed to them by life, to distinguish between the various teachings given out by the different teachers who now flood our cities week by week.

Many of these teachers claim to be the conveyers of Truth, or at least to have worthwhile suggestions as to how to go about looking for it, so let us start by defining to ourselves what we mean by this very important word. By Truth we mean "Reality" but so vast is Reality and so profound is it that we, at our stage, can only advance towards relative Truth, leaving the cosmic reaches to the far future. What *we* generally mean by Truth is some understanding of life and its purpose. We want to know where we are going; why the world is such as it is, and what part we should play in it if we are to fulfil the true object of our existence.

In this article I would like to try to define and dwell on special aspects of Truth emphasized by the teachers of the Ancient Wisdom, so that people can discriminate between Theosophy and some of what are so often called by people in general, the other "isms". Dwelling on these facts is not done with the intention of claiming that the Theosophical Society has a stranglehold on Truth. That indeed would be a ridiculous claim. Nor is it done in criticism of other teachings or teachers, for any work or any teaching that makes for under-

standing between men, peace between nations, and a right understanding of life must be of use in our uphill climb. At the same time, I think that it is important that people seeking for light from the different Societies, should know something about the special aims and objects of the Society whose teachings they are investigating, and even this is not easy, for the various exponents of a teaching colour it with their own interpretation which in turn depends on their own personal point of view. So I would like to say in the beginning that these ideas are my very own ideas of what are some of the most important teachings in our philosophy, giving special emphasis to those not so much stressed by other Societies.

Now the first of these ideas, and one which it takes some time and much thinking to grasp, is the difference in each of us between the personal self and the individuality or higher self. The subject is profoundly important, for it is only with the light of this knowledge that we can follow the threads of Theosophical thought. Indeed if we spent a whole season studying this teaching, and trying to work it out in our daily lives that time would be well spent. The word "persona" as we know means a mask, and each human being has a "personality" which masks his individuality, his higher self. This personality is the result of many lives, many different experiences and many different environments. It is the outcome of lives lived in different countries. It has been influenced by different religions and modes of thought. Painful experiences have left it with certain repulsions, pleasant experiences with strong attractions. We have made, through the ages,

strong and lasting ties with certain of our fellow men, which ties we renew and strengthen over and over again. We may also have made enemies to whom we feel antagonistic. No two personalities are exactly the same, for none of us has met with precisely the same experiences. Most of us, in thinking about these things, find that we are very much wrapped up in our own personality, with the addition of those nearest and dearest to us, and a few other interests that do take us further afield. When things go well for us, when we are successful, when we feel in physical good health and are in what we feel to be the right environment, we are happy. When things are hard, and we are not able to do the things which give us pleasure, or when we feel ourselves neglected, we are most of us unhappy, and this seems perfectly natural. It is the way we grow and develop our powers from life to life. There comes a time, however, when we feel a vague discontent, and we know that if we had everything that this world has to offer, it would not be enough. The story of life is the story of growth or evolution, and once more, be it faintly at first, we hear life's call urging us to struggle upwards and onwards, for there is no such thing as standing still. This is the time when we may be attracted to Theosophy.

Now many speakers today make their appeal to the personality. They promise us better health, a more attractive approach to other people, wealth, psychic development, and so on. Some of the methods suggested may be good, while others are definitely harmful, working as they do on the lower emotions of their audience.

Theosophy makes no appeal to the personality. It does not promise us material wealth, popularity, short cuts to our goal, or any sensational secret

knowledge. It appeals to that part of us which is not content with these things, that part known as the individuality. This individuality is the real part of us which remains from life to life and gathers up between lives all the experiences of the personality, which are of use to its eternal purpose. Most of you know the excellent example given by Madame Blavatsky to illustrate this point. She takes an actor to represent the individuality and the various parts the actor takes to represent the personality. The actor remains always the same, but the parts he plays are different, ranging from that of an extra in the beginning of his career, to one of the great parts such as Hamlet at the end.

We play many parts in the school of life taking from each something to add to our character, and that is the important thing. Let us take another example. Suppose a general was planning a campaign, and to obtain knowledge of the surrounding country, the position and strength of the enemy, the feelings of the people and so on, he sends forth from time to time, a subordinate. The subordinate is new to the work at first and gets so interested in new experiences and so entangled in this and that, that he brings little back at the end of his sojourn. However, as time goes on he realizes the importance of his mission, and begins to subordinate his own desires to that of carrying his mission out. He devises means of getting in touch with the general even when away from his base, and finally they are of one mind and one purpose.

Now, we all of us have a fight on hand—not a fight against our fellow beings, but a fight against materialism. There is nothing wrong with matter as such for it is really on aspect of spirit, but it is wrong for a human being, who has risen to that level, to remain under the influence of the lower powers.

The general in our analogy is, of course, the individuality, whose warnings we should heed when in enemy country. We try to fight selfishness and its attendant ills, and we, when we consider ourselves as personalities, are the beings who go forth to gain experience and knowledge and bring back the fruits at the end of our individual lives.

So some day, instead of judging life from the viewpoint of our own personal interests, we shall judge it from a higher level where our own interests will be subordinated to the welfare of life as a whole. Unselfishness will then have become a habit, and selflessness, will have become the rule of the day. We shall then have risen beyond the level of the personality. Meanwhile the battle is on, and we have many a fight in front of us, for our various personalities will not easily give up their prominent positions in the scheme of things, specially to acknowledge a guide whose wishes most certainly will not tally with theirs. This, however, should be the aim of the Theosophist and I do not think anyone would be happy in the society if a purely personal aim dominated their lives. We are none of us far from that state, and often we are amazed at the strength of our desires in the face of thoughts and convictions which run contrary to them.

There is another important fact in connection with this line of thought, and it has to do with life on the inner planes after we have passed through the portals of what man calls Death. We are told that this is the time of recreation as opposed to earth life, which is the time for work, but the recreation which we are then entitled to enjoy, depends on our efforts here. We could lead a "lotus eating" sort of life filled with pleasure and personal satisfaction, but there might be little in it which would bear fruit on the higher plane which we call devachan or the heaven world. On the other hand we might

have a hard and difficult life, but if we have met it with courage and endurance, that courage and endurance will turn to joy and understanding on those planes where unhappiness cannot exist. This does not mean that we have to be unhappy here to gain happiness between lives, or vice versa. That would, indeed, be a melancholy doctrine. If our happiness here comes to us through such channels as love or beauty or a search for Truth, such things as can live and have their being in the finer realms of nature, then we can have happiness on any plane. The objection that some people raise that they are so busy with the every day affairs of life that they have no time to indulge in thoughts that will flower in the heaven world, is not valid. We can all dream, and if our dreams are true they too can flower in devachan. At least such is our teaching. It is not the sort of life that each of us is called upon to live that matters. It is our attitude toward that life. Before passing on to another of our important teachings I would like to quote a passage from *The Secret Doctrine* where Madame Blavatsky speaks of our personalities in the usual graphic language of that wonderful book.

She says:

"Just as milliards of bright sparks dance on the waters of an ocean, above which one and the same moon is shining, so our evanescent personalities, the illusive envelopes of the immortal monad; twinkle and dance on the waves of Maya. They appear, and as the thousands of sparks produced by the moonbeams, last only so long as the queen of the Night radiates her lustre on the "Running Waves" of life, the period of Manvantara; and then they disappear, the 'Beams' symbols of our eternal spiritual egos, alone, surviving, remerged in, and being as they were before, one with the Mother-Source."

(Continued on Page 114)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It is with sincere regret I announce the death of a long and valued member of the Society in the person of Mr. Edward G. McLean of the Calgary Lodge who passed away after much suffering on the 1st October. Mr. McLean joined the Society in June, 1920, and from then on his main interest in life was centered on Theosophy. A keen and intelligent student he was ever alert to spread and encourage the doctrine wherever he thought it was growing on fertile ground. His loss will be sadly felt not only in Calgary but in the Society as a whole. To his widow we express our deepest sympathy and extend it to the family in their sad bereavement.

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September 9th was a gala night in Hamilton when at the Wentworth Arms Hotel after a banquet and much to-do I presented the Charter to the new Phoenix Lodge. The arrangements were perfect and much credit is due all concerned. A detailed report is published elsewhere in this issue.

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I regret tardiness in stating that I was informed some time ago of the election of Mrs. Alice L. Berry as General Secretary of the English Section. I tendered the best wishes of the Canadian Section to her in this new and arduous undertaking and on my part will add that I hope early in the New Year to be able to convey the same to the Section in person when I visit the Old Land as I hope to do.

* * * *

The magazine being published but once in two months seems to throw things somewhat out of kilter, for instance Christmas is still quite a way off and salutations seem somewhat premature—however the opportunity must be

seized so I trust everyone will have a happy time not only at the festive board but in their relationship with all their fellow beings. And apropos of this the New Year will soon be along also. So a word on that. We who have lived through this so far turbulent century have participated in happenings exceeding anything the world has so far known. Atrocities and bloodshed unprecedented, in fact a facsimile of the infernal regions undreamed of by the most facile imaginations have been our lot. And all this, in spite of our so-called civilization. We are also seeing the apparent decline of the once glorious British Empire and all it stood for it seems to be going the same way as that of Rome and other great empires. But we must realize that states rise and fall very much like human beings, each has its day and then like chaff before the wind, is gone. New nations are born, grow up and have their day and so it goes on. Knowing this and what our theosophy teaches we are emboldened with the hope that our children and our children's children will see the day when the lion shall lay down with the lamb and there will be universal peace. With that thought in mind, my salutations to you all, coupled with the sincere hope that the New Year will be a happy and fruitful one for humanity at large.

E.L.T.

QUARTERLY MEETING

The Quarterly Meeting of the Executive of the Theosophical Society in Canada was held at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, on Sunday, October 21, 1956.

Members present:—Miss Hindsley, Messrs. D. W. Barr, G. I. Kinman and the General Secretary. The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Business arising from the Minutes: Mr. Kinman had made enquiries re an advertisement in *Maclean's* magazine and found that it would be

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OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

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

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Emory P. Wood, 9360 — 86th St., Edmonton, Alta.

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.

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prohibitive in cost (this enquiry was made at the instigation of the Hamilton Lodge which thought it would be productive of good results to have theosophical subjects thus publicized); Mr. Barr stated that the pamphlets on hypnotism which were being prepared by Mr. Boris de Zirkoff had been ordered; the General Secretary stated that the by-laws of the Phoenix Lodge had been approved and dispatched.

The financial statement, which showed a balance on hand of \$2205.15, was read and approved. Mr. Barr suggested that the question of life memberships be considered and it was agreed to bring this matter up again at the next meeting. The Editor reported progress for the magazine. Mr. Kinman, Chairman of the Pamphlet Committee, re-

port that the die for the seals was in the making and would be ready shortly.

A letter from Adyar respecting an amendment to Rule 20 regarding age of admittance to the Society without parental consent, and also respecting the appointment of four additional members to the General Council, was considered, and the General Secretary was requested to consent to the proposals.

Colonel Thomson informed the meeting of the latest development in connection with the proposal of Mr. Mark Dewey to leave certain properties to the Canadian Section on his demise. Miss Hindsley reported on her recent visit to Montreal where she lectured for the Montreal Lodge. Mr. Kinman handed to the General Secretary a complete list of the recorded lectures now available for the lodges. Colonel Thomson stated that so far no request had been made for the loan of these. Mr. Kinman moved and Miss Hindsley seconded: that twelve volumes of each year's magazine be bound instead of six as heretofore. Carried. The General Secretary read a letter from Mrs. W. S. Harley respecting unity among all lodges in Canada and suggesting a national convention. This was discussed but no action was taken.

The next meeting was arranged for January 6, 1957. The Meeting then adjourned.

General Secretary.

ANNUAL REPORT

12th October, 1956.

To the President,
The Theosophical Society,
Adyar, Madras, India.

Sir,—

I have the honour to submit my report for the year.

The Theosophical Society in Canada has had a year of steady growth and progress and has shown more vitality than in many years past. Two new

lodges have been inaugurated, one in North Vancouver and the other in Hamilton. Also the lodge in Victoria for many years dormant, has been re-opened and is filling a long felt want. Our membership is now 394, an increase of 12. There is a list of 26 "inactive", but this promises to be reduced in the near future, many members being slow in remembering to pay their dues. One member was transferred to another Section, and eight members have died. During the year we had a series of lectures by Professor Ernest Wood and Mr. Geoffrey Hodson paid us a visit and during his four days' stay had near capacity audiences. Mr. Iverson Harris, Mr. Norman and Elsie Pearson and Miss Helen Zahara were other very welcome visitors, each one giving one or more lectures. Much interest was aroused amongst the public by "The Bridey Murphy Case", and to meet the situation many of our lecturers both visiting and local, took advantage of this unusual interest in reincarnation and assuaged to a large extent the curiosity and otherwise of those who came for enlightenment. Many pamphlets were distributed and the "Case" stirring the popular imagination helped in a large degree to put Theosophy on the map.

An election of officers took place this year. The General Secretary was returned by acclamation; the members with one exception remain the same as last year. The Magazine continues to give general satisfaction, and there were 20 new subscribers. Toronto Lodge has as usual been very active. Its bazaar for necessary funds exceeded all expectations. The Library loaned over 2200 books; and the number of visitors exceeded 700, not including the many who came in before the lectures. A large number of books were presented to the new Victoria Lodge. Our Travelling Library is a very active concern and over 700 books were mailed to out-

lying districts. The other lodges are without exception, decidedly active also, and are requesting pamphlets for distribution. These will be available in the immediate future when the new ones in the press are available. Animal Day was celebrated with a very special programme, and with it was inaugurated a proposal for urgent efforts on behalf of a Bill of Animal Rights. Messages from The President and Rukmini Devi were read on the occasion. I feel I can truly say that Theosophy in Canada is on the up-and-up—it may not be spectacular, but nevertheless it is working like yeast in the bread, and eventually the loaf will be baked and found to be good. Slow and steady wins the race, and I think we can await results with the utmost confidence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. L. Thomson,
General Secretary,
Theosophical Society in Canada.

HAMILTON LODGE

The Charter of the recently-formed Phoenix Lodge was presented by Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O., General Secretary of the Canadian Section, to the President, Cecil Williams, at a dinner held in the Wentworth Arms Hotel on Sunday, September 9th, 1956. The following day this event was prominently reported, together with a picture of the presentation, on the first page of the local section of *The Hamilton Spectator*.

Lt.-Col. Thomson gave an inspiring address, telling of his discovery of Theosophy and how much it had meant in his life. He outlined the development of the Society since its inception, and announced a growing interest in the movement. Phoenix was the third new lodge to be chartered this year. Later in the

evening he made an earnest plea on behalf of the welfare of animals.

Harry Marquis, of Toronto, extending felicitations to the Lodge, urged the members to remember the essential practical element of financial support.

Certificates of membership were presented to new Fellows of the Society by the General Secretary in an impressive ceremony as follows: Miss Stella Ballard, Henry Kramkowski, Mr. and Mrs. C. Richard McIlroy and Arnold A. Moxom, Ph.D.; following which a bouquet was presented to Mrs. Cecil Williams by Mrs. McIlroy.

Miss Lucille Brown, a talented young pianist, played charmingly, and Walter Marquis, accompanied by Walter Johnson, both of Toronto, pleased with Gaelic songs.

The recently-elected officers of the Lodge were presented, as follows: Cecil Williams, President; Mrs. Kathleen Marks, Vice-President; Miss Stella Ballard, Secretary; C. Richard McIlroy, Treasurer; Henry Kramkowski, Librarian; Mrs. Agnes Hambly, Membership Convenor; Mrs. Cecil Williams, Social Convenor, also the Auditor Harry Marquis, of Toronto.

In the course of his remarks, outlining the work and aims of the new organization, the President said the name Phoenix had been chosen because this ancient Egyptian symbol typified new birth and resurrection.

In the six months following its inception the Lodge had drawn up by-laws modelled on the constitutions of early Theosophical Lodges, with additions from practical experience, and adapted to new policies. These had been approved by the General Secretary.

Lodge Meetings had been held, during which *The Key to Theosophy* was studied, and public discussion meetings on themes from *The Secret Doctrine*, which it was proposed to continue during the winter months. Two public

lectures had attracted a large number of strangers.

The Lodge started without a penny and without a book, but among other minor donations there has been received two collections from the libraries of former members, containing many rare books, so that the lodge now possesses a library of nearly 150 volumes. Two enjoyable social gatherings, held to raise funds, had netted upwards of \$90.

A suggestion made by Mrs. Hambly that Theosophical literature be placed in prison libraries had been eagerly acted upon, with the result that one set of books had been placed in Barton Street Jail, where they were being read by the prisoners, and another set had been accepted for Burwash Reformatory. Further contacts had been made with a view to placing books in other penal institutions.

The Lodge had been appointed Canadian Agents for the publications of the Maha Bodhi Society of Calcutta, India. This Society's exceptionally fine work, *Perfect Health Through Buddhist Mental Science*, was to be placed in local bookstores and widely advertised.

Stella Ballard,
Secretary.

BOOK REVIEW

The Outsider by Colin Wilson, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1956, pp. 288, price \$4.25.

The Outsider, the first work of a twenty-four year old writer which quickly ran through seven printings and is still in short supply, is indeed a most unusual book. It is described as 'an inquiry into the nature of the sickness of mankind in the mid-twentieth century' and it deals with the problems of 'a man who has awakened chaos' and who suddenly realizes that the ordinary round of human activities is 'savage, unorganized, irrational'—in theosophical

language, the problem of the man who has awakened to maya. He is the Outsider, the man for whom the veil of illusion has been torn asunder, enabling him to gaze upon its horrific shapes. It is the problem of Arjuna face to face with the unveiled form of Krishna in which good and evil are intermingled. Once having had this vision, a man can never again become part of the mass, intent upon the trivial and unimportant details of lives given over to the pursuit of survival, security, comfort and pleasure.

The last sentence of the book reads "The individual begins that long effort as an Outsider; he may finish it as a saint" but it does not indicate the way through. With a few notable exceptions, those whose lives and works are mentioned by the author as outstanding examples of the Outsider, fail to obey the Zen koan, 'Walk on'; unable to go forward to a profounder integration, incapable of returning to the trivial, they live in an Outsider's half-world, and for some suicide, madness and mental inertia were the means of escape. To Wilson the Outsider is essentially a religious man who having realized the complete futility of the ordinary, seeks real freedom and an apprehension of ultimate truth; the answer to his problem is a religious one—but orthodox religion is useless to him. "If Hulme's 'new religious age' is to be born before our civilization destroys itself, it may require an intellectual effort of gestation that will involve the whole civilized world."

The erudite author left school at sixteen and is largely self-educated. His writing room and library was the British Museum; during a year of intense study he 'roomed' on Hampstead Heath in a sleeping bag. He is a provocative writer with an astonishingly perceptive and retentive mind. Undoubt-

edly many will read the book for its literary criticisms. It discusses the works of such persons as Sarte, Camus, Hemingway, Herman Hesse, Kafka, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, T. E. Lawrence, Blake, Shaw, Ouspensky, Gurdjief, Ramakrishna and many others. The author's comments are succinct and penetrating.

A book well worth reading for its above mentioned criticisms, for its presentation of the 'Outsider' problem and for its approach to the ever fascinating study, the enigma of man.

D.W.B.

THEOSOPHY IN GREECE

The General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Greece, Mr. Kostis Melissaropoulos, has requested that an announcement be made in *The Canadian Theosophist* regarding the official magazine of the Greek Section, *Ilisos*. We are happy to oblige, although we have not received very full information. The next issue, No. 2, will carry an article by Mr. Sri Ram on Man and Spirituality; an article on the Dead Sea Scrolls by Professor N. Louvaris; one by Krishnamurti on Peace in the world and in the mind; an article by the General Secretary on the White Lotus, together with other articles of interest to Theosophical readers. Issue No. 3 will contain articles on the Buddha, Mozart, Pythagoras, as well as one on *The Search for Bridey Murphy*. We trust that this announcement will be noted by students from Greece who will be interested in reading a Theosophical magazine written in their own language.

The yearly subscription rate is \$2.00 or 15 shillings. Subscriptions should be sent to Mr. Melissaropoulos at Filothei, Athens, Greece.

“THE ONLY WAY”

“Thus have I heard:

“At one time the Blessed One was living in the Kurus, at Kammasadamma, a market town of the Kuru people. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus as follows:

‘This is the only way, O bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of sorrow and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbana, namely, the Four Arousings of Mindfulness.’”

—Opening paragraph from *The Way of Mindfulness*, being a translation of the Satipatthana Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya, by Bhikkhu Soma.*

In the Lord Buddha’s first sermon, he said sorrow was the basic characteristic of life. He observed, named and described the chain of causes which produce the sorrow. This is known as the Doctrine of Dependent Origination, *paticca samuppada*, the teaching about relationship and dependency. Simply put, it is the Buddha’s statement that all things are dependent upon past circumstances and on present supporting conditions. Therefore, no thing can come to be of itself. If it comes to be, it must come in relationship to and be dependent upon other things.

Students of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* will remember that Letter X contains the Master Koot Hoomi’s translation of this Doctrine; and, of course, there have been many other translations of it.

Having established that sorrow and the cause of sorrow are the first two

*Obtainable from Watkins, Ltd., Publishers, 21 Cecil Court, London, W.C.2, England. Paper, price 8/6 postage included.

great truths, the Blessed One set about finding the way to put an end to sorrow. The areas of affliction, he found, were the body, the feelings, consciousness, and the whole phenomena we call the outer world. These, he said were to be examined with perspicacity and insight. How?

The only part of the individual capable of use as a tool for this diagnosis, he found, was the mind.

Ordinarily, mind is a rapidly flowing, ever-changing awareness of objects, environment, and of being alive and separate from other creatures, particularly as to form. Steadied and concentrated, mind can be made to observe the nature of things.

Using his mind, Buddha examined the body from the soles of the feet up, and from the crown of the head downward; he analyzed feelings and consciousness in the most amazingly detailed fashion, and threaded his way through the awful network of cause and effect within which humanity traps itself.

Buddha perfected this technique of analysis and therapy, saying it is the only way leading to liberation, and he taught it to his monks. “Thus have I heard”, quoted at the beginning of this article, refers to the Elder Ananda, cousin of the Buddha. At the first Buddhist Council held in the Sattapanni Cave at Rajagaha under the Elder Mahakassapa, the Collection of the Discourses was recited by the Elder Ananda. And thus they have been transmitted to us over twenty-five centuries.

As will be evident, Buddha’s teaching is selective and one-pointedly concentrated. The Cause and the Ceasing of Sorrow, these only, he taught.

The whole vast scheme of evolution, the hierarchy of beings, and the overwhelming range of knowledge possessed

by the Brahmins, and, without question known to the Buddha, for purposes of instruction, he bypassed. Questions put to him on subjects similar to those dealt with in, for instance, *The Secret Doctrine*, were treated with silence, or the questioner was told, in effect, that such inquiry was not relevant to the task facing each individual, which is to extinguish desire, break the chain of relationship and dependency, and thus attain to freedom.

Ignorance (partiality of view), thirst, craving and clinging bind us to the birth process life after life. "As a fletcher straightens his shaft, the wise man straightens the restless, fickle mind," and takes the path of mindfulness, recollectedness, awareness, to release.

Though learning to value this teaching, even without real practise of it, is important, only practise will make it yield its full measure of influence in one's life. There is no compulsion; no one will force another even to read the Satipatthana Sutta; certainly no one, however sure of its inestimable worth, will say to another "You must practise this." We are free agents, free to spend lives in pursuit of scientific and other knowledge, none of which, however interesting and true, will show the way out of the birth-death maze. Suffering alone for most people is the instigator of search. Even in a palace, Gautama was miserable.

In the East, particularly Burma and Siam, if a competent teacher is found, lay persons wishing to practise Mindfulness intensively may undertake it in a monastery for one, two, three sometimes four weeks.

In a meditation monastery, every trainee is given a separate cell, and provided with two simple meals before noon, and only liquids after noontime. During the practise, the trainee speaks only to the meditation instructor. He

does not read anything nor write. All external activities, for instance, walking, are slowed down to make possible mindfulness as to one's actions, feelings and thoughts. By such exaggerated, deliberate slowness, one learns to act consciously, not on the spur of the moment. Thus one is prepared to face the consequences of action. By mindfulness, one's actions, feelings and thoughts are observed in detail. The mind—always outward turned—hard to curb as the wind, is thus conditioned to calmness and concentration.

The aim of the meditation instructor is, of course, to prepare the mind of the student for direct, personal experience of truth.

Only the occasional person has time, money, opportunity or the physique to go to the East for such instruction. Therefore it may be of some interest to serious-minded students—for no others could carry out the discipline—that this ancient practise of Mindfulness was taught by Bhikkhu Kapilavaddho, an Englishman, who founded the English Sangha, and who is a fully qualified teacher. The practice was undertaken for one week this summer by a group of students at the famous University of Oxford in England.

Thro' many a round of birth
and death I ran,
Nor found the builder that I sought.
Life's stream is birth and death,
and birth, with sorrow filled.
Now, house-builder, thou'rt seen!
No more shalt build!
Broken are all thy rafters,
split thy beam!
No more compounded,
Mind hath cravings slain.

—*Dhammapada.*

SPECIAL AIMS OF T.S.

(Continued from Page 106)

The Bhagavad-Gita, too, contains priceless knowledge of the relationship between man and his own higher and immortal spirit, but to get all we should out of this book we shall have to try to develop our intuition, that power which lies beyond the mind.

A little while ago I went to a funeral and was much struck with the rather constant use of the word "elect". The impression was given that only certain people would be entitled to enjoy endless bliss in regions beyond the grave. Needless to say this idea is entirely foreign to the Theosophist if by "elect" is meant those subscribing to a certain creed or religion, for he recognizes only one life of which everyone and every thing is a part, whose normal path is growth or evolution. Some call this life "God", some the "Absolute", some just "That", but to the Theosophist it means that God is present everywhere, not a personal man made God, but the essence of the life from which we have all emerged and to which all in time will return. We cannot therefore separate ourselves in thought from anyone or anything. The so-called sinner and saint are both part of the one life as are the animal, vegetable, mineral and elemental kingdoms. There are endless realms of being stretching below him. Therefore to the Theosophist the terms good and bad are relative terms, for the best of our humanity might appear as ignorant and unevolved to a Being of Cosmic Stature, while an unevolved primitive man would seem almost a God to beings of a lower grade, had they the capacity to consider such things. To us "good" is that which we aspire to, something a little beyond us which beckons us on—bad, that which we are trying to leave behind. Therefore good and bad will mean something a little different to people at different levels of growth.

Many people feel that the absence of a belief in the orthodox, anthropomorphic God, the loving Father of Christianity, makes Theosophy a cold and comfortless philosophy, but it is not so when you understand it. True, its exponents refuse to speculate on the essence of the One Life, feeling that such speculation could only dwarf the Reality, but we know of beings, beyond man, such as the Christ, the Buddha, Lao Tze, and many more, Beings of such purity, grandeur and compassion, that no one need feel the loss of guidance and inspiration. These Beings we call Masters for they have gained Masterhood over their own lower natures, and that is what Masterhood really means.

To approach their world, we too must seek to gain this control, for only when we have ceased to be important to ourselves, shall we be of any use to Them. True modesty and selflessness are the earmarks of greatness, despite the fact that those who make extravagant claims often have a greater appeal to the public. Beyond this Theosophy teaches that at the innermost centre of our being there abides a Divine Life, our own higher self, whose voice we can learn to know, the voice that seems to say to us "come out of the darkness into the light, forsake the personal for the impersonal, live in the nobler part of your nature". In *The Secret Doctrine* Madame Blavatsky writes: "The pivotal doctrine of the Eastern Philosophy admits of no special gifts in man, save those won by his own ego, through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of reincarnation". In the light of that it can be seen that for the Theosophist there are no "elect" in the sense of that word used at the funeral.

Now, the next idea I should like to mention, much emphasized by Theosophy or rather I should say series of ideas, is the vastness of the world

scheme. To people who consider one life on this earth as a long period, these ideas may seem a little bewildering at first for in this scheme one life is as the "wink of an eye". It is necessary however if we are to see events in their proper proportion, that we see the causes leading up to the events and the probable results of them.

There are many people in the world today doing wonderful work in helping other people in difficult and tragic circumstances. There is the Red Cross, the Community Chest, the John Howard Society, and so on. There are societies to help the animal kingdom as well as the human kingdom, in many and varied circumstances, but their object is concerned, and generally usefully concerned, with the cross section of life which we call the "present" and although most members of the Theosophical Society quite rightly support these movements in one way or another, they are not its chief concern. The object of this Society, whose teachings are as old as life itself, is to give a broad picture of the past, present and future, showing how the present has emerged from the past, and how the future will emerge from the present, and by so doing to arouse the spiritual instincts in man.

It is a vast picture indeed and we can only follow it up to a certain point, but even so it gives the mind such a tremendous scope that in contemplating it, we feel like a prisoner from whom the walls of a prison have fallen away.

It might be thought that such a picture would distract us from the problems at hand, but this should not be so, because in studying these things the conviction becomes clearer and clearer that unless we resolve our problems in a satisfactory way now, they will simply return to us in the future, which will then be the present.

Another result coming from the con-

ception of vast periods of time is the growth of a sense of proportion. We learn to fit things into their places and to sift out those things which are important from those things which are not. An unhappy life is seen as the result of ignorance of the laws of life, in fact all pain is seen as the result of destroying, even for a moment, its equilibrium. It is a warning that somewhere on the road we have gone wrong. When we meet trouble it is an opportunity provided us by life to repair the damage done, and if we can accept it in that light, the quicker shall we accomplish our purpose. None of us really escape from unhappiness while living in a material world because we come here to learn. Had we risen above this necessity we should not be here except through choice. Difficulties and troubles, at our level are our most potent teachers. Through them we gain understanding, sympathy, will power, endurance, and above all the ability to help others when they are passing through the cloudy periods of life. We have only to imagine someone whom disappointment and sadness have never touched to realize their all important place in our development, for we cannot reach the heights without going through the depths.

Some people are not interested in what is called technical Theosophy. The teachings concerning the rounds and races, the cyclic laws, the vast periods during which our earth chain came into existence, and the tremendous preparation for the entrance of man into the drama of life do not interest them, and if this knowledge were all that we got from our study of Theosophy, the understanding of it would be no more than a difficult mental feat. If, however, these things are studied, while at the same time we try to live up to the ethics of Theosophy, these same ethics which are taught by all the great teachers, and

which life itself holds before our eyes, then this study can and does enlarge our vision and arouses within the depth of our nature latent spiritual powers, for thoughts of this kind exist on a high mental level.

This brings us to another idea very important to the Theosophist and an idea that seems to be spreading very rapidly in the world today, and that is that it is only by putting our own individual worlds in order that we can bring a modicum of peace and happiness to the world in general. We have tried everything else and we are still far from our ideal. With some good that has undoubtedly been brought about, arise fresh evils for selfishness cannot be legislated out of existence. It may be curbed in one form but it arises in another and with the present idea in our Western world that we have only one life in which to pack all earthly experiences, materialism clouds the light of the spirit.

Old forms of religious orthodoxy, in which fear took a leading part, have rightly been removed, mostly through the influence of science, but unfortunately the sane and arresting doctrine of karma, that doctrine that repeats once more that we literally reap what we sow, has not been generally accepted in its place. Once we are convinced that the world conditions which we see around us are a reflection of the collective inner lives of each one of us, then we shall try to right things at the source. If one person alone produces *within* himself a state where abide peace, integrity, selflessness, courage, wisdom and compassion, then that person's influence is enormous, whether anyone has ever heard of him or not, for we cannot change the world to any great extent until we have changed ourselves. Naturally we cannot arrive at such a state in a day, or many days, but the would-be Theosophist is told continu-

ously to look inwards for inspiration, striving always to clear away the rubbish that shuts out the clear light of Truth. A Teacher can point only to the direction in which it can be found. Each one must find it for himself for "live the life and you will know the doctrine" is as true of Theosophy as anything else.

This brings us to another of our teachings which I would like to dwell on briefly, for important though it is, it is too complicated to explain in an article such as this, even if I were capable of so doing.

When most people say "I" they mean by that a single being which is themselves. Whether they are thinking lofty thoughts or brooding revengefully over some real or imagined wrong, whether they are lost in the contemplation of the starry skies, or the horrors of a bull fight, whether they are seeking for true knowledge or pursuing drugs or drink, they feel that the source of those thoughts and desires is man himself. *He* is thinking or desiring or contemplating this or that. Theosophy, however, teaches that man is a part of a stream of consciousness, all of which plays a part in his life, and that these various thoughts, desires, inspirations and longings come from different levels in his stream of consciousness. At the higher or innermost point is the Inner God, at the lowest all the little elemental lives that compose our various bodies.

There enter man's consciousness, desires of the physical body, desires of the animal soul, there come to him warnings from the individuality or higher self, and occasionally inspiration from the plane of the Inner God. They enter the consciousness of "man" the thinker, the central point in this stream of life and he has to decide what to do with them. They come from different sources, some higher than our ordinary level of consciousness and some lower,

and our evolution in the right direction depends on how we deal with all these various feelings, thoughts and intuitions. This requires wisdom, a high ideal, sometimes a sense of humour, but above all self control. So when the Theosophists says, "I" he means the human soul, but since all evolution tends towards higher levels his aim should be towards those levels which rise upwards. He has already graduated from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, but these kingdoms are still represented in his stream of consciousness and he is greatly influenced by their voices and demands, if one can call them that, just as he can be greatly influenced by the voices from the higher levels.

Man stands at the central point of his small world, for in him the material and the spiritual meet, and the great aim of Theosophy is to show him how to raise the lower part of his nature until it becomes a reflection of the higher and the two become as one. This is no selfish aim for he cannot do it at the expense of his fellowman or the other kingdoms of nature. His victory is their victory, as his defeat is their defeat for all life is one. As we look for help and guidance to those further along the road so others, who are behind us, look to us for guidance. As our elder brothers stretch out a hand to us, so should we stretch out our hand to our younger brothers. Thus the link is not broken.

Now, one more thought that is important to anyone interested in this philosophy. In the world today we find so many people seeking distractions, in other words trying to get away from themselves. The distractions may be good, bad, or indifferent. It may be through drugs or drink. It may be through movies or radio. It may be through reading, or it may be on a higher plane through a busy public life or even attending endless lectures, but

the fact remains that some people are never happy unless some outer activity is holding their attention. They avoid being alone with themselves. Theosophists are not puritanical. They enjoy many of these things too, but they feel that some of their time at least must be given to what Paul Brunton calls "discovering yourself". This search has to be honestly undertaken for discovering our strength and our weakness, what we have that can be used in humanity's battle and what we have that can be used against it, is necessary to this purpose. This does not mean that we must look backwards, except perhaps to distil a little wisdom from our past experiences. It is better to look forward knowing that nothing can come to us that is not in the long run for our eternal good, hard and sometimes almost impossible as this is to realize.

In this article I have not touched specifically on the twin doctrines of reincarnation and karma, except by implication, although they are the keystones of Theosophy. Were they not true, Theosophy would fall to the ground, for such a vast scheme demands endless time for its fulfillment and if luck or chance ruled the world no philosophy would have any meaning. There are many books dealing with these doctrines. We cannot, however, know all there is to know about them until we ourselves grow in understanding, but even a little knowledge of them will open up new horizons and maybe change our lives.

I have often heard it said "so and so shouldn't say such a thing, she is a Theosophist", or, "Why is Mrs. Brown afraid of such a thing, isn't she a Theosophist?" If by being a Theosophist is meant someone who completely lives up to the high ethics of its teaching, let us admit freely that, with the notable exception of some of our leaders and advanced students, few of us can claim

to be Theosophists. We are simply members of the Society who believe in its teachings, and when we write articles, or give lectures, we are simply trying to interpret a vision we have caught, and to point out a way of life that we intend to try to live up to. You would not expect a boy who has become interested in science to become a Huxley or an Einstein immediately. You would not expect a keen young musician to suddenly emerge as a Beethoven or a Bach. What we should expect, if they intended to follow these paths, would be that they should keep bright the ideal which first captured their imagination while steadily working towards its attainment. It is the same with us. We have caught a vision of life which satisfies us. It points to a plan, within which growth and evolution is the normal course. We have all of us fulfilled part of the plan, for we have reached the human kingdom, that kingdom whose distinguishing mark is the ability to think selfconsciously. This thinking leads us to ask questions and if we ask sincerely enough we shall get an answer. The answer to some of us is Theosophy, but we cannot begin to grasp its whole significance in a day. We are something like the captain of a ship who has been sailing the seas for many a year. We have put into this port and that port, seeking to find a land that pleased us, and sometimes we think we have found it, but we get tired of it and often we hand the helm over to one of the crew whose guidance is not so good as ours and so land in trouble. We meet squalls and storms and we meet blue skies and smooth seas, but it does not last for long. Then one day we get tired of all this and we sit up on the deck and try to think it all out. We say to ourselves, "What is the object of all this journeying—where are we trying to get to"? Then we hear a voice and that voice will say: "Your time has not been wasted for you have learned many

things. You have learned that happiness is not acquired through material possessions and pleasant living conditions. You have learned to take your boat through storms and fog and rough weather. You have learned, to some extent, to control your crew, and to help other boats in distress. You know something of the rules of the sea. Now is the time for you to start on your real journey, the journey for which all these others have been a preparation and this journey will lead you to the land of Reality, the land of the spirit where the air is fresh and pure, the land which is your real home".

"To get there you must put out to the open sea where the waves are higher and the storms are rougher than anything you have hitherto experienced, so before starting be sure that your ship is in good condition and is not overloaded, and your crew under control, for on this journey you must be well equipped. Tell others who feel as you do what you have heard, for they too may want to take this journey, and then if you are in difficulties and need guidance listen for my voice".

To sum up briefly the ideas I have tried to bring out, the first is that all Life is one, for all that we see and sense and experience emerges from the One Root, the inexplicable reality upon which all speculation is useless. We can, however, bring the idea down to our plane and say that whether we look at the sun or a leaf on a tree, whether we look at the sea or a dew drop on the grass, whether we look at a mountain or a clod of mud we are looking at an expression of "That". Indeed all units of life, elemental, mineral, vegetable and human are expressions of this life. We cannot see this very clearly as yet because we view most things from the standpoint of the personality, which is the separative instinct in man. Therefore we are urged to make the attempt to rise beyond the per-

sonality into the region of the impersonal. To do this we have to study ourselves, to decide which of our modes of thought and feeling belong to the realm we are seeking and which to the realm we hope to leave behind. This requires standing, in a sense, outside of ourselves and viewing events both personal and universal with that detachment which leads to intelligence, for we cannot become intelligent just by an act of will. It takes experience and dispassionate judgment. For some, philosophy is thought to be a collection of ideas that have little bearing on practical affairs. This is not true of Theosophy for its teachings, which spread from almost endless time in the past to what to us is almost endless time in the future, give us a plan that helps us to gain a truer sense of proportion in all affairs of life. It tells us that justice is at the heart of life, but can only be sensed when we understand the causes that have led up to our present existence. It tells us that every unit of life, reaching the level of man, has reached the stage of responsibility where he must be prepared to bear his own burdens, scorning to load them on someone else. It tells of compassion too, and love, because although no one can bear our burdens for us, those further on the path than we are can give us guidance and inspiration and sometimes a helping hand. It is not expected that miracles will occur overnight for all of us are at different levels of evolution and need time to complete our course in this school which we call life. What is expected is that anyone accepting these teachings will try to ally himself with the forces of light which are forever at war with the forces of darkness. These forces can fight within ourselves and when we are successful we know at least that we are helping, however infinitesimally, those great Beings who compose what is called the "guardian wall"; these great souls

who having earned their freedom from any link with the physical plane, have refused to take it, so that they can help humanity to safety in its upward struggle. To them we owe our loyalty and a determination to struggle on, despite our weaknesses, difficulties and the obstacles we find within ourselves. As they by their example have shown us the path, so we in our turn must be able in the distant future to show the path to those coming after us. This we can only do by treading it—and this to me is Theosophy.

BUDDHISTS FIND A NEW HOME

The Buddhist Society, London, the oldest and largest of the many Buddhist organizations in the West, has found a new and permanent home at 58 Eccleston Square, near Victoria Station.

It needed an appeal to the Minister of Housing to get permission to use the house for the purpose of the Society, but when it was pointed out that such religious organizations are normally housed in residential areas, the appeal was allowed. As a Member of the Council said of the new house, "a lease for 95 years should see us out, at least for this incarnation."

The new Lecture Hall will hold 120, and the library will house the Society's 3,000 books on the subject of Buddhism. All who use the Shrine Room for meditation must leave their shoes outside.

Treasures to be suitably displayed include a picture of the Potala Palace in Lhasa sent by the Dalai Lama to the Society, the chair in which Sir Edwin Arnold wrote most of *The Light of Asia*, and an elaborate shrine of lacquer and gold specially made in Bangkok and sent for the Society's Jubilee in 1949. The Society's Journal, *The Middle Way*, is now one of the leading Buddhist Journals in the world. Mr. Christmas Humphreys' Pelican *Buddhism* has now sold 140,000 copies.

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