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THE MASTERS OF WISDOM

BY MRS. N. DALZELL

Theosophists are often asked, "Where do you get your teachings?" and the answer is "From the Masters of the Wisdom." "Who are these Masters?" Well, who are they? If we say, "They are great Beings, who come to us in their astral bodies, who speak to us from the astral plane," we hear immediately, "Oh, they are guides, like the Spiritualists have," and we will find it very hard to erase that impression: for to a great number of people, any communication from the astral plane can only come from a discarnate entity.

The names Initiate, Adept, Master, Mahatma, Arhat, are all used in speaking of the Masters, yet all have not quite the same meaning. In *The Mahatma Letters*, page 96, the Master Koot Hoomi says he is not a full Adept, yet he is one of the Masters connected with the founding of the Theosophical Society.

The passing of one Initiation makes the Aspirant an Initiate. With the fourth Initiation he has made a definite contact with the Higher Ego. With the fifth, he is conscious in his Buddhic vehicle. He has left behind the lower vehicles. He is a Master in three worlds and can contact Higher Manas freely.

Now, he may choose. He may enter Nirvana, or he may return to earth life

to help his fellow-men. That means, he must again take a physical body, although he is not compelled to use it always.

He can, if necessary, leave his physical body, and travel in his astral vehicle. At his destination, he may, if he wishes to be visible to those who have no astral vision, draw enough physical matter around him to make a shell, which looks exactly like his physical body: and if you tell your Spiritualist friends that, they will say, "But that's materialization. Our mediums do that, or their controls do."

But the Masters are not disembodied Entities, or discarnate spirits. They are *Men*. Men who have lived many lives, living and working with this end in view: the attainment of Mastership, of spiritual knowledge which they may pass on to those human beings who prove themselves fit for the trust.

The Masters have their students, or chelas, and of these there are several grades. There are probationary chelas, and accepted chelas, and there are also students who have not reached the probationary stage. These may be used by the Masters to bring their teachings to those of us who truly desire to have them, and are willing to work for them. We cannot tell who they are, these

student teachers; we only know that sometimes a friend speaks, and the words bring to us understanding. Sometimes it is a stranger who speaks, or perhaps a librarian puts a book into our hands, which we might otherwise have missed.

Perhaps we get a great deal of enlightenment from some one person. We may think, "He is a Master," and he may be; or he may be a chela of one of the Masters, but to us he is truly a Master.

The Masters, we read in *The Mahatma Letters*, are under the direction of one who is called a Chohan. A greater one still is called a Maha-Chohan. We wonder, "how did they get so far ahead of us?"

The Masters have given to us, through their messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, the book known as *The Secret Doctrine*. In this book we read of the great races of mankind, evolving on the global chain which is called the Earth chain. We read of the Third Root Race, the first race to be given mind, or Manas. The members of that race had to be taught to use that gift, just as we teach children today. Their teachers were great Beings who had finished their evolution in a previous manvantara. We read of the Solar Pitris, the fathers from the Sun, the Lunar Pitris, from the Moon, and the Lords of Venus. These Beings, perfected on their own global chains, came to Earth to teach Earth's children. There were on Earth certain Beings who did not finish their evolution on the Moon chain. These wore Earth bodies.

They were much further advanced than the real Earth men, and could absorb the teachings more easily. When the first teachers left, the task of teaching was taken up by these secondary teachers, and for a great period of time the teachings were given to man in their original purity.

The time came when the secondary teachers were ready to pass on. Now, the people began to debase the teachings. The first teachers were acclaimed gods; the second were priest-kings, for whom divine ancestry was claimed. These also, in many cases, were deified. The divine spark, that atom of pure spirit which is the true man, became more densely involved in matter, more spiritually blinded with each incarnation.

There were still those who tried to keep the teachings in their original purity; many, however, only cared for the power which the knowledge gave them. These latter tried to keep the true knowledge to themselves. Such knowledge, they said, was not good for the majority. They would not know how to use it. This attitude of mind is not unknown today.

During the fourth race, the Atlantean, there was a struggle to maintain the true teachings. Many had attained a high degree of knowledge, only to use it selfishly, and to corrupt it. Then it was hidden, and only given to the few who could be trusted.

The Secret Doctrine tells us of the Atlanteans, who formed colonies in Egypt and India, in Tibet and Chaldea. Amongst these colonies were some trusted custodians of the Wisdom Teachings.

The Egyptian god Osiris is said to have been an Atlantean Initiate, who carried the truth to Egypt.

The time came when the fourth race had run its course. Its continent was due for destruction, even as the continents of the older races had been. Many, who were not "black with sin", as the records say the majority of the Atlanteans were, left the country under the leadership of one known as the Lord of the White or Dazzling Face. The others, who had so misused the sacred teachings, were destroyed, physically, with Atlantis. Their karma was heavy, and

much of our trouble today is attributed to Atlantean karma, which means that we, who suffer did our bit towards generating that karma.

Today, some of those "white" Atlanteans are Initiates, perhaps full Masters. A true Master is never in any way selfish. In fact, he has left all self behind, and has identified himself with that greater self, which is the true SELF.

No Master will withhold knowledge from one who is fit for it, but it is the Master who will judge the fitness, and not the aspirant. Through their Messenger, H.P.B., they brought us teachings which had been esoteric for millenniums. These teachings come to us through a veil of words. It is for us to penetrate the veil, and reach understanding; and each one of us must do it for himself. If we try to rend the veil for another, we make it doubly thick.

No man truly understands through the mind of another, just as no man sees through the eyes of another. If the teachings of the Masters are hard to understand, it is because it is necessary for each one of us to work for the understanding. The effort we make, while it may seem useless at the time, will bear fruit eventually. The fact that we try to understand will bring to us a Teacher; but if we are content to adopt the understanding of others, we will never have more than beliefs, and beliefs are not knowledge, as a rule.

The road to the Masters, and to Mastership, is the road of knowledge. The knowledge gained in a past life may be mistaken for a belief in this; and we may call it a belief. An intense inner conviction may prove to us that it is knowledge; yet, to those who know nothing of the Wisdom Religion, that which we *know* is still only a belief. The same holds true of the Masters. Inwardly, we *know* they exist, but we cannot produce them as evidence. How

may we reach them ourselves? They give us a few hints in *The Mahatma Letters*.

On page 16 they say: "... we neither push, nor draw, into the mysterious domain of occult nature those who are unwilling; never shrink from expressing our opinions freely and fearlessly; yet we are ever as ready to assist those who come to us . . ."; and on page 268: "... it is our law to approach every such an one if ever there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true 'Tathagata' light within him . . ."

The Tathagata Light is the true Buddhist Light, the illumination which shows the lower nature left behind, and the aspirant in contact with higher Manas, or his Buddhist principle.

You will notice the Master says "the feeblest glimmer." They do not wait until emancipation from the lower principles is complete. It is enough that there is the desire to rise, plus the energy to start. We cannot expect a Master to bother with us, if we say, "Oh, yes, we want to rise to your height," and then remain supine and inert, expecting to be pulled upwards by a force outside of ourselves. We must prove to them that we are ready, and deserve their help.

Again, we cannot expect to make contact with the Masters in a day, a year, or a lifetime! It is possible that we, who desire their help so greatly, may have started on the path in previous lives, and so may be much nearer than we think; but we cannot relax because of that possibility. No race is won until it is ended, and if we permit ourselves to lag, we may lose our chances in this life, and may even neutralize the position we have won before. So, it seems our best way is to work on the assumption that this is our first chance.

There is the question of loyalty. Today we read books which we understand were dictated by the Masters them-

selves; and we know that esoteric truths have been given to us in exoteric language.

We have a certain latitude in our understanding; that is, the same sequence of words do not give the same meaning to each of us. Yet to each is given the ability to understand as much of the truth as he can assimilate at the time. Occasionally a direct statement is made. More often, a truth is hidden in words whose meaning we must work for.

When a Master accepts us as his pupils, obedience is necessary. We must then believe, because, if we are ready to be taught by a Master, we have an inner conviction that he cannot lie, and seeming discrepancies lie in our faulty understanding. We may be tested in many ways, and constantly; and the manner in which we meet the tests proves to the Master our readiness for further teachings. Trust is necessary. "How can we ever *teach*, or you *learn*, if we have to maintain an attitude utterly foreign to us and our methods . . .?" the Master asks, on page 235, of *Mahatma Letters*.

We who wish to learn must learn as they wish to teach. We cannot plan the curriculum ourselves. We sometimes ask too much; we ask for knowledge which might prove detrimental to us if given before we are ready. We ask for knowledge, and we have not wisdom. There is the possibility that we may pass on, to those unfit, the knowledge we desire, if it is given us too freely. The Masters understand these things. They know that many have almost reached their ranks, and have then fallen back, through selfishness, greed, or just unreadiness; and these failures are dangerous to all humanity.

The Masters themselves have passed all these tests; more than we know, or can imagine, and because they have passed, they are able to look ahead and see results of which we know nothing. That is why faith, and trust, and loyalty are necessary.

Sometimes a would-be student has so arranged his life that he is not free to give to the Master and his teachings, the necessary time. He has, perhaps, a certain duty towards his family which may make it impossible. In this case, he must remember, he has arranged his life himself, either in this, or in previous lives. Nothing happens by chance. His karma, the logical result of his own deeds, has placed him in his present position, and has gathered around him the people and the circumstances needful for his training. It is of no use for him to break away, in order to pursue what appears to him to be a better way. Only by accepting his conditions and learning the lessons they will teach him, can he approach the Masters.

And it may be, at the end of his physical life, he may realize that a Great One has held him by the hand all the way, and the seeming obstacles were only gateways to a higher path.

To become a chela, a tried and tested *accepted* pupil of the Masters, we read that initiations are necessary; that each step of the way ends in an initiation which proves our readiness, or unreadiness, for the next step; and automatically we think of, and perhaps try to visualize, a ceremony. We know that clubs, societies, etc., have initiations for new members.

These require certain robes and insignia for both initiator and aspirants, and sometimes for all the other members as well. There will be a series of questions and answers. Some rituals are simple, and some are elaborate. Many of these rituals had a real meaning in the past, which today has been lost. The native Indians of Mexico and Peru are said to have known a great deal of the Masonic ritual, and greatly surprised certain non-Catholic members of the Cortes and Pizzaro expeditions.

The churches of today have rituals, accompanied by robes and regalia in many cases. The ceremony of baptism

is an initiation, admitting the applicant, sometimes an infant, sometimes an adolescent, to membership. All religions have something of the kind. The colours of the robes, the solemnity of the questions and answers, and, perhaps, the beauty and grandeur of the music which so often accompanies them, all have an emotional effect on the aspirant.

On page 11, *Mahatma Letters*, the Masters say: ". . . it is men, not ceremony-masters, we seek; devotion, not mere observances . . ." and Theosophical teachings, given us by these same Masters, stress the necessity for overcoming the emotions. They tell us that the greatest ideal we have at present is to establish contact with the Higher Manas, with the Buddhist principle, the true Self. To do this, we must rise above the emotions, instead of allowing the emotion to assume control. We must forget our dreams of the gorgeously coloured robes of initiation, the beautiful music of the ritual. The idea of a ceremony, or ritual, in which we dramatize ourselves as the centre-piece, must be cast into the discard. "Are there then no initiations?" we ask; and we remember that a student becomes a probationary chela, and a probationary chela, an accepted chela, through initiation. From the chela to the Initiate, the Master, the Arhat, each transition is marked by an Initiation. The Arhat, we learn, is no more bound by the wheel of Life and Death, because he has passed what is termed the last Initiation. So there are initiations; but if we are wise, we will not watch and wait for them. They come to us in our daily lives, and it does not matter if we are Theosophists or Shintoists, Christians or Mohammedan, the tests come to us each day, and we may not recognize them; but we meet them and overcome them. Or, if we do not overcome them, we meet them again. We may have made plans for ourselves which seem unalterable, only to find that to carry

out those plans entails a hardship on another. We may, if we so wish, force the issue, and hurt the other. Have we then met our test successfully?

In one of H.P.B.'s letters she says: "No real, genuine Master will accept a chela who sacrifices *anyone but himself* to go to that Master. He who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another."

One's duty may seem a stumbling block, but it is the only road to the Masters. And, when we reach the Masters, what have we found but our own Higher Self; for we have established contact with that Self which has no personality, but is the One True Self; and we know that those individuals whom we have called Masters are but phases of that One Self, that Unity which we barely sense today but which will one day be all of Truth to us.

Every time we try to practise brotherhood under difficulties, and succeed, we have passed an initiation; a minor one, perhaps, and we may not know it as such but it is truly a test. We think sometimes "What is the use of going on. We try and try and seem to get no better." Habits of thought betray us. We think we have weeded them out and suddenly they spring up again. A thought groove, once established in the mind, is very hard to eradicate. We can only keep on trying, not so much to destroy the habit we despise, as to form a new habit. We cannot reach the Masters if our thoughts persistently take us away from them. We cannot realize Brotherhood if we believe our brothers are separate from ourselves; and we can do nothing if we give up because we have not already done it. We must remember that time is relative, and some reforms may take a whole life to make us realize that reform is necessary, but we can meet failure undaunted, for a Master has said, "There is no failure, save in ceasing to try."

The Masters do not ask for worship or adoration. They do not pose as gods. They do *not* say "We are infallible." They *do* say that when acting in the physical body they *are* fallible. When their teachings are reduced to words, we understand that in many cases those words but serve to hide the truth from those unfit to receive it; those who have not left all of self behind. Truth is something we must work for. It will not come to us easily.

The greatest truth is that of Unity; that truth which proves to us that no being, or phase of being, is independent of all others, or too high for us to reach. In each one of us lies all potentialities.

The infinite patience of the Master in dealing with us is the outcome of the fact that He Himself has passed through our present stage. And in that fact lies our hope. There is no height to which we may not attain. The Masters lead the way to prove to us, at last, that they, and we, are One in all verity.

WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

BY MRS. MOLLIE GRIFFITH

Before the most elementary study of life becomes worthwhile, there is one thing each of us must decide. That is, whether Life is regulated by law.

If not, and chance rules the world, if it is possible for us to have what we call either good fortune or bad fortune, without having deserved either, then are we wasting time trying to understand life's meaning.

We know the physical world is ruled by law because we can see and study it. The astronomers can foretell certain movements of the stars years before they take place because they have studied the laws of astronomy.

We know certain physical laws too and when we know them, we can work in harmony with them. We know, for instance, that if we were to stay long enough under water we would be drowned. Therefore we don't do it. But if we did, no one would blame the sea for having drowned us. Put ourselves in a certain relationship with that law, and the result is inevitable.

We affirm law everywhere in the physical world, but strangely deny it in many of the affairs of human life. We deny it simply because we cannot see far enough either backward or forward.

To illustrate, let us suppose we are taken on a tour of inspection over a typical school in any town in any country. We know what we would see. There would be children of every degree of intelligence from the lowest to the highest grade. Some of the pupils would be enjoying all the privileges the school could offer, while others would be more restricted. Some would be suffering for the misdeeds of yesterday, others reaping the reward of hard work and good conduct. All would be learning something, even those who refused to try, and the greater the understanding of the teachers, the greater the advancement of the pupils.

Nothing in this would surprise us because we could see before our eyes the working out of cause and effect, and we would know that the child who is kept in today is the one who broke the rules, or refused to learn his lesson yesterday; that the irresponsible children in the lowest grade might be the responsible, privileged pupils of the future.

It is all simple and reasonable and fair. Suppose, however, that we had been shown over the school and had watched its workings for one single day without any knowledge of the days be-

fore and none of the days to follow, our reaction would have been very different. "Why" we would say "should some know so much more than others? Why is one child restricted to the class room, while others are out playing games? Why are the teachers so unfair?"

The first thing that makes us wonder about life is the apparent appalling injustices. We see some people wise, prosperous, happy and healthy while others are ignorant, poor, unhappy and sick. Some have all the advantages of a good home and fine education, while others may be born in a home of crime in the slums of a large city.

Why among mankind should there be, side by side, the genius and the ignorant, the sinner and the saint?

We may be told that God created each man at birth, but no thoughtful person could accept this, for not even a man who could create a thing of beauty would waste his time creating ugly and useless things. The God who created a Shakespeare, a Michael Angelo, a Plato or a Beethoven would not at the same time create the monsters, for instance, whom we see in the world today.

If we cannot accept that theory, then the alternative we are offered is that of heredity. This theory no doubt contains much truth; particularly from a physical point of view, for evolution in that field is admitted almost everywhere. But is it wholly satisfactory in regard to character?

Leaving out such questions which perhaps the authorities on that theory may be able to answer, as to why the descendants of great people shouldn't be greater still, why the character of twins should often be entirely dissimilar, why a genius may be born into a very ordinary family, why infant prodigies, and so on, there is another and subtler difficulty.

We all admire great men and women. They stand out and are remembered

throughout the ages. They may even inspire someone a thousand years after their death. We feel that what they accomplished was their contribution to life and they hold a special place in the hearts of men.

If the theory of heredity, morally and mentally as well as physically, was wholly true, we should give the credit to their fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, in fact, to all their ancestors.

If we are solely the results of our heredity, why should we look up to a man of fine character and condemn the criminal? Both are the result of something they cannot help. Environment cannot be the complete answer either, for some of the outstanding characters in history have risen from what we should consider a poor environment.

That we do admire and pay homage to greatness, seems to suggest that greatness is a personal achievement, not the result of birth into a certain family. If it were not so, what a pity that children are born before their parents have been moulded by some of the greatest experiences in life. What a pity too, that people of great promise die young, or have no children. Could heredity alone, added to environment, completely account for a Hitler?

There seems to be something left out, something fatalistic in this idea, something that takes away from us free will. We cannot dismiss the thought that no decent man, let alone a God, would hurt a child because he had a grudge against his father or mother, and we cannot be satisfied with an explanation of life that is not founded on justice.

If special creation seems unreasonable and the theory of heredity not wholly acceptable, there is another explanation of life which, to those who believe it, seems so simple and satisfy-

ing that they wonder it is not seriously considered by all thinking mankind.

We feel we have gained something of priceless and lasting value when seemingly by chance, through a book perhaps, or a lecture, or a conversation, we first come across the teaching about reincarnation which casts such light on things which have puzzled us. This light, when once seen may often be dimmed but will never be extinguished.

Immediately we want to share it with others and pass on our good news, sure that it will be received with enthusiasm equal to our own.

What is our surprise when the very person we thought would hail it with joy looks at us in mild surprise, as if we had taken leave of our senses. As soon as possible, our friend changes the conversation or looks at the clock with an assumed start at the lateness of the hour, and goes home!

Why is it that what appeals to us so completely, has no meaning to many earnest and intelligent people? Is it that as children they were taught that such and such was God's will and they must accept it? Is it that they are satisfied with the present or feel it wrong or useless to try to understand why things are as they are, or is it that we clutter up our presentation of reincarnation with so many details that the true picture is obscured?

Few people, indeed not the writer, can say that they can prove to others that these theosophical teachings are true. What can be said is, that if a teaching satisfies the mind and heart, if it is contained in the great religions of the past, in the writings of great poets and philosophers, and is confirmed by certain laws of Nature, then we should give it serious consideration.

Theosophy is not new; it is as old as life itself, of which it is a part. It is, in other words, the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

This physical world has often been called the "school of life" and this expresses the idea perfectly. For a school is a place you return to, over and over again, until its lessons are learned. Could not the difference in people be explained by the fact that some are older pupils and some younger. If you want to take the two extremes—the wisest beings this world has ever produced and the most ignorant—you would say that the wisest beings are on the point of graduating from the school of life, while the ignorant are still in the kindergarten.

The wisest are those who have lived many lives on earth, the ignorant those who have lived very few, and learned very little.

The immediate response to this suggestion usually is, "Why, if we have lived before, don't we remember something about it?" This is a very reasonable question, but before considering it fully, let us first try to fill in the picture.

All the great Teachers in the world have taught us that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap, but we haven't given this the serious consideration we should, because some evidence has been to the contrary.

We see selfish, ruthless people meeting with the best of good fortune, while some of the finest people we know meet with nothing but trouble. We have been told that the so-called wicked get their deserts after they have passed from this life, but even if that were so, it doesn't explain why those who have lived self-sacrificing and useful lives should be inflicted with great sorrow.

Life confirms the truths uttered by its exponents, the teachers of mankind, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap—not necessarily immediately, but at the time when the lesson will be most effectively learned, for Life is a perfect teacher.

The ruthless, selfish person is a child in the lower grades, not yet aware that he should do anything but struggle for that which he thinks will give him pleasure. He has many lessons to learn, many experiences to go through, many lives to live before he learns that the brotherhood of man is a fact in nature, a fact he cannot ignore with impunity, for no one can hurt another without hurting himself.

What about the other individual, the one who was self-sacrificing and hard-working, why should he suffer? That answer will emerge as we go on. We enter the school of life ignorant human beings, conscious for the most part of our physical wants. We live for ourselves alone, we are little more developed than animals, for our minds and emotions are only faintly stirring. We live a life on earth, pass through the gateway known as death for rest and recreation, and then once more we are born into another family for one more day, or one more life at school. We suffer and enjoy. Many times we come back to school.

Then the day comes, when on meeting a certain experience, something within us tells us not to do this thing. We have done it in other lives and suffered. Conscience is born.

We come back again and are attached to tribe or clan. We not only fight for our own family, but for the clan as well. Our circle is widening. Many times we pass through the gateway of death. Many times are we born. Our emotions and minds are developing. We become attached to finer things, music, poetry,

beauty, government, philosophy or religion. We are people of definite character, whose loyalties include not only a family or tribe but a nation. We still suffer and enjoy. Life has led us some way on our journey.

True, we are far from the goal of human perfection, but equally true, we are far from our kindergarten days.

A question is growing in our minds. We constantly put it out, and dwell on other things, but it persists. We asked about it when we were children, but we got no satisfaction for our elders too were seeking a solution.

They told us "God is Love" but the child next door was born a cripple. We were told that "God is all-powerful" yet he allowed the innocent to suffer, innocent that is, if we have only one life, one chance on earth.

We could find the answer, for it is everywhere to be found, but strangely enough we usually pass it by, till the question gains power and will not be denied. "What are we here for? What is the meaning of all we see? How can our sense of justice be satisfied?"

Then we read a book, hear a conversation, attend a lecture. A great light dawns, for at last our question is answered; we have been given a map of our journey, with an outline of the road we have followed and a signpost pointing to a straight and narrow path, which leads to a glorious destiny. We can tear up the map, we can lock it away in a drawer, or we can study it with earnestness and intelligence, for we have been offered a chance to co-operate with Life, our teacher.

"But my first duty is to *my* Master. And duty, let me tell you, is for us, stronger than any friendship or even love; as without this abiding principle which is the indestructible cement that has held together for so many millenniums, the scattered custodians of nature's grand secrets—our Brotherhood, nay, our doctrine itself—would have crumbled long ago into unrecognizable chaos."

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, p. 340

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The response to my request for copies of the March/April, 1956 issue of the magazine was exceptionally good and I hereby express my sincere thanks to those who so promptly forwarded same to me, thus making it possible to bind the number of volumes required.

* * * *

It is with much pleasure that I welcome the following new members into the Society: Mrs. Vera Lyachenko, Montreal Lodge; Mr. Joseph Brook, Mrs. Hazel Brook, Mr. Earle T. Bradford, Mr. Jan Golumski of Phoenix Lodge; Mrs. Sarah G. Fowler, Miss Annie Lee and Mrs. Jennie Richardson of Toronto Lodge, and Mr. T. B. G. Burch as a member at large.

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Many thanks to the donor of \$5 to the Magazine Fund. The initials given on the accompanying note are not known to me, therefore I could not send a receipt.

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I would remind our American cousins that the discount on their dollar is now 5%, and when paying their subscription for our magazine either by cash or cheque this should be taken into consideration, otherwise it means quite a loss on the transaction.

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Miss Helen V. Zahara, well known to many of our members, writes me that she has been elected General Secretary of the Australian Section. She was formerly Recording Secretary at Adyar and has recently been on a global tour, and we in Toronto had the pleasure of attending several of her interesting lectures. She sends greetings and best wishes from Australia to the Canadian Section which on your behalf I heartily reciprocated and added that I felt sure she would make a success of her new office and take full advantage of the

wonderful opportunities she will have in that vast country.

* * * *

It is with deep regret I report the passing of several of our older members. Miss Mary A. Todd who died on June 2 joined the Hamilton Lodge in 1929 and although not a member at her demise owing to age and other reasons, maintained contact by means of the magazine to the end. Another Hamilton member, Mr. Fred J. Blackett died on April 20, he was 85 years of age but maintained an active interest to the last; his presence will be sadly missed by his fellow members. Mrs. Elizabeth Belcher who recently passed her 98th birthday passed away on May 18th. She was the widow of the late Felix Belcher so well known to the Canadian Section. An obituary notice by Mr. D. W. Barr appears in this issue.

* * * *

I have just received news of the sudden death of Mr. Donald Tong, a member of long standing in the Toronto Lodge and faithful student for many years in the Sunday morning Secret Doctrine class. Mr. Tong died on July 3 while driving his automobile to work. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his family.

* * * *

For many long years the Canadian Section has been under eclipse and treated more or less as a black sheep because of its attitude in respect to the original teachings. This obscurity seems to be passing and hopes of a better understanding seem nearer, as I scan the many theosophical magazines especially those from the Antipodes. The New Zealand General Secretary in her address at the Diamond Jubilee Convention stresses her policy on organizing and advancing the future of Theosophy in her section. She begins by advocating a clear and correct understanding of the principles by reference

to original sources but strangely enough refers to several neo-theosophical books which we certainly would not advocate, "for those however," she continues, "who really do want the deeps and the beauties of the original Adeptic thought and writings, then let them study *The Secret Doctrine* and other writings by H.P.B." "Why", she continues, "is this careful study of basic theosophy so important? Because I believe that whilst the effective presentation of sound theosophy, of correct aspects of the science of theosophy can prove of the greatest possible benefit to individuals and to society, so wrong presentation based upon imperfect or even erroneous ideas can do great harm to the T.S. and all recipients". To this we all heartily agree. The latest issue of *Eirenicon* published in England also sees this trend and I quote "Correspondents outside the Adyar Society are sometimes sceptical about our assertion that there is a rising tide of interest in *The Secret Doctrine* among Adyar Lodges," it then enumerates many instances such as the following:—"From *The American Theosophist*—Ernest Wood in a series of lectures at the Chicago lodges; Mrs. Camille Leigh continues a Secret Doctrine class at Los Angeles; a S.D. class at Miami and another at Tulsa; in New York Mr. Fritz Kunz speaks on *The Secret Doctrine* in the light of *The Mahatma Letters*," and so on, and concludes with a report on a very fine series of S.D. study classes in most centres of T.S. work in New Zealand which have been so popular and the demand for Tape Recordings so general, that many have been run off for use in the lodges there. Mrs. Lavender, who, it is stated, is responsible for these classes and recordings, has this to say, "Earnest search in this *magnum opus* is a fundamental 'refresher' in the ancient wisdom. We fight too shy of it, fearing to find ourselves lost in its deeps. But it is good

to be thus lost and to explore the path out of the maze". We here in Canada, who nailed the flag to the mast these many years and have been assiduously studying the "deeps" as witness the S.D. Class in the Toronto Lodge which has never failed in the past sixty-five years to meet every Sunday morning, seem to be vindicated in our attitude and can be excused for a little bit of pride in having been true to H.P.B. and the Masters.

E.L.T.

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The Annual Meeting of the General Executive was held in Toronto on Sunday July 7, 1957, the following members being present: Miss M. Hindsley, Messrs. C. E. Bunting, C. M. Hale, G. I. Kinman and the General Secretary. Mr. D. W. Barr attended as editor of the magazine.

The General Secretary welcomed Mr. Hale on his return to the Executive this year.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The financial statement for the past year and a statement showing the standing of the Lodges were read and approved.

Mr. Kinman moved that a message of sympathy be sent to the Phoenix Lodge in respect of the recent death of its President, Mr. Cecil Williams. This was seconded by Mr. Hale and carried.

Mr. Barr reported progress for the magazine and stated that Miss Laura Gaunt was now active in the magazine work. The indices to all previous volumes had been compiled. The General Secretary suggested that two or three years' issues be bound in one volume to save costs. This was approved, the number of issues in each volume to be left to the discretion of the General Secretary.

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THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
IN CANADA

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OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

GENERAL SECRETARY

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

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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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29 Rebecca Street, Hamilton, Ontario.

The General Secretary then read correspondence relating to a matter concerning the internal economy of Montreal Lodge. This was discussed and the General Secretary will write to the Lodge concerning this.

The draft of an article by T. H. Redfern, Editor of *Eirenicon*, relating to Rule 10 was read and discussed. Mr. Barr suggested that, if agreeable to Mr. Redfern, the final draft be printed in *The Canadian Theosophist*. This was agreed to.

The next meeting was arranged for October 6. The meeting then adjourned.

E. L. T.

MRS. ELIZABETH BELCHER

Mrs. E. Belcher, widow of Felix A. Belcher, passed away quietly on Saturday May 18, a few weeks after her 98th birthday. Mrs. Belcher had been a member of the Theosophical Society for over sixty years, she and her husband having joined Toronto Lodge together either late in 1896 or early in 1897—the early minutes of Toronto Lodge meetings did not always record the dates of admission of new members.

In the early days of the Toronto Lodge when the foundations of the present organization were being established, Mrs. Belcher was a very active worker and this activity continued when the West End Lodge was formed and her membership was transferred there. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Belcher rejoined the Toronto Lodge. In her later years Mrs. Belcher was confined to bed, but her interest in Theosophical affairs continued and she was always glad to hear the news of the lodge.

Sixty years is a long time relatively in the average life span, and it is an exceptionally lengthy period in which to maintain, as Mrs. Belcher maintained, a constant Theosophical attitude towards all the trials, sorrows, joys and changes brought by the ever-moving cycle of the years. Between the year of her birth, 1859, and the time of her death, the world passed through many epochs. This period was the time of greater, more far-reaching and more rapid changes than were ever experienced before in a comparable time cycle. But throughout the maze of those outer transformations, Mrs. Belcher followed faithfully the Ariadne thread of Theosophy, and found understanding, peace and certainty.

The funeral service on Tuesday, May 21, was conducted by Mr. G. I. Kinman, President of Toronto Lodge. Cremation took place at the Toronto Crematorium.

STANDING OF THE LODGES

FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30th, 1957

Lodge	New Members	Joined on Demit	Reinstated	Left on Demit	Deceased	Resigned	Inactive	Total 1956	Total 1957
Calgary .....	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	5	3
Canyon	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	14
Edmonton .....	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	15	11
Hamilton	1	...	...	...	1	...	3	26	23
Kitchener	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Montreal	6	...	1	...	...	...	5	42	44
Orpheus .....	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	14	14
Phoenix	4	...	...	...	1	...	1	13	15
St. Thomas .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	5
Toronto	13	2	7	...	4	2	16	204	204
Vancouver	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	21	22
Victoria	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	6
Vulcan .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Winnipeg .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	22	2
Members at Large	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	9	9
Totals	32	2	9	...	10	2	49	394	376

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AS AT JUNE 30th, 1957

RECEIPTS

Balance from last year	\$2088.56
(Includes Bal. W/E Lodge \$20.30 and Vulcan Lodge, \$36.88)	
Lodge Dues and Fees:	
1957	\$741.90
1958	207.50
1959	7.50
	956.90
Magazine Subscriptions	193.75
Magazine Donations	26.00
Sales	59.55
General Donations	52.75
General Fund	24.75
Refund	5.00
Bank Interest	52.56

Total

New members 32
New subscribers 14

EXPENDITURES

Adyar, per capita	\$ 104.46
Magazine Cost:	
Printing	\$1016.00
Postage	44.41
Zine	5.50
	1065.91
General Fund:	
Postage	\$ 22.06
Stencils	9.68
Extras	3.35
Stationery	79.25
Office	16.61
	130.95
General (J. Beck)	5.00
Pamphlets (B. de Zirkoff)	63.00
Trav. Expenses	35.00
Bank Charges	4.52
Seals for pamphlets	51.00
Cash in Bank	1999.98

Total

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

CECIL WILLIAMS

The President of the Phoenix Lodge in Hamilton died on Monday, May 20th, after a short illness. It is with deep regret I make this announcement. Mr. Williams was a keen and devoted Theosophist and his life was guided and ruled by its principles. He joined the Society in 1921 and was for many years a member of the Toronto and Hamilton Lodges. Later feeling the urge to expand and create along lines of greater endeavour he was instrumental in forming the Phoenix Lodge in Hamilton and was engaged in the multifarious duties of stabilizing and making a success of this venture when he was called away. His passing at such a time is particularly distressing to all concerned. In business life he was essentially a newspaper man. He joined *The Hamilton Spectator* as a special writer and was for many years City Hall reporter. From that he graduated to editorial writer and recently became chief librarian and was instrumental in organizing the newspaper library which under his management became one of the finest on the continent. He was also a writer of distinction, his book *The Foundations of Intelligence* a scientific exposition on the pattern of proper thinking, was well reviewed and caused much comment. There was a large attendance at the funeral, friends from the staff of the *Spectator* swelled the concourse augmented as it was by members of the Phoenix, Hamilton, Kitchener and Toronto Lodges. Mr. Dudley W. Barr delivered the funeral address and read the special service which was most impressive. Cremation took place in Toronto. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mrs. Williams in her bereavement and to the members of the family.

THE KALEIDOSCOPE

All the little fragments took another turn,

Formed themselves in other versions,
Finer patterns than the Persians
Used in their carpetries,
Or than tilemakers burn.

A handshake only brings
Translucent symmetries,
Concentric jewelled rings,
Sliding circles, shooting stars,
Hearts and coronets,

Crosses and tall candles,
Triangles, dots and bars,
Urns with curving handles,
Swords and bayonets;

An illuminated idol;
Rhythmic floral lines,
Shifting, weaving, tidal,
Intricate designs.

Gems of ruby, emerald, pearl,
Jewels in a flashing swirl.
Mysterious eyes peer back at me
From the brassy column;
Dark, repeated, solemn,
Reflected imagery.

Dominants, recessives,
Like genes of evolution;
Statics and successives,
Stained glass in revolution.

Who could ever tame
The permutations, combinations,
Never twice the same,
Turned on the wheel of birth?
Progressive incarnations
Begun upon the earth.

All the little people took another turn,
Formed another period-piece,
(Chips upon eternal ocean)
Sought another chance to earn
Sums for the soul's release.

Yet nothing was added but motion.

Laura Baldwin.

REVIEWS

The Opening of the Doors of the Mind, by L. C. Roper. (Blavatsky Lecture, 1956) published by The Theosophical Publishing House, London, Ltd., 24 pp., paper bound, 1/6.

The Blavatsky Lectures were instituted in 1917 by The Theosophical Society in England, which directed that "a Blavatsky Lecture on the analogy of the Hibbert and Gifford Lectures be . . . instituted which . . . shall take the form of a speech or paper based on some original research in connection with the writings of Mme. Blavatsky." *The Opening of the Doors of the Mind* was delivered at the Annual Convention of the Society in England at London in May, 1956.

This is a well-prepared paper on the implications of the verses in *The Voice of the Silence*, 'The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.' We identify ourselves with our minds and with the processes by which the mind 'knows', but as Patanjali said, 'The mind is not self luminous' and of itself it cannot cognize that which is beyond thought, the Self. "Just as one cannot reach the sky through climbing, so the Real cannot be attained through degrees of knowledge"—realization comes through direct and immediate experience, unconditional by comparisons with past experiences and the accumulation of ideas in the mind's memory.

The author states that there is no reason to suppose that the awakening of the psychic senses brings us any closer to Reality, in fact . . . "too great a concern with the beings, objects and experiences of the superphysical worlds is as great a hindrance to the direct perception of the Real as is immersion in those of the physical world."

Systems of thought control and of concentration and meditation designed

to train and still the mind do not, according to the author, produce the desired result—the mind is only held down and suppressed. Real meditation is said to be, 'continual awareness of the Self . . . all the time, during all the varied activities of daily life'. The need for quietude of mind is recognized and ". . . as we go deeper and deeper into ourselves through this passive awareness (of the Self) the mind becomes still, not made still by any discipline or thought-control." The process is not one of detachment, but by 'self-forgetting attentiveness'. One becomes spontaneously alert and attentive when the whole interest is directed towards the Self; this is right meditation. When this is achieved, then "the ego, that accumulation of innumerable experiences over many lives, dissolves, and there remains only a self-transcending consciousness." The mind, 'the slayer of the Real' ceases to be the vehicle with which the consciousness identifies itself and it is subordinated to its proper and relative place in the psychological economy.

The author quotes from many authorities in support of his approach to this age-old problem of mind, its function and limitations. Students will find this little booklet of real interest and value.

An error which escaped the author and publishers appears on page 22 where a quotation from *Light on the Path* is ascribed to *The Voice of the Silence*.

D.W.B.

Have You Lived Other Lives? by Ernest C. Wilson, D.D., published 1956 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 163 pp., \$3.95.

Dr. Wilson, minister of Christ Church, Unity, in Los Angeles, did not welcome the concept of reincarnation when he first encountered it in his early youth, but later he became convinced of its truth. A touch of psychism—extra-

sensory perception—in other members of his immediate family, lead him to an examination of this phase of the occult; he himself appears to have a certain psychic sensitivity.

In this book, Dr. Wilson tells of his steps from scepticism to acceptance of reincarnation and presents arguments, examples and texts in support of this doctrine and of the companion doctrine of karma; many of these will be familiar to readers of Theosophical literature. The "life readings" of Edgar Cayce are referred to several times and to Dr. Wilson the Cayce testimony appears to be valid—a viewpoint with which many theosophical students will agree. Naturally, those verses from the Bible which support or indicate reincarnation and karma are quoted. Verses from Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* are also quoted, but no other non-Christian sources are drawn upon.

Although Dr. Wilson has retained much of his orthodoxy, his departure from the orthodox in the acceptance of reincarnation, karma and the concept of life as a continuum which never dies but ever seeks re-embodiment, will be sympathetically received by many readers. In fact, a book such as this could reach into homes and communities where Theosophical literature would not be accepted. It is a good, readable book to have in a Theosophical library for the use of newcomers.

The Aquarian Press, London, England, is re-publishing some of Dion Fortune's early works. *Moon Magic* was published last year; three others have appeared this year:

The Sea Priestess, 316 pp., cloth bound, 16 shillings. This was first published privately by the author in 1938.

The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage, 132 pp., cloth bound, 10/6.

Through the Gates of Death, 94 pp., paper bound, 4/6; a short work on death and after-death stages.

TORONTO LODGE

In May, Swami Pranavananda Saraswati, who is on a world tour, lectured three times at the Theosophical Hall in Toronto. His talks on May 3 and 4, "The Purpose of Human Existence" and "The Royal Road to God Realization", were not sponsored by the Lodge, but on Sunday May 12 he spoke as an invited guest speaker on "The Higher Art of Living". The three meetings were exceptionally well attended. Considerable newspaper publicity had been given to the Swami's visit and he also appeared on television. He had previously lectured extensively in the East and in the United States. After visiting Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal in Canada, he is leaving for South America.

According to the descriptive literature which was received, the Swami, whose lay name was S. P. Shukla, was a practicing medical doctor in India when an inner urge led him to renounce his profession and to become a chela of a guru, Swami Sachchidananda Saraswati, in the Himalayas. After completing his training, he travelled throughout India and then embarked on his world tour.

He stated that his mission was 'to bring harmony and understanding into the lives of many men of different religions and languages'. In his three talks, the fundamental concepts of the ancient wisdom were presented along with practical advice on the control of mind, emotions and habits. He stressed the idea of the unity of all life and the fact that each religion was a way to the central truth which lay behind the outer form.

"Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims."

The Voice of the Silence.

ANNUAL LETTER OF THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

Dear Associates:

The U.L.T. Day "Letters" of the past several years have consistently noticed the broadly "theosophizing trends" of modern thought. This is natural, for both the Declaration and the modulus of U.L.T. stress the universality of Theosophic thought, and consider as Theosophists all who regard man as a soul in evolution—a soul destined to discover, in time, the esoteric truths which underlie the phenomenal world. An only temporarily obscured fellowship, it can be thought, exists among all who seek truth in this "soul view", while those partial obscurations, fostered by creedal and sectarian affiliations, are said by H.P.B. to have nearly run their course in world history.

The early days of the Theosophical Society, then, rapidly expanding, embodied something of this broad vision. The original Constitution placed first a determination "to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions." It spoke of the need to "oppose and counteract—after due investigation and proof of its irrational nature—bigotry in every form", and it called for devotion to that "non-sectarian education" later defined so clearly in H.P.B.'s *Key to Theosophy*.

By such an atmosphere of thought, now sought through the simple statements of the U.L.T. Declaration, the student is enabled to understand and to welcome expressions which reach beyond either bigotry or materialism. In this light, and from a deeper fellowship which finds purposeless any sectarianism among Theosophists, the partisan spirit withers away.

That something of this character is presently taking place in *all* Theosophi-

cal groups is made apparent by the tone of various Theosophical publications, regardless of the body represented. Something, in short, is happening among Theosophists, just as something is happening, however obscurely, in world affairs, in academic thinking, and in the multifarious fields of modern psychology—a move toward new levels of understanding. With such changes apparent in some degree among proclaimed Theosophists, an interest in organizational unity is hardly surprising, and may hold a special meaning for the students of U.L.T. After all, the U.L.T. Declaration was conceived precisely in order that students of differing affiliations might unite on principles and in basic attitude, and find a place whereon to stand, beyond the limit of organizational identities. Through the years, many members of the various Societies have become associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists, without disturbing their earlier and more formal ties and obligations.

The Declaration of U.L.T. was addressed to "all open-minded Theosophists" in an endeavour to suggest "an unassailable basis for union"—in other words, a basis for union which made no attempt to define either the opportunities or the obligations of Theosophic fellowship. Differences of opinion were of course bound to exist among U.L.T. associates, but the common declaration of intent was to regard those differences as "side-issues". A high regard for the "Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy" was to be the "sole bond", and basis for whatever enlightenment might result from the stimulus of numerous active minds focused in a single *philosophic* direction.

Interestingly, an 1886 draft of the Objects of the T.S. declares that Theosophical association "exact[s] from each member only that toleration of the beliefs of others which he desires each and all his fellow members to exhibit in regard to his own faith." At that time, the fellows of the Society included many followers of particular religions. While this is seldom the case today, may not the same "toleration" apply in principle, since each student is in the final analysis his own interpreter of the Theosophic doctrines, and each one reflects a somewhat different way of thinking about and responding to fundamental principles?

In short, the "original lines" of the Theosophical Movement of 1875 are really *in the care of individuals*, not organizations. "Group thinking" of any sort is, in effect, a departure from these lines, but the dangers of "group thinking" can never seriously threaten one who has come to know that Theosophy is the essence of self-discovery. Self-discipline and resistance of the temptation to suggest the proper disciplines for others are the mandate of Theosophical occultism. In the days to come, one can hope, occultists of this nature will grow in number.

One needs no formal organization, however, for this endeavour. For this reason, H.P.B. never tired of pointing out that Theosophy is beyond all organizations. The Declaration of U.L.T. has never become antiquated—not because it is a "sacred" document, but because it is a document so simple and clear that arguments about it can hardly arise.

Meanwhile, U.L.T. Lodges continue to send down roots in their communities. The Bombay Lodge hopes before long to occupy its own building and Theosophy Hall. In the United States, the new Lodge at Laguna Beach (California) has beautiful new quarters of

its own on a much-travelled highway. In Belgium a new Lodge has opened its doors at Berchem, Antwerp.

We may thus move forward with encouragement, gaining confidence from the strengthening foundations of U.L.T. the world over, and from an ever-fresh understanding of the Declaration, which is the working basis of our fraternity.

Sincerely,

The Parent United Lodge
of Theosophists.

BROTHERHOOD

The definition of 'brotherhood' as given in the dictionary, namely—the state of being a brother, or brotherly, an association of men for any purpose, a class of individuals of the same kind, profession or occupation, a fraternity—is most inadequate.

Brotherhood—the word when dwelt on impersonally, conjures up the most beautiful of ideals—man's perfect relationship to man, and to all things that are in the universe, from the most lowly forms to the highest reaches of our imagination.

Most important is the fact that brotherhood exists. Opening the door of an understanding of brotherhood, we pass the portals and behold a new heaven revealed, that will delight and gladden us and make our whole living gracious and happy.

Once brotherhood is established in our thinking, we no longer censure, deride or condemn our fellow beings. We see them as potential gods, fighting their individual limitations of seeming indifference, errors, unused intelligence, and striving to break through the barriers of these boundaries towards a goal of salvation. We are at one with them in their journey forward; their victories become a universal victory, their failures, our failures.

Therefore, to our brothers we should convey by example, the knowledge that we work with them; they shed their tears, and our tears are intermingled; they rejoice, and we are part of their rejoicing. We judge not, and expect to be spared their judgment. We judge *ourselves* only.

All our brothers bring us wondrous gifts, and we give gifts to them. These can be so many things—smiles, kind words, helping hands, enthusiasm and joy. Let us take these gifts wholeheartedly, responsively and lovingly, and send ours out unselfishly, withholding nothing. We can enhance the richness of our lives in this taking and giving, this oneness of sharing, this oneness of love.

Practise giving to those who need the most—the tired, unhappy, defeated ones, who stray along the highway of life without knowledge of their brotherhood, and your gift to them may open their eyes and lift them up and help them to discard the chains that, though of their own making, bind them cruelly.

We need recognition and acceptance to be well-balanced personalities. Brotherhood supplies the only scientific remedy for deficiency or lack of these in our lives. Those who have knowledge must utilize it in everyday living to give to those whose need is greatest, and the reward will be progress towards universally expressed brotherhood.

Send out your gifts of love and understanding to all without reservation; accept no hurt in return, and to those who seemingly reject, give more and more. Not one thought will be wasted, somehow, somewhere it will reach its destination.

There are times when material help is needed. Give this help when and wherever possible. You will not be poorer.

It is easy to look upon a beautiful flower and feel kinship, but this is also possible with the lowliest weed. Beauty

is growth and progress, and nature is lavish.

It is easy to be kind to animals. They express nature's bounty to their highest capacity.

It is easy to be kind to little ones, babies that pull at our heartstrings by their very dependence, little children who themselves resemble flowers, and lovely adolescents who are beginning to ask questions, to think out ideas and establish a personal sense of values, and to mature people who still seek life's answer and a pattern of goodness.

—It is not easy to love those who look unlovely to our eyes. Yet it is possible to reach down and search below the surface. Seek and you will find, and suddenly the golden rule is found so applicable that we wonder at our former blindness.

For we are brothers! Let us act like brothers, think like brothers, live in this life and all lives in brotherhood. A sincere application of the principle of brotherhood at all times and in all places will set off chain reactions which will embrace mankind.

Hazel Brook.

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 life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.—Idvll of the White Lotus.

THE WRITING OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE

The months of July and August are both anniversary months in the life of H. P. Blavatsky as she was born near midnight of July 30-31 according to the Gregorian calendar which was then in use in Russia,—August 11-12 of our present system,—in the year 1831 at Ekaterinoslow in the south of Russia. Whichever calendar is used, she was born under the sign of Leo and she remained the lion-hearted one throughout her whole life.

No other individual of this age has had such a profound influence on the thought of the world. This may not be recognized by those who are unfamiliar with her writings or who do not accept the basic concepts there presented. Nevertheless, religion, philosophy and science have passed through a revolution in attitude since the time of the formation of the Theosophical Society, of which she was the principal founder and the chief exponent of the ideas for which it was formed. That the old barriers of race, creed, caste and colour prejudices are slowly breaking down is due in a large measure to the influence of her teaching of universal brotherhood and of the regeneration of mankind through altruism.

The Secret Doctrine was her principal work and it is encouraging to find that today it is being studied more widely than ever before, not only among members of the Society, but also by many persons who are not associated with any Theosophical organization. This is in accordance with her prophecy that in this and the next century the world would slowly come to realize the truth of its fundamental propositions. She took no personal credit for those ideas; they were man's heritage from the sages of wisdom of all ages, and she regarded

herself as merely the transmitter of those ancient truths. The Masters, of whom she was the agent in the work, stated that she was the only one in the western world who was capable of undertaking the task and that, despite her eccentric ways and habits, they found a profound wisdom in her *inner Self* which was expressed in her life and writings.

The story of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* is of perennial interest to members of the Society and at this anniversary we are re-printing hereunder Mr. Bertram Keightley's interesting account of this. It will be noted that H.P.B. had originally planned to have volume one consist of the life stories of occult teachers; this was subsequently changed so that this volume would become volume three of a series of four. The present third volume was compiled after the death of H.P.B. and while it does contain some biographical matter, there is still an unresolved question concerning the quantity of mss. which, according to some accounts, was ready at H.P.B.'s death for the third and part of the fourth volume of the original project.

The following account is taken from *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and The Secret Doctrine*, by The Countess Constance Wachmeister, F.T.S. and others.

The first I saw of *The Secret Doctrine* manuscript was on a visit paid to H.P.B. at Ostend, at the very beginning of the year 1887. I had gone over to urge upon H.P.B. the advisability of coming to settle in London for the purpose of forming a centre for active work in the cause of Theosophy. There were six of us in all who felt profoundly dissatisfied with the deadness which seem-

ed to pervade the Society in England, and we had come to the conclusion that only H.P.B. could give efficient aid in restoring the suspended animation of the movement, and initiating active and wisely directed work. Of these six—with H.P.B. the original founders of the first Blavatsky Lodge—two only, alas! now remain active workers in the Society.

During the few days I then spent at Ostend with H.P.B., she asked me to look over parts of the manuscripts of her new work, which I gladly consented to do. Before I had read much it grew plain that *The Secret Doctrine* was destined to be by far the most important contribution of this century to the literature of Occultism; though even then the inchoate and fragmentary character of much of the work led me to think that careful revision and much re-arrangement would be needed before the manuscript would be fit for publication.

On a second visit a week or two later, this impression was confirmed by further examination; but as H.P.B. then consented to come and settle in or near London as soon as arrangements could be made for her reception, nothing further was done about it at the time.

Not long after my return to England we learnt that H.P.B. was seriously ill, in fact that her life was despaired of by the physicians in attendance. But, as usual, she disappointed the medical prophets and recovered with such marvellous rapidity that soon after we were able to make arrangements for her coming to England, to Upper Norwood, where a cottage, called Maycot, had been taken for her temporary residence.

The move was effected without any untoward event, though the packing up of her books, papers, manuscripts, etc., was a truly terrible undertaking, for she went on writing till the very last moment, and as sure as any book, paper, or portion of manuscripts had been carefully packed away at the bottom of

some box, so surely would she urgently need it, and insist upon its being disintegrated at all costs. However, we did get packed at last, reached Maycot, and before we had been two hours in the house, H.P.B. had her writing materials out and was hard at work again. Her power of work was amazing; from early morning till late in the evening she sat at her desk, and even when so ill that most people would have been lying helpless in bed, she toiled resolutely away at the task she had undertaken.

A day or two after our arrival at Maycot, H.P.B. placed the whole of the so-far completed manuscripts in the hands of Dr. Keightley and myself, instructing us to read, punctuate, correct the English, alter, and generally treat it as if it were our own—which we naturally did *not* do, having far too high an opinion of her knowledge to take any liberties with so important a work.

But we both read the whole mass of manuscripts—a pile over three feet high—most carefully through, correcting the English and punctuation where absolutely indispensable, and then, after prolonged consultation, faced the author in her den—in my case with sore trembling, I remember—with the solemn opinion that the whole of the matter must be re-arranged on some definite plan, since as it stood the book was another *Isis Unveiled*, only far worse, so far as absence of plan and consecutiveness were concerned.

After some talk, H.P.B. told us to go to Tophet and do what we liked. She had had more than enough of the blessed thing, had given it over to us, washed her hands thereof entirely, and we might get out of it as best we could.

We retired and consulted. Finally we laid before her a plan, suggested by the character of the matter itself, viz., to make the work consist of four volumes, each divided into three parts: (1) the Stanzas and Commentaries thereon; (2)

Symbolism; (3) Science. Further, instead of making the first volume to consist, as she had intended, of the history of some great Occultists, we advised her to follow the natural order of exposition, and begin with the Evolution of Cosmos, to pass from that to the Evolution of Man, then to deal with the historical part in a third volume treating of the lives of some great Occultists; and finally, to speak of Practical Occultism in a fourth volume should she ever be able to write it.

This plan we laid before H.P.B., and it was duly sanctioned by her.

The next step was to read the manuscripts through again and make a general re-arrangement of the matter pertaining to the subjects coming under the heads of Cosmogony and Anthropology, which were to form the first two volumes of the work. When this had been completed, and H.P.B. duly consulted, and her approval of what had been done obtained, the whole of the manuscripts so arranged was typewritten out by professional hands, then re-read, corrected, compared with the original manuscripts, and all Greek, Hebrew and Sanskrit quotations inserted by us. It then appeared that the whole of the Commentary on the Stanzas did not amount to more than some twenty pages of the present work, as H.P.B. had not stuck closely to her text in writing. So we seriously interviewed her, and suggested that she should write a proper commentary, as in her opening words she had promised her readers to do. Her reply was characteristic: "What on earth am I to say? What *do* you want to know? Why it's all as plain as the nose on your face!!!" We could not see it; she didn't—or made out she didn't—so we retired to reflect.

As an interpolation, I had better state here that in the autumn of 1887—October, if I remember aright—we all

moved into London, to 17 Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, where the Countess Wachtmeister, who had been on a visit to Sweden ever since H.P.B. left Ostend, joined us in establishing the first T.S. Headquarters in London. During our stay at Maycot, *Lucifer* was founded, being published originally by Mr. G. Redway, H.P.B. keeping on all the while writing her articles, and also turning out further manuscripts for *The Secret Doctrine*. These and other T.S. work had to be attended to, and as sub-editor of *Lucifer* I found my hands pretty full, so that many weeks were consumed, and I think the removal to Lansdowne Road effected, before the problem of the Commentary on the Stanzas was finally solved.

The solution was this: Each sloka of the stanzas was written (or cut out from the typewritten copy) and pasted at the head of a sheet of paper, and then on a loose sheet pinned thereto were written all the questions we could find time to devise upon that sloka. In this task Mr. Richard Harte helped us very considerably, a large proportion of the questions put being of his devising. H. P. B. struck out large numbers of them, made us write fuller explanations, or our own ideas—such as they were—of what her readers expected her to say, wrote more herself, incorporated the little she had already written on that particular sloka, and so the work was done.

But when we came to think of sending the manuscripts to the printers, the result was found to be such that the most experienced compositor would tear his hair in blank dismay. Therefore Dr. Keightley and myself set to work with a typewriter, and alternately dictating and writing, made a clean copy of the first parts of volumes I and II.

Then work was continued till parts II and III of each volume were in a fairly

advanced condition, and we could think of sending the work to press.

It had originally been arranged that Mr. George Redway should publish the work, but his proposals not being financially satisfactory, the needful money was offered by a friend of H.P.B.'s, and it was resolved to take the publication of *Lucifer* into our own hands. So the Duke Street office was taken, and business begun there, the primary object being to enable the T.S. to derive the utmost possible benefit from H.P.B.'s writings.

Of the further history of *The Secret Doctrine* there is not much more to say—though there were months of hard work before us. H.P.B. read and corrected two sets of galley proofs, then a page proof, and finally a revise in sheet, correcting, adding and altering up to the very last moment:—result: printer's bill for corrections alone over £300.

Of phenomena in connection with *The Secret Doctrine*, I have very little indeed to say. Quotations with full references, from books which were never in the house—quotations verified after hours of search, sometimes, at the British Museum for a rare book—of such I saw and verified not a few.

In verifying them I found occasionally the curious fact that the numerical references were reversed, e.g., p. 321 for p. 123, illustrating reversal of objects when seen in the astral light. But beyond such instances of clairvoyant vision, I have no further phenomena directly bearing upon the production of *The Secret Doctrine* to record.

Finally I must not omit the valuable assistance which was rendered by Mr. E. D. Fawcett. Before I went to Ostend he had been in correspondence with H. P. B., and later on he also worked with and for her on the book at Lansdowne Road. He supplied many of the quota-

tions from scientific works, as well as many confirmations of the occult doctrines derived from similar sources. It would not be right in giving any account of how *The Secret Doctrine* was written to omit to mention his name, and as I have not done so in the proper chronological sequence, I repair the omission now.

Of the value of the work, posterity must judge finally. Personally I can only place on record my profound conviction that when studied thoroughly but not treated as a revelation, when understood and assimilated but not made a text for dogma, H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* will be found of incalculable value, and will furnish suggestions, clues, and threads of guidance, for the study of Nature and Man, such as no other existing work can supply.

THE GOLDEN STAIRS

“Behold the Truth before you: a clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for one's co-disciple, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a loyal sense of duty to the Teacher, a willing obedience to the behests of TRUTH, once we have placed our confidence in, and believe that Teacher to be in possession of it; a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the Secret Science (Gupta Vidya) depicts—these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.”

(from the letter of a Master, quoted by H.P.B. in her first preliminary memorandum to E.S. members in 1888).

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