

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

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Theosophy and Theosophists Extracts from the Writings of H.P. Blavatsky

In October of 1984, among other representatives of Theosophical groups and societies, I was invited to speak at the West Coast Conference of Theosophists, held at the Krotona Institute-School of Theosophy. In my address I quoted words from HPB's articles in *The Theosophist* of October 1879, titled "What Is Theosophy?" and "What Are the Theosophists?", (See also BCW II, 87-106), and suggested that all Theosophists should read the complete articles at least once a year. A voice from the audience piped up and said, "Once a month!" It was the voice of the late Henry Geiger of the ULT. We give here only a few extracts from those articles written in the important formative years of the TS. —Ed.

Once Known In Every Ancient Civilized Country

... Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.

There were Theosophists before the Christian era, notwithstanding that the Christian writers ascribe the development of the Eclectic theosophical system, to the early part of the third century of their Era. Diogenes Laertius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies; and names as its founder an Egyptian Hierophant called Pot-Amun, the name being Coptic and signifying a priest consecrated to Amun, the god of Wisdom. But history shows it revived by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. He and his disciples called themselves "Philalatheians" —lovers of the truth; ... His object was to prove a primitive system of Theosophy, which at the beginning was essentially alike in all countries; to induce all men to lay aside their strifes and quarrels, and unite in purpose and thought as the children of one common mother; to purify the ancient religions, by degrees corrupted and obscured, from all dross of human element, by uniting and expounding them upon their pure philosophical principles. Hence, the Buddhistic, Vedantic and Magian, or Zoroastrian, systems were taught in the Eclectic Theosophical School along with all the philosophies of Greece.

Theosophy is, then, the archaic Wisdom-Religion, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.

— Blavatsky: *Collected Writings* II, 88-9.

The Search — Not For A Personal God

The search after man's diviner "self," so often and so erroneously interpreted as individual communion with a personal God, was the object of every mystic, and belief in its possibility seems to have been coeval with the genesis of humanity — each giving it another name. —*Op. cit.* p.92

Has No Creed

...The most important [of our objects] is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas, and make various nations remember that they are the children "of one mother." As to the transcendental side of the ancient Theosophy, it is also high time that the Theosophical Society should explain. With how much, then, of this nature- searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: —with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: —"*as a body* —Nothing." The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself — the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. The religion of the Society is an algebraical equation, in which so long as the sign = of equality is not omitted, each member is allowed to substitute quantities of his own, which better accord with climatic and other exigencies of his native land, with the idiosyncrasies of his people, or even with his own. Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand may be made. — *Op. cit.* pp. 100-101

The Solitary Path of Independent Thought

The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation. As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature... were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or a deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere the *Presence*, the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivisible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is ALL, and NOTHING; ubiquitous yet one; the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything; contained in all. It will, we think be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought — Godward — he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with “an inspiration of his own” to solve the universal problems.

With every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied. It is likewise the ally of honest science, as distinguished from much that passes for exact, physical science, so long as the latter does not poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics. — pp.102-103

Modeled on the Constitution of the United States

... Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Motherland. The latter, omitting the name of God from its Constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to make a state religion, gives absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support, and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modeled upon this Constitution, may fairly be termed a “Republic of Conscience.” —p.104

Our Object

Our object now was but to prove to the reader that Theosophy is neither “a newfangled doctrine,” a political cabal, nor one of those societies of enthusiasts which are born today but die tomorrow. —p.106

The Ideal

G. de Purucker

Extracts from answers to a question asked at a lecture given June 22, 1930, at Point Loma, in the Temple of Peace, and reported in *Questions We All Ask*, No. 52, August 22, 1930.

Times have changed. We live sixty years after this talk was given. The world has suffered much. And the T.S. ? What was herein presented may to sincere minds today seem obviously impossible. But historically it should be noted — this act, this daring declaration, amazing at the time — as of great significance in the overall destiny of the Theosophical Movement. Perhaps all we can say today is that this spiritual effort of over half a century ago is recorded in the astral light, and even today must have its beneficent effects in our outer world. The pragmatic mind facing today's conditions, however, will regard it as impracticable, impossible. Yet in our highest thought can it not reflect the Ideal — something not improbable in the far off future ?

We quoted parts of this in our *Eclectic* of January 15, 1974, marking the centennial anniversary of G. de P.'s birth. We give here a few additional paragraphs. —Ed.

Question: In your attempts to bring harmony into the Theosophical Movement by uniting the Theosophical Societies and other mystical bodies, may I not ask, without desiring to be offensive, if you yourself have not a fear of starting a super-body largely composed of — n-u-t-s ?

... No, very definitely I have no such fear. Had I seen that in forming such a superbody it would be naught but a superbody of ‘nuts’, I am quite positive that I should not have begun my work to that end.

But now, friends, let me say a few kindly words for the officials and members of other Theosophical Societies. Many of them come to our meetings here, and I should deeply regret if any one such, generous-hearted enough to accept my invitation to come, should think for a fugitive instant, that I would tolerate a discourtesy, even by answering a question such as this is, without assuring him that what I want and yearn for is mutual understanding, brotherhood, kindness, peace, and harmony....

... There are any amount of splendid, sincere, loyal, devoted Theosophists in the other Theosophical Societies. I want that clearly understood. They have their own organizations, their own officials, their own work, their own ideals. I do not want to touch those. Let them stay.

... It is a shame and a disgrace to the Theosophical name that the very Movement which was founded to promulgate brotherhood and mutual love and kindness among men, and also to teach the doctrines of the Ancient Wisdom, should today be split up into a number of bodies fighting a desperate internecine warfare. It is wrong ! I will have none of it ! If I am attacked and attacked untruthfully and unkindly, as long as the attack is against me personally, I will hold my peace. Let the attack be directed against my work, however, — then I will act, because I have an ineluctable duty to perform. This, then, is my first wish: to work on a common

Theosophical platform of mutual understanding and brotherly love with all other Theosophical Societies....

... My hope is ultimately to see established a Theosophical Society of the world, in which all Theosophical Societies will join, each one such retaining its own organization, if it wishes, its own officials, its own peculiar teachings if it wishes, but working for the fundamental Theosophical truths in brotherly union.

I do not care a snap of the fingers for a merely political federation of Theosophical Societies. The idea seems monstrous to me — the idea of trying to confine spiritual truths within the limits of a politically federated body of Theosophical Societies....

Imagine trying to cramp the Theosophical Movement within the foolish bounds of a mere political federation ! That is not my idea.... Do you know what would ensue almost immediately ? I will tell you: A continuation of the same intestinal troubles that have disgraced the modern Theosophical Movement already. But let men meet with understanding hearts on the basis of love and brotherhood, genuine and sincere, and you will have no trouble.

Furthermore ... I stand irrevocably for Theosophy — the original pure and unadulterated Theosophy of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. If anyone else chooses to preach different teachings, different doctrines, that is not my affair. I will never throw a brick at them; I will never cover them with mud; that is their own business and for what they do they shall be held strictly accountable by Nature's ineluctable laws. They may choose. Karma and time will weave their magic solution of all such difficulties and aberrant wanderings into side-paths and by ways of thought and life.

Now I will go a little farther ... I am looking forward to a super-society without officers, except one — a society held together by bonds of love, understanding, brotherhood, and ethical principles; that one official to have no power to meddle in the internal affairs of any of the societies composing this Spiritual Brotherhood; but he will stand as a Teacher and Leader by the right of training and by the right of having gained the love and confidence of the component elements who and which have conjoined to form this Spiritual Brotherhood.

Do I hear someone say: 'A Theosophical Pope'? My answer is an emphatic, No! In my plan, this official shall be without any temporal power whatsoever. He stands as spiritual Teacher and Leader, as guide, but with no temporal power whatsoever as regards the Spiritual Brotherhood. And I hope, if I can bring this to pass, that there will become living as a vital current in the history of The Theosophical Society, the unbreakable, ineluctable tradition, that, as soon as one iota of temporal power be taken over by the one occupying this supreme position, it shall be recognized as a sign of spiritual dissolution and decay; and then it will be the probable duty of the component societies to withdraw.

The Theosophical Movement is a spiritual movement; it has a duty to perform in the world — to give forth certain

sublime, spiritual and intellectual, teachings, and all questions of inter-organizational politics would be entirely out of place in such a Spiritual Brotherhood.... Remember this: Such a supreme position did the great founder of The Theosophical Society in modern times, H.P. Blavatsky, hold. No one needs to join such a Spiritual Brotherhood, who fears, who doubts. To such as these I say: Stay out. But to those who have the intuition to understand and to see and to realize how this Spiritual Brotherhood ... will cause dissensions to cease, will bring peace where there is now discord, and will be a unifying and cementing power such as none other in the world is, because it will be based on the moral instincts of men, on their hunger for love and peace, for union and brotherhood, I issue the call.

It would mean that any society composing, or being one of the composite elements of, this Spiritual Brotherhood would retain all its own officials, all its own doctrines (or lack of doctrines), all its own traditions, its own spheres of work, would be as free as the ambient air, but would nevertheless be an element equal with other in such a super-society, such a Spiritual Brotherhood. The fact is that the hearts and minds of the members composing most of the different Theosophical Societies are hungry — hungry for light, hungry for peace, hungry to receive the divine wisdom.

The Opposite of Death is Birth

Iverson L. Harris

In the 1950's former members of the Point Loma T.S. gave a series of talks under the general title "Theosophy and Contemporary Thought," in the Unitarian Church, San Diego. We give here a few excerpts from one titled "Sowing and Reaping: a Study of Karma and Reincarnation".

As a boy of 9 years Iverson Harris accompanied his father from Macon, Georgia, to attend the Theosophical Congress held at Point Loma in February 1899. He remained there until 1942 when, on account of WWII, the headquarters moved to Covina, California. In his very early years Iverson became traveling secretary to Katherine Tingley on her worldwide lecture tours. In the regime of G. de Purucker he was Western District Regional V.P., of the American Section T.S.; Secretary of Theosophical University; and, on the death of Joseph H. Fussell, Chairman of the Cabinet (1942- 45). In 1946 he and his wife were asked to leave the Headquarters. In 1971, with other associates from the Point Loma days, he founded and organized Point Loma Publications, Inc. On August 30 of this year he would have celebrated his one hundredth anniversary.

As we wrote in the *Eclectic* of March, 1979, "he will long be remembered as one steadfast in duty, loyal in principle, valiant in action, and unswerving in devotion to what he felt were the highest ethics and challenges of Theosophy." —Ed.

... The Greeks had a saying, *Hypnos kai thanatos adelphoi*: Sleep and death are brothers. We lay us to sleep at night in perfect confidence that we are well cared for; and we take it for granted that when morning comes the thread of consciousness, on which our life is builded, will be picked up again where we left it on retiring. Whither do we go during sleep ? Whither the thoughts and tendencies of our waking

hours draw us: not far away from the body or the personality if our consciousness has been largely centered therein during the hours when we were responsible for our thoughts and acts; but ranging the starry spaces and achieving the conquests of the soul, if the tendencies of our thoughts and aspirations are heavenwards and divine. And the same is true at death — only more so.

I have tried to approach our theme this afternoon in the same spirit of reasonableness in which Socrates discoursed with his friends gathered around him in the death-chamber in 400 B.C. By his discourse he kindled a flame that will never be extinguished for men who have sparks of that same spiritual fire aglow in their own breasts. You will recall that under Athenian law he was permitted to suggest an alternative punishment to the death-sentence imposed upon him, such as banishment or paying a heavy fine. It was then that he made one of the grand historical jokes by saying that death was not certainly an evil; it might be a very good thing; whereas banishment was assuredly an evil and so was paying a fine. Besides, he had no money with which to pay it. So he suggested that Athens should support him for the rest of his life in the Prytaneum as a public benefactor ! He then quietly and deliberately elected to accept the sentence imposed upon him and called in his friends to discourse with them on reincarnation. He said that the doctrine was an old tradition, and what could be more reasonable than that the soul, departing to Hades, should return again in its season: the living born from the dead, as the dead from the living ? Did not experience show that opposites proceed from opposites ? Then birth must proceed from and follow death. If the dead came from the living, and not the living from the dead, the universe would at last be consumed by death. Then, too, there was the doctrine that knowledge comes from recollection; what is recollected must have been previously known. Our souls must have existed, then, before birth.

There is no dogmatizing in this; there is no assumption of supernormal knowledge, even if he had it. There is nothing but an appeal to sweet reasonableness. And then, when Crito asks Socrates: "How shall we bury you ?", the wisest of the Greeks turns to the others present and says: "I cannot persuade Crito that I here am Socrates — I who am now reasoning and ordering discourse. He imagines Socrates to be that other thing of sinews and muscles, whom he will see by and by, a corpse."

We shall never understand the mysteries of death, until we cease identifying our *selves* with the *bodies* we live in — until we realize instead that essentially man is a *stream of consciousness*. Further, that the opposite of *death* is not *life*, which is eternally and everywhere existent in some form, but *birth*.

It's What We Do With Kali-Yuga...

Kali Yuga seems to be a 'season' like all winters, or like old age. I think it is what we do with it that matters. What could we say this climate might be ? Karma is said to bear fruit quicker. Small efforts now will produce far-reaching results — the reason why HPB came ? How all this must be known to the 'dark' side as well, and it is 'they' who would have to believe that "Nothing can be done", and hence that we should become passive. I don't think that is true. In any case while the K.Y. cycle may have begun 5,000 years ago, the overlap of the Dwapara Yuga into the Kali is not mentioned, so presumably we will have the continuing influence of that — just as day merges into night through the twilight. I've always noticed that real philosophy and theosophy tries to explain and not to deny things as they are. The planetary positions, like a good clock, indicate the *time*. It is we who do not know how to read the clock. Krishna says in the Gita that the Spirit in man (*Kutashta*) (*Gita*, ch. 15) "sitteth on high unaffected." I would conclude that if we are agitated, it is only the personality which is in a 'stew', and not the real man. If the One Life pervades us all, and serves to connect all bodies in 'space', then the subtle influences that are acting touch us all, and it is only when we harmonize with them (and I guess we have to be very wise to do that) that we can become aware of their power, and also of how we may take advantage of that moment. If we are ignorant, then the opportunity fades as it passes, to return to another cycle, when we will have another chance — as 'immortals' in our universal school ! — Wane Kell

Strong Conviction is not Dogmatism

What is dogmatism ? To my mind, it is the assertion of a tenet that others must accept. Is that what we do as a body ? I think not. Certainly I do not do it. In my opinion, oft declared, anyone who asserts in our society that one must believe this or that theory or philosophy is no Theosophist, but an intolerant bigot.

But those who have spoken of dogmatism, have mistaken energy, force, personal conviction and loyalty to personal teachers and ideals for dogmatism. Such are not dogmatism. One has a perfect right to have a settled conviction, to present it forcibly, to sustain it with every argument, without being any less a good member of the Society. Are we to be flabby because we are members of an unsectarian body, and are we to refuse to have convictions merely because no one in the society may compel another to agree with him ? Surely not.

— W.Q.Judge in the closing address at the European Convention held in London, July 6th and 7th, 1893.

Let Us Remember

[We give the above title to the following brief quote extracted from the Presidential Address by Mrs. Radha Burnier, to the 114th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, December 26, 1989. —Ed.]

In a Society where the search for truth is more important than dogmas, where 'free and fearless investigation' is encouraged, where minds are not controlled by authority and conditioned into belief, one must endeavor to proceed beyond the level of ideas to a different type of knowledge, the deep knowledge of the heart. Mind and heart must be open and therefore all tendency towards cultism and dogmatism must end. All psychological barriers must be broken down. Then a deeper level of contact and communication comes into being with mutual respect for each other's search. One begins to hear what Nature herself wants to say, silently from the heart of all beings.

— *The Theosophist*, January 1990

One Hundred Years Old

March 1990 marks the centennial anniversary of *Le Lotus Bleu: La Revue Theosophique*, the official journal of the Theosophical Society of France (Adyar). To commemorate this publishing event *Le Lotus Bleu* devotes its current March issue to a historical retrospect of its past 100 years of publication.

The cover of this centenary issue displays a reduced facsimile of the original March 1890 cover. H.P. Blavatsky's name was listed as "Redacteur in Chief" ("Editor in Chief") and Jean Mattheus (pseudonym of Arthur Arnould) as "Directeur" ("Managing Editor"). Articles written by H.P.B., A.P. Sinnett, and Franz Hartmann were published in this premiere issue.

In a fascinating feature article, in the current number, ("1890-1990. *Le Lotus a Cent Ans*"), Daniel Caracostea gives a historical overview of the founding and continued publication of the journal. Brief biographical sketches are given of Arthur Arnould and succeeding editors (including Theophile Pascal, D.A. Courmes, Gaston Revel and Salomon Lancri, the well-known scholar and authority on H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine*.)

In the course of this article Caracostea points out that *Le Lotus Bleu* has had a name change or two since its birth but reverted to its original title in 1947. The value of this article is enhanced with photographs of H.P. Blavatsky, Arthur Arnould, D.A. Courmes and several of the other editors, including the current editor Francoise Caracostea.

This centennial issue also reprints Arthur Arnould's lead article ("Au Lecteur") from the premiere March 1890 issue, as well as H.P.B.'s article "La Legende du Lotus Bleu" (The Legend of the Blue Lotus) from the April, 1890 issue of *Le*

Lotus Bleu. (An English translation of H.P.B.'s article appears in her *Collected Writings*, Vol. XII, pp. 177-186).

Also in this issue Mrs. Gay Gering, a member of the Edmonton Branch, T.S. (Canada), contributes a thought-provoking article entitled "Un Point De Vue Sur L'Histoire Du Mouvement Theosophique".

Theosophists who would like to brush up on their French (or maybe even learn French!) might consider subscribing and supporting this centennial publication. Address inquiries to: The Theosophical Society of France, 4 Square Rapp, 75007 Paris, France.

Best wishes to *Le Lotus Bleu* during its second century. I can't wait to see the March 2090 issue!

— D.H. Caldwell

Occult Astronomy

New data supports a Blavatsky assertion over a century old.

Ted. G. Davy

"Modern science is our best ally," wrote Mahatma K.H. in 1882. But he was quick to add, "Yet it is generally that same science which is made the weapon to break our heads with." —(*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 63.)

Friend or foe? Or friend and foe? The anomaly remains to this day. Science knows little of Theosophy, and on principle would not recognize it as an acceptable source of knowledge. On the other hand, Theosophical study includes science as one of its main components. The index to *The Secret Doctrine* confirms this, if confirmation is called for; and of course the Theosophical Society's second object explicitly encourages the study of science.

Surveying the past hundred years, a case could be made that these two schools of thought are closer now than ever before. Closer, yes, but not that close. There is still a wide gap between the two, and there is a fundamental reason why.

In general, it has to be acknowledged that the majority of the differences between Theosophy and Science will never be resolved while their objects and methods are so basically different. Science depends exclusively on the inductive course of reasoning, i.e., proceeding from particulars to universals. Theosophy also employs this system, but complements it with the deductive mode, siding with Plato in his insistence on proceeding from universals to particulars. Then again, Science limits its field of observation to the physical plane only; Theosophy takes in all planes from matter to spirit. Until Science is liberalized, the two will remain distant from each other.

Modern scientists have this advantage over the students of Theosophy: that within the relatively narrow limits of their field of study they are able, and indeed required and expected, to check and recheck experiments that provide data from which theories are developed. Most present Theosophical aspirants, however, have at their command

only imperfect or still latent faculties with which to investigate 'meta-scientific' postulates, let alone universals. Certain ideas — especially those pertinent to the sciences — that were promulgated in early Theosophical literature, have therefore either to be taken on trust, or held in abeyance until the means of testing them are individually perfected.

Occasionally, unexpected temporary bridges are put up, when new scientific data supports Theosophical ideas. But the latter have been on record for over a century, and surely it is of no little significance that the Theosophical position has remained unchanged over that period, and science has taken that long to reach a similar one in certain specific cases.

Under the 'meta-scientific' heading could be classified certain statements made a hundred or more years ago by Madame Blavatsky or her teachers. A recent example should give both schools something to think about.

The relative proximity of Halley's Comet to planet Earth early in 1986 prompted astronomers and astrophysicists to mount a special research effort before, during and after the event. The data thus obtained is now being studied, resulting in no few surprises. One chemical analysis in particular revealed "that the ratio between Carbon 12 and Carbon 13 in Halley differs from all other solar system objects examined, including terrestrial and lunar rocks, meteorites and the atmospheres of the large planets." (This statement by astronomer Dr. Susan Wyckoff of the Arizona State university, explaining the results of her research, is from a report in the *Calgary Herald*, March 31, 1989.

The strong implication here is that Halley's chemical content includes material unknown in the solar system. This has an interesting correlation with an assertion made by H.P.Blavatsky in 1883. An English member of the Society (Frederick W.H.Myers) had submitted to her as Editor of *The Theosophist* a number of technical questions prompted by his reading of *Esoteric Buddhism*. In content these ranged from scientific to historical. Obviously much effort went in to the replies, some of which were written by T. Subba Row.

Included in some general remarks which preceded the answers, Blavatsky made some comments on the astronomy of her day, and observed that "So far, it has been unable to discover with any approach to certainty the physical constitution of either Sun, stars, or even cometary matter." Several lines later she went on:

The essence of cometary matter must be — and the 'Adepts' say is — *totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which the greatest chemists and physicists of the Earth are familiar* — all recent hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding...

Occultists have asserted and go on asserting daily the fallacy of judging the essence by its outward manifestations,... the physical constitution of Sun, stars and comets by our terrestrial chemistry and the matter of our own planet.

—H.P.Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, V, 147-8 (Author's italics.)

In *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 85, she also suggested external nature in other Solar systems differs from our own.

Citing "The essence of cometary matter..." statement in *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. went on to say:

And even that matter, during rapid passage through our atmosphere, undergoes a certain change in its nature. Thus not alone the elements of our planets, but even those of all its sisters in the Solar System differ as widely from each other in their combinations, as from the Cosmic elements beyond our Solar limits." (*S.D.* I, 142)

To a student of occultism, far more important that the fact itself will be the answer to the question: how did Blavatsky (or perhaps her mentors) know cometary matter is of a different chemical composition from that in other bodies in our solar system ?

A supplementary question is why did she choose to make such a statement in 1883 ? At that time, astronomers had no means to check it. By publishing it, she ran the risk of ridicule, and even of being accused of bluffing.

The "cometary matter" statement was quoted in "The Comet Cometh" (*The Canadian Theosophist*, Nov-Dec 1985, p. 98) The writers of that article commented: "This is one of the questions for which there should be more conclusive answers before this time next year." Their timing was out, but at least they spotted a potential item of exciting interest which might emerge from the Halley research.

Dr. Wyckoff's team will be looking at other comets as they approach close enough to the earth for detailed study. Their findings may or may not give added confirmation to Blavatsky's assertion about cometary matter.

Certainly, there are many statements scattered through the early Theosophical writings that would have been incredible, nay, *inconceivable* to scientifically minded readers a hundred years ago. But as modern science gathers more and more facts, and is — usually reluctantly — forced to reject or modify old theories, the less fantastic some of the statements by H.P.Blavatsky and her teachers appear to modern readers. Curiously, several of them pertain to astronomy in one way or another.

Until relatively recently, the average intelligent though skeptical reader would have felt justified in describing some of those statements as nonsensical. Consider, for example, how such a reader might have reacted in 1923 when *The Mahatma Letters to A.P.Sinnott* was first published. They contain a remarkable passage, written in 1882, stated in the following matter-of-fact terms:

Science will hear sounds from certain planets before she see them. This is a prophesy. (p.170)

It was a prophesy indeed — remarkably fulfilled seventy or more years later with the development of radio astronomy. But to the 1923 reader (to say nothing of the original recipient of the letter in 1882) the statement would have been next to meaningless. Radio was then in its infan-

cy, and the electronic techniques necessary to design and construct radio "telescopes" were still nearly thirty years and a world war away.

Another example is the statement that the true colour of the sun is blue (*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings XII*, 548fn.) — confirmed by the early astronauts. (And unconfirmable until space exploration began.)

Yet another: that the moon is older than the earth (*S.D.* II, 64), supported by rock samples brought back from the moon.

Not to belabor the point, but these examples should be sufficient to alert intelligent readers to the fact that over a hundred years ago a few individuals possessed information unknown to science at the time. Then too, there is every indication they knew much more than they told, and gave out hints only.

The modern Theosophical teaching was new to the world of a hundred years ago yet it has a timeless quality. New students rightly want to know how dependable it is. Today, they can be referred to the old saying, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. *The Secret Doctrine* reads exactly the same in 1989 as it did in 1889. It requires no apology, no commentary, and remarkably little correction. The exciting ideas, the awe-inspiring theories, have weathered the remarkable scientific discoveries of this century, and in many instances are comparatively more credible to the scientific establishment today than when written.

Little by little, Science and Theosophy move closer together. Perhaps in not too many centuries hence, a leading scientist will have to admit that "Modern Theosophy is our best ally."

—*The Canadian Theosophist*, May-June 1989

The Parable of the Pudding

[From an Ancient Scripture]

Kenneth Morris

1. WHEREUNTO shall I liken him that heareth the Doctrine, and sayeth, Nay, Sirs; but give us proof, give us proof!

2. He is like unto a man that had great riches, and was anhungered;

3. And he called unto his household; and they got them about: and brought unto him a Pudding in a lordly dish.

4. Noble was she of dimensions; beautiful of aspect: in all things conforming with the laws and principles of Universal Puddingdom.

5. And his heart was lifted up within him, and he rejoiced: saying, Now, verily, shall the hungry be filled.

6. Then came Satan and whispered in his ear: How knowest thou if the Pudding be good?

7. And he tore his raiment in his grief, and clad him in sackcloth and ashes; and went and sat upon the refuse-heap.

8. And he called unto him men learned in the law; and saith unto this one, Sir, be thou for the plaintiff; and unto that, Be thou for the defendant: that is, the Pudding.

9. And he paid them mighty fees: shekels of silver many; and jewels; and raiment.

10. And they took the matter before the judge; and called unto them witnesses to bear testimony.

11. They called unto them the parlor-maid, and examined her; and she answered and said, She is good; I brought her from the kitchen to the parlor.

12. And they called the cook, and she bore witness, saying, Verily the Pudding is good.

13. With lofty ingredients I compounded her: suet from the cow; eggs from the hen; raisins from a far country: according to the laws of Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book, which cannot be altered.

14. Then called they men from the far country, and they said, We grew the grapes in our vineyard, and dried them in the sun: the Pudding is good.

15. And they said, The case is against the Pudding unless the Cow gave evidence: wherefore they called unto them the Cow that gave the suet; but she came not, seeing she was dead.

16. And they said, The case is against the Pudding unless the hen bear witness; and they called unto them the hen that laid the eggs, and examined her, yea, and cross-examined her.

17. But she had an impediment in her speech, which caused her to cluck foolishly; and no man could interpret her answers.

18. And strife and hatred arose amongst them; and quietness of mind was with none, save only with the Pudding. And there was like to be war in Israel.

19. Now when they had disputed among themselves many years, even till the rich man's substance was wasted,

20. The jury returned their verdict, saying, It is not proved that she is good; let the Pudding pay the costs.

21. Then Allah endowed the Pudding with voice, and she spake unto her master: yea, she spake with courteous humility:

22. Saying, Sir, hadst thou eaten of me at first, thou wouldst have known that I am good.

23. But he heard her not: being a long time dead of his hunger.

—*Lucifer, the Light Bringer*, Sept. 1932

Items of Interest and a Note From the Editor

We first include, for their historical relevance, several items inadvertently omitted from our last issue:

Subba Row Medal Awarded Virginia Hanson

"Virginia Hanson has been awarded the Subba Row medal in recognition of her contribution to theosophical literature, including *Masters and Men* and *The Readers' Guide to the Mahatma Letters*. The medal was established in 1883 in honor of T.Subba Row, a learned Vedantin and early member of the Theosophical Society who was closely associated with H.P.Blavatsky during her residency in India.

"Mrs. Hanson was senior editor for Quest Books and editor of *The American Theosophist* for a number of years. She also created the new members' letters program. Since 1975 she has been resident at the Krotona Institute in Ojai, where she was active for several years teaching classes at the Krotona School."

—*The American Theosophist*, May/June 1990

The Perennial Wisdom: Fundamental Teachings of H.P.Blavatsky

The Los Angeles Center for Theosophic Studies has prepared this video program, available now for \$24.95. It "draws from Blavatsky's major works to explain what occultism means, its philosophical and ethical basis, as well as how Blavatsky intended this knowledge to be applied."

Section 1: A discussion of the four fundamentals upon which the modern Theosophical Movement is based, and a brief historical background of the T.S.

Section 2: Core concepts of HPB's teachings on the underlying unity in life, cycles, karma, reincarnation, the nature of man, and after-death states.

Section 3: The ethics of Theosophy, with emphasis on the importance of balancing study with practical application.

A study guide accompanies this 72 minute video.

For video or study guide write to: Los Angeles Center for Theosophic Studies, P.O.Box 3727, Los Angeles, Calif. 90079.

Frankfurt Convention (for all Theosophists)

From Helga Rex, Convenor: "The Convention is over and we are very happy about its success." And from Wilfried Goltz (Berlin): "The National Convention of German Theosophists, was international in certain degrees, and a big success, better than at Wurzburg last year. It was good to note that all groups brought their best speakers...." From Willy Schmit (The Hague): "The Convention at Frankfurt from 11-13 May and for all Theosophists in Germany, was ably and charmingly presided over by Helga Rex. The lectures were far better than before. There was also representation from Point Loma oriented groups from Nurnberg

and from Berlin, Irmgard Scheithauer and Renate Behrenbeck giving excellent addresses.

"Der Weg zur Wahrheit" (The Approach to Truth)

We note with appreciation that Chapter one, titled above in G. de Purucker's *Man in Evolution*, is included in German translation among the other excellent articles in the January 1990 issue of *Theosophie Heute*. (formerly *The Higher Life*). We note particularly this is a translation of the unedited original edition of that volume issued at Point Loma, and we feel it important that new readers in Germany should have G. de P.'s own unedited words, especially in this opening chapter.

"Subjects for Discussion"

Under the above title the ULT of Los Angeles has issued a useful 71 page booklet for study of "Forum Answers" given originally in the *Forum* from May 1895 through March 1896, published under the direction of W.Q.Judge.

Subjects covered: The Fourfold Lower Man; Rebirth and Pre-existence; Theosophy applied to life; Karma or Compensation; Spiritualism and Theosophy; Yoga, Death; The Astral Light; Masters and Chelas, Devachan; Hypnotism; The Fundamental Propositions of 'Secret Doctrine'; Cycles; The Theosophical Movement; Antaskarana; Buddhism; Mediumship; The Third Object of the Society; Zoroastrianism; Intuition.

Order from Theosophy Company, 245 West 33rd St., Los Angeles, California 90007.

"Unsolved Riddle"

We regret omission of reference for the article above title in July-August *Eclectic*. It was a reprint from 'On the Lookout', *Theosophy*, published by The Theosophy Company (ULT). In current theosophical periodicals 'On the Lookout' provides invaluable theosophical light on current trends, research, and historical events.

Interested in Theosophical History ?

Do you know the fascinating history of Theosophy over 100 years ago in America ? Read in *The Canadian Theosophist*, beginning with Jan.-Feb. 1989, and still running, the series "Studies in Early American Theosophical History" by Michael Gomes. It starts with "Elbridge Gerry Brown and the Boston 'Spiritual Scientist'"; "Initial Spiritualist Response to H.P.B."; "THE Ante- and Post-Natal History of The Theosophical Society"; "Colonel Olcott and the American Press: 187"; and (in the May-June 1990 issue) "R.B.Westbrook's 'Reminiscences of Original American Theosophists.'" And there's more and more to follow.

“Theosophy Versus Neo-Theosophy”

Margaret Thomas' book (titled above) came out in England over half a century ago. Most of it was reprinted in Victor Endersby's *Theosophical Notes* serially from December 1952 through October 1953. A valuable service has now been rendered by Isis Books (M-793 Road 7, Napoleon, Ohio 43545), of which Mark Jaqua is publisher. “A bound, xerox reprint”, as he describes it, it is largely a reprint from Endersby's publication: a comparison of basic theosophical teachings given in *The Mahatma Letters* and in HPB's works with those of C.W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant, and C. Jinarajadasa. Some of the subjects covered are: The Teaching of Logos or Deity or God; On Religion; on Jesus and the Christ Principle; Churches and Priests; ‘Absolution’ and ‘Confession’ through ‘Apostolic Succession’; Vicarious Atonement; The Sacraments; On Ceremonial; The “Coming” Messiah or Lord Maitreya or World Teacher; Formation of Earth-Chain; Mars-Mercury Teachings; Teaching on Lower Kingdoms Versus “Group Souls”; Death; Sleep; Devachan; Memory.

“A comparison of C.W. Leadbeater's *The Chakras* with the writings of H.P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge, and G. de Purucker, adds a valuable chapter, and Boris de Zirkoff's article “Two Schools of Thought” from *Theosophia*, Summer 1971 is included. Order from: Mark Jaqua, P.O. Box 121, Waterville, Ohio 43566, \$7.00 postpaid. (also \$7.00 surface rate overseas).

Theosophical Network Directory

32 pages of useful information listing Theosophical Societies and Organizations around the world, National Sections and Branches, from A (Argentina) to almost Z (Yugoslavia). Also Publications and Publishers, and individuals with addresses and often phone numbers. The Network is not affiliated with any theosophical organization. It is an independent not-for-profit endeavor, but since subscriptions do not cover cost of printing and postage financial support is appreciated. Annual subscription: \$10.00 (for overseas by Air add \$10.00). Address: Theosophical Network, Rick Nurrie, Editor, P.O. Box 155, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402, USA.

The Editor Responds

A correspondent in several appeals has urged the editor of *E.T.* to speak out more clearly and say what he thinks about G. de Purucker. Here is my answer to a recent letter. —Ed.

It is not important what I think; or even, if I may be permitted to say so, what people think about G. de P. What is important is what they think about what G. de P. wrote and said. And let me remind you here of what I have quoted before in our bi-monthly, words of Trevor Barker (compiler

of *The Mahatma Letters*) in his introductory Preface to G. de P.'s *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*:

...It is a fact, paradoxical though it may seem to some, that no teaching calling itself Theosophical will bear the test of a thoroughly impartial investigation, unless it is consistent with the teaching of H.P. Blavatsky; and this precisely because her writings bear the stamp of consistency with the recorded teachings of all the great Sages and Seers of Antiquity. Herein lies the strength of Dr. de Purucker, not only in this work, but in his other writings.

That is the simple answer, and every Theosophist ought to know it. Of course at our human stage human personalities color our thought. Too much so. The personality is the instrument. The Teaching is the Life. Test the Teaching. Forget the persona. Go even beyond and within the words if possible and get the basic spirit within them, the essence of the teaching itself. I knew G. de P. well, as I was a student of his School. I knew Katherine Tingley well, as I was a child and growing to maturity in her School. I have had ample opportunity, a lifetime, to test what they taught, what they represented. I refer you to what Boris de Zirkoff said of KT (“Katherine Tingley As I Knew Her”, *Theosophia*, Spring issue 1979). I echo this same thought. And as to G. de P. I have more than once quoted the words of HPB in her Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine*, p. xxxix:

...One turn of the key, and no more, was given in “Isis”. Much more, is explained in these volumes. In those days the writer hardly knew the language in which the work was written, and the disclosure of many things, freely spoken about now, was forbidden. In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called Gupta-Vidya, and that like the once-mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found.

Let me add that I knew over many years many at Point Loma, stalwart characters, dedicated, devoted. I could name the rollcall. In thought they are my daily companions — for what they stood for, for what they did. And Point Loma — history will some day reveal — was needed at the time it existed. As far as G. de P. goes, as I've written before, he lived a life of rigid discipline from 1903 on when he arrived at PL. When the time came for him to “take over” he was ready. He was there. He taught. And his words are on record for those who wish to study. You surely must know my opinion: a Teacher was among us, the one to whom HPB pointed. But why press this upon friends of other Theosophical Societies? Much today is being done in the way of theosophical cooperation. Let that grow wisely. When the time is ripe though there will be perhaps many sub-branches of the great Theosophical Movement, there will be a strong solid trunk of the Tree of Theosophy, holding firmly to truth, rooted in the Teachings given from the Masters — and G. de P. unequivocally will be recognized as a historical part of that Tree.

There is no dogma in Theosophy. But, tantalizing paradox, there are the Teachings. Each individual "takes" what he can. Each individual tests and comes to conclusions. And each individual "becomes" what he is.... I think I have said enough. — W.E.S.

From Letters Received

Erica Lauber, London — Dr. Radha Burnier was invited by the "Soviet Writers' Union" and the organization "Peace Through Culture" to Moscow and Leningrad, where she talked to great crowds inspite of no or little advertising. They have already an H.P.B. Exhibition and want to make the next year "H.P.B. International Year"; but this latter is only a plan so far. She gifted 5000 offset copies of the S.D. (already extant in Russian). It seems 50,000 copies or so are required. Altogether, the European Federation (TS Adyar) is forging ahead with remaking links with most countries hitherto behind the Iron curtain ... The theme for the recent meetings in Holland, which Dr. Radha Burnier had instigated and programmed (1 week for Gen. Secs., many from outside Europe; and 1 week for younger workers), had for its theme: "Human Regeneration and Inner Transformation, The Essential Work of the Theosophical Society." — We have also listed this challenging theme for discussions at our Summer School.

Dick Slusser, Boulder, Colorado — As you have observed, the winds of change seem to be blowing over the fields of the theosophical movement. I just returned from the T.S.A. (Adyar) conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, where the impulse of change is apparent. A young theosophist, John Crocker, from the Missoula, Montana Lodge gave a talk on the topic of the T.S. in the 21st century in which he charges that the present movement (at least the Adyar part of it) with its membership of only 5000 in a country of 250 million is utterly ineffectual and is failing in its mandate from the Masters to be "nucleus of universal brotherhood," or to present the Ancient Wisdom as given through H.P.B. Barely one in ten of the man on the street, he charges, has even heard of theosophy. Personally, I think the figure is closer to one in a hundred. At the evening rap-session we brainstormed our visions of what we would like to see in the movement by the year 2000.

Crocker's ideas include such things as getting the T.S. actively involved with current moral issues addressed by organizations such as Amnesty International, etc., in order to become relevant in today's world. He suggested that we might act as host for conferences on such topics. I liked these proposals but at the same time I am concerned lest we lose sight of our basic theosophical teachings which are our reason for existing as a movement. For this reason, I feel strongly that work such as Joe Fulton proposes must proceed simultaneously.

While Crocker's comments are directed specifically at the Adyar T.S. in A., I think they have implications for the Movement as a whole. He is asking us to take a hard look at ourselves as theosophists and examine whether we are fulfilling our duty as laid out by the Masters.

You may have noticed that I am currently placing more emphasis on the writings of Judge. I am beginning to realize the value of his writings because of his fidelity to the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters and am impressed by his occult insight. Early on, I was only aware of his *Ocean of Theosophy* and unaware of his voluminous writings elsewhere — as in *The Path*. While in India last winter, I was saddened to see a complete lack of recognition, among Adyar theosophists, of the position of Judge as an equal co-founder with H.P.B. and H.S.O. and of his contributions to theosophy. I recently purchased two volumes of Judge's writings from The Theosophy Co., U.L.T., in Los Angeles.

As you point out, and as I have come to realize, the consciousness of the Masters is present as much here in America as in India and just because we have no objective evidence of their presence it does not follow that They are not watching, listening and "throwing out suggestions on the mental plane so that seeking and receptive minds may use them."

Abhinyano, Lakeside, California — Have you seen the article by John Crocker, "TS 2001: A Blueprint for Restructuring", in *The American Theosophist*, July/August 1990? It calls for aggressive reply. Mr. Crocker's 'restructuring' (Perestroika) recommendations would hasten the death of original Theosophy.... Crocker says that the TS should cooperate with the (pseudo) Rosicrucians, the (pseudo) Masons, the Lucis Trust (and other New Age groups); but he does not mention the mother of Theosophy, namely the Esoteric Buddhism (!) or Gupta Vidya of the Eastern Spiritual Hierarchy and White Brotherhood with a single word. He wants a 'Western Neo-theosophy'! But cut yourself from the roots, and you will die! And thus original and Eastern Theosophy is being forced out of the Society by our enemies. There may be a 'body' which calls itself Theosophy, but the spirit is gone! Consequently the 'Brotherhood' has inaugurated a new thrust toward the West by sending the Dalai Lama and his monks to establish new Buddhist groups. Original Theosophy will not die. The mission will go on!

Joseph E. Ross, El Montecito Oaks Press, Santa Barbara, Calif. — In the July/August issue, J.H. Dubbink criticizes *Krotana of Old Hollywood*, Vol. I as "a great deception." He cited the appearance in the Index "nine times the 'Second Coming of the Christ' as a serious topic" and objects to the omission of HPB's teaching

that the "first coming" was not an actual occurrence in a physical body. Further, he labels the belief in the Second Coming "a collection of mayavic ideations."

In my opinion, a historian ideally should report, to the best of his knowledge and ability, what happened during the period of his study and such thoughts of the persons involved as are expressed in their writings and actions. He need not comment on the validity of those ideas or activities.

Much of the motivation of the Krotona colony centered around preparing the way for the coming — influencing the public, by education, lectures, art, drama, ritual and literature, to be receptive to the message of the coming World Teacher. That the book simply documents this fact is no deception.

To bring up HPB's considering the first coming as "a figure of speech and not as a historical fact," however correct she may be, I believe, is outside the legitimate function of a historian, unless he wishes, as some do, to air his own views. Perhaps it was a result of "mayavic ideations" that many early theosophists accepted the Second Coming as fact. But many did not, as evidenced by the one referenced on p.188 of my book, that "she did not believe in the coming of the Christ as taught by the T.S. now."

With regard to the Foreword, "From Krotona Today," Dubbink apparently wishes to bury the past in oblivion, as if he fears today's young people cannot stand too much truth. The whole tenor of modern psychology, and indeed, of the most advanced educational practices, is that to understand the present we must understand the past.

Though nothing remains the same for even a billionth of a second, HPB in her commentaries on the Stanzas says a "person or thing ... is composed of the sum of all its various and changing conditions from its appearance in material form to its disappearance from the earth." The events of old Krotona are part of the "sum-total" of Krotona today, and thus may be called theosophical. Even more so can Volume II be called theosophical as it deals with the years 1914-21, when Krotona was also the headquarters of the American Section.

I make no apology for the facts presented in the book other than to say it was my attempt to show, as Radha Burnier says, p. xiv, "the activities of the Society from the earliest years were such as to encourage change in contemporary thought and situations." Also, as stated in my Introduction, p. xii, I have endeavored "to carefully observe, but withhold judgment" concerning Krotona history.

Book Review

Letters That Have Helped Me by William Q. Judge; Books I & II. Semicentennial Edition 1946 — Reprint 1989; Theosophy Comany (India), Theosophy Hall, 40 New Marine Lines, Bombay 400 020; pp. 131, Price Rs.87.

This is a compilation of letters written by W.Q. Judge (1851-96), one of the founding members of the Theosophical Society. While Book I contains fifteen letters, Book II has twenty-two and also certain extracts on four classified subjects. The compiler feels that "As the theosophical movement gathers new momentum, fresh recruits may be added by those letters that so greatly sustained me, or encouraged by some co-partnership of thought, and that, too, in the real issue confronting them." The contents of the letters elucidate the theosophical principles and are full of practical hints for adoption with benefit.

An aspirant must "undergo a long preliminary training in knowledge, self-control, and the subjugation of the lower nature before he would be in any way fit for instruction on the higher planes." Sufficient caution is sounded that one should have a right conception of Theosophy and Occultism.

Compiled by Thomas Green and Jasper Niemand, the letters are of all-time value and need to be studied by every student of philosophy. References to certain scriptures and theosophical texts provide much food for reflection. The book will decidedly help one obtain the needed right perception.

—Yensiare, in *The Theosophist*, Adyar, August 1990

To Merge With The Totality of the Cosmos

The relative autonomy of organisms usually increases with their complexity, and it reaches its culmination in human beings. This relative concept of free will seems to be consistent with the views of mystical traditions that exhort their followers to transcend the notion of an isolated self and become aware that we are inseparable parts of the cosmos in which we are embedded. The goal of these traditions is to shed all ego sensations completely and, in mystical experience, merge with the totality of the cosmon.

—Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, p. 270

... I believe that the world-view implied by modern physics is inconsistent with our present society, which does not reflect the harmonious interrelatedness we observe in nature. To achieve such a state of dynamic balance, a radically different social and economic structure will be needed: a cultural revolution in the true sense of the word. The survival of our whole civilization may depend on whether we can bring about such a change.

—Closing lines of the same book.

Contributions

Since our last reporting in May/June, the following contributions have been received, and here gratefully acknowledged: G.C., \$250.00; R.J.M., \$21.38; E.S., \$266.33; D.P., \$11.50; J.D.P., \$5.00; German Arbeitskreis, \$588.20; M.N., \$20.00; S.G., \$6.00; D.C., \$20.00; R.K., \$50.00; J.v.d.S. \$17.50.

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