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WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

APRIL 13, 1851 — MARCH 21, 1896

It is heartening to observe throughout the Theosophical Movement an increasing respect for the life and work of William Q. Judge. Until a few years ago his very existence was ignored by some groups, and while today he is not everywhere looked upon as one of the founders of modern Theosophy (which he certainly was) his unique contribution to our cause is now almost universally acknowledged.

Judge is and will be remembered not only for his writings, which present the age-old, ever-new Divine Wisdom in clear, unequivocal language, but also for his example to students. His unselfish devotion to the Society, his almost superhuman efforts to promote and teach Theosophy, his pure conception and practice of brotherhood stand as ideals to which we should constantly aspire.

Shortly before her death in 1891, Madame H. P. Blavatsky wrote to the Theosophists in the American Section and told them: "Had it not been for W. Q. Judge, Theosophy would not be where it is today in the United States. It is he who has mainly built up the movement among you, and he who has proved in a thousand ways his entire loyalty to the best interests of Theosophy and the Society." This acknowledgment was well-deserved, for after Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott quit the United States in 1878, it was left to Judge to rally, lead and inspire the followers on this continent.

His achievements, however, are not to be measured only in terms of organization. What he did was to show *how* to be a Theosophist. If our own attempts fall short of his standard, we still know, by his example, that greater things are possible for us. Judge never ceased *trying* to reach perfection, and the least we can do is to *try* within our limitations, to follow his path.

More than at any time in the past, we are faced with the necessity and responsibility of correlating Theosophy with the continuously changing hypotheses of modern science, and to do this we must know the original teachings. Next to that of H. P. Blavatsky, the literary output of William Q. Judge is perhaps the most important among early Theosophical writings, the study of which is *sine qua non* for all who aspire to the higher wisdom. His books, particularly *The Ocean of Theosophy*, and his articles (written under many pseudonyms) are readable, informative and possess a convincing internal authority.

On this, the 68th anniversary of his death, we salute William Q. Judge as a leader and exemplar. Down through the years his name has been an inspiration to his fellow students, and their debt to him can only be repaid by passing on what they acquired from him. Thanks to the quiet mannered Irish-American lawyer and those who were influenced by him, Theosophy has been well served.

T.G.D.

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To The 88th International Convention Of The Theosophical Society

BY N. SRI RAM, *President*

Every Convention is a kind of peak we ascend as well as an occasion from which to look back and to look forward. It provides an atmosphere in which each of us can best realize what this movement is intended to achieve and what he can do to help it. The Society was launched into existence not long before the onset of the most revolutionary era which the world has ever witnessed. No one, except perhaps its Founders, could have foreseen at that time the nature of the events that were to take place or the changes both in the world's thought and in conditions all over the world. The last fifty years or so have been the most fateful period, so far as we know, in the history of humanity. Now we have arrived at a point which is partly its culmination and partly a turning-point at which humanity must take a radically different course if it is to achieve the happy destiny that lies within its sight, and avoid the disasters that loom ahead on its present track.

Although the teaching that H.P.B. brought was addressed to her generation, yet we can see it had a value much farther-reaching than her times. Presented as an outline of the esoteric philosophy, it embodies a Wisdom applicable to all times and places and enables us to place in perspective the events that have happened and are happening. It only gains in its significance from the advances in scientific thought more revolutionary as these are than what one could have ever expected. The philosophy is esoteric in the sense in which what is seen deep within an instrument such as a microscope or telescope must seem esoteric to those who do not also see it and do not suspect the existence of such an instrument. In this case it is really the instrument or mirror of our own purified consciousness which can reflect the underlying truth that cannot be perceived otherwise. The philosophy is

esoteric in as much as it comprehends a whole range of subjective truth which reveals itself in the consciousness that is open to receive it, that has achieved the clarity needed to perceive what lies in its own depths, as well as what appears on its surface. This philosophy, as propounded, has widely influenced the thoughts of people in various ways, but all the time in a manner which has tended to broaden and cosmopolitanize their minds, not only in matters of religion and philosophy, but also in matters of individual life and human relationships, anticipating the great need of the world as it is today.

We discuss from time to time how to make the Society, which is now 88 years old, more vital than it is. Is there a way of rejuvenating it, even as a tree, which has passed its autumn and winter and become completely denuded and seemingly lifeless, is rejuvenated in spring? Vitality means the upsurge of life, and for this tree of the Wisdom-Religion to renew itself what is needed is not the kind of energy that goes round and round and is content with stereotypes and clichés; it must be the life that springs like fresh waters from the deepest source in ourselves, charged with the truth, the evolving and renovating power that is there. Life flows at whatever level. What checks its flow is immobilization in a form, though it needs form at every point for its expression. In the exploration of truth, the form that limits is often a concept, word or activity that has become a fixed and mechanical habit. So, there has to be a mind that is free of every form, though it may perceive the truth in that form; an approach to truth which, though based on what one learns from those who have explored and investigated, yet has the spirit of exploring and understanding for oneself. What is important are always those truths

which fall within the province of one's direct understanding and determine the manner of his living, the ways of his thought in relation to others and all things around him—not the truth that is an abstraction or an argued-out idea but the truth that is of life and living.

I have read with care all the Section Reports that have been received. Of all the Sections, India has the largest membership, which is understandable; at present it is about 7,400, a small increase since the previous year. The General Secretary for India, Mrs. Radha Burnier, mentions in her Report no less than 758 lapsings during the year, and says that the reasons for increases as well as decreases in membership would be worth studying by Federation officers and workers, having regard to the type of work in their respective areas. In India where there is a religious and philosophical tradition, the main ideas of which are also to be found in Theosophy, people sometimes drift into the Society or are persuaded to come in, without their knowing clearly what are its Objects. They understand them only vaguely as Brotherhood. She makes the following general observations pertaining to the question of the number of members, and what is needed to make them effective in the work: "It would be relatively easy for us to add to our membership by having more entertaining programmes and by satisfying people in various ways. But we would not then be really carrying on our work . . . It is necessary for members to understand that the greatest and most lasting inspiration can come only from one's own deepening realization of the truths of Theosophy. The study of Theosophy has to be unlike other study, in the sense that it should not lead to a mere intellectual grasp of certain concepts but should be closely linked to an inward realization of the truths of life, finding expression in every act. Such an attempt to know Theosophy can be a day-to-day adventure which is full of interest and inspiration. Members should be encouraged to embark on this adventure and not merely depend on lectures and

visitors for inspiration and stimulus . . . If the majority of members decided to apply themselves to studying Theosophy and knowing it for themselves, each Lodge would have its own well-springs of energy, and the problem of waning interest, large-scale lapses, etc., can be tackled." There are some who come into the Society, no doubt attracted by its general character, but also with certain expectations, and they leave when they are disappointed. We need not be sorry when that is the case, but we have reason to blame ourselves when we do not do all that we can to help the Society to be dynamic and active for its proper ends and to help our fellow-members, especially those who have recently joined, to understand what Theosophy is and what is our work as Theosophists. The General Secretary stresses the need for every member to realize his responsibility and the value of what he can do: "The work of every earnest member, whether he lectures in public or keeps the torch burning in some lonely corner, is equally valuable . . . It rests upon every member to reflect on the ways in which he can help and fulfil the work of the Theosophical Society."

The above observations apply not only to work in the Indian Section, which goes on steadily as usual, but also everywhere else. The problems in different Sections, although conditions in them vary greatly, are essentially not dissimilar. For they are all connected with our comprehension of Theosophy, the way it is presented and the way we carry on the activities of the Society. There is good work being done in practically all Sections, and there are also defects and short-comings everywhere.

Dr. Henry Smith, National President of the Section in the United States, remarks that "There are still structural weaknesses in many Lodges, with problems of inadequacy in leadership, ineffectiveness in the presentation, and in some instances even a general apathy". At the same time, "there are many Branches that are vital, well organized, have excellent programs and show progressive methods of presentation."

Efforts are being made from the Section Headquarters to remedy the defects and also raise the tone and quality of the work in Lodges and Federations. To this end workshops have been increased. (A workshop is a kind of seminar, with someone to lead and instruct.) In these workshops what is studied or learned is the presentation of Theosophy, Lodge programs and methods of conducting Lodge work, including public relations. Dr. Henry Smith says emphasis is being laid on study and exploring the roots of Theosophy.

One of the Sections which has shown very welcome signs of fresh interest and vitality is England. The General Secretary, Mr. Wallace Slater, reports that the very successful Campaign for Unity in 1962—not unity in the Section but the truth of the unity that underlies the diversities of life—has been followed up in 1963 with a special emphasis on basic Theosophy, “the fundamentals without the frills,” as someone has called it, although there can be, I think, no frills in Nature’s vast plan, except ramifications and details, like the branchings of a leafless tree in winter as seen against a cloudless sky. For the first time in many years the membership has shown a definite increase—some 323 new members having come in during the year. The public lectures at the National Headquarters have been so well attended, we are told, that it has been necessary to arrange for three beginners’ classes each week, to meet the demands of the interested public. The value of such classes, if conducted by someone who knows how to lead and develop the interest of students, cannot be overestimated. If Theosophy, with all the beauty that belongs to it, can be so presented as to evoke at every turn the response that is the counterpart to its different facets and aspects, the study can become a veritable induction into that truth which is beauty and ever expands without losing its freshness

The General Secretary for Italy, Mr. Roberto Hack, refers to a kind of cleaning-up and renewal which has been taking place

in that Section, though this work has been very difficult to manage. He says there has been for some years “a strong trend to accentuate all forms of psychism and to neglect completely the original teachings.” It was urgently necessary to give the members the opportunity to acquire the fundamental knowledge which will prevent them from falling into sectarian habits of mind. This is being done by concentrating efforts in the careful preparation of articles for their monthly journal *Alba Spirituale* of a nature that will help this purpose. Mr. Hack has also, in his contacts with Lodges and members, and at the Section Convention, laid stress on the importance of maintaining in the Society a spirit of investigation, free from every tendency to phenomenalism and crystallization of thought. Two Lodges had to be dissolved during the year; also the number of unattached members is less. The number of members at present is about 580, about the same as five or six years ago.

It is happy news that both in Cuba and Viet-Nam, countries where conditions have been very troubled, the Society’s work has gone on steadily and without a break. Mr. Aguilar Mora, the General Secretary for Cuba, reports that there are 23 Lodges in the country, nine out of these in Havana. All the nine have been functioning throughout the year. Out of the other fourteen, eleven have carried on their work normally. The Section journal has been published regularly and contains carefully selected Theosophical articles. Also a number of booklets have been issued, as well as a study course in Theosophy. It seems that the Lodges in Havana are this year studying the same subjects as are in the syllabus of the School of the Wisdom of Adyar, beginning, as at Adyar, on October 2nd and continuing the study during Monday to Friday of each week. Surely this is proof of the earnestness and enthusiasm of our Havana brethren.

The General Secretary for Viet Nam, Mme. Nguyen-thi-Hai, reports that throughout the period of troubles in that country—marked by insecurity as well as econ-

omic difficulties—the Section, confining itself strictly to the three Objects of the Society, has been “able to carry on its mission of fraternity and peace, widely diffusing the teachings of Theosophy”. The bi-monthly review which is issued provides, she says, both the public and the members with an abundant supply of literature on Theosophy and is of particular interest to the intellectual classes. Two new Lodges were formed during the year, and the present membership is about 670.

I reported last year that Indonesia was one of the Sections where the membership was increasing. It had then about 1700 members and had just celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Section. Our members there were eager to hold this year the Second Indo-Pacific Conference. But the whole situation changed suddenly. On April 3rd, 1963, President Sukarno of Indonesia declared the Society in Indonesia a prohibited organization, on the ground that its Constitution (which of course adheres to that of the parent Society) does not show “any certainty about the acceptance and adherence to the Political Manifesto” of President Sukarno; that the purpose and object of the Indonesian Section is “not in accordance with the personality of Indonesia, (will) obstruct the Indonesian revolution, and is contradictory with the socialistic idealism of Indonesia”. In brief, the Society is prohibited, because it does not follow the ideology or the political ends of the Indonesian State. All international organizations, including the Rotary International, had already been forbidden in Indonesia; the Theosophical Society, with its aim of Universal Brotherhood, has also been dealt with in the same manner. Some of our brothers in Indonesia have set up another body, as a successor to the former body, with the same Objects, I am told, but having no international connection and adhering to the State’s political manifesto and policy.

An event to which Sections in Central and South America have been long looking forward was the holding of an Inter-Ameri-

can Congress, convened in Mexico City from November 27th to 30th, in which representatives from some 16 of these Sections, as well as from the United States (including Dr. Henry Smith, the National President), Canada, Australia and New Zealand were present. The organization as well as the success of the Congress were possible because of the enthusiasm and devotion of Senor Vado Lopez, the Mexican General Secretary, and the members in Mexico. It is proposed to hold other such Congresses from time to time, in different countries, beginning with Argentina. Senor Lopez remarks that the results of this first Inter-American Congress cannot be seen in the immediate future. The important fact is that the first step has been taken for the emergence of a structure strong and beautiful, from which—to use his own language—“the marvellous forces of our Theosophical teachings shall radiate to help the world”.

The Theosophical Order of Service and other groups engaged in similar activities figure more than usual in the year’s Reports. In England the T.O.S. has bought and organized a Home for Retired Theosophists; in Saigon, Viet-Nam, the Section has been for many years conducting an orphanage for infants, of whom there are fifty at present. Among causes which have especially attracted help from Theosophical groups might be mentioned help for Tibetan refugees of whom there are still a large number in northern India without a home and the Freedom from Hunger Campaign.

I referred last year to our plans for the new Adyar Library building, for which the foundation stone was laid during the Convention in December 1960. I mentioned also my proposal, endorsed by practically all the members of the General Council, that the Besant Centenary Trust and Kalakshetra should be asked to vacate the Eastern portion of Besant Gardens by June this year. I am glad to report that the site intended for the Library itself has been vacated, but not the area adjacent to it to the east, which has been used as an open-air theatre by Kalakshetra, an area which we also need

in connection with the development of the Library's work. (However we have been given to understand that it will be vacated by June 1964).

I have clearly stated as part of my proposals to the General Council, and also to Kalakshetra and the Besant Centenary Trust, that the remainder of Besant Gardens, that is, the Western portion where there are the buildings, should be vacated as early as possible. It will presently be thirty years since these buildings began to be occupied (on a year-to-year basis), and now that the Besant Centenary Trust and Kalakshetra have extensive grounds at Tiruvanmiyur and have been able to put up many buildings, it should be possible for them to restore the Besant Gardens buildings to the Society's use. They were allocated temporarily for the work of the Besant Theosophical School and Kalakshetra when these were started. But at present Kalakshetra has several departments, some of which are of a commercial and expanding nature, and it is only right that these should be located in their own proper premises.

The new Adyar Library building is to be commenced as soon as we possibly can. There has been some delay in doing so, because of official formalities and restrictions on the use of materials required. The work of the Library (the research and publications work in particular) cannot be expanded, or even properly carried on in its present greatly restricted premises.

This survey of the movement from one end of the world to the other, might be concluded with some self-searching questions. What are we accomplishing? This question is asked, in nearly the same words, by Brother Argente, General Secretary in

the Philippines. Trying to answer it he uses the words: "Minds illumined and hearts ennobled through contact with Theosophy and the Theosophical Society". Theosophy, even as we have it, has been for innumerable people as a light brought into a place of darkness, and it has ennobled their lives in varying degrees. We have abundant testimony to that effect. But turning to what we are doing at present, cannot we do very much better both in our Lodges and in relation to the public? No one who is honest with himself can answer this question otherwise than by admitting the possibility. Perhaps we have first to realize the obstructions within ourselves, our self-centredness and fixations, which are reflected both in our understanding of Theosophy and in the way we present it and carry on our activities. Happily, there is in very many quarters a spirit of questioning and criticism directed towards these very points.

Out of this questioning I think there must come the change which Dr. Henry Smith speaks of as a need of the present time. But change in what direction? I should say in very general terms, a greater depth, universality and wholeheartedness in our comprehension and work. Brother Argente asks: Are we too much preoccupied with the fruit of action, the results we can perceive and enjoy? "What should preoccupy us is to give our best to the act of sowing, leaving the fruit and the time of reaping to the Good Law." But what we sow must be the Truth, the seed that falls out of the ripeness of our minds and hearts. We are concerned only with the call of the here and now, and with giving all that is waiting in us to be given without any thought of return.

The Theosophical Society is meant to be a platform of true Brotherhood, a bond of amicable tolerance . . . It has no one religion to propagate, no one creed to endorse: it stands for truth alone, and nothing can make us deviate from this which we consider the path of our Duty and for which we have sacrificed every thing. Our motto will stand for ever: "There is no Religion higher than TRUTH!"

—H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings 1883*

DISCRIMINATION

FOR THE STUDENT OF THEOSOPHY

The student of life, who believes that there is light to be had upon the mystery of human existence, and is determined to seek it, finds himself as soon as he enters the arena, far from suffering from a paucity of ideas, rather is overwhelmed with strange Movements and Societies all offering him the keys to Eternal Life, or to some more immediately satisfying substitute. So it is that the ability to discriminate between the true and the false, or between the real and its many more or less spurious imitations, becomes of first importance to him.

It is true that the final and only fully reliable means to discrimination where spiritual things are concerned is by the very rare faculty of intuition. This power which transcends the rational mind and all avenues of psychic information, is a spiritual perception. It always indicates the truth, but it is so rare as a faculty to be called upon that it is of little practical value to the student who is still caught up in mundane attractions and still divides his allegiance between spiritual, and mundane things. Doubtless this power is the active possession of the Occultist and the Initiate.

How then can the inexperienced student, who as yet lacks any certainty of his own, hope to distinguish the real from the imitation and avoid wasting his efforts in a fruitless pursuit of phantasms, if not of something worse?

There are one or two things which do usually serve to eliminate the imitation and the spurious, whether applied to an individual with a claim to possess spiritual knowledge, or to a school or society — things which can be applied as touchstones by the one determined to know the truth. Whenever we find an appeal is being made to our personal advantage, however subtle or covered up it may be, or what form it may take, we can be certain that it is not the real thing. For a true spiritual appeal offers only to show the way to acquiring truth and

to the power to serve humanity, and nothing whatever for our personal self.

Some of the cruder imitations of a spiritual appeal offer the ability to acquire money and possessions, as well as health. Others offer the acquirement of psychic faculties or the aggrandisement of passing initiations. These are easily seen for what they are, but there are the much more subtle kinds whose appeal to personal advantage or to special protection, or to aggrandisement is subtly insinuated in their teaching, in one or another of a hundred ways, not noticed by the unwary and which yet have their appeal to the desire for quick advancement, or for easy methods of achieving the desired end. All such disclose themselves to be a conscious or unconscious imitation of a true philosophy.

Recognising the existence of a personal appeal in a teaching will eliminate most of the imitations of the true spiritual appeal, but the absence of such does not of itself, prove that one is in contact with the real. A Jesuitical envoy for instance, will be aware of all this, and will disguise any personal appeal but will use the subtleties of flattery and such like psychological means to win our allegiance.

To find out whether an individual who claims to teach spiritual knowledge is the real thing or a false imitation, the only final test may be to live in close contact with him for a period and discover what has been the effect upon ones life. Ask oneself, has it widened or contracted my sympathies? Am I more, or less, obsessed with myself, *my* aims, *my* progress, *my* personal stature and effect upon others, *my* love of praise, and fear of criticism, etc? Or am I more content to settle down to the un-spectacular work of self preparation to fit myself to doing my bit for the Cause of Humanity?

Another thing always present and to be easily recognized in the man who has made

a spiritual attainment, is his possession of a certain strong vitality — not physical, or emotional, but spiritual - intellectual. This outstanding vitality has the strange effect that it either strongly attracts, or repels, those it contacts, leaving none unaffected. It quickens and intensifies everything in the life of the student under its influence, the bad, egocentric tendencies, as well as the good and disinterested, and thus forces him to come to decisions which he must make. Thus he becomes induced to decide which of these two influences he will live for. This rare quality of vitality in the man is manifest in his speech and in his writings, and is to be most easily studied in the voluminous literary output of H.P.B. and in the *Mahatma Letters*.

The traveller on the path of knowledge seeking some certainty of his own regarding the mystery of human existence, has not far to go before he finds the path he follows dividing into two, each branch going off in an opposite direction to the other. The one is called Religion, and the other Occultism. The philosophy upheld by each and the attitude to life implicit in it, is the exact opposite of that in the other. It is the student's intuition which in the final conclusion, decides which path he will take. The one, Religion, teaches that Man in himself and of himself, can do nothing. It is only by prostrating himself in self-obedience before his God, Allah, Jehovah, Brahma etc.—that he may propitiate Him to send down "Grace" which will save him. Hence his great reliance upon sacrifices, rituals, prayer, and sacraments. His attitude is one of utter dependance — upon God, his priests, and his churches. His highest values are obedience and self-abasement before his great All Powerful God. In other words, he has to look to some external source for the power to redeem him.

In contra-distinction to this, on the path of Occultism, there is no place for prostration, or the bended knee, for here the philosophy teaches that the redemptive power resides within Man, and that "if he fails to find it there, it is useless to look for it

elsewhere". So erect, facing the world, and all that it may bring him, he stands, knowing that all the powers of the Universe are his as he finds the courage and determination to unfold them. The attitude he seeks to inculcate is one of self-reliance and self-responsibility, and his highest values are self-mastery and human brotherhood.

Each individual has to choose for himself between these two paths. It is folly to attempt to bestraddle both, as this can only lead to futility and frustration. The choice is between becoming a "Son of Mary" — those who put their troubles upon the "Lord" and live in ease, honour, and contentment, and die well respected; and becoming one of the "Sons of Martha" who follow the path of the Warrior, of whom it is said that "they lose all the battles, but win the war for humanity".

And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessed — they know the Angels are on their side.

They know in them is the Grace confessed,

And for them are the Mercies multiplied.
They sit at the Feet — they hear the Word—They see how truly the Promise runs;

They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and — the Lord He lays it on Martha's Sons!

—Rudyard Kipling

Religion requires us to accept and believe external authority and its dictates. Its demand is for blind faith — the ability to accept on authority even what the rational mind rejects. Theosophy on the contrary, demands that its doctrines and ideals shall always be put forward for study, examination and testing, and the faith it seeks is the power to perceive the validity of things unseen, — the great timeless truths which underlie all life, and to put ones trust in them, lean ones weight upon them in reliance, and by so living them know whether they are true or false.

There may be some who say that discrimination is easy. All we have to do is to take as the standard the Esoteric philosophy of

the Mahatmas—Modern Theosophy—and abjure all that is out of line with it. If we follow this advice are we ourselves blindly following authority? Truth will justify itself, just as light does. Just as light will not only be seen itself, but will illumine all sorts of dark corners hitherto unseen, so will Truth. All great truths have the ability to throw light upon all sorts of dark mysteries and make a rational whole and this is a measure of its truth. Truth may be supra-rational and be beyond examination by the rational faculty, but never will it be found irrational. And so the student has to rely upon his rational mind, — made as free of bias and prejudice, and even where possible of preconception, as far as he can make it, — for his instrument of knowledge, to discriminate the truth from its imitations. To truly take the Esoteric Philosophy of the Mahatmas as our guide and our measuring rod, is not a matter of mere intellectual consideration and acceptance. To truly take it up, an individual has to apply its principles in terms of human living in his own life. Nothing less than this will bring certainty.

What is the element in the student which makes him so vulnerable to delusion where spiritual things are concerned? It is, of course, the uncontrolled, unguided Kamic element, the undisciplined emotions, and likes and dislikes being allowed to dominate the mind (Manas) — the clear - seeing faculty, whose function it is to control and guide — and determine our beliefs and values. When this happens emotional values take precedence over Spiritual, and emotional harmony — friendly relations — take precedence over truth in the values of the truth seeker and good intentions, which cost nothing, give assurance that all is well, and frank, out-spokenness in the cause of truth, is called intolerance. Herein lies the value of discipline, to keep the Kamic energies in their place as the driving force in human life, and bring blind attraction and repulsion out of the seat of control and guide. One strong reason why the student is so vulnerable where Spiritual things are con-

cerned, is because here he is “off guard”. Anyone who offers aid where his aspirations are concerned — the finest things in life, his sacred emotions — must be, he thinks, wise and good intentioned; yet it is these sacred emotions which have been used by priests all down the ages to dominate him and hold him in mental slavery.

Certainly, it is the business of every theosophist to become able to distinguish and know who are the friends and who are the enemies of Theosophy. We have to learn to estimate people, especially we have to be able to estimate those who offer to teach or to lead. There is only one way to this power; it is through the rigid examination of ourselves. To the extent that we know ourselves, we have the key to others. The shrinking from estimating others, which everyone experiences at first, is the certain measure of our own secret desire to avoid criticism. When we know ourselves and have faced the worst and the best that we are able to perceive, then criticism is always welcome. If it shows up something we did not know, we are glad to know it; something we already know is (a matter of indifference) simply hearing something we already know regarding ourselves.

Our aim then should be to impersonally estimate and so understand all those persons, (influences, activities and Movements) who are, in any way our concern, both as students of Life and as guardians of Theosophy.

W. E. Wilks,
Orpheus Lodge

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom, the “Eye” from the “Heart” doctrine.

— *Voice of the Silence*

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY ?

BY H. STYFF, PH.D.

(Translated from the Swedish by Inez Van Assche)

Religion is not only emotionally-accented belief in a mystic supernatural world, to be gained by performing certain rituals or creditable virtuous actions. Religion contains also a knowledge of the world around us, of human nature and the world of spirit, which, however, is said to be reserved for a few chosen, initiated ones—a science that, therefore, is called occultism.

This secret science is the content of the Indian Upanishads, which, according to Radhakrishnan, "give more spiritual information, than systematic thinking. They reveal to us a world of rich, diversified spiritual experience, rather than a world of abstract philosophical categories. Their truths are not only verified by natural reason but also by personal experience. Their goal is more practical than speculative." The philosophy, *Brahma-vidyâ*, is the seeking after wisdom through a way of life. *Brahma-vidyâ* means knowledge of *Brahmâ* (Monier) the science of the Absolute (Radhakrishnan), the Highest Spirit (Judge). The word appears, for example, in *Maitri-Upanishad* and *Bhagavad-Gitâ*. The Persian mystic Ferid ed-Din Attar in the *Bird Parliament* speaks of the Sun of God-awareness (see Hermelin's transl. verse 3466). In the Old Testament wisdom of God appears—but is not explained—in the phrase *Daath Jahveh*: e.g. *Isaiah 11:2*, *Jeremiah 22:16*, *Psalms 19:2*, "Day and night give each other knowledge of God." *Daath Elohim*, which means the same, is found in *Hosea 6:6*, "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." In his commentary on *Genesis*, Philo, in his allegorical manner, declares the source as *Divine Wisdom* (*Theia Sophia*). *Chokmah* (wisdom) appears also in the Old Testament, e.g. *Proverbs 8:1*, and in the *Wisdom of Solomon 14:22*, "They strayed from the

knowledge of God." *Chokmah* is often used by the medieval *Kabalists*.

In Greek sometimes *Sophia* (wisdom) is used and sometimes *Gnosis* (knowledge). The *Gnostics*, in contrast to the anchorites of the East, lived mostly among ordinary human beings; they founded many sects—before, inside and outside the borders of Christianity, both in time and space—all equally variable as to the dogmatic teaching and as to practical ethics. *Gnosticism* is the theoretical philosophy of the Hellenic Age, while the mystery cults were characterized by mythical rites and world explanations, which sometimes showed a trend to *Gnosticism*.

What the religious trends of the Hellenic Age held in common was *syncretism*, the blending together of mystical, philosophical and ethical movements of different origins, depending on the bent and interests of the particular religious leader. A consequence of this *syncretism* together with the tolerance exercised on the religious plane during Antiquity was, that one could belong to more than one religious community, according to bent or opportunity—or, if imagination and ambition were strong enough, create a new sect. One could also change from one doctrine of faith to another, as for example, *Augustine*, who first was philosopher, then *Manichean*, before he became *Christian*.

Where Christianity is concerned, it was, during its years of breaking through, divided, into many sects, influenced by different philosophical and religious teachings and can therefore be called *syncretic*. We need only think of our four Gospels and Paul's pronouncements, to find a handful of different *Christian* teachings. *Indian*, *Jewish*, *Egyptian* and *Greek* lines of thought were adopted and more or less completely

(Continued on Page 15)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The annual meeting of Montreal Lodge was held on Jan. 21 when the work of the past year was reviewed. The officers of the past year were re-elected, namely, President, Mr. F. T. Griffiths; Vice-President, Mrs. M. Roth; Treasurer, Mrs. B. Scott; Secretary, Mrs. M. Howard; Librarian, Mrs. H. Sora, and Auditor, Mr. Peter Sinclair. Three new members have joined recently.

* * *

Toronto Lodge announces that Miss Joy Mills, National Vice-President of the Theosophical Society in America, will visit Toronto from May 10 to May 12 and will be the principal speaker at the White Lotus Sunday meeting which will be a joint meeting with the H.P.B. Lodge of the Canadian Federation of Lodges.

Miss Mills will also speak at evening meetings on May 11 and 12, and at a special meeting for members only on Sunday, May 10 at 3 p.m. This will be Miss Mills' first visit to Toronto and we are looking forward to the pleasure of meeting her.

* * *

Miss Elouise Harrison of British Columbia who is a member-at-large in the Canadian Society, will be a welcome visitor to Toronto, June 7-9, when she will address three public meetings. Although this will be Miss Harrison's first visit to Toronto she is already well-known to our members through her articles in the magazine.

* * *

A member is very anxious to obtain a copy of the Peking Edition of *The Voice of the Silence*—this is the grey cloth edition published in 1927 by Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather and Mr. Basil Crump which contains a foreword of some Tibetan sentences written by the then Tashi Lama of Tibet. If anyone has a copy of this for sale, please get in touch with me.

* * *

A great need exists for financial aid in re-establishing some 85,000 Tibetan refugees now in India, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. They left their homes in Tibet with little chance to carry anything with them, and all kinds of supplies are needed. Aid is coming in from relief organizations, but the need is very great indeed.

A special effort is being made to help the Tibetan children of whom there are about 9,500 in India and Nepal, but children are reported to be dying daily from dysentery, tuberculosis, exposure and malnutrition. The more fortunate, some 3,000, live in overcrowded refugee schools where they have at least some measure of shelter and food and some medical attention, but the remaining 6,500 are without fixed homes or regular food supplies, and have no educational or medical attention.

At the suggestion of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and with the approval of the Indian Government the "Tibetan Children Homes Foundation" has been established and this is an avenue through which help can be given quickly and effectively. Donations may be sent to Mr. R. D. Taring, Secretary, Tibetan Homes Foundation, Happy Valley, Mussoorie, U.P. India, or may be sent to the Treasurer of The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras 20, India, and marked for Tibetan refugees.

Some literature on the plight of the children and on the efforts being made by the Tibetans to help themselves has been received; included are a few copies of a booklet "The Dance of Tibet" which I would be glad to send to enquirers as long as the supply lasts.

* * *

The *New York Herald Tribune* for Dec. 25, 1963, carried an account of the drift away from Roman Catholicism in South America. According to one estimate the Church there is losing 5 million members a year, many of whom are returning to "the pagan rites of their primitive Indian ancestors".

Many of the factors which affect the

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changing pattern of South America are economic and sociological. South America, like Africa, is an awakening giant, and the old forms will not suffice the new surging life. But another factor, and one which bears directly on the drift from the Church, is the spread of Theosophical ideas on the continent. There are now about 8,000 Theosophical members in Latin America, many more than in North America.

Theosophy, that excellent magazine published by the Theosophy Company of Los Angeles, carries in its "On the Lookout" columns of the January issue an article on an interview between a Toronto Lodge visiting speaker, the Rev. Harold Boon, and Mr. Allen Spraggett staff writer of the *Toronto Daily Star*. The subject was Reincarnation. One of the key questions was "Can a Christian believe in reincarnation?" Mr. Boon, who accepts reincarnation, said that for him, "Reincarnation is the fulfillment of the Gospel," and defended it as a Christian teaching. The article mentions the spread of Neoplatonic thought among prominent Christian thinkers in England and ends ". . . with the single exception of C. J. Ducasse's writings, nearly all the noteworthy, scholarly material on reincarnation has been written and published in England. Now it appears, Canada may become the scene of similar growth—out of orthodoxy into philosophy."

* * *

The members of the Society will read with regret the announcement in the President's address of the closing of the T.S. in Indonesia. Last year the Indonesian Section had 1675 members and 33 Lodges. All international organizations are now forbidden in Indonesia which is following the pattern of years ago in the "Iron Curtain" countries. Apparently the members there are trying to preserve some sort of organization but whatever the outcome of this may be, I am sure that their inner loyalty will be to the ideal of human brotherhood without distinction of race.

* * *

I have very much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society the following three members who joined through Toronto Lodge, Mrs. Jessie Patterson, Mrs. Maud Wilkie, and Mr. Steve Loza.

D.W.B.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

*The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist*

Judging from the blunt remarks made in the Jan.-Feb. issue by Mr. G. W. Barratt, the Theosophists had better learn to fend for themselves since the Society itself, as a vehicle of the Ancient Wisdom, has now evidently passed its high water tide of purposiveness and utility! One would think that all we have to do now is formally disband and our troubles will be forever—and blissfully—at an end!

Whose fault is it if Theosophy is “veiled”, as Mr. Barratt remarks, the *officials* who devote their time, efforts and—in many cases—*reputations* in propagating it? The *writers* and *lecturers* who do their utmost to combat a complacent society and, in no small degree, an “inwardly dead”, (as Krishnamurti recently put it) public? All of us who earnestly want Theosophy to reach the hearts and minds of others are doing our best, it is up to those who are still sluggish and apathetic within our ranks to do their share. Many of us are all but compelled to set an example for others as if the latter were on the drag line of a tow-chain.

This writer also sees no reason why Karma and Reincarnation should be kept in the background at this late date. These doctrines are theosophical *essentials*—certainly not *non-essentials*! Western countries are becoming increasingly aware of their reasonableness and truthfulness and are more prepared to face them today than in H.P.B.’s day.

If someone like Dr. Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia Medical School (who, to this writer’s knowledge, is *not* a Theosophist) can overtly carry on studies of reincarnation cases, what is to prevent us who *are* Theosophists from doing whatever we can to see to it that such doctrines are kept continuously in the forefront? While some of us are working more effectively as individuals, an organization such as the Theosophical Society is still needed—or has

Mr. Barratt forgotten the all - too - evident fact that orthodox religious denominations have their houses of worship, the influence of which our Theosophical lodges tend to beneficently offset?

—Richard Sattelberg

☆ ☆ ☆

*The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist*

The best thing that has happened for a long time in the Theosophical Movement is the rising tide of opposition — spearheaded by reputable members of the various Theosophical bodies — to the worship of C. W. Leadbeater.

It is, of course, a matter of common knowledge that no healthy-minded or well-informed student of the Occult gives any attention to the Leadbeater fantasies. One look at them is enough.

Put his books are still published and sold, with the result that many non-theosophists, and theosophists-to-be, associate his paranoid hallucinations with the genuine teachings of Theosophy, and are even led to believe that he was a Mahatma! This is outrageous; and the deluded champions of this pitiable degenerate have dealt the Cause of Theosophy a near death-blow.

That the human mind is a curious thing, capable of deceiving itself in many incredible ways, is beside the point. The point is that incalculable harm has been done to the work of Blavatsky, Judge, and the Masters by persistently holding before the world, in the name of Theosophy, an individual who was, by his own admission, the very epitome of normal corruption.

Let his apologists build high their sand-piles of adulation. The rising tide will yet engulf them, and reveal — in the Mahachohan’s words — “the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

—George Cardinal LeGros

Give up in mind and heart all to the Self and you will find peace.

—William O. Judge,
Letters That Have Helped Me.

MODERN ART AND H.P. BLAVATSKY

Under the title of "Eight Contemporary Painters from India . . . Interaction of East and West" a recent exhibition of paintings by Indian Artists was presented in New York by the India-America League, Inc. An excellent catalogue with biographical notes and reproductions of works of the painters accompanied the exhibition. Brief essays serve as foreword; these deal with Western influences on modern Indian painting, and the influence of Indian philosophy "exerted either by direct contact or through Theosophy" on modern non-representational art is discussed. This influence is traced from H. P. Blavatsky through Kandinsky, Mondrian and Klee, pioneers of the modern art movement. Excerpts from the writings of these artists are compared with quotations from Madame Blavatsky's works showing clearly the source of their philosophy, as for instance;

"*Considering the Spiritual in Art*, a book by Kandinsky, published in 1911, where the following illuminating observations occur; (Spiritual) methods are still alive and in use among nations whom we, from the height of our knowledge, have been accustomed to regard with pity and scorn. To such nations belong the people of India, who from time to time confront our scholars with problems which we have either passed without notice or brushed aside. Madame Blavatsky was the first person, after a life of many years in India, to see a connection between these 'savages' and our 'civilization'. In that moment rose one of the most important spiritual movements, one which numbers a great many people today, and has assumed a material form in the Theosophical Society. This Society consists of groups who seek to approach the problem of the spirit by way of inner knowledge. Their methods, in opposition to positivism, derive from the ancient wis-

dom, which has been formulated with relative precision . . . the Theory of Theosophy.

"*Matter and Force are One* — Mondrian, a Theosophist since 1909, wrote; 'Art being life, it depends on the state of evolution and on the nature of society. Since modern science has confirmed the Theosophical doctrine according to which matter and force (mind) are one, there is no reason to separate them. If it is true that matter and mind (force) constitute life, we must take both into account and not just one of these two. One cannot create life, or art, with mind alone. Nor with matter alone. Creation is the unity of these two . . .'

"Similarly Klee, under the influence of Kandinsky, looked into Theosophical writings. However, he preferred to go to the original sources of Indian philosophy reading 'Mahabharata' 'Sermons of the Buddha' and the writings of Tagore. In 1918 he wrote to his wife, 'I am obeying some inner compulsion . . . After the die of fate is cast, it is pointless to continue doing inferior things.' "

Then follow these comparative quotations from the writings of Kandinsky and Madame Blavatsky:

"Matter is but the storehouse out of which the spirit selects the necessary elements to secure the objective results."

Kandinsky

"Matter is Eternal, it is the Upadhi (the physical basis) for the one finite Universal mind to build thereon its ideations."

Madame Blavatsky

"The genesis of the work is cosmic in character, the originator of the work is thus the Spirit."

Kandinsky

"Considering the metaphysical triad as the Root . . . the great Breath assumes the character of precosmic ideation . . ."

Madame Blavatsky

"Thus every quiet and every moving point or line became just as alive and opened up its soul to me.

"Every line says, 'Here I am'. Each holds its own, reveals its own eloquent features and whispers, 'Listen, listen to my secret'".

Kandinsky

"Wherever there is an atom of matter, a particule or molecule, even in its most gaseous condition there is life in it".

Madame Blavatsky

The final essay closes with a quotation from Kalidasa, the greatest poet and dramatist of ancient India, "Whatever is old is not necessarily excellent; neither is the new in arts or poetry blameworthy. The critical and accomplished mind after examining various forms chooses the right ones while the undiscerning fool follows the path laid down by others."

Sufficient has been quoted to show the tenor of the essays. Altogether it is a most interesting catalogue and worthwhile exhibition; it is to be wished that the Art Gallery of Toronto or of some other Canadian city might be included in its itinerary. Whatever one's personal bias may be concerning modern art, these examples of modern art in India seem to have a foundation in sincere study, and may well serve as a bridge in understanding between the older literal schools and the work of contemporary painters.

J. T. M.

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

(Continued From Page 10)

fused together as a whole, and in such a way that neither the faithful nor the scholars can agree to, or have any conception of, what constitutes the heart and spirit of Christianity.

The Gospel according to St. John, with its strong Gnostic warp and woof, is considered by many to be the true Christianity. But Paul, whose writings are the oldest

in the New Testament, gave out a doctrine closely related to that of John and Luke but differing from that of Matthew and Mark.

It is interesting to see how Paul uses the words *gnosis* and *sophia*, especially *theou sophia*. The noun *gnosis* is found in our New Testament almost exclusively with Paul. Exceptions are a few places in Luke and the Epistle of Peter, *Sophia* is found in Matthew and Mark only in a few places, otherwise mostly in Paul and Luke. An illustration is I Cor. 1:24 where Christ is called God's wisdom (*theo sophia*), and also I Cor. 2:7, "We speak the wisdom of God . . . even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world . . ."—even here *theou sophia*. This sequence of words is striking; used instead of the usual order, it shows that even then Theosophy was becoming a technical term. In Colossians 1:26 Paul says he will proclaim the secret that had been hidden, but now is to be revealed. This secret is "Christ in you, the hope of Glory." He will therefore teach with all wisdom, that he may "present every man perfect in Christ." "Christ in you" is evidently the divine in man according to Paul's opinion. See also Ephesians 3:9.

In his essay on man's pre-existence V. Rydberg characterizes Paul's views as theosophical, as also the Gospel according to St. John. Colossians 1:9-20 is a compendium of Paul's theosophy. Here he says, he never ceases to pray, that his readers may be filled with knowledge of God's will as to all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Wisdom is to lead a life worthy of the Lord, through knowledge of God. Further, to be filled with power to show steadfastness and patience. Secondly, wisdom is participation in the light—that is, free from sin, salvation from darkness and remission of sins. The Son is the image of the invisible God, first born before all creation. Knowledge of the world, its origin and creation, also forms part of wisdom. Lastly, wisdom is the peace and atonement coming through Christ. For the rest, Paul mentions man's complex nature: spirit, soul and body

(Thess. 5:23), Christ in man, the law of Karma (Galatians 6:7, Romans 2:6).

Occasional references to theosophy in the New Testament are: John 6:45, "And they shall be all taught of God," (see Isaiah 54:13). Epistle of James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James declares what this wisdom of God is: "Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, without partiality and hypocrisy." 3:17.

The term *theosophia* is found for the first time in the magical Leiden Museum papyrus from the first half of the second century after Christ, (see Dieterich: Abraxas). It also may be found in Porphyry, Proclus and Damascius. Likewise we find the adjective *thelosophos*: wise in godly matters (Porphyry and Iamblichus) and also the verb *theosopheo*: to possess knowledge in godly matters (Porphyry). Related words are found in English in the sixteen hundreds, while Littré on behalf of French cites Diderot. During the Middle Ages we find *theosophia* used by Dionysius the Areopagite, who explains it as divine knowledge, the source of all wisdom. For him the subject of Christian enlightenment is a theosophy. Boethius' *Consolatio*—a book that was read extensively during the Middle Ages—has also several times the term *scientia divina*, divine knowledge. As far as the Middle Ages is concerned, the Danish philologist A. Christiansen delineates theosophical trends from the Indian Vedanta via Neoplatonism, to the Arab Avicenna and the lyrics of the Persian Sufists.

Numerous are the theosophists in historical times: Apollonius of Tyana, the Neoplatonists Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus. N. Soderblom calls Mani "the greatest theosophist of all times." Paracelsus, the Rosicrucians, Jacob Bohme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin are some of the most striking names. "In modern times theosophy is probably the most widespread and esteemed representative for the occult tradition." So says Evelyn Underhill in *Mysticism*.

Modern theosophy was originated by H. P. Blavatsky (1831-91), who together with Col Olcott, William Q. Judge and others, founded the Theosophical Society. Around this remarkable woman there has been much sharp controversy. She made worldwide journeys, appeared first as a spiritualistic medium, (?) studied occultism and wrote startling books. We can with impunity pass over biographical data as irrelevant to her message. A more important question, however, is the origin of her Secret Doctrine, which she claimed to have received in Tibet. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, specialist in Tibetan affairs and the religion of that country, writes with support of a Lama: "There is adequate esoteric evidence in H. P. Blavatsky's work, to show the author's intimate knowledge of the higher lamaistic doctrines, into which she claims to have been initiated." (*Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 7). Her main works are: *Isis Unveiled* (1877), *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, besides shorter works and essays. At her death W. Q. Judge became leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, while Annie Besant assumed presidency of the Theosophical Society with headquarters in Adyar, India. She died in 1933. The most important works of Judge are: *The Ocean of Theosophy*, *Theosophical Handbooks*, *Letters That Helped Me*, and a translation of the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*. The difference between these two groups is in short: that Judge represented an ethic-religious line of thought, while Annie Besant interested herself in spiritualism among other things.

After Judge's death in 1896 he was succeeded by Katherine Tingley (1847-1929), who devoted herself mostly to practical theosophy: nursing the unfortunates during U.S.A.'s war in Cuba (1898); women's rights and educational activities. She visited Sweden several times and founded a Theosophical School in Visingsö. She gave public lectures on theosophy and wrote among others: *The Mysteries of the Heart Doc-*

irine, Wine of Life, all translated into Swedish. By G. de Purucker, who succeeded Mrs. Tingley, we have in Swedish: *Occult Handbook, Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* (a re-writing of the Secret Doctrine), *Questions We All Ask*. Mention should also be made of *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*. Successors to Purucker (1942) were: H. T. Edge* (died 1946), Conger and James Long.

Krishnamurti (born 1895) was Annie Besant's disciple, but left the Theosophical Society and settled in California where he gained many adherents. Anthroposophy is the creation of Rudolf Steiner (1913). In Dornack near Basel he built a temple that, on account of the war, was not completed until 1920. This was intended for the presentation of esoteric dramas by Steiner and Schuré. But for political reasons Schuré drew back and was attracted to the Theosophical Society. Among Steiner's writings to be mentioned are: *Outline of Occult Science, Knowledge of the Higher World and its Attainment*, the periodical *Goethenium*. His movement was banned in 1935. As Annie Besant, Steiner interests himself mostly with the astral planes and gives hints at exercises for the development of so-called psychic powers. Steiner has some astrological ponderings, however without explanations. Particularly his color symbolism seems unclear. His expositions are dry and dogmatic, his point of view is more intellectual than ethical. Max Heindel (the book *Rosicrucians*) was Steiner's disciple. Most of Steiner's and Heindel's ideas are derived from Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. A closely related teaching can be found in Poul Goos: *Theosomatic Thinking* (in

Danish, 1953). A somewhat shorter rendering of Theosophy during its early period is S'innett's *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883). *Verdades Ocultas* (1944) by the Argentinian Vigil is a beautiful book, about intuition and instinct, how these put man in contact with the spiritual, with love, and give liberation.

The opposition to Theosophy has been very strong and attacks have mostly been directed to the Besant line, which to the opponents characterizes all Theosophy. In Sweden a number of authors have appeared against Theosophy, from Geijerstam (1877) to T. Andrae (1930). "Violence and Spears: Modern Religious Movements", considers having objectively evaluated theosophy this way, "Theosophy is the highest knowledge of God, the world and its evolution. Theosophy is against materialism, teaches retribution (is for righteousness in the world); it stands for brotherhood, for honest seeking after the truth, for the independence of religion as a mystic insight, a mystic experience. We are surrounded by a supernatural, a spiritual world." The criticisms of these authors are: dissension and intolerance in the ranks of theosophy. Theosophy is fantastic (teaching about mahatmas). It is neither a science nor a religion, because it is pantheism. Salvation in theosophy consists of soul salvation through knowledge, gnosis. The main argument of the Church against theosophy is its syncretic character, forgetting that this is a double-edged sword. One overlooks also that as in Gnosticism, there are different trends that cannot be lumped together.

A Swedish theosophist declares that, "according to his view, theosophy is the belief in a Divine core in man, a belief in karma and reincarnation." T. Andrae in *Modern Mystic* (p. 46).

(We are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Iverson I. Harris for furnishing us with this translation.—*Editors*)

* (Dr. Edge was never officially named as Dr. de Purucker's successor as Leader of the Point Loma Theosophical Society. But as a dedicated, unfaltering devotee and prolific exponent of genuine Theosophy, he was an intellectual leader from the time of his meeting with H.P.B. in 1887 until his death in 1946. —Iverson L. Harris.)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, Third and Revised edition, edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin, published 1962 by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 524 pages with index, price \$6.50.

The preparation of this revised edition, a work of several years, has been painstakingly done by the two Editors and the Theosophical world is under a debt of gratitude to them. As our readers know, *The Mahatma Letters* is a unique collection of letters exchanged from 1880 to 1885 between two Mahatmas, K. H. and M., and Mr. Sinnett who was editor of an influential newspaper, *The Pioneer*, in India. The letters constitute one of the principal sources of information concerning the ancient wisdom and Mr. Sinnett's early books on Theosophy were based upon his understanding of the teachings conveyed therein. When the correspondence began "there was no idea then of any publications being issued on the basis of the replies you might receive." Their publication in 1923 aroused considerable controversy, some members strongly upheld Mr. Trevor Barker in the course which he had taken while others condemned his action on the ground that the letters were not intended for publication and that some of the material was private and personal. Mr. Barker said that he had published the letters to correct some misconceptions and even distortions of the original teachings given out by H.P.B. For example, one of the points was the "Mars-Mercury controversy", H.P.B. said that Mr. Sinnett in his *Esoteric Buddhism* had misunderstood the teaching and that Mars and Mercury did not form part of the earth chain of globes. Mrs. Besant said they did—and this teaching is still being put forward in Theosophical lodges, although an analogous teaching would be that a man in incarnation has three physical bodies. The first edition of *The Mahatma Letters* appeared too late to prevent the formation of The Liberal

Catholic Church. It is doubtful if Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater would have gone ahead with this if they had been aware of the words of K. H. respecting the evils of "the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches". The circulation of the first edition of *The Mahatma Letters* was discouraged among the members of the Adyar Society. The fact that this third edition was published by The Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar is indicative of the very real change of attitude towards Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater which is going on in the Society.

Mr. Sinnett died in 1921 leaving the letters to Miss Maud Hoffman, his executrix, who authorized Mr. Trevor Barker to edit and publish them. Later she created "The Mahatma Letters Trust" and appointed the Editors of this third Edition as Trustees. The original letters were deposited in the British Museum in 1939 where they were carefully bound in seven volumes and were later microfilmed and copies went to various Libraries and organizations throughout the world.

In this Third Edition the letters remain in the order in which they were first published; an alternative would have been to arrange them in chronological order, but many of the letters are not dated and despite the efforts of several students to produce an exact chronology, no one of these has been accepted by all. Only a small portion of Mr. Trevor Barker's original Introduction has been retained and his Appendix on the Mars-Mercury question has been omitted entirely. The Editors state that these omissions were made because much of the contents was comment and that if so much comment had been included, there would have been little reason for not including more. This is a matter of editorial judgment; personally I feel that the valuable Introduction and Appendix could have been included as part of the original publication without opening the door to further comment. We are assured by the Editors that in the text itself *no single word has been added save in*

square brackets to make the sense clear; and that *no single word has been omitted* save in a few cases of an obvious grammatical error. After reading the Editors' Preface one cannot doubt that the laborious task of editing was done most conscientiously, and that a deep respect for the sources of the letters and a keen appreciation of the importance and significance of the work was with the Editors at all times.

The last paragraph of the Preface reads: "Whatever else, therefore, is studied by the student of Theosophy, these Letters must be read, their teaching digested and applied and their warnings heeded. For this is Theosophy. From such a study there may come in time a new understanding of Theosophy, so wide that it may heal the rifts in the Movement which in the last fifty years have impeded its development, so deep that every member of that Movement may re-dedicate his life to its service. For these Letters speak not only of the Wisdom but of the Way that leads to it, and it is for the reader, by inner conquest and the awakening of compassion, to achieve for himself the timeless Wisdom which the writers of these Letters sought, and found, and taught in outline in these pages for the benefit of all mankind."

—D.W.B.

* * *

There is No Religion Higher than Truth, by E. L. Gardner, T. P. House, 68 Great Russell St., London. 23 pp. 2s 6d.

This little booklet may well become epoch-making, for it is really an announcement by three very prominent members of the T.S. in England, that the clairvoyance of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater has been proved to be basically unreliable. These three members are Mr. Gardner the author, and his two collaborators in this work, Mr. L. H. Leslie-Smith and Mr. V. Wallace Slater, who is General Secretary of the English Section of the T.S.

The final proof of the fallibility of C.W.L.'s clairvoyance came from the perusal of his letters to Mrs. Besant over the years 1916-20. These voluminous letters,

we are told, deal with directions from the Lord Maitreya and from the Master K.H. concerning the new church (the Liberal Catholic) which the Lord Maitreya had "brought into being" its trappings, ceremonies, and procedures in preparation for the Coming of the World Teacher. And it is the contrast between the K.H. of these letters—the lover of sacerdotalism—and the K.H. of the Mahatma Letters with his strong views denouncing the same, which finally decided the author and his collaborators that C.W.L.'s clairvoyance was the product of his own imagination.

The proof that the Lord Maitreya, and the K.H., the church lover, were products of C.W.L.'s imagination was, one would think, sufficiently evident when these were no more heard of, and the "Coming" collapsed with the defection of Krishnamurti in 1928. (Only the L.C.C. carried on and is going strong today, and draws its Bishops, priests and members almost wholly from members of the T.S.)

There have been in almost every country, both inside and outside the T.S., those students who have vociferously maintained down the years that C.W.L.'s clairvoyance was nothing but moonshine. Nor will Mr. Gardner's explanation, that C.W.L. was the victim of unconscious Kriya shakti—seeing clairvoyantly his own thought creations—suffice to explain Leadbeater's requesting Prof. Ernest Wood for the names of prominent theosophists to fill out his "Lives of Alcyone" as reported in the latter's book *Is This Theosophy*.

Nor was C.W.L. the only one who suffered from clairvoyant delusions. Lady Emily Lutyens in her book, *Candles in the Sun*, which describes in detail the whole Krishnamurti World Teacher Movement, in which she took a very active part, gives extracts from her day by day diary describing the hectic seven weeks at Huizen during which George Arundale became first a priest, then a Bishop, and the chief clairvoyant who daily brought through messages announcing the initiations taken by all those

declared to become the Apostles to the Lord Maitreya when he took over Krishnamurti's body as the World Teacher. Everyone took initiations including Lady Emily herself, (Rukmini took the whole five initiations in seven weeks) also Krishnamurti, and Raja Gopal who were at Ojai at the time. Such excitement prevailed that Mrs. Besant was induced to postpone her Albert Hall lectures to go to Huizen where she proclaimed to the world these initiations taken by the Lord's Apostles, 10 of whom were named. It was this Occult orgy which made Krishnamurti rebel, and a few years later repudiate the whole Movement, and disband the Order of the Star, and forsake the Theosophical Society.

Mr. Gardner states that when he last saw Mrs. Besant in 1930 she had just returned from a tour with Bishops Leadbeater and J. I. Wedgewood; "Certain incidents on that tour had opened her eyes, and she saw clearly much that had been obscure. It was plain that she knew the truth and it was devastating. The dreadful burden was that she herself might have prevented the illusion and its results if she had retained her Occult faculties and had checked statements instead of blindly accepting them."

From this it would appear that Mr. Gardner himself, was well aware of C.W.L.'s unreliability thirty-four years ago. The record will certainly show that Mrs. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater have to stand together and accept responsibility as the Authors of Neo-Theosophy, which has side-tracked the T.S. from its sacred duty of sponsoring Modern Theosophy—the Esoteric philosophy of the Mahatmas left in the care of the T.S.

This valuable little Booklet ends with a section headed "The Ancient Wisdom Stands" in which is found the sound advice that the search for truth demands not only an "Open Mind" but also strong convictions, the product of our own thinking; provided we are ready to modify them in the light of future knowledge.

Our convictions can be of little import-

ance to ourselves or to others, if we do not uphold them positively.

We have to thank Mr. Gardner and his collaborators for having the courage to publish what will doubtless cause great resentment amongst many members who still blindly idolize the "Beloved Leaders" of the past.

Finally, where are these letters which induced Mr. Gardner to make this announcement? The members cannot come to a worth-while decision upon this important matter without reading the evidence.

W.E.W.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant, by Arthur H. Nethercot. pp. 483, including index. Rupert Hart-Davis, London 1963. 42/-net.

This second volume of the biography of Annie Besant is so large, so comprehensive and so splendidly written and documented that anything like a full review would require the space of a whole issue of this magazine. The research work in which the author found himself involved commands the highest admiration and respect. It is understood to have occupied him for some fourteen years, during which time he has read millions of words, in scores of magazines, newspapers, read and written some thousands of private letters and interviewed dozens of individual participants in the multitudinous labours which marked the activities of Dr. Besant.

This almost incredible range of activity has necessitated extreme condensation, which, in turn, causes an occasional "gap of the seams". Never-the-less, after full allowance has been made for minor errors of fact and for generalizations which occasionally mislead where they do not "jell", the book remains a model biography, worthy of ranking with anything in the same field. After a close reading, one is left with a tragic feeling that the portrayal of the slow disintegration of Annie Besant as an individual may lessen the number of readers and have less impact than the book deserves.

These "Four Lives" (and many people would have preferred to have them described as "Facets" or "Segments",) takes up the story of Mrs. Besant where it was left off in the previous volume, with Annie installed as a great Theosophical celebrity, but still somewhat overshadowed by the American, W. Q. Judge. It is soon made obvious that Nethercot has had his view of Judge "slanted" and he inclines to be less than fair in depicting him as one of the minor characters in Annie's development. As with Mme. Blavatsky, it is not always easy to follow courses of action; but the utter consistency of Judge's expositions of Theosophy, the luminous quality of his writings, have always stood out. It is well to remember that Mrs. Besant produced her own translation of the Bhagavad Gita to supplant that of Judge, and her volume *The Ancient Wisdom* was intended to replace Judge's *The Ocean of Theosophy* as an introduction to the Secret Doctrine itself, as well as to the volumes by Blavatsky bearing the same title.

Nethercot brings out in his proper order the belated admission by Annie that she had been wrong in her attitude to Judge and in her acceptance at the time that he gave a misleading form to genuine messages from the Masters, (he was never overtly accused of forgery, remember) but such an admission was made privately and never publicized at the time. This recalls to your reviewer a long interview which he had with G. R. S. Mead in 1916. Mead said he had often wondered if he had not gone astray in refusing to support Judge, who had called on him during the 1894 crisis and implored such support. Mead was ill in bed with a severe attack of influenza and his normal judgment was not functioning.

The simple fact remained that Mrs. Besant emerged triumphant and Judge was forced into a course of action that rent the seamless garment of Theosophy in twain, with no possibility of being rewoven while the protagonists remained alive. This, indeed, is something which has never been brought about.

Before going on to review Nethercot's attitude to Mrs. K. A. Tingley, who succeeded Judge in one sense but not in another, it is well that we recognize that Nethercot very rarely commits himself to the pronouncement of any final judgment. He prefers to state the facts, as he sees and has resurrected them, so as to allow untrammelled freedom to his readers to form their own judgments, to arrive at their own conclusions. But this is not so in the case of Mrs. Tingley. He has very few words of commendation of her but more than enough of condemnation. He stresses unduly her supposedly implacable hatred of Mrs. Besant, which he implies was the basis of her opposition to all that Mrs. Besant was aiming at, whereas, it was intended to preserve the true inward teaching which stemmed from Blavatsky and Judge. His references to Mrs. Tingley's most vigorous worker, as her "most scurrilous pamphleteer" and as spreader of "filthy" leaflets are unworthy of Nethercot's vivid style; his summing up of Mrs. A. L. Cleather and Miss Hildegard Davey as "poisonous females" is grossly unfair, even unworthy.

After ten years of comparative calm the Theosophical Society and the occult world was shattered by the emergence of the "Leadbeater Case". One cannot help admiring the way in which this unsavoury matter has been handled. The facts are there, the evidence from both sides is clearly presented; there is no overt condemnation or even judgment. By this time "neo-theosophy" based largely on the supposed clairvoyant vision of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, ex-Anglican clergyman, ex-Buddhist, suspected by Blavatsky during her last years, had become rampant. Now grave charges of moral delinquency had been formulated, and the whole story in highly condensed form is narrated by Nethercot in a way which excites admiration. Any fuller description might have aroused grave charges of pornography on Nethercot's part and lessened the value of this biography. By carefully approaching the subject he has been able to

include in the original cipher the most offensive and condemnatory portions in a most innocuous way. The evidence is there for anyone who will take time and trouble in deciphering it. The outcome of the Theosophical Council investigation in London led to seven of fourteen members voting for the expulsion of Leadbeater, the other seven voting for the acceptance of his resignation. President Olcott used his casting vote for resignation. In 1908 a special court of review was set up by Mrs. Besant, comprising E.S. members pledged to her support, but which saw only a portion of the evidence. It reported that it found nothing which prevented Leadbeater from rejoining the T.S. So the matter was left unresolved.

Then follows the story of the Krishnamurti fiasco. It is well told, at considerable length, but too intricate to be followed in detail in a brief review which already threatens to become too long. Nethercot's biographical method shows up to great advantage—a statement of fact, an outline of events in just sufficient detail to allow the thoughtful reader to form his or her own conclusions. It is a fascinating story. Leadbeater was the *fons et origo* of this amazing myth, but at the critical moment it was wrested from his hands by Messrs. Arundale, Wedgewood and Kollerstrom. The end came in 1925 when the almost blasphemous announcement came that twelve apostles had been selected to aid the coming Messiah (Krishnamurti). Nethercot misses one important point here—the furious outburst of temper on the part of Bishop Leadbeater when the news reached him. "What is all this damned nonsense?" he was credibly reported as saying. "I know nothing about this!" He despatched a cable to Annie repudiating the statement, sealed only with the authority of Messrs. Arundale, Wedgewood and Kollerstrom, and received a reply that if he did not support Annie regarding the announcement she would resign from the Presidency of the T.S. As his very livelihood rested on his acceptance of all she

did, even to his membership in the T.S., he reluctantly complied.

What will strike the ordinary reader is the sheer lying, the mendacity, the pseudo-occultism that centred around the announcement. Leadbeater had enthusiastically accepted the claims of the Liberal Catholic Church, but he was unwilling to see his authority as the chief source of all occult revelation being usurped by the triad that had emerged. Krishnamurti ended the fiasco by renouncing the whole wretched business of leadership. He had been shocked into realisation by the death of his brother Nityananda, who had ever been a more likeable and far more intelligent character than Krishnaji himself. The question which naturally arises is: were these people, fairly strong characters in themselves, deluded, self-hypnotised, the victims of forces which they were unable to master or were they liars, charlatans, egoists, deceived as well as deceiving.

It was just prior to this that Australia had been subjected to its share of the turmoil. Nethercot tells the story well, but with several minor errors. It is a pity that the Martyn Letter to Mrs. Besant of May 1921 is not quoted, as it is a recapitulation of much that is not available anywhere else, and it shows the nobility of Martyn's character, so cruelly maligned by Mrs. Besant in private conversations and in various Theosophical journals, but most of all in E.S. publications. She lightly dismissed the whole soul-destroying episode as a Muddle in a Puddle; but this was too cynical to be taken seriously.

Perhaps the least interesting portion of the book is the account of Mrs. Besant's tremendous political work in India. There is an almost day-by-day record of her multifarious activities, leaving the reader breathless at what she aimed at, what she actually accomplished and the final bitter betrayal by those whom she sought to serve. Her constant travelling, speechmaking and other political activities are almost incredible and would have exhausted a woman half her age. Had her advice been accepted, had her pro-

posals been adopted, the history of Modern India would have been far happier. Even though her name is fading into oblivion and even though India has already well-nigh forgotten who she was and what she did, she will, she must, remain a tremendous force for good, however unacknowledged. So much for Mother India, who betrayed and deserted her step-daughter, thereby creating an aftermath of blood, massacre of interne-cine strife which continues even now and for which there is no apparent end.

There is something terribly pathetic in her long, slow decline into old age, with her snow-white hair, always an attraction, going in sorrow to the sandalwood of the funeral pyre. The great things to which she aspired were never to be achieved, but even in each and in all of her failures there was an element of grandeur. She was vain, she was proud, she spoke other men's thoughts far better than they could have expressed them; she saw in every opposition to any of her personal ideas and projects a personal affront. Unlike Blavatsky she, being dead, no longer speaks with an air of authority, if, indeed, she speaks at all. Her incredible activity has ended largely in nothingness and she surely deserved a kinder fate.

So this review closes with a deep regard and respect to the writer of the book. Professor Nethercot deserves in an unmeasured degree our thanks; his generalisations may err sometimes, as his suggestion that Buddhism is exoteric and Brahminism esoteric comes as a surprise; but there is little doubt that this will be the definitive Life of Annie Besant, in which minor errors sink into insignificance and the larger facts stand stark for future students. He has earned our gratitude.

And what of us who survive, after playing lesser roles that keep us on the lunatic fringe of this tragic extravaganza, tragic comedians at best. Kipling has spoken for us:

Yet we were what we were,
And being so
It pleases us to stare
At the far show
Of unbelievable years, and shapes that flit
In our own likeness, on the edge of it.
—J. M. Prentice

☆ ☆ ☆

The Principles of Astrology, by Charles E. O. Carter. 5th and Revised Edition published 1963 by The Theosophical Publishing House, London, England. 186 pp. Price 21 shillings.

This is an excellent book for all beginners who would like to understand the laws that govern a horoscope. The author goes into a careful step-by-step analysis of how to plot a horoscope, and at the same time shows how to interpret it. He gives a clear definition of each term used, a valuable point since once these terms are understood, the rest is made that much clearer.

Advice is also given to those who are just starting to use astrology, what to avoid at the beginning and what to emphasize. The book is very complete as far as understanding the science of horoscopy and of how to plot a specific horoscope goes, but it lacks with respect to the interpretation of a horoscope; undoubtedly this would be a book all on its own, and not everything can be compiled in a 186-page book. But for its size and purpose it gives enough for the reader to get a good idea about horoscopy.

An Encyclopedia of Psychological Astrology, by Charles E. O. Carter. 4th Edition reprinted 1963. Published by The Theosophical Publishing House London, England. Price 18 shillings.

In this work Mr. Carter has made a general study and compiled it in an encyclopedia type book, which is more for the purpose of looking up one or another point of a horoscope rather than for the study of astrology. It is a good book to have for reference as well as for checking one's own interpretation of a horoscope.

K.S.

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