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FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To The 86th International Convention Of
The Theosophical Society*
BY N. SRI RAM, *President*

It is a deeply significant fact that while there is much sameness and agreement in the nature of their thoughts and outlook among the members, who have a widely varying background, comprising so many different nationalities, races and religions, there is in the Three Objects of the Society nothing of a creed except Universal Brotherhood. This Brotherhood finds its place there not as a thesis for intellectual acceptance but as a truth rooted in the very nature of a human being, and capable of expression in one's life according to the degree and depth of one's awakening to that truth and to the nature of his own fundamental being. It is our conditioning by so many factors, which we may name variously as race, upbringing, caste, nationality and so forth, which eclipses that truth, and causes us, even when we theoretically accept it, to interpret it as a mere anaemic co-existence or mutual sufferance. The word Brotherhood thus becomes just a sign, devoid of the vitality, beauty and transforming power of truth and life. The truth which will ultimately prevail and is of vital consequence is the truth of life, of the life that is in ourselves and all other beings around us. What we seek to know as Theosophists is principally the nature of life and consciousness. All else is subsidiary to this knowledge, which is important because it is inseparable from our being.

Theosophy is an undefined Wisdom and there is no document or official paper which says how it shall be interpreted, but insofar as this wisdom pertains to our individual being, its expression and action, it takes its rise not from any conditioning to which we are subject, but from the pure unconditioned nature of ourselves. To merit being described as Wisdom, which is different from the accumulation of knowledge, it must be the efflorescence of a truth which abides in ourselves. Brotherhood, in the sense of a deep pure relationship experienced in one's heart and filling the heart, is of the essence of that truth.

There are many things we can do in the Theosophical Society, many lines of work, each good in its way, but I feel that more than anything else, we need to achieve a different comprehension, out of which there will flow a different way of life, including our thoughts and action. We all tend to live as we have always been doing, and add a doctrine or two, which do not make much difference to the condition of ourselves. As we look at the world today, we see everywhere a spirit of self-assertion, of dominance, exploitation and regimentation, and inevitably it is a world of tension and conflict. It is a world of restless activity, forthgoing in every direction. Along with this forthgoing, whether for knowledge, enjoyments and pleasures, ad-

vantage or gain, which is seemingly an objective attitude, there is an unconscious subjective condition, which is an involution in self-centred motives and emotions and makes us indifferent to life in whatever form, to the needs and feelings of others, not to speak of their manifest pains and sorrow. There is this hardening process along with our mechanical achievements and progress. The world's situation at present, dreadful as it is, is a development of trends in our way of life which give more importance to power, competition in achievements and the accumulation of material goods, than to a life which is simple, non-ambitious, but rich in understanding, in its relationships and harmony. Obviously we need to move in a different direction altogether. We need to seek a different way of progress, a way which makes for increasing freedom within our selves, a freedom which opens our being on every side, even as there is an opening out on every side of the world of knowledge. We need to stress the importance of a manner of living based on the truth of what we fundamentally are, of what life is, when looked at not superficially but in a perspective that increasingly reveals its depths.

The Society was founded eighty-six years ago when the conditions in every department of life and the climate of the world's thought were very different from what they are at present. Yet the Society's Objects are as adapted to present conditions as they were in previous times. The Objects have been so defined as to make it possible for its work to keep pace with a changing world, and to contact the minds of people as they have been modified by various developments in this century. The latter part of the nineteenth century was a time of increasing colonialism in politics, rigid social and religious orthodoxy, and an equally rigid materialism in matters of Science. The Society, besides preaching Brotherhood, which tended to alter the then existing relationship between rulers

and the ruled, had the duty of combating the orthodoxy and propounding a view of life, which while strictly sensible and logical, was based not on the dead premises of matter but on something infinitely more of a reality, which can be experienced only in the depths of one's consciousness and being.

The world as a whole has since then moved into different conditions, into more open waters of thought and action, though the waters are turbulent with many problems. At the present moment there is a challenge, posed by accumulations of nuclear energy, of death or a new beginning. Our duty, as I see it, is to point the way to the truths that are eternal, not so much in terms of symbols, which are substitutes for reality, but in relation to life and our own inner consciousness, its perceptions and movements, as well as to an understanding of how our consciousness is affected by all things around it.

Sometimes it is said that there must be a new presentation. The feeling of newness depends on the condition of the mind or heart. But the presentation has to be such as to apply to the problems of individuals at the present time and in relation to the activities of their minds, which create those problems.

A new outlook on life, a new quality of consciousness, a spiritual renaissance, which is what the world needs, cannot be brought about by purely organizational means. An organization can bring together like-minded people, promote exchanges between them, and arrange for joint or co-operative activities of different sorts, such as talks, the printing of journals and books, their dissemination and so forth. But there is a work at a deeper level which has to be done by us as individuals. An organization cannot do what an individual can do, for he is capable of understanding, love, reverence, sympathy, and so forth, all of which is the action of what he is in his nature and being. The Theosophical Society is an organization, and as such, it

has to be kept free of those weaknesses, vested interests, and the tendencies to settle down into certain moulds and stereotypes, which every organization tends to develop. But the Society is also an association of free individuals, of members intended to be friends of one another and of the world in general, and students and centres of the Wisdom, its life-giving energy and peace. This duty rests on each and every one of us, and not only upon so-called leaders. Only to the extent that the Wisdom in this living sense is present and active in the hearts of the members, the Society, which is a movement as well as an organization, can accomplish its purpose.

Let me say that I have read all the Reports received from Sections and Federations with great interest. Having visited most of these countries, some of them more than once, I have a general understanding of their conditions, activities and problems. But I cannot refer to all of them in this address.

"The whole membership must realize that they must be part of a program of moving forward," writes Dr. Henry Smith, the National President of the American (United States) Section, in his Report. There is "need to stimulate in them zeal for study and work". He makes this observation from appraisals by lecturers sent out from the Headquarters in Wheaton. But the same is the case with the whole Theosophical Society in every country. The American Section adopts a variety of methods to maintain contacts with Lodges as well as with National members, who are members attached not to any lodge but directly to Section Headquarters, and are called in certain other countries "free members". The Lodges are supplied with material for programs in the form of tape recordings, slides, films and so forth. There are correspondence courses which can be taken up by individual members who can also borrow books from the Section Library. I mention these methods as they are capable of being adopted by other Sections

also, or by a group of Sections. Tape recordings of talks are being increasingly used by Lodges in different parts of the world. But Dr. Smith thinks, and I agree with him, that they should be supplementary to discussion and study, and not supplant "live" programs.

In the year ending 30th September, which is the official year for the Society, 65 Lodges in the United States utilized the services of the Department of Education and Research at "Olcott" (the Section Headquarters) in planning their programs. While on the subject of such planning, I might mention the fact that there are Lodges in some countries where sometimes members turn up in the Lodges, such of them as come, and then consider what they should do. When meetings are not arranged with care, but become a haphazard affair, there is bound to be loss of interest and of the Lodge membership little by little. In the United States they have a program of regional expansion. The work is intensified in a selected area, where there is a small Lodge or group of Lodges, with the help of one or more workers deputed by the Section for a period of time. These regional expansion workers are trained at "Olcott" in class and group work. They have "workshops" also in the regional expansion areas for such training. It is stated that this program has resulted in an increase of members in those areas, and the local branches have been able to sustain the heightened interest.

I might mention, in passing, that there are very many members who prefer the term "Branch" to "Lodge". In India too in the early days the word in common use was "Branch". In certain other countries they use the word "Group".

In England the membership does not increase, but the new General Secretary, Dr. Wallace Slater writes that "there is a definite growth of interest in Theosophical subjects by the general public and an active interest in the deeper aspects of Theosophy by the members". Dr. Bendit, the previous

General Secretary, had instituted a new type of public meeting "where a subject is introduced by two speakers and then discussed in a free and easy manner, without attempting to reach formal conclusions. The subject is left in the air to continue working in the minds of the audience". The non-member who is present thus feels that he is part of the meeting and he also can help in exploring the problem or the subject. Dr. Slater reports that there is a good attendance at these meetings and "there is a healthy keenness in examining the teachings". The English Section has acquired all the shares of Tekels Park Estate in Camberley and can now freely use the facilities of the estate. A number of members and workers live there in residential houses and flats and form a Theosophical community maintaining certain activities, but as the Park is not far from London, it serves as an admirable meeting place for week-end camps, Conferences and so forth. The Theosophical Publishing House in London, which is also owned by the English Section, is another asset of importance to its work,

A happy feature on the continent of Europe is increasing co-operation among Sections speaking the same language or languages which are closely allied. This is due largely to the work of the European Federation, with its Regional Committees. Norway, Sweden and Denmark are trying the experiment of issuing one journal jointly, instead of three separate journals, and it is edited by M. Ernst Neilsen, the General Secretary for Norway. In June they joined together to hold a summer school at Hornsjo in Norway, at which there was an attendance of some 126 members.

The General Secretary for Sweden, Mrs. Eva Ostelius, reports "a marked growth of interest for Theosophy among the public but also a strong tendency not to join any organization". There are so many organizations today everywhere for religious, spiritual or so-called spiritual purposes, all of which seek to secure adherents and

strengthen themselves. The more independent thoughtful person is naturally wary of being inveigled into some new cult or sect and becoming committed to its beliefs and ways. Theosophy, being a truth that is inherent in the nature of things, our presentation, approach and methods should manifest that free, open and universal spirit which will save the Society from being mistaken for any sectarian member-seeking body. We should welcome members of course, but their coming should be in free response to the truth and a desire to help in propogating a truth which is so identified with freedom—freedom of mind and heart—and the underlying unity of all that lives and breathes. In Sweden they have been attempting to achieve a closer co-ordination of Lodges, the need for which is felt in other countries also, as for instance, in South Africa where the Lodges are scattered over long distances.

Mr. Neilsen, the General Secretary for Norway, makes the remark, based on his experience over many years of work, that "it is difficult to get people interested in our ideas in Norway". The same difficulty has been experienced in Sweden and a number of other countries. As everyone is interested in his own problems, they have been trying in Sweden the experiment of "a series of lectures on subjects touching the daily problems of the average individual," and these have been much appreciated by the public and unusually well attended. The Malmo Lodge, alongside the Lodge work, has started a discussion and lecturing group called the Gnostic Society, which is completely unattached but is proving a gateway to the Society.

Netherlands too reports a decrease of membership. The General Secretary, Mr. A. J. H. van Leeuwen, expresses the opinion that the main cause for the dormancy of a number of Lodges there—there are other Lodges which are very lively—is that the same people stay permanently in the Lodge Council and as its principal officers. Again, this is a phenomenon not con-

fined to the Netherlands. Sometimes the members get so accustomed to the leadership of someone with an outstanding devotion or talents that the relationship thereby established continues mechanically. The tendency then, of which the members concerned may be unaware at first, is to form a group or party around him, which inevitably excludes others and antagonizes them. In the Theosophical Society, where there should always be a free atmosphere and a spirit of universal friendliness, there should never be any clique, group or party around some one, however fine he may be. We have all to remember that however well one may do a particular work, a new person, even though we may think he will not do it so well—perhaps he will not—will bring a new quality and touch which may be needed for the development of the work. Mr. van Leeuwen mentions as an outstanding event a Summer School at Amersfoort which was very well attended and was devoted to a study of the Buddhist philosophy. The Section has an active publishing department and its recent publications include a book entitled "Studies in Religion, Occultism and Esotericism" by Mr. van Leeuwen himself, and a book on "Psychology and Theosophy" by Mr. D. G. Gower and Dr. A. G. Vreede. Mr. van Leeuwen has started a program of meeting members of Lodges in the Netherlands at special and exclusive meetings to talk over essential points of the esoteric philosophy. The first of these was one at Haarlem for seven Lodges in that area to study and discuss "the original program of the T.S." by H.P.B.

One of the most active Sections in Europe at present is Iceland, which has a membership of 509. Mr. Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson, the General Secretary, writes that activities of instruction have increased greatly. The Section's periodical has been improved to include matters of general intellectual interest, such as psychology and philosophy. A pamphlet introducing Theosophy has been sent to every farmer, every physician, clergyman and teacher. A new type of work

that has been started is the training of workers in Lodges and giving them guidance in lecturing and group work. The Icelandic Section was forty years old this year, and to celebrate the occasion, a Theosophical Publishing House has been founded. Also there is a newly started Young Theosophists organization which holds regular meetings and discussions.

Another European Section where there is much liveliness is Switzerland. Mr. Georges Tripet, who is again the General Secretary, has been taking an "inventory" of the Section, pruning out the names of members who for years have taken no interest in the movement and also initiating a number of activities intended to vitalize the Lodges and members. During the year a course was organized for Lodge Presidents to instruct them in their duties, and two courses for instructors of study classes, one in German and the other in French. A circular letter is sent out every month in German and French, in which the General Secretary answers questions asked by members on a variety of subjects. The success of these circular letters has, it seems, greatly exceeded expectations.

The European Federation is as active as ever under the energetic guidance of Mr. John Coats, who mentions in his Report the regional summer schools held during the year; in Norway for the Scandinavian countries; in Pichl, Austria, for the German-speaking Sections; and in Milano Marittima for the French-speaking and Italian Sections; also the work of the Regional Committees. The Council of the Federation held a session at Milan in June, together with the Convention of the Italian Section, thus helping the Section by the presence and participation of leading workers from other countries in Europe.

Mrs. Radha Burnier, the General Secretary for India, writes that India has now a membership of 7405, an increase from last year's figure by 373 members. The Section is divided into a number of Federations, as in some other countries, but

largely on a linguistic basis, and each Federation consists of the Lodges in its area. The work in these Federations and Lodges continues steadily as before. A noteworthy event was the celebration of H.P.B.'s birthday in Bombay jointly by the Bombay Federation and the United Lodge of Theosophists, under the presidentship of Mme. Sophia Wadia. I might mention here that similar celebrations took place in Los Angeles and San Francisco in the United States, our Society co-operating there too with the United Lodge and other Theosophical groups. The Section Report mentions the holding of various study camps and conferences in different parts of the country, including a North Indian and South Indian Conference at Varanasi and Adyar, respectively.

Mr. Domingo Argente, General Secretary of the Philippines Section, writes that the year has been one of the most fruitful in the history of that Section, which has now a number of new young members, full of enthusiasm and dedicated to living a Theosophical life. They help in various ways including the raising of funds for a new building for the Section Headquarters in Manila.

The activities of the Australian and New Zealand Sections continue in the usual pattern. Miss Helen Zahara, the General Secretary for Australia, reports that the Section Convention was held in a holiday home near Perth, for the first time in the Section's history as a residential gathering. As it was followed by a summer school at the same place, those who came, some from places in the Eastern States thousands of miles away, were able to be together for one whole week in the atmosphere of Theosophy, discussing, listening and coming to know one another better. Miss Zahara writes as follows with regard to a change in approach to the Theosophical work which is noticeable, especially among the young people in that country: "There is a tendency toward a critical reappraisal of the purposes and functions of the Society

and the methods by which they may be achieved. Many members today . . . challenge any tendency to formalism and authority with the result that there is a move toward the breaking up of established patterns in some directions and a defence of these in others. If we can keep a fresh, free and creative approach to the work of our Society, without losing the value of that which has gone before, then the vitality of the movement, based on the Three Objects, will be strengthened and grow. This depends on us all." We can all heartily agree.

In the Sections of South and Central America the work goes on steadily and much as usual. Mr. Nazareno Rimini, the General Secretary for Argentina has sent out an invitation to the other Spanish-speaking Sections to co-operate in organizing a Convention of the Latin American Sections every third year. Such a Convention would of course help the work in South America greatly and bear excellent results. But the difficulty lies in the vast distances from which members will have to come, even if it is held in some geographically central place on that continent. It may be that even though the distances and the cost may prove prohibitive for some, those who attend will form a sufficiently representative gathering for the chief workers in the different Sections to come into touch with one another and plan to do certain things in co-operation. Mr. Rimini and Mr. Walter Ballesteros of Colombia have already approached the other Sections for their co-operation for the systematic translation and publication of Theosophical works into Spanish.

Brazil is a Portuguese-speaking country; but most Brazilians understand Spanish, as the two languages are very similar. In Brazil, one of the Lodges is carrying out a course of study based on the program of the School of the Wisdom at Adyar. The attendance of those who have taken up this course is said to indicate considerable interest. Mr. Armando Sales, the Gen-

eral Secretary, feels that though the Section is maintaining its strength and activities, they realize the need for "the intensification of the spiritual life, making each Lodge a real channel for the higher forces in the service of the common good."

In Mexico, the Section has a new Headquarters building on the old site. It was inaugurated last May. Mr. Vado Lopez, the General Secretary, mentions among other features of the work the formation of a Young Theosophist Lodge, which holds meetings for study sometimes in the Headquarters building, and sometimes in the parks, intercalating these activities with visits to children in hospitals.

The Adyar Library is celebrating its 75th Jubilee this December. It has become increasingly well known in India and abroad among Indologists, scholars and research students for its collection of manuscripts and books, its publications and its work as a research centre. During last year's Convention the foundation stone was laid in a part of the Besant Gardens for the new Adyar Library Building, which is more than ever urgently required. The present premises are exceedingly cramping and there is no possibility of expanding the work or using the manuscripts and books to full advantage until the Library is located in the building that has been planned. Shrimati Rukmini Devi has told me that the site (on which there are at present a number of Kalakshetra cottages) will be made available before June 1962.

An important addition to our work at Adyar is the *Adyar News Letter*, edited by Miss Katherine A. Beechy and issued quarterly. It gives news of the activities at Adyar, of visitors of note and people who come here to reside for a shorter or longer period, and each issue features some particular department or activity, giving something of its history and a summary of the part it plays in the varied work of the International Headquarters. The News Letter is sent to all the General Secretaries, certain other workers and quite a number

of regular subscribers. Many of the General Secretaries have welcomed this unofficial bulletin and quoted from it in their Section journals, because it gives a more informal and intimate view of Adyar's day to day life and work than is ordinarily possible in official correspondence and reports.

I must here express my grateful thanks also to all those who have helped the Society by their donations. We are especially grateful to those members whose deep devotion to the Society's work has prompted them to make bequests with which to carry on its work.

Our Society is now eighty-six years old. It is only fourteen more years to its centenary, a comparatively short period. Everything old tends to get set and rigid, unable to function outside its established habits. But a Society which stands for the ageless Wisdom should in a measure be free of that declining and deteriorating process. This is possible as its membership is constantly renewed, and the freedom which the Society as a whole declares as a cardinal principle of thought and action should help us to keep our minds and hearts free, fresh and young. Let us hope that as the Society approaches its 100th year it will be able completely to renovate itself and arise Phoenix-like with new life and vigor.

"We assert that the divine spark in man being one and identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit, our 'spiritual Self' is practically omniscient, but that it cannot manifest its knowledge owing to the impediments of matter . . . The identity of our physical origin makes no appeal to our higher and deeper feelings. Matter, deprived of its soul and spirit, or its divine essence, cannot speak to the human heart. But the identity of the soul and spirit, immortal man, as Theosophy teaches us, once proven and deep-rooted in our hearts, would lead us far on the road of real charity and brotherly goodwill."

The Key to Theosophy

A TOUCH OF THE REAL

BY W. EMMETT SMALL

A modern habit of classification likes to divide people into optimists and pessimists; but no student of the Esoteric Philosophy can bind himself to these limitations, nor yet rightly call himself a realist in the sense attributed to that word today. Something in the Esoteric Philosophy lifts one far beyond such classification. What is it, then, that is so inspiring about it that its students are immediately thrown out of any orthodox or standard category once they begin to grasp something of its meaning? What is it in this philosophy that transforms, sharpens, and brightens one's whole life so that for the first time one finds himself really living?

It is this. The Esoteric Philosophy — what minute aspect we know of it — *is a touch of the REAL*. To know that Truth is recognizable, attainable, and can be tested, that it can be seized and made our own, is one of the greatest inspirations life affords. For in the Esoteric Philosophy we have what we may call the Great Economy. There is no waste. What is Truth is Truth — here, or in distant Orion, Aldebaran, or Betelgeuse. There is no unlearning needed caused by stumbling theory. Generations of sages have put their seal of approval on the interpretation of the actual facts themselves, knowledge wrested from the very heart of Nature and revealed to them because, in harmony with certain times and seasons and their own advancement, they have learned by temporarily becoming the thing sought, and have then reported what they saw and experienced. These testings thus checked are the Teachings — not sentimental romancing and fiction, but that which is The Holiest — TRUTH, as near as it can be reported in human terms for human understanding. That is the first tremendously inspiring thing about the Esoteric Philosophy.

And we have the Great Economy again in our personal searching for the Path. What we learn we save. We carry it from life to life; we make it a part of our eternal being. If we do not seize the golden opportunity of the day, the loss is ours; we are responsible. Yet even in this loss, all is not waste. From failure we may learn, so that some inner essence of the experience is carried forward, if we are alert, and what Nature would render as penalty becomes instruction and tuition. We press forward then with accumulated wisdom.

Each one, furthermore, is himself a direct channel to something higher; may become, intrinsically *is*, one of those 'singular points' the scientists speak of where energy from a higher dimension or world may enter into this one, so that we may become a vessel into which is poured the attributes of 'Spirit' which we may translate through the alembic of our human consciousness into a rarer quality of human action than is granted to most people. This additional 'something' does not separate us from our fellows; in the deepest sense it binds us closer to them in responsibility. For each one thus becomes a leader, a teacher, in degree, a light for others to see by. Nor is this vainglory or megalomaniac dream. It is a simple fact. But the measure of our realization of it lies in our ability to perform wisely, simply, sustainably, the duties of such leadership, which are found not in the dramatic situation which commands the applause of the world, but in our response to the challenge of our duties and responsibilities, in the moment to moment doings of our lives.

The student of the Esoteric Philosophy has that unique and rare opportunity to drench himself in what we may loosely but perhaps understandably speak of as a quality of eternity, distilling thus into daily

Life through his thought and action an atmosphere that we associate with a higher type of being. In our rushing, roaring and often maddening world he anticipates, at least has a faint fore-glimpse of, those far-distant eras when our kâma-mânasic nature will be flooded with the buddhic light of wise and generous understanding. So to live is the first step along the pathway of the Esoteric Philosophy. It is something we can all do in degree. And for that reason we recognize more and more the tremen-

dous, almost awesome, debt we owe those Spiritual Teachers who have preceded us, who have mapped for us these early cuttings through our material jungle, who have held our hands and guided us while we are children, who have brought us, through their love and their pity and their sacrifice, this vision of the REAL. Our homage, our reverence, for Them lies not in our poor words, but in our consecrated thought and action.

ROY MITCHELL

BY CHARLES R. CARTER

At the insistence of a newly - acquired friend who had spent many years of his life as a tea plantation manager for Sir Thomas Lipton in Ceylon, I found myself sitting in the Theosophical Lodge in the Shelby Building, Pender St., Vancouver. The year was 1922. We arrived at 7.45 p.m. to find the Lodge room almost full of eager expectant people who evidently knew who the speaker was.

This fact had been kept from me by my friend as a surprise, also the nature of the speaker's lecture. Never in his wildest moments had my friend, Gordon Forbes, ever realized how complete and far-reaching was the surprise he had planned.

Above the platform a large clock ticked away the moments, 8 o'clock! 8.15! 8.25! —and no sign of the speaker!

"Time appears to mean nothing to Theosophists, I suppose?" I asked my friend a trifle impatiently—for I came from across the inlet from North Vancouver.

My friend smiled like a 'Biliken' and remained silent. At 8.30 p.m. there came footsteps down the passage. An exceedingly well built man nipped the glowing end off his cigarette and paused in the doorway while he stuffed the remainder into his pocket. He was dressed in a blue serge suit, the coat part of which was patterned much

after a military tunic I knew so well. He walked to the platform; his friend whose head reached the level of his shoulder, followed him, and together they mounted the platform. The smaller man sat down in a chair beside the table upon which a green baize cover hung down to display the Theosophical crest. The man in the tunic suit paused a few seconds, then leaned upon the bookrest in a very comfortable manner to say, with a hint of laughter in his voice, "I'm not to blame for being late! it was your Vancouver fog and the ancient street-car that delayed me tonight." He then sat down, his large dark eyes moving in quick appraisal of his audience.

The little man got to his feet, grinning pleasantly. He turned out to be the Chairman. "We are very fortunate to have upon our platform Roy Mitchell of Toronto—Mr. Roy Mitchell!" With a wave of his hand in the direction of the man from Toronto the Chairman sat down with an agility that astonished me. It seemed he had no intention of wasting any more time.

Roy Mitchell got to his feet as if time did not exist. He moved towards the friendly bookrest, placing his left arm upon it most naturally. "We'll have a chat about Karma," he said simply. The way he stood impressed me as one who had waited his

turn to take a series of shots in a shooting gallery. Sensitivity can be a burden or a blessing—this night it was the latter. Long before he commenced one felt his atmosphere (auras were not known to me then) and it was all embracing in its warm friendliness, so much so that one would not have been surprised had he addressed us all by our Christian names. It seemed as if he had known us all from childhood.

Here was mental strength clothed in the most unassuming personality I had ever sensed before. Roy Mitchell found not the slightest difficulty in expounding Theosophy. His lips painted word pictures of Karma so vividly that he had me sitting upon the edge of my chair in five small minutes. There was not the slightest pause in his expression of the subject, and, better still, no haste to get it over.

I see him now leaning upon that book-rest, sharing with the audience the rich experience of his personal contact with Karma in his early days as a newspaper reporter in Toronto. With the skill of an adept he brought in reincarnation and with its alter ego, Karma, he fitted both together in the very intricate jigsaw puzzle of physical life, bringing to our mental vision a truly understandable picture, coloured vividly with Karma and Reincarnation. The only movement from this satisfying exponent of Theosophy was a delightfully smooth movement of his right hand to emphasize a point and having the quick intuition of knowing that he had done so in no uncertain manner, he would give his black mane a sudden jerk backwards from his deep broad forehead.

At times when humour came to the fore (as it did with an unplanned ease) his lips would lift in a smile, and as if lips and eyes were connected in expression, the eyes would fill with humour and glisten like polished jet. There can be no such thing as time! That clock above him surely must have slipped its cogs to rob us of some never to be forgotten soul enjoyment.

Its hands told 9.30 p.m. In that hour the spiritual void in my consciousness, so rudely scooped out from me on the battle-fields of France, was replaced by a living, vital philosophy that I now know to be Theosophy. What is more, this master of the spoken word from Toronto had answered questions that orthodox Christianity had never dared to tackle, and to date has never attempted it, and still hints that death will answer them! As if death ever answered any riddles! Now came questioning time. I watched the expressions flit across his face as his lips moved whilst reading them silently before answering them outright. Here again he excelled. He didn't sip water and bring a pleasant evasive answer to questions that demanded a straight decisive answer.

With the same velvety pitched tone that revealed the artist, he answered those questions with rapier-like directness and it pleased the audience. 'If's', 'and's' and 'but's' seemed to him words fit only to be put upon a child's building blocks. He dealt with reality!

Question: (by a gentleman behind me) "I seem to experience nothing but misfortune. I certainly have not asked for it! How can I make such experiences tolerable?"

Roy Mitchell didn't look towards the questioner. He seemed to look above him into infinity. Another shake of the black mane, and then, "If you are walking a road liberally sprinkled with puddles and the soles of your boots are worn out, you are going to step into some of those puddles and get wet feet . . . right?" he asked his questioner.

"Yes, that is true."

"Then," continued Roy Mitchell, "there are some puddles on that road you will not step in. Those that you must step in will wet your feet."

"Yes, that's for sure."

"Well then," Roy Mitchell advised, "seeing you have no means of preventing your feet getting wet, why not let them experience the sensation caused by stepping in

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NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It is with deep regret that I record the sudden death on January 30th of Mr. Charles M. Hale, a member of the Executive of the Canadian Section and of the Executive of Toronto Lodge. In his passing the Toronto Lodge has lost one of its most faithful and active workers and the Canadian Executive has lost a deeply respected member whose calm presence and considered judgments contributed so materially to its deliberations.

Mr. and Mrs. Hale joined the Toronto Lodge in July, 1922 and from then on were both active in the Lodge work and in the Sunday morning Secret Doctrine Class, except during the period when they resided in New Liskeard in Northern Ontario where Mr. Hale was Secretary-Treasurer of Clark-Francis Limited. On Mr. Hale's retirement, they returned to Toronto and immediately resumed their former links with the Lodge. Mr. Hale was first elected to the Canadian Executive in 1951 when he was still at New Liskeard, and, despite the long drive from his home, he faithfully attended each meeting of the Board. He will be sorely missed.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Hale.

Died Jan. 1, 1962
I also regret to report the death of Mrs. Mary Dean of Edmonton Lodge, who was one of its older members. Mrs. Dean joined the Lodge in 1924 and was a faithful member until her health compelled her to discontinue her visits to the Lodge.

Our deep sympathy is extended to the members of Mrs. Dean's family and to the members of Edmonton Lodge who have lost a well loved friend.

A Congress of the Theosophical Society in Europe will be held from July 25 to August 3, 1962, at Swanwick, Derbyshire, England. Our international President, Mr. N. Sri Ram, has agreed to attend and other

speakers will be present from various countries.

The European Federation is very active, as is evident from both the name and contents of its excellent quarterly publication, *Theosophy in Action*. The Congress promises to be a friendly and mutually informative gathering of students from many nations—any of our readers who are planning an overseas holiday this summer will be sure of a welcome.

Immediately following the Congress, there will be an "International Week" at the Theosophical Centre at Huizen, Holland.

Another link with the past was broken with the death of Mr. Tom Henderson of Northern Ireland. Mr. Henderson was a nephew of the late A. E. S. Smythe and resided in Toronto for a number of years where he took an active part in the work of Toronto Lodge. He later returned to Ireland but continued to keep in touch with Theosophy in Canada through our magazine.

The officers of the Lodges are reminded that nominations for the office of General Secretary and for the seven members of the General Executive should be made during March and should be sent to Headquarters immediately so as to reach there before April 1.

I have very much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society the following new members: Mrs. William H. Stringer, Mrs. L. Hodder, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Fletcher, all of Toronto Lodge, and Mrs. Cecile Goodman, of Montreal Lodge.

—D.W.B.

"Blessed are the ears which catch the throbbings of the divine whisper within and take no heed of the whisperings of the world . . . They publish mysteries but Thou (Who art within) unlockest the meaning of the thing signified".

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TORONTO LODGE

Toronto Lodge held its usual Open House for members and friends on New Year's Day—a pleasant custom which has been continued since the early days of the Lodge.

On Sunday, January 7, members and friends were happy to welcome Mr. Dudley W. Barr to their platform for the first time since he was elected General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Canada. He gave a most interesting and instructive lecture entitled "The Ancient Wisdom in

China" after which a Tea in his honour was served in the Lotus Room.

The Rev. Harold O. Boon of Philadelphia will give a series of lectures from April 8 to April 15, inclusive.

(Miss) Jane Angus,
Corresponding Secretary

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

We are in receipt of a lengthy and very interesting letter from Mr. Fritz Schleifer, the General Secretary for the Theosophical Society in Austria, in which Mr. Schleifer requested us to forward his thanks to the Toronto Theosophical Society for the donation of a copy of *The Divine Plan* by Geoffrey Barborka, and in which letter he also gave news of the Austrian Section.

Mr. Schleifer writes: "It may be of some interest to you to hear some news about our own theosophical work and activity. Our library in Vienna might be mentioned. Before the invasion of the Nazis in Austria, our library contained about 4,000 books on theosophy, philosophy and occultism, but in 1938 all the books were confiscated and taken away. In 1945 we re-established the Austrian Section of the Theosophical Society. At the beginning of 1946 a number of our confiscated books were discovered in some castles in Czechoslovakia by some Austrian Socialists who were seeking their own confiscated libraries. Last year, we finished the re-organization of our library, and arranged to edit a catalogue of our German books. The latest enumeration of our books is as follows: we have 1460 in German; 189 in English, and 80 in French. I would like to mention that we received some very important books written by Dr. A. B. Kuhn, and Professor Ernest Wood, through the active interest and generosity of a member of Toronto Lodge. It was possible by the study of those books to amplify my theosophical knowledge, and raise the intellectual knowledge of our study groups, as well as to change old conceptions for a more classical attitude toward theosophy.

"The propagation of Theosophy in Europe is sometimes very difficult, especially as the Roman Catholic church has declared Theosophy and Rudolph Steiner's Anthroposophy as modern forms of the old heresy of Gnosis. Also, the Socialists in our country, the second of the two great political parties in Austria, have made a new concordate with the Roman Catholic church, so this part of our political coalition is not interested in "religious sects of all kind", in which Theosophy is included. So our meetings and public lectures cannot be announced by broadcasting stations. Our request for announcements of our program was rejected with the statement "there is no public interest in Theosophy".

"With the co-operation of my wife it was possible to inaugurate a yearly, theosophical summer school. In 1952 I was authorized by the Executive Committee of the Theosophical Society in Europe to start such a school for the German-speaking Theosophical members of Europe, and other countries who would like to attend these meetings. This year, the Summer School was held for the ninth time, in the small, but wonderfully situated Village of Pichl, in the Austrian Alps. The number of Theosophical visitors varied from 55 to 78. People came from Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and also from the Netherlands, England, Australia, and Israel. Each summer school started with a leading topic for the whole week. In the frame of the chosen topic, some five readers delivered their lectures, and in the evening hours, after supper, in four different discussion groups, the last topic of the morning was discussed. Each discussion group functioned separately, led by a chosen leader, but consulted by an older member of the executive committee of the Regional Summer School. All the visitors stayed in the large inn of the Village, or near it, in some private houses. Musical performances, warm friendships, and common excursions in the surrounding mountains made our Summer Schools very attractive, with international activities fost-

ering real brotherhood, co-operative study, and broad-minded understanding".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist

Dear Sir:

Charles M. Hale

Once again we see one of the old-timers retire; the passing of Mr. Hale leaves another gap in the ranks of those who have been a mainstay of the Toronto Lodge for so many years. Standing some six feet, seven inches, he was quickly noticed by visitors, and to members and friends was well-known for his work on the Toronto Executive, the Canadian Section Executive, and for his regular Sunday night lectures. He will be missed; surely we wish him well, and our thoughts go out to Mrs. Hale.

Yours truly,

Cedric Weaver

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The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist

Dear Sir:

I wish to take the liberty of commenting upon the article *Is Theosophy A Definite Philosophy?* in the January-February issue, and signed by W. E. Wilks of Orpheus Lodge.

Whether we like it or not, the Theosophical Society exists officially in order to promote its three declared objects and not to teach any doctrine—not even one made up of the writings of H.P.B. and the Mahatmas. This situation has its historic roots in the very early period of the history of the Society and is by no means a recent innovation. The founders could have easily made it the object of the Society to disseminate and uphold a definite philosophy, denoted Theosophy, and confined to a certain (limited) number of books. It happens, however, that they have done nothing of the sort. Instead, they laid down certain objects, which are now with very minor changes contained in the three objects of the Theo-

sophical Society. Let us ask ourselves, why have they done this?

It appears very likely that the founders established this policy, because they believed that the Ancient Wisdom could be most effectively served by a body composed of students rather than of believers. Students of what? Assuredly not of a definite, rigidly circumscribed ideology, euphemistically called a "definite philosophy"! Such a system cannot be *studied*, it must be *believed*. On the basis of this recognition I should like to suggest that we may with far greater justification regard Theosophy a field of study, an area of research and exploration. If we were to accept this premise we could rightly liken the Theosophical Society to any of a number of fine scientific societies, such as the Historical Society, the Geographic Society, the Society for Psychical Research, etc. The members of such societies are bound together by a common interest. On the other hand, churches and religious cults are composed of persons sharing a common creed. Which of these categories should we fit into?

Our wise founders organized a society in 1875, and not a religious or quasi-religious cult, based on revelations from whatever sources. It is astonishing that precisely those members who revere the memory of these founders most, would like to see the Society depart from the policy laid down by these great men and women. The contention that Theosophists must accept and promulgate a "definite philosophy" is a form of ecclesiasticism, which does not belong in the Theosophical Society. Ecclesiasticism does not always just consist in clerical titles and such; it may—and does—manifest as dogma and orthodoxy. The above named article deplors the presence of bishops and priests in Theosophical Lodges, and in the same breath clamors for more orthodoxy, more dogmas. I fear that this attitude is not likely to appeal to anyone who uses sound logic.

Assuredly the prolonged and unfortunate domination of the Society by the forces of

Neo-Theosophy was a most regrettable state of affairs. The most unfortunate feature of this situation was not merely that the Neo-Theosophical teachings diverged from those of H.P.B., but that the over-enthusiastic devotees of the Neo-Theosophical leaders made a "definite philosophy" out of the Besant-Leadbeater books, and tried to make everyone pay allegiance to this "party line". It is my humble suggestion that we have no need whatsoever for any "party line", Neo-Theosophical or otherwise. Theosophy can not be limited to the works of H.P.B., or Besant or anybody else any more than one can limit psychology to Freud, Adler or Jung, or biology to Darwin, Haeckel or Huxley. The sooner we realize this the better.

The founders did not give a "definite philosophy" to the Society. It is useless to quote the *Mahatma Letters* in this connection for that interesting work was never intended for public reading and is not an official document of the Society. What the founders gave us were the *three declared objects of the Society*; these and these alone the members of the Theosophical Society had to make their own, ever since 1875. These fine objects served the cause of wisdom well for 87 years, without a "definite philosophy."

It is undoubtedly true that in her works, H.P.B. claimed that she was presenting to the world a redeclaration of the Ageless Wisdom and that in some manner the Theosophical Society was to serve as a vehicle for this newly declared Wisdom. But she felt that a body of non-dogmatic "fearless investigators", not bound by any doctrine would make the best Theosophists. She opened the journals of the Society and the membership in the same to persons of all views and persuasions. She felt that the objects of the Society were sufficient; why should we presume to improve on the broad platform she and her colleagues created, by narrowing it down into the mould of a definite philosophy?

Yes, let us proceed back to Blavatsky; not to a dogmatic belief in her words—

which she never asked for—but to her liberal, fearless, unfettered spirit, which conceived of a Society of bold, adventurous students, united by the bond of a common interest in things Theosophical and not by any so-called definite philosophy!

Sincerely yours,
Stephan A. Hoeller

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The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist
Dear Sir:

In your Jan.-Feb. issue the article by Dr. Wilks, Orphes Lodge, *Is Theosophy A Definite Philosophy?* is to be noted for the question is vital to the idea and ideal for which Theosophy stands. Dr. Wilks affirms that the Theosophical Society does have a definite teaching.

I, for one, realize this to be true as Madame H. P. Blavatsky laid down Three Fundamental Propositions in the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*:

1. “. . . there is One Absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned Being . . . It is ‘Be-ness’ rather than Being, Sat in Sanskrit, and is beyond all thought or speculation.”

2. “The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically ‘the playground of numberless Universes . . .’” It asserts periodicity.

3. “The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter itself being an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul . . . through the Cycle of Incarnation . . .”

These three postulates do give Theosophy a definite philosophy.

To reach the masses one must stress the basic fact that the Theosophical Society stands as a liberating force to release the true nature of humanity as it will express itself when the full force of these propositions is recognized.

In our day and age the recognition of the dynamism of the Universe is increasing. These three propositions should be seen as

the dawning light of a new era that can dispel the darkness of the embodied dogmas that have cleft mankind into thousands of contending sects.

The separate human beings that live on this planet lose their individual importance when seen as humanity. It is only as a united group that the human family will be felt as a positive force to achieve a constructive relationship to contribute its part to the solar system as a whole.

Doctors note that boredom, unhappiness, no goals, and being nobody are the most common psychological causes of distress and fatigue. This fits the entity humanity; it needs new vision to cohere in achieving strength and power to become an evolutionary force to transform the planet and add to our solar system a new power that will aid in relationships internal and external.

The greatest blessing will come to humanity and consolidate it into a universal force to achieve its goal when the basis of relationship is known factually and fundamentally as expressed in the Three Propositions. The emphasizing of these will tend to enlighten people everywhere, weld into a unity the various factions of our day and help towards the glorious future in store for an enlightened humanity. A new attitude will be attained when life is viewed from the fundamental Propositions, and the Theosophical Society will become the dynamic unit in society which it should be to achieve its original goal.

Yours very truly,
J. M. Poulin

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The Editor
The Canadian Theosophist
Dear Sir:

With reference to the article by W. E. Wilks in the January/February, 1962, issue of your journal, I wish members would not make sweeping statements which are not strictly accurate, and give a completely wrong impression. I refer to his remarks about H.P.B.'s books, to which he says

"members were refused access". He also says, "Her books . . . practically disappeared from T.S. Lodges".

This has certainly never been the case in England. During the early years of my 42 years of membership it was quite a regular feature for Lodges in this country to include a Secret Doctrine Class. In 1949, when I travelled across Canada, I was greeted by members in the different Lodges with the statement "Of course you in England do not study *The Secret Doctrine*." In fact some members informed me that it was forbidden. On my return to England I went to the trouble of collecting a large number of Lodge syllabuses, on each of which there was included reference to a Secret Doctrine Class, and I sent these to the General Secretary, Col. Thomson, who expressed surprise but pleasure that H.P.B.'s works were being studied in England.

Yours fraternally,
General Secretary, T.S. in England
V. W. Slater,

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist
Dear Sir:

Regarding the book *Tibet Is My Country* the Autobiography of Thubten Norbu, brother of the Dalai Lama, reviewed in C.T. for Jan.-Feb., 1962, the following excerpts from the Theosophical Glossary compiled by H. P. Blavatsky should be of interest to Theosophists:

"Panchen Rimboche, literally "The Great Ocean, or Teacher of Wisdom" the Title of the Tashu Lama at Tchigadze.

De jura the Tesu Lama is second after the Dalai Lama, *de facto* he is higher. While the former (Dalai Lamas) are addressed as "Jewel of Majesty", the latter enjoy a far higher title, namely "Jewel of *Wisdom*" as they are higher initiates . . .

The Panchen Lama is an Avatar of Tsong-kha-pa "A famous Tibetan Reformer of the 14th century, who introduced a purified Buddhism into his coun-

try. He was a great Adept, who, being unable to witness any longer the desecration of Buddhist philosophy by the false priests who made it a marketable commodity, put a forcible stop thereto by a timely revolution and the exile of 40,000 sham monks and lamas from the country."

H.P.B. then goes on to say "Since the reform produced by Tsong-kha-pa many abuses have again crept into the *theocracy* of the land."

As a disciple of Tsong-kha-pa the Panchen Lama must support such much needed reforms today, viz. the removal of sham lamas from the monasteries and doing away with such superstitions as prayer-wheels, rags of cloth on bushes, and so on—all of which the Dalai Lama permitted to flourish in his time.

It is the Panchen Lama (Jewel of Wisdom) who has remained with his people in Tibet, while the Dalai Lama departed with his very considerable worldly goods to the safety of India.

Sincerely,
E. K. Middleton

ROY MITCHELL

(Continued from page 10)

the puddles, and you leave off living in your boots along with your feet! Remember, you—the real you—are only wearing both the feet and the boots. May I suggest to you a better way than that even? Use your mental body. Walk the road in that, and wait until your physical body catches up with *you*."

From the audience there came soft modulated laughter in which the questioner joined.

The next question savoured of escapism.

Question: "Is Karma immutable? Or can it be modified by—by another?"

My plantation manager friend's back suddenly straightened. He looked towards Roy Mitchell with what I thought was unwarranted intensity. Karma had not favoured him! The man from Toronto clasp-

ed both hands loosely upon the book rest and looked up to the ceiling briefly before he again swept the rows of eager seekers with his impeturable, magnetic gaze.

"Let me tell you of something that happened during my newspaper reporting days," he commenced. "I was in the saloon bar of one of our Toronto hotels . . ." (A lady in the front row gasped loudly at this admission of tampering with virtue) It brought a burst of laughter from the audience, in which the man from Toronto joined.

"I was in the saloon bar, as I have said," recommenced the speaker, with all the deviltry of the god Pan dancing in his eyes, "when a very unconcerned man sauntered up to the bar and ordered a whiskey and soda. His demeanor was one that gave the impression that 'God was in his heaven—all was well with the world'. He interested me as a newspaper reporter; I wondered how he had found such peace—in Toronto! I watched him raise the glass to his lips, then quickly set it down upon the bar and clasp both hands tightly together, so that the knuckles whitened with the pressure, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name'—It came from his lips in an earnest entreaty," Roy Mitchell said. (I wish he had spoken the whole prayer, his voice moved over the words like rich purple velvet.) "He had just finished the last words of the Lord's prayer when the saloon door burst apart as if struck by a thunderbolt. A dishevelled man rushed towards the bar and plunged a dagger thrice in the back of our friend who never had the slightest indication of his physical danger. It all happened so quickly no one could intervene. Down on my knees beside the stricken man I became 'reporter' whilst aid arrived."

"Why did you suddenly recite the Lord's Prayer?" I asked, knowing full well he had not the slightest knowledge of what awaited him."

"He motioned my head still lower. With his lips close to my ear he said, 'I really do not know . . . something . . . some irresistible voice within me commanded,

"Say the Lord's Prayer, quickly!" That . . . that was . . . was all'."

"His head sunk lower upon his chest. Outside upon the sidewalk as I mentally arranged my copy, came his hurried words 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive . . .'"

The speaker was now looking out from the lodge room and down the long corridor.

"Evade Karma . . . outwit eternal justice?" he asked, and now his dark eyes flashed. "Impossible! Utterly impossible! No matter who tells you this—tell him he lies! If winter displeases you can Nature be cajoled into altering her seasons and giving two summers to one winter?"

"Do you believe in God?" a feminine voice asked quickly.

"Most assuredly," the speaker replied, "only spell the word right. Put back the 'o' that the theologians have taken out to delude the inexperienced—and make it 'Good'. All Theosophists believe in Good."

"Could you tell me . . ."

The little chairman functioned at last. He raised a pointed index finger and said in a wobbly falsetto, "I declare this meeting ended." My sense of humour almost took the bit between its teeth.

No! I had no need to write a question. I had listened to a lecture upon Karma and Reincarnation by a Theosophist who knew his subject—and Theosophy—and knew it well! No half-convinced student filling in the blank spaces in his mind by using opinions of well-known Theosophists long gone across the Styx. No reference to books one needed to read. No "hinted at" meaning in mid-air, but brought down to earth and clothed in understanding.

I have a habit of closing my eyes at intervals when listening is of great importance. The last question was answered, then he again sent that look of infinity over his highly satisfied audience, resting his gaze upon me he said, "So the best we can hope to do is to enlighten some and talk others to sleep." I bided my time until my friend introduced me to Roy Mitchell. "Did I talk

you to sleep?" he asked. I moved my fingers to see if they were still intact after his handshake. "No," I said, "you awakened me out of a five year trance," and added truthfully, "I always close my eyes when intense interest seizes me. I shall always be eternally in your debt." He waved that eloquent right hand loosely towards the platform now empty, "That's where you can get out of my debt," he said, "by the same means as you admit contacting it." "This is the first time he ever attended a Theosophical lecture, Roy," my friend said, proud of the result that the lecture had had upon me.

How that man from Toronto could look through one! I met his gaze as his eyes searched mine and I felt the intensity of the mind that directed them. His lips lifted, then the smile broadened at the thought that prompted it. "Yes—probably in this

incarnation—but he was no slouch in his last," he said with conviction, then moved on to where some ladies awaited him.

We are glad to publish Mr. Charles Carter's memories of Roy Mitchell, whose sudden death in 1944 removed one of Canada's most capable and outstanding exponents of Theosophy. Mr. Mitchell contributed many articles to the Magazine; visited all the Canadian Lodges and lectured frequently in Toronto, Hamilton and London Lodges. His lectures in Canada, and later in New York, attracted many serious students. His rare genius as a teacher found its best expression with groups and with individuals and here his exceptional intuitional and intellectual capacities, and his warm and sympathetic nature, evoked deep respect and created ties of enduring friendship.

Editor

SOME WORDS ON DAILY LIFE

(Written by a Master of Wisdom)

"It is divine philosophy alone, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with nature, which, by revealing the fundamental truths that lie hidden under the objects of sense and perception, can promote a spirit of unity and harmony in spite of the great diversities of conflicting creeds. Theosophy, therefore, expects and demands from the Fellows of the Society a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings, ungrudging mutual help in the search for truths in every department of nature—moral and physical. And this ethical standard must be unflinchingly applied to daily life.

"Theosophy should not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics, epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy *must be made practical*; and it has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless digressions, in the sense of desultory orations and fine talk. Let every Theosophist only do his duty,

that which he can and ought to do, and very soon the sum of human misery, within and around the areas of every Branch of your Society, will be found visibly diminished. Forget SELF in working for others—and the task will become an easy and a light one for you . . .

"Do not set your pride in the appreciation and acknowledgement of that work by others. Why should any member of the Theosophical Society, striving to become a Theosophist, put any value upon his neighbours' good or bad opinion of himself and his work, so long as he himself knows it to be useful and beneficent to other people? Human praise and enthusiasm are short-lived at best; the laugh of the scoffer and the condemnation of the indifferent looker-on are sure to follow, and generally to outweigh the admiring praise of the friendly. Do not despise the opinion of the world, nor provoke it uselessly to unjust criticism. Remain rather as indifferent to the abuse

as to the praise of those who can never know you as you really are, and who ought, therefore, to find you unmoved by either, and ever placing the approval or condemnation of your own *Inner Self* higher than that of the multitudes.

“Those of you who would know yourselves in the spirit of truth, learn to live alone even amidst the great crowds which may sometimes surround you. Seek communion and intercourse only with the God within your own soul; heed only the praise or blame of that deity which can never be separated from *your true self, as it is verily that God itself*: called the Higher Consciousness. Put without delay your good intentions into practice, never leaving a single one to remain only an intention—expecting, meanwhile, neither reward nor even acknowledgement for the good you may have done. Reward and acknowledgement are in yourself and inseparable from you, as it is your Inner Self alone which can appreciate them at their true degree and value. For each one of you contains within the precincts of his inner tabernacle the Supreme Court—prosecutor, defence, jury and judge—whose sentence is the only one without appeal; since none can know you better than you do yourself, when once you have learned to judge that Self by the never wavering light of the inner divinity—your higher Consciousness. Let, therefore, the masses, which can never know your true selves, condemn your outer selves according to their own false lights . . .

“The majority of the public Areopagus is generally composed of self - appointed judges, who have never made a permanent deity of any idol save their own personalities—their lower selves; for those who try in their walk of life, to follow their *inner light* will never be found judging, far less condemning, those weaker than themselves. What does it matter then, whether the former condemn or praise, whether they humble you or exalt you on a pinnacle? They will never comprehend you one way or the other. They may make an idol of you, so

long as they imagine you a faithful mirror of themselves on the pedestal or altar which they have reared for you, and while you amuse or benefit them. You cannot expect to be anything for them but a temporary *fetish*, succeeding another fetish just overthrown, and followed in your turn by another idol. Let, therefore, those who have created that idol destroy it whenever they like, casting it down with as little cause as they had for setting it up. Your Western Society can no more live without its Khalif of an hour than it can worship one for any longer period; and whenever it breaks an idol and then besmears it with mud, it is not the model, but the disfigured image created by its own foul fancy and which it has endowed with its own vices, that Society dethrones and breaks.

“Theosophy can only find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and brotherly love. Its Society, as a body, has a task before it which, unless performed with the utmost discretion, will cause the world of the indifferent and the selfish to rise up in arms against it. Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness, hidden under the mantle of hypocrisy. It has to throw all the light it can from the torch of Truth, with which its servants are entrusted. It must do this without fear or hesitation, dreading neither reproof nor condemnation. Theosophy, through its mouthpiece, the Society, has to tell the TRUTH to the very face of LIE; to beard the tiger in its den, without any thought or fear of evil consequences, and to set at defiance calumny and threats. *As an Association*, it has not only the right, but the duty to uncloak vice and do its best to redress wrongs, whether through the voice of its chosen lecturers or the printed word of its journals and publications—making its accusations, however, as impersonal as possible. But its Fellows, or Members, have *individually* no such right. Its followers have, first of all, to set the example of a

firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality, before they obtain the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic unity and singleness of purpose in other associations or individuals. No Theosophist should blame a brother, whether within or outside of the association; neither may he throw a slur upon another's actions or denounce him, lest he himself lose the right to be considered a Theosophist. For, as such, he has to turn away his gaze from the imperfections of his neighbour, and centre rather his attention upon his own shortcomings, in order to correct them and become wiser. Let him not show the disparity between claim and action in another, but, whether in the case of a brother, a neighbour, or simply a fellow man, let him rather ever help one weaker than himself on the arduous wilk of life.

"The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission are, first, the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness.

"Such is the common work placed before all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task, and will require strenuous and persevering exertion; but it must lead you insensibly to progress, and leave you no room for any selfish aspirations outside the limits traced . . . Do not indulge personally in unbrotherly comparison between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbours or brothers. In the fields of Theosophy *none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him.* Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to Karma, and can be dealt with justly by that all-seeing LAW alone.

Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathising individual may help you magnetically . . . You are the free volunteer workers on the fields of Truth, and as such must leave no obstruction on the paths leading to that field.

"The degree of success or failure are the landmarks the masters have to follow, as they will constitute the barriers placed with your own hands between yourselves and those whom you have asked to be your teachers. The nearer your approach to the goal contemplated—the shorter the distance between the student and the Master."

From *Lucifer* Jan. 1888

BOOK REVIEW

(by Colonel J. M. Prentice, Sydney, Australia)

The First Five Lives Of Annie Besant, by Arthur H. Nethercot. Pub. by Rupert Hart-Davis, London 1961. pp. 435. 42/—.

This is a most difficult book to review. It is large and long; it is incomplete;—a second volume is promised for next year. It has a most misleading title: the term 'Lives' would be better expressed as 'Phases'. It will appeal to two quite opposed types of reader—one interested in the great social changes of the second half of the 19th Century; and one concerned only with the Theosophical career of Mrs. Besant.

The scholarship is more than adequate; the research work involved is meticulous, one might say amazing; no fact or reference, however obscure or remote, has been overlooked. Although not so stated, the writer appears to be a Professor at Northwestern University. Some eight years was devoted to the research, and the book suggests a thesis for a Ph.D. degree, lacking in both grace and charm. But it will remain as a definitive biography of Annie Besant, who emerges even more extraordinary than we had thought her, as well as a social history of a period that now seems as remote as the Pelopnesian War. The great social

changes, fought for with so much bitterness, sweat and tears, have all been achieved, but the Utopia which they foreshadowed is farther off than ever. One wonders if, in this era of the Welfare State, there is any interest in the misery, poverty and degradation which preceded it. Moreover there are two world wars to consume our attention and hold our interest.

The first five 'Lives' (and the title suggests some exposition of Reincarnation that is completely misleading) take us up to the period where Mrs. Besant, by this time a Theosophist, is about to set out to conquer India with her eloquence. The Lives are (1) the Christian Life; (2) The Athiest Mother; (3) The Martyr of Science; (4) The Socialist Labour Agitator and (5) The Chela of the Mahatmas. This latter section acts as a hinge between this volume and its successor. To Theosophical students it is the most interesting. I admit that I read it first, before going back to the start and the consideration of the earlier start.

This 'Life' is fascinating. It gives a picture of the Theosophical set-up in London that has never before been attempted. Pen pictures, as well as a splendid collection of photographs, introduce us to a menage which is quite unique. Madame Blavatsky remains rather sketchily in the background, but it is not her biography that is being written. To Adyar Theosophists of my generation this 'Life' is an appetiser for the four Indian 'Lives' to come. (In passing, it may be said that a lack of time and money prevented the author from pursuing his researches in Australia, to his expressed regret, as it was here that psychic pretensions and so on were reduced to ruins and a pseudo-occultism was stripped to its revolting nakedness. Only talks with those who still remain could provide a complete picture; ordinary research, which served so well in the eariler 'Lives' will not serve. Believe me, I speak as one who knows!

From this first volume the picture of Mrs. Besant which emerges completely confirms

what has been written elsewhere, but never in such complete and pitiless form. Her complete lack of sense of humour; her inability to think an original thought, which was concealed by her matchless ability to clothe other men's thoughts in winged words of unmatched eloquence; her inability to hear the ideas which she had espoused for the time being debated or attacked without immediately construing it into a personal attack which demanded and obtained from her a vituperation equally unmatched. Yet when once she had abandoned such ideas she never attempted to make any reparation. Behind every change of outlook was some individual, usually a man, who became a new fountain of inspiration, to the utter abandonment of everything that had gone before . . . the one outstanding example in reverse was Madame Blavatsky, the one feminine influence. Unfortunately she died some eighteen months after their first meeting and this left Annie only W. Q. Judge to fall back on. Then came her next Guru, Gayanandra Nath Chakravarti (Nethercot leaves out his middle name) whose appearance brings the first volume to a close. There is only one small error which I seem to recognize—Nethercot says that Mr. C. W. Leadbeater had a bed-room-study at 19 Avenue Road. My recollection is that he never spent any time in association with Mrs. Besant's household (for most of this period he was living with the Sinnetts in the capacity of tutor to their son Dennis, whose early death was a tragedy.) I believe that in the period from 1889, when he returned to London, and 1891, when she died, he saw Mme. Blavatsky twice only. Nethercot makes two references to the American lady who became Mrs. Archibald Keightley, without mentioning her name. She was Mrs. Julia Campbell Ver-Planck, but she wrote also under the pen name of "Jasper Niemand", and the identity of this writer was one of the best kept secrets for many years.

There are many fascinating things which one would like to refer to, but time and

space forbid. The book is one which will remain long in the memory of those who have the opportunity of reading it. Names long forgotten are recalled; political causes and issues are resurrected like articulated skeletons in a furious but futile *Danse Macabre*. Mrs. Besant is herself well nigh forgotten. Excepting to a few faithful disciples, she means nothing to a world which is sorely in need for some true spiritual nutriment. Her beauty, her charm, above all her eloquence, which I experienced for the first time as long ago as 1908, are wind-sifted dust from a funeral pyre in India, which, like so many other things, she never really understood. To me this book has been a retrospective glance into a past in which I had a small part to play, but which is now no longer of any consequence. They were great days, full of heroic enthusiasms. We no longer count in this strange new world; we linger on, a world in which we seem to have no part.

But we were what we were,
 And being so,
 It pleases us to stare
 At the far show
 Of unbelievable things and shapes that flit
 In our own likeness on the edge of it!

—Kipling

From *The Bulletin*, Dec. 1961, Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists.

EAST AFRICAN CONVENTION

The following letter from Mr. R. H. Patel, General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in East Africa, will be of interest to our readers. Africa has three active Branches of the Theosophical Society; the Theosophical Society of Southern Africa was formed in 1909, the Society in East Africa was established in 1947, and in 1956 a Federation of Lodges in West Africa was formed.

The problems arising from the momen-

tous changes now taking place in the political, economic and social life of Africa will, as Mr. Patel says, need ingenuity, compassion and wisdom to solve. Let us hope that the influence of Theosophical attitudes radiating from the triangle of the three Theosophical centres there, East, West and South, will be significant during the critical transitional period.

Dear Brother,

I am happy to inform you that our 12th Convention will be held at Zanzibar during the Easter Holidays beginning from 20th April to 23rd April 1962. Zanzibar is a beautiful, emerald-green island in the Indian Ocean, noted for its clove industry. It is the capital of the Protectorate Government of the Sultan of Zanzibar. All these East African territories are on the very threshold of independence; Tanganyika gained it in December 1961; Uganda is gaining it in October this year, Kenya and Zanzibar may have it next year. These territories are thus passing through a critical period in their development; for even Independence brings in its train vast and complex problems which need all the ingenuity, compassion and wisdom of man to solve. Moreover, these territories are inhabited by not only the indigenous African races, but also other races of Europeans, Asian and Indian origin. It is in the context of these conditions that the Theosophical Society in East Africa hopes to foster the spirit of brotherliness, friendliness and tolerance among all and will endeavour to strike this note of the hour at our coming Convention.

We extend to you and all members of your Section our cordial invitation to attend this convention and share our feelings of togetherness . . .

With love and greetings,

Faternally yours,

R. H. Patel,

General Secretary,

Theosophical Society in East Africa

Reincarnation, An East-West Anthology, which was reviewed in our Jan.-Feb. 1962, issue, has attracted wide-spread interest; the reviews have all been most favourable. Here are some comments from authors, critics, clergymen and other scholars:

Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Poling, Marble Collegiate Church, New York; Editor of *The Christian Herald*; President, World's Christian Endeavor Union: "In its field, this anthology is the most complete and exciting that has ever come to my desk. The arrangement is particularly effective."

Dr. C. J. Ducasse, Emeritus Chairman, Dept. Philosophy, Brown University, Past President, American Philosophical Association: "An excellent piece of work, informative, judicious, and likely to be of great interest to any person who has given thought to the possibility of a life after death, but who is not content either with the sonorous phrases heard at funeral services, or with the accounts, nebulous when not unbelievably naive, offered by orthodox tradition concerning the nature of a future life."

Dr. Bruno Walter, Symphonic Conductor, and Author: "The content of this most valuable and interesting anthology volume will be an inexhaustible source of tuition and satisfaction for me."

Huston Smith, author *The Religions of Man*, Professor of Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "I am glad to know of this book. I feel confident I shall be referring students to it in the years to come."

W. C. Alvarez, M.D., Emeritus Member of Mayo Clinic: "I think it is marvelous the tremendous amount of research you have done on this beautiful book. I imagine you have been at it for a lifetime. I shall be reading through it with great pleasure."

Dr. Pitirim A. Sorokin, Director, Research Center in Creative Altruism, Harvard University: "It gives a very good selection of the opinions of eminent philosophers, religious leaders, scientists,, writers, and others about this problem. So far as I know, it is a unique volume of this sort."

Dr. S. Ralph Harlow, Congregationalist Minister, Author *A Life After Death*: "It is excellent, I am recommending it to others."

Rabbi Emanuel Feldman, reviewing the book in the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution*: "This anthology brings home to us the ideas of the Upanishads and James Jones, of the Cabbala and Albert Einstein, of Zoroaster and Robert Frost. In an age in which shoddy printing is the norm, these publishers have produced a book which is a joy to behold."

Dr. Gina Cerminara, Psychologist, author of *Many Mansions*, and *The World Within*: "There have been a few other anthologies on reincarnationist thought, but in my judgment none is as timely, as comprehensive, and as provocative as this one. I find something exciting on every page. Even a skeptic would be startled, I should think by the tremendous extent of scientific and philosophic thought in favor of this ancient concept. It makes a real contribution to our times."

Orders for this book may be sent direct to Stanweather Co., 255 Seventh Ave., New York 1, N.Y. Price, Cloth, \$6.50 per copy.

It is also available in Canada through Mr. John Gaunt, Book Steward,, The Toronto Theosophical Society, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5; price \$6.50, post-paid.

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