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MAY THE EIGHTH

WHITE LOTUS DAY

THE CHALLENGE

It is now 72 years since H.P.B. finally laid aside the worn out robes of her physical body. Each passing year but serves to emphasize the extraordinary nature of her genius, for of the voluminous 19th century writings in religion, philosophy and science, hers alone remain as fresh and vital today as when first released to a sceptical world.

Once again, on White Lotus Day, the anniversary of her departure, her students pause to remember her life and work, silently acknowledging their share of the rich legacy she left for the following generations. As always, their feelings will be those of gratitude and love. The idolization posthumously accorded other spiritual teachers is as repugnant to H.P.B.'s students as it would have been to her; indeed, one might well wonder if she did not act deliberately to discourage her own sanctification by future Theosophists.

Though not to be looked up to as a saint, yet will she continue to be respected as a beloved teacher and guide. *But this is not enough.* As natural as the devotion may be, it is for naught unless accompanied by the pupil's determination to carry on her work; gratitude is worthless unless expressed in proper deeds. Let us remember that action is the key to the success of any movement; H.P.B.'s original contribution to the Theosophical cause was so fully charged with dynamic power that its attenuation is even yet not perceptible.

It is obvious that there are several spheres

in which activity is called for at the present time. Each presents a challenge of sorts which must be met. On White Lotus Day the most urgent challenge would seem to be that which calls *all* Theosophists (of whatever Society or none) to the defence and preservation—to say nothing of perpetuation—of Madame Blavatsky's mission.

That there is a need for militancy is to be regretted, but it cannot be ignored. From its very beginning the Theosophical Movement has suffered from a continuous barrage of defamation, most of which has been aimed directly at H.P.B. Without those who have taken up the cudgels of resistance and gladly joined the fight to uphold her name and integrity, Theosophy would now be dormant between the covers of its books in second-hand bookstores.

The call to arms is still being made and can only be rejected at the cost of wasting generations of prodigious effort to safeguard Theosophy for the future. There is no conscription. There is no reward. There is no ally to call upon for help. The challenge first voiced in the 19th century echoes now in the "Space Age". It is directed to all who appreciate the original Theosophical message, and who wish to read the succeeding chapters thereof.

The purposes of the founders must be protected and maintained. The ultimate success of that for which H.P.B. worked so hard to lay the foundations is still threatened. This is the challenge.

SOME EARLY CANADIAN LODGES

(Continued from Vol. 43 Page 141)

Toronto Lodge

The Toronto Theosophical Society was the first Theosophical Lodge established in Canada, its charter being dated Feb. 25, 1891, one of the last charters signed by H. P. Blavatsky before her death on May 8 of that year. The Lodge was well organized from its beginning and fortunately its Minutes have been preserved from the first official meeting held at the residence of Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, one of the charter members. The preliminary meetings prior to the charter were held at the home of her mother, Dr. Emily Howard Stowe at 119 Church St. The early history of the Lodge is especially interesting as it includes the soul-searching crisis arising from the schism of 1895 which split the Lodge down the middle and resulted in the formation of another Lodge, the Beaver Lodge, which was composed of those members who decided to follow Mr. Judge.

Mr. A. E. S. Smythe, our former General Secretary and Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist* from 1920 to 1947 was the moving spirit in Toronto Lodge. As a young man of 26 Mr. Smythe began to study Theosophy in Edinburgh in 1887. He came to Canada in the summer of 1889 and after a few weeks in Ottawa, was transferred to Toronto in September of that year and immediately began Theosophical propaganda, at first through letters to the newspapers and afterwards with a small group of persons who had been attracted through his letters. In 1890 it was decided to form a society and an application for a charter was made through Mr. Wm. Q. Judge, General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America whom Mr. Smythe had met on the voyage to Canada. The Charter Members were, Dr. Emily Howard Stowe, the first woman doctor to practise in Canada; her daughter, Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, the first woman to be graduated with a medical degree in Canada; Mrs. Mary E. D. Mac-

pherson, a Socialist and a prominent worker in social matters; Mr. Algernon H. Blackwood who subsequently became well-known as a writer of mystical and occult tales, and Mr. A. E. S. Smythe.

A word about two of the founders; Dr. Stowe was one of the most influential women of her time in Canada. Born of Quaker stock in Western Ontario she received a good education, and after teaching school for some time, she applied for admission to the medical course of the University of Toronto only to be told that "the doors of the University are not open to women". Rebuffed in her native land, Mrs. Stowe did not abandon her aim, but went to the New York Medical College for Women from which she was graduated with a medical degree. In 1868 she established a practice in Toronto, thus becoming Canada's first practising woman doctor, but the prejudice against women in the profession was so strong that she did not receive her licence until 1880. In her Quaker background the equality of women with men had been an accepted principle and Dr. Stowe pioneered a movement for the removal of the prevailing prejudice and discrimination. She was an eloquent speaker and was in demand as a lecturer in Toronto and elsewhere in Ontario. In 1877 she became the first President of the Toronto Women's Literary Club, an organization whose declared object was to promote free exchange of thought on the education of women, but whose real aim was to achieve the enfranchisement of women. So much interest in the subject was aroused that in 1883 the Toronto Women's Suffrage Club was established, Dr. Stowe being one of its officers.

Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, the brilliant daughter of a noted mother, entered the School of Medicine affiliated with Victoria University of Cobourg, Ontario and received her medical degree in 1883, the first woman to graduate in medicine from a Can-

adian University. She, too, was deeply interested in establishing equal suffrage for women. In 1883 as an indirect result of the activities of the Suffrage Club, a Medical College for Women was organized in Toronto, the success of Dr. Stowe Gullen in obtaining her degree being one of the factors moving the Club members in this activity. Dr. Gullen was appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy in the new college which was amalgamated with the University of Toronto in 1906 at which time Dr. Gullen was Professor of Paediatrics. (Much of the above material has been gathered from a lengthy and informative article by Miss Joanne E. Thompson on Dr. Emily Howard Stowe and Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen which appeared in the Dec. 1962 issue of *Ontario History*, the official organ of the Ontario Historical Society.)

When Mr. Smythe introduced Theosophy in 1889 both these talented and devoted women were attracted by the first Object of the Society, the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, and their own background made them sympathetic towards its attitude of tolerance for all religious beliefs and the insight it afforded into the esoteric teachings lying behind the outer forms of religion. Both were earnest students in the young Lodge and many of the weekly meetings were held in their homes.

The new Lodge grew steadily and during its first year about a dozen members were added. One of these was Mr. George A. Reid, an artist, who later became President of the Ontario College of Art. It was at a meeting held on May 12, 1891 at his studio in the old Yonge St. Arcade that the death of Madame Blavatsky was announced; an appropriate resolution of sorrow and condolence was passed and copies were sent to headquarters at Adyar, New York and London.

On March 1, 1892 a circular letter was received from Mr. Judge announcing Col. Olcott's resignation from the Presidency and requesting nominations for the position.

Mrs. Besant was nominated on a motion which went on to say, "While it was the unanimous opinion of all present that Mr. Judge was best fitted for the work, it was also felt that his removal to India consequent upon his nomination to the Presidency would be too serious for the movement in America. India was better able to look after itself; hence Mrs. Besant's nomination." The Lodge had its knuckles rapped by Mr. Fullerton (Mr. Judge's assistant) for passing this resolution and at the next meeting the matter was reconsidered and Mr. Judge nominated, but only after strong objection by one member who declared that "Mr. Fullerton had overstepped his bounds in expressing to us (his unofficial) annoyance at our nomination and that such bias should not be exercised on the Branches."

In June 1892 two new members, both of whom were destined to play important roles in the life of the Lodge, were admitted, Mr. Samuel L. Beckett and Mr. F. E. Titus. Mr. Beckett became President in 1894 and was the leader of the Secret Doctrine Class which was formed on March 7 of that year; he continued to conduct the class until his death.

Mrs. Besant visited Toronto on September 20, 1893 and spoke to a large audience in the old Shaftesbury Hall. Her visit resulted in larger attendance at the Lodge meetings but apparently only a few became members. However, in view of the increased interest, the Lodge decided to rent its own quarters at 365 Spadina Ave. and the meetings in members' homes were discontinued.

The Lamp, a sixteen page monthly Theosophical magazine was started in August 1894 under the editorship of Mr. A. E. S. Smythe. This venture was approved by the Lodge but apparently was financed privately as there is no reference to its cost in the Treasurer's reports. Five thousand copies of each issue were printed and these were distributed by the members by hand throughout sections of Toronto, one section per issue. The magazine stirred up more interest, but, again, only a slight increase

in membership was reported. *The Lamp* ran from August 1894 to January 1897 when Mr. Smythe left Toronto but was revived on his return in September 1899 and ran until February 1900, when Mr. Smythe was again absent for several years.

Enquiries about Theosophy were received from Ottawa, Oshawa, Hamilton and other centres and in January 1895 it was noted that following a lecture given by Mr. Titus in Hamilton, "in the near future we might expect a branch of the T.S. in that city," but, alas, it was not until many years later that the first Lodge was established there. In Feb. 1895 "a successful public meeting was held in Ottawa."

Clarke Thurston, Claude Falls Wright, Mrs. Alice Cleather and other prominent speakers visited Toronto and helped to arouse interest in Theosophy.

Finances were always at a low ebb; in those early days a five cent piece was "big money" on the collection plate, but expenses were always met even though the Treasurer could report only say, \$2.57 in General Funds and 81 cents in Library funds. The picture that one forms in reading the early records is that of a small, but very earnest, enthusiastic and devoted group of students to whom Theosophy was a sacred charge and in whose light they "lived, moved and had their being".

But, unfortunately, the work in Toronto, as elsewhere, suffered disastrously because of the schism of 1895. Through 1894 and early 1895 the Minutes record references to the growing tension between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge, but the members seem to have read of the charges and counter-charges with sorrow and with the hope that the storm would blow itself out. Circular letters from Mr. Judge, "Official Directives" from Colonel Olcott, letters from Mrs. Besant, Bertram Keightley, G. R. S. Mead, Dr. J. D. Buck and others "were read, discussed and ordered filed" and the members do not appear to have become emotionally involved in the controversy.

The matter came to a head at the Boston Convention held on April 28 and 29, 1895

which Mr. Smythe attended as delegate from Toronto Lodge. Previously a circular had been received from Dr. Buck regarding "taking action at the Convention to secure unity in the Theosophical Society throughout the several Sections". After considering this circular and other material, the Toronto Lodge passed the following resolution at a meeting on April 24, 1895;

1. "That this Branch is of the opinion that a revision of the Constitution of the Society in the direction of decentralization of power may be beneficial to the Theosophical movement.
2. That in any such revision, however, the First Object of the Society should be kept clearly in view and no change should be made which will in the least interfere with that Object.
3. That in any change which may be made or suggested by the American Section the only object which should be kept in view is the welfare of the Society and the Cause it represents, and no change should be suggested based upon either personal affection or antipathy.
4. That we are opposed to any disruption of the Theosophical Society. It should ever remain an International organization."

Mr. Smythe read this Resolution at the Convention and later voted in favour of a Motion passed by the Convention which established "The Theosophical Society in America" as an independent organization, a motion which Mr. Smythe felt did not clash with or was antagonistic to the spirit of the Resolution passed by Toronto Lodge. Presumably it was the hope of some of those who voted for the Boston motion, that this action would be acceptable to Col. Olcott and the constitution of the Theosophical Society would be amended to provide for the affiliation of various independent Societies, perhaps resembling somewhat the composition of the present British Commonwealth of Nations. This seems to have been the hope of Mr. Smythe and, according to his later accounts of the incident, of Mr. Judge also.

But if this were the prevailing hope of the Boston Convention, it must be admitted that the wording of the Motion was, to say the least, inept. Apart from one paragraph which recognized the long and efficient services rendered by Colonel Olcott and that to him belonged the unique and honorary title of President - Founder of the Theosophical Society, there is nothing which could be construed as expressing a desire or intention to retain any link whatever with headquarters at Adyar. The American Section had grown rapidly under Mr. Judge's leadership and had numerous lodges with about six thousand members, the great majority of whom deeply respected Mr. Judge and resented the attacks emanating from Adyar, which had been made against his integrity. The resolution, framed in the tense atmosphere of the time, expressed the self-confidence of the members of the American Section in their ability to serve Theosophy best by carrying on as an independent organization with Mr. Judge as President for life, with power to nominate his successor.

In the eyes of Colonel Olcott it was a

repudiation of his authority, an act of secession; all members who gave their allegiance to the new Society were declared to no longer be members of the T.S.

Toronto Lodge discussed the action taken at Boston at a meeting on May 15, 1895. Mr. Smythe moved that the Toronto Society ratify the action and this motion passed by a narrow majority, 12 being in favour and 10 against. At the next meeting it was decided to reconsider the previous motion and a committee was appointed to report at the next meeting. It was soon evident that a number of Toronto Lodge members would not join the new organization and finally at a meeting on June 5 Mr. Smythe notified the members that those who had ratified the Boston action would apply for a separate charter. Application was duly made to Mr. Judge, the charter was granted and "Beaver Lodge" came into existence with sixteen members, Mr. Smythe and Mr. Beckett being two of the most active. Separate Lodge rooms were established in the old Forum Building on Yonge St. D.W.B.

(To Be Continued)

BERGSON'S PLEA FOR MYSTICISM

BY RICHARD SATTELBERG

I

The Significance of Moral Obligation

According to Henri Bergson, individuals are members of a community in which they follow various habits of command and obedience. These habits are bound to exert a significant influence upon given individuals, particularly their wills, causing them to feel within a sense of obligation. Obligations to the community are necessary for it to subsist and follow a pattern of regularity. In addition to being morally obligated to his community, the individual has a social life to follow, a great part of which is founded upon the weird notion that "however severely we may profess to judge other men, at bottom we think them better than our-

selves." (p. 3)¹ Society goes along with this notion and even encourages it.

Closely tied with the social life of the community is the religion of its people, which, while being a mainstay to them, is also the sanctioner of the laws of which they are subservient:

Society institutes punishments which may strike the innocent and spare the guilty; its rewards are few and far between; it takes broad views and is easily satisfied; what human scales could weigh, as they should be weighed, rewards and punishments? But, just as the Platonic

¹ Page numbers refer to *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, New York, 1935.

Ideas reveal to us, in its perfection and fullness, that reality which we see only in crude imitations, so religion admits us to a city whose most prominent features are here and there roughly typified by our institutions, our laws and our customs. (p. 5).

Searching for morality in its purest form, Bergson turns to the great moral leaders of all time who he feels are exemplary of what he terms "complete morality"; exemplary because they were living incarnations of this morality which transcends social pressure. These great men were the "sages of Greece, the prophets of Israel and the Arahants of Buddhism." (p. 26). A religion may bring us a new morality, but, says Bergson, "even if our intelligence is won over, we shall never see in it anything but an explanation, theoretically preferable to the others." (p. 40). If this is so, one may ask, how does the new morality attain any success over earlier, deeply entrenched moralities? Bergson's cryptic answer to this is that the new metaphysics and morality are merely expressing the same thing "one in terms of intelligence, the other in terms of will . . . the two expressions of the thing are accepted together, as soon as the thing is there to be expressed." (p. 41).

M. Bergson notes that preaching love for our neighbor does not guarantee the desired result. Besides, what is needed, is action: putting into effect what we preach, shifting from the realm of what is theoretically possible to the phenomenal world where these high-sounding ethical ideas should be practised. What we need is a hero like Christ, Buddha, or St. Francis from which others can take the cue and pick up their crosses and follow:

For heroism itself is a return to movement, and emanates from an emotion—infectious like all emotions—akin to the creative act. Religion expresses this truth in its own way by saying that it is in God that we love all other men. And all great mystics declare that they have the impression of a current passing from their

soul to God, and flowing back again from God to mankind. (p. 45).

Speaking of spiritual power passing from the soul of the mystic, the Gospel story is brought to mind, of the woman who was cured of a twelve year-long flow of blood by merely touching Christ's garments. Her action immediately aroused the attention of Christ who "perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?" (Mark 5:30).

The Gospels typified what Bergson terms the morality of the "open soul." To be sure, the Gospels are full of moral exhortations, but these admonitions are often contradictory and paradoxical. Riches are looked upon as being evil, but what is gained by giving them to the poor, making them wealthy and putting ourselves in their meagre position? Turning the other cheek may be a courageous action if one believes in following the New Testament literally, but what would become of justice if everyone were to follow this courageous but foolhardy maxim? But these seeming imperfections of Christian ethics do not deter Bergson from earnestly believing that they create within the practitioner a "certain disposition of the soul" for if one gives his riches to the poor he now knows the meaning of deprivation—"blessed are the poor in spirit!" One has now experienced a broadening out of his soul, a dynamic outpouring of ecstatic motion of which the old morality was but a whimpering example:

Current morality is not abolished; but it appears like a virtual stop in the course of actual progression. The old method is not given up, but it is fitted into a more general method, as is the case when the dynamic reabsorbs the static, the latter then becoming a mere particular instance of the former. (p. 51).

Thus we have seen, *via* Bergson, that morality has a twofold origin: one in duties to the community which he terms "moral obligation"; the other which is found in a "certain emotional state" which exists in

the hearts of all people but seems to be best expressed by the great moral leaders and mystics of the past, who have left an indelible imprint on the pages of human history.

Is there any hope for the hedonistic masses to inculcate into their lives the fruit of the great moral leaders? Bergson optimistically believes that it can be done in two ways:

(One by) . . . training, in the highest meaning of the word; the other the mystic way . . . in its most restricted sense. By the first method is inculcated a morality made up of impersonal habits; by the second we obtain the imitation of a person and win a spiritual union, a more or less complete identification. (p. 88). By the methods above Bergson believes we can attain mastery over the human will; with the will in subjugation the door is then opened to moral progress and a world of mysticism.

II

Static and Dynamic Religion

Bergson looks with dismay and contempt upon religious conditions of the past and the present time, referring to them sarcastically, as a "farrago of error and folly." Time and experience bring the absurdities of religious history sharply into focus where we can look upon them critically and laugh at the mistakes of past human folly. When a philosopher such as Bergson defines man as an intelligent being it is only fitting that he should be critical of man when he behaves in a manner which one would only have believed a lower animal would be capable, for, says Bergson, "It is highly probable that animals are unacquainted with superstition." The heights of superstition to which man can reach are indeed immeasurable when one reflects back upon the Middle Ages when religious relics within religious shrines were looked upon as medicinal agents and a monastery in Jerusalem claimed to possess one of the fingers of the Holy Ghost! Today a different emphasis has taken over in contemporary supersti-

tion; religion as a psychiatric catharsis is now in vogue. But the basic religious tenets have no more credence today than the witch-doctors had aeons past. As Bergson mentions, "Homo sapiens, the only creature endowed with reason is also the only creature to pin its existence to things unreasonable."

Closely allied with superstition is fiction which is closely tied with the myth-making function of what Bergson terms "static religion." According to Bergson our intelligence is more or less guided by a "vivid residue of perception called recollection." (p. 112). If a fiction then appears which is especially vivid under the guise of perception, it may "prevent or modify action."

It is in some such fashion that nature has proceeded. And that being so, we should not be surprised to find that intelligence was pervaded, as soon as formed, by superstition, that an essentially intelligent being is naturally superstitious, and that intelligent creatures are the only superstitious beings. (p. 99).

Since superstition has evidently been with us since time immemorial it should come as no great shock that it is still with us today. Regardless of whether we are in the right or in the wrong, we have a psychological "compulsion tendency" within us to satisfy which can lead us into truth or plunge us into the abyss of persecution and error. The Inquisition and the wars of religion are pertinent reminders lest we forget to what the consequences of irrational thinking can lead. As Goethe wisely put it,

He who has Science and has Art,
Religion, too, has he;
Who has not Science has not Art,
Let him religious be!

Once man imagines that there are kind spirits or an invisible Deity he postulates the corresponding evil forces. Here harmony and equilibrium have been reached but in a degrading manner:

The representation of a hindering force is scarcely a later development than that of a helping force; if the latter is natural, the former is its immediate con-

sequence, but it is bound to proliferate above all in stagnant societies such as those which we now call primitive, where beliefs multiply indefinitely by means of analogies without any regard for their origin . . . all the religious representations which here arise . . . are defensive reactions of nature against the representation, by the intelligence, of a depressing margin of the unexpected between the initiative taken and the effect desired. (p. 130).

One may rightly ask how Bergson could possibly know this! Bergson explains that man in primitive societies is content with primitive representations of things which to him are mysterious and demand an explanation, any explanation which he and others around him can accept and find their consolation in. All the natural, rupturing forces determined the religious development of the primitives; and yet, we are told to believe these fairy tales. Mystics like Bergson are no better than the primitives, because they too tried to point up the weaknesses of intellect as against the higher "spiritual" centers! But we still must carefully consider this type of methodological approach, in the hope that something beneficial may be there. What he says of the primitives is true—

Let us not then talk of minds different from our own. Let us simply say that they are ignorant of what we have learnt. (p. 140).

Fear is what animates men to take decisive action in static religion even though it leads in most cases to anthropomorphism; but if it were not for the factor of man's intelligence, he would be unable to find a way out of his dilemma—"religion is less a fear than a reaction against fear, and it is not, in its beginnings, a belief in deities." (p. 142). Bergson comments analytically in the origins of religion when he states,

(There) . . . has never been any absolute pluralism than the belief in spirits . . . polytheism, strictly speaking, along with its mythology, implies a latent monotheism, in which the multiple deities

exist only secondarily as representations of the divine. (p. 189).

Thus, it is not the material anthropomorphized object which the primitive worships dutifully, but the divine *Essence* behind it.

Because religion is a source of strength and discipline, rites and ceremonies are manufactured to give the believer an added sense of security and confidence. This takes a circular activity according to Bergson—"if gods exist, they must have their worship; but since there is worship there must be gods." Religion in this latter stage begins to take on all the aspects of being man made: it is both for man and in his image. Religion also is now something apart from speculative truth, having become dependent on man for its efficacy. Thus static religion is for Bergson,

(A) . . . defensive reaction of nature against what might be depressing for the individual and dissolvent for society, in the exercise of intelligence. (p. 194).

(To Be Concluded)

THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, yet remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

Idyll of the White Lotus

A CANADIAN VISITS ADYAR

After leaving the crowded streets of Madras behind, from the Elephantstone Bridge, one first sees Adyar. A clump of white buildings breaks the line of green trees on the south bank of the wide Adyar River. Here the river is a small, shallow, calm lake blocked by a sandbar with the Bay of Bengal in the distance.

The compound of 266 acres is flat and well-wooded with palms, huge flowering trees, casuarina firs, the Banyan Tree, shrubs and bougainvillea vines. It was strange to see flowering beauty in February for I had left behind me a land of snow. The main road from the big iron gates by the bridge is paved. Shady paths lead from building to building and to the sea. As one walked through the grounds thoughts filled the mind of the masters and the people that were responsible for bringing Theosophy to the world. One's eyes searched out the buildings specially connected with the work of this or that great personality.

Many widely-spaced white structures appear unexpectedly among the trees. After passing the Vasanta Press wreathed in flowering bougainvillea, through the first Trilithon rise the Headquarters Buildings, including the Library, the Sanscrit section being one of the best in the world. The statues of H.P.B., Col. Olcott and Annie Besant in one group grace the Great Hall, with its beautiful bas-relief symbols depicting the various great religions of the world. Nearby are the Museum, bungalows, Publishing House and offices, the Dispensary and Bojanasala, all between the river and the main road. Beyond a large coconut palm grove, between Blavatsky Bungalow and the House of Meditation, spreads the famous Banyan Tree. Since 1879 when H.P.B. and Col. Olcott founded the Theosophical Society in India thousands of people from all over the world have come to study and to pay tribute. A little farther, stands the huge, three - storey Leadbeater Chambers, a residence for students and the

first poured concrete building in India. Beyond, scattered among the casuarina firs, are shrines and residences facing the river or the sea.

The gentle yet firm President radiates a peace that seems to set the calm tone of the whole Compound. Tranquil people on foot or bicycles go about their business without the need for loud voices, radios, phones, cars, tobacco, alcohol or meat. In the river fishermen chant all day as they drag their nets. On land, the gardeners move about with their waterpots or hose. During visiting hours groups in vari-coloured saris, or white dhoties meander to the Banyan Tree where chipmunks play and the water bird makes its strange pumping cry. Friends greet each other with the gracious Indian salute of joined hands, a bow and a smile. In many still pools yellow, blue, white and red lotus buds gently unfold their beauty. It is a 'mystic powerhouse of peace'.

As the heat increases, after lunch in the Bojanasala where Indian food is served or a Western meal in Leadbeater Chambers, activity ceases. A great calm settles over the Compound during the siesta.

Following the afternoon's work, and perhaps a quiet half hour at the House of Meditation before supper, a walk may be taken along the path by the river past the Garden of Remembrance and the casuarina grove to the sea. Then along the hard sand in bare feet past lean brown fishermen on their way home to Kuppan village, one hears hundreds of noisy crows gathering in the casuarinas for the night, as the sun sets quickly. By ten o'clock all is silent, lights out, mosquito nets down, tired flowers gently dropping, while vitality is gathered for another useful day.

At Adyar everyone works. The day begins before sunrise. Miles of paths are swept free of leaves and smoothed. Fresh flowers are arranged around the memorials in Headquarters Hall, the Buddhist Temple and other shrines. At the Bharata Samaja

Temple (Hindu) there is a beautiful sunrise service. There are quiet inspiring services in St. Michaels and All Angels. At Headquarters a great mass of routine work goes on, keeping records of the world organization up-to-date, editing *The Theosophist*, managing finances and banking, not only for the world society but also for the Compound. The Library is very important. Repairing, translating, and circulating a great number of valuable books in many languages (including 10,000 ancient palm leaf scrolls) taxes a capable staff in this land of heat, humidity and insects. The Publishing House and the Vasanta Press too are full of activity. With thousands of visitors monthly the Information Centre is far from idle. Many sick are cared for at the Dispensary. The School of the Wisdom draws serious Theosophical students from all over the world. The closing exercises in Blavatsky Bungalow beside the Banyan Tree followed by the President's breakfast are impressive indeed.

On such a large estate, the Gardening Department with paddy fields, cocconut and casuarina groves, flower beds, lotus ponds, tree care and watering, requires much thoughtful planning. Earlier photographs in the booklet 'Adyar' by C. R. Groves show how well this has been done. In a very dry state, supplying pure water, electricity, sanitation, temporary accommodation for conventions, maintenance of many large buildings and repairs to furniture, etc., pose problems for the Engineering Department. For protection close to a large city and two villages there are the efficient Watch and Ward men who silently patrol day and night and guard the gates.

It says much for Theosophy that the residents get all this work done under many handicaps yet there is no fuss or hurry, no worried faces, no one without time to answer a stranger's questions (often quite silly ones), and no one without a peaceful contented smile. It is good to be there.

Perhaps the key to it all is in a few quiet rooms upstairs in Headquarters facing the river. Here the President gives serene spirit-

ual inspiration while the Vice-President directs the material affairs of the Society. Naturally they have capable secretaries and assistants imbued with the same calm. From here seems to flow over the Compound a silent tide of peace, goodwill, cheerful tolerance and efficiency.

Not directly under the Society but on the Estate is Kalakshetra devoted to developing South Indian music, dancing, and crafts such as weaving. The hand-loom saris are in demand for their quality and design. In 1963 the centre is moving to new and better quarters nearby. Also just outside the Compound but on the Estate are the Besant High School for Girls, the Arundale Training Centre for Teachers and the Olcott Memorial School for primary boys and girls from the neighbouring village. All of these do excellent work.

This sketch, very brief and inadequate, is an attempt to put life into whatever picture of Adyar the reader may have. To me, and perhaps to others, Adyar was World Headquarters, offices, officials, buildings, varying views of Theosophy. Now the picture is alive with active, sincere, friendly people all doing their best, each in his own way, to promote the ideals of the founders. Naturally such a short visit (one month) by a shy stranger did not result in a complete picture. The heat, strange food and customs were confusing and tiring. Many friendly advances were not taken full advantage of to get to know the many interesting people. Mistakes were made like clumping up to the President's office with my shoes on. However, it is hoped that this effort may lead members that have not been so fortunate to visit Adyar yet to think of it as a powerful living force for good guided by the Masters.

What memories are left of Adyar? It is a good place in which to find oneself through work and study in a peaceful atmosphere; where attitudes to life and to Theosophy grow to fuller understanding of each other. One may realize that all paths up the mountain meet on the same peak; all rivers merge in the ocean.

—F.B.B.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death of Reverend Robert G. Katsunoff of Montreal Lodge who died at the age of seventy-five on February 27. Dr. Katsunoff was an eminent member of the Theosophical Society and lectured for both Montreal and Toronto Lodges. He contributed many articles for the magazine; his last article, significantly titled, "Concerning Death and Eternal Life" appeared in the March-April, 1963 issue, but the news of his passing was not received before the magazine was being printed. A previous article, "The Lord's Prayer" (Sept.-Oct. 1962 issue) attracted much attention and there were many requests for extra copies. His booklet, *Does the Bible Teach Reincarnation and Karma*, is a valuable contribution to the literature on these subjects.

Dr. Katsunoff was born in Sofia, Bulgaria and came to Canada fifty years ago. He founded the Church of All Nations in Montreal in 1929. He was a noted linguist and during the depression years, his principal pastorate was among Protestants of European descent. The funeral service was held in the Church which he had founded and in which he had laboured for over thirty years.

Dr. Katsunoff's gentle presence and kindly wisdom will be long remembered by all who knew him.

Two former members of Toronto Lodge also passed away recently, Mrs Lillian Haines and Mr. James Govan. Mrs. Haines was quite active in Lodge affairs during the early years at 52 Isabella St. Mr. Govan came in later, in 1945, and continued his active membership until 1947 when his memory began to fail. Mr. Govan was a prominent architect, the head of a large firm of institutional architects in Toronto. He was particularly interested in the designing and construction of the Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, but in nine Canadian

provinces and also in Jamaica, there are hospitals designed by him. His death occurred on March 13. To Mrs. Govan and to other members of the family our deep sympathy is extended.

A cordial invitation has been issued by Dr. Henry A. Smith to the General Secretary and to all members of The Theosophical Society in Canada to attend the Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society in America to be held at Wheaton from July 12 to July 15 and also a Summer School Session from July 17 to July 21.

The President, Mr. Sri Ram, will be the principal speaker at the Convention. It is hoped that Mr. Sri Ram, will visit Toronto on July 27-28. A member's meeting is being arranged for July 27.

Auditor's Report. Major L. Anderton, a former member of Toronto Lodge, very kindly audited the books of the Society for the period commencing Jan. 1, 1961 and ending Dec. 31, 1962. The auditor's certificate was duly read at the meeting of the Executive on April 7 by Mr. R. A. Webb, Treasurer.

Election. Canadians recently went through the throes of a political election, but the members of The Theosophical Society in Canada decided that for the coming year an election was unnecessary. All nominations received were for the present members of the Executive Committee and the present General Secretary was the only person nominated for that position.

I have much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society Mr. Shiawax P. Damania, who entered through the Toronto Lodge in March.

A number of mimeographed copies of Dr. R. G. Katsunoff's lecture on "The Spiritual Significance of Goethe's Faust" are on hand and I would be glad to send copies to all who would like to have them. D.W.B.

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NOTES ON MITHRAISM

BY GEO. W. WEAVER

In *The Canadian Theosophist* for Nov.-Dec., 1962 is a reprint of an article written by Roy Mitchell some forty years ago. In that pamphlet Mr. Mitchell opens wide fields for exploration, one of which is the question of the real meaning of the Mysteries of Mithraism. This, says Mr. Mitchell, is but one of the many problems that future theo-

sophists will have to solve, and he points out that the *Secret Doctrine* should be the mentor and guide, and from the hints therein given find analogies and correspondences that may be highly enlightening.

One of the points advanced by Mr. Mitchell is that Mithraism cannot be considered as the rival of early Christianity; that function was in the hands of the followers of Mani or Manes, the traditional founder of Manichaeism. Now of Manichaeism little is known; there is the usual mystery accompanied by the age-old traditions of miraculous birth, shadowy parenthood, the performance of miracles, the twelve companions (disciples?), the seventy-two "bishops" or messengers, and finally the crucifixion, apparently accompanied by two others. The cult spread during the early years of Christianity—Manichaeus in one legend claiming to be a "disciple of Jesus Christ," and struggled against Christianity for several centuries. It seems to have disappeared at about the time Constantine took over Christianity and made it the state religion, a tool of state policy, a function which an ambitious priesthood took over quite willingly.

But enough is known of Manichaeism to make it reasonably certain that it arose from Mithraism, and that it, not Mithraism, was the real rival of Christianity: it was another version of the age-old Solar Myth—the Sun God. In a different form it had a resurrection some centuries later, according to H.P.B., as a branch of Masonry.

Turning to Mithraism itself, it is important to note that it never was a religion; it was a brotherhood with an esoteric section having secret rites, and was open to men of any religion or of none. All the available evidence bears out Mitchell's statement that Mithraism was pure Masonry, and could therefore include all gods. Mithra of the Rock was said to be born in a cave, and was buried in a cave. According to the *Secret Doctrine*, Mithras was the masculine principle of mundane fire, or personified primordial light, while Mithra, his wife and mother, was the principle of passivity—

earth and water. An early tradition calls Mithras the "son of Bordj"—fire-mountain or volcano, i.e., fire, rock, earth, and water. So again there are the masculine (active) and feminine (passive) principles.

Now early Christians said that Jesus was born in a cave—the stable story came from later priests—and, as even the gospels admit, was buried in a cave (sepulchre of rock). He is reported to have stated that his message was founded on a rock (not the ridiculous Peter tale) and that the rocks would, if he were silenced, preach his message. And to this day, Christians refer to him as the "rock of ages."

It is to be deplored that a later writer has added to the fog surrounding both Mithraism and Christianity. So anxious is this later author to thrust Mithra from the universe—to exterminate him beyond hope of patching up any remnants, that the New Testament has been converted into an historical document, a record of actual events. (And yet even the rationalists call the gospels etc., "a description of the progress of a mystery drama.") Of course this heroic effort to rid the world of Mithra by such means involves the author in some odd entanglements. For example, the tale of the scourging of the temple money-changers is an actual event; but the turning of water into wine cannot be accepted. Why not? Because Jesus, being an Essene, could not countenance—let alone encourage—the use of alcohol! And again, Revelations is classed as definitely a Mithraic statement of doctrine. And yet, the Beast, the very incarnation of evil, is none other than Mithra himself—condemned by his own statements.

The Synoptics are genuine records of actual events, the Acts is an historical document, and the epistles are all authentic and historically reliable, while the Christ is anthropomorphized, and regarded as tangible a personage as Nero or Lloyd George. It is all very sad, although it may have a sardonic humor.

That Mithra should be found in Christianity is natural and to be expected; is there

any one of the Solar Myths from which he is absent? He is found in the legends of Mexico and Peru as well as in India and elsewhere. Roy Mitchell says the right word: Mithra WAS not—he IS; he never CAME—he is always COMING. And we may hope, with Mitchell, that theosophical students may yet arise who will use, not only spades, but the keenest "dissecting" tools of research and intuition and occultism to restore the mysteries of the ages for the enlightenment of men.

As to the Cumonts, Robertsons and others of their school, they have the merit, as Roy Mitchell says of having got "related material between two covers"; and that was worth while.

NOTES ON THE GAYATRI

BY WILLEM B. ROOS

tat savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi
dhiyo yo nah pracodayat

The Gayatri is the name of a very sacred verse of the Rig-veda (III-62-10), which is repeated by every Brahman at his Sandhya or morning and evening devotions and on other occasions also. Furthermore it is a Vedic metre of 24 syllables, generally as a triplet of eight syllables each, and, hence, it may stand for any hymn composed in the gayatri metre. But *the* Gayatri is the specific stanza (rc) No. 10 of hymn (sukta) No. 62 of the third Book (mandala) of the Rig-veda. Its author is the Rishi Visvamitra and it is directed to Savitr, the Sun-god. The next two stanzas, Nos. 11 and 12, are also directed to Savitr but, though written in the gayatri metre, they are not *the* Gayatri, and are not given the very special consideration that distinguishes the first verse of this group from the rest of the Rig and other Vedas.

Translation

A translation of a verse like the Gayatri is, of necessity, at the same time an interpretation. I have in front of me a number of translations, which all differ in various

degrees, and some of which are considerably adorned with an excess of words born from the enthusiasm of their authors. But I cannot find that any one of them contributes more than any other to the understanding of the Gayatri. This being the case I shall confine myself to a "literal" word-for-word translation, as far as this is possible.

1. Tat savitur varenyam:
tat—on that;
savitur—of savitr, the sun;
varenyam—to be desired, desirable.
2. bhargas devasya dhimahi:
bhargas—on radiance, lustre, glory, splendour;
devasya—of the god, divine;
dhimahi—let us meditate.
3. dhiyo yo nah pracodayat:
dhiyas—thoughts, understandings (Accus. pl.);
yo—who;
nah—our;
pracodayat—he ought to inspire, he may inspire, etc.

This results in the following literal meaning:
Let us meditate on that desirable radiance of the divine Savitri, that he may inspire our thoughts.

Wilson's version in his Vishnu Puranah (II-250):

We meditate on that excellent light of the divine sun: may he illuminate our minds.

S. E. Gopalacharlu in "The Gayatri" (*The Theos.* XIII-616, July 1892):

Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine vivifier. May he enlighten our understandings.

References In The Manusmrtih

In the 2nd Book of Manu we find the following, as translated by George Buhler (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXV):

76. Prajapati . . . milked out . . . from the three Vedas the sounds A, U, and M, and (the Vyahrtis) Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah.
77. Moreover from the three Vedas Prajapati, who dwells in the highest heaven . . . milked out . . . that Rk-verse, sacred to Savitr . . . which begins with

the word tad, one foot from each (i.e., one measure of eight syllables from each veda, WBR).

78. A Brahmana, learned in the Veda, who recites during both twilights that syllable and that (verse), preceded by the Vyahrtis, gains the . . . merit which . . . the Vedas confer.
81. Know that the three imperishable Mahavyahrtis, preceded by the syllable Om, and (followed) by the three-footed Savitri are the portal of the Veda and the gate leading (to union with) Brahman.
83. The monosyllable (Om) is the highest Brahman, (three) suppressions of the breath are the best (form of) austerity, but nothing surpasses the Savitri . . .
148. But that birth which a teacher acquainted with the whole Veda, in accordance with the law, procures for him (the pupil, WBR) through the Savitri, is real, exempt from age and death.
170. Among those (three) the birth which is symbolised by the investiture with the girdle of munja grass, is his birth for the sake of the Veda; they declare that in that (birth) the Savitri . . . is his mother and the teacher his father.

See also Manu II-38, 39 on initiation (upanayana) through the use of the Savitri. As to prolonged muttering (*japa*) of the Gayatri, Manu states in Book IV that:

94. By prolonging the twilight devotions, the sages (Rishis, WBR) obtained long life, wisdom, honour, fame, and excellence in Vedic knowledge.

Further references to recitals of the Gayatri will be found in Manu II-101, 102, 104, 118, and to recitals in relation to penances (prayascitta) in Manu XI-194, 225.

Nowhere in Manu do we find an explanation why the Gayatri has such great and peculiar powers. Charles R. Lanman, in his Sanskrit Reader quotes Whitney on the Gayatri in the following words: "No good and sufficient explanation of the peculiar sanctity attaching to, this verse has ever been given."

DEFINITE PHILOSOPHY?

Since Dr. Wilks' original article "Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy?", published in our Jan.-Feb. 1962 number, as much space has been devoted to this subject as would more than fill a complete single issue. Considering the limitations of a bi-monthly magazine, this coverage has been generous and sufficient to air all sides of the controversy; therefore, we feel obliged to bring the discussion to a close with the following articles. Letters only will be accepted for the next issue, and correspondents are asked to restrict the length of their contributions. We reserve the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all.

The recently elected Bishop of Moosonee

QUESTION OF A DEFINITE PHILOSOPHY

BY ALVIN BOYD KUHN, PH.D.

The new article by Dr. W. E. Wilks in the Jan.-Feb. issue seems to keep the "recent" controversy a "current" one, which makes a contribution from this quarter still appropriate. It has seemed to me that the question whether Theosophy is a definite philosophy or, as the alternative must be, an indefinite one, is what might be called "gratuitous." And are we to assume that the term carries also the implication that Theosophy is the one definitely true philosophy? For a philosophy can be entirely definite, and yet be quite false. Is not the truth, rather than the definiteness of Theosophy the thing in question?

In the nature of the case philosophy of any formulation is bound to be a bit on the indefinite side, unless we have a certified oracle of near omniscience to give us the true, the perfect system of knowledge. It would seem as if Dr. Wilks would predicate the existence of such an oracle in the two Masters, K.H. and M., or maybe in the Mahachohan. It may be that their stated knowledge comes as close to perfection, or

(a remote Northern Ontario diocese) was advised by his archbishop that he "... needed to be possessed of an open mind and hold firm convictions." We think we know what the reverend gentlemen was trying to say, and are tempted to repeat his howler to sum up this debate. Let us by all means accept Theosophy as a definite philosophy, but at the same time, realize our present inability to fully grasp every aspect of it.

We are indebted to Dr. Wilks and other fellow Theosophists for expanding this thought-provoking theme. Their opinions, however different, are all worthy of our serious reflection, and we hope our readers have enjoyed the long range exchange of views.

The Editors

so far superior to that of mankind at large, as to command our respect for it as being for all practical purposes a perfect system. I think this must be the common belief of Theosophists. Yet even these Adepts remind us that they have given out only some portion of their exceptional knowledge and wisdom, leaving the message as so far divulged necessarily somewhat deficient. There is the old adage that says that half-gods go when full-gods arrive. Maybe some of the present revelation will have to be modified, or almost certainly reoriented when greater truth comes later.

But if the debate is more or less gratuitous and not too crucially consequential, it is clear that it does involve questions of very definite significance for our movement.

Dr. Wilks has always commanded my high regard for his balanced views, intelligence and forthrightness in standing for what we must feel is the genuine message of Theosophy, and I have applauded his consistent efforts to hold the Society to the line of genuine "true" Theosophy. For there has been the constant tendency of groups or individuals, even some of our leaders, to swing off from the orbit on tangents of diversion, or what the Communists call "re-

visionism." It is a tendency that will always set in when followers of an original vital impulse in religion or philosophy attempt to elucidate or "simplify" the message of a pioneer. The motive is to introduce innovations and variations on the central theme. And the effort often distorts the primal message.

Certain tendencies of this kind resulted in the generation of what has drawn upon itself the pseudonym of neo-theosophy. It certainly stands out as a production of very significant bulk and proportions, and it has exercised a very great influence upon the direction, tenor and content of a tremendous wave and volume of Theosophical interest and pursuit over some thirty or forty years. It appeared to be a special development of research and discovery carried out from a point of departure in the general field of the third object. It was an attempt to apply some of the "powers latent in man" to the problems of the moral-spiritual living of the life of occultism. If one of the main purposes of the Society, given a spring-board initial impulse by the psychic marvels of the dynamic H.P.B., was to explore the as yet uncharted laws of the psychic nature of man, then it seemed permissible that several adepts in this extraordinary exploitation should proceed to demonstrate the thrilling achievements their use made possible. It was sensational, arresting, opening up a new fairyland of unseen realities in the psychic overworld. It seemed to promise the conquest of this new domain of super-existence, as it appeared to extend the reach of ordinary consciousness into the ever religiously dreamed-of world of spiritual transcendence. It was much like the realm of Swedenborg's angelic visions of spiritual hosts and celestial scenery, laid open now to more general vision of "trained" psychic faculty. It promised to bring such things into the realm of science. It was not supposed to be spiritistic phenomenalism, but "regular" scientific possibility, if one developed the requisite proficiency in expanding psychic faculty.

As phenomenalism is always tantalizingly challenging, this trend was carried to great lengths and became a sweeping vogue in the ranks of the Society, and having engaged the forthright propaganda efforts of the headship, it went far. It has dominated the major body of the Society down to the present, although by now much of its momentum has diminished.

It is a question, if one attempts to balance the issues fairly, how close this surge in a special direction of one segment of the primary objectives of the movement held, one might say, within bounds on the legitimate first grounds of main interest and intent. If it came directly from following the line of the third object to its legitimate development and application, it would be impermissible to invalidate it as spurious, irrelevant and too far tangent to original purpose to justly be entitled to the name of Theosophy. It is a question whether it had wandered too far off base and strayed too widely from the paddock of the main compound of the Theosophical camp.

It has seemed to this observer that the whole issue here might be summed up in the statement that the interest and effort of the movement that eventuated in Neo-Theosophy might be expressed, not by the word "revisionism," but by "diversionism," or perhaps "deviationism." The argument has to take account of an item that must be conceded to involve this debate in considerable nebulousity and indeterminateness. That is the claim we make that Theosophy embraces all that is true in any field of life and mind. We practically assert that anything that is true is elemental in Theosophy. Also we declare that anything that is true in Theosophy is true in its proper place in the overall context of truth. But in any system claiming to be truth, it is always the fact that there are elements of truth that are considered of central, basic and major importance, and those which are subordinate, corollary, dependent and contingent, in other words relatively of minor importance.

As to Neo-Theosophy it has seemed to

me that it had veered pretty far out from central position and stood well out on the fringe of the main body of our philosophy. It had swung rather far off center and in the mechanical sense might be said to have become "eccentric." This, however, would not diminish the importance of whatever truth it expressed. To put an individual opinion frankly, it never appealed to me either as interesting or as important as the essential features of our message. In fact after a time it palled on my mind and I tired reading it. It went flat, unimpressive, uninspiring. This was in sharp contrast to my reaction to other segments of the philosophy, which had the power to thrill me to the core. I grant that an individual's mere "tastes" in the matter of choice of philosophical reading may be no categorical criterion of value, truth or rating. Nevertheless the experience, the reaction of every thoughtful reader must register something as to the status of a thing of this kind. And if it is largely shared it becomes a judgment carrying weight for the movement.

If, as many fine minds in the Society have always contended, Neo-Theosophy has weakened, diluted, or corrupted genuine Theosophy, to me it appears to have done so, as hinted above, by its "diversionism." It had the tendency to draw collective interest off the central cardinal aspects of the occult knowledge and to focus a tremendous volume of interest upon phases and aspects of occultism that were of much less vital importance than the pivotal truths we should eternally emphasize. When one eats food that is less nourishing, he deprives himself of more vital nutriment. Surely it is well to know more or less about the tenuous condition of things on the astral plane, to get a general view of what consciousness may be when functioning through the higher and more rarefied vehicles. It all comes under object three, and as far as it is true, it has relevance. But for the whole Adyar Society to have made the literature dealing with this exploitation almost the nub and core of its propaganda effort for some

thirty years, following the first impetus created by *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine*, *Mahatma Letters*, etc., seems to me to have been a disastrous diversion of the quantum of study given it through the placing of undue and disproportionate emphasis on interests of very secondary moment. While it ran out its tide it diverted main effort from the more crucially important issues. From this point of view Dr. Wilks' strictures on Neo-Theosophy would seem to be sufficiently warranted.

But, getting back to the main question under discussion, I am constrained to think that his position as to Theosophy being a "definite philosophy" can not be validated, or at any rate concisely and concretely enough to be of practical helpfulness. The problem of circumscribing the message of Theosophy to constitute it a "definite philosophy" would seem to involve difficulties that are insurmountable. The task is impracticable. For who shall say what constitutes the precisely delimited corpus of Theosophical truth? I believe Dr. Wilks has named the collection of books that he thinks would make up this exclusive Theosophical library. The writings of the Masters and H.P.B. sure choices, of course, but what else? Will it include the output of Olcott, Judge, Sinnett, Maitland, Kingsford? Alice Bailey's "Tibetan" master, Djual Khool? Rudolph Steiner? James M. Pryse, Basil Crump, Alice Cleather, William Kingsland, Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*? Going right down the line, who shall, or who can separate the chaff of pseudo-Theosophy from the golden grain of the true?

In common with many others I violently revolt against the idea or the possibility of Theosophy imitating or repeating the absurd and really disgraceful spectacle which such a movement as Christian Science has arrogantly flaunted before the world, pointing to a row of some six or seven of Mrs. Eddy's volumes and saying that this is the entire body of the one true spiritual science. If we should attempt anything similar, how soon would it be that zealotry would inspire

the decree that no member dare read anything outside that little collection? Dr. Wilks' rigorous delimitation of what he assumes is real Theosophy would take the movement far toward that unconscionable position.

Even with "regular" Theosophy, with Neo-Theosophy, Crosby Theosophy, Judge Theosophy, Tingley Theosophy, Steiner Theosophy (Anthroposophy) and shall we add Krishnamurti Theosophy, we face the charge from the general academic world of purveying a far too limited and narrow category of literature, if we are supposed—or if we claim—to monitor the whole literature of ancient truth, occult wisdom and esoteric interpretation of sacred Scriptures. And we do broadly make this claim. Outside the limits of that "true" Theosophy to which Dr. Wilks, in fealty to our message, would restrict our literature, there are numerous former systems, cults, movements, which our effort has in a wide view of the field introduced to the modern world as eminently worthy of cultivation. We have such cult interests as Egyptian Hermeticism, Jewish Kabalism, Platonism, Neoplatonism, Pythagoreanism, Orphism, Sabaeism, Masonry, Medieval Alchemy, Tarot Symbolism, Rosicrucianism, Astrology and more, all of which touch our central body of truth quite closely in the main.

And what about our claim that Theosophy really embraces *all truth*? We can hardly admit that any truth in any phase of life can not be included in Theosophy. We would then be obliged to include whatever is true in mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, electronics, logic, psychology, philosophy, even art. I would not know how Dr. Wilks thinks a complex situation of this sort can be handled, when the whole argument centers on definiteness.

Our second object, almost completely neglected, sweeps into the sphere of Theosophy the study of such vast, almost illimitable, fields of human knowledge as comparative religion, philosophy and science. This leaves almost nothing that lies outside our

pale. With philosophy named as a particular field of study, rather distressingly one has to reflect on the fact that the Society has scarcely ever organized any effort to study this subject. Often I have been forced to consider the anomalous situation one sees in most Theosophical libraries. We have the main body of accepted Theosophical catalogue entries. But mostly one looks in vain for books, particularly of ancient vintage, that have come to mean for me more "Theosophy" than all those I now find catalogued as the literature of the movement. From my own individual experience I must think it an anomaly when I find the usual run of modern Theosophical books, but do not find such works as those of Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, Plutarch, Plato, Aristotle, Hermes, along with good histories of philosophy. Since the second object legitimizes philosophy as an accredited object of study, then I would say that B. A. G. Fuller's *History of Philosophy* (I happen to like it best) is a fully authorized text-book, if not *of*, then at least *for* Theosophy. Under the same object any fine text-book on any branch of science will be accredited Theosophical reading.

Perhaps Dr. Wilks has an acceptable elucidation of all this.

A VERY DEFINITE PHILOSOPHY!

BY CHARLES CARTER

Theosophy is as its name implies, "God-Wisdom". Wisdom certainly is definite, and Theosophy as given out to the Western world through the agency of capable H.P.B. was and is a first water gem forever flashing its definite truths from the diadem upon the brow of Wisdom.

Like all gems Theosophy has many facets each of which flash the guiding beams of light upon the path of the pilgrim, weary of mundane mirage wherein orthodox theology would have him kneel before the idol of *blind belief*, assured that Death would eventually answer his many questions.

The twilight of the Soul deepens amidst scenes of reoccurring world carnage, and the

repeated cycles of terror, of body and spiritual starvation. Now driven by a fervent desire to find a surcease from its sufferings, the Soul silently meditates upon the ideologies handed down from pious, well-meaning ancestors, themselves victims of *blind belief*, called by the theological medicine men . . . Faith! Faith, lacking entirely a bare pittance of spiritual understanding.

The pilgrim Soul is repelled by reiteration of creeds and dogmas that shed not a vestige of light and understanding to assist it upon the long journey towards mastery and the long promised "peace that passeth all human understanding" and decides that if this peace is to be found at all it will become manifested from within—not from without!

In its earnest search for light, between temporary gleams and reoccurring despair, the Soul at last attracts the notice of the "Elder Brothers" and by means of an attended lecture, or meeting a fellow pilgrim enlightened by Theosophy, the Soul at last gazes upon that gem of the Ancient Wisdom—Theosophy.

Staggered at first contact with this vast ocean called Theosophy, the Soul remembers that an Adept teaching in Galilee once warned, "unless ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of harmony". The Soul now feels like a child by the seashore where a wave spilling its force upon the beach sends foam and water over his feet.

The gem flashes inspiring truths now to the wandering Soul, *definite* truths that flash again and again in the Soul's consciousness.

The Soul is taught that its journey is one of necessity, not just chance of physical birth, a brief "three score and ten" years in which to solve all its spiritual problems, but one "from the unreal . . . to the real" (from the unreality of unconsciousness to the reality of conscious immortality . . . the cycle of necessity!).

Unceasingly the gem flashes its definite truths of Karma-Reincarnation, those two guardians of perfect justice, that no lip ser-

vice of spiritual make-believe or vicarious atonement can ever set aside "one jot or tittle of the law . . . until it be fulfilled". The Soul remembers that same Adept of Galilee's saying, and realizes for the first time with any conviction that he did but repeat the immutable law that governs all . . . that we reap our sowing—Karma! If our sowing has been over a period of many lifetimes, the Theosophic gem flashes the truth of reincarnation with the assurance that there will be no lack of future bodies with which to enter the Hall of Learning, and at long last reach the Hall of Wisdom!

From the very outset of being "guided" by those absolute, immutable laws proclaimed by Theosophy, the Soul intuitively knows the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom to be definitely dependable by which to chart its course through the mundane desert of physical existence!

As the Soul applies its knowledge to everyday life it realizes that the time of blind belief and its cul-de-sacs have ended! The disheartening efforts of retracing one's steps and wandering around to find the lost trail is now finished, the night of bogs and swamps are over, and the Soul moves forward with a rapture never known before, and like the pilgrim Tolstoi can find a song ready upon his lips with which to greet his fellow pilgrims.

The Soul knows for a truth that Death does not answer any questions, that only life can do so by means of *personal experience*, and so the Soul now seeks the lesson that every experience brings to him. It matters not if the experience is pleasant or painful, there is a lesson to be learned. There is no need to pray to an anthropomorphic deity for help to dodge the issue, to find the blind side of this deity and outwit eternal justice. The Soul knows that is an impossibility, that the law of Karma is a very *definite* law that knows neither the bribery of one's priest or the prayers of those who would enlighten the custodians of the Cosmic Realms of Being. As *The Light of Asia* tells us, "it perfect balance weighs!"

Can one term this indefinite? Can one who has taken the plunge into the "Ocean of Theosophy" be less able to define—to his Soul's satisfaction—the reason for the journey ahead? His evolving status? The newly discovered freedom in following the rules laid down by the founders of Theosophy, who are our Elder Brothers, whose duty and joy it is to hold out their hands and teach us the first letters of the Alphabet of the Ancient Wisdom, and leave the journeying for each of us to do—as they once had to?

If this is not a definite philosophy, will those who deny it and possess more spiritual wisdom than the Adept Brothers who made it possible for the West to receive it . . . TELL US SOMETHING MORE DEFINITE!

* * *

As the Soul glances back upon the terribly rough and bloodstained path it has trod, wherein even in the past short 50 years two world wars have destroyed millions of bodies and brought the nations that waged those wars to physical and spiritual bankruptcy, it realizes that "the Brotherhood of Man" is a definite and spiritual philosophy that can, when transgressed, bring intense mental and physical suffering upon its transgressor; that all human suffering stems from human action; that which humanity sows individually or nationally, "shall it also reap".

Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy?

It matters not if this question is asked by the President at Adyar, or the most recently joined member of any Theosophical Lodge. It cannot be answered from the platform because the answer can only be found by the individual who has seen and shared Theosophy in "working overalls". Theosophy is then really known for what it is—a very definite philosophy, a very accurate signpost that directs all earnest seekers to the Hall of Learning, and from the Hall of Learning to the Hall of Wisdom.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors, The Canadian Theosophist

I have been wondering for a long time why Dr. Wilks seems to have so much difficulty in getting his point over, but I suddenly saw the light with the Rev. Hoeller's letter in the C.T. for March-April.

They are talking about two entirely different things. This should have been obvious earlier from the fact that the Rev. Hoeller's writings in various publications are accompanied by listings of his studies in various Catholic schools. He seems to feel that that confers authority in the occult field. To me it merely imparts the information that he is probably incapable of understanding any but the religious attitude in such matters. In that attitude a creed—and he obviously thinks that confidence in Blavatsky is a creed—has either to be infallible or suspect. Finding some apparent holes in the Blavatsky presentations, he then lists such confidence as a false creed, without recognition that that confidence may have far more solid basis than anything in the way of mere "belief."

The fact is that whatever study and revaluation they require—and they require a lot of it—her works have proven themselves to contain the only nucleus of solid tangible facts in the Movement, and I refer to facts elsewhere unknown, and which could not possibly be known, outside of a superior occult realm, at the time when she wrote. Hoeller does not seem to know anything about this and probably does not care; and I probably shall never be able to understand how the world of physical science looks to the theological mind. It must seem something quite unreal as compared with the theological meanderings in their own closed circuits.

Be that as it may, I doubt that anyone has done more drastic revaluations of the *Secret Doctrine* teachings than myself (to which some have called my attention, not always with approval). But the more of it I have done, the more confidence in the reality of H.P.B.'s mission and connections I have acquired; the solidity of the basic

framework stands out in increasing measure, despite the inhuman handicaps and the scant information she was given during the work.

The "religious" attitude is impossible to me. I rejected all religious faith over fifty years ago, finally coming into Theosophy from the background of atheism. I could no more entertain a blind faith in Madame Blavatsky in the face of facts going the other way, than I could believe in the infallibility of the Pope. In the scientific approach, truth is arrived at by studying tangible facts, organizing them into hypotheses with the aid of reason, digging up new facts, modifying the old hypotheses by them when necessary, and so on, pinning down the finally verified facts as one goes on—but not pinning them down so tightly that they cannot be pulled up and re-examined at any later time. According to Madame Blavatsky, the superior science from which she drew was achieved in exactly the same way, though with another order of instrumentation.

With that science on its own plane we cannot tamper; we have not been given enough for it, and in our present state it is obvious that there is no terminology in which a major part of it could be imparted to us even if desirable to do so. (It is not desirable to do so, so long as we show the present predisposition to blow ourselves to hell with anything new that we find out.)

Where *our* scientific effort comes in is in our efforts to understand and expand what we have in the light of facts verifiable in our sphere and in the light of reason. In that way we earn more knowledge by effort which at the same time improves our thinking ability. It is merely the indefinite pursuit of such effort which makes a Mahatma in the long run, and there is no way to reach that, or any other higher status, otherwise.

But to make any progress of that nature we have to have confidence in the validity of what we are studying and concentrate on it instead of running all over the place after self-styled "authorities" who have demonstrated no such worth. Hoeller puts the

matter excellently himself in remarking that Leadbeater's works require the minimum of intellectual effort. Precisely. That is what threw the major portion of the Movement off the track. By the same token, the Blavatsky works require the maximum of effort. That is why the others are in demand, and seem to form the line along which the Movement is dividing. Easy religious faith on the one side and hard scientific study on the other, each of which yields rewards of its own kind, the chief reward of the former being the ultimate disillusionment from which the Rev. Hoeller seems to be suffering.

And incidentally if Hoeller really means the admiration for H.P.B. which he presently expresses, he has changed his own position faster than Dr. Wilks has. In several years of correspondence I have not noted that Dr. Wilks has lacked either confidence in H.P.B. or been impervious to factual revaluations of her work as needed; this is simply the scientific attitude. On the other hand, not long ago, at least, Hoeller considered her a bungling amateur whose Mahatmas and duggas were alike non-existent, and who should be set aside in favor of "modern scholarship."

(Incidentally, in a former letter I said that one of the modern scholars, Dr. Evans-Wentz, had not mentioned her. It has been called to my attention that he did, and favorably, even though in a footnote.)

There is still another category of confidence in Blavatsky, less difficult than the scientific but more so than the religious. It is based on the inherent reasonableness of the metaphysics and the appeal of the ethics. It can also be verified progressively; in ethics, by observation of the workings of karma; in metaphysics, for some by growing personal experience, which however is very difficult to convey to others. These aspects were set forth more clearly; probably because most of them were already in the public domain and only needed assembly and integration; also because less subject to abuse than the scientific.

Victor Endersby

The Editors

The Canadian Theosophist

Mr. Hoeller in the March-April, 1963 *Canadian Theosophist* writes that: "If we wish to accept Theosophy as a science and as a philosophy . . . we must simply cease to emphasize in any way whatsoever the idea that Theosophy originated in Mahatmic revelation . . ."

This is actually an impossible stand, if we are to tell the actual truth about Theosophy. Theosophy, which originated in 1875 came into being as a teaching given out by the Mahatmas by their agent Madam Blavatsky; the *Mahatma Letters* and Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* are very explicit in making this fact very clear, that their direct agent (and only agent) for transmitting these ideas to the West was H.P.B. Why was this done? I think it is self-evident that in H.P.B.'s day as today there were many other "teachers" putting out "revelations" of one sort or another, such as the teachings promulgated by the Swami of Almora. Obviously there is a true school and many, many false ones—the Mahatmas were going to clear the matter up once and for all and show the true from the false for those who were willing to hear and to learn.

One of the fundamental teachings in theosophy is the fact that there *are* Elder brothers in this race who have secreted themselves from the public not from selfish exclusiveness but simply in order to avoid the polluting atmosphere of the sinning world. Mr. Hoeller would have us deny this most fundamental of theosophical ideas—an idea that sets Theosophy apart from many other philosophies and religions.

But, actually, Theosophy is so all-embracing and universal that it cannot be crammed or categorized under the heading of "Philosophy" and "Science"—it includes, also, "Religion"—and by this I mean pure religion going back to the days when religion was pure and divine before it became polluted with unworthy priesthoods and with sin.

I would like to point out to Mr. Hoeller

that theosophists *can* have it both ways, as Theosophy is both a science, a philosophy, a revelation and a religion, and a lot of other things as well, including the sublimest of ethical teachings. What appears as mystical revelation by Mahatmas *to us* is actually scientific findings *to the Mahatmas*. In other words, the Mahatmas have faculties as yet unborn in most of this race, whereby they can definitely ascertain the facts of their doctrines just as a scientist does in this civilization with the scientific instruments invented by modern laboratories. One must remember that the Mahatmas wrote Sinnett in their *Letters* that they had for generations scientifically verified every one of the doctrines they were putting out through their agent, H.P.B., by means of the actual experiments carried out by large numbers of the Elder brothers through the centuries.

It is true that we all have the Higher Self within (as long as we maintain the right conditions of living so that it does not abandon the body, as in some cases) but one must disagree that the Higher Self is a Mahatma. Our Atman is higher than any Mahatma, as the Mahatmas still do not epitomize the very highest, Atman, while in a physical body. The highest state requires another form of body; such as the radiant body of the Nirmanakaya (but this is another and most abstruse doctrine). They are well on their way, however, according to their teachings. Though we have the Atman overshadowing us and shedding its divine light within our Higher Manas, few are those able to commune with that Power. So many of the so-called saints and mystics of all centuries have been simply self-deluded psychics intoxicated with the lower astral world which they imagined to be a spiritual state, when it was simply the world of the great Illusion. As an example, one of the qualifications that the Mahatmas must have is the very highest degree of true purity and holiness of life. How many mystics can come even near that in this day and age!

One can agree with Mr. Hoeller about the disastrous principle of *occult prestige* that caused so many after H.P.B.'s death to consider themselves full-blown Mahatmas. This was true even in her day; some made claims of being in with even higher Mahatmas than the Theosophical ones. Her answer was that they should prove it. None could—all their revelations were pure drivel whereas today the so-called revelations of Theosophy are gradually being proved correct even by science. One must also remember that H.P.B. herself was by no means an average person: she had amazing phenomenal powers that *have never been duplicated since*.

Why should Mr. Hoeller object to the idea that there are men with higher powers? Does he think that the miserable thing called mankind today is the ultimate expression of *homines sapientes*? Heaven forbid!

Elouise R. Harrison

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors

The Canadian Theosophist

With regard to the criticism of Dr. Wilks' letter by Mr. S. A. Hoeller in the March-April issue of the *Canadian Theosophist*, I am left with only one clear impression out of what is to me a lengthy and somewhat pointless epistle. This impression is that Mr. Hoeller sets no store by the U.N. or a World Government or the humane treatment of animals; all he wants is the facts of the Ancient Wisdom. I am compelled to wonder what he would do with this information should he acquire it, when he so obviously has not learned rudimentary humanity.

As for myself, it is far more important to educate people to the point when they will outlaw vivisection than for me to spend time on the hair splitting activities in which he seems to delight. I understand that Theosophy teaches that there is a bigger price to pay for knowing and not doing than there is for not knowing and not doing. Mr. Hoeller would do well to ponder this if he

is unable to see the virtue of kindness to all creatures on it's own merit.

J. Plewes

"We supposed that nearly everything of importance about physics was known. Yes, there were a few obscure points, strange anomalies having to do with the phenomena of radiation which physicists expected to be cleared up by 1900. They were. But in so being, the whole science blew up, and the Newtonian physics, which had been supposed to be fixed as the Everlasting Seat, were gone. Oh, they were and still are useful as a way of looking at things, but regarded as a final description of reality, no longer valid. Certitude was gone."

. . . . This collapse of certitude where certitude was supposed to be least assailable affected his thinking for the rest of his day. Gone was the Everlasting Seat, yet he noticed how repeatedly even men of science themselves who knew the story would come forward with discoveries in the tone of "Now at last we have certitude." In due season Whitehead formulated his reply.

"The Universe is vast. Nothing is more curious than the self-satisfied dogmatism with which mankind at each period of its history cherishes the delusion of the finality of its existing modes of knowledge. Sceptics and believers are all alike. At this moment scientists and sceptics are the leading dogmatists. Advance in detail is admitted; fundamental novelty is barred. This dogmatic common sense is the death of philosophical adventure. The Universe is vast."

We thus arrive at what he termed "the fallacy of dogmatic finality." . . . One-sided seeing is what Whitehead called "half-truth" . . . "There are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil."

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