

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. XXXIX, No. 2

TORONTO, MAY-JUNE, 1958

Price 35 Cents

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## A VISIT TO MADAME BLAVATSKY

The following article on a visit to H. P. B. at the Lamasery in New York, is reprinted from the January 4, 1879 issue of a former Canadian weekly newspaper, the *Canadian Illustrated News*, a publication now long deceased but which flourished between 1870 and 1883. It was published in Montreal by the Barland-Desbarats Lithographing and Publishing Company. The article was brought to our attention by Mrs. I. Schneider, a member-at-large, who found a copy of this issue in a second hand bookstore in Toronto. So far as we know, it is the first reference to H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society in Canadian literature.

Presumably the *Canadian Illustrated News* had picked up the article from the *Hartford Daily Times* of December 2, 1878, although the *Times* article is not mentioned by the *News*. The article from the *Hartford Daily Times* is quoted in part on pages 417-9 and 423-4 of *Old Diary Leaves* by Colonel H. S. Olcott. Before the article appeared in the Canadian paper, H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott were on their way to India, having left New York on December 17, 1878.

In addition to its considerable historical interest, the article is important for

its excellent pen portrait of H.P.B. and for Col. Olcott's statement of the aims and objects of the Society. Doubtless it was the Colonel's enthusiasm which led him to speak of "branches in nearly every country in Europe". Although there were correspondents and sympathizers in many lands, the only Branch Society in existence at that time was the British Theosophical Society which was formally organized on June 27, 1878. The article mentions the association with the Arya Samaj of India: this turned out to be unfortunate as the objects of the Samaj were much more restricted than those of the Society.

### MADAME BLAVATSKY

It was with a feeling of intense curiosity, and more than ordinary pleasure, that we stood at the door of Mme. Blavatsky's residence in New York, and awaited an answer to our ring. It soon came, and in an odd way, for the door was unlocked by no visible hand, and for a second we did not realize that it was done by electricity. Ascending to the second floor, we were ushered into a tiny reception room, where Col. Henry S. Olcott, the president of the Theosophical Society, greeted us with cordiality. We inquired if madame was visible, and he sent a servant to inquire,

who returned with a prompt and decisive answer, "No." We had arrived at a very unfavourable hour, it being in the morning, and were informed that it was almost an impossibility to gain access to madame's presence in the day. Conversing, however, with Col. Olcott, while he opened his eggs and took his coffee for breakfast, we questioned him regarding the aims and objects of this society, which is becoming so well known, so much discussed, so well grounded on the basis of cultural and honourable men and women as members, and received for reply, in substance, the following:

The object of Theosophy is individual cultivation in the science and mysteries which madame has given in a measure to the world through her book "Isis Unveiled." It is to initiate some chosen ones into the knowledge of those secrets which are higher and finer than anything now taught, and which are to eventually lift each member to the power and position of an adept. "In religion," he said, "we work to break down old dogmas and carping theologies, whether Christian, Brahmanic, Buddhist, Jewish, Mohammedan or others, and to teach the undefiled religious philosophy which prevailed before even the Vedas were written, and which furnishes the grains of wheat in every mountain of chaff that has been piled up in any nation and labelled with the names above enumerated.

In the state we wish to spread high notions of honour, patriotism, responsibility, and that international exchange of courtesy based upon the Golden Rule, which would make a *brotherhood of humanity* possible. In the individual we would purge away the vicious taste, the groveling sensuality, the mean sordidness, the pettiness of aim, the obtuseness as to civil, social and moral obligations, which everywhere prevail under the patronage of the church. This is a wide field, and were our labourers

an hundred times more numerous it could not be covered at once. We are not unreasonable or optimistic. We are quite content with the rate of our progress up to this time, and shall add to our roll of Fellows from time to time as they offer themselves (for we solicit no one), if they prove to be in sympathy with our work, and are willing to help us in these projects. And, first of all, we who lead the movement mean to set an example of correct living and dealing which will at least win the respect of the community. "We presume that those who become members are bound by the most solemn oath are initiated by the most fearful and mysterious ceremonies?" we remarked inquiringly. "The pledge we exact," replied the colonel, "is that none who join us shall do anything to retard, by word or deed, our progress. We are quite willing to leave your own conscience to be the monitor. We bind members by no oath whatever, saving their word of honour, to keep strictly secret those matters confided to them which should, in the opinion of their superiors, be kept sacredly private!" "But you have rules, by-laws, officers, etc., do you not?" "Certainly! Its officers are a president, two vice-presidents, a corresponding secretary, a recording secretary, a treasurer, a librarian and councillors. At first it was an open body, but later it was re-organized on the principle of secrecy, experience having demonstrated the advisability of such a change." "But what are the benefits to be derived from such a membership? Can all members become 'adepts'?" "By no means! To be admitted into the highest degree, of the first section, the Theosophist must have become freed of every leaning toward any one form of religion in preference to another. He must be free from all exacting obligations to society, politics, and family. He must be ready to lay down his life, if necessary, for the

good of humanity and of a brother fellow of whatever race, colour or ostensible creed. He must renounce wine and every other description of intoxicating beverages, and adopt a life of strict chastity. Those who have not yet wholly disenthralled themselves from religious prejudices and other forms of selfishness, but have made a certain progress toward self-mastery and enlightenment, belong in the second section. Those only who persevere in these studies, who practice every virtue, and eschew every vice, who subjugate the body to the will, and throw off every tie which binds them to things gross, can become that to which even Mme. Blavatsky has not yet, after all her long life of devotion, perfectly attained. We offer for your zeal, industry and loyalty the reward of an approving conscience, the respect of a brotherhood whose good opinion is well worth having, and the assurance that you are assisting to lay the foundations of a great society whose future is already an established certainty. Already you would be able to meet brothers in the remotest quarters of the globe, and before long the public will know that we have enlisted on our side some of the profoundest scholars and purest souls of the present day." "This is only a branch society, we are told. There are other branches similar to this in New York, are there not?" We have already one established in nearly every country in Europe. It was only this morning, also, that we had from Bombay full permission to announce our society as the American branch of the Arya Samaj of India. This is a great organization, founded by one of the holiest and most learned men of our age, the Pundit Dyánand Sarasvati. His preaching and teaching of ancient Vedic philosophy and ethics have created a profound sensation, throughout the Indian peninsula among the natives. He preaches against castes, idolatry and

superstitious observances of all kinds. Many of the latter, originally devised by the priesthood to increase their power and emolument, have become accepted as of divine authority, after many centuries. Among these are *suttee* (widow burning), sitting dhurna (a creditor deliberately starving himself to death at the door of his debtor), and others, for which the Vedas contain no authority.

"What the Pundit teaches is the identical, pure, wisdom religion, about which Madame Blavatsky discourses so learnedly in her 'Isis,' and which was the primeval substratum upon which not only Brahmanism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism were built, but which is the essence of Christism when the embroidered cerecloths are unwrapped from its body.

"It teaches one incomprehensible, eternal, Divine essence, out of which all things come, and to which all return, in a never-ending series of evolution and involution—'Days and Nights of Brahma'." "The correspondence for your society must be enormous; who does it, pray?" "Madame. She writes nine languages and reads three more. She converses fluently and daily with her various friends in at least five. You may hear them any evening at her little receptions—but madame has concluded to see you." The colonel said this without having moved from his chair; no one had entered the room, the door was shut; there was no visible means by which he could have received this communication of madame's pleasure. We were delighted as well as astonished, and only waited to ask one question before entering her parlour. "There are so many rumours regarding madame, colonel, that one is almost driven to desperation in trying to select which is most probable. Can you tell us how old she is? We have heard that she is thirty, eighty, an hundred; that her

countenance is so changeable that at one moment she seems a young girl, at another she seems an old lady. But the general tendency is to belief in her great age!" "Perhaps my sister will tell you," laughed the colonel, as he gave the requisite introductions to that estimable lady and two or three children, who were entering.

"Will you not say how old you think madame to be?" "I think it would be utterly impossible to determine; her age seems to me as mysterious as her character, for all I have known her so long and so intimately. Indeed, although I live in the same house with them," she added, "and see madame at any time, there are some subjects on which she is as non-committal as the Sphinx!" "What is your imagination of her person?" inquired the lady. "We have thought she might be tall, with a thick, compact figure, cold grey eyes, a broad face, a high forehead and light hair." "I declare," exclaimed Col. Olcott, "you must be a clairvoyant! This is a very fair description." Madame was seated in her little work-room and parlour, all in one, and we may add, her curiosity shop as well, for never was apartment more crammed with odd, elegant, old, beautiful, costly and apparently worthless things than this. She had cigarette in mouth and scissors in hand, and was hard at work clipping paragraphs, articles, items, criticisms and other matter from heaps of journals from all parts of the world, relating to herself, to her book, to the Theosophical society, to any and everything connected with her life, work and aims. She waved us to a seat, and while she intently read some article, we had a chance to observe the walls and furniture of this New York Lamasery. Directly in the centre stood a stuffed ape, with a white "dickey" and necktie around his throat, manuscript in paw and spectacles on

nose. Could it be a mute satire on the clergy?\*

Over the door was the stuffed head of a lioness, with open jaws and threatening aspect, the eyes glaring with an almost natural ferocity. A god in gold occupied the centre of the mantel-piece; Chinese and Japanese cabinets, fans, pipes, implements and rugs, low divans and couches, a large desk, a mechanical bird which sang as mechanically, albums, scrap-books, and the inevitable cigarette-holders, papers and ashpots, made the loose, rich robe in which madame was appalled seem in perfect harmony with her surroundings. A rare, strange countenance is hers. A combination of moods seems to constantly play over her features. She never seems quite absorbed by one subject. There is a keen, alert, subtle undercurrent of feeling and perception perceivable in the expression of her eyes. It impressed us then, and has invariably, with the idea of a double personality; as if she were here and not here; talking, and yet thinking, or acting far away. Her hair light, very thick and naturally wavy, has not a grey thread in it. Her skin, evidently somewhat browned by exposure to sea and sun, has no wrinkles; her arm and hand are as delicate as a girl's. Her whole personality is expressive of self-possession, command, and a certain *sang froid* which borders on masculine indifference, without for a moment overstepping the bounds of a womanly delicacy. Very, very old! Impossible! And yet she declares it is so; sometimes indignantly, sometimes with a certain pride; sometimes with indifference or

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\* "No, on the materialistic scientists," said Colonel Olcott in *Old Diary Leaves*. The manuscript was of a lecture on the "Descent of Species" and the baboon—not ape—was dubbed "Professor Fiske."

impatience. "I come of a long-lived race. All my people grew to be very old. One of my ancestors lived to be more than one hundred, and preserved all his faculties. You doubt my age? I can show you my passports, my documents, my letters for years back. I can prove it by a thousand things." She began to talk with us in a friendly and cordial manner, tintured with foreign nonchalance and piquancy combined. We explained that our errand was to pay our devoirs to the author of "Isis Unveiled," but our courteous speeches were hushed with a peremptory command to take a cigarette, which we gladly proceeded to do. The chat was naturally turned into that channel which leads to the great ocean of the unseen mysteries, and we were astonished at the rapidity and fluency of her speech. Her English is far better than the ordinary run of conversation in America, however, for it is absolutely correct; bookish, in fact. Her accent is not very marked. She said, "I can not get your English. I can not pronounce it."

"Why, madame," we replied, "there is hardly a scholar in New York who can equal your elegance of speech."

"Yes, yes, I know," she answered impatiently, "but your accent I can not get it!"

"How do you so preserve your looks, your health, madame? What magic recipe have you to keep your freshness, and all these evidences of youth? Our women of forty, however fat and fair, would sell their eyes, almost, for the knowledge! You must have drunk of the fountain of perpetual youth!"

"That is what we study for," she replied, quietly.

"Well, how long do you intend to live?" we added, laughingly.

"Oh! if no accident occurs, as long as I please; thirty, forty, or fifty years, perhaps, I don't know!"—in the most indifferent manner, as if it were a mere

matter of her good pleasure.

"If all the stories we hear about you are correct, you must be the great mystery of the world yourself, madame! Why, do you know, we heard the other day that, instead of having an immense library, as we had supposed it was absolutely necessary you should have, since you quote from at least a thousand authors in twenty languages, you really have no library at all, but when you desire to make use of a passage, say, for instance, in some old Hindoo parchment, that all you have to do is to will it to appear before you, and there it is, ready to be copied! Then we have heard that it is not to be done in that way, but that you can send mental telegrams to brother adepts all over the globe, and they give you the desired information in the same way! Why, we presume, if an adept were in the planet Venus, and you desired his presence by your desk here, all you would have to do would be to mentally call him, and his astral body would cast its shadow on the floor!"

Madame seemed heartily to enjoy the speech. We defy, however, the keenest observer to have discovered whether we were, as one might say, "driving the nail home," or merely amusing her, with our half-badinage. She evidently does not wear her heart on her sleeve.

"Whether these rumours may be true or not," she remarked, serenely, after a singular little smile to herself, "there is certainly nothing supernatural in anything we teach. The wonderful things recorded in the 'Isis,' if they were produced at all, were produced according to the eternal laws. It is all natural, all scientific. You people do not know the laws of your own atmosphere, your own bodies, your own powers. That is all! We do. We have learned the mysteries of real wisdom from those who knew them before us. If you did but hold the key you would see there is nothing in our knowledge or our powers

but what is natural and according to the plan of the universe. There never was a miracle, and never can be. What are called miracles were not so. They were produced by natural laws. One must have the gift of fine intellectual powers, moral purity and physical health to attain to the higher mysteries. Not all who live are immortal. Some will be annihilated. Their natural tendency is ever downward. It is inevitable. They can not go higher; they must go lower. Change of some kind constantly takes place. There are two progressions—upward and downward. Those who go downward in virtue, in experience, in taste, will be eventually blotted out and return into the elements. Those who live longest on this earth and ever advance upward will stand the highest when they enter the spiritual life. This is the preparatory school. There begins action."

"Of course, you believe in Spiritualism?"

"We admit the reality of mediumism and mediumistic phenomena, but discourage them unless under very strict precautions, as we think they tend to degrade the medium. Our views are not original—only those entertained by Eastern psychologists. We say that for a pure person to passively submit to the domination of unseen, unknown and uncontrollable influence, is to place himself in very great peril of corruption and ruin. The passive medium takes all the chances of control by the worst as well as the best spirits; in fact, the former class is far more likely to take control, for they are the most intimately connected with the earth. You could not be a medium!"

"Why not?" we questioned.

"Because you are in such perfect health. The elementaries could not control you!"

"Well, which is superior—to be or not to be a medium?"

"I can imagine nothing worse than to be one. They are always sickly, puny, with no will, no character of their own. A poor, miserable set."

Glancing at a pile of letters which the servant had just brought, we exclaimed: "What an immense correspondence must be yours, madame! And in so many different languages! Tell us; what language do you *think* in?"

"In a language of my own, which is neither Russian, French, nor any you know."

"It may be in the Pythagorean numbers, who can tell; or in some dead language employed by races who had attained to a civilization of which the present phonograph may have been but the merest commonplace to them. Who knows but madame may sometimes find a sheet of tinfoil in some future museum of 'recent excavation,' which she will run into her little instrument here and make talk to her in the very language of her thoughts?" The colonel said this with the mock solemnity of one very amusedly in earnest.

Madame laughed. When we write madame laughed, we feel as if we were saying, laughter were present! for of all clear, mirthful, rollicking laughter that we ever heard, hers is the very essence. She seems, indeed, the genius of the mood she displays at all times, so intense is her vitality. As she now opened her bag of letters, we immediately felt that this interview must end. "You will be quite welcome to come any evening," she exclaimed, busily tearing open envelope after envelope, "and no doubt you will meet many agreeable people. I want to show you my album, also, containing portraits of many of our friends in India," and here her face brightened as a man's does when he is far away from home, and speaks of the dear, beloved spot. "I want to tell you of them, and have you meet others who have lived in that grand country." We

accepted the invitation with pleasure.

It was the following evening, after our introduction to various people, among whom were no Americans save Col. Olcott and ourselves, that madame displayed to us her much treasured album containing portraits of foreign members of the Theosophical society. It was, indeed, one of the finest collections of intellectual, cultured, refined faces, that it had ever been our pleasure to examine. Men and women of every nation were there represented. Every type of countenance, from the veteran English general to the Indian philosopher, with his delicate features, clean-cut, expressive countenance and wonderfully perfect form. The costumes were as curious as elegant; and in many cases characteristic of the persons who wore them. Here was a face, filled with selfwill, command and power; here one poetic, imaginative and æsthetic.

"India!" exclaimed madame, turning the leaves lovingly. "India! I love it. It is the country of my heart, my soul! Born in Russia, and of Russian parentage, my physical body may be claimed as of that country; but the land of my adoption, the home of my affections and ambitions, is grand old India, ancient of days!" The sparkle, the enthusiasm, of her mood was catching. Conversation was for a moment hushed. The eloquence of her intense emotion was felt by every one to breathe itself from eye, lip and hand.

The conversation becoming more general, we were held breathless, listening to the adventures and incidents happening to the narrators, and which are well worth reproducing. A young English colonel of her Majesty's service—regiment in India, who had been there three years, a perfect hercules in stature, and with a frank genial countenance—detailed the following tricks or phenomena, whichever we choose to call them: "I have seen many fakirs and jugglers

perform inexplicable tricks, but I think the best I ever saw, and the most incomprehensible, was one which I am told madame perfectly describes in her book. A juggler in the open air, in the presence of a dozen of our officers, in broad daylight, and nude, excepting a cloth about his loins, took a melon seed which was presented to him by one of our number, and digging a little hole in the earth with his finger, thrust it in, and making some passes over it; the seed soon sprouted and put forth little leaves. It grew and grew, adding leaf after leaf, and flower after flower, until the flowers became fruit, and the juggler handed us the melons, and we cut them up and ate them, finding them very rich and sweet, all within the space of half an hour."

"Do you mean to assert that you ate them—ate fruit grown in half an hour?"

"I not only assert it, but can prove it by 20 witnesses. Why, it is not an uncommon thing at all. The powers of these Hindoos are perfectly marvellous! Here is another thing I saw—and not only I, but a crowd of us fellows—and it can be seen any day:

"One of these nude natives took a common ball of yarn, which we all examined, and holding one end, flung it up into the air. It went up, up, beyond our sight and remained so, our vision only following it perhaps thirty feet. He then told a native boy assistant, perfectly nude, to climb up the yarn. He did so, like a sailor going up a rope hand over hand. He also went out of sight. The juggler then pretended to be angry and called him down. As he did not obey, the native climbed up himself, and also disappeared, the end of the yarn still hanging to the earth. Pretty soon down fell an arm, then a leg covered with blood, and horrible to look at. The trunk of the boy soon followed, then the head and the remaining limbs. With

inconceivable rapidity then came down the juggler, sliding on the yarn, and with a commanding gesture waving his wand over the severed members, they, as it were, crawled together again, and became the living boy, absolutely whole and unharmed. The Prince of Wales saw all these wonders also, as have innumerable Europeans and Americans. There is no explanation! I never found an European who so much as attempted one. The basket trick, so well imitated in this country lately: the lying suspended in the air, a yard from the ground; dancing on swords keen as a razor; changing a coin into a reptile in the palm of a spectator, and other strange tricks too numerous to mention, may be witnessed daily in any of the principal cities of India."

"I am delighted," cried madame, as he concluded, "that I find still another witness to the truth of my assertions regarding the peculiar exhibitions given by these people. You are fortunate," she continued turning to us, "to have heard this gentleman—whom I have the pleasure of meeting this evening for the first time—corroborate me in all that I may have stated in *Isis Unveiled*."

It was at this point that a charming English gentleman sought our corner, and remarked, quietly. "All this is very wonderful. I have lived seven years in India myself, and was in a state of chronic astonishment during the whole period, but nothing quite equals what, I am told on good authority, our mutual hostess can do herself." "What is it? How delightful! Do tell us; no one is listening. Is it possible she can really do wonders?" "If my friend was not deceived in his own senses, she certainly can. I will tell it to you precisely as he told it to me. 'I know it will seem incredible to you, my dear fellow,' said my friend, 'for it does to me as I look back upon it; yet, at the same time, I know my senses could not have deceived me.

Besides another gentleman was with me at the time. I have seen madame create things. 'Create things?' I cried. 'Yes, create things—produce them from nothing. I can tell you of two instances.'

" 'Madame, my friend and myself were out one day looking about the stores, when she said she desired some of those illuminated alphabets which come in sheets like the little painted sheets of birds, flowers, animals and other figures so popular for decorating pottery and vases. She was making a scrap book, and wished to arrange her title page in those pretty coloured letters. Well, we hunted everywhere, but could not find any, until at last we found just one sheet, containing the twenty-six letters, some where on sixth avenue. Madame bought that one, and we went home. She wanted several, of course, but not finding them proceeded to use what she could of this. My friend and I sat down beside her little table, while she got out her scrap-book and busily began to paste her letters in. By and by she exclaimed, petulantly, 'I want two S's, two P's and two A's.' I said, 'Madame, I will go and search for them down town. I presume I can find them somewhere.'

" 'No you need not,' she answered. Then suddenly looking up, said: 'Do you wish to see me make some?'

" 'Make some? How? Paint some?'

" 'No, make some exactly like these.'

" 'But how is that possible? These are printed by machinery.'

" 'It is possible—see.'

"She put her finger on the S and looked upon it. She looked at it with infinite intensity. Her brow ridged out. She seemed the very spirit of will. In about a half a minute she smiled, lifted her finger took up two S's exactly alike, exclaiming, 'It is done!' She did the same with the P's.

"Then my friend thought: 'If this is



trickery, it can be detected. In one alphabet can be but one letter of a kind. I will try her.' So he said: 'Madame, supposing this time, instead of making the two letters separately, you join them together, thus: A—A—?'

'It makes no difference to me how I do it,' she replied indifferently, and, placing her finger on the A, in a few seconds she took it up and handed him two A's joined together, as he desired. *They were as if stamped from the same piece of paper.* There were no seams or joinings of any kind. She had to cut them apart to use them. This was in broad daylight, in the presence of no one but myself and friend, and done simply for her own convenience.

"We were both astounded and lost in admiration. We examined these with the utmost care. They seemed as much alike as two peas. But if you wish, I

can show you the letters this moment. 'Madame, may we take your scrap-book to look at?' 'Certainly, with pleasure,' returned the madame, courteously. We waited impatiently until Mr. P. could open the volume. The page was beautifully arranged and read thus, in brilliant letters.

THIRD VOLUME, SCRAP-BOOK,  
of the Theosophical Society,  
New York 1878.

Their Tribulations and Triumphs.

"'There,' said he, pointing to the S in Scrap, and the S in society, 'those are the letters, she used, and this is the one she made.' There was no difference in them."

Space forbids further details of the odd, the marvellous, the inexplicable things which we have witnessed during subsequent visits to the "Lamasery."

## THEOSOPHY AND BUDDHISM

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

In any comparison it is well to define or at least to describe one's terms. By Theosophy I do not mean what is currently taught in most Lodges of the Theosophical Society, whose Headquarters is at Adyar, Madras. With the writings of Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater and others I am not concerned save as they extend and comment upon the teachings of the Masters M. and K.H. as given to H. P. Blavatsky and by her given out to the world. When a doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism has roots in the Pali Canon it is clearly a part of the field of Buddhism; when a Theosophical doctrine taught today is an extension of the outline of that 'accumulated Wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of Seers' which 'H.P.B.' wrote down in the *Secret Doctrine* and other works, it is reason-

able to call it Theosophy. But when a doctrine found in Buddhism is by all reasonable tests diametrically opposed to the original teaching it should not be known by that teaching's name. In the same way, if much that is taught in the Theosophical movement today is incompatible with the Masters' teaching as given by H.P.B., A. P. Sinnett, W. Q. Judge and some others, it should not be taught as Theosophy.

Theosophy, so called from the Theosophia or "Wisdom of the Gods" of Ammonias Saccas of the fourth century A.D., is not a pastiche of doctrines culled from various religions and represented as a whole. It is the accumulated fruits of man's spiritual experience, as preserved by those who are self-perfected, whether called Arhats, Bodhisattvas, Rishis, Mahatmas or the

Brothers. Much of this Prajna Wisdom is necessarily "esoteric", in the sense that the integral calculus must remain esoteric to a class of small children. But there is no "closed fist" for those who have earned the right to know, even though that which may be publicly disclosed must ever remain in quantity as a single leaf to the forest of trees around.

Masters have pupils, for those who have attained to Prajna knowledge are ever willing to help to enlightenment all who have ears to hear. These pupils have pupils in their turn, down a descending hierarchy to the beginner-student who humbly attempts to assist a friend who knows still less than he. But the pupil must teach as he was taught and not otherwise, and woe to him who takes the name of his master in vain. Whether the "transmission" be the handing on from student to student of intellectual understanding, or the direct passing in silence from Master to chosen successor of the unwritten wisdom as taught by the All-Enlightened One, the principle is the same. "Thus have I heard," says the Bhikkhu of his Master's teaching, and "thus have I found to be true." In the end the teaching has no words, for words are the coinage of the dual world of thought. The essence of such teaching may be indicated, but the rest is silence, and a finger pointing the Way.

The Theosophical movement is enormous. No one Theosophical Society is commensurate with the movement any more than one school of Buddhism is Buddhism. There are many Theosophical Societies in the world, some faithful to the outline of the Wisdom given in the last century, some "extending" the Teaching out of all recognition. There are also scores of groups, bearing a chosen name or none. Finally, there are numberless individuals, many of whom know nothing of the name as

such but yet carry out, consciously or sub-consciously, the will of those who have found Enlightenment and work in the world, or out of it, unceasingly for the benefit of all mankind.

Our knowledge of Theosophy, then, comes from the two Masters who trained H. P. Blavatsky for her mission in the world, and taught her by divers means the wisdom outlined in her writings, from *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine* to *The Key to Theosophy* and that exquisite gem, the *Voice of the Silence*. Later they corresponded at length with A. P. Sinnett, and their correspondence was made available to the world in 1923 in the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. Other students, who imbibed the teaching direct or from the first pupils, included the famous Buddhist, H. S. Olcott, founding President of the first Theosophical Society, Subba Rao, a learned Brahmin, W. Q. Judge, who was largely responsible for the movement in America, and somewhat later, Mrs. A. L. Cleather, author of *Buddhism, the Science of Life*.

After the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891 the movement split up, as all such movements will, into several societies. Among them there are, as in Buddhism, always the Blavatsky or "original" groups and the "progressive" (Mahayana or modern Theosophy) groups. Always from time to time there is a sudden movement of "back to the source" of which the Zen and the present "back to Blavatsky" movements are examples.

And so to Buddhism, which is a Western term for the structure of thought built up over a thousand years about the Buddha Enlightenment. Like Theosophy, it has no dogmas or authority; hence no intolerance of differing points of view. According to the ancient Wisdom the Buddha is the  
(Continued on Page 37)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

On April 20 the Vancouver Lodge celebrated the 60th Anniversary of its founding. The General Executive forwarded a bouquet of flowers to grace the proceedings together with a message of congratulation and best wishes. I regret that a report of the proceedings was received too late for publication in this issue. Accompanying it was a history of the vicissitudes of the lodge since its inception coupled with messages of esteem from its peers and impromptu eulogies from the members themselves. I may say that these made a deep impression on me, and I hope to tabulate them and publish a comprehensive account in our next issue. Lodges like individuals undergo trials and tribulations that outsiders know little or nothing about, and when a history such as this comes into focus I feel that it should be brought to notice as an incentive to others. As someone said at the happy gathering "Vancouver Lodge is a fountain of inspiration. It is always filled with a feeling of harmony and Brotherhood. Under the faithful and untiring efforts of our president over the years the Teachings have been a limitless source of wisdom and help to us all." Well Done! Vancouver Lodge, may you long continue to keep the Light burning.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn made a welcome re-appearance at the Toronto Lodge where meetings were held extending over eight days. Dr. Kuhn also spoke in Hamilton to a combined audience of the two lodges in that city and further extended his tour to Montreal. From each of those places I have had very good reports of the interest aroused and the excellent attendance at all lectures.

I have presented two of my large mystical paintings (Charon and the Odyssey of the Soul) to the Toronto Lodge and they now hang in the large hall. Large pictures are a drawback in that there are few places to display them, and I am glad that they now have a permanent home.

\* \* \* \*

A very successful class conducted by Miss M. Hindsley on the Upanishads has just been completed. It began in January and closed in April and had an average attendance of twenty-five which proves the interest members have in this great work.

\* \* \* \*

Beginning next issue I intend publishing an account of the activities of our lodges, under the impression that it will be of general interest to our Section to know just what the various lodges are doing. With that in mind, will those concerned please send me this information with a copy of their programmes regularly. The lodges that do not favour lectures and prefer study groups should send in notes on what subjects they are studying.

\* \* \* \*

I am happy to welcome two more new members into the Society, the names of these are Mr. William McKinley and Mr. Jean E. Hawryluk both of the Toronto Lodge.

E. L. T.

## GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The Quarterly Meeting of the General Executive, Theosophical Society in Canada was held at 52 Isabella Street, Toronto on Sunday April 13th with the following members in attendance, Miss M. Hindsley, Messrs. C. E. Bunting, Charles M. Hale, George I. Kinman and the General Secretary. The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and ap-

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST  
THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
IN CANADA

Published Bi-monthly.  
Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.



Subscription: **TWO DOLLARS A YEAR**

OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

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

Dudley W. Barr, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

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

proved. The General Secretary read and moved the adoption of the Financial Report which was carried. Owing to the absence of Mr. Dudley Barr, Colonel Thomson reported for the Magazine. The chief item of interest was that six sets of twenty volumes were being prepared for binding, this large number was necessary in view of gaps in bound volumes and to complete sets to date. There is an increasing demand for bound volumes. Mr. Kinman informed the meeting of the arrangements made by the Toronto Lodge for the forthcoming visit of the President, Mr. Sri Ram. It was decided that the General Executive entertain the president by giving a luncheon and Col. Thomson was requested to make arrangements for

this at the Royal York Hotel. There was much discussion as to ways and means of helping our lodges in their efforts to promulgate Theosophy. It was generally agreed that the outside members of the Executive have done little or nothing to keep headquarters informed of any efforts made or of sending in suggestions and ideas as to what might be done. Nominations for Officers of the General Executive for the coming year closed on April 1st, and there being no other names submitted beyond those already holding office it was declared that an election was not necessary. The next meeting was arranged for July 6th. The meeting thereupon adjourned.

E. L. T.

PHOENIX LODGE

Mrs. Hazel Brook, Secretary of Phoenix Lodge reports that the lodge membership is increasing and that the public lectures are attracting more enquirers. The members' meetings are well attended and there is marked enthusiasm in the study work.

On March 2 the lodge held its second anniversary party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. Brewerton. This was a very happy occasion and was well attended. Mrs. Kathleen Marks, the President, was presented with a handbag by the members as a token of their esteem and love.

Mrs. Nedra Ruder of the American Section visited Hamilton and spoke at joint meetings of the Hamilton Lodge and the Phoenix Lodge on February 8, 9 and 10. This was Mrs. Ruder's first visit to Canada as a lecturer and her talks were very well received. Another joint meeting of the two Lodges was held on March 28 when Alvin B. Kuhn, Ph.D. (Columbia) spoke on "Ancient Wisdom versus Religion of Today". Other lectures were given by the Gen-

eral Secretary, Ltd-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O. and by Mr. H. Marquis, Mr. George Kinman and Mr. D. W. Barr.

Phoenix Lodge is the youngest of the Canadian Lodges. The results of its two years' efforts are very encouraging and the Lodge is to be congratulated.

We hope that other Canadian Lodges will forward reports from time to time of the work being done in their centres.

## THEOSOPHY AND BUDDHISM

(Continued from Page 34)

fourth of the present line of Buddhas, and as such the "patron of the adepts", the holder of the supreme "office" in the hierarchy of self-perfected ones. The Buddha gave his deeper teaching to the Arhats; to the people he gave a limited yet magnificent way of life, which, at first transmitted orally, was written down as remembered in the first century B.C., and is now available to all as the Pali Canon of the Theravada school. When the Mahayana school arose it was a blend of the esoteric tradition and of doctrines developed from the earlier teaching by minds which, if not of the Buddha's calibre, were some of the greatest yet to appear in the history of mankind. Within a thousand years the various forms of the teaching had spread over a large part of the earth, and today at least a third of mankind accepts in one form or another the noble message of the All Enlightened One. As such it is as a whole the finest extant exposition of Theosophy, in the sense of the Wisdom which, appearing in fragments in all religions, is slowly receiving the endorsement of science, psychology and other aspects of Western thought. If this Theosophical attitude to the Buddha Dharma disturbs the sleep of Buddhist orthodoxy, its truth may be checked, as mine was gained, by thirty

years of study of the entire joint field involved.

Comparisons may be odious but none the less useful to those who, without emotion or pre-conception, wish to know what Theosophy and Buddhism have in common. First, the Buddha. "We too have temples," wrote the Master K.H. to Sinnett, "but in them there is neither God nor gods worshipped, only the thrice sacred memory of the greatest as the holiest man that ever lived." Secondly, the Masters. Whether in Brahmin or in Buddhist bodies at the moment, they are in perpetual Prajna consciousness, above all base distinctions, and serve the Buddha as their Master in the service of mankind. Coming to mere mortals, both H. P. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott took Pansil in Ceylon in 1880, and the Buddha-rupa of gold which marked the event for H.P.B. is the most treasured possession of the Buddhist Society today. In the way of publications, they share the *Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold (those who like "relics" may visit our Headquarters and sit in the chair in which he wrote most of it); the *Voice of the Silence*, described by the late Anagarika Dharmapala as "a pure Buddhist work" (and he took up Buddhist work at the behest of H. P. B.); and Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*, still selling steadily and approved as "pure" Buddhism by the Sangha of Ceylon.

The basic teaching is the same, at least as I understand the Buddha's teaching. The unity of life throughout all manifestation, which in time, or at the end of that illusion, returns to the Unmanifest; the unreality of any self less than the Self which is a reflection of the Absolute and the property of no man; Karma and Rebirth, and a graded path to self-Enlightenment and finally Nirvana. Such was the teaching taught to Europe for thirty years before Buddhism appeared as a way of life, and it

is thanks to the efforts of those pioneers that the way was prepared for the Dhamma as such when it finally appeared.

The difference between the two is a difference of emphasis. Theosophy is a modern exposition of the doctrine of the immemorial Wisdom on cosmo—and anthro—genesis; Buddhism, at least in its early life, emphasized the Way. In neither are there Gods to dogmatize; only Guides, whether greater or less in their own advancement, to assist the pilgrim on his journey home. They agree on self-effort, self-preparation and ultimately self-Enlightenment. "When the pupil is ready the Master appears". Until then, and after, the individual works out his own salvation with diligence. Whether he follows the Arhat or the Bodhisattva ideal, or realizes that the two are modes of the same

experience, matters not. In the end he can but enlighten himself; in the end he cannot save himself by working for himself alone. Compassion speaks and saith, "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"\*

Theosophy, then, is the accumulated wisdom of mankind. Of those who have attained the enlightenment from which it flows the Buddha was and is the Master of Masters. His own message to mankind was of the Way which leads to Enlightenment which is the birth-right of each living thing. Let us study that Wisdom and add to it by treading that Way.

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*The Middle Way*, November, 1957.

\* *The Voice of the Silence*.

## SOLIDARITY AMONG THEOSOPHISTS

In various fields of Theosophic thought and endeavour, a hope—nay, a yearning and a prayer—has been voiced, that all who have drunk at the Pierian spring of the Ancient Wisdom might present to the world a solid front. A careful study of Theosophical history and close observation of the current scene lead to the conviction that solidarity can be born, be nurtured, and grow to maturity, without requiring students to join any particular Theosophical organization or to change or surrender the present affiliations (if any), in which they find themselves at home.

The basic prerequisites are simple and acceptable to all. They are: for all students to bear in mind two fundamental concepts which are common to every organized group and have been so since shortly after the foundation of the Theosophical Society in New York

in 1875. These basic concepts, alas, have sometimes been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. But it need not be so any longer. The two all-important concepts are so familiar to every student of Theosophy that it may seem trite to repeat them.

The first is the principle of Universal Brotherhood; the second, equally important, is the motto of the Theosophical Society: "There is no religion higher than truth." It is essential that Universal Brotherhood be accepted, not merely *in abstracto* as a sound, philosophical principle that compels recognition of our spiritual oneness with all humanity; it demands also day-to-day exercise of brotherly consideration and kindness towards all other Theosophists. Recognizing the motto of the Theosophical Society, not merely as an attractive slogan, but as a basic, essential part

of our daily meditation and efforts, we will then seek *truth* as dispassionately and searchingly as does a serious scientist in the field of epistemology.

Everyone of us can examine his own heart and mind in utter candour and ask himself: Do I always practise brotherhood? Do I always place *truth* ahead of my own prejudices and predilections? With every earnest student daily asking himself these and similar questions—which should be easy and natural to all who have accepted the principle of Universal Brotherhood and who conscientiously embrace the motto of the Theosophical Society, an *inner* solidarity of all such Theosophists will be already born. Like Athena, it will spring full-grown from the brow of Zeus.

Neither of these two basic prerequisites of solidarity is enough by itself. One cannot just be brotherly and kindly and at the same time proclaim to the world as Theosophy, pipe-dreams that repel the scientific or the honestly critical mind. Neither can one condemn, repudiate or 'expel' fellow-students who, rather than accept *a priori* the claims made for or by anyone that he is endowed with clairvoyant powers or is the recipient of Mahâtmic guidance, stand firmly on the age-old rule: "By their fruits shall ye know them."

It would be a simple matter for one familiar with Theosophical history to point specifically to individuals or groups that have egregiously failed to practise brotherhood or to examine critically claims to occult knowledge and authority. Such a specific naming of names might make this a more readable article! But it is far better for individual members of each group—especially those charged with determining policy—themselves to look into the record and see wherein individuals in their respective groups or the group as a whole, have failed to practise brotherhood or to seek *truth* at all costs to themselves,

and, having faced facts with candour and detachment, to determine that similar departures from basic Theosophical principles shall not be encouraged or permitted in the future.

In *The Mahatma Letters*, Page 367, the Master K.H. gives a clear-cut injunction emphasizing the first prerequisite to solidarity:

"Beware then, of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path, and devour the better qualities of your nature which have been springing into life. Broaden instead of narrowing your sympathies; try to identify yourself with your fellows, rather than to contract your circle of affinity. However caused, a crisis is here, and it is the time for the utmost practicable expansion of your moral power. It is not the moment for reproaches or vindictive recriminations, but for united struggle."

On Page 246, the second requisite for solidarity is stressed by the same Master:

"It is not *physical* phenomena that will ever bring conviction to the hearts of the unbelievers in the 'Brotherhood' but rather phenomena of *intellectuality*, *philosophy* and logic, if I may so express it."

On page 24 he combines both requisites for solidarity in a positive statement as to the main purpose of the Theosophical Society:

"The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds."

Is there any sincere Theosophical student or any group of Theosophical students that can challenge the validity of the foregoing propositions to bring to birth real *inner* solidarity among all Theosophists?

Iverson L. Harris.

# LET'S GO

BY T. H. REDFERN

Three contributions to *The Canadian Theosophist* for March-April had a congruity on the subject of theosophical unity that encourage an attempt to take this thinking a step or two further.

Mr. Victor Endersby and Dr. W. E. Wilks both make an identical and crucial point. They think Mr. Spinks is an unrealistic sentimentalist, who believes that organizational unity will cure the ills of the Theosophical Movement. Perhaps we should wait for the full statement of his views in his forthcoming book before affixing any opinion on him, for it may be that he proposes reunion rather as a starting point than as a remedy in itself. He is obviously earnest and fervent in eagerness to promote the wellbeing of the Movement—something many of us share from widely different angles of view. Whether or not his proposals will “run”, they will make an impact and have their karmic consequences.

The disunity that troubles Mr. Spinks has troubled others, too. It has seemed wrong to me for nearly 40 years—since first hearing of it before I joined The Theosophical Society. There have been various attempts to heal the breach—Pekka Ervats, de Purucker, Kingsland, Emory Clapp, Cecil Williams, Marie Hotchener, Boris de Zirkoff, and many others, have worked at it. Is there a valid, incremental inspiration behind this recurrent impulse to redeem the Movement? If so, it might be profitable to consider whether or not past efforts have been contributive forerunners to a success still to come. There has certainly been a great change in the atmosphere of inter-relations in the last 25 years. Will it advance to a wholesome consummation? Who knows?

Whether it does, or not, may well depend on us.

In my first decade of membership I heard of members of the Point Loma Society, the United Lodge, the Sydney Independent T.S. and other bodies as somewhat peculiar “foreigners”. Today if I think of theosophical friends whom I have met or corresponded with outside the Adyar Society—Harry and Elsie Benjamin, Jan and Ingrid van Mater, Boris de Zirkoff, Victor Endersby, Christmas Humphreys, Alex Wayman, Willem Roos, Miss Debenham, Mrs. Clough, Mrs. Ansell, Jan Venema, Iverson Harris, W. Emmett Small, Col. J. M. Prentice and many others—I am not conscious of any different degree of fraternal comradeship compared with Adyar colleagues. Institutional affiliations indeed appear quite incidental. That we are “separated” merely seems absurd—a folly to be put up with because our predecessors and we ourselves have been rather stupid and made some hampering karma that has to be worked out.

Mr. Endersby regards the T.S. as “dead” as an instrument for the fulfilment of its original purpose—obviously it isn’t dead as a body, since it added a thousand members last year—but he admits that “some component parts are quite lively”. The anonymous commentator on *Candles in The Sun* concludes: “Adyar today may—does indeed show signs of—changing. It will depend on how thorough such a change becomes. A total catharsis is needed.”

The Adyar Society is changing. It has never been as Blavatsky-suppressed as the more extreme critics have tried to make out. Apart from a wartime period of suspension of meetings I do



not remember a time when one or other of H.P.B.'s works was not under regular study during 35 years in Peace Lodge—if there was, it was during the first few months of getting started. No one in any official position ever tried to dissuade us or find fault with us—rather were we admired for tackling *The Secret Doctrine*. If it be answered that we were fortunate in our founding President in Peace Lodge—Mr. Edwards is still President—my earlier experience of the T.S. was in Manchester City Lodge, and there I found a regular *Secret Doctrine* class, too. In England I never heard of anyone being *discouraged* from studying Blavatsky, but there could well have been more official *encouragement* to do so. There was advice to try something simpler first. Mr. Edwards and I both read *The Mahatma Letters* diligently as soon as they were published. (I was in “digs” at the time and the Masters’ humour and many shafts of illusion-shattering penetration released such appreciative guffaws that my landlady told me she had been in my room to look for my “funny book”!) Since then we have constantly drawn on it. No one has ever said us “nay”. True, Mr. Jinarajadasa sought to dissuade Adyar members from reading the book on the grounds that the letters were private and ought not to have been printed; but that did not cut much ice. Did not the United Lodge take a similar line at first, and did not Mrs. Tingley put a taboo on them? Anyhow, it is *The Mahatma Letters* that has had to be reprinted repeatedly, not C. J.’s edition of selected extracts under the title *The Early Teachings of the Masters*. The karma of publication rests upon those who published, and members could not reasonably be expected to put blinkers on to keep themselves ignorant of what the world at large was free to learn.

Answering Dr. Wilks, Mr. Sri Ram points out again in *The Theosophist* for March 1958 that publication was in flat defiance of the wishes expressed in the letters. Whether there was *still* opposition to publication in 1923 we do not know. No *permission* was claimed. Probably no way of seeking it was available. Whether the writers were or are still living in the bodies they then had is unknown. It is odd that Mr. Jinarajadasa, who so rigorously disapproved of the publication of *The Mahatma Letters* in face of the express disapproval of this course to be found in the letters themselves, was guilty of the same fault—no doubt unconsciously. When three of the Masters visited Col. Olcott before his body died, the Master Serapis asked that his letters be destroyed. They were not, and they were published in Vol. 2 of *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*, which Mr. Jinarajadasa edited.

*Candles in the Sun* is doing some loosening up of rigidities among older Adyar members—breaking kamamanasic moulds—but those who lived through the events discussed in it are passing on. Some Lodges have been interested and stirred. Some it has hardly touched because they know little or nothing of those past happenings and care less. Maybe most of the Adyar members now have never known Krishnamurti as a T.S. member. They have probably heard that he once was—30 years ago; but they know of him as they know of Ramana Maharishi, though mentioned more frequently. The Order of the Star in the East is something archaic to them—something about which older members can become boring. A South African member wrote me recently commenting that there were not more than about half-a-dozen members there to whom *Candles in the Sun* really meant much. The rest it passes

by—they have never been caught up in those events.

Yes, the Adyar Society is changing. Study of *The Secret Doctrine* is encouraged to-day, and no one now frowns on using *The Mahatma Letters*. In his appeal for collaboration in the work of the Research Division of the American National Society's Department of Education, Mr. Fritz Kunz writes: "We must, and we can now, with the help of science, not only use *The Secret Doctrine*, but also *The Mahatma Letters*, which has to be done if we are to become an educational body, and not a kind of internally reasonable religion." The English Research Centre is steeped in the *Secret Doctrine*, whilst fraternally weighing Leadbeater in the scientific scales. Leadbeater may be "on the way out" of the Adyar hagiology—indeed the whole hagiology may well be going, and if the Judge-headed hagiologies went as well the Movement would indeed be refreshed. Every member can place his respects where he honestly finds them merited. Annie Besant's books have very little sale in England at present, and not the theosophists but the spiritualists are the biggest British customers for Leadbeater's books today. It will be curious if he works out through the spiritualists and the church people. It reminds me of H.P.B.'s statement that occultism has to win the day before the end of the 21st century, and it will permeate the masses through its distortions—"by spirit hook or bishop's crook".

In a recent letter Mr. Dudley Barr said that I lean over backwards to be fair to Leadbeater. There is a lot of emotionalism in the anti-Leadbeater camp, and when feelings run high in criticism I am wary. That is when injustices happen. If to be fair—whether to Judge, Besant, Leadbeater or anyone else—it is necessary to "lean over backwards", then I will do just that. Jinara-

jadasa nailed the Leadbeater flag to the mast by his elaborate edition of *Occult Chemistry*. That was audacious. If future scientific discoveries swing towards confirmation of Leadbeater's clairvoyance in that field, his stock will rise again, and his extreme critics will have to revise their views substantially. At present it is uncertain, and meantime therefore all his reports rightly come under sifting review.

Dr. Wilks' article on *Unity, Real and Superficial* is the best approach I have ever read to the problem of reintegration of the Theosophical Movement. The thinking is clear and incontrovertible, even if one sees the component elements of the situation in a different perspective. Real union in free interplay of thought is what we need, not sentimental fraternization of antagonists trying to be nice to each other; and it can come only through those who do not feel institutional separation—who do not feel united by institutions but by community of co-working on a common programme. On the Adyar side, the Canadian National Society almost certainly contains the strongest body of members who are in this position, and it is therefore a natural focus for development on these lines.

Mme. Blavatsky's Original Programme is referred to repeatedly by various writers as the sound basis for vital coherence of the Movement as a whole, but how many who propound this conscientiously practise it? If this is to be the platform, it might be fruitful to examine the planks in it, and *The Canadian Theosophist* would be a good organ for interchange of views.

There is one unsentimental and very practical ground for the Spinks plan—whether and how far he uses it in his book we must wait and see.

Mr. Endersby says there are lively areas in the otherwise dead body of the Adyar T.S. There would be a lot more

lively areas if all those theosophical groups that are outside it came into it. Does not that which is dead decay in time? The Canadian National Society has demonstrated that it is possible for a national section to follow an independent line and remain in good standing in the Adyar Society. St. Louis Lodge proved it in the American Section—though it has been only mildly “heretical”! Phoenix Lodge, and more recently Peace Lodge, have proved it in England. An influx of groups and Lodges with a strong Blavatsky heritage, joining with the existing independents in the Adyar Society in the “free and fearless exchange of ideas” and aiming “to arrive at truth”, could be a powerful force in the Adyar Society in the next decade or two; possibly an irresistible one. The United Lodge may think their declaration provides a basis, but what would happen to the United Lodge if all the Adyar members joined it?

Dr. Wilks has his eye on 1975 — “eighteen years to go”. It may be that the representative of the Brotherhood of Liberated Guardians at that epoch may not become a member of our Theosophical Society, or of any of the smaller groups either, or of a united body if one exists by then; but Mme. Blavatsky said we could be a lot of help then if we were united, and that makes sense. Divided we must be a serious hindrance. We have to decide which it is to be—hindrance or help; *we*, in all the sectors of the Movement. “Let’s go!”, says Dr. Wilks. “Let’s go”—whatever the mode or method of getting together, “let’s go”; and the starting point is surely to examine where and why we think one another “off beam”, and to prove it, if we can.

Does anyone doubt that the Brotherhood will be interested in the effort? I have a lot of faith in them—not as the writers of 70/80-year-old letters, but

as a living force in the world to-day, when they sure have a job on their hands—probably not all of them still in the same bodies. They probably haven’t got much time to spare for us as persons, but if we set about trying to do something in a man-sized way instead of behaving like a lot of children, maybe they’ll flick a few useful thoughts along. They are hardly likely to try to reach us through *written* communication in the aftermath of the nineteenth century effort! We may not know where helpful ideas come from. They will have to stand on the merits of their own validity and depend on our recognition; but there is a great power in faith, in contradistinction to mere belief, and if we find faith in the deep purposes of our Divine selves, and trust one another as we find each other trustworthy, who can doubt we shall find our faith reinforced by the *power* and wisdom of those far more developed than us? If I write of them without a deferential capital to the pronoun references, it is not from any lack of respect, but because I don’t think they like it. It is what is in the *heart* that they care about, not the dressing up on paper. Who was it said that they don’t want devotees but heroes? Let’s go, indeed; let’s go forward in deed: and let’s have some guts about it.

## IN RE UNITY

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*:

The existence of several societies bearing the name ‘theosophical,’ each committed to Brotherhood as a main objective, all of whom are mutually uncommunicative and exclusive, is an *affront to the memory of H. P. Blavatsky, an injustice to the White Lodge which sponsored the Parent Society, a Theosophical disgrace and a mockery of Brotherhood.* This division of the Society into opposing camps is a con-

fession of the partial failure of the Society's mission.

The theosophists of today should employ their talents in an endeavour to rectify a situation which so blatantly runs contrary to their main profession. The Masters did not create the Theosophical Society to be broken up into many little unfriendly pieces. If division in the T.S. were desirable and carried out in its entirety, the eventual result would be a regression into some form of solipsism. This is just what "the enemy" (referred to by H.P.B. so often) wants. As students of H.P.B. and the Masters we are disobedient to their expressed wishes in condoning disunity in our midst, though we profess to loyally serve them. To illustrate this we have only to refer to H.P.B.'s words written just before she died:

"Never has it been more necessary for the members of the T.S. to lay to heart the old parable of the bundle of sticks than it is at the present time; divided they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united there is no force on earth able to destroy our brotherhood."

In this same message she specifically warned us of the "diabolical attempts of our powerful enemies" to break the unity of the Society. In an earlier message she implored us "to sink all private differences" in united work for our Great Cause. If we sustain the present disunity are we not playing right into the hands of this "enemy"?

The issue to which we must address ourselves is that of how to reattain the unity which the Masters so pointedly begged us to preserve. In his letter appearing in your last issue Bro. Endersby fears association with the Parent T.S. because he says it is heir to what he terms "a disgraceful period". But the doctor must go to the sick, if any there be. He states that if you join the Parent T.S. you can expect to become identified with "anything except the

theosophy of H.P.B. and the Masters". This is a general statement, an all or none statement with which few will agree. Had he said that *some* of the members embrace teachings which are in conflict with *some* of the teachings of H.P.B. he would have been closer to the fact. But it must be remembered that right from the beginning the Founders insisted that the members were "free to profess whatever religion or philosophy they like, or none if they so prefer, provided they are in sympathy with, and ready to carry out one or more of the 3 objects of the Association". *Key to Theosophy* by H.P.B., p. 19) Surely Bro. Endersby would not propose to change this.

Another statement which Bro. Endersby makes which is not the fact, is that our concern is only to reunite all theosophical brothers and "never mind the mere question of truth, or the health or unhealth of psychic practices." Psychism has not entered our discussions, nor did we advocate a united body without truth. We want a general rapprochement to take place among all groups of theosophists and we believe disagreements can and should be discussed after reunification. It is generally recognized by students of public relations that reasonable men can resolve their difficulties if they have the will to do so and will sit down and talk in a friendly manner with those whose views they question. But this must be done without any arrogant self-righteousness on the part of either side. The best proof that this is practical is the Canadian Section itself. They have opposed some of the policies of the Parent T.S. rather consistently, but they have done this as loyal members of that Society. This is highly commendable. Harsh criticisms of other Societies and its members is not permitted under "The Original Programme of the T.S." written by H. P. B. herself. "On the

other hand," she said, "as a great respect for the private views and creeds of every member was demanded, any Fellow criticizing the faith or belief of another Fellow, hurting his feelings, or showing a reprehensible self-assertion, . . . —such a member incurred expulsion." These rules, H.P.B. says, were enforced and respected by the members. If they were workable in her day, they should be at the present time too.

H.P.B.'s words above make it plain that members are not required to hold any set of beliefs and this includes Theosophy. In order to retain their membership they are required to support the Objects of the Society. The T.S. *must stand on its Objects*... What is really basic in the T.S. is *Brotherhood*.

This does not mean, however, that theosophical scholars are not to point out that this book or that contain teachings which conflict with those of H.P.B. That is precisely their duty and they should be encouraged to do so. The only provision is that this must be done in a manner not to offend.

It is lack of this tolerance which engenders hate-breeding situations among the theosophists and produces the disunities and carping and corroding criticisms which flagrantly violate H.P.B.'s Original Program. These situations are not conducive to that love which must be central in all theosophic activity. In view of this we assert that a difference in teaching is the *least valid* of all objections which can be made to reunification. The Master K.H. wrote (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 20) that for successful achievement in occult sciences "a *Universal Brotherhood*, i.e. an Association of 'affinities' of strong magnetic yet dissimilar forces and polarities centred around one dominant idea is necessary.

The above is not a condemnation of the scholars who point up errors which

have been made by *all* groups of theosophists—and there are many—but an assertion that these errors are not valid grounds for ignoring H.P.B.'s request for unity. And we mean organizational unity. We feel that arguments which favour the merging of theosophical objectives and activities but not the theosophical societies themselves, are byzantine arguments due to fuzzy thinking. Organizational disunity promotes disunity in the area of objectives and activities. How can it be otherwise?

It is a contradiction in terms to create ideological fences in the Theosophical Society. It divides people. But mankind's need for unity is stronger than ever before. It is a downgrading of the theosophist when we urge him to support two such opposite commitments as Brotherhood and organizational disunity. It is an affront to his intelligence. We want to see this corrected as soon as possible, and we call upon all brothers in the Movement to help in its correction.

To say that these ideological fences do not exist and that there is no exclusiveness in the T. S. is simply not the fact, as anyone even partially acquainted with the situation can testify.

Again we believe H.P.B. would uphold our call for reunification for she forcefully presented this idea in a letter she wrote to Rev. Arthur Gebhard on July 13, 1886. We quote:

"But for you to talk of forming '*an independent Branch*'— . . . I find a *treason to the Masters*. And how can you ever suppose that the Masters will have anything to do with, or even notice a Society if it has nothing to do whatever with the Parent T.S.?"

In the Convention of the American Section of the T. S. in 1892, W. Q. Judge sponsored a Resolution which states that the T. S. as such, has no creed, no formulated beliefs that could or should be forced on anyone, and that "no doctrine

can be declared as orthodox." Thus those who advocate maintaining the present disunity for doctrinal reasons, are in disagreement with eminent theosophical authorities.

Some of the propositions discussed by Bro. Wilks have our sympathy. For one, we are sympathetic with any attempt by theosophical scholars to show where the books of some theosophical writers may be "off the beam", or are not always in harmony with the teachings revealed by the Masters through H.P.B. But we believe that Bro. Wilks has unintentionally misunderstood some of our remarks and hence has left an impression which needs clarifying. First, he suggests that I should have stated that the professors of different faiths who were invited to membership in the T. S. were to be "united in a fearless search for truth to help humanity." Later he suggests that I proposed the gathering together of people of diverse races and creeds, "without a definite purpose" and that this "would be senseless". But the "definite purpose" is inherent in the whole activity of the T. S. and in its Constitution. It would seem to me to be redundant and tiring to quote the pertinent parts of the Constitution whenever a proposition is laid down.

When Bro. Wilks states that I am advocating "a gigantic sham" in proposing reunification of all groups, he is, we feel, not in agreement with the Founders. They did not wait until everyone got rid of all un-brotherhood from their hearts before forming the T. S. They formed it out of very disparate elements, very imperfect human beings. These included Christian clergymen, Spiritualists, Masons, Materialists, —and even Theosophists could join this dissimilar and conglomerate group. It was a unique departure from the norm and certain rules were laid down for its success,—perhaps the most important

being that of respect for the beliefs of others. If our proposal to return to the integrity of a reunited Movement is "a sham", then this too was a sham.

It was probably never expected of this infant Society that it would be a model of brotherhood at all times. It is not "a pretense of Brotherhood" that we advocate when we propose a reuniting of all theosophical societies with their diverse beliefs. It is precisely the kind of Society which the Founders began. It is only a "sham" when we violate the Brotherhood by setting up opposing and belligerent groups within the Movement. This it is which is a dishonor to the Founders, the real sponsors. We are all human, hence quite imperfect. We are all going to make mistakes for a long time—our Brotherhood, our Society will reflect these mistakes. But it would be a lack of courage to refuse to try to make this Brotherhood of ours work merely because we have made some mistakes. No, this is not the way of courageous men. Theosophy teaches, does it not, that the soul does not immediately reincarnate on the birth of a child. In a sense the infant is irresponsible for a time. Life does not precede form, in this material world.

"And God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2.7).

First there was form and later man became a soul. What we want to do is to keep on breathing life into the form. Let's not chop it up into pieces and thus kill it.

As to loyalties we recognize the existence of conflicting loyalties and feel that the intelligence of theosophists can be counted upon to expand them into a loyalty that overrides them all: a loyalty to the wishes of the Masters. Loyalty to lesser figures to the exclusion of the greater are as discreditable as the loyalties shown to certain recent political

characters. These inharmonious loyalties act as power fields which animate and breed antagonism within the Movement. They feed on the dogmas held by some of the members which tend to make them deify their "leaders". This is akin to henotheism and is deplorable. Even the Masters object to being deified and disclaim infallibility. But this apotheosis is not firmly put down, as it should be. It is inimical to harmony because each group tends to set up its own and opposing deities. If the deified leaders of Group "A" are the only ones accredited to the White Lodge then it follows that all other leaders and groups making similar claims must be spurious. Idol worshippers tend to exclude the idols of competing groups. Leader-worship is a form of idolatry.

Persecution of other people because of a belief is something that belongs in the 19th century waste-basket. It is a relic of barbarism. There is a need for us to rediscover our goals—the Three Objects. When we do it will produce a climate in which to sift truth from error, true teachings from false. Our plan does not, I repeat, exclude this desirable processing. A thousand years of doctrinal argument in a framework of disunity will only result in further sectionalism in the Movement. It will only increase antagonisms and confirm each unit in its mistakes. Christianity has sadly suffered from this fate. Can we not profit from its mistakes?

We agree with Bro. Wilks' statement that the Theosophical Societies must return to The Original Programme of H.P.B. wherein any sincere belief will find expression in any magazine or on any platform. This was H.P.B.'s policy in *Lucifer*. The truth will come out of the beating it takes on the anvil of discussion. But let us never forget that the Movement does not require unanimity of us except in the case of our commitment to Brotherhood and the Objects of

the Society. We cannot go on living in artificial separation from those people to whom by nature, by similar commitments and study, by common tradition, we belong. But our divisions remind us of George Elliott's words: "The peoples of the world are islands, shouting at one another across seas of misunderstanding."

It is our belief that those who oppose reunification do so in the sincere belief that they are thereby serving the theosophic cause. If they thought in their hearts that the White Lodge now wanted a general rapprochement they would be the first to respond. It is our belief that such a realignment is now wanted. Sufficient evidence has been given to show that H.P.B. would vehemently oppose organizational disunity—and doubtless she would also call attention to any errors in teaching which may be found in theosophical writings. But the last word on Theosophy has not been spoken, though some of us act as though it has. In the attitude of some of us towards the future, I find too much pessimism and a complete lack of faith in the possibility of continued interest in our welfare on the part of the White Lodge. This pessimism is rejected by most members. But there is much to do to make the Movement worthy of the real Founders.

We believe that an honest poll of all theosophists of all affiliations, after a period in which these issues had been properly and honestly presented to them, would show them overwhelmingly in favour of reuniting and working together harmoniously in a Grand Cause. It is a voluble minority which keeps the nineteenth century antagonisms alive. They keep crusading over the tired old Judge issue, the Prayag Letter issue and other matters with an emphasis out of all proportion to their importance. These issues thereby become emotionally charged. They are kept alive

through this churning process—not because they are important. The only thing that is of paramount importance is Brotherhood. Other issues are of lesser importance. They derive importance only to the extent that they support this primary matter.

Thirty years ago the National Conference of Christians and Jews was formed, dedicated to the problem of building brotherhood by wrestling with the destructive human impulses—the weakening of human relations by fear and ignorance of one another. At the suggestion of a Catholic priest they began “Brotherhood Week”. It is now celebrated annually in over 3000 communities both here and abroad.

We believe there should be a “Theosophical Brotherhood Week” to be observed annually on H.P.B.’s birthday (July 31) by every theosophist of whatever affiliation. During this week every theosophist shall seek out at least two members affiliated with theosophical groups other than his own and discuss those things they have in common such as Brotherhood and the Three Objects of the T. S. Inter-group gatherings promoting inter-relatedness among the should be encouraged. Local committees separated theosophical groups could be formed to whom all members should be encouraged to send a report as to their activity vis-a-vis “Theosophical Brotherhood Week”. The Christian churches are making a magnificent effort to break down the barriers that divide them. Why should the theosophists lag in this race towards strength? This is a new era—that of co-operative endeavour. Why do the theosophists freeze onto a pattern which is inimical to this?

The doctrinal arguments of the theosophists remind one of the Third Nicaean Conference held in Constantinople (formerly Byzantium) in 1453. Here the Christians met in fruitless and

useless abstract discussions, miserable disputes, and frivolous preoccupations, over trifle matters of theology, while Mohammed II was storming the gates of the city. The virulence with which these useless disputes were waged threatened to dismember the whole religious body. The country they should have defended collapsed. The Turkish scimitar ended their disputatious arguments. This is what gave rise to the expression “Byzantine arguments”—fruitless discussions.

Let us save the Theosophical Society from a similar fate!

Footnote: Those interested in reunification are invited to write to:  
F. Pierce Spinks,  
1233 California St.,  
San Francisco 9, California.  
San Francisco, California,  
April 27, 1958.

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“Theosophists: Re-Unite. This is not a review of the book that will bear that name but it is certainly our whole-hearted endorsement of the earnest desire of Mr. F. Pierce Spinks, F.T.S. to see Theosophists of all affiliations throughout the world unite. In a passionate appeal in *The Canadian Theosophist* for November-December, 1957, Mr. Spinks writes at length why all Theosophists should unite. It is true that the differences that divide us are of the smallest and the common points are of enormous portent. Flowing from the same founders, the societies have bifurcated, divided and subdivided into various offshoots. It should be possible to bring about a union so that they speak with one voice and at least do not waste time in finding fault with one another. The world needs their united efforts to propagate the truths revealed through Madame Blavatsky. We wish Mr. Spinks’ mission all success.”

*The Bombay Theosophical Bulletin*  
March, 1958.