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FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To The 101st Annual Convention Of The Theosophical Society

JOHN B. S. COATS, *President*

Last year at our Centenary Convention, our thoughts were focussed largely on the success of the World Congress in New York and the great worldwide publicity given to the 100th birthday of our Society on November 17th in the Press, in magazines and on the Radio and Television. We were indeed recognized in the world as an organization working for the betterment of humanity. Already the first year of our second century has slipped by and we must look urgently to the future. What lies ahead for our Society? Our concern today is for what lies immediately ahead of us in the foreseeable future — in the next 25 years. Having laid the foundations we are now on the first floor and the structure will take shape as we place the bricks according to the plan — the blueprint which we must always keep in mind as our work progresses. Have we remained true to that plan envisioned by the inner Founders of the Society? Are our foundations so well and truly laid that we as a society will (and deserve to) survive? Do we still merit their interest in us?

I think we may truly say that the Elder Brothers looked to the wide horizons of tomorrow and that the whole founding of the Theosophical Society was not only for

the last century, but for the future as well, and we may well ask ourselves to what future are they looking now. What could we see if we were looking hard enough and in the right direction, regarding what they are founding today for a yet more distant future. We can accept that the doctrine that H.P. Blavatsky and others gave us 100 years ago will remain the doctrine still and presumably those who gave it will not contradict themselves. This is why it is of vital usefulness to know the foundations upon which we have to build. May we not confidently expect other corners of the veil to be lifted and if so, then we have to keep our eyes widely open and ourselves aware of everything that is happening about us. We might ask ourselves whether we would be able to recognize, what one might call the Master's touch, in any new happening, or whether we are still bound by prejudice and conditioning, by concrete forms of expectations and thereby rendered unable to see what is taking place?

The Elders, evidently, are not sentimental but pragmatic and full of common sense. Surely they have a great responsibility to carry out their part of the great plan and looking around them, will choose those persons or groups that seem most

likely to help effectively. "Are we going to be a part of it?" is a question that is often asked and it has been said by one of them that ingratitude is not one of their vices. But surely all finally depends upon ourselves. If we are not useful or willing to fit into a possibly new pattern, I might even say a probably new pattern, then we may not be used as part of the new plan and the new effort of the end of this century. Surely this is just plain common sense. The needs of the world and the needs of the times come first. They are more important than our particular hopes and wishes. We have to face this fact bravely and without fear.

H.S. Olcott, the President Founder, at the first convention held at Adyar on December 27th 1883, wrote "The Movement is now too strong to be stopped: it must run out its career and exhaust its momentum. Ideas penetrate the carcasses in which error reincarnates itself as a rifle bullet does the body of an ambuscading assassin. The antagonisms and antipathies of mankind all lie upon the surface of being; the inner man of each of us is kin to all humanity. The surface stream may run muddy, but the water that trickles through the gravel bed beneath the clay is limpid. The surface stream brawls and mingles its tide with the offal of life's selfish industries, but the vapour of the clouds which afterwards drains from the glaciers of the mountain peak, to sink out of sight until it reappears and refreshes the valley, is crystal-pure. This is the secret of Theosophy. This is the key to its success. Just in proportion as theosophists keep this in view, will they enjoy peace and happiness, and spread them around."

These are strong words, spoken by a courageous man "... one who never questions, but obeys, who may make innumerable mistakes out of excessive zeal but never is unwilling to repair his fault even at the cost of the greatest self-humiliation; who esteems the sacrifice of comfort and even life something to be cheerfully risked whenever necessary; who will eat any food, or even go without;

sleep on any bed, work in any place, fraternize with any outcast, endure any privation for the cause." (K.H. to A.P. Sinnett about Olcott in Letter No. 4 — *The Mahatma Letters*)

Antagonisms and antipathies there have been, and who shall say where they may recur, but we must face their challenge or we shall have failed those who were willing to dare more ridicule and difficulty than it has ever been necessary for us to encounter.

Now is the time for getting down to brass tacks, and facing the world both within and without the Society. Sometimes, I think, we have become so immersed in our own jargon and so enclosed in our own little theosophical cocoons that we are largely unaware of the world around us. I hear members, now and then, referring to the scientific world, for instance, as if it were the same as the scientific world H.P.B. castigated in no uncertain terms. Similarly in the field of religion we seem ignorant of the great changes which have taken place and are still occurring. So it is up to us, and that is why it is so necessary for us to be open to change.

The members in the early days of the Society and well into the 20th century were, one might almost say, scared of investigating psychic phenomena, except in a few cases. It was not the thing to do, it was dangerous, it was harmful to one's inner progress and so on. Today there is tremendous interest in the occult, in the unknown, and in the psychic fields. Great psychologists, like Jung, have opened the doors on to the world of the unconscious and its great importance to us in our daily lives — in fact at every moment of our lives, either waking, sleeping or dreaming.

So what is needed is not change only for its own sake, but the attitude in us, that is open to experiment in new fields; the courage in us that is willing to face new challenges and the good sense in us that can see the need to acknowledge and the usefulness of working with all those other people in the field of science, parap-

psychology and so on who are already substantiating by their own methods, many of those things that we, until now, have held to be theosophical. Whilst retaining a recognition of the fundamental laws of life, which do not change, so far as we are concerned at least, we have to proceed into a wider and expanded field of endeavour and opportunity where we shall only be able to fulfil our purpose if we loosen ourselves from some of the thought patterns of the past.

In a newspaper recently I read an article about how young people had taken the very self-sacrificing step of forming a group of people who were willing to bequeath their eyes to the All India Eye Bank, which apparently already is in existence, and the Editorial says this: "If youths take a bold step where elders are hesitant, it is not only indicative of the times, but it is also the right type of action that is called for. It should not be viewed as a case of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread, it is certainly a case of youth attempting to meet the challenge and overcoming it, which of course, the fading generation has not chosen to do. To restore sight to those who have lost it is the highest form of service and those who help to make this possible are entitled to the greatest respect." I think this kind of thing is indicative rather of the new attitudes which are coming into being around us and that it becomes one of the most important things for us in the Theosophical Society to acknowledge and to face.

Young people, the world over, are searching for something they cannot find in their religion. They feel incomplete, they seek for that something more. They look for it in drugs and hypnotism and other ways. But why have so few of the members of the Society in our lodges not risen to the challenge to give some direction to those asking for it? The same thing may be said of "yoga". Everywhere in the west, yoga schools are springing up, like mushrooms, in educational establishments, in women's organizations. In towns, cities and villages

wherever you go you will hear of yoga classes, yoga teachers, even on the Radio and Television! But how many lodges have their yoga courses? "But," you will say, "this is only Hatha yoga." Of course that is so, but cannot Hatha Yoga be shown to have its place in the great Yoga philosophy and in the whole totality of man? Can we use this movement with all its enormous impetus and guide it into the theosophical setting? The time is now ripe for this.

I would feel, myself, that if we are not willing to try and do something to help many of these young people avoid falling into the traps of pseudo-occultism and into the hands of pseudo-swamis, which so often happens, we shall be neglecting our duty — the very duty for which the Society was founded, for all this will no doubt have been foreseen more than a hundred years ago. The point is really, I suppose, that it is we older people who have to review the scene, look into our own hearts and try to establish for ourselves whether our attitudes are really truly outward turned and free and full of understanding of the need for change, or whether we simply want to go on in the same old way, which must lead to some eventually final destruction, because whoever does not become a part of the new effort is going to be cast aside. Why not? Mme. Blavatsky, quoted in the *Collected Writings*, in reference actually to the Society as a body having no creeds, etc., says this: "The attainment of these objects, all agree, can best be secured by convincing the reason and warming the enthusiasm of the generation of fresh young minds that are just ripening into maturity and making ready to take the place of their prejudiced and conservative fathers. And as each — the great ones as well as small — have trodden the royal road to knowledge, we listen to all and take both small and great into our fellowship." It is a fine statement and when we are enjoined by H.P.B. to take all into our Fellowship, we have to realize that all means *all* and that Fellowship means friendliness and understanding and

Brotherhood and affection. It does not mean that we think we are superior to others just because they happen to be younger in body. Who knows but that it is very likely indeed that they may be older in soul. If asked which is the more important, of these two what shall we answer?

It seems to me, then, that we need very specially today in our T.S. to be aware of what is happening in this field around us and to feel ourselves in duty bound to do something for this increasingly numerous group of seekers within the general population of the world. If we do not take advantage of it, the wave will have passed us by and we shall have "missed the boat."

C.W. Leadbeater is quoted as saying, on one occasion, that nothing matters very much and very little matters at all, and I suppose that we are meant to interpret this as best we can, for man lives finally in the world of the eternal and we need the courage, the daring, the pioneer spirit that is therefore unafraid to wrestle with time and the things of time, and when a pioneer goes to a new country with all his memories and skills and virtues and possibly some of his problems, he has to face challenges that he has not even imagined and for which he is not at all prepared. So it seems that we too, having come purposely into incarnation especially to face the challenge of a new century — which is what we are doing today, — a new age, a new dawn, we must not fear to tackle the problems of today with fortitude and freedom of spirit. Sometimes we are too afraid, really, to do the job that we are actually born to do. Is this not something that we could offer to the Elder Brothers in the coming years, an aptitude which, if true, they might be able to use in the furtherance of their plans? Now this, of course, is no attack upon our loyalty to the fundamental principles of Theosophy, but rather a challenge to our deep understanding of what those principles really are. Because surely their very nature renders them applicable to every age, today, tomorrow and to 100 years ago. We stand at the beginning of tremendous

things. We have to be big enough to venture into new pastures. It is the responsibility that karma has laid upon our shoulders, and we have the chance to pay back a little more of the debt we owe to the great Brotherhood. Let us have courage, then, and common sense and compassion and if these three go hand in hand, our future usefulness is assured. What we do now will help to set the tone for many years to come.

There is little doubt that the world is moving quickly. What is taking place is literally changing the face of the earth and the lives of humanity. It was for this future world that the Society came into being. H.P.B., in her great works, gave us so much, but she indicated that what she gave of the ancient wisdom was only a fraction of the whole. But even in a century we have barely begun to grasp the magnitude of the work to be done. She has given us a glimpse of the magnificent panorama which lies ahead, of the tremendous potentialities that lie within this marvellous creation which is man. But she has told us in clear terms that in the long pull up the mountain of progress we have to make the effort ourselves; no one else can do it for us. It is a long and difficult journey but once we have set out upon it there is no going back. As Clara Codd, whose centenary we celebrated this year, once said when a questioner complained about the difficulties, "My dear, no one ever promised it would be easy!"

There can be no question at all that we have many vital problems to face in the Society. Our civilization of today has been described as suicidal and yet it is in this very extraordinary and critical situation that we have been called back to earth to try to do something useful and effective in bringing the wisdom of Theosophy to a darkened world, at a time within the Kali Yuga where it is not so easy to affect some of the materialism with which we are surrounded. From now on, while drawing wisely from the past, we have to look ahead in the context of 1977. The Centenary Convention of last year and the World Congress in New York have given us the

opportunity of opening up to new ideas and some of these ideas are going to come to fruition and some have already started, such as the Centre for Theosophical Studies, which has been so ably conducted in its beginnings by the Vice-President, Miss Joy Mills. The concluding of the first term here at Adyar was accompanied by an enormous appreciation on the part of all the students for what had been done for them during the months of study by the Vice-President herself, by Dr. Mullik, Dr. Kannan and others who helped in running the courses. This is a new beginning, in a sense, of something which has no beginning, and by that I mean it is the passing on from those who have studied much, to those who have studied less, something of that great wealth of information and knowledge which forms the background of our theosophical movement. The task Forces at the Congress in New York and the other discussion groups which took place here in Adyar, have been carefully sifted so that proposals of a concrete nature can arise from the many suggestions made, which can be adopted, in part at least, and passed on to the membership around the world as useful means, whereby the success of our work can be more readily assured in the circumstance of today.

I think we have to realize that it is now you and I who have this responsibility on our shoulders and I would seek to call on every member everywhere throughout the world to accept this challenge, so that our Society may remain the spearhead of spiritual advance in those fields where the theosophical student is best equipped to take a positive part in the direction of world events. Can we not dedicate this year ahead and other years beyond, which after all are

built on the finest foundations, to the duty of carrying out the great plan of the work wherever we may be, so that the star of theosophical wisdom may continue to illumine the paths of all humanity? Surely this is our continuing work and how many of us, we may ask, may find the strength to do it?

It has been said that anyone posing a question, already knows the answer. We do know the answers to our problem, let us go forward into the future using that knowledge to bring nearer, by however little, the true brotherhood of humanity.

There has been much correspondence between some of us this year on the whole question of whether we should have a Centre attached to the H.Q.s here in Adyar which could act as a recipient and a distributor of that information from and to the large numbers of younger people who are interested in the Society around the world. It is, of course, not restricted only to the young, but, what I would perhaps more readily call, the young in heart. But if I use the word "restricted" it is not because I or anyone else would like to restrict anybody or anything, for after all, is it not true that we restrict ourselves or we do not? If one can understand the need for helping and the actual cry that arises around us for help in the great difficulties of adjusting to life in this quickly changing age, then we should be up and doing, all of us who feel the duty of so doing.

We cannot escape from our true purpose, whether we want to or not, and the true purpose has always been turned towards helping to meet the needs of all men everywhere.

So once again we have to analyze what we feel as members of the Society. Can we really accept the challenge of being a theosophist, which means something very specific, and different from just going on with one's normal life, hearing a lecture or two, once or twice a week, and thinking that that is what a theosophical life is all about.

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Surely, my brothers of the theosophical movement, this cannot be true. It is much too easy and from all one can understand about the beginnings of the Society, it was called into existence to work for humanity by those who never do anything else. This is no imagination and no fairy tale. It is the facts and if our Society is really to be useful in the future as it has been in the past, then it means that every single one of us has to look to himself and his own character, his own nature, his own willingness to accept the challenge that Theosophy brings to us. If we cannot do this, let us at least not speak without understanding about those who try to do something, whilst we are often only sitting in our chairs. Do not let us, who are unwilling to co-operate, become millstones around the necks of those who are trying, as best they can, to do what they feel is necessary for our work in this present day and age. It is for work that we are here, but we clutter ourselves up all too often with all sorts of other things which take up our time and use up our energies.

From what I can understand of the early days, everyone was certainly tired, everyone certainly might say we just do not have enough time, but the time they had and the energy they had was spent without thinking of themselves at all and turning their attention entirely towards trying to be channels for the forces which came from the founders, who foresaw the great needs of the world and did what they felt was best to try to help it. Doubtless they help it still in every way they can, and if, in this end of a century, we are to be part of the great effort made, then it is we who have to take the facts seriously and make our main objective the assistance of those around us. It is not only in our lodges and in our special meetings we can do this, it is everywhere all through our lives and one does not have to go to a church or temple in order to work. In what, in England, is called a "pub" which is short for "public house" or country inn where ordinary people go to drink their beer, talk politics, make friends

and where there is often an atmosphere of joviality and bonhomie, there can be as much religious spirit as in many a place which makes high claims to its spirituality and its special mission. And this is true. The time has come for plain speaking and we may no longer feel content except with the very best that is in us, put to the service of the whole. Let us try to revive within ourselves that great spirit which so characterized so many of our wonderful leaders in the past. This spirit is infectious and it encourages each one of us to try and move mountains in the service of brotherhood. The need for brotherhood around us is almost as great as ever it was and theosophists should be in the forefront of every effort that is being made to help to bring about the happiness and peace of all living things. Not one of us is exempt from this. Not one of us can refuse the challenge that Theosophy has brought us, without in some way losing our self respect. There is a mighty force at work in the world and nothing can prevent its victory. Let us encourage that force within our own lives so that it may ever function strongly in the service to which we are called. In days gone by, in messages to Conventions from the beginning of the existence of the Society, splendid challenging calls have been made by those who felt so deeply that every member should be active in service. Can we not consider such a call once again and having satisfied ourselves that there is so much work in the world to do, can we not say with one voice, let us go out into the world, and for the service of the world, and for the service of those who brought our Society into being, do that work.

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The Adyar Library and Research Centre

In April Dr. A.G. Krishna Warriar was appointed curator. During the year a new publication, *Ramanuja on the Yoga*, by Dr. Robert C. Lester, Prof. of Religious

(Continued on page 16)

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

A. TYRO

Many who become interested in Theosophy do so because the basic concepts of the teaching, such as The Oneness of Life, The Law of Karma and Reincarnation, appear in their reasonableness to offer a more satisfactory solution to many of life's problems. It needs to be emphasized, however, that that which is really basic and fundamental in the Theosophical teaching lies more in giving expression to the implications of these concepts by the manner in which we live our lives.

It is the purpose of this article to convey some idea of the demands incurred by embracing Theosophy. Theosophy is essentially a spiritual teaching. It makes its appeal to that "Other" side of our nature wherein lies our appreciation of all that is fine and noble in the Human Race, exemplified in those acts of good will, of heroism and self-sacrifice in which nothing is sought in return. It makes its appeal rather to those things which, when divested of their mundane objectives, are responsible for all that is worthwhile in human life. It is an expression of that religious instinct which is implanted in the hearts of all mankind, eternally seeking expression through this "Other" side of our nature.

After putting these things perceived from the teaching to an actual test in our lives, we realize that in this endeavour we are challenging every element in our makeup of a selfish, separative and self-loving nature. Further, that in this entity we think of as ourselves, these elements play a very large part. So much so, that we find ourselves possessed by every subtle device and persuasion to dissuade us from this enterprise. We have little conception of the strength of this separative aspect of our nature until we take on the formidable task of overcoming it.

The first lesson that Theosophy tries to teach us is that our life on earth is in large measure a reflection of our own attitude toward it. Consequently, in order to change it we must first change ourselves. If we could but tear ourselves away from our worldly concerns and look at our world as it really "is", with an unprejudiced and unencumbered perception, the truth of this statement would be self-apparent. Moreover, we would see the futility of trying to improve our worldly conditions by manipulations in the political, economic and social fields without dealing with our shortcomings at the individual level — which are primarily the causes which sustain the conditions of our existence.

How blind are we who fail to see
The truth that hangs on every tree!
Who think to 'scape from their
 misdeeds,
Which bring to naught their strivings
To attain those mundane goals that
 ever
Pass beyond their reach, but which
 meanwhile
Befoul the land, the air they breathe
Even the seas, and the very beach.

They never ever pause to think how,
 in rectifying the conditions they
 have wrought and now
Offend them, and stand in their way,
Must, if there be any justice, come
 about
By undoing that which they have
 done.
Whatever else we learn from life, is
 this.

Whate'er we gain from life, for weal
 or woe,

Life demands the price be paid.
Inevitably!
However much we beg and pray.

Strange paradox indeed is Man! History shows he is ever willing to serve in freedom's cause, yet ever blindly ensnares himself with all those things in life that keep him bound. Our purpose now, it seems is to discover whether we are but pawns on the checkerboard of life, or do we in our strivings fulfil some purpose veiled ahead.

Some, we are told, have passed beyond that veil. But however much their love for brother man would have them offer a helping hand, first man must reach up his hand to clasp it.

Notwithstanding our veneration of civilization, "when the chips are down" the hate, the lust and cruel avarice still show their teeth in us as every war in history shows. As the Cockney in Shaw's play exclaims: "What price Glory now!"

Theosophy was brought to us to enable us to see ourselves as we really are without glamour or false pretense; the animal part that still holds us largely in its paw; and the Godly, which finds expression in the good we do. Also, to show us that to come into our true inheritance we must consciously strive for it by cultivating those powers within us that are reflected from that same source. Only these can overcome the forces that keep us bound.

The bridging of the abyss between these two sides of our nature is virtually what life is all about. This task is inescapable, because we know that deep within ourselves we not only have the power to overcome those elements that keep us divided, but also that life without its finer part would be inconceivable.

The task which faces us now, as students of Theosophy, is to understand the concept of the "Path", as we interpret the teaching, and concurrently to develop the "Will" to tread it.

Our deep involvement with and attachment to material things — which are so much a part of human life today — do not

allow us to freely participate in those things which that "Other" side would have us do. "Herein lies the rub." In order to do the things our finer part would have us do, we must first undo and free ourselves from the claims imposed upon us by our involvement with the needs of our personal, separative self.

When we come to discover that to follow the life demanded by our Spiritual aspirations we are challenging much which in the past we have held dear, and into which we have put a large part of our lives, we come to realize somewhat of the ordeals that are invoked in seeking to transfer our centre of consciousness to that "Other" side.

In many Theosophical articles this transference is blithely passed over as if it were of small significance; yet this is the most stupendous task that faces every human being. In the final analysis, for its ultimate achievement, it will call for the sacrifice of most everything we now hold dear.

Our primary objective should be to realize the power of our "egocentricity" to obscure the Light of our true nature. Until we become not merely aware of that "Other Side" of our nature, as we mostly do at present, but more *self-consciously* aware of its presence and its need for fulfilment in our lives, we remain enslaved to the realm of self-concern.

The mystery of Man's function and the fulfilment of his purpose are all tied up in the balancing of the forces of the two sides of his nature. The illumination of our minds which results from this achievement can never be known until we break the great hypnosis of "separatism" that our growth to individuality has imposed upon us.

Man, in the process of becoming an individual has given concrete expression to the content of his consciousness, which is exhibited in the structure and condition of the world today. But the problems that beset us are due not so much to what man has created, as to his attachment to it. The discordant elements are within ourselves,

not without. In our eagerness to give expression to our wordly needs we have lost the balance between the two sides of our nature.

Obviously, no one is required to do more than lies within the limits of his capabilities. But those who are already awakened to the call of the Spirit should deeply realize their responsibility to make the best use of their enlightenment — for if

it is not through such as they, how else can flow the Light to enlighten Humanity?

Finally, and most significantly, it is in the realization that in the foregoing, whereby we draw upon our higher principles to transmute the energies of our lower self to become a harmonious whole, that we accomplish our own Self-realization.

SUICIDE IS NOT DEATH

The following article first appeared in the New York World. It was reprinted in The Lamp — the first Theosophical magazine published in Canada — in September, 1894. Since then, it seems to have been seldom published and is consequently little known. We understand it will appear in a future volume of the Collected Writings of William Quan Judge. — Eds.

As a student of Theosophy and human nature I have been interested in the discussion of the subject of self-murder to which *The World* has given a place in its columns. The eloquent agnostic, Col. Ingersoll, planted his views in the ground with the roots of them in the grave, giving the poor felo de se nothing beyond the cold earth to cheer him in his act, save perhaps the cowardly chance of escape, from responsibility or pain. Those who, as Nym Crinkle says, occupy themselves with replying to Col. Ingersoll fall back on the mere assertion that it is a sin to kill the body in which the Lord saw fit to confine a man. Neither of these views is either satisfactory or scientific.

If suicide is to be approved it can only be on the ground that the man is only a body, which, being a clod, may well be put out of its sufferings. From this it would be an easy step to justify the killing of other bodies that may be in the way, or old, or insane, or decrepit, or vicious. For if the mass of clay called body is all that we are, if man is not a spirit unborn and changeless in essence, then what wrong can there be in destroying

it when you own it, or are it, and how easy to find good and sufficient reason for disposing similarly of others? The priest condemns suicide, but one may be a Christian and yet hold the opinion that a quick release from earth brings possible heaven several years nearer. The Christian is not deterred from suicide by any good reasons advanced in his religion, but rather from cowardice. Death, whenever natural or forced, has become a terror, is named "The King of Terrors." This is because, although a vague heaven is offered on the other side, life and death are so little understood that men had rather bear the ills they know than fly to others which are feared through ignorance of what those are.

Suicide, like any other murder is a sin because it is a sudden disturbance of the harmony of the world. It is a sin because it defeats nature. Nature exists for the sake of the soul and for no other reason, it has the design, so to say, of giving the soul experience and self-consciousness. These can only be had by means of a body through which the soul comes in contact with

nature, and to violently sever the connection before the natural time defeats the aim of nature; for the present compelling her, by her own slow processes, to restore the task left unfinished. And as those processes must go on through the soul that permitted the murder, more pain and suffering must follow.

And the disturbance of the general harmony is a greater sin than most men think. They consider themselves alone, as separate, as not connected with others. But they are connected throughout the whole world with all other souls and minds. A subtle, actual, powerful band links them all together, and the instant one of all these millions disturbs the link the whole mass feels it by reaction through soul and mind, and can only return to a normal state through a painful adjustment. This adjustment is on the unseen, but all-important, planes of being in which the real man exists. Thus each murderer of self or of another imposes on entire humanity an unjustifiable burden. From this injustice he cannot escape, for his body's death does not cut him off from the rest; it only places him, deprived of nature's instruments, in the clutch of laws that are powerful and implacable, ceaseless in their operation and compulsory in their demands.

Suicide is a huge folly, because it places the committer of it in an infinitely worse position than he was in under the conditions from which he foolishly hoped to escape. It is not death. It is only a leaving of one well-known house in familiar surroundings to go into a new place where terror and despair alone have place. It is but a preliminary death done to the clay, which is put in the "cold embrace of the grave," leaving the man himself naked and alive, but out of mortal life and not in either heaven or hell.

The Theosophist sees that man is a complex being full of forces and faculties, which he uses in a body on earth. The body is only a part of his clothing; he himself lives also in other places. In sleep he lives in one, awake in another, in thought in

another. He is a threefold being of body, soul and spirit. And this trinity can be divided again into its necessary seven constituents. And just as he is threefold, so also is nature — material, psychical or astral, and spiritual. The material part of nature governs the body, the psychical affects the soul and the spirit lives in the spiritual, all being bound together. Were we but bodies, we might well commit them to material nature and the grave, but if we rush out of the material we must project ourselves into the psychical or astral. And as all nature proceeds with regularity under the government of law, we know that each combination has its own term of life before a natural and easy separation of the component parts can take place. A tree or a mineral or a man is a combination of elements or parts, and each must have its projected life term. If we violently and prematurely cut them off one from the other certain consequences must ensue. Each constituent requires its own time for dissolution. And suicide being a violent destruction of the first element — body — the other two, of soul and spirit, are left without their natural instrument. The man then is but half dead, and is compelled by the law of his own being to wait until the natural term is reached.

The fate of the suicide is horrible in general. He has cut himself off from his body by using mechanical means that affect the body, but cannot touch the real man. He then is projected into the astral world, for he has to live somewhere. There the remorseless law, which acts really for his good, compels him to wait until he can properly die. Naturally he must wait, half dead, the months or years which, in the order of nature, would have rolled over him before body and soul and spirit could rightly separate. He becomes a shade; he lives in purgatory, so to say, called by the Theosophist the "place of desire and passion," or "Kama Loca." He exists in the astral realm entirely, eaten up by his own thoughts. Continually repeating in vivid

(Continued on page 17)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report a number of recent deaths of members of long standing.

On October 10 last, Mrs. I. Frances Millar passed away in Vancouver. She had been a member since 1961; however, her connections with the Society went back to the 1930s. She was a devoted member of Vancouver Lodge, and will be missed by her fellow-members there, who remember her cheerfulness and sense of humour. A Theosophical funeral service for Mrs. Millar was led by the Lodge President, Mrs. Doreen Chatwin.

Mrs. Mary Henderson died in Toronto on January 9. She had been a member of Toronto Lodge since 1926, and was a regular attendee at the Sunday evening and members' meetings.

Mrs. Kathleen Marks passed away in Hamilton on January 31. A member since 1923, she and her late husband, Robert Marks, had been very active on behalf of the Toronto Lodge in the '20s and '30s. In 1956 she helped form the Phoenix Lodge in Hamilton.

Recently we learned of the death in the Fall of 1976 of Miss Andree Smith, a former member of the Toronto and Centennial Lodges. Miss Smith joined the Society in 1949.

To the families of these departed friends, we extend our deepest sympathy.

* * *

Just as this issue went to press I was saddened to learn of the death of Mrs. Ila Barborka on the night of February 11-12 in Ojai, California. Her husband, Geoffrey, is well known as the author of several major Theosophical books; he is also the conductor of the S.D. Question and Answer Section in this magazine.

Ila was well-loved by many Canadian members who met her when she

accompanied Geoffrey on lecture tours in this country. I know they will want to join me in expressing our loving thoughts to Geoffrey on his great loss.

* * *

The *Victoria Colonist* issue on January 14 contained an article entitled "Theosophy — Doctrine of Ancient Wisdom". It was based on an interview with, and material supplied by Mrs. Dorita Gilmour, President of the Victoria Lodge.

"Multim in parvo" describes the article, which in little more than 600 words covered brief descriptions of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, reincarnation and karma, the unity of all life and "human brotherhood as a fact, not a sentimental opinion".

It is encouraging when newspapers are willing to publish factual material on the Ancient Wisdom, and we can only hope that from time to time articles like this one appear in journals across the country.

* * *

The Editors wish to apologize for their oversight in failing to identify the source of Alexander Wilder's article, "The Spectator of the Mysteries", which appeared in the Jan-Feb issue. It originally appeared in *The Platonist*, February, 1881.

Reader response to this article was very favourable — not unexpectedly. Wilder's scholarship and ability to impart knowledge has seldom been equalled in this century.

* * *

In January on the FM network, in February on AM, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "Ideas" program presented a five-part series on Atlantis. Those who tuned in with an initial degree of scepticism could hardly fail to be impressed with the objectivity of the research that went into this program. In the words of the producer: "It is your business to form your own opinion."

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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.

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The bibliography on which the program was based included H.P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*; also, *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*. It was a pleasant surprise, too, to hear Jimmy Sturzaker being interviewed in London, England. He will be known to some of our readers as the editor of *The Kabbalist* (formerly NEON).

There is a possibility this program will be repeated in the Summer; also that the text

will appear in book form. In addition, economy-priced cassette tapes of the unabridged interviews (including Egerton Sykes, John Michel, and Hugh Lynn Cayce) are being considered. Those interested in obtaining a copy of the bibliography, or wanting further information, should write "Ideas", Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, P.O. Box 4500, Station "A", Toronto, Ontario M5W 1E6.

I am pleased to welcome Mr. Max Edelson, a member-at-large, into the fellowship of the Society.

T.G.D.

VIEWS FROM CORRESPONDENTS

"...Theosophy as outlined in the writings of H.P.B. has provided me with a conviction of its ultimate truth in its explanation of the evolution of the universe and of life and spirit. This conviction has deepened over the years.

"It will, I think, surely be agreed that the depth of wisdom and inspiration conveyed to the world by H.P.B. is the true basis and guideline of the Theosophical Society. It is essential that the T.S. promote and perpetuate the teaching of the Masters transmitted by H.P.B. without digressing therefrom, and to continue in the hope and expectation that they will reveal a clearer, brighter concept of Truth in the future through the T.S. . . .

"...While there is a basic unity and similarity in all exoteric religions, it is evident that Theosophy transcends them and that the objectives of the T.S. should include the endeavour to heal and dispel the differences between existing religions by providing a higher, universal understanding of Truth. Theosophy cannot be considered as something already inherent and contained in any existing exoteric belief. 'There is no Religion higher than Truth.' "

Bryan K. Gardner

(Re: "World Animal Day" article, C.T., Sep-Oct 1976) "...as human disease is owing to the misuse of human intelligence under the Law of Harmony in Nature, disease must be treated in this light. . . . And this immoral and brutal practice of animal vivisection must be given up on the logical grounds that it is beyond all sound reason that one creature should be brutally tortured that another creature, called man, may have health.

"Theosophically speaking, these brutal acts are reflected in the astral light along with the acts of animal slaughter for human food and sport. From that plane flows down upon humanity much of human disease.

"What an outrageous, immoral behaviour it is for people to go out and hunt animals for 'sport' in their spare hours — and display such a delight in it. What a great need there is in such circles for a concept of life such as is put forward in the Theosophical teachings."

(Re: "Centenary Congress Revisited", C.T., Nov-Dec. 1976.) "I was disappointed with most of the material presented by the Task Force Groups at the Congress. But the Orpheus Lodge members' comments on the Task Group reports gave me the satisfaction that the reports did not give. The issues are indeed well perceived by them."

John Oberlechner

(Re: International Centre of Theosophical Studies and Research.) "(Emphasis is on) . . . H.P.B. and her teachings. The lectures given by Joy Mills are based on *The Key*. Judge and G. de P. are often quoted . . . Prof. Mullik lectures on the Ancient Mysteries, basing his notes on *Isis Unveiled*."

"May I stress the importance of this change, and suggest you give it publicity. Canadian members and all serious students (the courses are open to all) can assist in this work."

J.H. Dubbink

"A young woman visiting this nursing home said 'Oh! I know you Theosophists: you don't believe in God at all!' I said she was mistaken. 'Well,' she said, 'do you believe in God?' 'What God are you talking about?' She couldn't answer.

"I went on: 'There are several hundreds of ideas of God, and those who believe them are all sure theirs and theirs alone is the true one. We Theosophists see one great spiritual force, which is nameless. From this force all life proceeds. Your body will die, but you — the spiritual force which is really you — cannot die. All religious teachers have taught that, but their followers have distorted the teaching.' "

Nellie Dalzell

(Mrs. Dalzell celebrated her 96th birthday around the time of the incident she relates.)

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THEOSOPHY AND PRAYER

Mrs. Elouise Wilson, Atma Vidya Lodge, writes that at a recent public lecture on Theosophy she was asked by a newcomer in the audience what is the Theosophical position with regard to prayer. Because of the importance of this question, she has attempted to explore the subject in the light of original Theosophical literature, and shares with us the following citations for easy reference. — Eds.

In *The Key to Theosophy* (Original Edition, 1889) Madame Blavatsky gives us some important ideas with regard to prayer. An enquirer asked: "Do you believe at all in the efficacy of prayer?" to which she replied:

"Not in prayer taught in so many words and repeated externally, if by prayer you mean the outward petition to an unknown God as the addressee, which was inaugurated by the Jews and popularized by the Pharisees."

The enquirer then asked, "Is there any other kind of prayer?" The answer was "Most decidedly; we call it WILL-PRAYER, and it is rather an internal command than a petition." The questioner continued: "To whom, then, do you *pray* when you do so?" and H.P.B. answered: "To 'our Father in Heaven' — in its esoteric meaning." Asked if that is different to the one given to it in theology, she further responded:

"Entirely so. An Occultist or a Theosophist addresses his prayer to *his Father which is in secret* (read, and try to understand, ch. vi, v. 6, Matthew), not to an extra-cosmic and therefore finite God; and that 'Father' is in man himself."

Turning now to Matthew vi, 6, we read:

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret and shall reward thee openly."

The enquirer then continued, "Then you make of man a God?" And Madame Blavatsky returned as follows:

"Please say 'God' and not a God. In our sense, the inner man is the only God we can have cognizance of. And how can this be otherwise? Grant us our postulate that God is a universally diffused, infinite principle, and how can man alone escape from being soaked through *by*, and *in*, the Deity? We call our 'Father in Heaven' that deific essence of which we are cognizant within us, in our heart and spiritual consciousness, and which has nothing to do with the anthropomorphic conception we may form of it in our physical brain or its fancy: 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of (the absolute) God dwelleth in you.'"

To this statement, H.P.B. appends a footnote:

"One often finds in Theosophical writings conflicting statements about the Christos principle in man. Some call it the sixth principle (*Buddhi*), others the seventh (*Atman*). If Christian Theosophists wish to make use of such expressions, let them be made philosophically correct by following the analogy of the old Wisdom-religion symbols. We say that Christos is not only one of the three higher principles, but all the three regarded as a Trinity. This Trinity represents the Holy Ghost, the Father, and the Son, as it answers

to abstract spirit, differentiated spirit, and embodied spirit. Krishna and Christ are philosophically the same principle under its triple aspect of manifestation. In the *Bhavadgita* we find Krishna calling himself indifferently Atman, the abstract Spirit, Kshetragna, the Higher or reincarnating Ego, and the Universal SELF, all names which, when transferred from the Universe to man, answer to *Atma, Buddhi and Manas.*"

Madame Blavatsky then issued a warning to the interrogator thus:

"Yet, let no man anthropomorphise that essence in us. Let no Theosophist, if he would hold to divine, not human truth, say that this 'God in secret' listens to, or is distinct from, either finite man or the infinite essence — for all are one. Nor, as just remarked, that prayer is a petition. It is a mystery rather; an occult process by which finite and conditioned thoughts and desires, unable to be assimilated by the absolute spirit which is unconditioned, are translated into spiritual wills and the will; such process being called 'spiritual transmutation.' The intensity of our ardent aspirations changes prayer into the 'philosopher's stone,' or that which transmutes lead into pure gold. The only homogeneous essence, our 'will-prayer' becomes the active or creative force, producing effects according to our desire."

This was indeed surprising to the enquirer, who exclaimed: "Do you mean to say that prayer is an occult process bringing about physical results?" And Madame Blavatsky was quick to draw the benefits and detriments of such a power, thus:

"I do. Will-Power becomes a living power. But woe unto those Occultists and Theosophists, who, instead of crushing out the desires of the lower

personal ego or physical man, and saying, addressing their Higher Spiritual EGO immersed in Atma-Buddhic light, 'Thy will be done, not mine,' etc., send up waves of will-power for selfish or unholy purposes! For this is black magic, abomination, and spiritual sorcery. Unfortunately, all this is the favourite occupation of our Christian statesmen and generals, especially when the latter are sending two armies to murder each other. Both indulge before action in a bit of such sorcery, by offering respectively prayers to the same God of Hosts, each entreating his help to cut its enemies' throats."

A little later H.P.B. describes a prayer with which she was in accord:

"...Christ has given you one prayer of which you have made a lip prayer and a boast, and which none but the true occultist understands. In it you say, in your dead-sense meaning: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' which you never do. Again, he told you to love your enemies and do good to them that hate you. It is surely not the 'meek prophet of Nazareth' who taught you to pray to your 'Father' to slay, and give you victory over your enemies! This is why we reject what you call 'prayers'."

Madame Blavatsky then went on to explain why prayer as then understood by the average western person was dangerous because in the western mind the intense selfishness therein would incite the prayer-maker to pray for his daily bread instead of working for it, and to destroy his self-reliance by asking God to give him things and help him out of temptation with no effort on his own part.

She was most emphatic that Theosophists have nothing to do with that sort of prayer, but that they had everything to do with the type of prayer described by her as a form of spiritual communion:

"...I repeat, that we believe in

'communion' and simultaneous action in unison with our 'Father in secret'; and in rare moments of ecstatic bliss, in the mingling of our higher soul with the universal essence, attracted as it is towards its origin and centre, a state, called during life *Samadhi*, and after death, *Nirvana*."

H.P.B. then proceeded to remark that she regarded praying to saints and angels as idolatry, and that the only God we should accept in prayer, and act in unison with, is the Spirit of the living God of which our body is the earthly temple.

Seemingly misunderstanding these statements, the enquirer then retorts: "But did not Christ himself pray and recommend prayer?" To which question, she vigorously answers:

"It is so recorded, but those 'prayers' are precisely of that kind of communion mentioned with one's 'Father in secret.' "

—The Key to Theosophy, pp. 66-71

Elsewhere in *The Key*, H.P.B. gives this very enlightening remark:

"Meditation is silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, 'the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine; not to ask any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself — for the universal Supreme Good' of which we have all emerged. Therefore, adds Plato, 'remain silent in the presence of the *divine ones*, till they remove the clouds from thy eyes and enable thee to see by the light which issues from themselves, not what appears as good to thee, but what is intrinsically good.' " — *ibid.* p. 10

In short, therefore, Theosophy accepts prayer as interpreted in silent communion, privately made in a private place, with one's "Father in secret" as defined by Christ when he gave instructions for the right use of prayer.

* * *

At the beginning of the section on Prayer in *The Key*, the enquirer asks: "Do you believe in prayer, and do you ever pray?" To which the Theosophist's answer was "We do not. We *act*, instead of talking."

To which may be added a line from H.P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, p. 69:

"We think that work is prayer . . ."

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

(Continued from page 6)

Studies, University of Colorado, was released as Adyar Library Series No. 106. A revised edition of K.F. Leidecker's *Sanskrit: Essentials of Grammar and Languages* was brought out in the Adyar Library General Series No. 5. In the manuscripts Register 2,976 entries were made during the year completing the work undertaken in 1960. Every MS. in the Library has been examined and cards made for every work in the manuscripts. The Library records 454 readers, 181 resident cum borrowers, 176 borrowers from the city and 22 braille borrowers. 6,230 persons used the Library; 23,147 books and 6,361 MSS. were consulted; 6,144 books and 5 MSS. were loaned out. An increasing number of research students use the Library including students and professors from the Madras University and other colleges in the city, and during the vacation months an increasing number of research fellows from other Indian universities. 2,240 books have been added mostly from gifts and the Library also thanks those who have given donations so generously.

The Theosophical Publishing House - Adyar

An important feature of the work was the international Theosophical Publishing House Conference held at Huizen, The

Netherlands, in September, at which delegates of most theosophical publishing houses were present and for the first time the interests of the non-English groups were represented. Matters such as the presentation of Theosophy through books, through *The Theosophist* and *Adyar Newsletter*, costs of production and greater co-operation between the various publishing interests were considered. A Government of India import licence has been obtained for the Society which will enable it to import a greater number of books from associated publishing houses. Due to the centenary celebrations the T.P.H. had the largest turnover of sales in its history — over 5 lakhs. *The Theosophist* appeared in its new format in October, and during the year, from October to March, 5 special numbers were issued and can now be obtained in one volume. The *Adyar Newsletter* has also had a new format since May 1975 and contains information not only of Adyar but of work going on round the world. A centenary calendar showing coloured views of Adyar was issued. During the year seven new books were published including 3 of Dr. Taimni and one of Mr. G. Hodson, and 32 reprints of classical theosophical books.

SUICIDE IS NOT DEATH

(Continued from page 10)

thoughts the act by which he tried to stop his life's pilgrimage, he at the same time sees the people and the place he left, but is not able to communicate with any one except, now and then, with some poor sensitive, who often is frightened by the visit. And often he fills the minds of living persons who may be sensitive to his thoughts with the picture of his own taking off, occasionally leading them to commit upon themselves the act of which he was guilty.

To put it theosophically, the suicide has cut himself off on one side from the body and life which were necessary for his experience and evolution, and on the other from his spirit, his guide and "Father in heaven." He is composed now of astral body, which is of great tensile strength, informed and inflamed by his passions and desires. But a portion of his mind, called *manas*, is with him. He can think and perceive, but, ignorant of how to use the forces of that realm, he is swept hither and thither, unable to guide himself. His whole nature is in distress, and with it to a certain degree the whole of humanity, for through the spirit all are united. Thus he goes on, until the law of nature acting on his astral body, that begins to die, and then he falls into a sleep from which he awakens in time for a season of rest before beginning once more a life on earth. In his next reincarnation he may, if he sees fit, retrieve or compensate or suffer over again.

There is no escape from responsibility. The "sweet embrace of the wet clay" is a delusion. It is better to bravely accept the inevitable, since it must be due to our errors in other older lives, and fill every duty, try to improve all opportunity. To teach suicide is a sin, for it leads some to commit it. To prohibit it without reason is useless, for our minds must have reasons for doing or not doing. And if we literally construe the words of the Bible, then there we find it says no murderer has a place but in hell. Such constructions satisfy but few in an age of critical investigation and hard analysis. But give men the key to their own natures, show them how law governs both here and beyond the grave, and their good sense will do the rest. An illogical nepenthe of the grave is as foolish as an illogical heaven for nothing.

There can be no permanent rest and happiness as long as there is some work to be done, and not accomplished, and the fulfilment of duties brings its own reward.

—*Practical Occultism*

THE ETERNAL NOW

GEORGE CARDINAL LEGRIS

We learn from daily experience that our "time-sense" can play odd tricks. Pleasant hours seem like moments, and painful moments seem like hours. Remember the long, long summers of childhood, and how fleeting they seem now?

Theosophy teaches that our sense of "time" is an illusion, that there is no such thing, but only "boundless duration" extending forward and back without beginning or end.

We also learn that all things are forever rooted in an eternal consciousness whose characteristic is NOW. From the standpoint of Matter, there is a Past, Present, and Future, but they, like Matter, are illusions, reflections, having no existence in themselves. They merely *seem* to be different things because we live in a time-illusion world.

But, one might object, Theosophy teaches that man enjoys free will and can choose from day to day. Therefore, if all which to his limited consciousness "happens tomorrow" is "already happening" in the Eternal Now, where is free will?

The answer is that to fully understand the mystery one would have to ascend to the Buddhic plane. To solve an infinite problem with finite intelligence would be like gazing into the sky and "seeing the end of Space."

Theosophy teaches that each of man's principles, from Atman the highest to Sthula-sarira the lowest, has its own sense of "time" or time-illusion, its own Past, Present, and Future. The will descends to us from above, from Atman. It is not native to the Kama-manasic part of us in which we unfortunately live to so great an extent. The will is enchained, as it were, by Matter; but we can change our direction *at any time*, we can choose instantaneously — *if we will*.

Why is this possible? Because every monad, being a part of the Universal Life, enjoys its modicum of free will. Its inmost heart is Parabrahman — THAT, the Boundless. Our free will is therefore the free will of Infinitude, in each individual becoming progressively freer as he transcends humanhood and approaches the divine state, which means becoming more and more at one with the Heart of the Universe.

Dr. G. de Purucker has some interesting things to say on this subject in *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, pages 629-30-31.

"In occult philosophy, the past, the present, and the future, blend together in eternity, or what is called the ETERNAL NOW. Eternity, furthermore, is the fundamental — or as we might say, eternity and infinity are the two sides of the same ultimate Reality, the fundamental, the ALL.

"What the spiritual Seer does is to rise from this plane on which past, present, and future seem so positive and real to us, into as it were the ranges of his own spiritual being which bathe so to speak in the Eternal Now; and in this way the past is unrolled before his eyes, and the present is seen to be but a continuation of it into what we call the future, and both are glimpsed as an eternal drama whose keynote is Now. Thus likewise should karman be viewed, the karmic past, the karmic present, the karmic future; and in this way we avoid falling into the error of fatalism on the one hand, and on the other hand into the equally great error of karmic indeterminance.

“As an illustration, from another angle: an atom in my body contains electrons, any atom does. On these electrons let us say there are inhabitants, living their own tiny lives, but at an enormous rate of speed compared with our time. Thus a whole cosmic solar system so to speak, of atomic size, can come into being, live its innumerable aeons, and vanish many thousand times in one of our human seconds. In other words, one of our human seconds compared with electronic time, is almost ‘eternally’ long.

scarcely a billionth part of that one god’s seconds in that god’s time. So in our solar system we would be looking forward into millions of years ahead, and looking back into millions of years of the past; whereas the god’s consciousness would scarcely be aware of the entire life-period of the solar system as other than a tiny fraction of an instant.”

—*Messiah*, June-July 1976.

“Now, imagine an inhabitant on such an electron, living at its tremendous rate of speed which to us humans would seem incomparably quicker than a lightning flash. Yet to the electronic inhabitant, long years would be going by. To him there would be a future which we, with our slower time, would not appreciate except as a now. Thus the electronic inhabitant, because of his intense tempo, immense speed, would be undergoing his past, present, and future; whereas we, with our far more majestic time, with its slow rhythmic pulses, would scarcely realize it except by intellectual thought. To us it would be just simply now.

“In exactly the same way, the gods, whose time-tempo is incomparably stately and to us humans what we would call slow, look upon our past, present, and future, which to us seem so real, as scarcely differentiated, because our time by comparison with theirs is so rapid. We have next week, next year, a billion years from now, but these are our tiny little human years. To one of the higher gods, the entire manvantara of our solar system would be

REFLECTIONS ON A BIRTHDAY

And so, it is thy birthday.
What hast thou added to thy soul?
Art grown in stature only,
Thine age showing in wrinkles,
But not evident in wisdom?
How hast thou spent thy days
Throughout this now past year?
Do not thy cheeks incarnadine
In shame for wasted time?
Were tongue and hands all idle
When thy brother had need of thee?
O soul! Hast thou grown somewhat
In comprehension, in knowledge
Of the purpose of thy days?
Take heart, O soul!
At least there is the hope
Of further hours, and days,
In which to grow;
And, lest thy tie be quite short—
Start now.

Jean A. Frazer

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. What explanation is given in *The Secret Doctrine* in regard to the Virgin Birth?

Answer. First an explanation of the concept of the Virgin Birth. It is based on the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke, and the Virgin Birth of Jesus has indeed become one of the orthodox doctrines of Christianity. It is held that Jesus was conceived by Mary by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, and not through the instrumentality of a human father. Already in the second century the Virgin Birth was accepted; it was placed in the Apostles Creed. So the Virgin Birth has become a basic belief in the Roman Catholic Church and is also accepted in Lutheran and Anglican churches. It was indeed accepted by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

The Secret Doctrine stresses the fact that the Virgin Birth was written about in ancient times.

“That doctrine was universal, and it was not the mind of any one hierogrammatist that evolved it; for the Indian *avatars* are a proof to the contrary . . . (The Egyptian) Neith, the great (female) producer, *genitrix of the Sun, who is the first-born and who is not begotten, but only brought forth, and hence is the fruit of an immaculate mother.*

“How much more grandiose, philosophical and poetical is the real distinction — for whoever is able to understand and appreciate it — made between the immaculate virgin of the ancient Pagans and the modern *Papal* conception. With the former, the ever-youthful mother nature, the antitype of

her prototypes, the sun and moon, *generates and brings forth* her ‘mind-born’ son, the Universe. The Sun and Moon, as male-female dieties, fructify the earth, the microcosmical mother, and the latter conceives and brings forth, in her turn. With the Christians, ‘the first-born’ . . . is indeed generated, i.e., begotten, (begotten not made) and positively conceived and brought forth — (‘a Virgin shall bring forth’) explains the Latin Church. Thus, she drags down the noble spiritual ideal of the Virgin Mary to the earth.” (S.D.I, 399; II, 114-115 6-vol. ed.; I, 429 3rd ed.)

“It was the pure ideal of mystic Nature that was personified in the ‘World Virgins’, the ‘Celestial Maidens,’ and later on by the human Virgin, Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, the *Salvator Mundi* (the Saviour of the World) now chosen by the Christian World.” (S.D.V., 293 6-vol. ed.; III, 297 3rd ed.)

Another passage again refers to the fact that the concept of the Immaculate Virgin is applicable to the Cosmos as well as to the Earth:

“The ‘Son’ of the immaculate Celestial Virgin (or the undifferentiated cosmic protyle, Matter in its infinitude) is born again on Earth as the Son of the terrestrial Eve — our mother Earth, and becomes Humanity as a total — past, present, and future . . . Above, the Son is the whole KOSMOS; below, he is MANKIND.” (S.D.I, 60; II, 129 6-vol. ed.; I, 90 3rd ed.)

Question. What does *The Secret Doctrine* have to say about the War in Heaven?

Answer. A brief account of the War in Heaven is given in the last book of the Bible, in Revelation (chapter *ixx*, verses 7-9);

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

One of the slokas of the Stanzas of Dzyan also refers to the wars:

“There were battles fought between the Creators and the Destroyers, and battles fought for space,” (Stanva VI, sloka 6)

The Secret Doctrine explains:

“‘There were many wars’ refers to several struggles of adjustment, spiritual, cosmical, and astronomical, but chiefly to the mystery of the evolution of man as he is now. Powers — pure Essences ‘that were told to create’ is a sentence that relates to a mystery. It is not only one of the most hidden secrets of Nature — that of generation, over whose solution the Embryologists have vainly put their heads together — but likewise a divine function that involves that other religious, or rather dogmatic, mystery, the ‘Fall’ of the Angels, as it is called. Satan and his rebellious host would thus prove, when the meaning of the allegory is explained, to have refused to create physical man, only to become the direct Saviours and the Creators of ‘divine Man.’ The symbolical teaching is more than mystical and religious, it is purely scientific. . . . For, instead of remaining a mere blind, functioning medium,

impelled and guided by fathomless LAW, the ‘rebellious’ Angel claimed and enforced his right of independent judgment and will, his right of free-agency and responsibility, since man and angel are alike under Karmic law.” (S.D. I, 193-4; I, 244 6-vol. ed.; I, 215-16 3rd ed.)

“The ‘Fallen Angels’ and the legend of the ‘War in Heaven’ is thus purely pagan in its origin and comes from India via Persia and Chaldaea. . .

“Thus ‘SATAN,’ once he ceases to be viewed in the superstitious, dogmatic, unphilosophical spirit of the Churches, grows into the grandiose image of one who made of *terrestrial* a *divine* Man; who gave him, throughout the long cycle of Maha-kalpa, the law of the Spirit of Life, and made him free from the Sin of Ignorance, hence of death.” (S.D.I, 198; I, 248 6-vol. ed.; I, I, 220 3rd ed.)

Question. Was Lucifer the Devil?

Answer. Certainly not from the literal meaning of the word “Lucifer”, for it is composed of two Latin words: *lux*, light and *ferre*, to bear, to carry; hence the “light-bearer.” Similarly the Greek word “Phosphorus” also means the light-bearer, a term applied to the planet Venus when it appears as the morning star. It is strange that such a beautiful idea should have been associated with the devil: how did it come about?

“It was Gregory the Great who was the first to apply this passage of Isaiah, ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning’ (ch. *xiv*, verse 12) to Satan, and ever since the bold metaphor of the prophet, which referred, after all, but to an Assyrian king, inimical to the Israelites, has been applied to the Devil.” (*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VIII, 7
So Lucifer came to be associated with the archangel who led the revolt of the angels and fell from heaven and became identified with Satan. Then the poet, John Milton, dramatized the concept in his “Paradise

Lost" wherein he related that Lucifer is Satan, the rebellious angel.

"The devil is now called Darkness by the Church, whereas, in the Bible he is called the 'Son of God' (see *Job*), the bright star of the early morning, Lucifer (see *Isaiah*). There is a whole philosophy of dogmatic craft in the reason why the first Archangel, who sprang from the depths of Chaos, was called Lux (Lucifer), the 'Luminous Son of the Morning,' or manvantaric Dawn. He was transformed by the Church into Lucifer or Satan, because he is higher and older than Jehovah." (S.D. I, 70-71; I, I, 138 6-vol. ed.; I, 99 3rd ed.)

Here is another interpretation of the significance of Lucifer and Satan.

"Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the 'Holy Ghost' and 'Satan,' at one and the same time, *visible* Space being truly filled with the differentiated Breath invisibly; and the Astral Light, the manifested effects of the two who are one, guided and attracted by ourselves, is the *Karma* of humanity, both a personal and impersonal entity: personal, because it is the mystic name given by St. Martin to the Host of divine Creators, guides and rulers of this planet; *impersonal*, as the Cause and effect of universal Life and Death.

"The Fall was the *result of man's knowledge*, for his 'eyes were opened.' Indeed, he was taught Wisdom and the hidden knowledge by the 'Fallen Angel,' for the latter had become from that day his *Manas*, Mind and Self-consciousness . . .

"And now it stands proven that Satan, or the Red Fiery Dragon, the 'Lord of Phosphorus' (brimstone was a theological improvement), and Lucifer, or 'Light-Bearer,' is in us; it is our Mind — our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Saviour from pure animalism. Without this principle — the emanation of

the very essence of the pure divine principle Mahat (Intelligence), which radiates direct from the *Divine mind* — we would be surely no better than animals." (S.D. II, 513; IV, 82; 6-vol. ed.; II, 539-40 3rd ed.)

THEOSOPHY—THE PATH OF THE MYSTIC

A book with this title was published in 1922 by the Theosophical Publishing Co., Point Loma. It is from the teachings of Katherine Tingley and is subtitled "Links For Your Own Forging".

This is a book of wisdom, truth and beauty. Written in short paragraphs, it is a book for quiet reading and contemplation. Katherine Tingley described a mystic to be one "in whom the soul is ever manifest — he is the true mystic, and to him Theosophy is no system of sterile thought but a light, a teacher, a companion, ever calling to compassionate action, ever urging to higher things."

To one scanning the life of the Theosophical Society over the years, Katherine Tingley appears as a shining link between two great leaders. A valiant and illumined woman, she created in her Raja Yoga School at Point Loma a home, a laya-centre as it were, for the nurturing and growth of the Theosophic life in the West. That she did her work well is made very clear by the solid and enduring work put out by her Lomaland pupils throughout the long years.

"Let us not forget," she reminded her pupils, "that we are gathered together at Lomaland for the purpose of serving humanity, and bringing to it the knowledge that it needs; that this is not a commercial effort, nor simply an ordinary educational effort, but that it is a *spiritual effort in the highest sense*; and for that reason we must be spiritually endowed with those qualities

that make for true nobility. . .” p. 52)

“Self-analysis, self-study, self-control! These are the divine, protective powers, the golden keys to an understanding of the Self . . .” (p. 30)

“My whole aim is to bring out the spiritual possibilities of the individual . . . Individual effort towards higher things! That is what I aim to inspire: that is the aim of Theosophy. . .” (p. 9)

Katherine Tingley believed that the responsibility for human progress rests on human shoulders. “Waste no more time in argument. Find the Self, and wrest from that the message it is waiting to impart.” (p. 120)

Both H.P. Blavatsky and William Quan Judge stressed the need for individual effort. Mr. Judge wrote:

“We have to educate the West so that it may appreciate the possibilities of the East, and thus on the waiting structure in the East may be built up a new order of things for the benefit of the whole. We have, each one of us, to make ourselves a centre of light — a picture gallery from which shall be projected on the astral light such scenes, such influences, such thoughts, as may influence many for good, shall thus arouse a new current, and then finally result in drawing back the great and the good from other spheres, from beyond the earth. This is not spiritualism at all, for it has no reference to the denizens of spook-land in any way.”

— *Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 73.
Writing of the Theosophical Movement in the West, Judge continued:

“This movement has, among others, an object which should be borne in mind. It is the union of the West with the East, the revival in the East of those greatnesses which once were hers, the development in the West of that Occultism which is appropriate for it, so that it may, in its turn, hold out

a helping hand to those of older blood who may have become fixed in one idea, or degraded in spirituality.”

—*ibid.*, p. 74.

“In regard to the movement, you may be sure that it will be taken care of if the members do their part.”

—*ibid.*, p. 172. In her first message to American Theosophists in Convention, in 1888, H.P.B. wrote:

“The multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a centre of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a centre from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.”

“Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and healthy body, its many other ugly features notwithstanding. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergencies would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge.”

—“Five Messages from H.P. Blavatsky”, pp. 4,5. Also in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, pp. 242-4.

“Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions.” —H.P.B.

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