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Editor: Harriet T. Felix, 4 Ritchie Place, Chicago, Ill.

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The Birth of the Christ

Night broods over the old, gray city of King David. The winds have gone to rest in the fragrant underbrush at the hill-side; the shepherds of the plains of Rephaim lean drowsily against their tall staffs, as their fathers did when the little son of Jesse was one of them. And the sheep lay asleep around their keepers as their forbears had done so many times when the ruddy boy of beautiful countenance, the future King of Judea and of Israel, watched them. And the solemn stars twinkle in the sky, now as then.

Beneath the big olive tree, according to tradition planted by Jehoshua, the son of Nun, the conqueror of Canaan, sits a man motionless, meditating. There he has been sitting since the sun went down. A few cattle lay around him, chewing the cud and dreaming dreams.

The midnight hour comes and brings with it a stillness, as if suddenly every living being had in great expectation ceased to breathe. Slowly a golden light appears around the head of the man under the olive tree. It grows bigger and more beautiful for every moment; currents of radiant lilac and clearest sapphire blue and brightest rosy red appear in the golden aureole like sparkling jewels of liquid fire, and soft strains of music begin to fill the air.

And the shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks, shake off their drowsiness; for they hear the harmonies, and the glory of the Lord shines around them. And lo, the Messenger of Jehovah comes upon them; and they are sore afraid. And the Messenger speaks and says unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all peo-

ple. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you: Ye shall find the new-born wrapped in the hair-cloth of Ebionim, resting among the cattle of the field." And suddenly there is with the Messenger a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

And the shepherds go toward Bethlehem; and they come to the hoary olive tree, and they see the man sitting there, wrapped in the hair-cloth of Ebionim, resting among the cattle of the field. And they see the light that shines around him, and they say: "Verily, if this be the new-born Savior and Christ the Lord, how big to our untrained eyes the babe appears to be." And they worship in the simplicity of their hearts and go back to watch their flocks.

The day before there had come wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him." And the scribes and the priests answered: "In Bethlehem in the land of Juda you have to seek him according to the Scriptures. For thus it is written by the prophet Micah: 'And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda are not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel!'"

When they heard this, their hearts were thankful, and they turned toward Bethlehem. And lo, the star which they had seen in the East reappeared and went before them, till it came and stood where the man wrapped in the hair-cloth of Ebionim sat under the old olive tree. When they see the star they rejoice with exceeding great joy. And when they see the man in the garb of the poor sitting in deep meditation, they say: "This is the one whose star we saw in the East. This is the fifteenth day of the month of Tybi of the Egyptians and also the fifteenth day of the month of Dharbitu of the Chaldeans, the month of Papsuccal, the Messenger of the Gods. And lo, this man was born a Master in the midnight hour of the Virgin; therefore he is the son of the Virgin and the Messenger of Heaven." And they fall down and worship. And when they open their treasures they present unto him gifts: gold and frankincense, and myrrh. And then they depart into their country another way.

And the new Master, Jehoshua, the son of Pandira, the disciple of Jehoshua, the son of Perachia, comes out of his contemplation when the morning sun greets him from the East. And he sees the gifts presented to him by the wise men, and he receives them for the sake of the poor and he says: "What you have done to the least of my brethren, that you have done to me."

Thus came the spirit of the Christ into the blessed Master from Galilee. And at Christmas tide it behooves us to remember, that the Galilean Master is a Brother and a Helper as before—now and forever.

JACOB BONGGREN.

Do you not know great and rare men who cannot have become what they are at once, in a single human instance? Who must have often existed before in order to have attained that purity of feeling, that instinctive impulse for all that is true, beautiful and good; in short, that elevation and natural supremacy over all around them?

HERDER

Steadfastness.

In the days when the Apostle to the Gentiles bade the Corinthians, to whom he was writing, to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," human nature was evidently much the same as it is to-day; and St. Paul, wise man and knower of men that he was, as well as saint, recognized the danger which is apt to follow exaltation and heights of even devotional emotion—that of reaction. If we read the chapter—the fifteenth of the epistle to the Corinthians—in which this verse is found, we notice that the latter follows a shout of victory. Hence its peculiar significance. The law of action and reaction is always and everywhere operative, a fact which however we may recognize intellectually, we sometimes forget in its application to every day life.

This is a law which, like all laws, affects organizations as well as individuals, hence the care that needs be exercised after a period of spiritual uplift—of what may be termed "spiritual victory"—that our energies do not flag, that our zeal does not tire, and that we do not fall to a point correspondingly below the normal as previously we were spiritually elevated above it. Devotion is not measured by emotional ecstasy of the moment, or even by intellectual fervor given to a cause, but rather by that steadfastness which is immovable, turned aside neither by criticism, ridicule nor opposition, nor by discouragement at apparent failure of effort. What above all things is needed to make a spiritual movement a success, a factor in the molding of civilization—not an ephemeral thing of a day—is this fixity of purpose, this moral per-

sistence. This means a high ideal, a lofty standard, to which, without flinching, each must hold himself, but it is the only means of effective service, this rising above being swayed by the "pairs of opposites."

The necessity for steadfastness, for constancy, for fidelity, is pointed out by occultists of every age and every land; by none more emphatically than by the leaders and teachers of the Theosophical Society, and only as the members hold this ideal steadily before them and mold their lives into conformity with it, will the Society remain the great channel for spiritual out-pouring for which it was designed by those who stand behind it. The Theosophical Society is no place for the "infirm of purpose," for weaklings, for the easily discouraged, for those who measure success by the result of the day, or for those whose love and interest flag where there is no immediate incentive to urge to action.

The injunction to steadfastness is perhaps nowhere more needed than in America, where we, with our highly strung nervous organization, sensitive to every impact from without—from the world invisible as well as visible—are too prone, figuratively speaking, to go hither and yon, seeking some new sensation, some new mental stimulus. Let us "prove all things," if we will, but "hold fast to that which is good."

The future of our Society depends upon ourselves, upon our vigor, our steadfastness, our fidelity to our work, not on "Karma," in the sense in which unfortunately that is now too often used. Karma is no fatalism. It is we—we, who are co-operators with the Will which moves universes—who make or mar our own Karma and that of the Society with which we are connected.

JANET B. MCGOVERN.

What is Theosophy?

(Written for the Inter-Ocean by Annie Besant.)

This word, which is so much on the lips of people in America and in England, covers a wide field of thought—so wide a one that to many it carries with it a sense of indefiniteness. Yet both historically and philosophically, it has a very clearly defined meaning and has always covered the same fundamental ideas. It is the very opposite of agnosticism, and affirms where agnosticism denies. Where the scientific thinkers of the latter half of the nineteenth century declared man's impotency before the deepest problems of the universe, inasmuch as he could not observe them by his senses nor master them by his reason, Theosophy asserts its competency to solve them, declaring that beyond the senses and the reason is the spirit, and that the spirit is one in essence with the cosmic life and can know that life by virtue of a common nature. Hence Theosophy is positive where agnosticism is negative, and reaffirms in the modern world the gnosis which lent its splendor to Greek philosophy and gave to it its imperishable immortality. Theosophy and its gnosis are identical and both assert that man's nature is spiritual as well as intellectual and sensuous and that the spirit, being divine, can pierce to every secret of a universe which is but an expression of divine thought, so surely can the spirit plumb the deepest mysteries of being, for to the eye of the spirit "Nature has no veil in all her kingdoms!" That man can know God because he is God incarnate, that he can know every realm of nature because he is one with that nature's Emanator, that is the gnosis, that is Theosophy in its essence.

Man's nature is composite; he is a spiritual intelligence, evolving for his own wearing and use garments of matter. These garments are composed of different densities of matter and he draws from each of the great material kingdoms of the universe some of its characteristic material and weaves it into his own material wrapping. Each layer of matter puts him into touch with the cosmic kingdom to which it belongs, and as he organizes each layer into an instrument of consciousness he becomes aware of the phenomena of that kingdom and comes into touch with them. The first layer to be thoroughly organized is the densest—that of physical matter—and the senses and the brain form his apparatus for knowing the physical world; by these he studies his environment and learns to understand it, and, in proportion as he understands, he masters it. The greatest part of mankind today are still busy in mastering physical nature.

But man, as he advances, becomes conscious of other needs than the cravings of the physical body; he seeks to love and to be loved, he craves the society of his fellows, he needs beauty and creates art; the next, another layer of matter is being organized to bring him into touch with subtler objects of desire, with keener forms of pleasure and of pain; in the artist this part of the material garment is becoming more definitely organized and he becomes dimly aware of forms fairer than his physical eyes can see, of sounds sweeter than his physical ears can hear. Watts paints forms which none have seen; Wagner produces cadences which none have heard. "The artist's fancy," you say. Aye, but that fancy is the spiritual intelligence working in matter

finer than the physical. Question Mortimer Menpes as to the colors which he sees, with their strange, luminous, transience, and you will find that he is seeing colors beyond the physical range and is vainly striving to convey on canvas with his pigments the glories that he sees but cannot reproduce. Our highest artists in color and sound are those who are reducing into a responsive apparatus the second layer of matter which makes the garment of the spiritual intelligence—the real man.

The intellectual genius is the type which represents the organization of the next finer layer of matter in the clothing of man. Through that subtler medium the intelligence shines out more brilliantly, and, with the better organizing of that medium, the radiance of the genius becomes more splendid.

Theosophy has for each of these layers of matter its own proper name, and the organizing processes are carefully defined in its teachings, but here the broad results are given, the types of evolving humanity gradually shaping what we may call the action body, the psychic body, the spiritual body, for the use of the spirit, who is man.

This long process of evolution by which its cosmic consciousness becomes individualized, and then expands without loss of its individuality, of course necessitates immense periods of time. No human life can contain that process between one birth and death, and reincarnation is the method of evolution. Continuity of matter for the evolving of bodies, continuity of consciousness for the unfolding of spirit. The one is the complement of the other. Both are necessary for the perfecting of man. The results of each life are handed on

to its successor, and the experience during the earth-life is transmuted into faculty during the heaven-life. When the experiences are thoroughly transmuted into faculties, the man returns to earth with his increased powers and passes through more experiences, to be similarly transmuted after death—his return into the heavenly world. Thus he grows toward perfection and the end is sure.

Theosophy must not be confined to the Theosophical society nor regarded as its exclusive possession. The various new thought bodies, the associations of mental scientists, and other allied forms of thought are all manifestations of the mighty spiritual impulse which is sweeping over the world, and it is clothing itself in many varied forms. Theosophy is divine wisdom and belongs to all who assimilate it, and every true Theosophist rejoices that the theosophical movement is far greater than the Theosophical society.

From "Leaves of Grass"

I know I am deathless.

I know that this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,

And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years,

I can cheerfully take it now or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths.

No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.

Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years.

Births have brought us richness and variety, and other births have brought us richness and variety.

WALT WHITMAN.

Establishing a Committee for Local Propaganda*

WELLER VANHOOK.

The Theosophical Society serves, we may easily imagine, many purposes. Some learn to govern, all must learn to obey; all should learn to learn and most should become able to teach; all should gain ability to receive with gratitude and to give with joy, as if but passing on to others that which had been given to them—and all this that having learned to do these things in one degree we may continue doing them through many lives, in greater measure, for nobler ends.

But perhaps a greater object of our Society than the development of individuals is to give to the world the divine wisdom in such ways as it is willing and able to receive it.

So the Theosophical Society was not formed for the gratification of individual desires but to train up a body of unselfish workers in the cause of humanity.

If our organization at large has for its object so great a work why was it that all Theosophical souls were not incarnated in this era in a body or in a number of bodies, compact and easily brought into contact? It must be that it was for a leavening purpose, in order to disseminate our influence in one way or another among men.

Mrs. Besant beautifully expresses the action of individual branches in this work as follows:

*At the request of the writer an invitation was sent by Mr. Ransom H. Randall, President of Chicago Branch, to all members of the Society in Chicago or its vicinity, to meet on Wednesday, October 23, 1907, for the purpose of organizing for more active local propaganda. This article is the address of the writer at that meeting.

Each Lodge is a miniature Theosophical Society, of the same nature and essence as the world-wide Society. It also is a nucleus in its own town, its own area of influence; as is the whole Society to the world. All the splendor of being a centre from which the spiritual energies stream forth belongs to each Lodge, however obscure, however small, however humble. All the dignity of this high office, all the majesty of this royal priesthood, clothes each Lodge in garments shining like the sun. We do ill to belittle our functions, to doubt our lofty calling. The good Karma of the past—some loving service and self-sacrificing effort some pure thoughts and tender deeds—have brought us into this living nucleus, and the power of the White Brotherhood pours through us, as a body, to the helping and uplifting of the world. Wherever a Lodge meets a star is shining mid the darkness of the world, and its magnetic influences stream through the atmosphere, carrying blessing wherever they go.

This belongs to us, be it remembered, *as a body*; hence our value; we are an organic whole. When a Lodge meets together, it presents an organized centre, ready to be filled with outstreaming life.

Each branch being thus an epitome of the whole, having its president, its secretary, its treasurer, its body at large, its teachers and its pupils, all members have an opportunity to do those things which they need to do for their own development.

But as the society as a whole has its karma so have the branches. As they have their embryonic period of existence, their moment of birth, their crescent months or years, their age of mature activity, their decadence and their death, we may be sure that they will have their re-incarnation in some form in future ages, when they will awaken to the possession, we hope, of more glorious bodies, wider activities and greater glories of spiritual achievement. So it is well that each branch see that its spiritual gifts to the people of its environment be unstinted.

We rejoice in the existence of healthy branches, we take involuntary delight in their doings and measure with keen appreciation the strength of their efforts. Yet we cannot look coldly on the doings of even the humblest of our lodges. We are in no position to judge them or to estimate the value of their efforts to our cause. Similarly we cannot say that an organization that is ever so short-lived has not served a useful purpose.

It is reasonable to suppose that those who have led our society to its present honorable place in the world's activities have studied the Divine Wisdom in other lives—in Atlantis perhaps, in ancient Peru and India and Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Greece, at Crotona, in Palestine, in Alexandria and perhaps have helped hold high the torch in mediaeval as well as in modern times. These we may feel sure will do much for our cause and be less likely than those of us whose training has been less prolonged and painful, to fall by the wayside before the end of the incarnation. Some have had but little of this thought before, some none at all. These may not be expected to cling so long to the work or to be so strenuously and selflessly active in it. Each of us must have had the beginning of his work at some time. And why should there not be many who are taking up the work in this life for the first time? Perhaps it is these young souls that prepare the nest, make all things ready and leave the fledglings to starve. Yet who can say that good has not been done even if their branch has had but a short life? It may be that the organization will have its more glorious future in some distant century and that then its qualities will delight us far more than those of some

branch that now makes a much greater showing.

This is no plea for the establishment of weak and ill-considered organizations. It is merely the statement that it is far better to make an honest effort than not to try.

"I hold this true what e'er befall,
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all!"

Perhaps the existence of a branch in a community for but a few months will be of incalculable service to some who pass out of life before the branch dies, to those whose whole life-thought is to be modified by what they learn or to those living in the vicinity of a center of theosophic thought. Or there may be those who will have gained enough knowledge to receive our helpers with joy after death or who, in another life, will do great things for our philosophy.

The work and the achievements of Cook County Theosophists are well known to you and are worthy of the highest commendation. For many years members of our branches have conducted open meetings at branch headquarters; visited outlying neighborhoods and cities; conducted small meetings for the intimate instruction of groups; supported trained lecturers, specialists in the teaching of Theosophy; distributed Theosophical literature; aided in the support of Theosophical periodicals; published books and pamphlets; aided in bringing Theosophical teachers from remote quarters of the world; contributed to the cost of entertaining our annual gatherings; contributed to the national funds for propaganda and aided propaganda in other ways.

These activities need no present praise. Their reward is certain and it

will accrue not only to the individuals concerned but to the branches of which they are members.

The opportunity for propaganda work in the vicinity of Chicago by the organized effort of our Cook County Branches is the subject which I wish to ask you to discuss this evening. What a marvelous field for work we have! Within a few miles of our doors are dozens of towns in which are scores of thoughtful people, many of whom are discontented with the religions or philosophies which they now have. We have millions of people quite at hand. What are we doing to get them interested in our organization? A splendid work has been done to get them started in the path of liberal thought, to get them accustomed to what thirty years ago would have been considered wild heresy—the doctrines of karma and re-incarnation. What more can we do to interest the people in our organization, to get them actually to join with us and help to bear the brunt of our glorious pioneer work?

The following plan is suggested. Please consider it, modify it if you like, or substitute another or better one for it if you wish. But I beg you to take up this activity in hearty earnest.

It is proposed that all members of the American Section living near Chicago interested in the establishment of branches within short distances of Chicago be invited to register as members of a Chicago Local Propaganda Committee. Each member by registering signifies his willingness to give time, money, effort or special talents to the work.

Let a first meeting of this committee take place after the adjournment of this meeting. Take preliminary action

and adjourn for a time, appointing a day for convening again. I suggest that you have only two officers, a secretary and treasurer, so that the committee will not be hampered by a bulky organization. An executive committee can be formed by adding to these two officers a third member.

With this slight organization, if you choose these officers carefully, you will be able to accomplish much; but choose these officers with great care.

Let the officers get the names and addresses of people who are members at-large and those who, though members of branches, would like to study theosophy without the inconvenience of traveling to Chicago to do so. Then wherever a group can be formed for study begin holding quiet study-class meetings at regular intervals. Start with no more centers than you can manage. Let sub-committees be responsible for individual centers. If Mr. A. and Mr. B. are personally acquainted with two people at, let us say, Aurora, make these two members responsible for a study-class arranged with these people. Let no appointment be broken. With the organization suggested in which are many teachers it will be possible for X or Y to take the place of A or B if for any reason the latter must miss an appointment unavoidably.

Let these study-classes be kept up until some devoted person or persons can be found who, living in the vicinity concerned, can assume the responsibility of maintaining the class, perhaps with more or less help from the original organizers from time to time.

Out of a number of such study-classes a few branches will be formed. Many of our best theosophic centers

are maintained as branches by the energy and determination of one person! These people are individuals of such force that they will not accept defeat. They search for souls that will entertain theosophic philosophy until they find them and they infuse their life constantly into the little lodge they have brought into existence. Search carefully for these devoted souls among those you meet in your study-classes and teach them how they may do this great work. You will find some who will forego the excitement, activity and interest of membership in the large branches in order to give their membership and support to new and smaller lodges. Let us encourage these people to build up local centers of activity. They will thus foster the growth of theosophic thought in localities where it is now but a name and they will, by being faithful in a few things, become worthy of ruling over many things.

The secretary-treasurer can collect small sums from time to time to pay for railway tickets which can usually be had at commutation rates.

The Propaganda Fund will supply leaflets and pamphlets for distribution.

There is in process of organization a library scheme which will aid in this work by supplying books for reference and books for temporary study. It will be well for you, however, to have a number of sets of the commonly used textbooks which can be drawn by members of the committee who take the responsibility of their return. These books should be in the hands of the secretary-treasurer.

Let every one who enters this work consider what his talents are and offer them selflessly for the work. Perhaps he can teach, possibly he has executive

power, it may be that he knows well some foreign language and can enter our foreign city neighborhoods to establish centers of study among those who would find it only dull toil to dig out our wondrous truth from its burial in a language half unknown to them.

These people can aid the General Secretary in the work, already well started, of pushing theosophy among foreign-born Americans.

In conclusion I beg you to bear in mind that this plan is suggested in no spirit of criticism of the past work of our Cook County branches and with no thought that within a few weeks we shall see lodges springing up all over the neighboring states. But it is proposed with the firm conviction that, if undertaken reverently, the effort will be blessed, and that in a few years we will see our noble tree of Cook County Theosophic activity grow wider limbs and a more generous foliage, spreading its grateful shade over a broad territory now comparatively desolate.

Theosophy in Christianity

In this age of opportunities and on this great American continent we Theosophical students owe a large debt to the Great Christian Religion here so predominant in power and prestige, else why are we enjoying all the fruits of its benign influence upon this Western civilization?

It has occurred to the writer that there is a way to pay this debt and also work for Theosophy by striving to understand the meaning and purposes of the Christian religion and fitting ourselves to think intelligently and to converse likewise on subjects common to Christianity and Theosophy.

It is commonly known among us that

the founder of the Christian religion was One sent from the Great White Lodge, and, therefore, One of the Great Teachers, the Christ.

Though the Philosophy He gave has suffered at the hands of ignorant men and the error of centuries, still the truth shines out and no man can conceive of the Christian religion as other than a great uplifting force for good.

It is overshadowed by that Personality divine so dear to us all, the Blessed Master Jesus, Who to-day watches over His Trust and ever seeks to lift up and ennoble those who worship God through faith in the Holy Christ.

It would be well, indeed, for Theosophists who are so inclined to attend Christian churches, partake of their privileges, take classes in their Sunday schools and seek in every way to increase their own knowledge and to impart it to others.

The writer fully appreciates the fact that all fellow-students are not inclined toward Christian work, and this message is, therefore, not for such as these particularly, but it is for those who have come into the Society from the Churches, and it may be for those who though not Christians wish to find some outward expression in work of their devotion for the Glorious Masters of Compassion.

Any good work is Theosophical work and particularly is this so where a religious people is to be lifted from error and lack of faith into a larger measure of the Divine Wisdom, and a closer communion with God.

If you, dear brother, can do even a little in this direction the Master Jesus will, I know, accept that little and bless you for it.

As a means to an end the writer sug-

gests that branches take up the matter seriously and look into the subject of the relation of Theosophy to Christianity.

Mrs. Besant's book on Esoteric Christianity is a mine of good things for a study class which is willing to work earnestly and a further suggestion is given below which shall be worked out in the Chicago Branch this coming winter and spring.

Subject for the year, **THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.**

Its Necessity,

Its Ideal,

Its Accomplishment.

Subdivided for convenience of study into periods.

PRE NATAL.

ANTE NICENE.

DARK AGES.

RENAISSANCE.

MODERN.

The **PRE NATAL** Period will take in the study of the governments and religions of the known world and their influence on the evolution of Humanity, from 500 B. C. to the birth of Jesus, arranged in seven lessons.

Lesson 1, India.

Lesson 2, Asia (exclusive of India and Palestine).

Lesson 3, Palestine.

Lesson 4, Egypt—Africa.

Lesson 5, Europe (exclusive of Italy and Greece.)

Lesson 6, Greece.

Lesson 7, Italy.

The other Periods will be subdivided according to the study subjects involved.

The main points ever to be kept in mind in the above plan of study is "Its Necessity" why did the Christ give us a religion?

"Its Ideal" what was the thought in the Master's mind, what was His Idea?

"Its Accomplishment" has the religion done a part or all of its work? has it fulfilled its mission?

Look at all the points with a broad Theosophical mind and ask then "is there aught I can do to help the Great One fulfill His Mission?" "Here am I Lord, send me."

DAVID S. M. UNGER.

(To be Continued.)

An Omission from the Proceedings of the American Section U. S.

Mr. F. F. Knothe, of New York, N. Y., has called the attention of the General Secretary to the omission of the names of those whom he placed in nomination, and of his remarks in nominating them, and has requested that his words be placed before our readers. His wish is hereby complied with and at the same time the General Secretary, acknowledging himself alone responsible for the omission, which was chiefly due to a desire to reduce the bulk of the Transactions, expresses his sincere regret that his action did not meet the wishes of Mr. Knothe.

On page 21, MESSENGER, October, 1907, first column, nine lines from the bottom, occurs a sentence beginning, "Remarks by Mr. Knothe, etc."

At this point please insert the following:

Mr. F. F. Knothe: I made some rough notes during the recess for fear I might not express myself well. I am not a very ready speaker.

Immediately after the election in June of this year—I mean the Presidential election—certain of the officials of the section let it become known that they would not stand for re-election at the coming convention. Several of them took the ground that a majority decision having been made against them, the majority should elect officers

in accord with the policy and views of this majority. Naturally considerable interest was evinced as to the probable succession to the General Secretaryship and other officers. Among the most conspicuous of the names mentioned was that of Dr. Van Hook of Chicago. I know that with Mr. Fullerton and myself the mention of his name was received with much satisfaction, because he seemed to possess many of the qualities that would tend to maintain the dignity of the office of General Secretary, and perhaps even increase its usefulness. Speaking for myself I was prepared to accept Dr. Van Hook's nomination and vote for him as General Secretary. About two weeks ago Mr. Fullerton showed to me the letter Dr. Van Hook had sent to him, and which is now embodied in the circular entitled "Correspondence Between Dr. Van Hook and Mr. Fullerton," a copy of which I have. I may say that it had a most saddening effect upon us, for we realized that if Dr. Van Hook published this correspondence, and then came forward as a candidate for General Secretary, we should have to oppose him. (Applause). What some of us sorely regret has come to pass; and in addition to the original letter of Dr. Van Hook to Mr. Fullerton and Mr. Fullerton's categorical reply are added utterances which amaze and still more sadden some of us who esteemed Dr. Van Hook for what we knew of his life and character. Illogical, unwarranted, mischievous are mild terms to apply to this most curious pamphlet issued by Dr. Van Hook. But when the author of the pamphlet permits his name to be presented to the convention for the highest office in its gift, it is entirely seemly for the con-

vention to have its attention called to what is involved in electing a candidate who stands on the platform very clearly implied and expressed in this violently worded circular. It is presumed that each member realizes that Dr. Van Hook again opens the door of the X case, which was closed after all the members had been given all available information, and after the decision of the last convention. Dr. Van Hook practically challenges the retiring officers of the section in their conduct of the X case. It was hoped that the affair was closed, but evidently other chapters are to follow. As one of the retiring officers of this section I accept the challenge made by the candidate for general secretary, and nominate myself as assistant General Secretary and member of the Executive Committee, unique though my action may be. I have consulted none—absolutely none, I repeat—of my associate officers as to whether they would stand with me. They know absolutely nothing of this intention of mine, nor have I consulted with any group or faction. I stand alone in presenting this matter to you, and I now invite you, my associates of the Executive Committee, to permit me to present your names as nominees for the ensuing year, reluctant as I know you to be to serving. I hope you may feel it a duty and honor to stand against that for which the Nominating Committee's candidates presumably stand in permitting their names to be placed with that of Dr. Van Hook. I therefore place in nomination for General Secretary the name of Alexander Fullerton; for members of the Executive Committee, Mrs. L. J. Hotelling, of San Francisco, Robert A. Burnett, of Chicago, D. D. Chidester, of Philadelphia, Alexander Fullerton, of New York, and Frank F. Knothe, of New York.

Notes

Dr. Winfield S. Hall, Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology, Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, in his department one of the most eminent American investigators and teachers, has promised the MESSENGER a series of articles on *The Scientific Basis of Vegetarianism*.

Professor Hall has, for long periods, practiced vegetarianism in his own home. These articles will probably appear in the early part of 1908.

Mr. C. Jinarajadasa is to lecture before New England branches during the coming winter.

Mr. Thomas Prime is to visit Fremont, St. Joseph, Topeka and Denver on his way to the Pacific Coast, where he expects to spend several months in propaganda work.

Messrs. L. W. Rogers and J. H. Talbot will be engaged during the coming months in active propaganda in some of the larger eastern cities.

At a subsequent meeting Mr. Albert Brown, of Chicago Branch, was chosen as Chairman of the Cook County Propaganda Committee and Mrs. Gussie M. Trull, of Englewood Lodge, as its Secretary-Treasurer. A suitable fund for work was at once provided by subscription. Mr. Brown and Mrs. Trull have taken up the problems offered by this work with great enthusiasm and interest. They have enrolled upon the list of the Committee a large number of Cook County members and have begun the formation of new study classes.

In order to provide a large mailing list all members of the American Section T. S. are hereby earnestly requested to mail to the General Secretary at once and from time to time hereafter as occasion may arise, the names and addresses of such intelligent, open-minded people as they know to be interested in Theosophy, though not members of our society.

Intending subscribers to The Quarterly Transactions of the International Committee for Research into Mystical Tradition are requested to kindly send their names at once. The number of copies printed will be limited to that of subscribers and no stock will be kept. Subscribers may apply for English or French copies to Mrs. G. A. Mallet, Honorary Secretary, Les Bois Des Moutiers, Varengeville sur Mer. (*Seine-in'ra*,) France.

WELLER VAN HOOK.

Children's Page

The Christmas Manikin

It was Christmas eve. The snow was falling. It lay white and soft under the tall street lamp. The wind was blowing and the little manikin sat huddled on the cross-bar. One toe was tucked in his hand, for Jack Frost had nipped it. He was watching the people. They passed beneath him; most of them hurrying, most of them happy—for this was Christmas eve.

Just now a boy was carrying a Christmas tree; and here came a man with many bundles.

The snow was making wonderful music as it fell—and under the lamp post it sparkled like jewels.

Here came an old lady. She was bent and the wind was making her shiver. The manikin noticed that unlike most of the others, she carried no bundles. She might need him! He would see—and at once he sailed down, striking her black, rough collar. Close to her face, he saw that she was not old. She had been weeping, for a tear-drop splashed upon him. He would listen to her thoughts. This is what they were saying—"What shall I do—what shall I do—dear little girl—Christmas eve, and not a single gift—not even a little one—what shall I do—poor little girl—"

The manikin had crept under her ear. He now straightened himself, stood way up on his tiptoes.

"She will not mind, Little Mother," he whispered, "she will not mind. You can tell her why. Give her love, Little Mother, give her love—love is the greatest gift in the world!"

She listened for a moment. She had gone down a side street and no one was near. The moon was beginning to shine. The snow had stopped. Everything was white and still. She had lifted her bent head and her heart suddenly had grown warm.

Yes, yes—that was it! Love, love was the greatest thing in the world! *That* she had—that she could give in abundance!

Through a dark door—into a room, and two little arms were thrown around her neck!

"It is Christmas eve! It is Christmas eve, mamma! What have you brought? Mary came and left me some mittens, and Mrs. Mowry sent me a doll, how happy I am!

"And I, my Darling, have brought you a wonderful present! It is more beautiful than anything you could dream of. It is so large that it cannot be measured. It is so marvelous that you can share it with others—and the more of it you give the more you will have. If it is real, you will forget yourself. If you treasure it you will never be sad; if you give it to others, you will always be joyous! Come to the window, my Dear One, look out at the moon. Send your gift into the world, share it with others, merry and sad. It is love, Dear, it is Love!

And the child saw that her mother's face was shining. And she knew that her own was shining, too.

The Manikin spread out his arms and sailed into the quiet night.

H T. F.

Dear Seraphita:

I am a little girl. I like Theosophy. When I am grown I hope I shall know it very well. I have a cat with pink eyes. She is white and has a long tail. There is a hole in her ear. I am sorry. What I should like to know is: Do animals become human beings?

Your loving little friend,

MARJORIE CARTER.

New York City.

Dear Marjorie:

Thank you for your beautiful letter. Your cat must give you great pleasure. Does she understand you when you talk to her? If she does and if she is fond of you, you can be sure that her soul is waking and that some time it will be developed enough to enter a human body. You help her very much by having her with you and by loving her. One of our theosophical teachers once had a cat. They were very fond of each other. After the cat had died it appeared several times to this teacher in its astral body, which shows that it must have been thinking about her.

Your Loving friend,

SERAPHITA.

In a letter from Long Beach, California, a mother writes:

"My little son says at night, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, teach me, I am thy little child.' Also that he makes a shell around himself of purity and truth as he breathes in Divine Life and breathes out Divine Love. This is studied with the jewels of obedience, with obedience comes truth, with truth love, with love Peace."

Query Department

Beginning with January Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater has kindly consented to answer questions through this Department of The Messenger.

Question: How can we teach Children Theosophy?

Answer: One of the best ways to teach children the simple truths of Theosophy, for nothing but the simple outlines can very well be attempted until they begin to read and understand for themselves, is to bring it into their lives just as most of us have been taught the main outlines of the Christian religion. They will come in touch with the usual religious teaching through their schools and their companions, and will come to their parents for explanations of the things they do not understand. There is the opportunity to give them the Theosophic interpretation of those things which are generally held by the race.

Then again, there usually comes a time in the life of every child, when they begin to ask questions as to the operation of both nature and civilization, and there is again the opportunity to bring the Theosophic explanation to bear.

In both cases, it should be given to them not as Theosophy, but as the correct explanation in answer to their questions and difficulties.

It is a good plan to make a practice of telling them a story a number of times a week, just before they go to bed, and the subjects of these stories can be varied so as to embrace almost any number of practical subjects bearing on this matter, and can be enlarged in scope as time goes on, and the chil-

dren get familiar with the first principles of the subject. Take for instance such subjects as how the plants and trees grow; why it rains; what is the sun, and why the stars only show at night, and what they are for; take the simple things in every day life and explain them as carefully as possible in the form of a story as you understand them yourself. The subject of death, is one that should engage attention as early as possible, and the matter should be explained to the child as simply as possible, comparing death with going to sleep, which they soon get to understand perfectly well. The simple aspects of Karma are also good matters to take up in similar fashion, and many children accept the idea of Reincarnation without an effort, when clothed in simple language.

Such simple methods are not likely to make the child turn away from the subject, and even if their Karma does not favour their complete acceptance of the philosophy later on, they will at any rate have obtained breadth of view, which can hardly be obtained in any other way.

T. W. T.

Questions for December.

1. According to our views, all individual souls merge into the Great Soul in the final consumation. Under such conditions, how can individuality be maintained?
2. Does the Soul exercise any conscious effort in choosing the body into which it shall be born? If it does, cannot the parents in part determine the kind of soul that will enter the body of their child by conscious and unconscious suggestion? C. L. H.
3. Are the colour and ray to which we belong determined by our Karma?

After December, the American edition of the Theosophical Review will be discontinued and the magazine will be mailed to subscribers direct from London. Subscriptions, changes of address and other business correspondence should be sent to the American agency of the Theosophical Review, 4940 Washington Ave., Chicago, which will hereafter have charge of the business interests of the Review in this country.

Reviews

Mrs. Besant's Chicago Lectures, 1907, published in a volume of 153 pages, bound in cloth, can be obtained by sending \$1.00 to the General Secretary. Two-cent stamps will be accepted.

This very interesting book is divided into two parts, the first part containing four lectures—Psychism and Spirituality, The Place of Masters in Religions, The Value of Theosophy in the World of Thought, and Theosophical Work in India. The second part is devoted to Theosophical questions and answers.

As comparatively few Theosophists had the privilege of listening to Mrs. Besant during her recent visit, it is a great pleasure to be able to give them these valuable lectures in book form.

These lectures were received by the public with great enthusiasm, especially the one entitled, "The Value of Theosophy in the World of Thought." This one deals especially with the practical side of Theosophy as applied to the religious life, the life of art, the life of science and the life of politics.

The latter part of the work will be found unusually interesting as it deals with many questions that puzzle the minds both of Theosophists and of others.

The book entitled, "H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters of Wisdom," by Annie Besant, should be hailed with delight by all Theosophists. It is an explanation of the attack made upon Madam Blavatsky by the Psychical Research Society.

Theosophists are continually meeting philosophical and good men, who otherwise might belong to the Theosophical Society, but who turn away from it, because they believe that its founder was convicted of fraud.

If this prejudice could be met with the facts of the case, it might be the means of clearing the cobwebs from many a mind and of bringing many into the joys of Theosophy. No Theosophist should be without this little book. It can be obtained by sending thirty-five cents to the General Secretary, 103 State Street, Chicago. Two-cent stamps will be accepted.

"Meditation" is a booklet of 39 pages with a symbolic cover, written by Henry Bedinger Mitchell. Price 20 cents.

This booklet, very beautifully and clearly written, will be of the greatest help to every one who knows that "Meditation" is of primary importance to every genuine student of occultism. Meditation is inculcated as a religious practice in all systems of religious teaching, and is found playing a principal part in the life of every Saint. In lay fields, as well, it seems an invaluable concomitant of creative genius. It is spoken of as more than the door to the inner life—even as the inner life itself. Therefore, it is quite indispensable to all who seek to know this life directly rather than by hearsay.

Transactions of the first, second and third Congress of the Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society, can be obtained from the Theosophical Book Concern—26 Van Buren Street, Chicago. Price \$3.50.

Magazines

The Theosophist, the Presidential organ of our Society, has begun with the October Number, its XXIX Vol. The new impulse of life, which marks the New Cycle of our Society, manifests itself in the Theosophist as an improvement and an enlargement. According to the three objects of our Society—the Theosophist is divided into three main parts: Brotherhood; Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science, Occultism. Under Brotherhood, we find the Presidential address to the American Convention; Eastern Magic of Modern Spiritualism and Some Reflections on the Theosophical movement. Under Philosophy and Science: Some Notes on the Rosicrucians; from Chaos to Cosmos. Under Occultism: The Superphysical World and its Gnosis; Nature Spirits. Besides these principle articles we find in this interesting number Echoes from the Past, Reviews and Notes, Theosophy in Many Lands. In a supplement appear the Executive orders and official notes of our President.

Other Theosophical magazines received, are:

Bulletin Theosophique, Paris, November.

Revue Theosophique, Paris, October.

Theosophy in Australasia, Sidney, October.

The New Zealand Theosophical Magazine, Auckland, September.

THE OSOPHICAL SOCIETY

AMERICAN SECTION DIRECTORY.

Secretaries of Branches are requested to send prompt memoranda of changes of officers and all changes of members' addresses to the General Secretary, Dr. Weller Van Hook, 103 State Street, Chicago, Ill.

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