



THE THEOSOPHIST

ADYAR

MARCH 1945

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is a world-wide international organization formed at New York on 17 November 1875, and incorporated later in India with its Headquarters at Adyar, Madras.

It is an unsectarian body of seekers after Truth promoting Brotherhood and striving to serve humanity. Its three declared Objects are :

First—To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

Second—To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.

Third—To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

The Theosophical Society is composed of men and women who are united by their approval of the above Objects, by their determination to promote Brotherhood, to remove religious, racial and other antagonisms, and who wish to draw together all persons of goodwill whatsoever their opinions.

Their bond of union is a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection; by service, by purity of life, and by devotion to high ideals. They hold that Truth should be striven for, not imposed by authority as a dogma. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or of intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They see every Religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and demonstrates the inviolable nature of the laws which govern its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself, and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the

scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence as, in their original purity, they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition. The Society claims no monopoly of Theosophy, as the Divine Wisdom cannot be limited; but its Fellows seek to understand it in ever-increasing measure. All in sympathy with the Objects of The Theosophical Society are welcomed as members, and it rests with the member to become a true Theosophist.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

As The Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the civilized world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of The Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher nor writer, from H. P. Blavatsky downwards, has any authority to impose his teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to attach himself to any teacher or to any school of thought which he may choose, but has no right to force his choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office, nor any voter, can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion he may hold, or because of membership in any school of thought to which he may belong. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of The Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of The Society, and also fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.



ON THE WATCH-TOWER

BY THE EDITOR

IMPORTANT: These Notes represent the personal views of the writer, and in no case must be taken as expressing the official attitude of The Theosophical Society, or the opinions of the membership generally. "The Theosophist" is the personal organ of the President, and has no official status whatever, save in so far as it may from time to time be used as a medium for the publication of official notifications. Each article, therefore, is also personal to the writer.

IT APPERTAINS TO THE PRESIDENT

IN this Watch-Tower I wish to continue the theme of the Watch-Tower of August, 1944, for I feel I must decide where I am, whither I am going, not for myself, but as President for the time being of The Theosophical Society.

As the world changes and passes over from an old incarnation into a new, I must try to see clearly the effect of the change, of the reincarnation, upon a Society the primary object of which is the establishment of yet another nucleus among the existing nuclei of Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, rightly or wrongly restricting the pursuit of Universal Brotherhood within the narrow frontiers of the human kingdom. I must also try to see clearly the effect of the change upon the life of The Society which is Theosophy.

THE FIRST OBJECT

I feel clear that in its essence and in its vital presentation Theosophy must more than ever reveal the truth that uniting all differences, of whatever nature these may

be, and in whatever field, is the fact of Universal Brotherhood which no flouting, no ignoring, no denial, can ever affect.

Universal Brotherhood is a law of nature, and The Theosophical Society seeks to honour it by active observance.

But just as nature simplifies, so does man complicate, and from the very beginning we have become so much absorbed in the intricate machinery of Brotherhood that there has been a tendency to lose sight of the simple and practical Brotherhood to the spread and practice of which we all are dedicated.

It is the old story of the mind usurping the throne of the heart, and the position has been made worse by the prominence given to various interpretations of Theosophy and Brotherhood which once we mis-named as subsidiary activities.

ALLIED ACTIVITIES

Frankly, I am afraid of every activity which is more or less associated with Theosophy and The Theosophical Society, not that I would call any one of them anti-Theosophical, but that I fear lest the high purpose of Theosophy and The Theosophical

Society be forgotten in enthusiasm for some special revelation of Theosophy which certain members may be sure they have discovered.

I find that my difference with the iconoclasts lies in the fact that while they are violent against any activity which does not conform to their own standards of Theosophical orthodoxy, personally I welcome all activities which seek to express the universality of Theosophy and the all-inclusiveness of The Theosophical Society. But I cannot allow any single one of them to declare that it constitutes the essence of Theosophy and the *raison d'être* of The Theosophical Society.

And because of this I feel assured that while under certain conditions I have the right to belong to any one or more of them that appeals to me, my supreme allegiance as President is due to such understanding as I may be able to reach of those essential principles which disclose most clearly the fact of Universal Brotherhood.

So much so that my membership of any individual activity must be more nominal than in the slightest degree absorbed, and I must on no account be a member of any activity which in any way at any time subordinates me to some authority in the activity who has the right to say to me: "Do what I tell you, or go out."

Remember that I am writing in my capacity as President of The Theosophical Society. But I am suggesting that some individual private members may have the same duty. I am sure some have, and I am equally sure that if any one of them became President of The Theosophical Society he would have to take great care to uphold the dignity and independence of his exalted office amidst all the many interpretations and as far as possible to cause it to be an ever-increasing channel of the white Light of Theosophy in its garb as Universal Brotherhood: and of the nature of the white

Light and its garb he must be the best judge he can.

THE PRESIDENTIAL WAY

Let me give my blessing to all interpretations of Theosophy and to all activities of members of The Theosophical Society which are demonstrably sincere and unalloyedly brotherly, but I must without fear or favour pursue my Presidential way independently of them all, be it or not the way of my predecessor Presidents. *Autres temps, autres mœurs.*

Today that way is crystal clear to me. It consists in the constant endeavour to place before those with whom I come into contact the most compelling evidence possible of their family and intimate ties with those around them. Wherever these seem to be barriers I must be at pains to try to show that they do not really exist. I must try to blunt the sharpness of all differences and to show that differences need never cause inseparable barriers but rather create bridges of mutual respect—"together even though differently."

We are less concerned with the "secret doctrine" of Theosophy and far more with its simple, open, direct and natural appeal to all to discover within themselves their link of brotherhood with all around them.

What do we understand our knowledge of Theosophy to tell us about the essential unity of races, of nations, of faiths? What of this knowledge can we pass on in order to drive home the fact that while differences may be on the surface, underneath is the oneness of life?

But what I can do largely depends upon what I am. I can achieve miracles if I am a living Theosophist, for only the life ever speaks so as to carry conviction. The President should be the greatest living Theosophist in the outer world, and henceforth he must be chosen for this beautiful

quality rather than for any other. How he lives matters infinitely more than how he happens to be labelled, or what he happens to believe.

We must not look to see whether or not he is wearing the insignia and labels of this, that, or the other movement. It matters little if he is or is not a member of the Esoteric School of Theosophy, of the Liberal Catholic Church, or of the Co-Freemasonic order, or of any other subsidiary activity. What matters is that he should be a brotherly man towards all, without prejudices, an ardent student of Theosophy in the cause of Brotherhood, a devoted and loyal member of The Theosophical Society—denunciatory of none, appreciative of all, but unyielding in what he is sure is basic Theosophy. This understood, he will bless all the ardent convictions and understandings of his brethren, be they congenial or not to his own personal predilections.

A BROTHERLY THEOSOPHIST

For my own part, I want to try to learn to be a brotherly Theosophist, careful to have a sincere brotherliness, comradeship, friendship, towards those within The Society and outside from whom I may profoundly disagree, sedulously increasing the temperature of Brotherhood in all possible directions, maintaining a sincere regard for those who may think it their duty to damn me for my disloyalty—to use no stronger word—towards The Society and its traditions.

I am tired of controversy within The Society and more than apprehensive of its fissiparous tendencies. Our fiery principle of Brotherhood must be more precious to us than any differences which may have been separating us. I am tired of the controversy ranging about W. Q. Judge. He had his own greatness, and I want to rest content with that. I am tired of the controversy

about what is called "fraternization." We must be friendly with all, though surely we do not want so to degrade friendship that we make it a matter of policy and of demonstration against those who are unable to show their friendship in the way in which we think proper to show it. Fussy, political friendship will not get us anywhere, I fear. But if some there are who desire to engage in fraternization, well and good. Fraternization is, of course, all to the good, and may do immense good provided it produces a garden and not a fortress.

I am tired of the controversy about Adyar. The only way to reform Adyar is not by constantly abusing it but by being friendly to it and in a spirit of friendship and of a recognition of Adyar as the Headquarters of our Society throughout the world. Who is there who will not yield to the friendship of one who obviously *is* friendly even though he may feel constrained to express vehement disapproval when occasion demands?

I am tired of the constant erection of authority to condemn this, that, and the other—the authority of the Masters (who dare say what would be the nature and form of Their authority today?), the authority of H.P.B., the authority of tradition, the authority of books so much in danger of becoming Scriptures.

Let there be but one authority current in our midst—the authority of Universal Brotherhood, of which every individual member is a natural custodian. For each let there be other authorities, but under no circumstances let The Society be committed to any one of them. Let them be cherished by groups and by individuals, but there is only one authority before which we all are in duty bound to bow—the authority of that Universal Brotherhood to which we pledged ourselves on becoming members of The Theosophical Society.

ABOUT THE PAST

I am prepared to admit that very much which happened in the earlier years happened rightly. I do not quarrel with any of it. But I say that today The Society needs a wider outlook. It may have been very right for my beloved leader and late President to have told those joining The Theosophical Society that after two years or so of active service they might aspire to membership of the Esoteric School. I do not think it would be right to say so today, and I carefully refrain from so saying.

It may have been very right to proclaim the coming of a great World Teacher, and there may well be those today who feel it their duty and mission so to proclaim. Let the thought, the hope, the yearning, go forth. But it is the brotherly spirit manifest in each one of us that is of supreme significance, and this spirit must come from within, even though encouraged from without. A great World Teacher can only come to intensify the spirit of brotherhood throughout the world.

SANCTUARIES OF FREEDOM

We must keep our heads and our hearts for the ardent pursuit of the First-Object of The Society, to which the pursuit of the Second and Third Objects is subsidiary. We must bid Godspeed to every movement designed by members to such pursuit, as I am sure every movement is, be it or be it not congenial to us personally. The pursuit of Brotherhood, while the purpose of the whole Society, is the precious freedom of every individual member. It is not in the guardianship of a few, nor is its standard here, there, or elsewhere. The heart of every member is its sanctuary, and woe to him who would desecrate it.

The President must ever be the guardian of this sanctuary even though he may have a sanctuary of his own which he must also

guard. Let him beware, let every member beware, of imposing his own individual sanctuary upon others as if it were the *sanctum sanctorum* of all sanctuaries.

With our 30,000 members we should have 30,000 sanctuaries—a great galaxy of temples forming a great Temple of Universal Brotherhood, kaleidoscopically shining with all the colours of that glorious rainbow whereby the white Light of Life reveals itself to the eyes of all and of each.

GUARDIAN OF ALL SANCTUARIES

I wonder if I shall be misunderstood if I say that the President must be without a sanctuary even though he must have his own. On becoming President all sanctuaries become his. He dwells in them all, for he is the appointed Guardian of all Sanctuaries of the Universal Brotherhood, both within and, I would say, without The Society.

He must be able to worship in every sanctuary, but be unrestricted by the rules and regulations of any of them save in so far as these do not affect his freedom to be in any sanctuary.

He may be a member of the Esoteric School. Still more is he President of The Theosophical Society. He cannot have obligations which in any way narrow the scope of his Presidentship and its dominance over all sanctuaries.

He may be an officer of the Liberal Catholic Church or of the Bhārata Samāj. Still more is he President of The Theosophical Society.

He may be an officer of Co-Freemasonry. Still more is he President of The Theosophical Society.

Let him not dare to colour this greatest office with the hue of any other.

I sometimes wonder if, on becoming President, he ought not to shed all other offices. How many there will be to say to me—I told you so!

The Presidentship is itself a sanctuary. Shall he worship in any other since this sanctuary is the heart of all sanctuaries?

INNER AFFILIATIONS

Having said all this I must also say that each President so far has had his contacts with Those who in 1875 revealed Theosophy and The Theosophical Society to the world, and among the Presidents I must somehow or other include H.P.B., the *fons et origo* of all the outer work.

To each President has been given a special duty, as is fairly obvious. He has had as part of his Instrument of Instructions the obligation to fulfil this duty, for while The Society works in the outer world it has its inner affiliations, without the maintenance of which it would have no real life. I have my duty, and I try to perform it as best I can, and let me say at once that its due performance only adds to the forces at work for the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. It could not, of course, be otherwise.

No President can possibly ignore his inner obligations so long as The Society has inner affiliations. But if ever The Society had the terrible misfortune to lose these, a different type of President would

suffice to conduct the affairs of a Society exclusively belonging to the outer world.

At present, as every President has known, these inner affiliations exist, and every President must have the courage to follow their guidance, whatever may be said by those who like to believe that these affiliations stopped short with H. P. B. and H. S. O.

They in no way conflict with the essential democracy of The Society nor with the perfect freedom of every individual member to interpret in his own way his membership of The Society and his understanding of Theosophy.

But the President must heed Their beneficent advice, and there can be no intermediary between himself and Those who gave it. If he cannot heed the advice which is supremely in the interest of Theosophy, The Society and its membership, then he had better cease to be President, for the sake of all three.

I fear I shall not at all be understood in all this, for only a President can enter into its significance. But I owe frankness to my brethren who have done me the honour of conferring upon me a very high and precious office.

George S. Arundale

And so let us walk together as far as we agree; but remain friendly always, whenever we disagree. Let us realize that in the individual thought lies the salvation of the world in the future, and let us show that, in The Theosophical Society, we can differ in opinion and remain one in heart and aim, working for that great Humanity of whom the Elder Brothers are the Guardians, the Occult Hierarchy the Guide.

ANNIE BESANT

THE MAHACHOHAN'S LETTER, 1881

[This Letter is here reprinted at the suggestion of a friend who writes : " It is surely one of our Society's supreme literary treasures, and it is difficult to understand why it is not made more easily accessible to our members. As far as I can ascertain it is obtainable only in the book, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, the result being that a considerable number of our members have not even heard of its existence."]¹

NOTE

This Letter, known as the Letter of the Mahachohan, was not actually written by Him. In a letter to Mr. Sinnett referring to it, the Master K. H. says as follows :

"An abridged version of the view of the Chohan on the T. S. from his own words as given last night."

The Mahachohan is the great Adept "to whose insight the future lies like an open page." Written in 1881.

THE LETTER

THE doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must—supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give—become ultimately triumphant as every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually, enforcing its theories—unimpeachable facts for those who know—with direct inferences deduced from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science. That is the reason why Colonel H.S.O., who works but to revive Buddhism, may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of Theosophy far more than any other man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism, stripped of its superstitions, is eternal truth, and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theos-Sophia, Divine Wisdom, which is a synonym of Truth. For our doctrines to

¹ The Letter is being printed also separately in booklet-form by T.P.H., Adyar.

practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to popularise a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom)—which is after all only an exalted and glorious *selfishness*—but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true *Theosophist*.

The intellectual portions of mankind seem to be fast drifting into two classes, the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of their intellect, its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition—a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle ; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of *submitting* to annihilation pure and simple in cases of failure, to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution. Those "intellectual classes," reacting upon the ignorant masses which they attract, and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to follow, degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide. Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the white dove of truth has hardly room where to rest her weary unwelcome foot.

It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena. The sons of Theosophists are more likely to become in their turn Theosophists than anything else. No messenger of truth, no prophet, has ever achieved during his lifetime a complete triumph—even Buddha. The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object, a greater, wiser and specially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, of the Alpha and the Omega of society, was determined upon. The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations—to call the poor despised “nigger” brother. This prospect may not smile to all but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle.

In view of the ever-increasing triumph and at the same time misuse of free-thought and *liberty* (the universal reign of Satan, Eliphaz Levi would have called it), how is the combative *natural* instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard-of cruelties and enormities, tyranny, injustice, etc., if not through the soothing influence of a brotherhood, and of the practical application of Buddha's esoteric doctrines?

For as everyone knows, total emancipation from authority of the one all-pervading power or law called God by the priest—Buddha, Divine Wisdom and enlightenment or Theosophy, by the philosophers of all ages—means also the emancipation from that of human law. Once unfettered and delivered from their dead-weight of dogmatic interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different names for one and the same royal highway to final bliss—NIRVANA.

Mystical Christianity, that is to say that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through our own seventh principle—this liberated Para-Atma (Augoeides) called by some Christ, by others Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit—will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent *self*, to recognise our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish, we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognise the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddha, the Christ or God of every preacher. This is why even exoteric Buddhism is the surest path to lead men towards the one esoteric truth.

As we find the world now, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Pagan, justice is disregarded and honour and mercy both flung to the winds. In a word, how—seeing that the main objects of the T.S. are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally—are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with that curse known as the “struggle for life,” which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows and all crimes? Why has that struggle become the almost universal scheme of the universe? We answer, because no religion, with the exception of Buddhism, has hitherto taught a practical contempt for the earthly life, while each of them, always with that one solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that struggle for life raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in the Pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. (In China during famine and where the masses are most ignorant of their own or any religion, it was remarked that those mothers who devoured

their children belonged to localities where there were the most Christian missionaries to be found: where there were none, and the Bonzes alone had the field, the population died with the utmost indifference.) Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and delusion, that it is but our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge, our saviour in future lives, and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity. There are no penitentiaries in Buddhist lands, and crime is nearly unknown among the Buddhist Tibetans. (The above is not addressed to you, *i.e.*, A.P.S., and has naught to do with the work of the Simla Eclectic Society; it is meant only as an answer to the erroneous impression in Mr. Hume's mind of the "Ceylon work" as no *Theosophy*.)

The world in general, and Christendom especially, left for 2,000 years to the régime of a personal God, as well as its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure. If the Theosophists say: "We have nothing to do with all this; the lower classes and inferior races (those of India, for example, in the conception of the British) cannot concern us and must manage as they can"—what becomes of our fine professions of benevolence, philanthropy, reform, etc.? Are these professions a mockery? And if a mockery, can ours be the true path? Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of bell-ringing, cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone and astral body formations, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and despised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves and their hereafter the best they know how? Never! Rather perish the T.S. with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no

better than an academy of magic and a hall of occultism. That we—the devoted followers of the spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha—should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Among the few glimpses obtained by Europeans of Tibet and its mystical hierarchy of "perfect Lamas," there is one which was correctly understood and described: "the incarnations of the Bodhisattva, Padma Pani, or Avalokitesvara and of Tsong-ka-pa and that of Amitabha, relinquished at their death the attainment of Buddhahood—*i.e.*, the *summum bonum* of bliss and of individual personal felicity—that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind" (R.D.).¹ In other words, that they might again and again be subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh and all the sorrows of life, provided that by such a self-sacrifice, repeated throughout long and dreary centuries, they might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many races of mankind. And it is we, the humble disciples of these perfect Lamas, who are expected to allow the T. S. to drop its noblest title, that of Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a simple school of psychology! No, no, good brothers; you have been labouring under the mistake too long already. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to help it effectually by

¹ Rhys Davids.

correcting the erroneous opinions of the outsiders if not by actually himself propagating this idea. Oh! for the noble and unselfish man to help us effectively in India in that divine task. All our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay him.

Having explained our views and aspirations, I have but a few words more to add. To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilised* races less than any other, have ever

possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles—right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism—are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were; but to these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines prove their competence to offer it, the world will be the first one to confess that must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the truth.

INDIA, THE WISDOM-LAND

BY EDWARD CARPENTER

Here also in India—wonderful, hidden—over thousands of miles,
 Through thousands of miles of coconut groves, by the winding banks of immense
 rivers, over interminable areas of rice-fields,
 On the great Ghauts and Himalayas, through vast jungles tenanted by wild beasts,
 Under the cloudless glorious sky—the sun terrible in strength and beauty—the moon
 so keen and clear among the tree-tops,
 In vast and populous cities, behind colours and creeds and sects and races and families,
 Behind the interminable close-fitting layers of caste and custom,
 Here also, hidden away, the secret, the divine knowledge.
 Ages back, thousands of years lost in the dim past,
 A race of seers over the northern mountains, with flocks and herds,
 Into India, the Wisdom-land, descended;
 The old men leading—not belated in the rear—
 Eagle-eyed, gracious-eyed old men, with calm faces, resolute calm mouths,
 Active, using their bodies with perfect command and power—retaining them to pro-
 longed age, or laying them down in death at will.
 These men, retiring, rapt—also at will—in the vast open under the sun or stars,
 Having circled and laid aside desire, having lifted and removed from themselves the
 clinging veils of thought and oblivion,
 Saw, and became what they saw, the imperishable universe.
 Within them, sun and moon and stars, within them past and future,
 Interiors of objects and of thoughts revealed—one with all being—
 Life past, death past—the calm and boundless sea
 Of deep, of changeless incommunicable Joy.
 And now today, under the close-fitting layers of caste and custom, hidden away,
 The same seers, the same knowledge.
 All these thousands of years the long tradition kept intact,
 Handed down, the sacred lore, from one to another, carefully guarded;
 Beneath the outer conventional shows, beneath all the bonds of creed and race,
 gliding like a stream which nothing can detain,
 Dissolving in its own good time all bonds, all creeds,
 The soul's true being—the cosmic vast emancipated life—Freedom, Equality—
 The precious semen of Democracy.

—From *Towards Democracy*

THE RESURRECTION BEGINS!

[Under the above title I propose to publish from time to time extracts from correspondence received from our members within the heretofore stricken inaccessible areas of Theosophical activity, but now released from their terrible crucifixion. I shall be very glad to receive contributions for insertion from members who receive communications from those now able to contact us. The beginning of the new Beginning is at last in sight, and greatly have we cause to rejoice not only at the vast opportunities opening out before us, but at the steadfastness of those who have kept our Theosophical Flag flying amidst all assault and adversity.—G.S.A.]

I. THE FIRST LETTER FROM PARIS

Dated 22 Sept. 1944

We have just emerged from these four long years of national disaster and repression, and are rejoicing with all those who are winning back their freedom after appalling suffering and hardships. May the last struggle be short. From time to time news of Adyar filtered through, but many months have elapsed, bridged nevertheless by the magic of daily thoughts. Our dear mother Zelma Blech passed over on January 23rd of this year. We are hoping to get our Headquarters back soon. Our General Secretary is expected back in Paris as soon as the trains run again. There will be much to do to gather our family together again. Two-thirds of the precious library were taken, only one-third was saved with difficulty. I think people in general have learnt detachment and many other things as well for which one may well be thankful. We have had news of V. . . "Le Bois des Montiers" and "Les Communes" are standing though empty.

No news yet from England. We are so anxious to hear about C. J. and J. I. W.

For the last two years I have been working at the translation of *The Lotus Fire*. It has been a light in our darkness. We all join in sending you our love and warmest affection. —P. M.

II. LONDON, 28 SEPT. 1944

The first news of a continental member is to hand. Jaap van Dissel writing a few days ago from an unnamed town, but obviously Brussels, says:

"I am getting on well and just dropping you a line in case I am not able to write to you again before some time. These are days of high tension, now the country is being liberated, I hope without too much fighting.

"I hope that my family is coming out well of the difficult situation in which they are at present, and to be reunited before long.

"I met Serge a few times. She is full of energy and looks the same. Her health, however, is not too good and her financial position extremely difficult. She wants to stay where she is for the work, but will need looking after, as you are able and permitted to do so. I also met Polak and Nyssens, who looked rather well when I saw him. He looks a little older. His health has ups and downs and he is not very strong though. One of Serge's family had last year two of her sons shot, who were caught in the resistance Movement. She only learnt three weeks ago. I hope that G. S. A. will write to her later personally.

"That is all for the present. I hope to hear that you are all very well. Please inform C. J. and give my kind regards to Arnold and his family and also Mrs. English.

"You will hear from Serge and others when they are allowed to communicate."

—

Theo von Lilienfeld writes that he is going to work for the Swedish Government in Rehabilitation and Repatriation work, headquarters in Paris. He will resign his General Secretary's work, but do all he can for our members wherever he is. —A. G.

III. PARIS, 12 NOV. 1944

Translated from French

I have had a visit from M. Watson coming from London, who has told me that you were all a little anxious regarding us. For a month we have had access to a part of our buildings (Headquarters), the flat should be free by the 20th of November. Unfortunately the rest is still encumbered (filled up) with documents of the search (of) four years ago. The Gestapo was in the office. At last I hope that we shall be able to clean away the noxious emanations. The office is not wrecked. They have respected, in the main, our large blue hall; it has been used only as a store-room for furniture. Now it is free and I have the key.

We shall have on the 3rd of December, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a public lecture—the opening lecture by Professor Marcault, who does not regard himself as being the General Secretary. He is totally deaf. Dr. Chouin will help at the lecture. After four years of waiting we are once more in the Square.

I was at the Library and I recalled the beautiful film that you had given about Adyar. We have been united by thought during this absence of four years. In spite of all we have served as we have been able. Receive, Monsieur General Secretary, [Mr. Coats], my sympathetic and fraternal greetings. Have you any news of Bishop Wedgwood? —E. M.

IV. WHEATON, 4 DEC. 1944

I have just heard of Prof. Emile Marcault through a son-in-law resident in New York. The Professor's last letter was dated 16 May 1944 and represented the first direct news of him since 1941.

He stated in his letter that he had had a very difficult time, especially in the winter of 1941 and '42 and at one time had a period of total deafness. At the time of his writing he said that he was doing much better and that he has never stopped working.

Some time ago we attempted to arrange his transfer to the United States. He does not mention any likelihood of his coming here but requested that all those who attempted to ar-

range his coming in 1941 recognize his profound thanks for their thoughtfulness. He did not give any address in France but mentioned one in Geneva. His son-in-law, however, feels that since the liberation of France he can probably be reached directly.

I am sure you will be glad to know that our Brother Marcault is still well and in improving conditions. —S. A. C.

V

Just a note to tell you that I saw Jaap, twice. It was nice to have a talk with him. We are all right, G. Polak, myself and the rest, after that heavy storm. Thank God we breathe again and are happy to welcome, as best we can, our allied friends. Will write later on. This is but a short note to renew the contact which, innerly, never was broken. . . . We work again and are full of fire. —S. B.

[Our link with Paris grows stronger, though there are some uncertainties, owing to Marcault's disabilities. He is completely deaf, owing to hardships in concentration camp. We do not know if he wishes to act as General Secretary or not. Work there has begun as from December 5th, when a lecture was held at Square Rapp, given by Prof. Marcault.—A. G.]

VI. PARIS, 8 NOV. 1944

Lodge Volonté of Paris sends you, Mr. President, fraternal greetings for the Convention at Adyar. With all our hearts we are one with you in the common work. For the last month we have had access to the Square and we are trying to retrieve what remains to us of the books (by sales?) alas very little. Mr. Marcault does not resemble himself. He is completely deaf and Cecile is ill in Holland. Give us your news, also of Mr. Jinarājādāsa.

For the last month I have been going to the Square every day while waiting to reintegrate my little house. But in spite of my 75 years I am full of courage and strong to serve our Elders. What strength that has given during these four years of suffering—to have an ideal, how good that was!

Assuring you of my devotion to the cause which is so dear to me, Very sincerely,

—E. MOREL

NOTES ON THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS

BY JEAN DELAIRE

ALTHOUGH the origin of the Gospels is a subject of paramount importance to the world of religion as well as to that of scholarship, two articles dealing with that question, recently published in *The Hibbert Journal* above the signature of H. S. Shelton, do not seem to have received all the attention they deserve: for while other exegesists, notably Professor Wisner Bacon, of Yale University, have developed the theme that both Matthew and Mark, and to a lesser degree, Luke, are the product of fusion between two earlier documents, plus "floating traditions," Dr. Shelton hazards the opinion that all four of our Gospels are the result of a deliberate, and in a sense official, effort—made as late as the middle of the second century, and in Alexandria—to synchronize all known Gospels or fragments of Gospels existing at the time, even including in its text some of the more ancient Apocrypha. In the author's words: "Previous to the official standardization, there were no 'Gospels,' but merely variations of 'The Gospel'."

What was this Gospel? This is the question of questions in the domain of Exegesis. Was it those LOGIA or *Sayings of Jesus* mentioned by Bishop Papias—those precious fragments of the Master's teaching later brought together and immortalized in the Sermon on the Mount? Was it those MEMORABILIA or *Memoirs of the Apostles* alluded to by Justin Martyr as Scriptures publicly read out in the churches of his day? Was it that record of the inner teaching of Jesus later incorporated by the great Gnostic Basilides in the Gospel attributed to him?

Whatever it may have been, there are indications, if not actual proofs, that this First Gospel differed in many ways from our three synoptic records, although it may have resembled the more esoteric passages in the Gospel according to John: for it is highly significant that the earliest Christian manuscript we possess, the

Oxyrhynchus fragments, should be of a more mystical character than any of our later Scriptures, the Fourth Gospel alone excepted. To give an example:

"In the first papyrus we read: JESUS SAITH: If ye fast not from the world ye shall not find the kingdom of God, and if ye keep not the Sabbath for the whole week, ye shall not see the Father" (VII).

"The Kingdom is within you: and whosoever knoweth himself shall find it . . . Ye shall know yourselves that ye are sons of the Father . . . Ye shall know yourselves that ye are the city of God" (II).

"Wheresoever there are two, they are not without God: and where there is one alone I say I am with him. Lift up the stone and there shalt thou find me: cleave the wood, and I am there" (X).

Nowhere in the synoptic Gospels is divine immanence so clearly stated, and nowhere, unless in the *Last Discourse* in John's Gospel, does Jesus more definitely speak in the name and with the authority of the indwelling God.

Dr. Shelton, however, does not attempt to define, even tentatively, the possible nature of this First Gospel: but for the student of Theosophy it is specially interesting to compare his theory with the statement made some twenty years ago by Bishop Leadbeater in his book, *The Inner Life*, in the chapter entitled "Christianity."

"The four Gospels," he tells us, "are all founded upon a much shorter document written in Hebrew by a monk named Matthaëus, who lived in a monastery in a desert to the South of Palestine . . ."

Here the student of Gospel origins will at once be arrested by the name of Matthaëus, a name which, under various permutations such as Mattai (in the Talmud), Zaccheus, Matthew Levi and others, appears and reappears in the

history of early Christianity. The persistence of that name, nearly always in connection with the writing of a Gospel, in Hebrew, is certainly remarkable, especially when we remember that, according to Hippolytus, it was from "Matthias" that Basilides received some of the inner teaching given by Jesus to His tried and tested disciples.

This fact alone adds considerable interest to Bishop Leadbeater's statement. He continues: "He (Matthaeus) seems to have conceived the idea of casting some of the great facts of initiation into a narrative form, and mingling with it some points about the life of the real Jesus who was born 105 B.C., and some from the life of a quite obscure fanatical preacher who had been condemned and executed in Jerusalem about A.D. 30. He sent this document to a great friend of his who was the chief abbot of a huge monastery at Alexandria, and suggested to him that he, or some of his assistants, might perhaps recast it, and issue it in the Greek language. The Alexandrian abbot seems to have employed a number of his young monks upon the work, allowing each of them to try the task for himself, and to treat it in his own way. A number of documents of very varying merit were thus produced, each incorporating in his story more or less of the original manuscript of Matthaeus, but each also adding to it such legends as he happened to know, or as his taste or fancy dictated. Four of these still survive to us, and to them are attached the names of the monks who wrote them. . ."

It is interesting to see from this passage that Bishop Leadbeater, by means of clairvoyant investigation alone—of which more will be said presently—came to the same conclusions arrived at later on by Dr. Shelton in his scholarly researches in New Testament literature. As for the statement by Bishop Leadbeater, that the first Gospel—the Gospel of Dr. Shelton—was written in Hebrew, the Bible student will at once see how much light it throws on what has admittedly been a difficult point of textual criticism, namely, the fact that while several Church Fathers allude to "a Gospel in the Hebrew tongue" (Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome and others), yet modern scholars have long since

agreed that our Gospel according to Matthew, although written in Greek, is certainly not a translation.

Another point of great interest in Dr. Shelton's theory—and a point of special interest to Theosophists—is his inclusion of some of the New Testament Apocrypha in what he believes to have been the text of the original Gospel: for it has long been surmised by some of our students that in a number of these Apocrypha, notably the *Acts of Thomas*, and the *Acts of John*, are to be discovered fragments of that Ancient Wisdom which, for whoso has eyes to see, have been as liberally bestowed upon the early Christian Scriptures as upon the more admittedly esoteric books of Hinduism or of Buddhism. To realize this we have but to remember the *Hymn of the Soul* (sometimes called the Hymn of the Robe of Glory) in the *Acts of Thomas*, or the vision of the mystic Cross in the *Acts of John*. In the former we have a deeply esoteric version of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, a version which, in its every detail, reveals the fact that it is the story of the human Soul, its descent from the heights, its wanderings in a far country, its subjection to the king of that country, and forgetfulness of its own divine nature—"I knew no more that I was a King's son, and I became a servant unto their king." But the allegory, unlike the Parable in Luke's Gospel, is based on the three-fold nature of man—Body, Soul and Spirit—as in all the great myths of antiquity it is the Spirit, the divine Self, that seeks and saves the Soul; so here the elder brother is no longer the churlish figure of the Gospel story, the self-righteous youth who resents the welcome given to the Prodigal; but, in the words of the ancient script, "a lad of grace and beauty who came unto me and dwelt with me"; and who eventually leads his younger brother back to the palace of their Father. As for the Vision of the Cross in the *Acts of John*, it is pure mysticism, the mysticism of all ages, all races, all religions, the apprehension of the temporal in terms of the eternal, the transmutation of the human into the divine, the mysticism that sees the Passion of Jesus magnified into the cosmic sacrifice of the eternal Son of God.

Dr. Shelton probably did not look at the problem from this angle, for it does not appear in either of his articles that he interpreted the primitive Gospel in terms of mysticism; but the fact that he believes that Gospel to have included some of the older apocrypha with their many mystical allusions, is—at least for the student of Theosophy—a welcome indication that early Christianity was esoteric Christianity, and that the oldest of our Christian Scriptures probably had as their central theme the divinity of man, a divinity forgotten for a time but recovered by way of Initiation or the second birth.

Thus we find that one of the most recent attempts at Gospel Exegesis arrives, in its main position, at exactly the same results obtained many years ago by Bishop Leadbeater solely by means of clairvoyant investigation, namely, one primitive Gospel giving the various stages of Initiation as they were taught—and lived—by the Master Jesus, a Gospel to which were added many beautiful parables and allegories of the journey of the Soul, the mystic crucifixion, the personified wisdom of God, and many others which came gradually to be either materialized into set doctrines or dismissed as graceful myths or legends.

Not yet does Science admit the possibility of reading past events in the light of the *ākāsha*, or subtler ethers of our planet; yet Psychometry has been seriously studied by many thoughtful

minds of today, and Psychometry is in a sense merely a small-scale reading of the *ākāshic* records. The psychometrist, by handling certain inanimate objects, may, and often does, come into touch with some of the events or incidents connected with it. One of the best-known examples is that of a psychometrist who, on being shown a fragment from an ancient Egyptian monument, gave details of its long past history which were afterwards found to have been perfectly correct.

If every object, animate or inanimate, bears upon it its own history, it seems logical to suppose that the planet itself, our mother Earth, bears in her atmosphere—her aura, let us say—the photographic records of her own past, the past of the many children born of her life, nourished of her substance, the men and women who have toiled and suffered, loved and died upon her breast.

For the average man this must be one of the many closed books of Nature; for the sensitive, the clairvoyant, the book stands open, and he may read therein some fragments, if not more, of the past history of our race. Is it too much to hope that the time may come when the scholar and the psychometrist will work together, together recall the events of long ago, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the emergence of the great religions, the lives of their founders, the origin of their sacred Scriptures, all that has helped to make the world what it is today?

ABOUT A MONASTERY

[From "Study in Sainthood" by Mercedes de Acosta, in *Tomorrow* of May 1942.]

Not far from Assisi, in a remote and inaccessible spot high up in the mountains, stands a monastery. This monastery was built in the fifth century by a secret order of monks who travelled all the way from Tibet; some of their brothers continued to journey to these mountains as late as Francis' lifetime—as late anyway as the end of the twelfth century. Francis died in 1226. It is told in Assisi—even by the Franciscan monks themselves—that Francis often visited this monastery, although he must have kept these visits very secret as little is recorded about them. It is probable that whatever was known about his meetings with these Eastern monks was suppressed by the Church, the Vatican not wishing the credit of Francis' knowledge to be attributed to any influence outside the Christian faith.

After the death of Francis, the Franciscans took over the monastery for their own Order. They remained in it until the seventeenth century, when they abandoned it and left it empty. From this time, it remained deserted until about fifteen years ago. Then it was taken over and restored by a very remarkable woman who dropped her aristocratic family name, and is known simply by the name of Sorella Maria.

SEEKING A WAY TO THE DEVACHANIC PLANE

BY MARIE ROSE

"L'Eternel est écrit dans ce qui dure peu."—V. HUGO (*Les Contemplations*).

I

MOST students of occultism may have had convincing proofs of the astral plane, and perhaps also of the mental. But we rather think that those students who have had consciousness of the higher mental, or Devachanic, plane are only the few, and that the experience has probably been limited to "feeling" the Devachanic Plane; because the sense of touch is the first to develop in the newly born to any state.

But mere "feeling," or "touch," of this high realm does not enable the one who experiences it to get much knowledge about that realm; it brings no information about its place in the order of planes, the conditions to be fulfilled to reach it, the life of its inhabitants. So, it would seem as if in order to know something about the Devachanic Plane one has no choice but to refer to manuals only. This is not altogether satisfactory. For no genuine student is expected to accept what he has not proved true for himself, or about which he has not formed a personal opinion. How, then, can the student chained to the physical plane, arrive at some personal and, to some extent, verified knowledge of the Devachanic Plane?

Prisoners of a resourceful mind often find a way out of prison, generally by stealing a key from the gaoler and then climbing over some high wall. (Prison walls are always high.) We are our own gaolers, and I know of two keys in our possession to unlock the door of our cell. One is in the words of the Apostle: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Romans I, 20). The other is in those of the poet: "The Eternal is written within that which lasts but a little while." As to how to climb over the high wall,

fortunately we possess a ladder the rungs of which are: observation, study, comparison, deduction, imagination, intuition. We may arrive at some results in our study of the Devachanic Plane if:

1. We observe—in the light of occult science—what we can observe of the physical plane and its effects upon us, draw our deductions and our conclusions. Then remembering that the same law rules everywhere and that there is but one scheme of things and but one plan, we must transpose the result of our work two octaves higher up, as it were (using this term of comparison if I may);

2. We study the manuals written by those who possess the knowledge born of experience and vision;

3. We put the result of our deductions and conclusions face to face with what we are told in the manuals about the Devachanic Plane, and make use of what we have of imagination. As the rubbing of two stones against each other produces a spark, so it may happen that by the rubbing against each other of what we have obtained by doing what is said in 1 and 2 above, a flash of intuition will be the result, and by its light we shall see, interiorly, our own picture of the Devachanic Plane.

On the other hand . . . perhaps we shall not. But nevertheless we may rest assured that all the efforts we shall have made will have brought us so many steps nearer to the Devachanic Plane, because it is the law that thinking about a thing is the way to bring it to pass.

II

Having set our ladder to the wall and made sure that it is steady, we now proceed to climb. We begin by establishing this parallel:

The outer physical world is made of earth, water, atmosphere and stratosphere ;

The inner physical world includes etheric, astral, lower mental and higher mental divisions.

From now on we shall take the stratosphere as the correspondence, upon this plane, of the Devachanic Plane. Some might say its "reflection"; others, taking into account the two intermediaries "air" and "water" and the refractions of all rays of light crossing these two elements, might more accurately use the expression: *refracted image*. But let us proceed.

We have proofs that water penetrates earth ; that air penetrates water (for without air the aquatic fauna could not breathe) and therefore penetrates earth. We cannot prove, but assume that the ether penetrates the air, and therefore the water, and therefore the earth.

Remembering that the same law rules everywhere we conclude that the matter of which the inner stratosphere is made must penetrate the lower mental, the astral and the denser planes.

Therefore we are satisfied with the definition given on page 1 of C. W. L.'s *Manual* : The Devachanic Plane "is a realm of nature . . . in which we are living now" ; and we have verified the statement that there is no need to change our position in space to contact the matter of other planes—that we can contact the Devachanic Plane here and now.

To pass from a school to one of a higher order the pupil generally has to face an examination.

Those of our soldiers who wish to qualify for the R.A.F. have to pass an examination and to submit to a medical test. It is certain that giddiness must be conquered and that the heart must be strong because it will in some way do the work of the lungs.

The consciousness of the Devachanic Plane comes within the reach of those who have satisfied their Examiners that they have obliterated pride (that pride which comes before a fall) from their character and exercised their mind-body, and those in whom love and devotion are the inspiration of every thought—for the characteristics of the plane are unselfishness and spirituality.

Our physical plane atmospheric pressure is a pretty heavy thing to counterbalance: 1,033 grammes per square centimetre, I believe.

There is no atmospheric pressure in the stratosphere, (very little) or no weight to counterbalance. Physicists' experiments have long ago proved that the weight of a body is different at the sea-level from what it is on top of a mountain.

Read from the Devachanic Plane this means that there is no Karma to bear while there, and that the burden of one's Karma has to be considerably lightened if one wishes to reach there.

To live in the physical plane stratosphere one has to carry heat and oxygen with oneself ;

" Transposed two octaves higher up " this will read : to live on the Devachanic Plane one has to carry within oneself the fire of inspiration for a work of some sort or the *pure* thoughts we have built up during our life on earth.

So our conclusions on that point will agree with the statement in our *Manual* that the Devachanic Plane is the home of the genius and the pure.

On earth we can hear each other talk and speak because the air vibrations carry the sound of the words we pronounce.

But sound (as we know it) does not travel in a space void of air. If one had to live in the stratosphere one would probably have to invent the production of a more subtle kind of sound that could travel through the pure ether—or cause oneself to be understood of another by light-signals and probably have telepathic communications.

Transposed to Devachanic Plane this means: a language of light and colours, (called the language of the Devas); telepathy and direct knowledge through thought; music of which we have no idea on earth.

Taking a walk on earth one can see very little as to how things in a landscape are fitted into each other.

From a great height one can discover the pattern different things make in a landscape, what this hill or mountain is hiding, where that river is running to.

From the Devachanic Plane the panorama of one's incarnations is unfolded, and one perceives the chain which links them one with the other.

At physical plane level the atmospheric pressure keeps the blood within the arteries and veins.

Where there is no atmospheric pressure or where it is considerably reduced the blood may run out of the body (sometimes through the ears, sometimes through the pores).

From the Devachanic Plane we read this in this way: the blood is the symbol of life. The price to pay for a stay in Devachan is the pouring out of one's life in the service of mankind.

We grow our food on earth, and on the physical plane we submit to the law of gravitation.

The law of gravitation operates in the stratosphere. No one, yet, remains to live in the stratosphere. In peace time men rise up to this high region to make scientific observations and experiments. But they have to come back to earth for the food to sustain their bodies and for working out the results of their experiments, in a way which should be for the benefit and progress of the race.

From Devachan man comes back as long as the desire for sensation attracts him to earth—because incarnation provides experience (food) for the Monad—because to the earth plane he must bring the vision of the things seen in Devachan and do what he can to realize them down here, so as to help to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

The next point of comparison is established from personal experience.

After a stay at an altitude of 3,500 feet I found that coming back to sea-level was a most disagreeable experience. It seemed as if I was heavier. The earth atmosphere was opposing to my limbs a resistance to be compared to the one felt when entering sea water for a bath. I was suffocated by the impurities it contained, and squeezed by it as one might be by a case fitting tightly.

I assume that if one could make a stay of some length in the stratosphere these effects would be experienced even to a much greater degree.

So this makes it easier to imagine something of the sorrow and pain it is said to be the experience of the soul who has come to the end of its stay in Devachan and who is undergoing the descent into incarnation.

Up in the mountains the red corpuscles of our blood increase in number; the blood becomes richer. Some of these corpuscles become lost

again when we return to the plains, but not all of them and therefore the whole organism is benefited. We do not think it would happen exactly like that if one could live in the stratosphere, for there is no oxygen; but we feel that what happens in the blood of those who live at high altitudes symbolizes the increase in intensity and power of the Life of those who can reach

Devachan. In coming back to earth it is reduced and dimmed once again. But nevertheless those who have lived there carry down with them added intellectual powers and greater virtues.

This does not pretend to exhaust the list of correspondences; and when it is no longer possible to establish them one can use one's imagination to picture what one would see of the earth when travelling in the stratosphere: perhaps high mountains only, perhaps the things nearer the earth are not perceived at all. Then it means, as our manuals teach, that in Devachan we forget about the details and conditions of our sojourn on earth and enjoy only the fruit of our highest aspirations.

If this sort of work, of which we have just tried to give an idea, could be completed it might be said to describe the *Path of Knowledge*. We must admit that the war has brought about a considerable amount of travelling in the stratosphere. But "war" is a word that turns our thoughts to all kinds of suffering. In the language of symbols it means

that suffering is by itself a way of reaching Devachan—that the *Path of Suffering and Sacrifice* is the short cut to the Devachanic Plane.

We shall know when we have achieved the climb and when from "above" we can survey the panorama. For the present we are well prepared to believe that Devachan is not reached without a considerable amount of suffering. Poets know much, and the one already quoted has said: "To rise is to immolate oneself. Every summit is cruel." But, at the same time, no mountaineer is ever robbed of his reward, and I believe the experience of reaching the summit of a high mountain to be the greatest this physical plane offers to anyone. To describe it is beyond my power—and if it could be described by anybody it would not be understood by those who have not attempted it. I imagine it must be the nearest approach, upon earth, to that Bliss which is said to be the state of those who reach Devachan, and with this thought I wish to leave the reader.

A SPANISH POEM

As in the pebble sleeps the fiery spark,
The statue in the clay, inert and dark,
So slumbers the divine, O soul! in thee;
But underneath the stroke of pain alone,
Smiting and smiting from the lifeless stone
Leaps forth the lightning flash of deity.

Do not complain, then, of thy destiny,
Since what there is of the divine in thee
Only through it can rise into the light.
Bear, if thou hast the courage, with a smile
The life that the great Artist all the while
Is carving, with his chisel-strokes of sight.

What matter hours that teem with grievous things
If every hour unto thy budding wings
Adds one more feather beautiful and free?
Thou yet shalt see the condor high in air,
Thou yet shalt see the finished sculpture fair,
Thou yet shalt see, O spirit, thou shalt see!

Translated by S. G. INMAN

ALL LIFE IS A UNITY

BY A. E. S. SMYTHE

[*The Canadian Theosophist* has just published a Supplement commemorating the sixty years of service by Mr. Albert E. S. Smythe in Canada in the cause of Theosophy and the Canadian Section. I have already had occasion to congratulate Mr. Smythe, both on the Canadian Section attaining its twenty-fifth anniversary on the 12th of November last, and also on his having been its founding General Secretary and having held that office continuously ever since.

No doubt there have been and are sharp differences of opinion between us, but these have nothing to do with the stalwart devotion he has given to the work, and I take this opportunity of publishing extracts from an article appearing in the Supplement and written by Mr. Smythe at the request of members of the Celebration Committee. I regret that paucity of space prevents me from reprinting the whole article at length.

From a photograph of Mr. Smythe appearing on page 25 of the Supplement it is clear that he has grown old in service. But I am sure the spirit of his work must make him feel young, whatever be his years. It is interesting to see that he has assumed the Olcott-Leadbeater beard tradition.

31 January 1945

—G. S. A.]

MEN and women are not separate beings dependent upon civic or family or other relationships for their association together. Each is a composite being, not merely as regards his physical body but also with respect to such forces as cohesion, gravitation, magnetism, electricity, heat, light, chemical action, and probably others like vitality itself of which we have no direct cognition, though exceptional persons appear to be able to sense some of these forces as normal people sense light and heat and to some degree electricity. These forces originate or manifest through various planes or spheres of ether, there being seven ethers it is said, so that as we have a luminiferous ether and a soniferous ether, we may have to evolve sense-organs, or perhaps whole bodies or vehicles of consciousness, corresponding to these other ethers as our present body corresponds with the vibrational range of the present 92 chemical elements. These ethers may arrange themselves in octaves, like the colours of the rainbow or the notes of our musical scale, for analogy evidently plays a great part in the organization of the Universe.

Our philosophers, our scientific men and their followers have been largely influenced by Archbishop Ussher's calculation that the world was created in the year 4004 B.C. The Archbishop was not struck dumb with wonder about what

God had been doing in the eternity of eternities before this recent date. When questioned the academic people now usually repudiate the 4004 date, but they allow themselves to reduce their figures as far as possible to meet the Archbishop's views.

A little thought will convince the simplest mind that the Universe must always have been a going concern, but ruled by cyclic laws such as are represented by our four seasons, and the cessation of active life represented by the four ice ages the geologists describe.

The idea behind this is that everything that happens to us on a small scale, also happens to the Universe itself on a larger scale, proportional to the immensity of the time periods and the vastness of the organisms affected. We know that the sun is a million times bigger than the earth, but also there are stars like Antares 400,000 times bigger than our sun. These big and bigger worlds carry on processes of life on a scale so far beyond our conceptions of things that it is useless to talk to ordinary people about them. And there is no sense in trying to force knowledge on a mind that either does not wish to consider it, or is not sufficiently developed to entertain it.

This is why very few people are willing to take the trouble to listen to what is called

Theosophy, a science or a religion the ordinary exponents of which too often are led into making a display of the wonderful things they know than of conveying simple knowledge to the humble people who seek it. Most people suffer from the wrong instructions they have had handed down from the dark ages, which means they have been brought up in ignorance.

It is strangely true also, that such people will fight more stubbornly, more desperately, with more viciousness and bitterness in defence of their ignorance, than you might expect them to do in defence of the truth. Hence it is almost useless to try to disseminate truth among people who have not been taught or have not taught themselves to think; or who, by their experience of life have found out for themselves that what they were taught as truth cannot be depended upon when put to the test.

It really does not matter what men believe as long as these beliefs do not interfere with the laws of nature. Religious belief does not affect digestion, nor the circulation of the blood, and we are all subject together to the laws of the Breath, which is the Spirit of Life, so that all men breathe through the same nostril at the same time and all women through the opposite nostril, and whether you are Christian, Buddhist, Jew, Turk or heathen, the change of breath from right to left and from left to right occurs every one hour, fifty-six minutes and eight seconds. That is not a matter of belief. It is a process of Life.

The beating of the hearts of all living creatures is carried on in a similar manner. A scientific man made a great sensation of having taken the heart of a chicken and placing it in a suitable solution, hailed its continuing beating as a triumph of science. But he failed to indicate where the original impulse of the heart-beat came from. All our hearts respond to the central sun heart whether chicken or child, civilized or savage, saint or sinner.

The marvellous truth of the unity of all life is thus demonstrated in our regular breathing and in the systole and diastole of our hearts as the circulation of our blood through our veins and arteries follows the model of the mighty River of Life that flows from the sun and

through the planetary system, reaching the earth in due course and bathing all its creatures in its life-renewing stream. Our Salvation Army friends and others sing and praise the Blood of the Lamb, little recking that the purifying blood flows for the just and the unjust alike and that we are all of one blood in very truth, the blood of the Sun of Righteousness. Let him that is athirst, Come, for this healing stream is without money and without price.

* * *

Into a Universe which is all One Thing we are born separately, and the sense of separation is driven home in us till we come to think of the world as a lot of separate pieces, and are ready to take our cue from the Walrus, and as soon as we can speak, "talk of many things; of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—of cabbages—and kings." So we lose the sense of unity, and lose ourselves in diversity and variety. Naturally we listen to the conversation, or chatter, as the case may be, of our parents, or of our spiritual pastors and masters—it is all the same; they invariably instil us with the ideas of differentiation, diversity and variety.

They rarely, virtually never, point out to us that these separated aspects are not inconsistent with the actual unity of the Universe of which they and we form parts. So that from our infancy we are led to accept and are disciplined in the "heresy of separateness." This is most unfortunate, for we come to think of people, their religions, philosophies, sciences, trades, businesses, professions, economics and properties as things which do not concern us, while all the time we are one with them, blood of their blood, substance of their substance, mind of their mind, and Life of their Life. To reverse all this in our minds is no easy task. Yet if we wish to get at the truth of things we must accomplish this change of attitude.

It is all the more difficult because all organized religions teach their adherents to oppose the other religions as being inferior, and that members of other religions are not fit to associate with their own elect. Out of these assumptions have grown the caste systems of modern society, which must not be confused with the caste observances of the ancients which depended on

"being" not on "seeming," though even these have degenerated in important respects. Religion sets men apart in spite of themselves.

* * *

The tendency of the Great Life is to draw men together in co-operation and harmony, and this makes for a certain amount of unity in practice, reminding one of the quantum theories by which the scientists now seek to explain the mysteries of matter. This tendency towards union manifested itself historically in the nineteenth century to a greater extent than is usually recognized, and in unobserved ways. After England had accomplished the nominal integration of the United Kingdom of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the fusion was admired by other nations and when the desired result was not to be attained by good grace, it was sought by hard knocks. After 1848 Germany grew up out of a combination of four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities, three free towns, and what is called the imperial territory of Alsace-Lorraine. None of these gained by entering the German reich. Prussia saw to it that if there were any advantage in leadership it would not pass from Berlin. Prussia kept them fighting. They had to fight Denmark. They had to fight Austria. They had to fight France, and finally Russia, which has become united by good grace in our own despised day.

The United States of America had to fight a civil war to establish the liberty and freedom which the present war is being fought to establish these principles everywhere. Yet if Abraham Lincoln were to incarnate in a Negro body, he would not be received by certain Americans who are loud in their bragging about the "American way of life."

Nature fights against such ostracism and those who practise it will reap their appointed harvest. That civil war was foreseen long before it began, and there were men raised up in the preceding generation who formulated the principles of honour without which the nation could not be. Whitman, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes in America, and Wordsworth and Tennyson, Browning and Hood

in Britain, upheld the dignity of the soul whatever the colour of the clay that wrapped it round.

* * *

The Fox Sisters had just introduced Spiritualism to America. In 1851 a great World Exhibition had been planned by Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, and to this came one of the Mahatmas, with his message of Brotherhood to the 20-year-old Helena Petrovna Blavatsky who pledged her life and her soul to save humanity. There were other representatives of the White Lodge in the West. In Trinity College, Dublin, it is believed that one of the messengers must have been in attendance about this time, for in the university *Review* there appeared a work of undoubted occult value, *The Dream of Ravan*, the authorship of which remains a mystery till the present day. In the Public Library in Toronto there is a little volume entitled *Theosophy*, dated 1855. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny that followed, opened a new cycle of war, which still continues.

These were accompanied by a Revival movement in religion of the kind that became so popular during the next half-century, hysterical, hypnotic, inspired by fear, and wholly selfish in its personal appeal. In 1859 this delirium affected many communities. The Oxford Movement reached a more intellectual class, but was equally impotent in drawing men and women into a universal brotherhood of Love. The incarnating Ego, dropped into a world of this description, with its physical parents and nurses carrying the whispers of the outer world to its infant ears, must to some degree affect the virgin field of the consciousness that is to be woven or moulded into a personality. How far the inner consciousness of the incarnated Self affects the selection of the influences that go to the weaving or moulding of the personality is an important problem which has been scarcely touched or even recognized by modern psychology.

It is taken for granted that the personality grows out of the physical heredity of the parents and the environment in which it is placed; not even taking adequate measure of the resistance to environing influences in some cases, as well as the acquiescence met in others.

Nature has all sorts of analogies, and in this case of the incarnating Ego beginning to clothe itself with a personality, I am reminded of the caddis worm, the larva of the caddis fly, which finds itself crawling at the bottom of a stream, and to protect itself collects small bits of leaf or wood or small grains of sand or gravel which it fastens to a silken case with which it is covered, making a rough armour for itself in which it matures until it is ready to shed its gross body and escape through the water into the air as a caddis fly. The personality which we form to protect our inner consciousness or individuality, is made up, like the outer case of the caddis, of such opinions, impressions, attachments as are agreeable or useful for our purpose, and this we carry around till death comes and we drop the burden and identify ourselves with the real Self of which we may have lost sight while we toyed on the physical plane with such bits and scraps as caught our fancy.

It is very difficult for the ordinary man to understand that the personality, which is known to his friends and which he usually thinks of as himself, is only a temporary expedient, a mask, as the Latin word *persona* indicates.

The personality is the *psyche* or soul, and Jesus said that if any man sought to save it he would lose it. The Church translates *psyche* as "life" thus misleading its unfortunate members. But Nature is kinder and the real man is not affected by the mistakes he makes in his innocence. How silly would we think the caddis worm to be if it insisted on carrying its little bag of bits of sticks and leaves and grains of sand into the upper air when its sub-aqueous existence was over!

There is a lot of nonsense talked about "the subconscious" and other terms meaning the same thing or something similar. We all practise the use of dual or plural consciousnesses. Browning thanks God he has one to "face the world with, and one to show the woman that he loves." We are sometimes too lazy and sometimes too fearful to explore the depths of these other phases of consciousness which we create for ourselves. In the Vedanta system as given in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 157, Adyar ed. I. 212), the Seven Principles, as they have been called,

are differently sub-divided. They are called *koshas* or sheaths, which is exactly what any body or vehicle is, a protection.

These sheaths are also regarded as *mayavic*, illusory, actually false embodiments of the real Self. They are so false that they generally deceive the entity that creates them, and men and women come to believe that their personalities are their true and only being. The Mind that creates these illusory selves, is the slayer of the Real, and we are told that we must slay the slayer. Nothing but the realization of the true nature of these creations, our own creations, will enable us to escape from them.

One of the defects, if that is not too strong a word, of the new Adyar edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, is the omission of the running headlines on the alternate pages. One of these is "The Net of Destiny." We weave that net out of our own materials and are imprisoned in our own fetters. I have suggested some of the exterior influences which, through the talk and conversation of parents and others, may furnish the child mind with bits and scraps with which to sheathe itself. There is a still larger and more impressive, though in actual values usually a less important set of influences, in the interior family life and domestic relationships in which the child begins to learn of his Not-Self.

* * *

Any person who will take the pains to analyse his own early experiences may discover for himself how he has been led to create his own personality, and free himself from the delusion that he owes it to heredity or environment or anything outside himself. A nation is an aggregation of personalities and they constitute "public opinion" which is the national personality.

"Of Teachers there are many; the Master Soul is One," it is written. So, in the nation, the Master Soul must one day be recognized with its eternal ideals, or the nation must decline and fade away and die as history records of so many. The Egos who are loyal to the ideals that belong to the evolving forces, group themselves, as the Romans did in their best minds, around the ideals of truth, justice, equity, freedom and the intangible standards of honour, to

return in their due cycle as they have done in the commonwealth of the British peoples. So also the great American Republic reproduces for still higher flights of achievement the great cycle of national life that poured through Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh and the Hittite Empire. If anyone asks for Greece, let him behold the resurrection of France at this very hour, with all its beauty, its vivacity, its heroism and its secret altar to the Unknown God. Let us all seek within ourselves for the divine. The altar is only a negligible symbol. The Master Soul is manifest in Life itself at its highest, its holiest, its miracle of Light and Love.

It may be difficult for many in this world war to understand that this view of life is what the great War is being fought for, and that its triumph is not to bring peace on earth and good will to men, but to bring peace to men of goodwill.

The first promptings towards faith in the Inner Light should be gently dealt with, so that this faith may be increased and strengthened in the God within. That is one's own link with the divine heart of the Universe, and no priest and no rite or ceremony is needed to keep that link vital and active but the practice of The Golden Rule. This is what constitutes real religion, and all the rest is "leather and prunella." This is the religion of the Brotherhood of Man, Universal Brotherhood, without regard to race or colour, creed or caste. This it is that distinguishes animal man from spiritual man, or man born from above from man still bound by lust and ill-will, and ignorance or stupidity. A very little of this wisdom, says the *Bhagavad Gita*, delivers one from a great danger.

The element of Fear however binds many people to their ecclesiastical fetters.

* * *

Madame Blavatsky, who gave the western world all it knows reliably of these facts of our inner life, gave us assurance that no effort is wasted. She gives us this message :

"There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind—but yet a road, and it leads to the Heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret

gateway that leads inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come." Those who wish to follow these thoughts should study *The Key to Theosophy*.

I have never asked anyone to join the Theosophical Society. That is a privilege which is rarely appreciated. We do not join the Society for what we can get, but for what we can give.

The growth of the Society has been very slow, the conception of Brotherhood on the part of many active members being rather crude. A nucleus of Brotherhood exists, however, and each new generation may take up the task with a happier view of its method.

When I was a child I was taught to pray to God to make me a good boy. That was not God's job at all but mine. Some Theosophists think the Masters should perform miracles of transformation and enlightenment. That is not the Masters' work, but theirs. When all our members realize this, the Society will make blitz progress.

It has been the hope of many wise scholars and teachers that a national theatre would come into existence in all the great cities of the English-speaking world. Shakespeare's and other great classical plays could be constantly produced to educate the masses and teach them Brotherhood, Toleration and Charity. The Church has lamentably failed in this duty, setting up the selfish idea of saving oneself as the primary object of life. The newspapers are almost equally faulty in their concessions to the most vulgar and even decadent aspects of society. The theatre with its romantic charm and its heroic inspirations could do more than any other human agency to set the world on the high road of Truth and Justice. Failing this, we must each for himself determine what he can do for the national life, and through that what can be done for the world. This is the real religion and will serve the world better than the churches do.

OUR PLACE IN THE PLAN

BY G. N. GOKHALE

[Fourth Convention Lecture, delivered at Benares, 30 December 1944.]

OUR good brother Jamshed Mehta was unable to come to Benares and so the duty of delivering the lecture in his stead has fallen to my lot. I have in the past often acted for him and it was he who sent me to Benares, and so I do this duty with pleasure. You cannot, of course, expect from me what he alone could have given you, but I shall try to place before you what feelings are uppermost in my mind, hoping that they may help you.

Our elders have taken us to Himalayan heights, but we cannot stay there. We shall all be getting down into the valleys in a day or two, each to his appointed little place in life, and I will try to share with you a few berries picked up from these heights, which might sustain us on the way and even later on.

The problems we have been considering are now agitating the whole world and being discussed everywhere. In more unfortunate countries where every third house has been demolished, Reconstruction is on every one's lips, and all wise men are trying to make sure that the next generation may not have to go through the same ghastly experience. But there is one very great difference between their deliberations and ours. As Bishop Leadbeater once pointed out, we have the inestimable privilege of having a glimpse of the *End* to be achieved, the Great Plan which is unfolding itself, and *we are* or at least *ought to be* sure that there is a Guiding Hand behind it all. This fact makes an enormous difference in our attitude if—and I am afraid it is a big IF—we have first of all not a mere belief, but a real faith in it. I would therefore urge upon every one to re-examine this point and make sure.

Whenever clouds of doubt arise in my mind, as they do sometimes, I remind myself of the fact that what may be called the *Theosophical*

Philosophy of Life is a consistent whole, in which there is a place for every little fact of daily life. People talk of "Response to prayer" or of an "Inner Voice"; we accept it but we are asked not to believe in it unless it agrees with known laws of nature. It is only when it does fit into the Whole, that we write it with a capital I and V, and then alone we can have complete faith in it. This way of looking at it has helped me very much in confirming my faith in Theosophy and I pass it on to you. Try. Do it in any other manner you like, but my first point is that unless we cultivate this faith, we shall go back from the Convention as empty as we came to it.

* * *

Having made up our mind to trust the Plan, our next job is to see what little part we play in this great drama. The great English poet never said a truer thing than when he told us that the whole world is a stage and all men and women but actors. The actor is all along conscious of the fact that the curtain on the stage is not his real home, and the wooden sword he handles is no more his than the beard he often sticks on to his chin. He also knows that it does not matter in the least which part he plays, as long as he is true to that part, because the success of the whole depends upon his playing it well. That is what I understand from Krishnaji's expression that "the individual problem is the world problem." In this world there is room for everybody, even for us little people. If gold is valuable for certain purposes, it cannot serve the purpose of a tiny razor blade. If a lump of cow-dung is "dirt" in the drawing-room, it is very valuable manure in the garden; and so, if many of us are not fit for the assemblages of wise men, we can serve in the kitchen and so the wise men. There is nothing to worry

about if we are not great in the ordinary sense. We are and can only be what we have made of ourselves in the past, and it is only by making the best use of what we are that we can be what we choose to be in the future. Meantime we must mind our own business.

That is what Saint Tukaram told Shivaji when he felt tempted to lay down his sword for a pair of cymbals to sing the name of Hari Hari, of Vithala, Vithala. To understand this properly, we must go back to the days in India when by A.D. 1200 the impact of Greece had lost its momentum and the Guardian Rishis of this Sacred Land found it necessary to rouse us from our lethargy. They decided to introduce into India more virile elements from Arabia. How it all worked, we shall see later. But this time in anticipation of that event, and as a preparation for it, They sent their pupils to all parts of India, beginning with Dnyaneshwar in Maharashtra, who did the great work of rendering into the various local tongues, all the sacred knowledge which till then had been locked up in Sanskrit. When this was fairly well on its way, in were brought the Muslims, who came as conquerors but stayed as Indians. Their task was not to dominate, but to rouse the Hindus and to add their qualities into the common stock. The great Akbar showed them how this could be done. Unfortunately for India this mission, this Theosophical Society that Akbar started, failed in its purpose, and the social conditions became so bad that the Great Ones felt it necessary to check these tendencies by physical force.

What did the Guardian Rishis do? They sent to a part of India where the people living on hard trap rock were very hardy, *not one* but two members of Their Staff, one General Tukaram whose job was to quieten the masses and to teach them how to transmute their suffering into power, and the other one General Ramdas who was given the task of putting a physical check to the intolerance of the rulers. Tukaram achieved his purpose with cymbals and Hari-nāma, while Ramdas through his great pupil Shivaji collected together the sturdy Mavalas and hurled them with a sword in their hand at the insolent and turbulent elements. Shivaji

honoured temples and mosques equally, gave largesses to Hindu Bairagis and Muslim Fakirs alike, and showed in his life how one can fight arrogance without showing the slightest disrespect to the opponent's philosophy of life. The armies of Tukaram and Ramdas both did their apparently opposite tasks, one to quieten the masses and the other to arouse the disciplined few, in perfect understanding of each other, so much so that in a quiet moment Shivaji himself felt tempted to exchange his sword for a pair of cymbals, and to enter Tukaram's army. It was then that General Tukaram very kindly told him to mind his own business. The turbulent Shivaji and his band of faithful followers served God no less than the Bhaktas whose cries of Vithala and Hari and Rama rang throughout the land under the lead of Tukaram, Chaitanya, Tulsidas and others.

This has for us a great lesson. The sword is not for the undisciplined masses. The modern slogans of "Rousing the Masses" and "Mass Movement" have no place in the Great Plan. The Rishis never put on anyone's shoulders more burden than he can safely carry. As we have seen again and again, power goes to the head of the average man all too quickly, hence all the Chourichauras and Chimurs. If the ancient Tukaram, great as he was, and perfectly fitted to quieten people by example and precept, had taken into his head to replace General Ramdas by placing cymbals in Shivaji's hands, and swords in the hands of his numerous followers, as some modern Tukarams have done, the result would have been complete anarchy. It is by ignoring this great fact that we in India have got into a ditch today, and unless we take this great lesson of history to heart, we shall be heading into a worse ditch.

Tukaram, Chaitanya, Tulsidas and other great Saints were assigned, in the Great Plan, *the work of keeping the average man quiet*, and of preventing him from reverting to beasthood under the most intolerable conditions, and they did the work manfully and very well. They found cymbals and repetition of the name of God a very useful technique in achieving that end; and when conditions of life become intolerable, that is perhaps a very good escape even today.

But the very success of that method in the past has resulted in our exalting those means into the end itself, so that cymbals have now become the hall-mark of a good man in India. And that is another point worth considering.

* * *

Bhakti, Belief, Faith, Devotion are all very essential qualities, but I am afraid we all ignore the adjective "Right" added to each by Lord Buddha. That demands that discrimination, Dnyana, shall be wedded to Bhakti. I am afraid the whole mistake has arisen by our interpreting "Ninefold Bhakti" as nine separate paths to God, out of which Nām Sankirtana is the easiest and most suitable in Kaliyuga. I like to put it to you that they are not at all nine distinct paths, but nine stages on the One Path of Bhakti. We shall never understand Bhakti aright until we look at it that way. Then we shall see that Namasmarana comes not first but third, and there are still six steps more to climb until we are fit to talk of Mukti, *i.e.*, Liberation. Even Ramdas the Warrior Saint has dealt with Bhakti in his work *Dasabodha*, and there he clearly defines the first step on the Path of Bhakti as the understanding of the Plan. He recommends study through hearing (because there was no printing press in those days), study not only of the sacred books but of Geography, Botany, Chemistry, Medicine, Astronomy, Palmistry, and even Music and Dancing. Of course, he adds at the end of his list that an aspirant should study all these but take from them only the Essential and throw away what is not of immediate use. He also points out that all such reading must be reflected in our daily conduct. Is it not the same as "An open mind and an eager intellect" of H.P.B.'s Golden Stairs? That is evidently the first step.

The second stage is naturally the "sharing of this knowledge with others by lecturing to them." We must again bear in mind that he was talking in pre-printing-press days. We all know that we always understand our subject best when we try to explain it to others who know less. That is what C.W.L.'s pupil replied when he was asked how a little boy like him could be of such help. And it is only after attempt-

ing to share the knowledge of all the subjects enumerated under the first head—by singing the glories of the Great Architect of the Universe—that a man becomes fit for Namasmarana—meditation on the qualities of the Deity—Ishtadeva—Namaguna gaga—the model chosen by him to the end that "in His presence all desire dies out but the desire to be like Him in order to serve the great Orphan Humanity." That is Nam Sankirtana—repetition of God's name—not mere investing in a pair of cymbals.

But even that is but the third step. We have to climb six more before we can talk of Mukti. The fourth step, Padasevana—"at the Feet of the Master"; the phrase itself describes what is required at this stage better than anything else. The fifth step is trying to see and worship God in every form, and in every place, for which purpose Ramdas prescribes pilgrimages, like attending Conventions, as of very great use. Then comes Vandana—"bowing to the God in every one." The sixth step is active Service; and it is interesting to note that Ramdas mentions under this heading building temples, gardens, dharmasalas, kitchens, museums, in fact everything which delights mankind, and he asks that the aspirant should help in everything, and be ready to do the meanest task himself. That is Service, after which we are asked to cultivate "the Will to Goodwill." That phrase very aptly describes what is expected of us at this stage. It also includes complete trust in the Good Law; Ramdas warns the aspirant that if what you want does not happen, the fault is yours. As the modern business man has found out, "the customer is never wrong." "Do unto others as you would be done by." "Love begets love"; and all that attitude which accepts the world exactly as it is. Utter surrender to the will of God in every dealing with others only reserving to oneself the duty of doing one's best. That naturally leads to the next stage of Identity with Nature, and then follows Self-Realization—the Vision of Arjuna. That is the Path.

* * *

Another fact worth considering is the personal element that colours our Bhakti. Man has worshipped the Sun and Fire from time immemorial, but in India for centuries we have been

worshipping images of various Devas, and later the Avatāras as well, as a focus on which to pour all our Love and Devotion towards God. In a land where God is held as Immanent in all creation, although He is Transcendent as well, it is impossible to forget that, what we worship is not the stone or the brass, *but something within*; and the very multiplicity of the images is itself a proof of this. But the fact remains that so many of us who will pour out our devotion on a brass Balakrishna will think nothing of ill-treating our children, and the man who worships Annapurna and Kāli will try to tyrannize over his wife or mother. In spite of the Teaching of Immanence somehow the personal element in our Bhakti has resulted in our dividing our life into two compartments—spiritual and mundane—thought and action—so much so that even in our politics we worship our leaders, seldom follow them; that is how our Devotion gets a twist.

The very translation of the terms Deva and Avatāras by the words "God" and "Allah," which have a distinctly different meaning in Christian and Islamic theology, shows that we—even our learned Pandits who accept that translation—have entirely mistaken the purpose for which our ancients introduced the images. That is why they call Hindus idolators. That does not worry me, because we all mean the same thing. We worship the God *within*, who we are told is All-Powerful, All-Merciful and All-Knowing. Both the Hindus and Muslims use all the three adjectives, but by a curious irony, the Muslims underline the first one, All-Powerful, and that is why *they are more God-fearing*, almost afraid of God; the Hindus are convinced that He is Compassion personified, so much so that they expect Him to help them at every step in life, and they even tell Him when He ought to do so. Both somehow forget that He is also All-Knowing and therefore necessarily works unerringly after taking into account every little thought, word and deed, past and present before deciding our future. To me this underlining of the adjectives makes all the difference between the Islamic and Hindu cultures, which are complimentary to each other, and both need the addition of the Law of Karma

to make them a whole, and that is evidently why they have been brought together. Far from denying God's Compassion, the Theosophist asserts that every aspiring thought gets a response from the Most High, but the thought must have nothing of the lower self in it. It must be pointed heavenwards, not hooked to things of this earth. Such hooked thoughts can materialize on the physical plane only by the help of our muscles.

Apart from the question of the existence or otherwise of Deities, the personification of an Ideal has no doubt certain advantages. Stories of Orpheus with his lute or Shri Krishna with his flute, the music of which caused lions to forget their nature, and even cattle to stop grazing, have a charm of their own; but when we add to that that hundreds of Gopis left their husbands and ran after Shri Krishna, and that he married 16,000 of them, we certainly drag down the Ideal to our level. Therein lies the great danger. I know that nobody has attempted even sixteen wives after hearing that story, but we do have instances of modern Shri Krishnas seeking Radhas with the name of the Lord of Love on their lips. That is why we have been told in Theosophical literature that Devotion to an Ideal—an abstract principle like Brotherhood—is far safer than personifications of that Ideal even in Personages like H.P.B. or A.B. If we at our level cultivate "the Will to Goodwill" and radiate love, wherever we happen to be in our little circle, we shall be true followers of the Lord of Love who floods the world with His Love every moment. There is absolutely no harm in having a brass, silver or even a gold Balakrishna, but instead of lavishing our devotion on that image we must try to see the Messiah in every child; we must imitate Hanuman, the Ideal Servant of the Lord, not only in the Temple but at our office-table. Like the true Gopis, while we are constantly trying to listen to "the Sound of the Lord's Flute—the Voice of the Silence," we must attend to all our household and worldly duties with the utmost care and devotion. That is true Bhakti.

* * *

Then again in India we have Vedantins who go on preaching that the whole world is an

Illusion, and that things happen merely by the play of the three Gunas. All that may be true in a sense, but when they make these an excuse for shifting the responsibility for everything that happens to the shoulder of God, it leads to helplessness. Renunciation of the fruits of action talked of in *Bhagavad Gita* does not lie in the minds of those who do not do their worldly duties to their utmost capacity. The whole creation is bound up by certain Laws, which *cannot and will not* change for the so-called Vedantin as they do not change for the Bhakta. That is again the Law of Karma. The world is not an Illusion while it lasts, and we get nothing till we have paid the price.

In the West they know this principle quite well, and they are better Dnyana-margis than Indians who will neither try to understand the Laws of Nature, nor mould themselves to fit into them. Here again unfortunately the West will draw a line at things physical. They study all the laws in the material world and make use of them, but they know next to nothing of the Laws that cannot enter their test-tubes, but work as unerringly as the laws that modern science has discovered. Their morality has therefore not kept pace with their knowledge of things material, and hence the present condition. Those of us who in India talk of Science and Industrialization, do not seem to have learnt the lesson that things seen have their roots in Things Unseen. The Vedantin is perfectly right in stressing the comparative unimportance of things mundane. We have to change this emphasis certainly, but we must not ignore the laws of the material world, as we do in India, or those of the higher worlds as they do in the West. That is the lesson that the East and the West have for each other.

Then there is the Karma-marga, the Path of Action, which is the speciality of the West. They are splendid Karma-margis in things material, but they must not rush into regions they have never investigated and know nothing about. We in India are nowadays trying to follow this path of action to a certain extent, and have a lot of agitation and all that, with the result that our education is in the hands of people to whom Education is only a question of

bread and butter, for themselves as well as for their pupils, and who have not studied the Science of Education, which takes into account the whole man. Our Politics is in the hands of men who have seldom studied the Science of Politics, and so can only utter slogans which excite the public, without being in a position to lead that energy into useful channels, and so on.

* * *

I mention these things because they do not stop at things considered religious. They give a twist to our whole mentality. Devotion leads to love, and then Ahimsa is one more step. Of course, the spirit of True Ahimsa is one of the first essentials on the Path, but what I like every one of us to ponder over is that interpretation of Ahimsa which advises Churchill to end the war by inviting Hitler to London to take whatever he wants, and then proclaims a rebellion against Churchill himself because he did not choose to take that advice. We fail to see anything inconsistent in this, and even spend reams of paper proving that that is the highest spirituality. I have written on this subject before; but I do like to remind you that the whole twist comes in because we apply the word *Himsa*, "killing," to the physical body and not to the Inner Man. The individual living in his Causal Body, where the sense of the Unity of the whole Creation is never lost, cannot act in a manner which injures the whole, except when he is "killed," that is, completely put out of action by our lower bodies, by our twisted mentality, our passions and our lazy physical bodies. The mind can be enslaved, and physical bodies and other property can be destroyed, but the Inner Jeeva, never. Does not *Bhagavad Gita* start with that One Great Fact on which hinges the whole Teaching in that wonderful Book? At the present stage of our evolution, when we live so much on the lower levels, destruction of things physical is a very necessary lesson, and where human beings will not heed warnings which are always given by the Guardians of Humanity, horrid wars and all that they connote have their own very important place in the Great Plan. As has been pointed out in that modern edition of the Gita,

War—and After,¹ the reservoir of evil filled by us every day with every evil thought, word or deed bursts asunder as it has done now; and all we can do is to take it with understanding, fulfilling our little part in the Plan.

Shri Krishna made every attempt to prevent the Mahābhārata war, before he came to the conclusion that war was inevitable, whether Arjuna chose to fight or not. Dr. Besant in her ringing voice told the West in London in 1909 how the present civilization had come to a deadlock, and warned them that unless they left the road of competition and led the world on the road of co-operation Western Civilization was doomed to destruction. The warning went unheeded, and came the war of 1914-18 when millions entered "war to end war." But the dead men came back again, and the spirit of competition again came to its own place in world affairs, and so in a generation the whole world is now engulfed in this present holocaust. We are all hoping that mankind will learn the lesson at least this time. But here again the twist in our mentality asserts itself, and we at once ask: "Will Mr. Churchill accept this new philosophy of life? Will the Americans co-operate with Britain, and both with Russia, after the defeat of Hitler?" Perhaps they will, or what is more likely they will have to make room for others who will. Has not a prominent writer recently told Englishmen to get rid of Churchill before they lose all their respect for him? Be that as it may, I like every one to ask himself: "What am I going to do? Am I going to help or to hinder the Plan? Am I going to change myself at any rate? If I cannot do that, how can I expect to change the whole world?" And so on and so on.

As soon as we have made up our mind that we must begin with ourselves, we shall see that Bhakti is not as easy as it is made out in India, nor does it mean faith in ourselves as they interpret it in the West. Dnyana does not mean

¹ By C. Jinarājādāsa.

that the material world is an illusion, of no consequence, as we preach in India, nor that the Laws of God apply only in the material world as they seem to imagine in the West. "Surrender to God" does not mean surrender to Hitler, and that God helps only those who help themselves. The West has to learn that faith in ourselves is not enough. The true Dnyani has to remember that the Laws of God obtain in the whole Creation, Seen and Unseen, and a true Karmayogi must do his utmost, after taking into consideration all the Laws of Nature and without forgetting for a moment the Unity of Life that lies behind the whole Universe. It all means that Devotion must be wedded to Knowledge, and both are of no avail unless they are followed by appropriate action. Bhakti, Dnyana and Karma are equally necessary. Heart, head and hands, all the three must work in unison before we can expect happiness. One is the corrective for the excesses of the other. Our miseries are due to our lop-sided development, and each one of us has to cultivate in the direction in which we have yet to grow.

* * *

If you have followed my reasoning and more or less agree with my conclusions, you will see why I have given prominence to a consideration of what true Bhakti and Ahimsa are, especially as our Motherland is the Heart of the World. The task of showing the world by example first, and precept next, how true Bhaktas should live, is assigned to us, and unless India plays its part properly no Reconstruction in the real sense is possible. For there is a Great Plan and it shall succeed one day in its entirety irrespective of our puny little wills; but how soon, entirely depends upon us—each one of us doing his little part to perfection. Then only shall we have a right to utter the prayer: "O God, Thy will be done on this Earth as it always is done in Heaven!" Let us hope that even after we get back to our respective places we shall try to live in this spirit.

Harnessing the high-powered impulsion of collected genius to the accomplishment of the commonplace things of life is genius under the direction of super-genius.

DE WITT McMURRAY

CLOSING OF CONVENTION

Benares, 31 December 1944

BY THE PRESIDENT

GREETINGS

THIS is an adjourned meeting of the International Convention and I call on the late Recording Secretary to be good enough to act and to transact the necessary business.

[The Recording Secretary then read greetings from Sections, Federations, Lodges and members throughout the world. Other Lodges then gave through their representatives personal greetings, among them the Victory Lodge composed of men serving in the Indian Army, and the Burma Section. Mr. Tavera brought greetings from the Latin American Sections and especially to the President, Brother Rāja, and Rukmini Devi, and best wishes for the success of this 69th year of the life of The Society. Speeches were made by Rukmini Devi, Mr. N. Sri Ram, Mr. Rohit Mehta, and Mr. C. Jinarājādāsa.]

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

We are very glad to have all these greetings. It shows how we in Benares are truly representative of The Society as a whole.

THE STRICKEN SECTIONS

Brethren, there are a few observations I think it is desirable to make. I am at one with Mr. Jinarājādāsa when he describes the condition of very many stricken Sections both in the East and the West, and I well realize, as I am sure you all realize, the vital importance of every effort being made to renew The Society throughout the world, for we have lost in strength, so far as these stricken Sections are concerned. And when I say "strength," I mean material strength, because the moral strength of our members, in all of these stricken Sections, has been little short of marvellous. The thought of Poland comes to my mind for I am constantly in contact with those who have access to what is actually going on in that misera-

ble, that crucified nation. At the present time the horrors that obtain there are beyond description as are the horrors in many other countries no less. At least we do know in Poland our brethren are as stalwart as, of course, they should be but as it is difficult to be under the existing circumstances. I marvel at what they are able to be, at what they are able to do, under the frightful conditions obtaining. That is true of Poland. It is surely true of every other stricken Section. We Theosophists, even when we are *in extremis*, we are stalwarts, and I think it is wonderful to know that when Theosophists are weighed in the balance, as all these fine Theosophists have been weighed, they are not found wanting. And upon the basis of their sacrifice, upon the basis of their endurance of unimaginable horrors, will arise new Sections full of fire and life to give to the whole Society a life, a vitality, it has never had before. So do I look forward in the midst of a darkness to the advent of a tremendous Life but we must all do our duty to the utmost of our power. The General Council must do its duty to the utmost of its financial resources and every one of us must help to the utmost of his ability.

STRICKEN INDIA

But I must, at the same time, point out there is as much war in India as in any other country in the world. The famines that have been experienced in the North, South, East and West are equally horrible and unimaginable. Crores of people starve to death at our very doors. While we may, of course, pay homage to the way in which these nations of the West and East are fulfilling their Dharma and are setting a splendid example, we must know that war is in our midst too, horrible war, devastating war, war which kills as many in this country as are killed in the Great War. Some of our brethren have visited Calcutta and other parts

of Bengal recently and have told us here in Convention of the horrors they have witnessed, and not only of these horrors but of the difficulty of inducing those in authority to try to assuage the situation. There seems to be over that Province a kind of blight of indifference. One does not want to attach blame to any particular section but the blight is there and the people today, as I am speaking, are suffering horrors no less than people are suffering in any other part of the world.

While on the one hand we must endeavour to rebuild the stricken Sections by every means in our power, we must also help to rebuild stricken India, for she has suffered during all these years and is suffering today in a terrible manner, and unless you and I do what we can, as some of us have already been doing what we can, to relieve even in the smallest measure the horrors in Bengal, in Southern India, and in other parts no less, we shall have not deserved help from the great Rishis, and we shall have betrayed the trust which is now reposed in us. India to the rescue of the stricken Sections throughout the world! Yes, indeed, but India no less to the rescue of herself. India to the rescue of the people who are starving without any hope, of the children who are dying in the villages, because there are not enough orphanages for them to enter and to be cared for. Yes, there is much for us to do in India to try to give uplift to these miserable innumerable fellow-citizens of ours.

THE WORK OF RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. Jinarājadāsa has told us how these stricken Sections are suffering. He has pointed out to us that these Sections, or at least many of them, have lost their homes, their libraries, their means for propaganda, and that their members often have no means of livelihood. In some Sections there is no General Secretary and in some cases the Section has practically disappeared. That is where the splendid work of the European Federation comes in, and I think I may say we have done our utmost to strengthen our European Federation. We have given them authority to appoint Presidential Agents wherever desirable, so that they may begin the work

without delay. We have sent money and are prepared to send more money. The General Council has just permitted the issue of blank charters, so that there will be no delay in starting new Lodges. This will result in facilitating the arduous labours of the Committee in charge of rehabilitating the stricken Sections. The work of this Committee, and particularly of Mrs. Gardner and Major van Dissel, is beyond all praise, and I am sure that the European Federation will be the spearhead of a great Theosophical revival throughout Europe. I want you to think with all gratitude of this Federation for the tremendously effective and self-sacrificing work it is doing. The Federation knows what to do, and knows how to do it. I feel extremely confident in its management of our work in Europe.

Of course, we are concerned not merely with the stricken Sections, but with those Sections that must arise to help to prevent war in the future, in Germany, Japan, Italy, and in every other country where so far there may be no Section. A Section of The Theosophical Society in a country is a potent safeguard against internal disruption, against international disruption. It is largely because Theosophical work has been so weak in Italy, and still is very weak in Japan, and is practically non-existent in Germany, that we have come to such a pass as we have reached at the present time. How happy we shall be when we are able to welcome again a German, an Italian, or any other Section that may belong to a warring nation. I am equally looking forward to a Chinese Section, and obviously to a Japanese Section. We need them. They need us in order to form Sections. We need their Sections in order to strengthen the Masters' work.

We talk of reconstruction and innumerable plans are given to us. Various Governments in this country have established Reconstruction Committees, mainly consisting of officials and near-officials. Reconstruction must be effected by the people themselves and by their own leaders. I confess I have no faith in these official reconstruction committees which wish to take India more or less as she is and improve her here and there as best they can. I am not expecting any real reconstruction until India is

able to reconstruct herself. The reconstruction we can undertake must be to make Indian citizenship worth while to those miserable citizens who do not care how they are governed so long as they have opportunity to eat. That is the urgency in reconstruction for us, as it seems to me, at the present time.

THE NEXT CONVENTION

Rukmini Devi has been very fortunately envisaging a new Convention to begin in 1945. I do welcome her envisagement with all my heart, and I shall be very glad to receive from any instructed brethren practical suggestions for a new type of Convention, for we cannot look at things which are not practical. But something which is real, something which is helpful, something which can be done will certainly be very welcome for consideration. We must learn Theosophy by doing Theosophy, and those of you who are active in doing Theosophy can tell us how we can make our Theosophy more and more practical.

BE A SPECIALIST

One thought strikes me in this connection. Each one of us sooner or later will have to be a specialist in Theosophy. We have a general birds'-eye view, a general conspectus of Theosophy. That is all to the good. But as we grow we need more and more to specialize, to take some Theosophical theme and see what we can do to pursue it, to make it our own, until we become increasingly independent of books, of study-classes, of lectures, of external organization, and are able to draw Theosophy from within ourselves, to have personal experience of at least some aspect of Theosophy, according to the temperament of the individual. I think that all over the world there should be members intent on trying to prove Theosophy for themselves. I know that is a somewhat dangerous piece of advice to give, because a number of people will take up some line of study in Theosophy and will arrogate to themselves all kinds of fantastic and adulatory authority for their utterances. There is a good deal of that type of grandiosity, and it is very difficult to deal with unless those who have it keep it to

themselves. If you say nothing about what you know from inner vision, if you understand and keep it in your heart, you are a very wonderful person indeed, and are not only sane but wise to a very considerable extent.

I do ask you who are keen and enthusiastic to see what you can do to acquire genuine personal experience for yourselves. Study is not enough unless it is followed by experience. We owe an infinitude of Theosophical teachings to those who have had personal experience of the truths of Theosophy. H.P.B.'s supreme value was her personal experience. Dr. Besant's supreme value was her personal experience. Bishop Leadbeater's supreme value was his personal experience. We cannot hope to emulate these fiery pillars but at least we can begin with a few embers and try to blow them into a tiny, even though temporary and insignificant flame.

This New World Convention at Adyar I dare not envisage at the present time, but obviously we must shake the kaleidoscope of Theosophy so as to present a picture of Theosophy as it will be needed in the New World. Mr. Jinarājadāsa is quite right, if I may be permitted to say so, in saying that we need new presentations, the old wine in new bottles, or the old old wine bottled perhaps a little differently. We need that most urgently and we have to adapt that Theosophy to the changing world, so that it may be a changing Theosophy for the world which itself changes.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Then, as Mr. Jinarājadāsa also hinted, we must know what are Theosophy's peace terms for the world. I am more afraid of peace than of war. The war is coming to its conclusion, even though delayed. We know the Forces of Light are bound to triumph. We do not feel quite so certain as to whether Righteousness will prevail at the Peace Round Table if there is a Round Table at all, and whether there will be a healing of the wounds of the world and the revitalization of the stricken nations.

I am going to say to you something which is a contradiction of what I ordinarily say generally. When I stand on a platform I speak of

India's freedom and independence and I generally only have to pause a little to receive great applause. Now I feel inclined to substitute for "independence" the word "interdependence." The world is shrinking. Every nation is more dependent on every other nation than ever before. We ought in a measure to be dependent on our brethren. I do not think it ought to be necessary for India to pass through a period of isolation when the rest of the world is advancing into a period of comradeship with all nations.

Then I am going to say something which may cause a shiver up and down the spine of Dr. Bhagavan Das. He has been suggesting to us, as far as I can understand, that in the immediate future we must not forget the head, whatever we may do about the heart. I put it the other way. We must not forget the heart whatever we may do about the head. I would venture to say that heart education is far more important than head education.

STRAIGHT THEOSOPHY FOR YOUTH

We need the presence and the inspiration of youth at this new Convention at Adyar in 1945. We old people must see to it that young people can come to Adyar. We have pockets and usually put our hands into them less to extract anything than to see that nothing comes out. Now our delegates will put their hands in to take a little out for the young people to come to Adyar. We need young people at Adyar to plan with us the new Theosophy and The New Theosophical Society, for in the coming years they will be working in the world.

A final word and, of course, I am talking to the whole world and to all my brethren everywhere. We must be able to disentangle the essential vital straight truths of Theosophy from all the accretions, however true they may be, which have grown around the essential truths. Some of us believe perhaps a great World Teacher will come into the world as He never came before. Very likely it may be true. We must not put that in any sense whatever as a condition of admission of people who wish to join The Society. We may have ideas with regard to the Masters and the Esoteric School, advancement on the path, etc. These must not

be set forth to be conditions of real membership of our Society. With regard to many other activities, say the Liberal Catholic Church, we may think that is the true Christianity, but we must remember that there are other forms of Christianity. Without doubt we must clear the approach of Theosophy and The Theosophical Society so that anyone who believes in Brotherhood and accepts our three Objects feels that he is at home in The Society whether or not he believes in Karma, the states of consciousness, Reincarnation and all the other orthodoxies that seem to us so important. They may be true. He may come to believe in them later on, but let him come of his own free will supremely on the basis of The Society's First Object. So I would ask you to stress simple, direct, straight Theosophy on the appeal of which so many of us joined. Do not crush anyone who aspires to membership under the revelation of the knowledge, the wisdom, or the truths you may happen to know. Let him be free and let The Society be free for him to discover what he can and revel in it.

CONCLUSION

Well, brethren of the International Convention scattered throughout the world, I feel a tremendous wave of brotherly affection surging through me. Even though I am a temporary President, here today and fortunately gone tomorrow or on some other occasion, still I am the vehicle, the focus, for much of the Theosophical work, and I hope and pray that I may be in some measure the vehicle for the Elder Brethren, that They may use me a little as They use so many of us to guide and direct us along the paths of Brotherhood. And I, therefore, venture to invoke upon us all the Blessing of these Great Ones, Those who revealed a new Theosophy to a waiting world, Those who are the true Founders of The Theosophical Society, Those who are ever the Guides and Inspirers of the world; I pray Their Blessing upon us that we may go forward into a new year of dedication and of service to our fellowmen.

I declare the International Convention rightly, properly and duly closed.

CORRESPONDENCE

[Two more letters on the Watch-Tower notes of August 1944.
The first letter appeared in our January issue, page 93.]

II

IS THE T.S. STILL THE SPEARHEAD FOR BROTHERHOOD?

THE following was enacted recently by a couple walking past the door of the Theosophical Centre in Chicago:

She: (pointing at the Theosophical Sign) "What's that? What's The Theosophical Society?"

He: "Oh, they believe in some sort of spiritualism."

If what other people think of us is of little importance, then this article will have little purpose. If, however, what people think of us reflects not simply their attitude towards us, but *our* attitude towards *them*, then an unbiased analysis into causes and effects should prove fruitful.

Sixty or seventy years ago, a couple passing by a Theosophical Lodge might very well have engaged in pretty much the same conversation as the couple mentioned above. The probabilities, however, are that the remark would have been uttered with considerable disdain and perhaps some invective.

It is interesting to note that The Theosophical Society during the past 70 years has succeeded in being "accepted" by the general public. Although our views are as strange to most as they ever were in the past, we are now tolerated. It has become recognized that we are a well behaved group and not in the least bit dangerous. No longer can you read magazine articles by leaders of thought, scoring Theosophy as in the old days.

Is this an achievement? Personally I think it is indicative of failure. It is a sorry commentary that after 70 years we are still associated

with spiritualism. Let anyone who is interested in discovering for himself what the outside world thinks about Theosophists, conduct a personal survey. He will probably find that, apart from the big majority who "don't know," he will get a grand variety of opinions such as: Theosophy is a religious cult; they believe in astrology; in reincarnation; in spiritualism; in Mahatmas possessing strange powers; they are grass-eaters. All kinds of strange replies will be received—everything, practically, except the ONE thing that The Society stands for—UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD!

Isn't this dismaying? Perhaps a little frightening? I have mentioned that the world recognized the fact that we are a well behaved group. I wonder whether we are not *too* well behaved. Have we, perhaps, not been too meticulous in keeping ourselves beautifully unsullied by religiously refusing to commit The Theosophical Society in venturing any opinion on any matters, even those that concerned our cardinal principle of Universal Brotherhood?

Because of The Society's strict rule of Neutrality, it has had, perforce, to remain silent and aloof from all that has happened recently in the world, while every principle of Universal Brotherhood was being flagrantly and unbelievably trampled underfoot.

Is there not something pitifully incongruous about this? The movement that pioneered the idea of the Universal Brotherhood of Man sits on the sidelines in splendid isolation while the greatest struggle in the world's history between the powers of light and darkness is being waged. The movement that champions the Brotherhood of Man, stands immovable still, while the world passes it by.

The neutrality of The Society may have been necessary in the early days, and more especially, perhaps, while Dr. Annie Besant was pursuing her political activities in India while President

of The Society. The question we must ask ourselves is—is it necessary *today*? Is it not more of a retarding influence than a help? Should we not bring ourselves up to date?

A tremendous lot of things have happened and violent changes taken place. Does our FIRST PRINCIPLE, as it stands, fit into the framework of the world of today as well as it did into the framework of the world of 1875? In that so (seemingly) very distant past, it was a decidedly forward, perhaps even radical step, to “form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.” After nearly three-quarters of a century which has culminated with the pronouncements of the Atlantic Charter, and the inescapable Soviet “experiment,” are we still satisfied just to “*form a nucleus. . . ?*”

I have the temerity to make so rash a proposal as the disturbing of the wording of our First Principle, first because Dr. Arundale himself made such a proposal a little while ago; and secondly, and principally, because I have derived both the courage and inspiration to do so from Dr. Arundale's Watch-Tower article in the August 1944 issue of THE THEOSOPHIST. This, to my mind, is the most important piece of writing that has appeared in our Magazine for a very long time. I have to use restraint to refrain from describing it, in the popular American manner, as *terrific*.

It is often misleading to quote from an article, especially an article of this type. Nevertheless, the temptation is too great. Says G.S.A.: “*Are the foundations (of The Theosophical Society) as complete and as strong as they should be for my present usage? Are there other landmarks to be added? Are the original landmarks to be modified, enlarged?*”

Let us apply the modern science of semantics to the First Principle of The Theosophical Society. “*To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. . . .*” The implication is something that is partially static, connoting limited movement. The use of the word “form” in conjunction with the word “nucleus” implies action up to but not beyond the point where the nucleus (limited to a centre of development) has been formed.

Surely every vital member will agree with Dr. Arundale's constant plea that we members must be *pioneers*. Then surely The Society must pioneer to at least the extent that it did in 1875 when it sprung its (then) radical concept of Universal Brotherhood upon a world that has since literally leapt forward, or perhaps we should say, has been booted and scourged forward by the ruthless whip of war and chaos.

My proposal is a simple one. I would enlarge the scope of our ideal of Universal Brotherhood as at present contained in our First Principle. I would widen the horizons, slough the restrictions that now confine us to a mere “nucleus”; I would vastly stretch the goal of our endeavours.

No matter how much we work for brotherhood individually as members, it is high time, it seems to me, that *The Society* cease to hide the light of its brotherhood ideals under the bushel of 1875, and come out boldly, clearly and unequivocally as champions and *promoters* of Universal Brotherhood.

I would like to substitute a positive attitude for one that has become negative (due to the passage of time and events). I would like to change the present partially static implication of our First Principle to one that is mobile, has life, is unrestricted. There are many ways, simple ways, in which this change could be effected. For instance:

“*To Promote the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, etc., etc.*” This alteration while it is, admittedly, an addition, a new landmark, perhaps, it should be noted that *only two words replace the five words stricken out!*

I would like to forestall one objection that is sure to be voiced against the above proposal. Namely—the important work that The Theosophical Society is doing on the inner planes. I am quite sensible of that, but I do not see why that fact should prevent The Society from enlarging the horizons of its good work in the physical world.

Think for a moment of the probable results of The Theosophical Society becoming a dominant, vital influence in the world for Universal Brotherhood, instead of merely an unknown, inactive, although albeit, highly respectable and dignified figurehead.

Think what it would mean if instead of being associated with spiritualism and "grass-eating," The Theosophical Society became known as *actively* championing Universal Brotherhood. What would happen? Many thousands (I predict) would join our Society. There would be an infusion of new blood, new vitality, new enthusiasm. True these members would not be drawn because of their interest in Occultism, Astrology or Spiritualism. They might or they might not later become interested in a deeper study of the Ancient Wisdom, but through their infiltration The Society would receive a dynamic impetus that might make it the *real* (physical) world force that so many of us hope it will be.

While my mind is somewhat obtuse on matters of a legal nature, it seems to me that a change of our First Principle along the lines suggested would vitiate the neutrality of The Society on any question that involved the violation of "the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity." (We would still have to be neutral on such matters as vivisection.)

To those who are afraid (used advisedly) of involving our Society by pulling down the bars of neutrality, I would like to say this: Has it occurred to you that we may indeed be *involving* The SOCIETY by our Neutrality? By deliberately standing aloof, withholding action or even an opinion on a matter vital to the principle of Brotherhood, we may be definitely *involving* The Society, by giving the impression that we are belying our trust.

I want to say precisely what Dr. Arundale wrote in his August 1944 "Watch-Tower" article. ". . . I do not for a moment regard what I have written as a subtle undermining of the foundations of Theosophy and of The Theosophical Society." In fact I quite unashamedly confess that I do want to get The Theosophical Society *involved*—yes, inextricably involved—in Universal Brotherhood. A. H. PERON

III

Thank you for the August "Watch-Tower" in the limited issue of THE THEOSOPHIST of that month.

I am not sure that you need have apologized for any "Challenge," for what you put forward in a very striking fashion under the cross-heading: "Theosophy of the Heart" on page 264—near the end. I do so agree that we have often—far too often—ignored to a large extent these clear implications of our Theosophical teachings! We do care for head-knowledge—that is entirely to the good—but tend to forget sympathy and compassion.

Yesterday, I read in a book: "But for Shakespeare—for any poet—insensitiveness is a sort of death." The "man (Macbeth) must harden himself" for further crimes etc., and against terrible dreams and visions of the murdered Banquo. "I have almost forgot the taste for tears," Macbeth says at one stage in his career.

For any Theosophist, too, "insensitiveness is a sort of death."

Lots of us seem to be insensitive to lots of things that do not immediately touch us! More's the pity, for this is one sure way in which we not only live our Theosophy, but also enable our Theosophy to become alive to us!

We can, as you stress, be compassionate in thought when we hear of suffering or cruelty. Many of us refuse to hear of any acute suffering because it makes us uncomfortable. "We can't bear to be told about it; we can't bear to think of it! It's too dreadful!" How we miss a chance to react at least in thought in a useful and healing way!

One Druidic Triad (in the Welsh traditions) speaks of a qualification (needed for spiritual attainment) as a "love as far as necessity for it exists." There is a universal necessity! Also, there's a Druidic saying: "There is no spirituality except in compassion for every living thing." Can't that also be translated as: "There is no Theosophy but in compassion for every living thing"?

There is little Theosophy for me (relatively speaking, of course) outside that which is real compassion for every living thing, even though I may only know the merest A.B.C. of that Theosophy, and have yet to learn some words of that great language!

D. J. W.

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