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## THE RED AND THE GREEN

ALVIN BOYD KUHN

Having woven again the threads of connection of the great festival with its primal sources in ancient symbolic science, the way is clear to delineate as lucidly as possible the basic significations of the various rites, modes and symbols of the customary celebration. The explanation of the meaning of the two vividly contrasting colors which stand as the "theme colors" of Christmas, red and green, seems the most proper item with which to begin the exegesis. And the basic rationale underneath these colors will itself formulate the essential ground-scheme for the interpretation of most of the other symbolic features.

No treatise can dissertate upon such a matter as the birth of the Christ without blue-printing a chart of the interrelation of the several diverse but interlocked natures which enter into the constitution of man, the human-divine composite. The true — but long lost — bases of sound religious philosophy are to be located in the realm of anthropology. Religious experience is a phenomenon transpiring within the elements of human nature. It is, so to say, a psychosomatic ferment amongst the sensual, emotional, intellectual and spiritual components of man's compound existence.

Most graphically described, man is, in

Plato's analysis, half god and half animal; a god by virtue of his mind, an animal by virtue of his body. He is a god inhabiting the body of an animal. He is thus fabricated out of four separate natures, which are interfused and interrelated in one organism. He is *in toto* a combination in one physical form of four organic entifications of being or consciousness, the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual, each functioning in and through its own distinct body, which in each case is composed of matter in a state of atomic texture and organization consonant with its degree of fineness or coarseness in the evolutionary scale. These four bodies are maintained in communal relation to each other within the confines of the outer physical frame by the play of affinities and atomic energizations that life and nature readily, if mysteriously, succeed in regulating, the finer bodies interpenetrating and animating the coarser. Their diversity of structure is seen as a matter of the differences in frequency, wave-length and other modes of vibration of the four grades of matter composing them.

The two coarser and, in the evolutionary sense, lower bodies and their activated types of consciousness constitute what ancient arcane science denominated the

lower, or natural man, called in Pauline Christianity the first Adam, or the "man of the earth, earthy", while the two finer and higher ones composed the "spiritual man", the second Adam, Paul's "Lord from heaven". The first two, symbolized respectively by earth and water, united to form man physical; the second two, emblemed by air and fire, constituted man spiritual. The four united man earthly with heavenly man. When the Bible poetically says that heaven and earth have kissed each other, it refers to the union of the two natures in the body and life of mankind.

Man's complete constitution, then, consisted of four natures so conjoined as to make him a dual creature, with a material body composed of earth and water, and a spiritual body composed of air (Latin *spiritus* means "air") and fire, with the former housing the latter, but being animated and ensouled by it. As religion is the relation between man's physical-animal nature and that of this indwelling god within him, the gist of all meanings presented in the Scriptures and theology relates to the interplay between these two co-tenants of the physical body, the psyche and the soul.

This analysis prepares the ground for the explication of the red and green colors so vividly flaunted in the Yule display. The strongly contrasting yet complementary green leaves and red berries of the holly branch are not only beautiful to the sense, but stand as mentally cogent types of the two natures in man. Green is the universal color of nature on this planet, at least in the vegetable realm. It therefore symbolizes the first or natural man, the man whose life, like that of green leafage, is drawn up out of the earth. On the other side red typifies the second Adam, or man spiritual, because the age-old and invariable symbol of spirit universal throughout the world was *fire*; and red is the common color of fire. The red stands for the fiery essence of divine spirit, the soul of man.

The Christmas message that is mutely but eloquently spoken by the holly sprig is

indeed a moving sermon. It bespeaks the life, history and composition of the human soul, for it presents in dumb pantomime the growth of man natural as the green stem and its leaves, and then the generation out of these raw natural elements of man spiritual, as the fiery red product flowering at the summit. The colorful holly branch thus depicts man's potential divine spirit as the beautiful flower and fruit of a physical growth in the natural order.

Man can gaze upon the holly tree and see his own life-drama mirrored in outline and in miniature, or as the analogue of all natural process. His body is the growth and evolution of a rudimentary nucleus of life over a long period. It is his natural self, grown under the order of the world of nature and the operation of natural law. But in the fulness of time, it, too, bears its glorious fruit at the topmost reach of its "green" body, which in the case of man is the head. And this fruit of the tree of life when fully ripened, were it visible to all human eyes, would be seen flashing out in the form of a radiant crown of ineffable spiritual beauty efflorescent in the purest of colors.

In both nature and in man the first or natural order of creation gives birth at its apex to the second or spiritual man. The physical creation, the "mother", labors to generate her son, the conscious creation, the Logos. As the spiritual body or bodies in which this spiritual consciousness is instrumentalized are constituted of the glowing radiance of solar light, the color of fire is the most apt earthly symbolic representation of their nature. The world of green nature bears on its top branch the bright red of the spirit. If one can imaginatively see all this in the holly, or the poinsettia, or the barberry, one will find these emblematic objects the mental goad to realizations of the most potent cathartic virtue. They unite the mental and the emotional through the subtle power of an aesthetic dynamism. They portray vividly the birth of the Christ in man as the burgeoning of red fire of spirit at the top of

the green stem of the natural bodily life.

Here we have the basis of the old English legend of the blossoming of the thorn tree at Glastonbury at Christmas. It is symbolism. The tree of nature, here the thornbush, is proclaimed to put forth its bloom at the winter solstice, as precisely at this point in the cycle where involution (the soul's descent) turns into evolution (the soul's reascent), the Christ-child of noetic consciousness is born. The thornbush was in all likelihood chosen as carrying on the Old Testament allegory of the thornbush of *Exodus* aflame with divine fire.

With the tree introduced as typograph of man's natural self, the elucidation comes to the Christmas pine tree. And well may the German folksong carol its adoration of the fir-tree's perennial greenness!

O Tannenbaum! O Tannenbaum! (O fir-tree! O fir-tree! Wie gruen sind deine Blaetter! How green are thy leaves!).

For here nature is green, not only for the seasonal cycle of summer, but all the year round. The life of nature, preparatory as it always is to the birth of consciousness, is in its essence everlasting. Matter is in-

destructible, though its forms of manifestation may continually change. The root essence of material substance is imperishable. It is always a potency, latent during the alternate periods of non-manifestation, active during the opposite cycles of spirit's waking existence.

Perhaps fancy will not stray too far afield into whimsicality when it likens the darker shades of the pine's winter green or former years' growth to the dullness of matter in the inactive or latent state, while seeing in the brighter shades of the green of the summer's new growth an emblem of the more radiant energization of matter when ensouled by bright spirit in the cycles of manifestation. In the temperate and frigid zones nature has provided a type of the eternity of life and matter in never-fading greenness of the northern pine. Symbol of the immortality of life, it brings into the Christmas ritual much the same significance as the green of the holly. It represents outdoor or wild nature, thus again typifying the first or natural man in the human constitution.

— Yule and Noel

## MOTION

FLEET B. BERRY

Motion is of the essence of our world. Nothing is ever completely still. Even in Pralaya there is a slow ponderous heaving. If motion is greatly reduced, there is apparent sleep or death and if there is undue acceleration, explosion, a flying apart results. Buddha, Plato and others taught the Middle Way between extremes, walking the edge of the sword.

*The Voice of the Silence* shows how to reach this balance, yoga, union of space and energy, spirit and matter. All Nature demonstrates the truth. She works steadily towards a goal. At times she accelerates, then slows down, but the seasons always

follow each other in regular order according to Law, in tune with the great plan.

All passes through the circle of necessity.

Beavers dam up a small stream to make a pond. Silt gradually fills it up. Then for some reason the dam is neglected, the pond drains and becomes a beaver meadow. Grass replaces water-plants, then bushes and trees develop with their appropriate animal life. Higher forms replace lower.

Action in inaction. The still pond is very active beneath the surface, teeming with small plant and animal life, silt being deposited and future land evolving. In sleep, our bodies are still but the cells in-

tensely active. When intellect is subdued, the mind becomes a channel for intuition and the greater the stillness the more can intuition flow. A germinating seed is preparing for a future flower. In the stillness of dawn, Nature is in readiness to receive the sun's power. Quiet preparation precedes the burst of flame of a camp-fire. The pause at the end of a pendulum's swing is necessary for the return movement. Then there is devachan between incarnations, the gathering of energy for the leap of the lion, stillness in the eye of a storm, the moment of awakening when one may be conscious in two worlds. Intense activity is followed by a pause between in-breathing and out-breathing. The pause is very necessary for harmony and balance, its lack disruptive, shattering. The pause allows for an influx of power, life-force. The following activity expends this force, the lion's leap is limited by the energy gathered. The leap is followed by the pause when he feeds on his prey and digests, rebuilding energy for the next activity. On a lower level, a condenser in the timer of an engine gathers energy for a mighty spark.

The autumn equinox is a time of balance, harmony, the pause between summer and winter, in-breathing, and the burst of fresh life, out-breathing, preceded by the pause of the spring equinox. The results of the energy expended during the growing season are stored and matured during the winter to be ready for the next burst of activity. After the fall equinox, nature sloughs off non-essentials, returning them to the earth. In much the same way, man may dispense with lower desires and ripen the seeds of experience for new growth in the latter part of life. At the end of earthly existence, a similar action takes place as spiritual elements draw off to devachan in a second birth. In this state of apparent inaction intense activity may go on in preparation for rebirth in another body, to gather fresh experiences for evolution in the next cycle.

Stars seem to be motionless and so does earth. Yet earth is rotating about 25,000

miles a day and revolving around the sun at a speed of roughly 60,000 m.p.h. Science regards stone as inert, inorganic, because science judges by the physical, not realizing that stone is evolving and so must have life. Man even thinks of himself as static, at the peak of evolution, due to his materialistic outlook. Really, motion exists in each of the seven states of matter, speeding up as it becomes more refined. This is obvious in the musical scale where the higher notes are of increased vibration. In *The Mahatma Letters*, it is stated that the body of a Dhyani-Chohan is of the seventh state of electricity. This is inconceivable to man thinking of the physical body as real. One wonders about mind. Intellection has a slower rate of vibration than intuition. What will mind be in the 5th, 6th, 7th Rounds and in the 6th and 7th Root-Races? The tremendous increase of the rate of vibration in even the next higher state warns us of the need of a suitably developed body or instrument to sustain the strain. Extreme heat applied to one spot in a cake of ice expands it to steam causing a disruptive explosion before the rest of the block can adapt by melting. Premature development of one faculty psychically without comparable spiritual growth to direct it, has resulted in many cases of mental sickness and degeneration.

Perhaps yoga is attained by living in the present moment, seeking balance between the personal and the individual natures. When this balance or harmony is achieved, then comes the flash as intellect and intuition merge, vibrate as one and a new Buddha is born. No wonder that all Nature rejoices, flowers burst open, stars stand still and the world glows in the still light of Peace, according to ancient traditions.

Like birds we seek a place to alight, dropping down here and there, learning by experience what is stable, sometimes caught like a bird in "the wily fowler's lime" as we attach ourselves perhaps to a false teacher. It may take a long time to find the falseness and to extricate ourselves from the mud of half-truths, often

well-camouflaged. Many a moth is passed over by a bird because of its resemblance to a piece of bark. The bird has to learn to discriminate in order to survive, to distinguish between the vital and the false.

Our colored glasses, our thoughts, perhaps our auras, condition our opinions until we learn the color of our glasses and allow for it. It helps to know also the opinions of others so that their thoughts can be seen for what they are. Two people looking at each other through green and red glasses may have very distorted views that produce many sorts of manifestations. As a fresh breeze disperses fog, so pure thoughts can help to clear the auras of others. Each of us blends one into another, so it is important that we associate colors that are harmonious. We share all that we are.

Energy and space attract each other and are under a constant urge to merge since they are the two aspects of the Absolute. Spirit is always reaching out to the essence of Matter and this essence is always reaching out to Spirit. When the two meet, there is balance, harmony, yoga, new birth, enlightenment. A new centre of manifestation is produced, the apex of a new triangle, a new seed, which in turn is the beginning of another cycle of evolution, another circle of the spiral. In our lives we go on from cycle to cycle, reach many minor enlightenments, flashes of intuition. Each brings us nearer to the peak where we become the All and function in the "Vale of Bliss". All the earlier aspects of our evolving nature are fused with, and raised to, the finest until they act as one, directed by the One. We have intuition, Wisdom, and are ready to serve humanity as Mastercraftsmen. The Sun has risen, the day begun, and clouds of the new day's ex-

periences are drifting across the sky. As our spirits transmute them, we grow and meet the day's problems successfully, exhilarated by the knowledge that there is innate inner strength to meet whatever comes.

What is the source of this inner strength or energy? Could it be Akasa? Akasa is everywhere. If we knew more of the Laws of Nature we would be able to make greater use of it. At present we are familiar with electricity derived from water-power. Nuclear power from fission of the atom is man's latest discovery. But there are many other examples that have been known for ages. In our own bodies we derive strength from the food we eat and the air we breathe. By learning to use these more efficiently, some great souls are able to work effectively for long hours with very little food. Think of the tremendous energy used by H.P.B. in the huge amount of work she did in a few short years, her body being far from perfect. A seed's latent urge to grow, that is to reach the sun, provides the power for the fragile shoot persistently to reach upwards as it endeavours to unite itself with the universal life.

This huge reservoir of energy is available to each of us when we stretch up towards Spirit, evolve the Will to do, to serve humanity.

As we learn to use correctly our resources, our energy snowballs. The first fragile shoot has such a small area to soak in the sun's rays. When it becomes a tree, it has thousands of leaves, acres of surface. In man, since he has the ability to choose, pitfalls are along the Path. Growth needs to be uniform. If growth runs wild with no strong spirit to guide, deformity or destruction lie ahead. It is like an engine without a governor or a boiler without a safety valve, like psychic powers lacking the moral strength to control them.

Everything has the spark and reaches out. All is one in different stages of evolution. Each soul's actions are right for it at its stage of growth. Realization of this is compassion, the governor on the engine.

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With compassion we judge no one but observe objectively and try to find ways to help another to rise to a finer stage, a faster rate of vibration. We use our vibrations to induce a higher rate in another. Sometimes we have to slow our rate a bit to be nearer to his rate so as not to blow his fuses. By trying to understand his motives, to learn his background, to see his good points, we can expand the last, lift him and so lift

ourselves. The whole ladder rises, not just one rung. Our higher mingles with his lower aura, and our lower with his higher. Each helps the other. Opposites attract, magnetically, motion is the result.

Motion guided by Compassion is a powerful mechanism with a divine Being in control.

— *Theosophia*, Spring, 1978

## RESPONDING TO ENQUIRERS

A. TYRO

The problem of how best to answer an enquirer about Theosophy confronts most students of the subject from time to time. The more we think about it, the more the problem grows in importance. The temptation to enlarge on our knowledge of the Teaching — the old Ego never misses a chance! — must not be allowed to assert itself. We must remember that we are dealing with a spiritual teaching, the essence of which can only be conveyed to others as we are cognizant of it in ourselves.

not allow our predilections to influence our presentation. It would be ideal, and most helpful to respond in a way that would be most suitable to the enquirer's needs.

Perhaps the wisest approach, therefore, is to tactfully elicit the enquirer's own ideas and beliefs. In this way we can avoid subjects likely to strike an antagonistic chord. For example, for some reason or another, the subject of reincarnation is strongly opposed by some people. The more we know of a person's attitude to such subjects as this, the more effectively can we discuss Theosophy with him.

Regardless whether the enquirer is a sincere seeker, or merely curious, there is an element within all that can be touched by spirituality. It is this spiritual element, common to all of us, which is waiting to take its rightful place in human life, that we should strive to contact. We must realize that ideas, however lofty, can at best impart only an intellectual understanding, not its spiritual content.

In the Western world in the past two centuries a large segment of humanity has been freed from its bondage to a religious system which teaches that redemption is based on "vicarious atonement". This came about due largely to the dissemination of scientific information regarding the nature of things and the phenomena of life. The new freedom brought with it a gradual weakening of the moral sanctions of religion, and this unfortunately led to a reversion to a more materialistic concept of life by many people. To stem the flow of this materialistic trend, H.P. Blavatsky spent much of her life to introduce Theosophy to the world.

As we become aware of the importance of the spiritual part in dealing with Theosophical subjects, we must keep in mind our own limitations when endeavouring to convey our conception of the Teaching to others. Most of us interpret the Teaching according to our individual inclinations and find some parts of it more appealing than others; however, we should

To those who have been brought up with

an orthodox Christian background, there are a number of aspects of Theosophy that may antagonize them. To such it could be shown that prior to the Christian era there existed many great civilizations, and religious and philosophical systems; and that Theosophy is in large part a restatement of the fundamental concepts regarding Man and his destiny that were contained in those systems.

These all spoke of Man's relationship with the Eternal, and whose nature is essentially divine. It is this divine element in him which makes possible all that is fine and noble in human life, and which enables us to "redeem" ourselves by our own efforts.

Part of Madame Blavatsky's mission was to restore to Man the knowledge of his true nature, and to demonstrate that this nature is *not* basically sinful. On the other hand, she indicated that if we use our various powers to satisfy the demands of one side of our nature more than the "other", we become unbalanced, invoking the inevitable (karmic) consequences.

Theosophy teaches that Man is a dual being, an eternal Soul acquiring its Self-knowledge through its own embodiment in a physical organism through which it contacts the phenomenal world, a living instrument through which the Soul of Man can be ever becoming "One" with its essential nature. In maintaining a balance between the needs of the two sides of his nature, Man grows in stature and knowledge.

The existence of the "Other" path to redemption should be presented as an alternative, not to be accepted or rejected, but as a concept to be regarded in the light of free intelligence. The choice is an individual one, and if faced, the study of Theosophy can be of great assistance thereafter.

One important point regarding Theosophy is that its concepts are not to be taken dogmatically but rather as ideas to be studied and compared with others. Furthermore, it stresses that we are in-

telligent reasoning beings, and more — much more — than a mere extension of the animal kingdom. It is important to realize that it is through the exercising of the powers of the Mind that our sense of individuality grows. It is by the exercising of that thinking, reasoning mind that develops an individual living Soul with a sense of responsibility.

The seeming paradox that we needs must establish a strong sense of individuality (centre of consciousness) and at the same time deal with our sense of separateness opens up the subject of personality and individuality. In our personal life our sense of self is bound to the needs of our physical, emotional and intellectual natures, and is largely separative in its attitude toward life. On the other hand, to be aware of ourselves as individuals we must realize within ourselves our kinship with others, and ultimately with all life. Our sense of separateness must be broken. As individuals, we can no longer live for ourselves alone: our self-concern must be turned towards concern for others, and more especially towards that "Other" side of our Life.

As we become more mature as human beings, this sense of duality becomes part of our conscious processes. Our conscience will no longer allow us to lie back and "pass the buck" whether in the realm of heaven or earth. In the solution of life's problems the needs of both sides of our nature must be given equal consideration if we would live a sane and balanced life.

The retention of our *Self* consciousness in times of stress, or when important decisions have to be made, so that our subsequent actions may be equitable and unaffected by personal ends, must be seen as a very important factor in determining the future trend of our lives. Clearly, if we fail in this, our ability to meet similar circumstances will be weakened, just as our "Will" will be strengthened if we succeed.

The age-old illusion of a "Messiah" (which in our day takes many forms)

whose coming will wipe away all our ills and problems is one that Theosophy tries to dispel since it plays upon our weaknesses and blinds us to our strength. Theosophy appeals to all that is strong in Man, to his individuality which is born in him by his allegiance to his finer part. The knowledge and understanding that comes to him who endeavours to live in harmony with that finer part can never be known by those who give their allegiance to their personal self, and where the fruits of their lives reside wholly in the physical realm. In a permissive world where cheating, lies and deception pass without censure in a large part of our mutual dealings, is it reasonable to expect life to be other than it is?

To those who are sincerely seeking a philosophy of life that more nearly meets their spiritual needs, Theosophy teaches and emphasizes that it is only through their own efforts to discover and exercise the powers latent in our essential natures that we can redeem ourselves, and ultimately become Masters of Life. It is the awakening

of these latent powers that gives a real meaning to life.

As a self-conscious being, Man has free choice to live according to the dictates of his own mind and heart. The decision as to where his ultimate interests lie is one that has to be faced sooner or later. If, as the Ancients taught, Man's power to redeem himself lies in that element in his nature through which he participates in the "Oneness" of all Life, then the submission of his redemption to a power other than his own must surely obscure to him the knowledge of his Divine inheritance.

To embrace Theosophy means willingness to accept responsibility for our actions and to be self-reliant. Other than this indicates immaturity, the lack of inner fortitude ("guts") to face life on our own two feet. Life is a challenge to Man to draw upon his own Divine powers to solve his problems. Lacking this incentive, the best he can do is to change things around, but solve nothing!

## THEOSOPHY AND DOGMA

WILLIAM KINGSLAND

THEOSOPHY has many aspects, and derives its inspiration not from one source only, not from one teacher merely, or from one set of sacred writings, but from all.

This is a fact which it appears most difficult to impress upon the world at large, and upon the opponents of Theosophy in particular. Men are so accustomed to regulate their opinions by some particular creed or dogma, which they suppose to rest upon some authority beyond which there is no appeal, that they cannot grasp the wider aspect of human duty and human destiny which Theosophy presents.

If we examine any of those exclusive and contradictory religious systems on which, in some form or another, men blindly rely, we find at once a broad distinction drawn

between believers and unbelievers, between those who are within and those who are without the favour of God, between the lost and the saved. But Theosophy knows no such distinctions as these, neither any difference of race, color, or creed.

The spiritual sun shines alike on the good and on the evil, and the water of life descends both on the just and on the unjust. It rests with each individual to make the proper use of those spiritual forces which are ever emanating from the Divine source of our being.

We must do this first by faith, and secondly by knowledge. If we have no faith in the divine spark that burns within us, we shall make no efforts to let that spark illumine and guide our life; and on the



other hand if we have faith without knowledge, we shall still be groping in the dark, and will surely mistake the false light of some earth-born system of religion, for the divine light that burns only in the innermost sanctuary of our own hearts.

We must use the spiritual forces in nature in the same way that we make use of physical forces. If a man do not work in harmony with the laws of nature, he will find opposition instead of help; if he sow not in accordance with nature's law, he will reap naught but disappointment and pain. We need faith in the first place, faith in the unity and continuity of natural laws, and faith in our own divine nature, but no amount of faith will enable us to produce the desired result if we do not add to faith knowledge. Theosophy carries this principle right up to the highest spiritual plane, and does not recognize at any point the intervention of an arbitrary personal will, which can make a man other than that which he himself chooses. All are subject to the law of Karma, but Karma is that which each individual makes for himself, it is the law of cause and effect in relation to his own free will.

The will of man is as free as the will of God, and becomes, indeed, that will itself when the man has realized his divine nature, and by crucifying his lower principles has effected the at-one-ment.

It is the most common misconception, then, and the hardest to eradicate, that Theosophy consists in a belief in certain doctrines; that it is in fact nothing more or less than a religious creed.

What then we shall be asked are those doctrines which Theosophists everywhere profess to hold, and which they appear most anxious to teach the world? What is Esoteric Buddhism and the Secret Doctrine, or Reincarnation and Karma, if not a body of doctrines which are intended to supplant other religious creeds and dogmas?

The answer to this is, that these doctrines are the embodiment of certain broad generalizations concerning the history and

evolution of humanity; that they are the key which enables us to harmonize certain facts which would otherwise appear isolated and antagonistic. They are in no way analogous to the dogmas and creeds of the religious sects, but answer more nearly to such generalizations of science as the laws of gravity or the conservation of energy. It is not claimed for them that they are necessary articles of belief, neither that they are in their present form accurately and literally true. They are stepping-stones to a higher knowledge of the divine element in human nature, and of the laws physical, psychical, and spiritual by which we are conditioned. If we ask a scientific man what gravity or energy are, he cannot tell us, but no one will deny that the laws which have been formulated respecting their action or manifestation have been most powerful aids in scientific investigations. Now it is precisely thus with the doctrines of Theosophy. Once these doctrines are understood they give a man an immensely wider view of humanity, and raise him above those narrow and limited conceptions of God and his dealings with individuals, of which so many contradictory assertions are made by various religions, and the innumerable sects into which they are split up.

What practical relation then has Theosophy to our every-day life? We reply that practical Theosophy is identical with practical religion. It comes from the heart and not from the head. It is the spontaneous love for one's fellow creatures, which — taking possession of a man, leads to noble acts of self-sacrifice; to right action done simply because it is right, and without any reference to the merit of the act, or any thought of recognition or reward.

Theosophy aims at nothing short of perfection of character; but character as expressed in outward acts is the result of an inward condition. The root of action lies deep down in the inner consciousness. It is the man's thoughts, desires, and innermost convictions which give rise to action. Act does not produce character, is not even a

true indication of it, for a right action may be done from a wrong motive. Act is the result of character.

Right action must be based upon right thought, right motive, and right knowledge, and it is just here that the study of the doctrines of Theosophy is of such value to those who are seeking for firm ground to stand upon amid conflicting dogmas and controversies of the age, for it provides a basis which is independent of any religious system, and yet includes them all in their inner or esoteric meaning. There is not much difficulty in distinguishing between a right and a wrong action *per se*, but there is a great difference between the man who is merely moral through habit or temperament, and one who is actively beneficent because of the love for humanity which animates him. Moreover there will be a great difference in the actions of a man who believes in the doctrine of original sin and the atonement, and one who believes in reincarnation and Karma.

Theosophy therefore, as a system, seeks to influence men by giving them a right basis of thought. It seeks to counteract on the one hand, the materialistic and atheistic teaching of modern science, and on the other hand, the narrow exclusive and demoralizing teachings of dogmatic and formal religion.

But Theosophy as a system is something more even than this. Theosophy does not seek merely to destroy superstition, but it seeks to build up a new edifice constructed of those very materials which have been so perverted in their uses by centuries of priestcraft and ecclesiasticism. Theosophy is based upon a deeper wisdom, a more interior meaning of those sacred books of all nations, which form the foundation of so many religious systems.

Each one must verify the doctrines of Theosophy for himself, and in doing so will probably find new light and fresh inspiration in those particular records which he has been accustomed to regard as the basis of his faith; and he will also be able to recognize the same meaning in the sacred

books of other faiths, which hitherto he may have been accustomed to regard as "heathen", and as being contradictory and opposed to his own.

Theosophy, then, has two main aspects, the theoretical and the practical. These two must harmonize: practice must be based upon theory, and if the theory has been rightly understood, the practice can hardly fail to be in accord with it. Theosophy offers a motive and a moral stimulus free from fear, superstition, or lip worship, but full of divine love. It is practice that makes a Theosophist, and not profession. The Theosophical Society as a body and an organization seeks to teach the theory, while each individual member must practise so much of the theory as he has been able to assimilate, in his every-day life, in his relations with his fellow men, and in his inmost thoughts and desires.

Standing free from fear or superstition, let each one make obeisance only to the dim star that burns within. "Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light."

— *Lucifer*, June, 1889.

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## THE THREE TRUTHS

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

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

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

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

*Idyll of the White Lotus*

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death on September 26 of Gwladys Cunningham. She joined the Society in 1917, and was a member of Toronto Lodge except for a few years in the '20s, when she worked in Regina and was a member of the former Lodge in that city. For many years, Mrs. Cunningham had been among that steadfast group of members who have helped keep the light of Theosophy shining in the Niagara Peninsula area.

We send our deep sympathy to the family and friends of this dedicated member.

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On behalf of the members in Canada, I have written to thank Gordon Plummer for his lecture tour of Canadian Lodges. He was in Canada for the better part of two months in September and October, and there were very few days in that period when he was not energetically engaged in Theosophical activities, either lecturing or conducting study classes. We are grateful to him for giving so freely of his time and effort on our behalf.

Mrs. Esther Plummer accompanied Gordon during the first three weeks of the tour. Esther quickly won many friends in Victoria, Vancouver and Calgary, and we are sorry that she could not stay longer. She assisted her husband at lectures and in classes with readings to complement his talks.

For many members, Mr. Plummer's presence was their first opportunity to get to know at first hand what life was like in the famous Point Loma Community, where he was born and where he spent his early years. The intensity and, more important, the quality of Theosophical study in Point Loma was attested to yet again by Gordon's tremendous grasp of the teachings. Gordon also has the gift of being an excellent teacher (and indeed, teaching was

his profession). I am certainly not the only one who was impressed with his rare ability to express some of the loftiest concepts of Theosophy in simple language supplemented with thought-provoking analogies.

After the tour finished in Montreal, Gordon was planning to visit Hopkins Observatory in Massachusetts, on his way to his home in San Diego, California. The Observatory has placed an order for a universal self-correcting sun dial built to his design, and it is to be installed soon. This instrument is said to be accurate at any latitude. It is the second Plummer sundial to be ordered: the first was erected in Balboa Park, in San Diego, over two years ago.

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A business meeting in Vancouver gave me an opportunity to meet with local members on Friday evening, October 6. Hermes Lodge offered its excellent facilities for this meeting, which although called at relatively short notice, attracted a lot of members and resulted in what I felt was a very useful discussion.

Our discussion covered a number of topics, chief of which might fall roughly under the heading of the presentation of Theosophy to the general public. It was no surprise to hear the many different views on this subject, but I was encouraged to sense the positive attitude among those present, and to hear innovative suggestions on how to meet the challenge.

I came away with the optimistic hope that much good new activity will grow in Vancouver. Hermes Lodge has had a long experience of holding public meetings, and the Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges count among their members several extremely knowledgeable and articulate students of Theosophy. If a co-operative effort is forthcoming, as I think it will be, the results should be beneficial to the cause of Theosophy.

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THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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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

Doris and I recently had the unexpected pleasure of renewing our acquaintance with Carson Dawdy, the Foreman of Rannie Publications Limited, the printer of this magazine. He and his wife were on their way home to Beamsville, Ontario, after a vacation in Western Canada.

Rannie's association with *The Canadian Theosophist* goes back to 1960, and our personal relationship with Bill Rannie and his co-operative staff began a year later. It

has been a happy experience for us, and we feel the T.S. in Canada is very fortunate that the printing of its journal is in such competent hands.

\* \* \*

It gives me much pleasure to welcome the following new members into the fellowship of the Society:

*Edmonton Lodge.* David M. Bagan.

*Members-at-large.* Dawn Anne DeBeau,  
Ruth A. Sobczak

*Toronto Lodge.* Elizabeth Karikas, Steven Karikas.

*Victoria Lodge.* Pearle Maver.

T.G.D.

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## GOLDEN RULE LODGE

The Golden Rule Lodge meets Friday evenings at 133 Avenue Road, Toronto.

"Spiritual encounter" is the theme of our program, which consists of discussions, with occasional speakers.

All are welcome.

Norman Golden  
Secretary

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## VICTORIA LODGE

On September 19, Mrs. Alice Smith gave an excellent talk on Kahlil Gibran, with readings from *The Prophet*. This was an inspiring opening for our Fall season.

This year we are to participate in an in-depth study of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The help it will afford us in the practical application of our Theosophical precepts is of great interest to our members, and we look forward to a year of good attendance.

Dorita Gilmour  
President

# GORDON PLUMMER'S 1978 CANADIAN TOUR

Most of the Theosophical centres in Canada were privileged to be visited by Mr. L. Gordon Plummer this Fall.

Following are reports received from the Lodges which co-ordinated the local arrangements for his activities.

## VICTORIA

Victoria Lodge had the privilege and pleasure of being the first stop of Mr. L. Gordon Plummer's Canadian lecture tour. Arriving on September 8, Mr. and Mrs. Plummer spent five days in our city.

On September 10, the members gathered at the home of the President to meet Esther and Gordon, and to hear a most inspiring talk by Gordon and readings by Esther. Twenty-three members were present, and tea was served, during which they were able to chat with our visitors.

On September 12, Mr. Plummer gave a wonderful public lecture on "Theosophy and Occultism", which was well attended by interested and serious people. A few new enquirers attended a study class held by Gordon the following evening, at the Lodge gathering, when the subject of his talk was "The Seven Jewels of Wisdom".

Various drives, a few personal visits to members, and a trip to Butchart Gardens gave our visitors an opportunity to relax and see something of our city before their departure for Vancouver.

Dorita Gilmour

## VANCOUVER

From September 13 to 19, we really enjoyed the visit of Gordon and Esther Plummer from San Diego. Vancouver was the second point of call on their cross-Canada tour.

Gordon Plummer opened on Thursday the 14th with a public lecture at the Planetarium entitled "Beyond the Big Bang". There was an attentive audience of

about 125 people, and the question period which followed brought some interesting answers from Mr. Plummer. Esther opened with a beautiful reading of "The Imprisoned Splendour" by Browning.

The next day was a "day-off". It was a sunny day spent sightseeing and picture-taking around Vancouver. The Plummers had tea with Vancouver Lodge members at Judy Myrtle's, followed by a rest and dinner at Hilda Hewitt's. After dinner, Gordon entertained us with "card tricks" which boggled the mind — his father was a professional magician.

On Saturday afternoon he held the first of his three meetings for members at Hermes Lodge, attended by students from all the Lodges in the Vancouver area. His subject was "The Mystery Schools", concluding with the thought that we are each responsible as students of the Ancient Wisdom for developing our own "mystery school" within ourselves — and for sharing our learning with all who will listen.

That evening, members of Orpheus Lodge and anyone else who could, met at Lillian and Eric Hooper's lovely new condominium overlooking scintillating Vancouver city. Gordon showed slides of his models constructed to show the universal symbolism of geometric shapes and explained the golden rectangle, all of which is covered in his book, *The Mathematics of the Cosmic Mind*.

Sunday found us back for the second members' meeting on "The Seven Jewels of Wisdom" — developing mind from animal to Bodhisattva, and the role of the sacred planets, which are to the solar system as the various organs to our physical body, intrinsic working parts interconnecting the whole system.

On Monday evening, Gordon went into the subject of "Initiation", giving us a skeletal outline of the eight initiations

leading at long last to the Wisdom of a Buddha of Compassion. He particularly pointed out the distinction between a Pratyeka Buddha and a Buddha of Compassion — how the one worked for his own release from the agonies of the world, and the other who renounces the reward of Nirvana in order to help orphan humanity. The evening, and our studies with Mr. Plummer, closed with the Gayatri in Sanskrit, and its interpretation in English by G. de Purucker.

A most rewarding and inspiring visit from Mr. and Mrs. Plummer.

Doreen Chatwin

In reviewing Mr. Plummer's public lecture and the talks he held for members, we ask ourselves — what was the essence of his contribution to the understanding of the Theosophical message? In his public lecture, "Beyond the Big Bang", and in his study classes, he gave the grand metaphysical background of the unfolding of consciousness from the inception of our universe.

The question is often asked, what is the use of such metaphysical study to the theosophical student? We believe that intellectual knowledge of the teaching, by itself, will do little for humanity unless individuals can be found who will apply it in their own lives. But, H.P.B. speaks of the importance of such study, and of the difficulties which can arise "from an imperfect acquaintance with the philosophical teachings of Theosophy. They are the most striking proof of the wisdom of those who have repeatedly urged Theosophists to devote their energies to mastering, at least, the outlines of the metaphysical system upon which our ethics are based." Mr. Plummer obviously sought to stimulate individual and group study of the metaphysical concepts found in Theosophy.

The public lecture and the classes were prefaced and closed with very meaningful passages read by Mrs. Plummer, from

Browning's "*Paracelsus*", *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*.

In the three classes Mr. Plummer held for members, we felt that he made a perceptive approach which relates to the kind of work expected of the serious Theosophical student. The subject of these classes was "The Mystery Schools".

In the first, he dealt with the structure of the Schools, speaking particularly of the Pythagorean. Here the neophyte was introduced to an appreciation of a new level of life, by making the appeal at the level of the Higher Mind.

In the second, the requirements for the evolutionary journey were greatly expanded and applied specifically to the individual's own effort. He gave us some idea of the quality of power and stamina needed for this kind of work.

In the last class, which dealt with initiation, we were told that the candidate is tested in the rites of the Schools, and if strong enough to conquer his lower nature in the ordeals through which he must pass, he enters into a higher level of experience on The Way.

This is, of necessity, a very brief review of Mr. Plummer's talks. His particular gift lies in the way in which he is able to present the metaphysical background to the journey of the Monads, but the role of individual effort, although implicit throughout, was not given sufficient emphasis. We have chosen to highlight this aspect because the bent of our own study of the teaching lies in its practical application to the student's life.

Mr. Plummer studied the Theosophical teaching as given through H.P. Blavatsky, under the guidance of G. de Purucker who, we were told, expanded but did not change it. The original literature, seeking to again express in human life the concepts of the Ageless Wisdom, carries with it its own spiritual vitality. No interpretation of the teaching can reproduce this vitality. It is not a question of not reading widely in our search for understanding, but rather of

making this spiritual source a touchstone as we seek to enter a way of life which transcends our familiar personal world.  
Orpheus Lodge

#### CALGARY

At a meeting with members of the Lotus Lodge on June 24 we selected topics for public lectures to be given in Calgary by Gordon Plummer. Lotus Lodge also committed itself to full co-operation with us in organizing these events, and in sharing expenses for rental and advertising costs. At another joint meeting on September 12, we together worked out details: the two lectures were to be held on September 25 and 28 in the Memorial Park Library.

The benefit of a weeklong interaction with Gordon in various meetings has been felt by all concerned. We also enjoyed meeting Esther, and admired her travel spirit!

On Sunday the 24th, members of both Lodges met at the Davys' place to greet the Plummers. After telling us, on request, something about his background and training in the Point Loma community, Gordon used this meeting to outline his program for the week.

"Theosophy as it is meant to be, as stated by the Founders, is the Mystery School of the modern age," he said. "The 'outer court' teachings are for the general public; the 'inner court' is where disciples are taught; and initiation takes place in 'the Holy of Holies'."

The first public lecture was entitled "The Seven Jewels of Wisdom", covering the inter-related subjects of Re-embodiment, Karma, Hierarchies, Evolution, Self-Development, the Two Paths, and Self-Knowledge. Altogether 28 people were present.

On Tuesday and Wednesday evenings we met at the Davys as a study group, and Gordon expounded on many aspects of *The Secret Doctrine* teaching. Starting with the premise that "every living being has been, is, or will be in human form at some point in time", we explored the relationships

between monads (causes) and principles (effects). We looked at the principles from this perspective, and heard Gordon explain the paths of the Human, Spiritual and Divine Monads after the death of the body.

On Thursday evening we enjoyed the second public lecture at the Library. The topic this time was "What Are the Black Holes?" which gave Gordon the opportunity to share his knowledge and insight of astronomy. This lecture was well attended, and afterwards to his great delight, several young people surrounded Gordon and kept him busy with their questions.

Looking back at these events we are grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from Gordon and to be exposed to his remarkable teaching talent. A word of thanks is in order here to the Theosophical Society in Canada for sponsoring this lecture tour and to the Davys for their hospitality during the Plummers' stay in Calgary.

Laetitia van Hees

#### EDMONTON

Weeks before Gordon Plummer arrived in Edmonton the members of the Lodge zealously prepared for his visit. His name, and the expected events, became a pleasant second nature to all who pitched in to make this a memorable occasion.

Gordon arrived here from Calgary on September 30. The Lodge members held an informal meeting the same evening to extend a warm welcome to him, and to tally notes on his engagements. He enlightened us on the former Point Loma establishment, and captured our hearts with his buoyant humour.

On Monday, October 2, a public meeting was held at the Central Library. Gordon spoke on Karma and Reincarnation. We hoped for a more enthusiastic response from the public, but only about 45 were present to hear a very interesting lecture.

A small group met the following evening,

## TORONTO

and was briefed by Gordon on certain aspects of *The Mathematics of the Cosmic Mind*. He showed slides and a model of the sphere, and held us captive with his demonstration.

The regular meeting of the Edmonton Lodge takes place on Wednesday evenings, and on this one our brotherhood was blessed with Gordon's presence. He spoke on the Mystery Schools and Initiation. We all enjoyed this lecture immensely, and gained a valuable insight into the different Mystery Schools — especially the Pythagoreans.

A second public lecture was held on Thursday, October 5, at the Masonic Temple. With his usual exuberance, Gordon spoke on Psychic and Spiritual Powers. He concluded his talk by displaying a mirror, which reflected the depth of the room, and also the depth of the stars and universe when turned upwards. The significance was not lost on the audience, and the meeting was a great success.

At a members' meeting on Friday evening, Gordon spoke on the Avatars — Jesus in particular. On the following evening, we were held enthralled when he demonstrated some of his "magic tricks" and skills.

Monday, October 9, was Gordon's last evening in Edmonton, and on this occasion he spoke on the Globe Chains and Rounds. It was a brief meeting, extremely interesting, and before we knew it, it was time to bid adieu to our guest.

To sum up, Gordon's visit was most enervating — spiritually and mentally. We found him to be not just an inspired scientist and brilliant mathematician, but a master of wit and humour too. And it must be added that he excels in music as well. It was an enlightening and memorable experience, and we hope that in the near future we will once again have the good fortune and privilege to welcome him to Edmonton.

Pervin J. Mistry

In the lighting of a fire, there is often a sudden brilliant burst of flame. Whether the flame may burn itself out as quickly, or set alight a steady building and warming fire depends on the force of wind, the receptivity of the fuel, and the skill of the lighter. During the two weeks of L. Gordon Plummer's stay in Toronto a spark from the Great Fire of Theosophy was started, and the inspiration through the teacher and the effort among the students fanned the spark in to a bright flame.

Mr. Plummer presented public lectures on such topics of current interest as the "Black Holes", where besides giving a scientific description some occult philosophy was introduced, which leads to a more enlightened understanding of the Cause behind the phenomena. Another very timely presentation was that of Initiations and the Cycles of Nature. Initiation was suggested as the midnight blossoming of the Cereus flower. The adept is the efflorescence of all that is in the plant, brought about through the struggles of growth, effort and trial. Several questions which followed were slanted towards personal progress, and allowed Mr. Plummer to draw attention to many popular misconceptions concerning "Personal Masters" and initiations. He expounded very clearly on the generally unclaimed priorities of spiritual development from the occult point of view.

At another meeting, attended mostly by students with some Theosophical knowledge, Gordon presented a talk on the Divine Proportions of measurement, illustrated with slides taken from his book "Mathematics of the Cosmic Mind". This symbolized the Divine Plan unfolding in the abstract quality of geometrical form, and hinted at the occult science in numbers.

Also public lectures were held at McMaster University in Hamilton, and Trent University in Peterborough. The subjects were "The Seven Jewels of Wisdom" and "Reincarnation and Karma". These were well attended and well responded to, both



by students of Theosophy and students of the Universities. The questions after the lectures demonstrated an intelligent understanding of the basic teachings of Theosophy, and indicated the possibility of a continuing interest. There were two follow-ups with requests for catalogues of our Travelling Library, and one promise of the start of a small group for study.

Whatever fire will continue to burn is, of course, dependent upon the continuing effort and exertion made by the wind of our minds.

Joan Sutcliffe

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## GREETINGS FROM ESTHER AND GORDON PLUMMER

We are taking this opportunity of thanking the many friends that we have made on our trip through Canada. You have all made this a most rewarding experience for us.

The timing is just right for extending to you our heartfelt greetings for the holiday season, which means so much to us in the light of the teachings that we all love.

L. Gordon Plummer

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## INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH

*Winter Term: January 15 — March 15, 1979*  
(At Adyar.)

The program includes:

“Cosmic Processes and Contemporary Thought” — a series based on *The Secret Doctrine*. (Miss Joy Mills).

“Ancient Wisdom in the Modern Science Perspective.” (Dr. A. Kannan)

“The Kabalah” — with special reference to *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. (Dr. B.R. Mullik).

The Spring 1979 term will open on March 26. Details of courses will be published later.

The flame touched eager and receptive minds when Gordon led study classes at the Lodge, and here concentration was intense. The Theosophical teaching was very deep, going into detail on the Mystery Schools and the Two Paths. The three distinctions of the Mystery Schools are in man himself: the listener, the student and aspirer, and the Holy of Holies. While inspiring the pupils towards the highest cosmic truths and the supreme sacrifice of the Compassionate Souls, Mr. Plummer always brought the teachings into the heart of man and the here and now. He spoke of not “man and the Universe” as two distinct entities, but of the “Universe including man”. The choice between the Pratyeka Path and the Amrita Path is being made all through life.

## VANCOUVER LODGES

### SHARE IDEAS

As Ted Davy, the General Secretary of the Canadian Section, had occasion to be in Vancouver, the members of the four Lodges: Vancouver, Orpheus, North Vancouver and Hermes, met at Hermes Lodge on Friday evening October 6, for an informal gathering.

This was a very meaningful gathering to the older members of Hermes Lodge, who remember the separation of the past and are now enjoying the result of renewed relationships in the vigor and warmth that comes with unification.

I enjoyed the discussion we had very much, because I feel it is with such exchange of ideas and ideals that creative action can come forth to help us to build our membership and make our Lodge a centre of light.

I was very interested to hear such varied viewpoints and suggestions on how Theosophy could be presented to the public. One such idea was that we could have more visiting speakers who, like Mr. Gordon Plummer, could tour Canada, speak in our Lodges and give radio and television interviews. We all agreed with this idea, but as was pointed out by Ted, our finances are such that lecture tours cannot be scheduled as often as we would like.

Kubler-Ross and the work that she is doing with the dying was mentioned. I went to the Kubler-Ross seminar here in Vancouver during the summer months and was quite surprised to find she had little knowledge of the deeper Truths which we study in Theosophy. Her dedication to her work of helping the dying was very pronounced, and I am sure that humanity requires such workers. I think more people of this calibre will be working in these fields as the development of the mind of man continues. Although this seminar was free to older citizens, the younger members of our city had to pay \$35. to attend. Needless to say, I returned to our Lodge

greatly inspired, because here we have so much of the very highest wisdom to present — free for the asking!

There were many Theosophists who felt strongly that the Truth which we have to present must be kept pure and not “watered down”. We all agreed that this was so, but I wondered if perhaps the idea of being “watered down” was wrong. To me this suggests dilution. In most religious organizations it occurs in order to enlarge membership. We know that in Theosophy we require quality and dedication to the commitment of our Three Objects.

During the preparation of my talk for the opening of our Lodge this Fall, I did much research, both external and internal, on these Objects, as I am sure every Theosophist has done. I feel I know them now so much better than I did when I first became a member.

Our second Object reads, “To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science”. As I thought about this carefully, I wondered how we could encourage such a study. I noted that the first study to be encouraged is that of religion, and our motto is “There is no religion higher than truth”; therefore, it seemed to me that if we started here the rest of our Lodge work would “fall into line”. We are all at different levels of truth and awareness, yet at whatever level we find ourselves, Truth is splendour and light — perhaps more brilliant and less complex as we move ever higher, but by the work done in our Lodges, each of us has an opportunity to help everyone who comes in (whether a future member or not) to an ever higher rung on the ladder of life, because we ourselves are reaching out. To me, this is living in the harmonious rhythm of the Universe. The movement within (because we know how), regaining strength and encouragement; the movement without, giving that which we are able to give at any given time or place.

Our Three Objects are so definite, yet so expansive as to include humanity. Theosophy, the study which embodies these

Objects, is Eternal Truth. Who can improve on such a structure or limit such a light?

I hope we shall be able to have many more gatherings like that of October 6 in Hermes Lodge. The repast with which the evening ended made a complete fulfillment of our first Object.

I know the time will come in our Society in Canada when each Lodge will exert that special impulse of its own individuality, yet we shall be a unified whole — a living example of the Eternal Truth.

Phyllis Squires  
President  
Hermes Lodge.

## DEDICATION

MOLLIE GRIFFITH

Before joining the Theosophical Society we are told that the "brotherhood of humanity" is the only one of its principles to which we must subscribe if we wish to become a member, although it is often the teaching of reincarnation and karma which attracts people to further study. To many of us our first contact with Theosophy was an inspiring and happy event. It was like a great light enabling us to see the answers to many of our questions, and one by which we hoped to guide our future life. But what we may not have seen at first was the significance of the step we were taking and where it could lead us if we remained loyal to its precepts.

Theosophical books, classes and correspondence courses are there for any who are interested, but to actually join the Society brings another influence into our lives. We then have the opportunity not only to continue our studies but to support an organization through which this ancient wisdom is given out to the world.

In all organizations big or small, most of the work seems to be done by a few people dedicated to that for which their group stands. This is also true of Theosophical groups: since the Society's inauguration there have been outstanding men and women selflessly devoted to carrying out its objects. We should be truly grateful to them for they have not only given us in-

spiration but have helped us to a better understanding of this vast subject.

However, once we have joined the Society we should take our part in its activities. Although we may feel that as yet we are elementary students, there are still certain things we can do to relieve those who have so much of value to give, and often not enough time to give it. For instance we can offer to phone, write letters, type, and visit members who are unable to attend Lodge meetings through advanced age or sickness. We should also remember the dates of the Lodge activities and when our dues should be paid, so that we will not have to be reminded — unfortunately sometimes more than once! All this is a help to the officers of a Lodge. We have even known of several Lodges which have dissolved when the real workers left.

It is something like a team game, for example, hockey. On one team there are a few "stars" to whom the other players always try to pass the puck, feeling that they are the ones most likely to score the goals. On the other team, all the players, not only the "stars", learn to score themselves when they have the opportunity, and this is the team that usually wins.

If we don't begin to play our part in the work of the Society when we become members, what use shall we be to the

Theosophical Movement in the future? The Society in its short history has had some outstanding members but others must learn and be willing to carry on their work when they are gone.

Observing the world around us, we often see people putting out tremendous energy for what they think worthwhile. A musician, for instance, will practice long hours every day; a nurse or doctor will spend years to become efficient in their field, and an athlete will undergo strenuous training to make himself fit. If our object is to try and put into practice and pass on to the world the true meaning of the brotherhood of humanity, should we not also be prepared to give freely of our time and energy? H.P. Blavatsky once wrote about the drones in the Society — something we certainly do not want to be — and Dr. de Purucker said to give to the Society whatever you have to give, on all levels.

We have been told that there are Masters of Compassion, who, having passed through the trials and tests of life, rather than claim their right to enter the state of Nirvana, choose to remain in touch with humanity, to help us in our struggle towards the light.

The Theosophical Society has been called the outermost school of the Masters, so if we have the good karma, or indeed the privilege, of becoming one of its members, we can see that self-sacrifice will be part of our training — that is, self-sacrifice of the lower self or personality. The inner satisfaction of contacting the truths embodied in Theosophy are beyond words and few of us could contemplate returning to that state of mind which was ours before we came across them. But let us remember that all things have to be paid for. A school suggests work and is meant to prepare its pupils for life in a bigger world. A school in whatever slight degree connected with the Masters, is preparing its members to take their place in a still greater world and to become in time part of a beneficent force, if they have the will-power and heart

qualities to learn their lessons. Could anyone be offered a higher ideal?

Some people say that on account of duties and obligations undertaken before joining the Society, they have not much time to give to this work. We are never asked to neglect any worthwhile commitments and it is our everyday life which provides us with the many opportunities to develop qualities such as courage, understanding and unselfishness which are vitally essential to the work we are now undertaking. Nature, our teacher, has brought us to a certain point in evolution and we now have to take a further step on our upward climb. We can no longer concentrate solely on benefits for ourselves or certain groups, but begin to try and understand that all life is one, and expand our consciousness to include the whole.

We seldom find many people in our ordinary life with whom we can discuss these things, but Lodge meetings provide us with that very valuable opportunity to leave the personality outside the door and join with our fellow members in our search for Truth. The work of a group is more effective than a single endeavour, and if conducted in harmony may be a carrier of Theosophical thought further than we realize. This does not mean that our interest in the teachings of Theosophy should cut us off from communication with others even if they do not accept our ideas. All life is one and all have a part to play in it, and our admiration must surely go out to the many people working unselfishly for the good of others. If we listen and look with a background of Theosophical teachings in our minds at all times, we can learn much from our fellow human beings and even from the other kingdoms of nature as well.

In *From Atom to Cosmos* a book by Mr. L. Gordon Plummer, are these words:

“One of the reasons for the promulgation of the Theosophical Doctrine is to teach man, before it is too late, that he has a destiny to work out and if he fails he will be left in the

rear, for nature will not be held back on man's account. Oh, what a work there is to do before man even cares about these things, what a price we pay for ignorance and indifference! Just now when the opportunity is at hand we close our eyes to it and trust

to God or some outside power to take care of us to the end."

Let us hope that we do care enough about these things, enough to try and follow the example of those men and women who have dedicated their lives to this work.

## THE INDISPENSABLE EXPERIENCE

GEORGE LOWRIE

The classic question was asked — if Spirit was originally perfect, why come down into Matter to spend millions of years evolving back to the Absolute from whence it emanated in the first place?

In *The Secret Doctrine*, it is stated: "It was the Fall of Spirit into generation, not the Fall of mortal man". Spirit, in order to become Self-Conscious, "must pass through every cycle of being, culminating in its highest point on earth in Man. Spirit . . . is an unconscious negative ABSTRACTION. Its purity is inherent, not acquired by merit; hence . . . to become the highest Dhyān Chohan it is necessary for each Ego to attain to full self-consciousness as a human, i.e., conscious Being, which is synthesized for us in Man." (I, 192-3). So, it is impossible for Spirit to remain in a state of unconscious abstraction.

William Q. Judge says: "When a period of evolution begins, with spirit at one end of the pole and matter at the other, it is absolutely necessary for spirit to proceed through experience in matter in order that self-consciousness may be acquired. It is a 'fall' into matter so far as the fact is concerned, but so far as the result and the object in view it is neither fall nor rise, but the carrying out of the immutable law of the nature of spirit and matter. We ignorantly call it a fall or a curse, because our lower consciousness does not see the

great sweep of the cycles nor apprehend the mighty purpose entertained."

The creation of the universe and all there is therein, is not the total Divine purpose. If creation was limited to matter only, Deity could be imaged as Force; but, "God is Love", and Love is that, not which merely creates and after brief caress repudiates and discards, but which sustains, perfects and perpetuates. Matter complements creation by allowing Man his perfection and perpetuation through suffering and experience. Thus, Spirit returns from Matter to its original condition of purity, but individuated and enriched by the results of all that has been gained through the processes both of creation and of perfection. For that through which we are made perfect is experience, or suffering, and we are only really alive and exist in so far as we have felt. Matter is the agent of this indispensable experience.

William Kingsland wrote: "An individual belongs to the Race from beginning to end of the great Cycle, and cannot sever himself from the great stream of human evolution. The progress of the Race is accomplished only by the progress of the individuals composing it, and this is accomplished by repeated incarnations. Again and again the individual must come back, be reincarnated, not merely to play his part in the progress of the Race, not merely to gain further knowledge himself,

but also to reap what he has sown in his past incarnations, to work out his Karma. He must play his part and contribute to the progress or retardation of the Race from beginning to end of the Cycle; he must work out, not merely his own salvation, but also that of the Race."

Matter and its attributes constitute the middle term in a series of which the beginning and the ending are spirit. The world of ultimate effects, like that of ultimate causes, is spiritual, and no finality can belong to the plane of their middle term, this being a plane only of transition. The Absolute is pure abstract thought. On

manifestation, it is projected into nature — becoming molecular in time and space. It returns from this condition of self-externalization and self-alienation back into itself to become again subjective, but also self-cognizant. Such is, under manifestation, the process of universals; and such is, also, the process of particulars, which are the product of universals. Man, as the microcosm, must imitate and identify himself with the macrocosm, and subjectivize, or spiritualize, his experience before he can relate it to that ultimate principle of himself which constitutes the Ego, or Selfhood.

## 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 is the Sanskrit term, as used in *The Secret Doctrine*, for "Over-Soul" and mentioned in the third Fundamental Proposition: "The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul." (S.D. I, 17).

*Answer.* First, consideration should be given to the dictionary definition of the Over-Soul: The spiritual element of the universe which is infinite and from which finite souls draw their being and support; a term used by Emerson for a philosophical conception of the Deity, similar to what is known in theology as the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit — which is the Divine Spirit — the third person in the Holy Trinity; the Comforter of souls.

The Sanskrit term was given in the clarification of Over-Soul by the term Universal World-Soul in this passage:

"Cosmic Ideation, MAHAT or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul;

the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called MAHA-BUDDHI." (S.D. I, 16; I, 82 6-vol. ed.; I, 44 3rd ed.)

Then clarification of *Mahat* is presented in this citation:

"UNIVERSAL SOUL is not the inert Cause of Creation or (Para) Brahma, but simply that which we call the sixth principle of intellectual Kosmos, on the manifested plane of being. It is Mahat or Mahabuddhi, the great Soul, the vehicle of Spirit, the first primeval reflection of the formless CAUSE, AND THAT WHICH IS EVEN BEYOND SPIRIT." (S.D. I, 420; II, 138 6-vol. ed.; I, 452 3rd ed.)

Also the use of the word *Soul* is thus clarified:

"In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (divine Soul) can have an in-

dependent (conscious) existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth principle — or the *OVER-SOUL* — has passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara.” (S.D. I, 17; I, 82 6-vol. ed.; I, 45 3rd ed.)

Question. Is not *Mahat* associated with *Pradhana* in *The Secret Doctrine*?

Answer. It is so stated, in this manner:

“*MAHAT* is the first product of *Pradhana*, or *Akasa*, and *Mahat* — Universal intelligence ‘whose characteristic property is *Buddhi* — is no other than the *Logos*, for he is called ‘*Eswara*’ *Brahma*.”

*Ishvara* signifies the Supreme Being, and *Pradhana* is equivalent to *Mulaprakriti* and the quotation continues:

“He is, in short, the ‘Creator’ or the divine mind in creative operation, ‘the cause of all things’. He is the ‘first-born’ of whom the Puranas tell us that ‘*Mahat* and matter are the inner and outer boundaries of the Universe’, (S.D. I, 256-7; I, 300-1 6-vol. ed.; I, 276-7 3rd ed.)

Here is the explanation of *Pradhana*:

“Now, what is *Pradhana*, if it is not *Mulaprakriti*, the root of all, in another aspect? For *Pradhana*, though said further on to merge into the Deity as everything else does, in order to leave the *ONE* absolute during the *Pralaya*, yet is held as infinite and immortal . . . Hence *Pradhana* even in the Puranas is an aspect of *Parabrahmam*, not an evolution, and must be the same as the Vedantic *Mulaprakriti*.

“*Akasa*, then, is *Pradhana* in another form, and as such cannot be Ether, the ever-invisible agent, courted even by physical Science. Nor is it Astral Light.” (S.D. I, 256; I, 300 6-vol. ed.; I, 276 3rd ed.)

Here is another reference to both *Pradhana* and *Mahat*.

Although brief it is precise.

“*Mulaprakriti* is the same as *Akasha* (seven degrees). *Mahat* is the positive aspect of *Akasha*, and is the *Manas* of the Kosmic Body. *Mahat* is to *Akasha* as *Manas* is to *Buddhi*, and *Pradhana* is but another name for *Mulaprakriti*.” (S.D. V, 519).

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