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THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

BY MOLLIE GRIFFITH

Theosophy, which we all know means Divine Wisdom, has been called by other names as well, such as "The Ancient Wisdom," or "The Esoteric Tradition." It has been symbolized by a key or by a light, and Mr. Judge in the *Ocean* says: "Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child."

It is, however, in its aspect of light that these few thoughts are presented.

Now our first contacts with Theosophy in this life were naturally different. Some were born into it, having a parent or parents who had already accepted its teachings; others became interested because nowhere else could they find an explanation of life which satisfied both their minds and their hearts; while others felt when they first heard its message, that they were recovering a precious Truth, which they had once possessed, but which they had temporarily lost.

So although there are many ways in which we can and do contact this age-old wisdom, there is generally an experience which most of us have had and which might almost be called a revelation — the time in this life at which the true scope and grandeur of these teachings first entered our consciousness. It seems at such

a time, that the walls of our minds are pushed back, as understanding flows in, for we get a glimpse of the past, present and future as one continuous whole, and realize to some extent, why things are as they are. It is a time of great happiness, for everything is seen on an ideal level; the beauty and the justice of the scheme of life is apparent; the future seems clear and full of promise, for not yet have the trials and difficulties of even trying to fit oneself usefully into such a scheme of things become apparent.

As time goes on, this light which is Theosophy, sheds its beams on our relationships with all living beings, and who or what, according to this teaching, is not living? Although this opens up a far greater sense of responsibility towards all life, it also adds to our enjoyment of it, especially for those of us who love nature. In realizing our oneness with her, both inwardly and outwardly and the fact that her every unit is evolving in the same way as we are, our feeling of kinship with her has been justified.

Gradually we begin to sense what has sometimes been called the Divine Plan and although our understanding of it may still be immature, we feel impelled to try and add to its unfoldment with whatever knowledge we have. It is at this point that this same light which has illuminated the past, present and future and has shown us our kinship with all life, now condenses and

shows us ourselves. It seems to me that at this point we are seriously challenged as to the sincerity of our belief.

We have learned in some way or other, the great blessing of coming into contact with Theosophy and we know that this has been made possible through the valiant self-sacrifice of others. We want to carry on their work in the only way we can, which is to hand on to our fellow-men what we have been given, and we wonder how best we can fit ourselves to do this.

Most of us have had the experience of seeing a bright shaft of light enter a room, a room which we had thought was clean and tidy, but now as the strong light penetrates even into the darkest corners, we see dust where we had thought there was none, and even marks on furniture which before we had not noticed. In the same way, when the great and searching light of Theosophy is turned inwards on ourselves, we become aware of weaknesses and limitations which had not been so apparent before, but which we know will have to be dealt with before the light of our own inner and higher self can penetrate our minds and our hearts.

The lessons of the past have not been wasted and any good qualities we may have developed will now stand us in good stead, but others will have to be added to them. It is interesting to consider what some of these qualities are, and how our attitude towards life should gradually change.

We are taught that although we may and do seek guidance from our own teachers, and from the great of all the ages, this is done with the object of finally finding Truth within ourselves. This is, of course, a far-off event for most of us, although even now we are advised to "knock at the door of our own hearts, to enter the chambers so quiet and still of our own Being" for the God which we seek is within each one of us.

Although this is taught elsewhere, in Theosophy we are given such a clear-cut picture of the higher and lower self that

we do have a clue as to the method by which we can try to come into contact with that part of our nature which is imperishable, rather than give so much attention to the perishable and fleeting. It is the attention we give to our lower desires and thoughts that gives them their power over us. We are advised to stand aside and observe them, as they come and go within us, in the same way as we would observe people coming in and out of our own house; we should only entertain or give attention to those which are in harmony or at least not in disharmony, with that most inspiring of all our teachings, namely, the "Oneness of all Life." If there is only one Life and every part of that Life is affected by every other part, however infinitesimal that other part may be, then we do have an ideal compared with which our ordinary ideals sink into insignificance, and one moreover by which we can test our motives and actions.

It is true, as we are told, that a thought does not cease because we do not think it any more, for we have either given it birth or at any rate, added our quota to its original strength, but by gradually raising our consciousness to a higher level, we shall in time cease to be affected by it and it will fade out. Therefore to awareness, perhaps we should add discrimination, or the ability to judge which of our emotions and thoughts are harmful in the light of what knowledge we have, and which are not.

We are also told of the quality of detachment, the ability to accept the circumstances of life without being too greatly disturbed by them. In this connection, I once knew a man who was apparently a living example of such an attitude, but this did not please his friends. They would say, "Why doesn't he get a bit enthusiastic or excited about things once in a while? It would make him far more interesting." One day I was talking to this man and he said, "I have been losing my eyesight for some time, but the doctor told me

that the more I could keep from getting upset about anything, the longer I would keep my eyesight." Now we are not asked to keep balanced to preserve our physical sight, but rather that the higher nature may be reflected in our minds and hearts — something which is impossible when we are in a continual state of emotional and mental unrest. We know that to keep balanced is very difficult, but nevertheless it seems to be essential if we are seeking enlightenment.

It has been said that true faith is a reflection in the personal self of knowledge that has been realized at deeper levels of being, namely, of knowledge that results from the union of the higher mind with the buddhic principle. Although it is only a reflection, it is still a reflection of Truth, which we must cling to as a guiding star. I feel this is a very helpful thought at all times, but especially when we are faced with the inevitable question, "How do you know that these things are true?" Most of us do not know, in the sense that the questioner means, because our lower minds are not yet properly united to our higher minds, but yet we DO know deeply within ourselves

To shift our allegiance from the lower self and attempt to follow the guidance of the higher self is something which does require true faith, because the personal

self is dear and familiar, while the higher self is as yet only dimly sensed. However, it seems that at all levels of being, the lesser must be sacrificed to attain to the greater, and surely this holds good for anyone even contemplating the journey back to Reality.

Some of us have had a fairly long association with Theosophy, but few of us I am sure, feel satisfied with the use we have made of the teachings we have been given. We have, no doubt, wasted time and opportunities, and amidst the many distractions and trivialities of life, we have sometimes lost sight of the tremendous importance of the Movement with which we have associated ourselves. I feel, however, that in spite of all this, Theosophy has for most of us, become a deep-rooted necessity, and were we now to be offered all those things so dear to the personality, they would fail to satisfy us. So although we may not be able at this point to be a "sun" or even a "humble planet", if we cling to the vision we have had and refuse to accept defeat, we can in the words of H.P.B. "point out the way, however dimly and lost among the host, as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."

If we can at least do this, then perhaps we can hope to be never entirely cut off from the light of Theosophy.

The path of Practical Theosophy is wide; it is narrow; it is straight; it is crooked; but it is never without good. Expect nothing; work without thought of or desire for reward; share your happiness with others; be upright in your dealings with your fellow laborer on life's highway; work for the good of humanity; speak ill of no one; judge the act and not the actor; and last, but not least, strive for consistency as a theosophist. Then will be realized the basic idea of Practical Theosophy and Universal Brotherhood.

—W. Q. Judge

BLAVATSKY, SINNETT, AND ST. PAUL

BY J. M. PRENTICE

It is rather curious that part of the plan conceived by the Lodge of the Masters covering the relation of Theosophy to the world at large and to the Western World in particular, seems to have missed the average student, and indeed to some deeply versed in the teaching. This plan visualised a gradual revelation of the fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy.

In 1877, some 2 years after the foundation of the Theosophical Society in New York, Mme. Blavatsky published the first of her two great masterpieces — *Isis Unveiled*. Although she had not yet mastered the use of English, although she had great help from the Masters themselves, as well as others, and although there were some typographical errors, the book was a masterpiece. It contains some really magnificent prose passages and displays the touch of genius on every page. If she had not written anything else Mme. Blavatsky would still command a place in English literature, because of the erudition, the knowledge of ancient and modern science, the curious folk lore, and the mysterious background which the book displayed.

But even greater in importance was the fact that Mme. Blavatsky who earned a modest living as a journalist, (a) revealed the important fact of the existence of a Lodge of highly trained men secluded in the Himalayan Mountains and in Tibet who had brought to the West a message for several centuries, and whose Messenger she was. These men, superhuman in their knowledge and Their power in the mental and spiritual worlds, were still human: (b) that the mediumistic and spiritualistic phenomena then attracting attention, were not the work of people who were dead, but could be produced by those whose occult training was of a high order, consciously, and without the *mumbo jumbo* of the séance room.

After her arrival in India in 1880, Mme. Blavatsky introduced two outstanding men, A. P. Sinnett, the editor of an important newspaper — *The Pioneer*, and A. O. Hume, a high official of the British Civil Service, to the Theosophical Philosophy. Mr. Sinnett became the recipient of a series of letters from especially one of the two Masters, now called Mahatmas, who sponsored The Theosophical Society in the Great White Lodge, the brotherhood that H.P.B. had revealed to the world. The outcome was a book called *The Occult World*, which created a minor sensation when published in London. It also caused some bitter criticism from sceptics. It was followed later by another volume, entitled *Esoteric Buddhism*.

On the strength of these books Mr. Sinnett persisted in his claim that *he* was the real precursor of Theosophy in the West. His policy was one of high social dignity and restriction. He persisted in this claim until his death. He overlooked the Universal Brotherhood which Blavatsky included.

After many adventures, subject to bitter criticism and attacks, Mme. Blavatsky finally settled in London in 1887, and there she produced her two major works, the incomparable *Secret Doctrine* and her *Key to Theosophy*, as well as establishing her Esoteric School. She passed from our sight in 1891 but left a great heritage of occult learning, philosophy, and knowledge; far beyond the accepted scientific knowledge of her time. She had given her heart's blood over a period of sixteen years to a world alike lacking in gratitude and appreciation.

One is tempted to pause here and recall the fact that St. Paul also devoted sixteen years to the laying of the foundation of Christianity. During this period

some fourteen "Letters to Young Churches" were written, of which at least five are marked by his autograph. There is no doubt that St. Paul was an Initiate. His writings suffer in translation; he uses many phrases from the Mystery teachings which suffer in translation by the literal way in which they are translated; they lose a lot of their significance. One might say as much about Freemasonry. All sorts of tags are used which take on a deep significance when used the proper way, at the proper time, and for the proper purpose.

Let us consider for a brief space some hypothetical cases — 'poor and penniless', 'the tide regularly ebbs and flows', 'a newly dug grave', — simple ordinary expressions, but capable of being used to convey high moral teaching. So with St. Paul. There is a legend that a bright young teenager of the period once witnessed the great tragedy of 'The Trojan Woman', and asked Euripedes what the reference to the *Twelve Golden Moons* of Troy meant, and got back the reply "If you are an initiate of the Mysteries, you would know all about them; if you are not, you have no right to the knowledge'.

St. Paul spent three mysterious years in the Arabian desert after his conversion. He obviously must have spent the time somewhere where food and water were available, so it is possible he spent the time in one of the Communities who left behind as a memorial "The Dead Sea Scrolls". It is even more, it is probable.

It must not be overlooked that St. Paul's Letters are the *Isis Unveiled* of Christian teaching. The Gospels are written later, to provide an historical background. Many details are included of which St. Paul was obviously unaware. They became the *Secret Doctrine*, to carry on our simile. St. Paul will never be fully understood until his Letters are translated by an Initiate as high as himself (or Higher if such exist.)

In 1923 we received the volume *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. They are very precious — the Dead Sea Scrolls

of the Theosophical world. Many things that Sinnett had not understood become clear — they match *The Secret Doctrine* in value and importance. After almost 60 years of study this writer regards four books as Theosophically outstanding: *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Mahatma Letters*, and *The Voice of the Silence*, the last book by H.P.B., filled with priceless spiritual instruction. *The Occult World* is useful as a background, and W. Q. Judge's *The Ocean of Theosophy* is a most useful simplified introduction to theosophic thought.

There are many to whom H. P. Blavatsky has been a tremendous influence — demanding a high sense of duty, a belief in human brotherhood, self-criticism, generosity in thought and action. Such a one is the present writer. Coming to young manhood and Theosophy simultaneously, his reverence for H.P.B. has grown and still grows, sixty years and two world wars later. Drifting in the atmosphere of the great hospital where he now is are the words of a song:

"Just the echoing
Of her name brings back to me
From the depths of memory
All the loveliness of spring!"

—
Shortly after the above article was written "in a very shaky hand, using his hospital bed for a desk," Colonel Prentice died on November 4, 1964.

We were thus unable to write our thanks to him for this, his last literary effort, and can but salute farewell to a devoted student.

—Editors

—
Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee knows, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life, it is the man that was, that is and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

—Voice of the Silence

THE RELIABILITY OF THE MAHATMA LETTERS

I

Ever since the publication of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* in 1923, there has been a concerted endeavour by the Leaders of the Adyar Theosophical Society to discredit them. The Adyar Leaders have asserted that the Mahatmas are not the authors of the "Letters," most of which they say were written by Chelas, and state that consequently reliance cannot be placed upon these Letters as representing the teaching and ideas of the Mahatmas.

Over thirty years ago (in 1926) and three years after the publication of the *Mahatma Letters*, in the course of a correspondence with Mr. Jinarajadasa, in which he was asked how he accounted for the marked contradiction which existed between the teaching emanating from C. W. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant at Adyar, and that to be found in the *Mahatma Letters* with regard to religion, he informed us that "As a matter of fact we know that H.P.B. said that most of the 'Letters' were written by pupils under the general direction of the Adepts" and that this explained the discrepancy, and that the strong statements regarding religion, sacerdotalism, priestcraft, etc. to be found in the "Letters" were merely the views of some Chelas, not those of the Mahatmas.

As recently as March 1957 in the Adyar *Theosophist* Watch Tower Editorial, Mr. Sri Ram, President of the Adyar T.S., gave further support to the denial of the reliability of the "Letters" when referring to them he wrote, "We can understand what a Mahatma is . . . not from any superficial and disconnected impression gained from letters, which according to H.P.B., were written mostly by Chelas, but . . ." implying again as with Mr. Jinarajadasa, that the Mahatma "Letters" are not what they represent themselves to be, viz.. private and often extremely personal letters from

the two Mahatmas to Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume, but the work of Chelas for the most part under general instruction, and therefore not to be relied upon as true expressions of the Mahatmas' ideas and teaching. The dishonesty implied on the part of the Mahatmas in thus allowing themselves to be represented, does not seem to have occurred to either Mr. Jinarajadasa or to Mr. Sri Ram. What would anyone think of a man who in his own handwriting and over his own signature, sends out material which is a false representation of the views and the teaching he holds? Is anything more needed to show the utter absurdity of this attempt to discredit the *Mahatma Letters*?

We wrote to Mr. Sri Ram citing the above facts, and after pointing out the complete unreasonableness of supposing that the Mahatmas either could not, or did not, take the trouble to see that they were correctly quoted by their Chelas, asked him to publish the letter in *The Theosophist* and add his comments in order to finally, and from Headquarters, destroy this infamous charge, and to restore confidence in the reliability of the most authoritative book on Theosophy we possess. Mr. Sri Ram did not print our letter, on the excuse that *The Theosophist* the Official Magazine of the Adyar Theosophical Society, had no Correspondence Columns; but he did quote from it. He agreed with us regarding the great importance and value of the Mahatma "Letters", but failed completely to refer in any way to the main issue viz. the reliability of *The Mahatma Letters*. Since then a number of incidents have come to our notice which indicate how far this discrediting of the "Letters" has gone amongst some members of the Adyar Theosophical Society. Until very recent times this book has been banned, or frowned upon, in most T.S. lodges. We

remember well a few years ago, that after the "Letters" had been quoted a number of times by a lecturer visiting here, a member of the lodge was heard to remark that although a member for twenty years, this was the first time he had heard *The Mahatma Letters* even mentioned in the lodge. But now our President, Mr. Sri Ram, informs us this book is being widely read by members throughout the Society, which makes it all the more important that any question as to the reliability of the "Letters" be cleared up at once. At a meeting recently of some Adyar Theosophists, upon the "Letters" being quoted, a member replied that *The Mahatma Letters* were forgeries and could not be trusted. This shows how strongly the idea of the unreliability of the "Letters" has become implanted in the minds of some of the members. Finally, any copy of the *Mahatma Letters* bought from Wheaton (and so presumably from any T.S. book concern) has contained a leaflet of a few pages giving Miss Mary K. Neff's chronological arrangement for the "Letters". It also contained a warning from Dr. A. Besant against accepting the "Letters" at their face value, together with quotations in support, all of which we will go into later.

Nobody has claimed that the *Mahatma Letters* any more than the *Secret Doctrine*, or any other book, is without error. Indeed the Kiddle incident alone, possibly allowed to go to great lengths to forestall such ideas of infallibility, would make this abundantly clear. But the presence of errors does not in the least invalidate the natural and inevitable conclusion that the Mahatma "Letters" written in their handwriting and signed by them do contain their opinions and teachings, and not a garbled or distorted, and so false account of it.

These three presidents of the Adyar T.S. appear not to have considered that even supposing all, or most, of the "Letters" were written by Chelas under instruction from their Gurus, still the inescapable con-

clusion must be that either the Mahatmas are fully responsible for every idea and teaching put forward in their names, or they are not Mahatmas at all, but very ordinary, actually dishonest, irresponsible and very stupid men.

At the time the "Letters" were being written, the Mahatmas were using two rather prominent Englishmen resident in India, endeavouring to teach them the outlines of their philosophy so that they could become the entering wedge to introduce these ideas to the world, and to the West in particular. To suggest that the Mahatmas would permit false and perverted teaching to be transmitted to these men, is so monstrous that it seems impossible that anyone could have seriously put it forward. Yet this is what the mass of the membership, it would seem, have accepted and hold today. Is there any escape from this conclusion? Could anything be more nonsensical than this attempt to discredit the "Letters"?

All those who proclaim that the Mahatma "Letters" are not a reliable transcription of the teaching and views of the Mahatmas are tacitly, whether they realize it or not, accusing the Masters they profess to revere for their teaching, their power, and their compassion, of dishonesty, allowing false statements, contrary to their views, to go under their own signatures and in their own hand-writing, to those to whom they are teaching the rudiments of their philosophy. A saving sense of humour alone one would think, should have made this nonsense impossible.

What are the reasons given for doubting the reliability of the Mahatma "Letters"? The leaflet mentioned, enclosed presumably in all copies of the *Mahatma Letters* sold by the Adyar T.S., contains:-

"It is wise to add a few words of caution against the literal acceptance of the letters of the Mahatmas as Their own personal opinions and statements. Dr. Annie Besant disapproved of publication of these letters without such a warning."

This is followed by a number of quotations from the Mahatma "Letters", H.P.B., and Col. Olcott, chosen to show that rarely were the "Letters" written actually by the Mahatmas, but through Chelas. These are too many to quote but one, the most important, is as follows:- (in a letter from H.P.B. to Mme. Gebhard)

"How many a time was I (no Mahatma) shocked and startled, burning with shame, when these notes written in Their (two) handwritings (a form of writing adopted for the T.S. and used by Chelas only never without their special permission or order to that effect) exhibiting mistakes in science, grammar, and thoughts, expressed in such language that it perverted entirely the meaning originally intended."

This letter to Mme. Gebhard, her friend, contains the strongest evidence to be found that anything more than errors in transcription such as are to be found in every book, exist in the "Letters".

And now a few quotations from the *Mahatma Letters* on this matter. It is of course well understood by all readers of this book that many, if not the great majority, of the "Letters" were dictated in one way or another to Chelas. There is no evidence that any letters were written wholly by a Chela upon a general instruction.

Mahatma Letters page 296,-

"Another of our customs, when corresponding with the outside world is to entrust a Chela with the task of delivering the letter or any other message; and, if not absolutely necessary to never give it a thought. Very often our very letters — unless something very important and secret—are written in our handwritings by our Chelas. Thus, last year, some of my letters to you were precipitated, and when sweet and easy precipitation was stopped — well I had but to compose my mind, assume an easy position, and — think, and my faithful "Disinherited" had but to copy my thoughts, making only occasionally a blunder . . . Anyhow, this year, for

reasons we need not mention, I have to do my own work — the whole of it . . ." On page 232, *Mahatma Letters* we find:- "In noticing M's opinion of yourself expressed in some of his letters—(you must not feel altogether so sure that because they are in *his* hand-writing, they are written by him, though of course every word is sanctioned by him to serve certain ends)".

This should be enough to indicate the way in which Their correspondence is carried on and to show that there is no reason whatever for the absurd notion that the Mahatmas were ruining their own work for humanity by allowing a false or a warped expression of their views and teaching to be transmitted to their pupils. H.P.B. was the receiving end of the Occult line of transmission for all, or nearly all, the Mahatma "Letters" which is sufficiently indicated by the following quotation from Letter XL page 93, *H.P.B.'s Letters to A. P. Sinnett*,—

"Dispose of me, for you I will consent now even to serve again as a postman".

No one has ever claimed the *Mahatma Letters* any more than the *Secret Doctrine*, or any other book, is free of errors. Indeed many can be found by any reader, and some do make nonsense of the matter as e.g. the remarks on Jupiter; but this does not in the least take away from the teaching and the expression of views which are often restated and do not depend upon chance errors.

The *Mahatma Letters* is in the opinion of many students by far the most valuable book we possess. It not only outlines in clearest terms the most complete philosophy of Man and Nature the world has ever seen in historic times, but it breathes an attitude and an atmosphere not to be found elsewhere — an attitude which appeals to all that is fine and courageous in those who seriously study it and forces upon them the making of serious decisions.

The study of these "Letters" from the Mahatmas reveals two very distinct and very real individuals; men who have conquered

Self, and whose only passion is a great love for the whole of humanity.

It is almost unbelievable that we students who are still so largely taken up with mundane life, should have the privilege of this close contact with Them and Their wisdom through these "Letters".

In conclusion, we have shown the complete nonsensical absurdity of the claim made that the Mahatma "Letters" do not express in the most trustworthy degree the actual views and teachings of the Mahatmas. Whether a member accepts or rejects them in whole or in part is of course, wholly a matter of individual decision. We are concerned here only to show that they do represent in the most authoritative fashion the actual views and teaching the Adepts have made available to all Mankind.

II

The above article was written—at much greater length — some years ago, but was withheld from publication until a more fitting time. Now Dr. Hugh Shearman has boldly taken a strong stand in defence of Bishop Leadbeater whom he holds in very high esteem, (see his article in Jan. 1964 *Theosophist*) and to denigrate reliance upon the *Mahatma Letters*. Either the Bishop's psychic pronouncements or the "Letters" may tell the Truth, both cannot as they are in conflict in most matters. Dr. Shearman has taken this stand in at least three Theosophical journals. In the English *Theosophical Journal* for Nov./Dec. in an article "Dead Letters" he affirms "that the letters contain a good deal of matter which seems to many to be inaccurate, foolish or bigoted to such an extent that one finds the utmost difficulty in believing that these letters in their entirety can really come from persons to whom such a title as Masters of the Wisdom can properly be applied". Although this is only his own opinion, it is a position which many who have not freed their minds from orthodox thinking will inevitably hold. This quotation is valuable as showing clearly the attitude of Dr. Shearman to the "Letters".

For taking this stand widely in the T.S. and thus bringing the matter of the reliability of the "Letters", which for years has been questioned in some quarters, into the open where the evidence can be examined and the truth determined by each student for himself, we have to sincerely thank Dr. Shearman. We also have to thank him for telling us where we can find the oft-repeated amazing statement that H.P.B. said that many of the "Letters" had been written by Chelas under general instructions. Although he advances many minor matters in support of his stand, none would count for anything without this strong statement claimed to have been made by H.P.B. And now that we have that statement in full we find it has nothing to do with the "Letters" to Sinnett and Hume. It occurs in a very long and serious statement by H.P.B. which is described as extracts from a letter dated Wurzburg 24-1-86 and copied out by Mrs. Gebhard and later confirmed orally by H.P.B. in June of that year. All this to be found in the introduction to the book "The early Teachings of the Masters 1881-1883" edited by C. Jinarajadasa, published in 1923.

In this book we find the *notes* (not letters) referred to by H.P.B. in the passage quoted by Dr. Shearman (and also in the leaflet included in sold copies of the *Mahatma Letters* which is quoted above in I) and starts "How many a time was I, (no Mahatma) etc" were not the Letters to Sinnett and Hume, but notes written by Chelas on general instructions from the Master to answer requests and questions regarding "business matters, sons to be born, daughters to be married, houses to be built etc, etc".

Because of its great importance the first part of this long statement of H.P.B.'s which deals with letters and notes from the Masters, is quoted in full.

This morning before the receipt of your letter at 6 o'clock, I was permitted and told by Master to make you understand at last, you and all the sincere,

truly devoted Theosophists, "as you sow, so you will reap", the personal and private questions and prayers, answers framed in the mind of those whom such matters can yet interest, whose minds are not yet entirely blank to such worldly terrestrial questions, answers by chelas and novices, often something reflected from *my own mind*, for the Masters would not stoop for one moment to give a thought to *individual* private matters relating but to one or even ten persons, their welfare, woes and blisses in this world of Maya, to nothing except questions of really universal importance. It is *all you* Theosophists who have dragged down in your minds the ideals of our Masters; *you who* have, unconsciously and with the best of intentions and full sincerity of good purpose, *desecrated* Them, by thinking for one moment and believing that *They* would trouble Themselves with your business matters, sons to be born, daughters to be married, houses to be built, etc., etc. And yet, all those of you who have received such communications, being nearly *all* sincere (those who were *not* have been dealt with according to other special laws) you had a right, knowing of the existence of Beings whom you thought could easily help you, to seek help from Them, to address Them, once that a monotheist addresses his personal God, desecrating the *Great Unknown* a million of times *above* the Masters, by asking Him (or *It*) to help him with a good crop, to slay his enemy and send him a son or daughter; and, having such a right in the abstract sense, They could not spurn you off, and refuse answering you if not Themselves, then by ordering a chela to satisfy the addresses to the best of his or her (the chela's) ability.

How many a time was I (no Mahatma) shocked and startled, burning with shame when shown notes written in Their (two) handwritings (a form of writing adopted for the T.S., and used

by chelas, only *never without Their special permission or order* to that effect) exhibiting mistakes in science, grammar, and thoughts, expressed in such language that it perverted entirely the meaning originally intended, and sometimes expressions that, in Tibetan, Sanscrit or any other Asiatic language, had quite a different sense, as in one instance I will give. In answer to Mr. Sinnett's letter referring to some apparent contradiction in *Isis*, the chela who was made to precipitate Mahatma K.H.'s reply put, "I had to exercise all my ingenuity to reconcile the two things". Now the term ingenuity, used for meaning candour, fairness, an obsolete word in this sense and never used now, but one meaning this perfectly, as even I find in Webster, was misconstrued by Massey, Hume, and I believe even Mr. Sinnett, to mean "cunning", "cleverness," "acuteness", to form a new combination so as to prove there was no contradiction. Hence: "The Mahatma confesses most unblushingly to ingenuity, to using *craft* to reconcile things, like an astute tricky lawyer," etc., etc. Now had I been commissioned to write or precipitate the letter, I would have translated the Master's thought by using the word "ingenuousness," "openness of heart, frankness, fairness, freedom from reserve and dissimulation," as Webster gives it, and opprobrium thrown on Mahatma K.H.'s character would have been avoided. It is not I who would have used *carbolic* acid instead of *carbonic* acid, etc. It is very rarely that Mahatma K.H. *dictated verbatim*; and when He did there remained the few sublime passages found in Mr. Sinnett's letters from Him. The rest, He would say, write so and so, and the chela wrote, often without knowing one word of English, as I am now made to write Hebrew and Greek and Latin, etc.

(Continued on Page 142)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Greetings for 1965 — only ten years to go until the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Theosophical Society. Many who are now members will be here for the event, others will have joined the vast company of those who played their parts and left the stage. It would be fruitless to speculate on what the Theosophical movement may become before the anniversary date, but if in the short time remaining to us, we are to achieve the ideal aims mentioned by H.P.B. in the last paragraph of *The Key To Theosophy* a great deal remains to be done before, "The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings . . . Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people, ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path." Can this be accomplished in ten short years? Perhaps not; perhaps we are presumptuous in even assuming that we have earned the right to further teachings until we have made much better use of what is now available to us. To rest on our oars until the next Teacher comes would be absurd; there is no definite promise of a messianic outpouring in 1975—the new impulse may come then, but it may come much later. I think that on the whole the T.S. is healthier-minded than it was forty years ago; formerly held enthusiasms which gave the dominant direction for many years are not being pursued so avidly today, and there are encouraging signs of a return to the study of the original source material.

* * *

And the mention of the anniversary re-

minds me that in February of next year the Toronto Theosophical Society will celebrate its 75th birthday, an event which may coincide with the occupancy of quarters in the new building which is proposed to be constructed on the present site and on adjoining properties.

* * *

I regret to report the deaths of three members of Toronto Lodge in December, Miss Anne Grant, Mrs. Helen Dean and Mr. Leslie Floyd.

Miss Grant was a devoted Theosophist whose gentle kindness endeared her to a host of friends. She was helpful in many lodge activities and her work in the Library brought her in touch with many enquirers. Miss Grant died on December 5 and a Theosophical service was held on December 8.

Mrs. Dean, who died on December 15, resided outside of Toronto and was not often at the Sunday evening lectures. She was an earnest student of Theosophy and had been a close friend of the late Miss Hindsley with whom Mrs. Dean had been associated on the teaching staff of Havergal College.

Mr. Floyd became a member about 1918. His interest in books led to work in the Library and later he became Librarian, a position which he held for several years. He became a lecturer for the Lodge and his talks reflected his wide scholarly interests, his love of mystical poetry and his intuitive interpretation of various theosophical themes. Mr. Floyd also spoke regularly for Hamilton Lodge. In later years his failing health led him to spend the winters in Texas. His death occurred on December 18.

We bid farewell for a time to these three comrades of the way, and extend our condolences to their families and relatives.

With the death of Mrs. L. Davenport of Hamilton on December 20 at the age of eighty-eight, a long continued link with the early days of Theosophy in Ontario was broken. Mrs. Davenport's association with Theosophy, and also that of her mother's,

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Mrs. McKee, began around the turn of the century. After a brief, and for Mrs. Davenport, a disillusioning stay at Point Loma, she with her three children returned to Hamilton and became active in the work of the young lodge there. In those days

the Hamilton meetings were held on Sunday mornings in order that speakers from Toronto, Mr. A. E. S. Smythe, Roy Mitchell, A. G. Horwood, Felix Belcher and others might return to Toronto for the evening meeting there. Mrs. Davenport usually entertained the speakers at her home and many interesting and instructive conversations took place around her dining table.

Mrs. Davenport's long life was a rich one, rich in friends, in its influence on others, and in its "life meditation" as Mr. Judge would term it, her abiding interest in things of the spirit.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to her children, her sisters and to the other members of the family.

* * *

I have much pleasure in welcoming six new members into the fellowship of the Society, Mrs. Elizabeth Kleiner, Mrs. Wilmar J. Miller, Mrs. David Frazer, Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Haight, and Mr. L. W. Barclay. These members joined through the Toronto Lodge.

—D.W.B.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION

Nominations for the office of General Secretary and seven members of the General Executive should be made during March and should be received at Headquarters by April 1.

Will the officers of each Lodge kindly have this matter brought before their Lodge and then have the nominations sent promptly to the General Secretary at 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5. According to the constitution, nominations must be made through a Lodge and the consent of the persons nominated should be obtained.

D. W. Barr, General Secretary

Hugh Shearman, in his campaign to belittle the value of "The Mahatma Letters", and to question their authenticity, is curiously inexact in his facts and his interpretations. I take a few instances:

1. He says: "As original documents many (of these letters) do not exist! Many, like the much quoted Letter 10, come down only as transcripts in the handwriting of A. P. Sinnett or some other person, whether made accurately or otherwise we have no means of knowing". Many???? Out of the 145 Letters, there are exactly six which are copies, in Mr. Sinnett's handwriting, in each case letters written to Mr. Hume which he gave to Mr. Sinnett to make copies of. And would Sinnett, so eager to get exact and detailed instructions from the Mahatmas in the Ancient Wisdom, make any alterations; or himself being an experienced Editor, would he be likely to make mistakes in the copying? In any case, whatever "mistakes" there may be in the book, through imperfect transmission, have nothing to do with the basic teaching. Even the most famous one, "the Kiddle incident" does not affect the Teaching imparted.

2. Dr. Shearman quotes H.P.B. as saying "It is hardly one out of a hundred letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master in whose name and on whose behalf they are sent . . ." and he explains this as meaning that the letters do not come directly from the ones whose signatures are appended to them. Clearly H.P.B. is referring to the various occult means of transmission of the letters. One might just as well say that a business executive who dictates a letter to his secretary, and who perhaps even asks her to sign his name to it, has not himself written the letter!

3. Dr. Shearman seems to infer that those of us who find immense value in the Letters do so because we read them with unquestioning acceptance, as being sacro-

sanct. We think the boot is on the other foot. Because Leadbeater stated that he and Mrs. Besant stood on the threshold of Divinity, it seems that those who prefer his teaching and interpretations to those of the Masters, have taken C.W.L. at his own valuation. Of course the Letters must be studied with an open mind and a discriminative discernment. It is only thus one can study them with benefit, and we are constantly urged by the writers to do so.

4. Dr. Shearman seems particularly troubled about Letters No. 10 and No. 134, the latter of which he says was only written down by H.P.B. and is not a holograph. H.P.B. specifically states that it is Master M. dictating to her. In any case one's comprehension of the teaching contained in these Letters does not rest on them alone. The whole of the Ancient Wisdom teaching, the Three Fundamental Postulates of the Secret Doctrine tell us the same things. But Dr. Shearman further states that "unfortunately the Editors do not go on record" to point to Colonel Olcott's characterization of Letter No. 134 as being a false one. Why should we since we do not agree with Col. Olcott's opinion which was given at a time when both he and Mrs. Besant were attacking Mr. Judge who had printed the letter in his *Path*. Indeed not a false letter, it has the unmistakable ring of Master M.'s direct and vigorous style.

One could go on picking flaws in Dr. Shearman's reasoning, but it would be a waste of time. It is an interesting psychological study to note what a disturbance these Letters cause in the minds and feelings of those who prefer the more psychic revelations of Leadbeater and others. But for those who do value these Letters, it is not only because they appear over the signature of a Master, but the body of doctrine which they lay forth, "makes sense", which so many later neo - theosophical teachings, alas, do not.

—Elsie Benjamin

The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist.

The letters by Messrs Plummer, Wilks, and Shearman point up my conclusion years ago: that the structure, methods of impartation, scope, and purpose of the teachings, have been badly and widely misunderstood. My views:

1. The Mahatmas exist; their knowledge is actual, vastly superior.

2. A part of the *S.D.* was copied by H.P.B. directly from MSS written by them, but without identification as such. (They said so.)

3. The major part of the book was compiled and/or deduced by her from traditional writings and current scientific works, aided by keys and hints from them, not always understood; and corrected only in part.

4. She was temperamentally and mentally a practical occultist but neither by training or nature a scientific research worker or a literary researcher. Science itself was poor then, and she tended considerably toward pseudo - scientific writers because more usually they had caught on to some of the occult propositions.

5. The Mahatmas were under severe restrictions in imparting information. As an instance, the dead letter of the Brahmin Chronology could not be tampered with, because in India it was Holy Writ and to reinterpret it would have killed the Society in India. In rationalizing it factually by the aid of the general principles (which are scattered through the *S.D.*, the *M.L.*, and a number of articles and other books,) I found for instance that the "descent of the Manasaputra" was more likely 27 million than 18 million years ago, and that the extended table on the same formula checks almost flat with modern radio-chronology; also that half the table is a blind on the key figures 4, 3, 2, (1), and not a literal year-chronology. (Taken as such, it cannot be fitted into the first part of the table logically.)

This can be done now; it could not be

done then, either under policy or from information available.

6. The *S.D.* and the *M.L.* contain various points in factual error; but the former contains as one example otherwise a description of the prolongation of the Atlantic Ridge beyond Tristan da Cunha, which was neither known or suspected elsewhere until the IGY of 1957-58; the latter contains a prophecy, so labelled, of radio-astronomy, about as unthinkable a proposition as you could find in that era.

7. The Mahatma also said that if he trespassed too far with his information, his letters would be changed into "yards of drivel." We find plenty of drivel in the intimation that Jupiter and other planets will move and reveal "all but 5000 or 6000" of the stars which they are hiding by millions. Something is left out. The reference is to the known number of *visual* stars; I think it is to whatever it is in space which is obscuring the others to the eye and preventing the sky from being a single blaze of light. That is a subject of intense current scientific interest.

8. As stated by Shearman, the *Letters* were written mainly by chelas whose bungled English was sometimes spectacular, as the Mahatma said. He also said that he would never consent to publishing the letters in unchecked form. What we have then resembles a fine car which has been taken apart and thrown into a bin, with only some parts still bolted together and suitable to start a reconstruction with. Dr. Wilks sums up the resulting job in his closing paragraph in the Nov. Dec. number.

9. The teachings on ethics and metaphysics seem to be mainly exempt from serious errors; presumably because they consisted of the most important impartations and mostly being already in books, were more exempt from the restrictions.

10. I consider Letter No. 134 as one of the most authentic of the lot, because it explains so much of religious phenomena and history. It especially explains Leadbeater and his neo-theosophical visions,

though that sort of "clairvoyance" had already been explained by H.P.B. in *The Voice of the Silence*.

—Victor Endersby

The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist

I read with much interest the article, "There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth", written by the General Secretary of the Italian Section of the T.S. (*The Canadian Theosophist*, Jul-Aug, 1964) and felt how good it was that the Society in Italy was starting out its "renewal" with the clear distinction between Neo - Theosophy and the Theosophy of the Masters written down by H.P.B., and to wonder if at long last the Adyar T.S., here and there, might be going in the way of the original teachings. There are indications in several directions that new thinking is going on, and the weakness is being pointed out of following this or that leader without first of all examining the writings of H.P.B.

As suggested by Mr. Roberto Hack, the writer of the report, "If really *all* the members of the T.S. had exercised their own reasoning powers, instead of accepting blindly and unreasoningly that which was expounded and told by the so-called leaders, etc." But one must remember, in those days, the "so-called leaders" were the leaders of the Esoteric Section, and there were very few "personal hypotheses" indulged in. Messages were purported to be coming from the Masters all the time to Mrs. Besant—and it was the case of "If you do not accept my word, then you must leave my school," and there were many general exoduses.

It is ancient history in the T.S. that in 1906 Mr. C. W. Leadbeater was asked for his resignation by Col. Olcott, when he was examined and found guilty of the accusations against him. In 1907 on Mrs. Besant's invitation—after she had been told by him that they had taken their fourth initiation together some few nights before, in their sleep!! (and Mrs. Besant had to be

told of it!?)—from then on there came one pseudo - theosophic idea after another. And how long does it take to dislodge such ideas? Have we really come to the crossroads when the T.S. can drop its weighty bundles of Neo-Theosophy and really get down to the study of the Masters' message of 1875—so splendidly written down by H.P.B.? By the way, we hear complaints that the Mahatma Letters were written by chelas and not by the Masters—was it not a chela who wrote *The Secret Doctrine*, and all from Their *dictation*?

I fear we lose our sense of humour, if, when we join the T.S. we imagine that it takes us closer to the wisdom of the Great Ones by so doing. The T.S. is only another door that opens, wherein we do at least get the Masters' teachings in the original if we follow *The Secret Doctrine*, and all the splendid writings of H.P.B. who was the Masters' scribe. From then on, if we study and apply, surely we may do a little more spiritual shaping.

"There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth" is being much quoted in the T.S. magazines these days. And what is Truth? It takes a great deal of examination and the magnetism of false teachings clings very strongly as we realize when we strive to dislodge them. There is no use pretending that Mrs. Besant was not as responsible for Neo - Theosophy as Mr. Leadbeater. But it would be well if we could forget their errors and get down to fundamentals. Let us encourage the study of the *Mahatma Letters* and all H.P.B.'s writings in all lodges for a year or two, and if at the end of that time "they do not know what Theosophy is—at least they should know what it isn't" to quote H.P.B.

—Hannah Buchanan

The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist,

As a member of the Canadian Section of The Theosophical Society, I would appreciate your allowing me space in *The Canadian Theosophist* to expressly disasso-

ciate myself from the spirit of the letter published in your May-June, 1964 issue, signed by Grahame W. Barratt; and which has been commented upon in the September issue of the Adyar *Theosophist* by the International President, Mr. N. Sri Ram, in his "On the Watch-Tower" notes.

I understand that Mr. Barratt is a non-member of the T.S. His letter,—aside from being less than erudite, contains derogatory personal remarks concerning devoted and hard-working leaders of our Society. Although no name is mentioned, the identity is definitely implied.

It would seem that members of an organization owe it and their fellow-members at least a certain amount of loyalty. This can be demonstrated in various ways. *The Canadian Theosophist*, perhaps should be congratulated on allowing a measure of freedom of thought in its pages; but there are many able persons of high character in our Society who are able to see our faults,— and who have also devoted much time and effort towards correcting them. It is evident that some of your contributors never read the international official organ,— the Adyar *Theosophist*,—else they would be aware that they are still agitating about some Adyar policies that have been altered as long as a generation ago.

In addition, when such letters as Mr. Barratt's are published,— it seems only fair to the local members that his status as a non-member should be made clear.

Finally, as *The Canadian Theosophist* is the official journal of the Canadian Section of the T.S., I,— for one, wish to register my objection to its pages being made available to non-members for the purpose of attacking The Theosophical Society, its activities, its purposes, policies or its personnel. We have plenty of enemies outside our ranks,— we scarcely require a Trojan-Horse within.

Helen V. Barthelmes

The Editors,

The Canadian Theosophist.

That which exists between the concrete and the abstract we recognize as a state of incessant change. Nothing "in the heavens above or the earth beneath", now— or in the aeons to come, can escape this inexorable law except (as many believe) the Theosophical Society itself and its static outmoded concepts, which as past and present drifts show, are now growing stale and unappetizing to the "man in the street" or out of it.

That "something's wrong somewhere" is as plain as the nose on one's face. But let no man put what he thinks is that spot unless he is prepared to withstand the abysmal silence of those in the know. "La ilaha illa 'llahu . . ." There is no authority beyond the S.D. We are its interpreters and Blavatsky is our only disciple. Anything beyond this is the work of the Devil!

This conventional viewpoint—that all future "messages" must filter down through the "top" (the "top" being the T.S. leaders of the moment) puts the Society in a psychological sense in the same position as the Catholic Church—that all "true" directives can only come from Christ, to the Pope, then to the ignorant masses!

Remember Jos. Chamberlain's edict at the beginning of the century? "What I have said I have said. I have nothing to add and nothing to retract. What I have said I have said!"

Please let me make one statement before I conclude. The same "hand" that guided H.P.B. for 25 years also guided another equally worthy hand for 30 years after H.P.B.'s death.

I am not going to waste any more of your and my time going into trying to give "convincing" details. Let those writings speak for themselves. If the Theosophical ship sinks (*quien sabe?*) I can assure you I won't be the one to sink with it.

—F. Amos

WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE

BY CHARLES R. CARTER

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theosophical Jury, I must now ask your indulgence to commence my defence of Theosophical Object Number Three, which as you all know is "To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man". This object has been bypassed to such an extent that it seems to have been almost forgotten.

In fact, it reminds me of the following boyhood incident:

My father had in his barn a rifle used in the Crimean War by an old soldier who was glad to sell it to obtain stuff that frothed in mugs in the village tavern.

My father used it to scare crows that could, and did, play the Dickens with early sprouting beans and peas on his lands. A monstrous looking thing that required gunpowder, wads, shot, and last of all a copper cap upon the firing pin—and of course, the use of a ramrod!

To me, a boy of twelve, that Crimean rifle hanging upon the wall always invited a closer acquaintance. So insistent was the invitation that I was compelled at times to close my eyes and scuttle out of the barn.

One spring afternoon when the crows were playing havoc with the young tender shooting beans in the fields outside, I climbed upon the meal bin and lifted down the rifle, which was just about all I could manage to hold.

I knew my father kept it loaded and, as he thought, out of harm's way. Knowing my father had gone to Cambridge market, I fell a victim to the etheric vibrations of that Crimean rifle.

I couldn't lift it to my shoulder, but around the bean field there was a stiff hawthorn hedge, so I pushed the barrel through some branches that held it very nicely and took aim at those black gentlemen pulling up young beans and spoiling much of the labours of my father's hired help.

After aiming—and closing my eyes—I pulled the trigger, and found it was not cocked. With set teeth I pulled back the trigger, astounded at the strength I had to expend. I still remember how proud I felt when I saw the shining copper cap awaiting the fall of the trigger upon it.

Once again I sighted, then closed my eyes—and pulled the trigger. When I picked myself up seconds after, I discovered I had two jaws upon my right cheek and only one on my left. Well, that is how it seemed to my exploring, softly applied hand. It pained me to move my jaw for days after!

Like a hunted criminal I took the gun back into the barn and climbed again upon the meal bin and hung it where it belonged. That Crimean rifle's enchantment over me was finished. I was gun shy . . . very much so!

Now Ladies and Gentlemen, you are quite ready to ask, "What has this boyhood experience to do with the third object of Theosophical studies?" and I reply, "It has everything to do with them."

You must all remember quite a few years ago how a self-asserted "trained clairvoyant" sighted his psychic rifle and attempted to bring to earth an Avatar. The rifle "kicked back" and not only bruised the rifleman, but the explosion that echoed around the world caused many Theosophists to take cover from all Theosophical activities. Rifleman Leadbeater didn't bring down an Avatar with his psychic rifle but he certainly created thousands of casualties in the ranks of the Theosophical Society. Is this not correct, Ladies and Gentlemen?

Now the point I wish to make clear is this—that Rifleman Leadbeater knew no more about *positive psychicism* when he thought he saw an Avatar approaching Adyar than I did about the Crimean rifle in my father's barn! The crows I aimed at were somewhat startled and circled

around, but soon resumed bean-plucking.

The only harm I suffered was to my jaw, because I was quite innocent of the fact that a rifle could *kick back!* But at least I found that out.

On the other hand, Rifleman Leadbeater (who had himself sewn upon his occult tunic cuff the coveted "crossed guns" of a psychic marksman) aimed at an Avatar in his self-hypnotized vision and hit the *whole Theosophical Society*.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theosophical Jury, the great pity of it all! . . . The pity of it all was that the Officer Commanding the Theosophical Society at this time of calamity was psychically blind and thought Mr. Leadbeater was what he claimed to be—a "trained clairvoyant sharpshooter"!

There were other explosions from his psychic rifle fired behind the scenes to convince the Commanding Officer of his marksmanship, such as "The Eastern Star", etc. etc., but his aim was skew-whiff (as they say in the army) and the Eastern Star is still sparkling in the Eastern skies.

Now we come to the archstone—some call it keystone—of our Theosophical Bridge, the Third Object of the Theosophical Society, "To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man".

How sad it is to find at least ninety-five per cent of Theosophists are psychically "gun-shy"! Is it because of such psychic riflemen as Leadbeater?

Ladies and Gentlemen of this Jury, may I recall again the Crimean rifle that succeeded in making *me* decidedly "gun-shy"? Was it the fault of the rifle? Or was it my very youthful inexperience? I stand here before you all to admit that it was my own inexperience, and mine alone. For when in that fatal month of August, 1914, I was re-introduced to rifles galore and the art of musketry, the Sergeant in the Hussar Barracks took particular care that I became a master of rifles. I loathe the very sight of them now, but there is no rifle

made that could give me a swollen jaw such as the Crimean rifle did! And why? Because racial karma compelled me to become master of the rifle in the British Cavalry!

Ladies and Gentlemen, the time will come, yes, and is now at hand, when a *real* Theosophist will have to "investigate the powers latent" in his own being, or pass from this world when his moment arrives as a Theosophical Failure! The same lesson to be learned in a following incarnation.

How very many Theosophists shake their head at the mention of the psychic plane—and excuse themselves with the old reliable comeback, "It is dangerous!" Ladies and Gentlemen, it is also dangerous to walk across a busy city street, even if you are in the "section walk". It is dangerous to ride a jet plane. It is dangerous to clean your teeth—a bristle may come out of the brush and give you dreaded appendicitis!

Many people will affirm it is dangerous to get married, whilst others equally affirm it is dangerous to remain unmarried! The point is—does a Theosophist expect to be carried in a nice velvet handbag right into Devachan comfortably grinning from ear to ear?

No, Ladies and Gentlemen, nature has put a price on everything, and all must pay the price sooner or later. And if a person has joined the Theosophical Society fully realizing the price that must be paid for Adeptship, and the exacting immutable laws which must be obeyed on that long, long journey, that person needs no reminding. If one has made Theosophy a hobby, an intellectual garden party, leave him to his entertainment.

One of the most important "powers latent in man" (if he has not developed it) is his psychic power. Psychic power, like all other powers, has its counterfeit, and the counterfeit of a positive psychic is its shadow, the negative psychic.

A negative psychic is a prey to all the denizens of the Astral Skid Row, and be-

sides the malicious and obsessing ones amongst them, there is a fair sprinkling of practical jokers who love to pose as celebrated souls that left their names in the records of the past.

This, I have experienced, not by hearsay, but by personal investigation at the Psychical Research Society in London, England. A hearsay knowledge of negative psychics is utterly useless—every student upon “The Path” must some day encounter the Etheric Plane and know it for what it is. A negative psychic is exploited and usually made a laughing stock in the end—as happened to the “trained clairvoyant” who played hide and go seek in the Theosophical Society.

On the other hand, a positive psychic would no more think of allowing an astral entity to share his body and consciousness than he would think of allowing another to share his tooth brush . . .

A positive psychic can and does become *en rapport* and sometimes carry out a request from the Etheric Plane for another occult chela, but he knows just what he is doing and why! The work is conveyed to him in a clairaudient manner. He listens in much the same way as does a person to a telephone receiver, but he decides for himself whether or not he will carry out the request. No one can compel him to do otherwise—he is a positive psychic. He does what H.P.B. was continually reiterating to her students to do, whilst answering questions at Lansdowne Road, “Think for yourself! Think for yourself!” And she never tired of saying it.

Is not the dependence upon Theosophical Leaders by mentally-lazy Theosophists another form of theological atonement (vicarious)? Is the effort to think for oneself too exhausting? Tell me, upon what plane of consciousness does the soul find itself when the physical heart has pulsed its last beat, and the brain has transferred its film of physical activities to the psychic plane?

I have answered my question. There is no more hope of bypassing the psychic plane

on the soul's return journey to Devachan than there was in bypassing that plane on its way to the physical to take up its body of flesh. It is a perfectly natural order of things.

It is also a perfectly natural thing for the soul to learn its lessons upon the psychic plane as it is to learn its lessons upon the mundane plane—or there would be no need of reincarnation!

All the books in every Theosophical Lodge on this planet cannot help the pilgrim soul upon its journey. “All enlightenment must come from within” is a saying that leaves much still to be explained. The enlightenment that comes from within comes from the Higher Manas (our ever ready “master” in our kindergarten stage of spiritual development). Why not? It has overshadowed our every incarnation, guided us and warned us if we have given it our attention.

There is no need to carry my defence further, Ladies and Gentlemen, so with a few reminders I will rest my case. These reminders are from the Masters who made the Ancient Wisdom understandable in our age through their splendid agent H.P.B.

Listen to the words of Master K.H.:

“The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of Illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most if *not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*.”

I will finish with a most important statement that forever settles the psychic state of being to those who have perception:

“We feel and would have it known that we have no right to influence the free will of the members in this or any other matter. Such interference would be in flagrant contradiction to the basic law of esotericism that personal psychic growth accompanies *pari passu* the development of individual effort and is evidence of acquired personal merit.”

So the fearsome psychic development of which some would try to terrify the new recruit joining the Theosophical army, is

after all the "psychic growth that accompanies . . . the development of individual effort and is evidence of acquired personal merit."

Positive psychic ability has too often been mixed with phenomena, which is on a par with making a surgeon of great skill and an operation one and the same thing, whereas the operation is the outcome of the surgeon's skill.

Again, one would think to hear some lecturers holding forth that every Ego has at his command seven states of consciousness, instead of one consciousness operating upon different planes.

Psychometry, clairvoyance and clairaudient powers are common instruments used by the Adept, and there are also other "powers latent in man" that still await investigating.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I conclude with this observation—that had the third object of Theosophical study been given the atten-

tion it richly deserved, the Theosophical Society would never have experienced one disaster after another after the tired hands of Captain H.P.B. fell slowly from the wheel in the charthouse of the good ship "Theosophy".

Is it too late to get away from the polished dullness that has settled upon the Society like a London fog, as a direct result of synthetic teachings by so-called leaders utterly ignorant of that Theosophy put forth by the Masters, who have never been seen or heard of since H.P.B. sought rest from her titanic labours.

Away from parrotting the meaningless piffle so often put out in the name of Theosophy, and *think for ourselves* as H.P.B. demanded we should. Dig deeply within our consciousness and discover the powers latent in man that will in a distant incarnation lead us to Adeptship, even though "the road winds uphill all the way".

SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA

Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this feature by sending their questions c/o The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.

Question. Of the seven keys to the Mysteries, H.P.B. seems to name only four: first, Physiological (I, 363); fourth, Theogonic (I, 363); fifth, Geometrical (II, 471); seventh, Spiritual (I, 363). In volume three (3rd ed.) p. 198, she equates the anthropological to the first key. That leaves, so far as I can find, the following terms unaccounted for: the astronomical, the geological, the metaphysical, the numerical, the psychic, and the psychological. Can you guess as to how these names might be allocated to the three unidentified keys, namely: the sixth, the third and the second?

Answer. The only "key" not specified in *The Secret Doctrine* (in the references cited) is the one in the question which is termed "Geological." A more suitable term for this would be Terrene (or the Earth). It would

seem that the reference given: of III, 198: provides the clue, although unsuspected, because three keys are given *in reverse order*(!), namely: "the astronomical, the numerical (metrology), and above all the purely anthropological, or rather physiological, key."

Following this hint, then, we may tabulate as follows:

1. Physiological or Anthropological (or Man)
2. Psychological or Psychic or Metaphysical
3. Terrene, or the Earth, or Geological
4. Theogonic or Creative Gods
5. Geometrical or Numerical or Mathematical
6. Astronomical
7. Spiritual (or the Divine)

Question. In the second portion of the first sloka of Stanza 1, in the second series of the Stanzas of Dzyan, opening volume II of *The Secret Doctrine* (or the third volume of the 6-volume edition) are two short sentences: "His breath gave life to the Seven. It gave life to the first." What is meant by "it gave life to the first"?

Answer. The difficulty lies in its terseness; also because the Stanzas incorporate more than one meaning. Therefore, it may be interpreted by means of four aspects: thus, "the first" may be applied (1) to the First Race; (2) to the First Globe of the Planetary Chain of Earth; (3) to the First of the Seven Sacred Planets; (4) to the "First Point" or Source. To elucidate further: first, by referring to the first of the two sentences of the Stanza. "His" (the first word) refers to the term "the One Eye", to which H.P.B. added the words *Loka-Chakshus*. The two Sanskrit words signify "Eye of the World" which is a mystical title of the Sun. It is *his* (the Sun's) breath or prana which vitalizes the Seven (i.e., the Seven Sacred Planets).

Now turning to the second sentence, aspect No. 1. In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 23-4) this explanation is offered: "every Race in its evolution is said to be born under the direct influence of one of the Planets: Race the first receiving its breath of life from the Sun." (2) However, on pages 28-29 a Commentary is cited: "The Globe, propelled onward by the Spirit of the Earth and his six assistants, gets all its vital forces, life, and powers through the medium of the seven planetary Dhyanis from the Spirit of the Sun. They are his messengers of Light and Life." The "six assistants" are the other six globes of the Planetary Chain of Earth. (3) The first of the Seven Sacred Planets is the Sun — or rather the Sacred Planet for which the Sun stands as a substitute. This Sacred Planet acts as "the medium" of one of the "seven planetary Dhyanis from the Spirit of the Sun." (4) "The summation of the

Stanzas in Book I showed the genesis of Gods and men taking rise in and from, one and the same Point, which is the One Universal, Immutable, Eternal, and absolute *UNITY*." (II, 24). In this category, however, instead of "our Sun" which gives "life to the first" it would be the Central Spiritual Sun. This is mentioned in the following citation: "His breath gave life to the seven, refers as much to the sun, who gives life to the Planets, as to the 'High One,' the *Spiritual Sun*, who gives life to the whole Kosmos." (II, 23)

Please note the following which H.P.B. added: "The astronomical and astrological keys opening the gate leading to the mysteries of Theogony can be found only in the later glossaries, which accompany the Stanzas. In the apocalyptic Slokas of the Archaic Records, the language is as symbolical, if less mystical, than in the Puranas. Without the help of the later *commentaries*, compiled by generations of adepts, it would be impossible to understand the meaning correctly." (II, 23)

The Secret Doctrine Question and Answer Section is being translated into French, and the December 1964 issue of La Vie Théosophique devotes four pages to it. We are pleased that students in France are sharing this study with us, and hope that they will take an active part by also submitting their questions to Mr. Barborka.

—Eds.

If anyone thinks that he knows *The Secret Doctrine* by reading it once or even a dozen times, or a score of times, he mistakes greatly the situation. It must be read not only between the lines but within the words. I have found the value of the following rule: never take a single statement in it and allow your mind to mold itself around it, never let a single idea crystallize; break the molds, let in the light.

—G. de Purucker

THE RELIABILITY OF THE MAHATMA LETTERS

(Continued From Page 130)

The decision as to whether there is here anything which would give one the right to question the reliability of the "Letters" to express truly the teachings and views of the Mahatmas is a matter for the decision of the individual student. Errors, in these "Letters" there certainly are many; distortions of views, we maintain, there are none whatever. Even the greatest error, the "Kiddle incident" made no important change of view.

Finally two apposite quotations from the *Mahatma Letters*, Page 417, original edition,

For the present we offer our knowl-

edge—some portions of it at least—to be either accepted or rejected on its own merits independently—entirely so—from the source from which it emanates.

Page 304, bottom,

He (Hume) says that people will not accept the whole truth; that unless we humour them with a hope that there may be a "loving Father and creator of all in heaven" our philosophy will be rejected *a priori*. In such a case the less such idiots hear of our doctrines the better for both. If they do not want the whole truth and nothing but the truth, they are welcome. But never will they find *us*—(at any rate)—compromising with, and pandering to public prejudices.

W. E. Wilks,

Orpheus Lodge.

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