

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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## THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

### I. ORIGINS

By ROY M. MITCHELL

It would seem unnecessary at this late date to have to remind members of the Theosophical Society that the Theosophical Movement and the Society are not one and the same thing.

Several months of intensive work throughout the Canadian Section have convinced me, however, that, willing and all as we are to assent to so fundamental a statement, it is our failure to realize it in practice, along with its implications, that militates most strongly against our efficiency.

The Theosophical Movement of our time arises primarily out of the reaction from the materialism of the last century, when both religion and science had reached the outermost points of their swing from idealism. Religion posited a restless and whimsical Deity who plunged a new-made soul into a welter of evil, of good, or of mixed environment, and at the end of a few years drew it out and arraigned it for judgment on the one issue of its tenacity of belief in a dogma of redemption, condemning or beatifying therefor. Science, no better, posited a God called nature which for some obscure purpose of its own bred human beings into misery; pitted one against another in order to perpetuate the species of the victor; plunged souls into appalling misery, not for any benefit to themselves, but for the

sake of souls and intelligence to be born aeons hence.

It was into this deadlock of opinion that the Theosophical Society came, the herald of a movement, to proclaim the immortality of the souls of all created things, to restate the law of the cyclic return of souls and of the effects of the deeds of souls, to enunciate the doctrine that all religions, philosophy and science at their highest emanated from a body of custodians of the wisdom of the race, and to offer a common meeting ground for religion and science. It said to dogmatic religion: "There is no quarrel with your Scriptures if you will read them in terms of your immortal soul returning again and again to earth." To science it said: "There is no quarrel with your observed facts if you will interpret them in terms of the same evolving entities returning again and again to earth."

This was the original position of the Society, one of explanation and adjustment for the great wave of opinion then setting in against the positions of religious and scientific dogma. That reaction was bound to take a host of forms, for the reason, more than any other, that the world stood upon the verge of a return of the souls who had made the last great wave of preoccupation with occult things. When they came they would inevitably

bring with them all their schisms, hatreds, fanaticisms, and their cults. For all our talk of reincarnation we do not lay stress enough on this view of life. We still talk of spiritual movements as energizing one from another, as if the soul of the father created the soul of the son, instead of thinking of the soul of the son as another person who modifies or breaks from the forms which the soul of the father has projected for it—the body in which he functions, the house in which he lives, the clothes he wears, the school in which he was educated, the religious system in which he was reared. We are not the products of our predecessors. We are other people than those who believed in infant damnation, and other than those who urged the survival of the fittest.

The great Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then, is itself less an evolution of ideas than of old cults each born with the motive force of centuries behind it, and each with the genius of ignorance and selfishness in it which will destroy it again as they have destroyed it before. One of them is spiritualism, destined from its very birth to degenerate into necromancy; another is that Pharisaism of Jesus Christ's time which laid stress upon spiritual healing and worldly prosperity and denied the existence of evil—the cult whose members Jesus described as whitewashing the sepulchre instead of cleansing it—born again in the multitudes of faith-healing sects; another is adventism, that world-old hope which becomes father to the thought that an avatar is at hand; another, ceremonial magic; another, the scientifically garbed wonder-seeking called psychical research; another, mystical ritualism; another, the development of the lower powers by psychic processes; another, the enquiry into hypnotism and its effect upon neurosis. These on the more perilous side; on its nobler side, mystical Christianity, internationalism, and humanitarian and transcendental movements.

In the beginning the Theosophical Society as custodian of the most ancient and the most complete philosophy, held a central position among them all, to guide,

to amplify, to warn, and to answer. Its work was one of explaining the rationale of the movements round it—even the maddest—with sympathy and understanding; to provide a literature, to trace ideas to their origins, to restate the ancient doctrines of the soul of man which have survived the ages, to teach those things which are basic in all great religions and philosophies, and to round out the path of which each of the cults is a fragment.

It is a precarious position and one easily lost. Its most striking analogy is that of centrifugal action in water, where the most buoyant thing can stay at the centre of the swirl, the least buoyant swings out to the circumference. As long as the Theosophist can maintain his place at the centre of the great vortex of cults he will serve the purpose of the Society, studying and explaining with sympathy, with kindness and with insight. The moment he identifies himself with any of the incomplete and fragmentary cults around him he has done less than the task he has assumed. The moment he seeks to drag the Society into a special cult he has struck a blow at its usefulness. If he should succeed and persuade the Society as a body into one or other of the lesser vehicles he would destroy its purpose utterly.

It would then cease to be the explainer. It would become itself only one of the explained.

It is inevitable that in a body of so great extent and with so wide a platform as the Theosophical Society there will be those incapable of staying thus at the centre, who, because they are not trained to study or because they are bored, will find Theosophy insufficient for their needs, and seek a more exciting orbit. It is inevitable, also, that from time to time they will draw the Society or parts of it into their eccentricities (in its strict sense). Such things are inseparable from the task it has set itself.

The remedy is that the Society shall apply itself with more devotion and industry to its original work.

The nature of that work and the practical means towards it whereby the lodges

of the Theosophical Society in Canada may become more vital factors in the intellectual as well as the spiritual life of their communities I shall discuss in succeeding articles.

*Mr. Mitchell proposes a series of which the above is the first article, and which would appear in the following order: 1, Origins; 2, Method; 3, Theory; 4, Lacunae; 5, Study; 6, Speakers; 7, Writers; 8, Intellectuality; 9, Spirituality; 10, Rhythm; 11, Amateurs; 12, Purity. These articles will deal with the details of Lodge work, training speakers, writers, and workers, and maintaining the efficiency of a Theosophical centre.*

## CHRIST'S RULES FOR THE PATH

There is a parallel that can be drawn between the rules of the oriental Yoga, and the rules laid down in the Sermon on the Mount as given in the English version of the authorized or revised editions of the Bible. No doubt the English versions are not absolutely correct translations of the Greek, as so many scholars declare is the case with almost all the New Testament, yet the English version is within each man's grasp, whereas the Greek text is only of use to those who can read it. Right or wrong, the English version gives us all the necessary rules for a Christian system of Yoga for those aspiring to enter the Path at some future time. Not everyone is an aspirant for the Path, and the Christ gave the two commandments for the ordinary Christian to follow—1, To serve God; 2, To love one's neighbour as if he were himself. All our social troubles would cease if we really carried out these two commandments, for if each Christian when he is happy would see that someone else was made happy, too, and provide someone else with a good opportunity when he obtained one himself, what a different world this would be!

(All the quotations given are taken from the English Revised Version of the Bible.)

The Sermon on the Mount commences with the tests of spiritual perfection required by the candidate for the Path, and

therefore for the aspirant, these are the perfections to be aimed at. These verses are usually called the Beatitudes.

1. To be "poor in spirit," or to realize how poor the personality is in its spirituality. The true Self of every man is divine, and the Ego is a divine spirit seeking realization by limitation. Each personality taken by the Ego is another limitation determined by the laws of attraction, heredity, the magnetic influence of the planetary system, the epoch, environment, etc., and this limited personality is used by the true Self much as machinery is used by the manufacturer to produce goods.

2. To be "they that mourn," or those who so feel the unity of humanity that the sorrows of each human being are their sorrows. How often has Jesus been called the "man of sorrows"! H. P. B. gives the "solidarity of humanity" as one of the great truths connected with the first object of the Theosophical Society, for which the Society exists and as a mission to spread.

3. To be one of the "meek," or rather the "serene," for serenity is the chief characteristics of the meek. Excitement, passion, anger, hastiness and extreme enthusiasm are personal limitations connected with the flesh, that can be overcome till the ego can act serene and confident in its divinity while still in the flesh.

4. To be "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness," or the aspirant to be divine in reality and not only in potentiality. To want to work hard to attain the Path. Sloth is one of the greatest vices barring us from God.

5. To be "the merciful" or rather compassionate. The desire for revenge is another of the greatest vices which is seldom overcome by the ordinary person.

6. To be "pure in heart," or "pure." Grossness, sensuality, obscenity, greed, gluttony and filth of every kind have no place on the Path.

7. To be one of the "peacemakers," or one who spreads the Peace of God, or Nirvanic state, when the great joy of life is fully realized. To realize the Unity of Life is to feel with the universe which is pulsating and thrilling with the joy of life

and manifestation, and is at peace with the Logos or "Word of God" in which all things live.

8. To be one "persecuted for righteousness' sake," or rather one banished or shunned because of their attempted righteous life. The world is still the same, and to-day popularity is not for him who would try to live the life of the Path. Shaw and others have pointed out that if anyone to-day tried to do as Jesus would have him do, he would be put in prison or in the lunatic asylum.

9. To be they "that are reproached and falsely accused of evil for Christ's sake." This test of virtue is allegorized instead of expressed tersely, because it is difficult to understand it. The word Christ here means the Christ principle or Buddhi, and to realize or feel our Buddhic principle we shall have to acquiesce apparently in some evil things, just as Jesus was accused of consorting with sinners, publicans or grafters, drunkards and prostitutes (harlots), and of doing as they did. An evil is not a real thing, but an absence of good, and if some divine knowledge or experience can be gained by consorting with such people and their evil, the candidate for the Path must be prepared to consort with the evil in order not to miss the knowledge or experience. A candidate must learn to be single-minded and steadfast in purpose, and not to swerve from side to side for this or that consideration.

Having stated the virtues to be attained, various rules are now laid down for the attainment of them.

First comes a general test of fitness for candidacy. Can we, who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, be open enough to show our light before all the world?

It means shaking in our shoes when we start and overcoming the nameless terror of public opinion and social status. There is nothing derogatory in deciding not to start on the Path in this life, for it is a question of the adjustment between the characteristics of the ego and the characteristics provided by heredity, physical and emotional influences, environment, education, karmic ties, and the general

mundane and planetary magnetism which results in strongly marked or specialized talents, capacities and failings; and the influences of the epoch or cycle make many a difficulty for the egos of certain rays. Time is an illusion, so there is nothing lost in waiting for another life, and deciding to spend this life cycle doing something else. Time is lost only when nothing is done, because the habit of sloth and procrastination are too easily formed, and this is retrogression for the spirit.

The first rule is "keep the law." The first step in the Yoga rules is called Yama, and it is interesting to draw a parallel. (The Yoga rules are from Patanjali's aphorisms).

#### Yama Rules.

1. Not injuring anybody.
2. Truthfulness.
3. Non-covetousness.
4. Chastity.
5. Not receiving anything from anybody.

#### The Law of Christ.

1. No murder, anger or cursing.
2. No oaths or vows. (Truthfulness will render these unnecessary).
3. No revenge and non-resistance.
4. No adultery, and no divorce except for adultery. This also includes lusting after a woman.
5. No publicity or almsgiving.

The fifth rule differs to suit the changes in customs and habits, racial characteristics between east and west, and other epochal changes. At the present day another rule might be added—give alms. Evidently the Christ took this as a fact at that time, and proceeded to preach the elements of non-possession which can only be attained in actuality at Initiation. We can but practise discrimination regarding non-possession of earthly things, for life in the west does not allow of any such condition. We can try Christ's injunction, as St. Francis of Assisi did, and see how far we can go. He tells us to forestall a man and prevent him from sinning through envy, by giving him the thing he is envious to have; also one might prevent him from sinning by not possessing so many enviable things and giving the cause of envy. Anyway, people

possess much too much as soon as they get the chance.

The second step in Yoga is called *Niyama*, regular habits and observances. These are most elaborate, and mostly unsuitable to life in the west. The Christ says very little about this in the Sermon on the Mount, because the Jews on the whole kept the laws in this respect tabulated in Leviticus. The west has made of the laws of hygiene and health a scientific matter and not a religious one, but from a study of Leviticus it is evident that good health, sexual control, and the habit of regularity are the requisites, however they may be obtained. The eastern rules are suitable for a different life from that of the west, where the home is a place for board and rest, and where one has to go outside it for education, amusement, aesthetic and athletic pursuits.

The only injunction the Christ laid down is against the use of mantras, or "vain repetitions." This is one of the great reforms instituted by the Christ in an attempt to counteract one of the greatest evils of the time, when daily life was beset on every side with tabus and minor rituals against every conceivable superstition and bad luck. We are still in a bad way today in this respect. The divine ego is able to make of "luck" what it will and not what it must, and it turns one's attention from this divine aspect of the true Self to dabble with superstitions.

The third step in Yoga is called *asana*, the position of the body during meditation. The Christians took to the kneeling position with hands together, and it is as good as any other. There are many suitable positions to enable the vital or pranic forces to connect through the body the currents of the earth and the air. The Christ was, however, particular to give rules regarding the place and method—it must be in secret, in a room with the door shut, and in quiet and silence. Meditation is for the gaining of additional knowledge, and there is no object in making handicaps for oneself or making it difficult to attain. Knowledge is for us, without stint, therefore to give ourselves a handicap by meditating in public and by the roadside, as so frequent-

ly seen in the east, is unnecessary. No one will aspire to the Path because someone else has succeeded, else all Christians would have done so long ago. Men aspire because they are tired of the continuous buffetings of life after life and long for liberation.

The fourth step in Yoga is considered at the close of the Sermon on the Mount, so we will pass on to the next steps, which are all considered in the "Lord's Prayer."

The fifth to eighth Yoga steps are as follows:—

Pratyahara, making the mind introspective,

Dharana, concentration (12 seconds),  
Dhyana, meditation (12 x 12 seconds),  
Samadhi, Super-consciousness (12 x 12 x 12 seconds).

The complexity of the Yoga rules tends towards mechanical meditation which is derogatory, and Samadhi is therefore not attained by the majority. The Christ simplified these steps considerably and to make the mind introspective, or to open the inner senses, he instituted a short invocation:—

"Our Father which art in Heaven," opening up the consciousness of our oneness with God in heaven, the spiritual planes where our immortal egos have their consciousness.

"Hallowed be Thy name," opening up the consciousness that the name or self of each is sacred and holy.

"Thy Kingdom come," opening up the consciousness to the Kingdom of God, which is divine seership and divine knowledge.

"Thy will be done," or Kismet, which is the close of all invocations of God—i.e., submission to the way of the spirit and not the way of the flesh.

The mind should now be prepared for meditation, and for meditation the Christ enumerated several spiritual truths to which men's minds can be attuned to realise daily, with great benefit to everyone, and a few minutes' meditation should be given to each.

"On earth as it is in Heaven," or "as above, so below," as the eastern proverb has it. All things in this mun-

dane sphere happen because of causes generated on the spiritual sphere.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

This is very badly translated. Another translation is "The bread of the coming day give us to-day." This may not be exact, but it is more comprehensive as a spiritual truth. The bread is a symbol of spiritual perfection, and though it is for us in the future, it can be attained now.

"And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors." Our karma can be exhausted rapidly by forgiveness and remission.

"And lead us not into temptation." Another poor translation. The word translated temptation should be trial or test. We are not brought to the test, but we go to it when we desire and feel ready. The tests are given in the Beatitudes enumerated above. Spiritual perfection is not forced on us, but natural to us.

"But deliver us from evil," or the evil one. The personality in the flesh is for each one of us the evil one, because of its physical, formative and astral defects, and therefore additional karma is always being engendered, from which we can be cleansed or delivered immediately, if so desired, so that none is left behind after death.

The remainder of the Sermon on the Mount is a consideration of the fourth step of Yoga, Pranayama, the control of the vital forces of the body. The Yoga rules are not suitable in this modern, commercial, hurrying age, except men retire into hermitages and monasteries. The rules Christ laid down are simple, and only the addition of some physical culture exercises are needed. They are:—

1. Practise fasting, or rather frugality. Over-eating is given by all health authorities as a cause of bad health.
2. Anoint the head and perform ablutions.
3. Avoid storing useless "treasure," for the preservation of treasure is an exhausting nightmare to the possessor.
4. Keep the "Eye" clear. Anything that

blurs the vision, such as alcohol, drugs, narcotics, red meat and other toxic poisons, are thus condemned.

5. Serve God, or rather live for spiritual gain, for this does not exhaust the vitality.
6. Avoid worry. Worry kills, and is given by all health authorities as a source of poor health and sickness.
7. Do not judge, or rather do not fret about other people's sins and omissions.
8. Have faith in yourself, and your divine powers of omnipotency and omniscience, (ask, and ye shall receive).

The Sermon ends with a few additional proverbs regarding fitness and a warning for those who practise the rules leading to divine knowledge or magic without the necessary virtues.

Alice Warren Hamaker.

Montreal.

## BROTHERHOOD--- UNIVERSAL

Many people join the Theosophical Society with little heed to the object for which it is organized—to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

There are many in the ranks of the Society to whom the first of these distinctions is a stumbling block. They do not care to associate with the black or brown or red or yellow man. But as long as they do not come personally in contact with them they are willing to "belong."

Creed is not quite so much of a barrier to those who agree to enter the Society, but it is still much of a difficulty, particularly if the creed be new, or in opposition to the pet theories or system which the susceptible member has adopted. A new philosophy, or a new interpretation of the Secret Doctrine, or perhaps an opposition teaching, will upset these delicately poised ones, and if they cannot have it all their own way they retire.

Perhaps they do not care for some of the teachings they find in circulation in the Society, promulgated by Madam

Blavatsky or another, and they hesitate to countenance such ideas and prefer something newer or more aesthetic or attractive in other ways, and they cannot rest until they either leave themselves, or get those turned out who hold the views to which they object.

They are not satisfied to circulate their own views and rely upon their intrinsic merit to secure their survival, but they feel they must kill out all opposition in order to allow their own tender plant to grow. Truth is not a tender plant at all. It has a most robust constitution. The blasts of opposition only strengthen its roots, as "the oak strikes deeper when its boughs by furious blasts are driven."

If the Secret Doctrine or any other system of thought is unable to stand any criticism to which it is subjected, or if its upholders are unable to bear with equanimity the arguments advanced against it, or if members generally are unable to listen to arguments pro and con on any question touching any system under discussion in the Society, without getting hot under the collar or thinking the argument against them is unfair because it is too good, then they should try to understand that they have come into the Society for the very training they need, to accustom themselves to take buffets with good humour.

One asks why they should subject themselves to such experiences. No reason at all, except that they joined the Society with a full consciousness before they signed their application that it was a *Universal Brotherhood* they were entering.

Brotherhood does not mean agreement with everything your Brother thinks, but it means making an endeavour to understand him, and to clear up the difficulties that divide you. If it be objected that he is an incorrigible person and that he will not reform, and insists upon making a great display of his errors and fallacious teachings, then the more reason why you who disagree with him should show by your reason, your gentleness and good temper that you have something better to sustain you, and that, far from being driven out of your position, you are all

the stronger for the opportunity to show your convictions, grounded as they are on those interior and unseen principles which do not depend upon outward demonstration.

When you retire, as it were defeated, driven from your rightful position, the world is the weaker for your retreat, and those who have been looking to you for guidance are left to feel themselves deserted.

"Why should their interests be more our concern than those who know a little less than ourselves outside the T. S.?" another questions. Why should a man's wife's interests concern him more than those of any other woman? Because he has voluntarily undertaken a special duty towards her. Those who undertake to form a nucleus of *Universal Brotherhood* have undertaken a wider responsibility than perhaps they have fully realized. But incompatibility is not a cause for divorce in highly civilized countries. The sacred cause of Brotherhood and of those elder Brethren who suggested the ideal of the Theosophical Society should not be placed upon a lower level. A. E. S. S.

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A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims in some one particular to let the great soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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When men have true spiritual understanding they recoil from magic and magical sacramentalism.—Canon Barnes.

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IN CANADA.

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### GENERAL SECRETARY:

Albert E. S. Smythe.

## OFFICIAL NOTES

Have you voted?

\* \* \*

The scrutineers for the Annual Election are Mr. G. I. Kinman and Mr. Robert Marks, Toronto T. S.; Mr. Walter Cotton and Mr. Charles McCausland, West End Lodge; Mr. J. A. Wallace and Mr. Cecil Williams, Annie Besant Lodge. Mr. A. S. Winchester, the P. R. expert, has again kindly consented to preside over the counting of the ballots.

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The Adyar Bulletin announces the early publication of a volume, "The Early Teachings of the Masters," to be edited by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, M.A., vice-president of the T. S. It is to contain all the early teachings given to Mr. Sinnett and Mr. A. O. Hume on which the book "Esoteric Buddhism" was based. The original questions and answers given by the Masters are thus to be published, it is stated, for the first time.

The General Secretary wishes to thank the various Lodges which have sent eulogistic and enthusiastic letters and resolutions regarding his services and candidature, but hopes they will understand that it is no part of his policy to emphasize his own personality. If the principles he has endeavoured to follow commend themselves to the members he will be sufficiently rewarded in the growing strength and authority of the Society throughout the Dominion.

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It will materially assist the work of the scrutineers in the election if members will place their names and numbers and name of their Lodges on the envelope containing their ballots when they send them in. They can then be verified as valid votes and passed at once to the scrutineers, whereas, without the name and Lodge, identification must be delayed till after the envelope has been opened by the scrutineers, which lengthens the time they must spend on the work considerably.

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"Theosophy in India" announces that "in accordance with the decision of the Council Meeting at Adyar during the recent Convention, 'Theosophy in India' is now reduced to the form of a Gazette, and will contain such notices as may from time to time be issued from Headquarters, important correspondence affecting the Section, and brief reports of Theosophical activities. In addition, whenever possible, it will include one short article of a more inspiring nature, penned by one of the leaders of the Theosophical Movement."

\* \* \*

The following letter has been received from Mr. D. Graham Pole, 23 Bedford Square, London: "10th April, 1923. My dear Colleague: I write to inform you that the National Council at their meeting on the 7th instant re-elected me as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England for the ensuing year. I send you the warmest greetings of the members of this National Society and our hope that the closest co-operation will continue to exist between the several National Socie-



ties throughout the world in the cause which we all have so much at heart."

\* \* \*

The annual convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society will be held in Chicago, May 26-30. Those who desire to attend should buy railway tickets to the nearest point in the United States and then get a ticket thence to Chicago, asking for a certificate, which will entitle them to half-fare ticket back to this point on their return, provided there are 250 certificates shown at the convention. On arrival the certificate should be presented at the registration desk on the second floor of the Hotel Sherman. The convention is to be held in the hotel, beginning at 10 on Monday morning, May 28.

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The Messenger, Chicago, announces the amalgamation of the Chicago Brotherhood Lodge with the Chicago T. S., which was chartered November 27, 1884, and is the oldest Lodge now surviving on the American continent, its charter being signed by Col. Olcott and Madam Blavatsky. The next oldest is the Toronto T.S., which was chartered on February 17, 1891, the charter also being signed by the two founders, probably the last thus signed. The next oldest is the St. Paul Lodge, which was chartered July 21, 1891. The reorganized Chicago Lodge will carry on all the work formerly done by the Chicago Theosophical Association which had a State charter which is now surrendered.

## FELLOWS AND FRIENDS

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Wood sailed from New York April 25, for the Argentine, where Mr. Wood will fulfil a lecture engagement.

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Mrs. Maude Lambart-Taylor has been in Ottawa, and expects during May and June to conduct Secret Doctrine classes in Washington, Philadelphia and Baltimore, giving two days each week to each city.

\* \* \*

Mr. Albert E. S. Smythe has been re-elected for the fourth year president of

the Toronto Branch of the Dickens Fellowship. The annual convention of the North American or Inter-Branch Conference will be held on May 28th at Hart House.

\* \* \*

A Vancouver member writes: It will seem like losing an old friend when Mr. Mitchell returns to Toronto. I certainly like his "brand" of Theosophy. It's the sanest I have heard in the five years I have been in the Movement. Not only that, but one senses that there is something really big there, in the man himself.

\* \* \*

Miss Florence M. Papps, of the Toronto Lodge, writes from London, where she has been living for a year past, in expectation of returning for a short visit in August, then once more to go back to England to remain. Since January she has been doing voluntary work for the Order of Service from ten to five daily, part of the work being among the blind.

## AMONG THE LODGES

The General Secretary accepted a long-standing invitation to visit the London Lodge on May 5-6, answering questions on The Secret Doctrine at a members' meeting on Saturday evening, and on Sunday evening observing White Lotus Day with an address on Madam Blavatsky and Spirituality, in which he drew attention to the comments under Stanza Five in the Second Volume of the Secret Doctrine.

\* \* \*

North Vancouver Lodge writes: During the last four months the members of the North Vancouver Lodge have had the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with Mr. Roy Mitchell, and his genial, friendly spirit and unselfish devotion to the cause of Theosophy made him their unanimous choice as member of the General Executive of Canada. His is such a thoroughly practical "brand" of Theosophy that we can ill afford to lose the opportunity of placing him where his peculiar gifts may be at the service of the Section.

The following resolution was unanimously passed at the regular monthly meeting of Toronto Theosophical Society on May 16, with an instruction that the information be passed on to the other Lodges of the T. S. in Canada:—"That the Toronto Theosophical Society, hearing with regret that impressions are prevalent among the other Lodges of the Section that our Lodge is divided on the question of Mr. Smythe's candidature for the General Secretaryship, desires to assure the said Lodges that no such division exists, and that Toronto Theosophical Society is whole-heartedly endorsing Mr. Smythe's candidature."

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A Chess Club has been formed in connection with the Toronto Lodge, and up to the present has a membership of about 25, including a fair sprinkling of ladies. The officers are: Mr. S. Beckett, B.A., President; Mr. J. Hunt Stanford, Captain; Mr. G. I. Kinman, Secretary, and Mr. A. Cornwell, Treasurer. Meetings have been held on Saturday afternoons up to the present, but now that summer is at hand the sessions for play will be every Monday evening instead. During March, Mr. Morrison, the Canadian champion, paid the Club a visit and played 11 boards simultaneously, winning at all of them. A visit was also paid by Mr. Gale, the ex-champion and present Ontario champion, and a most instructive lecture was given by this expert on chess tactics and end play. A tournament is at present in progress, with 15 entries, and all the sessions are well attended and much enthusiasm is exhibited. If any Fellows of the T. S. from out of town are interested and would like to engage in correspondence games with any of the members, the Secretary would be glad to hear from them, and if any Fellow who is a chess player happens to be visiting Toronto, he or she will find a very hearty welcome at the Theosophical Hall, 52 Isabella Street.

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On the evening of April 26th the Julian Lodge met in its new quarters at 1304 Standard Bank Building. The meetings are to be held through the courtesy of

Dr. Ernest Hall and Dr. E. P. Fewster, in the commodious and attractive reception room of their Abrams clinic. These gentlemen, both actively interested in Theosophy, are practically following out the requirements of the third object of the Society, viz., "The investigation of unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man." They have attained valuable and corroborative proof of Secret Doctrine teachings in their use of the Abrams machines dealing with electronic force as a diagnostic and curative agent. Mr. A. M. Stephen lectured on "Zoroastrianism," the second of a series of studies in comparative religion. He traced the Magian influence through its original outpouring in Persia, its revival in the Mithraic religion and its later appearances in Manichaeism, and the Fire Philosophers of the Middle Ages. Dr. Ernest Hall gave an interesting talk on the psychology of religious experiences as exemplified by the recent divine healing as practiced by Dr. Price. He showed clearly the amazingly real nature of the cumulative psychic force of a crowd in breaking up a disease complex. Mrs. Irene Moody read a beautiful selection from the work of our British Columbia poet, Clive Phillipps-Woolley.

\* \* \*

"Divine Life" has a poem dealing with the occultism of Chestnuts in the following stanza:—

A friend to me a story told—  
It seemed to me the tale was old;  
To her its age was just one week,  
For these strange things the key I seek!

\* \* \*

Blavatsky somewhere says that to call the entity by its name is to command its potencies. There is, she says, a magic in the *spoken* word. I cannot meditate quietly. I go to sleep. My thoughts wander. But I can read aloud, say, The Ancient Wisdom. In a few weeks I know the book almost by heart. It yields me its mysteries. If any Theosophist wishes to make faster intellectual progress, let him try this method. He will declare it magical, if he give it a careful test.—J. Wesley Holway in "Theosophy in England."



Madam Blavatsky and Mohini M. Chatterji, translator of the Bhagavad Gita with New Testament notes, and joint-author with Mrs. Laura Holloway of "Man: Fragments of Forgotten History."

## MADAM BLAVATSKY

By Col. H. S. Olcott.

There are certain bereavements which one would prefer to bear in silence, since words are too poor to do them justice. Under such an one the members of the Theosophical Society, and I, especially, are now suffering. Our loss is too great for adequate expression. Ordinary friends and acquaintance may be replaced, even in time forgotten, but there is no one to replace Helena Petrovna, nor can she ever be forgotten. Others have certain of her gifts, none has them all. This generation has not seen her like, the next probably will not. Take her all in all, with her merits and demerits, her bright and her dark moods, her virtues and her foibles,

she towers above her contemporaries as one of the most picturesque and striking personages in modern history.

Her life, as I have known it these past seventeen years, as friend, colleague and collaborator, has been a tragedy, the tragedy of a martyr-philanthropist. Burning with zeal for the spiritual welfare and intellectual enfranchisement of humanity, moved by no selfish inspiration, giving herself freely and without price to her altruistic work, she has been hounded to her death-day by the slanderer, the bigot and the Pharisee. These wretches are even unwilling that she should sleep in peace, and are now defiling her burial urn in the vain hope of besmirching her memory; as the Roman Catholics have those of Cagliostro and St. Germain, her predecessors, by their mendacious biographies. Their scheme will fail, because she has left behind her a multitude of witnesses ready to do justice to her character and show the purity of her motives. None more so than myself, for, since our first meeting in 1874, we have been intimate friends, imbued with a common purpose and, in fraternal sympathy, working on parallel lines towards a common goal. In temperament and abilities as dissimilar as any two persons could well be, and often disagreeing radically in details, we have yet been of one mind and heart as regards the work in hand and in our reverent allegiance to our Teachers and Masters, its planners and overlookers. We both knew them personally, she a hundred times more intimately than I, and this made the rupture of our relationship as unthinkable a question as the dissolution of the tie of uterine brotherhood.

She was to me a sister in a peculiar sense, as though there had been no period of beginning to our alliance, but rather a psychical consanguinity which dated from anterior earth-lives. She was pre-eminently a double-selfed personality, one of them very antipathetic to me and some others. Her almost constant ill-health made her irritable, unquiet and often—I thought—unjust. But she was never commonplace. I loved her for the other, the higher self, which was also the most

mysterious. One seeing us together would have said that I had her fullest confidence, yet the fact is, that, despite seventeen years of intimacy in daily work, she was an enigma to me to the end. Often I would think I knew her perfectly, and presently discover that there were deeper depths in her self-hood I had not sounded. I never could find out *who she was*, not as Helena Petrovna, daughter of the Hahns and Dolgoroukis, whose lineage was easy to trace, but as "H. P. B.," the mysterious individuality which wrote, and worked wonders.

Her family had no idea whence she drew her exhaustless stream of curious erudition. I wrote and asked her respected aunt the question, soon after the writing of "Isis Unveiled" was begun, but she could afford no clue. Madame Fadayef replied: "When I last saw her"—some five years previously—"she did not know, even in her dreams, the learned things you tell me she is now discussing." I helped H. P. B. on that first of her wonderful works, "Isis," and saw written or edited every page of the MSS. and every galley of the proof-sheets. The production of that book, with its numberless quotations and its strange erudition, was quite miracle enough to satisfy me, once and for all, that she possessed psychical gifts of the highest order. But there was far more proof than even that. Often and often, when we two were working alone at our desks far into the night, she would illustrate her descriptions of occult powers in man and nature by impromptu experimental phenomena.

Now that I look back to it, I can see that these phenomena were seemingly chosen with the specific design of educating me in psychical science, as the laudatory experiments of Tyndall, Faraday or Cooke are planned so as to lead the pupil *seriatim* through the curriculum of physics and chemistry. There were no Coulombs then above the mud, no third parties to befool, none waiting for jewellery presents, or Yoga powers, or special tips about the short cut to Nirvana; she merely wanted my literary help on her books, and to make me comprehend the occult laws involved in the moment's dis-

cussion, she experimentally proved the ground she stood upon. More things were thus shown me that have never been written about, than all the wondrous works the public has read about her having done in the presence of other witnesses. Is it strange, then, that all the humbugging tales and reports by interested critics, about her trickery and charlatanry, failed to shake my knowledge of her real psychical powers.

And what wonder that I, who have been favoured beyond all others in the Theosophical Society with these valid proofs; who was shown by her the realities of transcendental chemistry and physics, and the marvellous dynamic potencies of the human mind, will, and soul; who was led by her into the delightful path of truth which I have ever since joyfully trodden; and who was made personally to see, know and talk with the Eastern Teachers—what wonder that I have loved her as a friend, prized her as a teacher, and evermore kept her memory sacred. Living, I might quarrel with her, but dead, I must only bewail her irreparable loss, and redouble my exertions to push on our joint work.—The Theosophist, July, 1891.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### MR. ROGERS

Editor, Canadian Theosophist: At a special meeting of the Annie Besant Lodge, held here this evening, the following nominations were made: For the office of General Secretary, Mr. Purdy, Toronto Lodge. As members of the General Executive Committee—Mr. Titus, West End Lodge, and Mr. James Rogers, Calgary Lodge.

The Annie Besant Lodge have learned that Mr. Rogers, the Secretary of the Calgary Lodge, is an earnest, indefatigable worker for Theosophy in that Lodge and in the district generally. From the information we have gathered we believe that there is no one among the members of the Society in the middle West who will give more valuable service to our Section as a member of the Executive Committee than will Mr. Rogers, and it

is therefore with the utmost confidence that we nominate him as a member of the Executive. On behalf of the Annie Besant Lodge,

James Wallace, Secretary.  
93 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, 7th April.

The above communication was inadvertently omitted from the April Magazine, and should be considered with the other election statements. A copy of the letter was sent to every member of the T. S. in Canada as soon as the omission was discovered, and before any ballots were distributed.—Editor.

### A CORRECTION

Editor, Canadian Theosophist: Would you kindly insert the following in the next issue of The Canadian Theosophist. Elizabeth J. Belcher has either made a mistake or been misinformed. Mr. Felix Belcher visited Vancouver during the summer of 1898; he made himself known to the members of the Vancouver Lodge, was welcomed by them, and attended their meetings and gave an address to the public. But he had nothing whatever to do with putting the Lodge on its feet. The majority of the members were old members who came over from the T. S. in A., at the time that the declaration was made that Mrs. Tingley was Sovereign Head of the T. S. in A. Sorry to have to contradict.

Frederick Albert Round,  
Secretary at the time and during  
the year 1898.

750 Kamloops St., Vancouver, B.C.  
May 8, 1923.

## CHELASHIP

Students of the esoteric science below the rank of Initiates are usually called in India *chelas*; these again are divided into two classes, regular accepted chelas and probationary chelas. The latter are those who present themselves as candidates for training, and receive the recognition of the Adepts to the extent of permission to try. While on the difficult path they have undertaken to travel, they receive no more help and encouragement than is

to be found in their own personal earnestness of purpose and strength of will. The emotional sentimentalist, who enters upon the study with a vague sense of spiritual need, little realizes the qualifications requisite for the task. Apprenticeship is a severe test of will-power and unselfishness, and, lacking these, one may be sure of failure.

Usually such persons fancy, because of the interest they take in occult literature, that they would like to be students under the Adepts, who possess the secrets of nature and have spiritual power to a degree little dreamed of by the generality of mankind. Such interest grows or weakens according to the impelling motive governing the character of the person. Appreciation of the study is the first step, and desire for more light is the applicant's passport to the probationary stage. His progress depends upon several conditions, which, if complied with in the main, will secure him a reasonable hope of success. These are a sound mind in a sound body, right moral principles, and a well-disciplined nature.

Then begins the work—of what? Obeying certain set rules and regulations, issued like the ukases of a tsar or the commands of a military chief? Many would like to have such, for it is easier to follow the directions of a leader than to discover the way without guidance. No. The impelling force must be in the neophyte, and without it he has nothing to hope for. Once it is shown that the desire to succeed is stronger than the distracting, engrossing, material cares of life which enthrall the vast majority of people, the next step is made plain for the struggler, but it may require a much longer time and a greater test of patience than even a strong-willed person can always bring to the task. Those who persevere in the right direction succeed, but intuition must be developed to discover which is the true way.

Temperamental differences are such that what is easy for one is a pitiless trial for another, and the inexorable rule of the Adepts of occult science is to leave each and all to make the attempt without any other inducement than what

their lofty example furnishes. If one succeeds another may, and so the battle is to be given up or won as the aspirant decides. It is wholly a matter of determined, sustained perseverance in the right direction. The accepted chela has entered upon new difficulties when he has passed the probationary stage, but he has also additional strength with which to contend against them. The resolution once formed to be a chela, and that resolution fed by constant mental effort, the teacher is impelled to recognize that chela's qualifications and to direct his future steps.

Chelas, it may be said with truth, are not created by any sudden zeal or spasmodic sentimental desire. They are those who know and realize that there is knowledge for them to possess if they can find it; powers in themselves which they can develop if they but understand the laws governing such powers, and teachers who know wisdom and can impart it, if one can merit and win their approval.

Accepted chelas live in the light of knowledge gained through spiritual unfoldment; they see the world with vision less dimmed and distorted by delusions, by carnal desires. They reach their goal by tortuous paths perhaps, and attain to their victory through trials which discourage any but the firmest and most determined. The road which the chela walks is strewn, every inch of it, with reminders of frays and skirmishes with himself. He has no other enemy half so powerful as his own selfish earthly nature, which he undertakes to discipline, and of whose strength he has no conception until he deliberately and earnestly begins the work of purification. To eliminate self, to care for the welfare of others as being his own truest interest; to be chaste and pure; humble and patient—these are the tasks he has set himself to.

The Delphic oracle said, "Man, know thyself"; and the only road to self-knowledge lies through the knowledge of duty; to sacrifice one's self otherwise than in the performance of one's duty is a form of selfishness which is as dangerous as it is insidious. Krishna says to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: "It is

right to die in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is surrounded with dangers." Just as avarice is produced by a perverted appreciation of money, so a morbid desire for self-sacrifice, divorced from the performance of duty, is begotten of a warped mind which mistakes the means for the end.

To the true chela the conventionalities of daily life are as unsatisfactory as the materialism of exoteric religious doctrines is distasteful; he, failing to find rest for the spirit, has rushed into duty as the only safeguard against despair. He is one who has lived so wisely as to have found the bondage of selfishness in self, as in others, too hard to bear, and for whom there is no life in any other than the higher principles of his being.

Happy are such natures if they find the way and the truth, and thrice happy are such when, having found it, they are accepted as pupils of the great teachers, in whom there is no shadow of selfishness, no sign of injustice, no thought of earthly reward or recognition!

According to Brahmanical treatises on occultism, and the testimony of its living devotees, there are four steps, technically called "accomplishments," which lead the neophyte to the rank of an accepted chela.

The first "accomplishment" which he must have is the right knowledge of the real and the unreal. The object to be attained by the help of the "Great Science," as it is called, being the realization of the true, and Adeptship being but the mark of a certain stage of this realization, it is clear that the first step to be taken is to gain an intellectual apprehension of what the truth is. But what is the truth? It will not do for the neophyte to ask the question like the jesting Proconsul, and refuse to wait for the answer. Had Pilate asked the question in Sanscrit, he might have been answered out of his own mouth. For the Sanscrit word itself offers a clue to the nature of truth. In that language truth and reality bear the same name, and reality is defined to be that which is unaffected by time, or, in the quaint phraseology of the original, remains witness of the three divisions of time—the past, the present and the

future. The first accomplishment, therefore, consists in an intimate intellectual conviction of the fact that all and everything which appears to have an existence separate from Parabrahm is merely phenomenal change (Maya).

The second "accomplishment" marks the next step on the path, and is the permanent effect produced on the mind by the theoretical knowledge which forms the preceding accomplishment. When the neophyte has once grasped the illusive character of the objects around him, he ceases to crave for them; and is thus prepared to acquire the second accomplishment, which is a perfect indifference to the enjoyment of the fruit of one's actions, both here and hereafter.

Exotic students fall into a grievous error by their failure to catch the true spirit of the injunction against acting under the impulse of desire. They erroneously suppose that the best preparation for spiritual life is to forcibly repress all outward expression of desire, entirely losing sight of the fact that even the most rigid abstinence from physical acts does not produce inactivity on the higher planes of spiritual or mental activity. Sankaracharya, in his commentaries on the Bhavagad Gita—one of the most authoritative of the Brahmanical sacred writings—says that such a conclusion is simply delusive.

A hasty supposition might here be made that these considerations will have the effect of sanctioning persistence in evil; but when the desire for improvement is constantly present in the mind, and the character of the evil thoroughly realized, each failure to harmonize the inward with the outward nature will, by the revulsion of feeling thus produced, strengthen the determination to such an extent that the evil desire will be speedily crushed. This is why Eliphaz Levi so vehemently denounces the institution of forced celibacy among the Romish priests.

The personality of a man at any one moment is the result of all his previous acts, thoughts, and emotions, the energy of which constantly inclines the mind to act in a particular way. All attempts, therefore, to cure this mental bias by re-

pressing its expression on the outer plane is as hurtful as to throw back into the circulation unhealthy blood seeking a natural outlet. The internal desire is always forging fresh links in the chain of material existence, even though denied outward manifestation.

The only way to free oneself from the bonds of Karma, producing birth and death, is to let the stored-up energy exhaust itself merely as a portion of the great cosmic energy, and not to colour it with personality by referring it to self. The Bhagavad Gita itself speaks on this subject with no uncertain sound. The Great Teacher Krishna reproved his pupil Arjuna for having expressed a disinclination to perform the duties pertaining to his sphere of life. The reason is perfectly plain: in reference to the great reality everything of this world is unreal; therefore, to renounce the duties entailed upon us by our birth for something equally unreal, only accentuates the ignorance which makes the unreal appear as the real. The wisest course, suggested by Krishna, is that Arjuna should perform all his duties, unselfishly.

"Thy right is only to the act," says the Teacher; "it ends with the performance of the act, and never extends to the result." We must perform our duty for its own sake, and never allow the mind to dwell on the fruit of our actions, either with pleasure or with pain. Purified from the taint of selfishness, the act passes by, like water over the lotus leaf, without wetting it. But if the act is done as a means to the attainment of a personal end, the mind acquires a tendency to repeat the act, and thus necessitates further incarnations to exhaust that tendency.

From the above considerations it is abundantly clear that occultism enjoins upon its votaries the necessity of an ardent and sleepless desire for the performance of duty, the sphere of which is enlarged by the first accomplishment, which requires a thorough recognition of the unity of the individual with the all. It is not enough to have a sentimental perception of this great truth, but it must be realized in every act of life. The student, therefore, to begin with, must do every-

thing in his power to benefit all on the ordinary physical plane, transferring his activity, however, to the higher intellectual and spiritual planes as his development proceeds.

This leads us to the consideration of the third accomplishment, which is the acquisition of the "six qualifications" in the order they are treated of here. The first of them is called in Sanscrit "Sama"; it consists in obtaining perfect mastery over the mind (the seat of emotions and desires), and in forcing it to act in subordination to the intellect, which has been purified and strengthened in attaining the two degrees of development already dwelt upon. This done, the mind is thoroughly cleansed of all evil and foolish desires.

The injunction to chasten our minds before purifying our acts might at first sight appear strange, but the practical utility of the course laid down will be obvious on reflection. We have already seen how varying effects are produced by a fixed amount of energy, according to the plane on which it is expended, and certainly the plane of the mind is superior to the plane of our senses. In the next place, forced abstinence from physical evil goes but very little way towards the evolution of that energy which alone can give us the power of approaching the truth. Our thoughts, governed under ordinary circumstances by the law of association, makes us contemplate incidents in our past life, and thus produce as much mental disturbance and draw as much of our mental energy as if we had repeated the acts in question many times over. "Sama," then, is really the breaking-up of the law of the association of ideas, which enslaves our imaginations; when our imagination is purified, the chief difficulty is removed.

The next qualification, the complete mastery over our bodily acts ("Dama" in Sanscrit) follows, as a necessary consequence, from the one already discussed, and does not require much explanation.

The third qualification, known by the Brahmans as "Uparati," is the renunciation of all formal religion, and the power of contemplating objects without being in

the least disturbed in the performance of the great task one has set before oneself. What is here exacted of the aspirant for spiritual knowledge is that he should not allow his sympathies and usefulness to be narrowed by the domination of any particular ecclesiastical system, and that his renunciation of worldly objects should not proceed merely from an incapacity to appreciate their value. When this state is reached danger from temptation is removed. They alone, the Hindu poet says, are possessed of true fortitude who preserve the equanimity of their minds in the presence of temptation.

Fourth in order comes the cessation of desire and a constant readiness to part with everything in the world (Titiksha). The typical illustration of this given in our mystical literature is the absence of resentment of wrong. When this qualification is completely attained there arises in the mind a perennial spring of cheerfulness, washing away every trace of solicitude and care.

Then is acquired the qualification called Samadhana, which renders the student constitutionally incapable of deviating from the right path. In one sense this qualification is the complement of the third as given above. First, all egotistical motives tempting the man to travel out of his chosen path lose their hold over him, and finally he perfects himself to such an extent that, at the call of duty, he can unhesitatingly engage in any worldly occupation with the certainty of returning to his habitual life after completing his self-imposed task.

*(By request this passage from "Man: Fragments of Forgotten History," is reprinted, giving the qualifications for chelaship. The remainder of the passage will be given next month.)*

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Seek knowledge for pure love, and self-knowledge eventually crowns the effort. The fact of a student growing impatient is proof positive that he works for reward, and not for love, and that in turn proves that he does not deserve the great victory in store for those who really work for pure love.—Quoted in Theosophist, Oct., 1890.