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THE CENTENARY CONGRESS

The Centenary Congress of the Theosophical Society, held in New York November 14-20, 1975, was much more than a celebration of the Society's 100th Anniversary. It was an occasion for much-needed introspection, and a long-delayed opportunity for the "family" to get together.

The mood of the gathering was little inclined towards nostalgia for the past, although the memory and inspiration of the three founders surely influenced our various activities and deliberations. Rather did most of the delegates seem to be seriously concerned with the present state of the Theosophical Movement, and even a cynic would have to admit that a healthy optimism for the future was much in evidence.

Mention must be made of the planning and preparation for the Congress. Contrary to popular belief, functions of this size and nature do not run themselves. Experienced conference organizers would have recognized immediately the skill and hard work that had gone into this one. Joy Mills, who several years ago took on the responsibility of heading up the planning committee, and all those who assisted, one way or another from that time until the actual event, deserve our admiration and thanks for a job well done.

The Statler Hilton is a hotel that has certainly seen better days. While one could

have wished for various better amenities at the headquarters of the Congress, yet the convention facilities adapted quite well to our requirements. For the most part, adequate space was available for all the various functions, displays, etc. Throughout the week there was nearly always something going on mornings, afternoons and evenings; consequently, the convention floor was a continuously busy and, for the most part, cheerful place.

Some 800 students of Theosophy registered for this principal centennial function. Probably few came away with identical or similar impressions of the program. I was amused to receive a post-Congress letter from one of the delegates, a valued correspondent, who described one part of the program as being the highlight of the week; whereas to me it had been somewhat of a disappointment.

No doubt most of the delegates would agree that, overall, it was an excellent Congress. It presented a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow students from all over the world, and, after all, it is people that make conventions of this nature worth while.

It is a pity that all the delegates' views of the Congress cannot be written down or otherwise recorded for the benefit of those who could not attend. A sample will have to suffice, therefore, and is presented on the following pages.

Needless to say, an objective report of the Congress is an impossible goal. What is offered here are personal impressions, and readers are asked to allow for various biases. We are delighted to include Mrs. Sutcliffe's comments, and know that her philosophic approach and refreshing style will be appreciated. In fairness to her, it should be mentioned that it was necessary for her to leave Canada for several weeks on an urgent family matter soon after she had prepared these notes and she did not have an opportunity of revising them before publication.

We hope these accounts will at least indicate some of the "feeling" of the Congress even though they cannot, even with the addition of a dozen others, do justice to the whole event.

Tributes to the Founders

Throughout the Congress, 1875 was not over-emphasized. Nevertheless, the spirit of the foundation of the Theosophical Society was very much a part of the 1975 proceedings. It was, I suppose, an implicit recognition that the great effort to propagate the Ancient Wisdom is not limited to historical events. Today, as in every year in the past one hundred years, the initial impetus requires recharging constantly if our Cause is to survive and flourish. Our individual contributions to the energy required for this purpose is surely continually enhanced by the inspiration of the three Founders. Hence, we salute their efforts, not so much with any connotation of reverence as with gratitude for their sacrifices and with acknowledgment to their example.

Of the Founders, H.P. Blavatsky naturally is the principal object of gratitude by students of Theosophy. At the Congress, it was not merely her pictures, her books, her personal effects, that set her apart. It was as if, because of her stupendous achievement, she was involved in every single aspect of the program.

The contribution of Col. Olcott to the

Society's founding and early growth is often overlooked, sometimes even downgraded. But here we were at the Statler-Hilton in November, 1975, thanks perhaps in no small part to his great drive and unique organizing skills a century before. All who have ever been charged with the responsibility of managing units of the Society, from a Lodge to the International Presidency itself, will surely both bless his example and sympathize with his problems. He too, was definitely part of the spirit of the Congress.

After having been virtually "in exile" these many years, the Congress paid special tribute to William Quan Judge. With full approbation of the Society, his name was at last relinked with those of H.P.B. and Olcott, his colleagues of 1874 and after.

This restoration of dignity, if not of honour, was the source of considerable joy at the Congress. Those many students who, over the years, have endeavoured to defend Judge's integrity and to continuously make available his valuable writings, must have felt that justice has been done at last. We in the Canadian Section have always recognized William Q. Judge as a founder of the Society and as a student of Theosophy who made a special contribution to our understanding of the Ancient Wisdom. It is gratifying to know that as a result of the wider recognition initiated at the Congress, his work will become known to a much larger segment of the Theosophical Movement, and that hereafter he will be identified as one of the Founders of the Society.

To President John Coats must go our gratitude for making this happen. His several references to William Q. Judge from the platform left no doubt of the Society's new attitude. No doubt others also come in for a share of the credit for this breakthrough, but the torch was in John's hands, and in delivering it to the Congress he initiated what will surely be a new era in the modern Theosophical Movement.

Fraternity

The Congress was also the scene of another effort to harmonize the various elements within the Theosophical Movement. All Theosophical organizations, regardless of their loyalties, were invited to participate, and their contribution to the success of this Centenary function was noticeable.

Their very presence alongside the Society at New York on this occasion would have gladdened the hearts of those who strove for unity for the past fifty or more years. Indeed, so obvious was it that organizational barriers of any magnitude simply do not exist that a newcomer might well ask why had there not been this type of fraternization much earlier?

Without naming all, it was obvious, both from platform activity and among the publication displays, the Point Loma inspired groups, the United Lodge of Theosophists and several independents have much to offer to the furtherance of the aims of the Theosophical Movement. Again, here is much promise for the future — and again, the Congress was the starting point.

Sunday morning, November 16, was given over to four short talks by representatives of groups not affiliated with the Theosophical Society. Their presentations were excellent; their messages universal. Miss Grace Knoche, the head of the Pasadena International Theosophical Society, was not present, but her paper was read by Kirby van Mater. Other memories of this gathering are the beautifully rendered "Let There Be Light!" by Eva de Lisle, of Ottawa, and the very stirring recitations included in Iverson Harris's "At Night I Accept the Authority of the Torches". Well into his eighties, Mr. Harris stood on the platform erect and glowing while he delved effortlessly into his memory to recall verses, many of which he learned at the turn of the century at the famous Point Loma school.

Boris de Zirkoff spoke at this session as

well as at the Centenary Banquet. He struck a serious note, which seemed to be in harmony with the feelings of a goodly number of those present. He solemnly warned of the dangers of the growing trend towards psychism in the Society. This did not reflect a totally pessimistic mood on his part, as is evidenced by the title of his paper: "The Dream That Never Dies!" All in all he radiated the spirit of the Congress, which was one of cheerful determination.

I apologize for dwelling at length on this one session, but it struck me as being one of the most significant achievements of the Congress. President John Coats remarked on the high standards of Theosophical study evidenced by the representatives of these organizations that are definitely part of the Theosophical Movement although not tied to the Society except by bonds of friendship. I heartily agree, as probably most would who were present that Sunday morning. The T.S. can benefit greatly from the example of some of the alternative groups. On the other hand, it is to be hoped that our fellow students outside the Society will hereafter look at the Society in a different light, recognize its potential, and work with us in all appropriate ways.

The Central and South American Sections demonstrated yet another example of fraternity. Through the Inter-American Theosophical Federation they have for many years engaged in a number of cooperative projects which have resulted in, among other things, an inter-sectional magazine and the joint publication of books that otherwise would have been economically prohibitive.

The American and Canadian Sections are also part of the IATF. The driving force behind it, however, originates in the several countries below the U.S.

An IATF Convention and Symposium was held as an integral part of the Congress. The theme was "Relations and responsibilities of those aspiring towards spirituality". It was my privilege to represent Canada in the Symposium, which

itself was an excellent example of what can be achieved through cooperative efforts. Language is, of course, no barrier unless we make it one. The Symposium was little impeded in spite of the three languages spoken in it. The translations, shared by two multilingual fellow students, was smooth and, certainly as far as the English was concerned, perfectly clear. But beyond mere words, what did come through in a very impressive way was the sincerity and enthusiasm of our Latin American sisters and brothers.

The Talks

Of the other plenary sessions I shall comment but briefly. Not that they were a less significant part of the proceedings, but because they were more conventional. In any case, most of the talks we heard at the Congress will be published, and those interested can read them for themselves.

The keynote address, "Theosophy and its Contribution to World Peace", was given by the Honourable C.V. Narashimhan, Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations. This talk frankly disappointed me, but I know others were strongly impressed by it — another example, though none is needed, of the different attitudes to be found among members of the T.S.

The President gave the only public lecture during the Congress. It was given on the Sunday afternoon, and must have attracted a large number from the general public, because the room was well filled. John spoke well, and had an appreciative audience for his paper, which was entitled, "The Wisdom the World Awaits".

On Monday, November 17, the General Secretaries participated in a Symposium, "A New Century of Opportunity". Apart from the fascination of observing the widely different reactions with which individuals respond to a vague theme, this to me was the least interesting or productive session of the Congress.

Perhaps this is the place to mention the Centenary Banquet. This function was

planned to coincide approximately with the time of the inaugural meeting of the Society in New York on November 17, 1875. It was a happy and successful event, as befits a family get-together of this nature.

Boris de Zirkoff was the principal speaker, and surely no other living student of Theosophy could have filled this role better. The 900 or so delegates and guests who attended the Banquet were delighted with Boris's anecdotes of some of the interesting and (sometimes) amusing incidents in the lives of the Founders. Needless to say, in most of these the subject was H.P. Blavatsky.

Task Force Study Groups

The "work" of the Congress was centred in the activities of the ten Task Force Study Groups. (See C.T., Sept-Oct 1975 issue for the complete list of Task Group study topics.) Most of these topics cover issues which are of vital importance to the future of the Society, and the delegates were able to participate in the discussion of the topics of their choice.

That only a fraction of the delegates thus chose to involve themselves is a great disappointment: the average attendance at Task Group meetings was probably not more than twenty. Those who did participate, however, undoubtedly recognized the value and importance of these sessions. Their deliberations might well indicate the direction of the Society over the next quarter century.

It is a pity that we cannot provide individual comments on all the Task Force Study Groups. In her report, Joan touches on the one she attended, on "The Relation of Theosophy to the Theosophical Society", and elsewhere Doris writes her observations of "Theosophical Publications: Programs and Policies". In my view, these two subjects give rise to the most significant questions facing our Movement.

I attended Task Force Study Group No. 5, "Examining the Society's Objects", chaired by Miss Ianthe Hoskins, General

Secretary of The Theosophical Society in England. This topic is of more than academic interest, because the question of changing the wording of the Objects does arise from time to time. The reason for such proposed changes is not always idealistic, either. In at least one country, the wording is significant in respect to national laws.

Members who have ever given serious consideration to the wording of the three Objects know they present a number of enigmatic semantic problems. One could argue through eternity, for instance, on the correct relative positions of the articles "a" and "the" (nucleus . . . Brotherhood) in the First Object; and it is interesting to remember that their order was actually reversed in a change ratified in 1896 and which resulted in the wording of the First Object still in use today.

So this Task Group had to resist becoming involved in matters of this nature, interesting as they are from a philosophical point of view. Not that the discussions were without interest. It was something of an eye-opener to discover how many members, although they were keen to participate in this discussion, could not recite the Objects. It was also instructive to notice the range of importance given to the Objects by various Sections, at least one of which seems almost to ignore them altogether for most practical purposes. One group attempted to "lobby" us to broaden the First Object; however, the concept failed to attract the sympathy of the rest of us.

All in all, the three sessions of this Task Group were highly stimulating. Miss Hoskins deserves much credit for her

handling of what might have developed into a controversial debate.

In future issues we shall try to include the reports of the most relevant Task Force Study Groups. If the reports adequately convey the gist of the discussions, whether or not consensus was achieved, they should prove of considerable interest to all who are concerned with the nature and direction of the Theosophical Society. They should also be the basis of ongoing discussions in Lodges and elsewhere, because the problems of the Society were surely not solved in a few days at the Congress.

Publications

Never has the rich literary heritage of the Theosophical Movement been so impressively presented as at the Congress book exposition. Practically the entire output of all the Theosophical Publishing Houses (Wheaton, London and Adyar), Theosophical University Press, Point Loma Publications, Inc., and Secret Doctrine Reference Series (Wizards Bookshelf) was exhibited for display and sale.

What a collection it is! Interestingly much of the most valuable material, including the later volumes of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, most of the Point Loma Publications, Inc. catalogue, and the S.D. Reference Series' reprints of otherwise almost impossible to obtain 19th century works, have been available to us only in recent years.

On the negative side, the exposition highlighted the enormous collection of material put out through T.P.H. which does it no credit whatever. I can sympathize with the delegate who observed, "What a load of junk!" That some of these books should be graced by association with original Theosophical literature is dreadful. It can only result in a large segment of the intelligent public being turned off the better books in the T.P.H. catalogue, in which is contained most of our priceless heritage. Doris probes into some

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of the causes of this situation in her Task Group report. I should like to think that an early solution will be found to this problem.

Displays

Some very interesting visual displays were erected on the Convention Mezzanine. Those responsible deserve praise for the skill and artistry with which the subjects were depicted.

Documents and other materials from the T.S. archives were incorporated into the displays, which included descriptions of the foundation of the Society, and brief lives of the Founders. Other posters attempted to correlate some of the profound Theosophical concepts, as given out in *The Secret Doctrine*, with modern scientific thinking.

Elsewhere, there was a gallery of paintings of Theosophists down the ages. These were the result of Margaret Geiger's artistry. Considering the occasion, this display was a useful reminder that the roots of the Theosophical Movement belong much earlier than 1875.

General Council Meetings

Attendance at the Congress provided the opportunity for me to attend a meeting of the General Council. This was only the second occasion when a Canadian General Secretary had done so, the first being in 1966 when Dudley Barr was present at the meeting held during the Salzburg Congress.

The meeting was spread over three sessions. Even then, so many were the matters arising out of the Minutes of last year's meeting that little else was discussed in that time. This was a great disappointment, because the Congress brought together a far larger number of General Secretaries than otherwise ever meet, and so it was a lost opportunity for discussions of important long term issues.

The Council itself is a fascinating group of individuals. As is inevitable in any international body, the members derive from many different cultural backgrounds. Also,

as is not surprising in our unique organization, their vocational backgrounds are also several and varied, including some from the teaching and medical professions, artists of all types, and business people. United by their common interest, however, the Society's General Secretaries are a homogeneous and amicable group.

President John Coats runs a good meeting and gives ample opportunity for the expression of all points of view. He has three sterling colleagues in International Vice-President Joy Mills, Recording Secretary Jean Raymond, and Treasurer C.R.N. Swamy. At one time or another during the sessions, all four contributed to the general understanding of complex issues, and took pains to explain, for example, the background to local Adyar matters, with which most Councillors are unfamiliar.

Incidentally, this points up a problem in respect to the General Council. A substantial portion of the agenda of any Council meeting consists of items that may be classified under the heading "Adyar Estate Administration". Decisions made by the Council on these items may have an important bearing on the lives of hundreds of people who live and/or work in Adyar. Now, neither I nor most of the other General Secretaries have been to Adyar. How can we be sure that our decisions, taken in good faith, are the best ones, in as much as we lack knowledge of local conditions, customs and geography? It is my fervent hope that the Committee studying Structures and Procedures will find a solution to this, among other problems.

At one session, the General Council was visited by Mr. John Kern, a personal trustee, and an official of the Northern Trust Company, the corporate trustee for the Kern Foundation. They provided explanations of the nature and objectives of the Foundation, which has done so much for the T.S. in America, often with spillover advantage to other Sections, over the past several years. We were also informed of some of the limitations that govern the

spending of funds from this source.

Following the opening ceremonies on November 15, members of the General Council and special guests were invited to a luncheon given by the Officers of the American Section. This function was much appreciated by all who attended, particularly as it provided a useful opportunity to get to know better those with whom we would be working closely in the days that followed.

* * *

It was a disappointment to us that we had to check out the day before the closing of the Congress. From all accounts, it was an inspiring conclusion. We were pleased to hear that Joy Mills received a standing ovation following her closing remarks, and well did she earn such an expression of thanks from the delegates for her tremendous efforts.

Over and above the Congress program, our memories are full of happy meetings with fellow students — old and new friends. But so busy was the schedule that we left New York without exchanging much more

than “hellos” with dozens of delegates. Too bad there was not more time in which to get to know them better. As the years go on we trust there will be opportunities to make up for this.

In retrospect, the Congress was very worth while. On the one hand — and let us not be ostrich-like in this regard — it symbolized the failure of the T.S. to live up to its original promise. On the other, it was proof that much has been achieved, especially in recent years.

Obviously, the attempt to impart some of the Divine Wisdom to humanity in the 19th and 20th centuries has not been entirely wasted. Obviously, too, there is much that can be done which is not being done. The field is large, the number of toilers few. But if each of us tries to apply his energies towards the ends envisaged by H.P.B., her teachers and colleagues, then by the time of the Theosophical World Congress in the year 2000 the Theosophical Movement will hold much promise for the generations that will be in incarnation during the 21st century.

T.G.D.

KNIGHTS ON THE QUEST FOR THE GRAIL

Notes of a delegate to the Centennial Congress in New York

JOAN SUTCLIFFE

In one of the versions of the legends concerning the mysteries of the Holy Grail there is a prologue, which tells us that once there was a very beautiful and fertile land. It was irrigated by springs of pure water, and the fruit and flowers that grew in the fields were nourishing and fragrant. The weary wayfarer who might find his way to the joyful court of the king, which filled the land with splendour, would be comforted by fair maidens who would refresh his thirst

from a golden cup. However, there came to this country a king, Amangon, and his men, who ravished the maidens and carried off the ever-filled cup. The springs dried up, the rich fields withered, and no more was to be found the sweet court of plenty, and the women became wanderers in a land that was laid waste and desolate.

It became the resolution of all the knights to rediscover this strange kingdom, ruled now by a king who was sick and kept alive

only by a mystic food delivered to him from the Holy Grail.

We are told that the court was visited seven times and there were seven adventures. The main legend describes how the knight, Perceval, reaches the elusive castle and is given sight of the Grail and other symbols, borne under the guardianship of pure youths and maidens. However, he fails to question the meaning of these mysteries, and there arises in the castle an intense sorrow. The inhabitants vanish, and Perceval is cursed for his failure, as his discovery of the knowledge would have set free the kingdom from the spell. He is doomed to become a sad traveller whose sole quest is to find again the castle and learn the mystery of the Grail.

What is the Grail? In some versions it is a drinking vessel, in others it is a stone flashing messages which vanish as soon as they have been read. History is filled with such tales of heroes in search of precious things. In Theosophical considerations, the Grail is Theosophy, Divine Wisdom, that knowledge existing since ancient times of universal law and its working in all the kingdoms of nature from the Kosmic down to the infinitesimal atom. It is a body of truth, which teaches of the unity of all things, and of the divine origin of man and his place in the evolving cosmic schemes, and it dwells in the castle of intuitional consciousness under the guardianship of developed souls or Mahatmas.

A hundred years ago penetration into this castle was made, when this wisdom was given to the world by a certain few of these adepts through their messenger, H.P. Blavatsky. November 17, 1975, was the centenary of the official founding of the Theosophical Society as a vehicle through which it might be sought. In order to celebrate that occasion, and to assess the work accomplished, the progress and failures, in this century and chiefly to seek to meet the spiritual urge which the Mahatmas have spoken of as occurring in the last quarter of the century, students

from Theosophical organizations all over the world came together. The programme was initiated at New York, where the inauguration of the T.S. took place, and it was an honour for me to have the fortune to attend and represent Toronto Lodge.

All interested Theosophists at this time are knights on the quest for the Grail, not just those who are, or have been, in attendance at the physical functions of the Centennial, but those too who gave assistance so that others might be present, and particularly those who are with the Theosophical Movement in thought. The wisdom that has its home in the spiritual spheres operates in the inner substances as well as the outer, and thought is a tremendous power, and this concentration by Theosophical minds on Theosophy, if the vision is clear and true, could release a positive force that will shine for a long time afterwards. We are told that he who has seen the Grail cannot die within fourteen days. It is not enough, though, to be just a witness. One must question, seek knowledge, and bring it to life to heal the sick king, humanity, who dwells in the wasteland of human frailties and ignorance.

A general outline of the programme of events at the Congress in New York would include: lectures, individual participation in Task Force Study Groups, reports from the heads of different Sections of the T.S., and Theosophical films.

Lectures were given by representatives of different groups, all of which operate within what is termed the Theosophical Movement. All have developed from that original impulse of 1875, but due to man's imperfections, misinterpretations of the teachings occurred, causing several splits within the T.S. body. As early as 1884 the Mahatmas write in their letters to Sinnett of the failure of the T.S. In Letter 65 we read:

"You must have understood by this time, my friend, that the centennial attempt made by us to open the eyes of the blind world — has nearly failed: in

India — partially, in Europe — with a few exceptions — absolutely.”

Concerning the true purpose of the Society, we read again in Letter 2:

“... you must be aware that the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspiration as to serve our fellow men ...”

Because this noble purpose was unrealized, human personalities became caught up in the deceptive delights of their own intellectual endeavours, and the true teachings became polluted and misrepresentations were put forward in their place. During the years that have intervened since the founding of the Society, many of the original works were printed with huge portions omitted, words and whole sentences changed, in some cases so that the whole meaning was distorted. Other later and less inspired literature was brought to the fore to replace the true teachings, and the material was actually conflicting with the Theosophy as given out by the Masters. The breaking away of certain groups served an important object, for it led to the republication of the original Theosophical books and literature, the pure source.

Human frailties ravished the pure maiden, Theosophy, and created a wasteland within the T.S. The Holy Grail of true wisdom is still alive, though. The false teachings are the trials and the wrong turnings the knight passes through before reaching the castle. The beautiful healing force of the Grail still shines, as we were to discover in the power that is generated through the words and presence of those one-pointed workers and students with whom we came in contact at the Congress.

One of the most inspiring parts of the programme was on the Sunday morning when four such people presented dynamic talks. As these talks have been taped, and it is hoped might be available for presentation at some later date, it is not necessary

here to go into them, but just give a general idea.

Boris de Zirkoff spoke on “The Dream That Never Dies”. It is he who has been responsible for the editing, production and publication of the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. These writings come from varied sources, e.g. newspaper articles; letters etc. to various publications; articles in journals of Theosophy such as *The Theosophist* and *Lucifer*; and many others. One can barely imagine the energy that must have gone into such research and preparation. He is also the editor of the excellent magazine *Theosophia*.

Mr. de Zirkoff spoke of the danger of psychism in its deceptive forms: programmes within the Lodges offering magic and lower forms of yoga etc. instead of the esoteric philosophy. “If the trend is not reversed we shall not be able to ride the crest of the spiritual wave of the future and lead mankind into intellectual and spiritual realms: if we give heed to all the fundamental teachings of Theosophy we will be able to ride into the second century on a wave of promise. H.P.B.’s school was Atma Vidya, gnosticism etc. The outer corps is wide, but the inner sanctuary is made up of the sum total of students who have devoted their entire life to the Secret Doctrine, renounced worldly ties for the vows to discipleship. Selflessness, dedicated work of teaching, forgiveness of personal wrongs are their mark. The path to wisdom starts at the root of one’s own heart. The dreams that are rooted in one’s inner heart can never die. Dreamers may die but never the dream.”

At the banquet Boris gave an account of some of the lesser known incidents in the life of H.P.B. which were interesting and endearing and often amusing. Some of these were taken from acquaintances with direct links and others from the *Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, which was interesting, as the book of this title was the source of one of the study groups in Toronto Lodge last year.

The Theosophical Society International

was represented in a speech titled "The Large Purpose". This is a centre of study in Pasadena, which specialises in preparing Theosophical books for publication, particularly the works of W.Q. Judge, one of the original founders of the T.S., and G. de Purucker, an early pioneer. The general theme here was Unity in diversity. In reply to the much requested cry for one body in the T.S., one united front, the words of one great teacher were quoted: "Keep your tents separate and bring your hearts together". It was pointed out that the more dedicated the work in the individual Lodges and Theosophical organizations the nearer are the radii drawn to the central hub of the wheel, where all meet as one, the differences are only when one is concerned with the issues at the circumference.

Iverson Harris represented Point Loma Publications Inc. Perhaps some of us will remember when Mr. Harris visited Toronto two and a half years ago and spoke to us of Point Loma. This had been a thriving cultural centre, initiated by Katherine Tingley, a pupil of William Q. Judge. G. de Purucker also served many years there. It had a school for children, and was also a scholarly institute for adult learning, where the arts, such as drama, literature, music etc., were taught and presented in the light of the esoteric doctrine and with the high degree of discipline that befits the Theosophical aspirant. Iverson Harris is a very inspiring speaker, who chooses moving quotations from the writers and poets of the ages, which have at the heart of their meaning, Theosophy. He says that when he sees a beautiful passage he decides "I will make that part of myself", and he learns it and passes it on to others.

The United Lodge of Theosophists (the U.L.T.) was represented by Eva de Lisle from Ottawa, who gave a really beautiful and inspiring talk. The possibility exists of having her visit Toronto to deliver this same one, and this should be a rewarding experience for us. There is a spiritual language which seeks the intuitional in man, raising his thoughts to his buddhic

consciousness, and transforming earthly activities into spiritual light.

These speakers represented Theosophical organizations outside the body of the Theosophical Society.

In the early years the Society tended to take the side of Annie Besant who had levelled certain accusations against William Q. Judge, and also to put her misinterpreted versions of Theosophical teachings in front of those of H.P.B. This situation still largely prevails in the Society today.

Under these circumstances, it is very interesting to report that on introducing those speakers, John Coats, the International President of the Society, made the dramatic remark that perhaps Mrs. Besant could have been wrong. Such an admission bears great significance.

Another most important part of the Congress was the division into Task Force Study Groups, to bring to light individual ideas and study.

We attended the one on "The Relation of Theosophy to The Theosophical Society", which was led by Geoffrey Farthing, who left such an impressive mark on Canadian Lodges after his tour in the Spring of 1975. In *The Key to Theosophy*, regarding this relationship we are told: "... Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love, and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection... It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities". How far this is being achieved came under fire in our discussion.

This was a very dynamic group and the subject that aroused the most vigour was that of the inclusion of the Liberal Catholic Church with the T.S. We became very unpopular with a Liberal Catholic from "down under", when it was pointed out that one of the Mahatmas in their letters to

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NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the deaths of four members of the Society.

Ernest Staniforth, a member of Edmonton Lodge, died suddenly on November 21. He joined the Society in 1969 and was a student blessed with a keen mind and a wide range of related interests. A senior official in the government of Alberta, he had taken an early retirement and intended to use the increased time available to him to extend his activities in Masonry and Theosophy. A Theosophical funeral service was conducted by Simon Postma, Secretary of the Edmonton Lodge.

Mrs. Helena Illingworth died on November 28. She had been a member of Toronto Lodge for over 41 years. Older members will remember her with particular affection as the conscientious bookseller at the Hall on Isabella Street. Quiet and unassuming, ever helpful, she set a wonderful example of service.

After having been bedridden for a long time, Mrs. Margaret D. Robson passed away on December 2. She joined the Society through Orpheus Lodge in 1929.

Members of Victoria Lodge were shocked to learn of the death on December 10 of Lodge Secretary Mrs. Sybil Bateman. A member since 1968, she had been continuously active in Lodge affairs except for a year or two when she lived in England. A tribute to Sybil is included in the Victoria Lodge report in this issue.

Our sympathy is extended to the relatives and friends of these departed fellow-students.

* * *

An attractive calendar has been produced by the Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar to commemorate the Society's Centenary. Because of the Canadian postal strike, it was not received

in time for us to make an earlier announcement.

The calendar runs from November, 1975, to December, 1976, with two months on a sheet. Above the dates are 17" x 11" coloured photographs of views seen in and around the Adyar Estate. On the date pages are quotations from various sources and pictures of some of the flowers that grow at Adyar.

The price of the calendar is \$3.00, plus postage and packing, for which I suggest another \$3.00 be allowed. Orders should be sent to The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 600020, India.

* * *

As will be obvious, the publishing schedule for *The Canadian Theosophist* is still running late. The Editors hope that by Spring they will be back to their normal routines.

We extend our apologies to all who have been inconvenienced.

* * *

Canadian representation at the Centenary Congress included thirteen members of The Theosophical Society in Canada, three members of the Canadian Federation, two affiliates of the United Lodge of Theosophists and two individuals who to the best of my knowledge are not members of any organization.

Delegates from the Canadian Section each received a share of the Centenary Fund, which was started several years ago with the idea of assisting members to attend either the Congress or the Centenary Convention at Adyar.

* * *

Seldom do we receive requests for pens, but two were in our mail recently.

Mr. David Urban, 4654 N. Laramie, Chicago, Illinois, 60630, U.S.A., is a student of Theosophy and astrology.

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

IN CANADA

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Editors: Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Davy

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

The editors reserve the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all.

RANNIE PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
Beamsville, Ontario

of the founders is Geoffrey Farthing, former General Secretary of the T.S. in England, and well-known in Canada as a result of two lecture tours he has made in this country.

Among the initial publications of the Blavatsky Trust is a 58-page booklet, *Theosophy, The Wisdom Religion*, and a "List of Suggested Reading" . . .

I have pleasure in welcoming the following new members into the fellowship of the Society:

Calgary Lodge. Hendrik van Hees, Jean A. Ross.

Toronto Lodge. Ruth P. Taylor, Elizabeth G. Wilson.

Victoria Lodge. Deborah J. Gerhardt, Gillian B. Kedward.

T.G.D.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 1975

Inevitably, each passing year takes the toll of active T.S. workers. Sadly, we open this report by recording the death in June of Dudley W. Barr. He had been a dedicated member for nearly sixty years; a former General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in Canada; and former Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist*. Dudley Barr was a devoted student of Theosophy, and for as long as his health allowed, worked tirelessly for the Society.

One of the highlights of the year's activities was a lecture tour of Canadian centres by Geoffrey Farthing, former General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in England. This was his second Canadian tour, and proved even more successful than the first. In some cities it was possible to interest the media in his presence, and a number of productive TV, radio and press interviews resulted.

From 1919, when The Theosophical Society in Canada was formed, to this year,

Mr. Simon Woodcock, 105 Cambridge Road, Churchtown, Southport, England, would like to hear from students in Canada with a view to discussing such matters as karma, rebirth, the Masters.

* * *

The attention of readers is invited to the prospectus given elsewhere in this issue of the recently formed Blavatsky Trust. One

the Canadian General Executive had invariably met in Toronto. It was an historic occasion, therefore, when in July this committee met in Vancouver, British Columbia. It is hoped that it will be possible occasionally to hold such meetings in various centres of Western Canada.

Business trips occasionally enable the General Secretary to visit the far-flung Canadian centres. Such visits might otherwise be inhibited by the lack of available time and finances. During the year he was fortunate to have the opportunity of meeting briefly with members of Montreal, Edmonton, Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges.

"The Universal Flame", the latest Quest film, was purchased from the T.S. in America. Together with "How Many Lifetimes" and "Reincarnation", it is available for free loan anywhere in Canada.

Ted. G. Davy
General Secretary

VICTORIA LODGE

The Lodge had a successful Fall season, meeting each Tuesday evening. Studies alternate between an Introductory Course for enquirers and new students, and a deep study of *The Key to Theosophy* for members.

On December 16 we had a tape recording by Boris de Zirkoff on the Winter Solstice, the final part of which is to be heard on January 6.

During the Fall, a small group of Lodge members met to study *The Secret Doctrine* one afternoon a week, and have found this a most rewarding work. All meetings are open to anyone interested.

Members of Victoria Lodge have sustained the loss of our well-loved Secretary, Mrs. Sybil Bateman, who died on December 10, 1975. She was a wonderful worker for Theosophy and also for any worthwhile cause in which she believed,

and was active right to the end of her life, in spite of failing health. She attended her last meeting of the Lodge on December 9.

If certain spiritual values are necessary for chelaship, Sybil had one outstanding quality which will surely bear fruit in succeeding lives — that of tremendous courage, both moral and physical.

At the last Lodge meeting before the sacred season of the Winter Solstice we had two readings in Sybil Bateman's memory, followed by a short silence when our thoughts went out to her in gratitude. She has passed from our sight, but is not lost to us.

Dorita Gilmour
President

CALGARY LODGE

The Calgary Lodge *Secret Doctrine* class met regularly on Thursday evenings throughout the Fall. It will resume in the New Year after a short break for the holiday season.

Attendances of eight or nine have been consistent since we started, and this has contributed to harmony and stimulating discussions.

S.S. Elliott
President

A NEW T.S. SERVICE IN WESTERN CANADA

Members and readers in Western Canada requiring T.S. books and literature are invited to write to:

Box 2983, Station "A"
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2G6.

He who would be a true Theosophist must bring himself to live as one. — *The Key to Theosophy*

THE RELATION OF THEOSOPHY TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Points for discussion by Centenary Congress Task Force Study Group No. 1

GEOFFREY A. FARTHING

1) THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

i) Its published Objects

These express the intentions for the Society in the world, in outline. They do not mention Theosophy as such. First there is the idea of universal brotherhood; then the encouragement to study and investigate in stated areas.

Note: No dogma or set teaching.

ii) Its expressed purpose

This was to "let it be known that such a thing as Theosophy exists."

The T.S. "was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines and for the promotion of the Theosophic life." (See *Key to Theosophy*)

There is much else in the early literature in this vein; not only that, but about what Theosophy is.

iii) How far has the Society fulfilled

a) These objects (i.e., spread the idea of brotherhood, encouraged study and the investigation of latent powers, etc.)?

b) its purpose of spreading a knowledge of Theosophy?

iv) a) To what extent has the T.S. succeeded in its Objects? In what areas?

b) To what extent has it failed? In what areas?

c) What of the Society's public image? Does it have one?

Insofar as it has, is it good or poor, and why?

How far is H.P.B. still regarded as a fraud, immoral, etc.?

How much are people influenced by the defection of Krishnamurti?

What effect have such books as *Candles in the Sun* by Emily Lutyens and *Krishnamurti, Years of Awakening* by Mary Lutyens, had on the Society's image?

d) What effect on the Society and its image have such organizations as the Liberal Catholic Church, Co-Masonry, etc.?

e) What can we now do to correct our public image?

f) Has the E.S. over the years drifted away from the original teachings and declared object?

Is the emphasis now too much on Hindu teachings and training practices?

What is the effect of E.S. training and teaching on the T.S.? or even the mere fact of the existence of the E.S.? Is there room for a western E.S. on a jnana yoga basis?

g) Has there been reconciliation of Theosophy with Spiritualism — as normally understood — and with exoteric religion and its practices, instead of maintaining its own points of view as distinct from these?

h) How far has the T.S. promulgated a knowledge of Theosophy? For example in the *Key* the function of the T.S. was, inter alia, "to put into written form correct information upon the various ancient philosophies, traditions, and legends, and to disseminate the same . . . by means of publications in those places where no lectures and personal teaching are possible . . . what we have to do is to seek to obtain *knowledge* of all the laws of nature, and to diffuse it. To encourage the study of those laws least understood

by modern people, the so-called Occult Sciences, based on the true knowledge of nature . . .”

- i) How far has the concept of the purposes of the Society come to be different from the above?
- j) What can the theosophical movement now best do to promote brotherhood and a knowledge of Theosophy?
- k) The Masters said it was intended that the Theosophical Society should become “the cornerstone of the future religions of humanity.” (Mahachohan’s letter, 1881, and the 1900 letter) What have we done, or what can be done, about this?
- l) Is there a need for a western headquarters? If so, where and what would be its function?

2) THEOSOPHY

- i) How far has it been assumed that Theosophy relates to areas of knowledge outside the ordinary experience, and so must itself be only a matter of opinion?
- ii) If Theosophy is, and can only be, a matter of opinion, how far is it better than or different from the belief or faith of the religionist?
- iii) Can we not assume that our Masters know what they tell us about, from first hand? If so, then cannot Theosophy be taken as facts in nature—discoverable, knowable facts, when we have the faculties working to apprehend them?
- iv) Would we not then have something specific to disseminate? If we can agree that we have, does it not behoove every member who would speak and write in the name of Theosophy to know what the Masters told us of it?
- v) If there are teachings at variance with what the Masters gave us and there are, as for example, traversing the planes of being, in consciousness, after death, do we not have to decide whether we will believe the Masters with their teaching on the matter (consistent with the whole grand scheme), or the psychic or spiritualistic view at variance with the teaching and which does not fit with the

grand scheme? Both views cannot be right. We have to choose. As members of the Society, have we not a responsibility to put the theosophical view?

N.B.: It is important to note here that we are under no compulsion to abandon our own beliefs, whether they accord with Theosophy or not. But surely we should give out our differing views as our opinion (not as Theosophy) and make it clear we are doing so.

- vi) How far is Theosophy a matter of book learning? What is the theosophical life? How do we know these things if we do not read at least the summary type literature, such as *The Key to Theosophy*?
- vii) What are the prerequisites for living the theosophical life?
- viii) What part has *The Voice of the Silence* to play in our aspirational training? What is the “Heart Doctrine” as opposed to the “Head Doctrine”? Is it emotion and sentimentality? If not, what is it? Is it not important to discover this?
- ix) What can a Theosophist (a member of the Society) do effectively to serve the “Cause,” in this day and age?

* * *

In all our thinking we must be positive and forward-looking. If there were mistakes in the past, wherever and by whom they were made, they are past. We can only and must surely correct their effects on the future work we have to do. If we can agree on what Theosophy is, this can be the common message for all branches of the Theosophical Movement to promote. Their different organizations and ways of doing it really do not matter. But can there be coordination in their efforts and in the use of their resources? Let us, amongst us, from now on promote the brotherhood we have talked so much about.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS: PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Notes on Centenary Congress Task Force Study Group No. 9

The members of this Task Force Study Group included representatives from Wheaton, Theosophical University Press, Point Loma Publications Inc., Wizards Bookshelf, Blavatsky Institute Publications, a Librarian and an art designer.

The Chairman was Clarence Pedersen, Book Sales Manager, of T.P.H. Wheaton, who had drawn up a number of suggested points for discussion, so that we were able to move directly to some of the important questions in respect to Theosophical publishing.

One of the problems facing T.P.H. appears to be the lack of authors in the general membership. This frequently means going outside of the Society, and while this provides Quest with a sufficient number of books to enable them to come up with new titles and stay competitive in the publishing field, it tends to cover a much wider range of subjects than what might be termed "theosophical" in nature.

The question was raised whether this is a good thing for the Society as a whole. Each Quest publication carries a statement to the effect that it is published by the Theosophical Society in America and to a reader not familiar with the aims and objects of the Society it might be construed that every Quest and Re-Quest book is theosophically oriented.

Several present expressed the view that some of the earlier and out of print Theosophical books should be republished before further new books. However, the Chairman advised that book outlets were not as eager to handle reprints as to show new titles on their shelves. I found this to be an interesting piece of information, not having realized before that there are

disadvantages to being in the position of a "business" rather than just a small Theosophical publishing concern.

There are other related problems. Because of a number of factors, the image of Theosophy is not rated highly in some circles. The group was told that when approached to write a foreword to a Theosophical publication, an eminent author refused unless the word Theosophy did not appear in it!

The group was asked for its views on some of the "untouchable" theosophical literature. Should it be allowed to go out of print or should suitable editing, including revision, be considered before each reprint or abridgment? An example of the dilemma facing the publishers would be references to race which might now be considered not in keeping with Theosophical principles.

A very important point of discussion ranged on the question of what can be done, more than is now being done, to coordinate the efforts of all theosophical publishing houses.

The occasion has arisen where the same book or books have been published by two different publishing houses. This could be avoided by better communications between them. A suggestion was made that perhaps one or two meetings a year could be arranged between the representatives of all the Theosophical publishers in which they could discuss future publishing plans. To extend this outside the Theosophical publishers was felt to incur the danger of other publishers "jumping the gun" on a proposed publication but within the "family" this should not be the case. Also, perhaps joint publication of a title or titles might be considered.

The expense of such meetings was mentioned and the suggestion was made that perhaps under its terms of reference the Kern Foundation could provide funds for periodical discussions in view of the fact that this would be of benefit to all.

The question of improving contributions to the Non-English Publications Loan Fund was discussed.

There was whole hearted agreement that every effort be made to ensure that good Theosophical literature is available in languages other than English. To accomplish this requires more capital and it was suggested that constant reminders be made to members of the existence of the Non-English Publications Loan Fund.

An interesting discussion ensued regarding translations. If professional translators are used there is a risk of incorrect interpretations of some theosophical concepts. It would be desirable, therefore, if translators could be found among theosophists who have a grounding in theosophy. Also the problem occurs when a variety of languages are spoken within a country. One of the members in this study group was from Ghana and he emphasized this point with the example that a book or books translated for one region of his country could not be read in another a few hundred miles away.

It was unanimously agreed that Theosophical publishers should not include modern "format" art books in their catalogues.

It was reported that the present policy of making the covers of Quest books more attractive i.e. with brighter colours and more eye-appealing designs was found to increase bookshelf sales. However, which is the more important, the contents of the book or its cover?

The Quest children's books came in for criticism, it being suggested that, with one or two exceptions, they lacked appeal. We were advised that *Navajo Bird Tales* had been a good seller, while most others had not, and this may provide an example of the type of book required.

Good authors are needed in this field, not only to write a story, but to "speak" to the present generation of children.

Another suggestion was put forward that a list of available early magazines be supplied. The list should state where the magazines are located so that anyone wishing to refer to them would know their whereabouts.

This Task Force Group was a real "working" group and it was a privilege to be part of it. Discussion was good and if at times we "agreed to disagree" this made for three very worthwhile sessions. If not all the suggestions or criticisms are carried out or noted, at least the airing of them may be of some help in establishing future Programs and Policies.

Unfortunately, I had to leave the Congress before the Reports of the Chairmen of the Task Force Study Groups were presented but undoubtedly these will become available and possibly can be included in future issues of the magazine.

— Doris Davy

KNIGHTS ON THE QUEST FOR THE GRAIL

(Continued from page 130)

Sinnett wrote: "I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind". (*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, Letter 10, p. 57).

Among other aspects of the Congress were films, which were very beautifully presented with music. One showed scenes

of Adyar, the T.S. headquarters, and then travelled up into the Himalayas and the high plateaus of Tibet, where the lamaseries stand stolidly on mountain recesses. Pictures were taken inside, of the teachers and their chelas. Another film was of *Our Universe*, and attempted to demonstrate the idea of spirit manifesting through matter, in galaxies, in the mineral kingdom, in plants and animals. The unity of all life was stressed, the law in nature and the perfect workings. The auras of plants were also demonstrated, and appeared as luminous rays encircling each part, shining with bright colours and vibrating.

There are many good and worthy people who are trapped under the spell of falsely portrayed Teachings. They are like the

innocent ladies imprisoned in the Castle of Magic, under the sorcery of the black magician, Clinschor, for the dark forces use subtle weapons to block the light of truth. It is one of the trials the knight must pass through, to overcome the evil force of Clinschor and set free the captives. By courage and steadfastness of purpose he accomplishes. The knight is always portrayed as naive and simple, and so the Theosophical seeker must return to the childlike state of mind. This does not mean forgetting experiences or an unwillingness to learn, for the child is always eager to discover new truths, but it means to free oneself from a biased outlook, a molded mind crippled with preconceived ideas; it means to look with a pure open mind at the original teachings and compare.

THE BLAVATSKY TRUST

The Object of the Trust

The object of the Trust is, 'to advance education in and promote or further the study of or research into religion, philosophy and science, and to disseminate the results of such study and research to the public'. Included in this object is the undertaking and promotion of 'study and research in the field of the laws of nature and the powers latent in man', and 'to disseminate the results of this research and the writings of H.P. Blavatsky and *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* and other literature consonant with them'.

The Trust may promote this object by awarding scholarships, bursaries and grants for the purpose of such study and research, and it may disseminate the results of its researches by means of publishing, translating or by lectures or television or radio or otherwise howsoever in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.

There is a tradition in many countries of

an Ancient Wisdom or Wisdom Religion known to men of superior development and power who represent the advance guard of humanity. This Wisdom is relevant to ordinary man as it treats, against a background of knowledge of Nature's inner laws, of man's proper place in the scheme of things, his ultimate potentialities and of his responsibility for his individual and collective state. It also treats of the way to his inner growth of faculty and the unfolding of his essential spiritual nature, in line with the universal evolutionary trend. It tells also of the service a man inevitably renders his fellows in truly progressing along that path of self-development. This Ancient Wisdom has latterly been referred to as Theosophy.

The writings of H.P. Blavatsky and the *Mahatma Letters* contain what the Trustees consider to be Theosophy as given out, at least in part, for the first time to the public towards the end of the last century.

In so far as Theosophy brings so much light to bear on religion, philosophy and science, the Trustees feel it to be a principal aim of the Trust 'to let it be known that such a thing as Theosophy exists' and something of what it is.

The Trust's ability to assist students financially and to undertake lectures etc., will depend upon the necessary resources of money and personnel being available.

The Trust is being launched during the autumn of 1975 to commemorate the founding of the modern Theosophical movement a century ago by H.P. Blavatsky and others.

The Trust is a registered charity and is independent of any other organisation.

There is no desire on the part of the Trustees that the Trust should rival any Theosophical or other institution.

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The Trust is financed by subscriptions, which may be under covenant thus enabling the Trust to recover any Income Tax the subscriber may have paid on his subscriptions; by donations and bequests. Bequests made to charity have the effect of immediately reducing the value of the estate by the amount of the bequest, for purposes of Capital Transfer Tax *

Subscribers and Donors

It is proposed to keep a list of subscribers and donors to the Trust. The list may become a register of supporters of the objects of the Trust, and they can then be put in touch with one another, if they so desire, to organise group activities etc.

Trustees

The founder Trustees are Geoffrey Farthing, Chairman and acting Secretary, Christmas Humphreys and Graham Nicholas.

Literature

A booklet giving outline information about Theosophy is available. (50p, post free, to defray costs.) The Trust has also

prepared a suggested Reading List and can supply the books mentioned by post.

Many books of summary and commentary based, some more and some less, on the original writings have since appeared. With these later works the Trust is not primarily concerned. Enquirers are advised to become acquainted first with the original writings so that they may judge for themselves the quality of the others.

Enquiries

The address of the Trust for enquiries and requests for the recommended Reading List, for the Booklet, *Theosophy, the Wisdom Religion* and orders for books from the List is:

THE BLAVATSKY TRUST

P.O. Box 167, London, N20 0HQ.

England

The secretary's address is:-

Lake Farm, Eavestone,
Ripon, North Yorks. HG4 3HD.

England

BOOK REVIEW

The Divine Pymander (of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus), translated by Dr. Everard (1650). Published 1973 in the Secret Doctrine Reference Series by Wizards Bookshelf, Savage, Minnesota. xviii + 112 pp. Cloth. Price \$6.95.

Extant Hermetic writings represent but a small portion of what once must have been a vast literature. Of the available works, *The Divine Pymander* is by far the most important, and is of such a quality and nature as to suggest that priceless scriptural treasures might have been among the works that disappeared.

There is no use crying over spilt milk, however, and we must be grateful for the Pymander. Grateful, too, that Everard's translation is now again obtainable through this Secret Doctrine Reference series edition.

*Applicable to England only — Eds.

G.R.S. Mead wrote that it was "hopeless" to try to understand Hermes from this version. Nevertheless, Everard's translation is harmonious with the contents, and for what it lacks in scholarship, it makes up in a sensitivity to the spiritual nature of this "guide". It is written in simple 17th century prose which seems admirably suited to this ancient work.

It is difficult to describe these fragments of Hermetic teachings. Their genuineness cannot be doubted, except perhaps by theologians. It is obvious that they contain a very old exposition of the Theosophic philosophy. While much remains hidden in

obscure language, yet the scope of Man's spiritual evolution is here conveyed quite clearly to those who wish to see.

No one can be sure of the source of these writings, the originals having been lost for centuries. Perhaps other influences have crept in through translations, but an early Egyptian source is indicated. It is more than likely that we have here the remains of an esoteric system that was introduced into Ancient Egypt millenia ago.

This valuable book is verbatim with the 1650 edition. It also contains Hargrave Jennings' introduction to the 1884 edition.

T.G.D.

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. In the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine* we read: "the orthodox Christian separates his personal creative Deity into the three personages of the Trinity, and admits of no higher Deity. The latter, in Occultism, is the abstract Triangle; with the orthodox, the perfect Cube." (p. 19)

To what is referred by "the perfect Cube"?

Answer. "From this Cube emanates the whole Kosmos." (S.D. V, 189 6-vol. ed.; III, 181 3rd ed.)

But in order to understand the significance of the answer, as well as to explain the meaning of the passage which preceded the reference to "the perfect Cube", one should turn to Volume V of *The Secret Doctrine*, where the subject is treated in greater detail than the brief mention made in the Proem. This will be quoted following the explanation of the term "Hypostases", which means any

one of the persons of the Trinity (usually stated in the Christian concept as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

"The *Zohar* premises, as does the Secret Doctrine, a universal, eternal Essence, passive — because absolute — in all that men call attributes. The pregenetic or pre-cosmical Triad is a pure metaphysical abstraction. The notion of a triple hypostasis in one Unknown Divine Essence is as old as speech and thought. Hiranyagarbha, Hari, and Shankara — the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer — are the three manifested attributes of it, appearing and disappearing with Kosmos; the visible Triangle, so to speak, on the plane of the ever-invisible Circle. This is the primeval root-thought of thinking Humanity; the Pythagorean Triangle emanating from the ever-concealed Monad, or the Central Point.

“Plato speaks of it and Plotinus calls it an ancient doctrine, on which Cudworth remarks that: ‘Since Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato, who all of them asserted a trinity of divine hypostases, unquestionably derived their doctrine from the Egyptians, it may be reasonably suspected that the Egyptians did the like before them.’ (quoted in *Vishnu-Purana*, I, 14)

“The Egyptians certainly derived their Trinity from the Indians. Wilson justly observes: ‘As, however, the Grecian accounts and those of the Egyptians are much more perplexed and unsatisfactory than those of the Hindus, it is most probable that we find amongst them the doctrine in its most original, as well as most methodical and significant form.’ (*Vishnu-Purana*, I, 14)

“This, then, is the meaning: ‘Darkness alone filled the Boundless All, for Father, Mother and Son were once more One.’ (Stanza I, sloka 5)

“Space was, and is ever, as it is between the Manvantaras. The Universe in its pre-kosmic state was once more homogeneous and one — outside its aspects. This was a Kabalistic, and is now a Christian teaching.

“As is constantly shown in the *Zohar*, the Infinite Unity, or Ain-Soph, is ever placed outside human thought and appreciation; and in *Sepher Yetzireh* we see the Spirit of God — the Logos, not the Deity itself — called One. ‘One is the Spirit of the living God . . . who liveth for ever. Voice, Spirit, (of the Spirit), and Word: this is the Holy Spirit’ — and the Quaternary. From this Cube emanates the whole Kosmos.

“Says the Secret Doctrine: ‘It is called to life. The mystic Cube in which rests the Creative Idea, the manifesting Mantra (or articulate speech — Vach) and the holy Purusha (both radiations of prima materia) exist in the Eternity in the Divine Substance in their latent state’ — during Pralaya.” (S.D. V, 188-189 6-vol. ed.; III, 179-181 3rd ed.)

Question. What is the significance of the Cube itself? Why was it used?

Answer. It should be borne in mind that a cube is defined as a solid bounded by six equal squares and having all its angles right angles. A passage in *The Secret Doctrine* points to the significance of using geometrical symbols, such as the triangle and the circle, as well as numbers, for recording esoteric knowledge.

“the most archaic symbols in Eastern Esotericism are a circle, a point, a triangle, a plane, a cube, a pentacle, and a hexagon, and plane figures with various sides and angles. This shows the knowledge and use of geometrical symbology to be as old as the world . . . Hence one finds numbers and figures used as an expression and a record of thought in every archaic symbolical Scripture. They are ever the same, with only certain variations growing out of the first figures. Thus the evolution and correlation of the mysteries of Kosmos, of its growth and development — spiritual and physical, abstract and concrete — were first recorded in geometrical changes of shape. Every Cosmogony began with a circle, a point, a triangle, and a cube, up to number 9, when it was synthesized by the first line and a circle (i.e. 10) — the Pythagorean mystic *Decade*, the sum of all, involving and expressing the mysteries of the entire Kosmos; recorded a hundred times more fully in the Hindu system, for him who can understand its mystic language. The numbers 3 and 4, in their blending of 7, as those of 5, 6, 9, and 10, are the very corner-stone of Occult Cosmogonies.” (S.D. I, 320-1; II, 33-34 6-vol. ed.; I, 340-2 3rd ed.)

The opening of the bloom is the glorious moment when perception awakes: with it comes confidence, knowledge, certainty. The pause of the soul is the moment of wonder, and the next moment of satisfaction, that is the silence. — *Light on the Path*.

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