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CAPTURING A WORLD WITH IDEAS

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It takes some courage, I mean the true courage of the Seer, whom naught can daunt and none may stay, to oppose a world's thought-currents, and for this sublime work are called forth the truest heroism, the sublimest intellectual vision, and the deepest spiritual insight. These last prevail always. Sometimes he who runs counter to the world's thought-currents loses what the world esteems highest: reputation, fortune, even perhaps life. But his work—that is never lost!

That is what H. P. Blavatsky did. And that is what the Theosophical Society has been doing ever since her time, in certain ways opposing a world's lower thought-currents, and prevailing in the end. It is a strange paradox of our life on this earth that the noblest things call for sacrifice, and yet it is one of the most beautiful; so that the Theosophist may say with the proud boast of the Christian Church—and I deem it true, and even truer than in their case—that the blood of its martyrs is the seed of its success, and of its victory. The world is ruled by ideas, and an inescapable truth it is also that the world's lower thought-currents must be opposed by ideas higher than they. It is only a greater idea which will capture and lead captive the less idea, the smaller. *Graecia capta Romam victricem captam subducit.* "Captured Greece leads conquering Rome captive."

What is this Theosophical Movement which was so magnificently voiced in some of its teachings by H. P. Blavatsky, but a series, an aggregate of grand ideas? Not hers, not collected by her from the different great thinkers of the world; but the god-wisdom of the world; and she brought together the world's human wisdom in order to bulwark, for the weaker minds who needed such bulwarking, the grand verities shining with their stellar light, and bearing the imprint of divinity upon them. Some men cannot see the imprints of divinity. Forsooth, they say, it is to be proved! They must put the finger into the nail-mark, into the hole. Millions are like that, they have not learned to think yet.

So the only way to conquer ideas is to lead them captive by grander ones; and that is what Theosophy does: it is a body of divine ideas—not H. P. Blavatsky's, who was but the mouthpiece of them in this day, but the ancient god-wisdom of our earth, belonging to all men, all nations, all peoples, all times; and given to protoplasmic mankind in the very dawn of this earth's evolution by beings from higher spheres who had learned it themselves from beings higher still—a primeval revelation from divinities. The echo of this revelation you will find in every land, among every people, in every religion and philosophy that has ever gained adherents.

When H. P. Blavatsky brought our modern Theosophy to

this world in our age, she did not bring something new, she brought the cosmic Wisdom, the god-wisdom studied by the Seers, as understood on this earth, which had been stated in all other ages preceding that in which she came. She merely repeated what she had been taught; the same Wisdom, divine in origin: Science because voicing nature's facts; Religion because raising man to divinity; Philosophy because explanatory of all the problems that have vexed human intelligence. No vain boast this—no empty words, but truths which are provable by any thinking man or woman who will study our blessed god-wisdom faithfully and honestly.

It was an amazing world to which H. P. Blavatsky came—the Western world I am now speaking of—a world held by one slender, yet in a way faithful, link to Spirit, to wit the teachings of the Avatâra Jesus called the Christ; nevertheless held to by faith alone and by the efforts of a relative few in the Churches. On the other hand, millions, the major part of the men and women of the west, absolutely psychologized—by what? Facts? No! By theories, postulates, ideas, which had gained currency because they were put forth aggressively and with some few natural facts contained in them. Why, all the science of those days practically now is in the discard, and the scientists themselves have been the discarders; the later generations of scientists have themselves overthrown the overthrower of man's hope in those days.

It was in such a time that H. P. Blavatsky came, and almost single-handed in an era when even in the home-life, in society so-called, it was considered exceedingly bad form even to speak of the "soul" in a drawing-room; it was considered a mark of an inferior intelligence. Alone, she wrote her books, challenging the entire thought-current of the western world, backed as it was by authority, backed by so-called psychology, backed by everything that then was leading men astray. And today we Theosophists happen to know that her books are being read, mostly in secret, by some of the most eminent scientific thinkers of our time. What did she do? Mainly she based her attack on that world-psychology on two things: that the facts of nature are *the facts of nature and are divine*; but that the theories of pretentious thinkers about them are not facts of nature, but are human theorizings, and should be challenged, and if good accepted *pro tempore*, and if bad, cast aside. She set the example; and other minds who had the wit to catch, to see, to understand, to perceive what she was after, gathered around her. Some of the men eminent in science in her time belonged to the Theosophical Society, although they rarely worked for it. They lent their names to it occasionally. But she captured them by the ideas she enunciated, and these men did their work in their own fields. That indeed already was much.

Consider her titanic task: that of changing the shifting and varying ideas of a body of earnest scientific researchers

after nature's facts: replacing these shifting ideas, then called science—which had for nearly two hundred years been casting out *all* that innumerable centuries of human experience had shown to be good and trustworthy—replacing these, I say, with thoughts that men could live by and become better by following, thoughts that men could die by with hope and in peace; and bringing these back into human consciousness by the power of her own intellect voicing the immemorial traditions of the god-wisdom which she brought to us!

From an extempore address given by the Theosophical Leader in the Temple, Point Loma, California, in 1938.

SPEAKING OUT

"OLD DIARY LEAVES"

We have been informed that the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, is republishing H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Series III and IV, long out of print. The historical accuracy of these volumes is often challenged; personal prejudices and almost puerile misunderstandings which mar its pages have for many decades caused, to say the least, much distress among literate Theosophists. Why now, it is asked, should these volumes be brought to public attention?

It is with the object of pointing out these weaknesses to our readers that we share with them the following compilation and commentary. The Editors recognize the difficulties facing the compiler, the impossibility almost of conveying to the public by means of selected excerpts the real cause of conflict between H.P.B. and H.S.O. which went far deeper than surface irritation. It had to do with the almost inseparable interplay of the exoteric and the esoteric in those early days of the T.S.

We regret that limitations of space have made it advisable to curtail some of the material submitted, but we feel sufficient is presented for the reader to judge for himself of the grave elements involved in Adyar's present plan of republication.

Passages from *Old Diary Leaves* (ODL) have been placed in juxtaposition with other sources, such as H.P.B. herself, the Masters, and C. Jinarajadása. Colonel Olcott's statements are numbered 1, 2, etc., while these other sources are listed 1a, 2a.—Eds.

For a cyclic period of nearly one hundred years Madame Blavatsky has been continuously persecuted, misrepresented, maligned, belittled and generally thrown on the trash heap of discarded garments of truth by the hands of Vested Interests. When such attack has been perpetrated by the so-called Outside World, the Defenders of the Faith have been quick to defend her and her writings in the most able of ways. But now a most peculiar turnabout, a veritable *bouleversement*, takes place: the one they have been loyally defending they now unaccountably permit to be attacked. The lion becomes the scapegoat, and, under the seal of the Theosophical Society, two books are to be published which contain statements and character evaluations which will undoubtedly serve as fodder for the continuation of a pattern of injustice and calumny unparalleled in the history of the Wisdom-Teachings.

We are speaking of the republication by the Adyar Theosophical Publishing House of Series III and IV of Colonel H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, originally published in 1904 and 1910 respectively. When many years ago Countess Wachtmeister, as president of the H.P.B. Press, was asked to publish these volumes she declined to do so unless the author removed certain objectionable passages regarding H.P.B. This Olcott refused to do, and ODL was published by an outside firm. (See Ransom, *History*, p. 294.)

Whatever Colonel Olcott's reason for publishing ODL

for public consumption, it is impossible, with the perspective presumably gained in the last half century, to justify certain statements made by him. These reveal to the student why the Master M. wrote to Olcott the following regarding his attitude toward H.P.B.: ". . . the Maha Sahib had nothing to say—neither have I or any of us, but to regret, and that very deeply, that want of discrimination and tact so prominent in a man of your intellect and sense." (*Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, 2nd series, p. 85). And again: ". . . These are foolish, insane ideas of yours about Upâsikâ, Henry, wretched thoughts — the *mirage* thrown upon your brain by some of those who surround you . . . Do not take as an excuse your honesty. *Honesty* without *Justice* is like a drunken watchman's *bull's eye*—made but to throw light on his own distorted features leaving all around him in greater darkness still . . ." (*LMW*, 2nd series, p. 100.)

If H.P.B. were one who had "had her day in the sun then was seen no more," these matters would be of less consequence. But H.P.B. remains the Teacher of this Age, and as such deserves to be protected from further adverse criticism which can only be harmful ultimately to the teachings which she sacrificed so much to give us and future generations. Giving publicity to and publishing personal attacks from the pen of one who was her friend and the president of the T.S. are ill-advised and are a plain disservice to the Theosophical Cause.

In reading the extracts which follow I urge the reader to keep in mind the important occult fact that H.P.B. never published, or caused to be published, one word in any way derogatory of Colonel Olcott. It is only in reading private correspondence that we are made aware of their clashes of personal temperament. Thus it is only through such letters, and certain letters of the Mahatmas, that can be found that illuminating background without which the honest historian cannot properly evaluate the Colonel's account.

Selected Passages from Old Diary Leaves, Series III, re H.P.B.

1. . . . *for they would have been spared the bitter pain that has been caused them and all of us by the many successful exposures of her [H.P.B.'s]* defects of character* (p. 92) . . .

1a. You [Olcott] wrong her from beginning to end. You have *never* understood Upâsikâ, nor the laws thro' which her *apparent* life has been made to work since you knew her. You are ungrateful and unjust and even cruel. You take *mâyâ* for reality and reality for illusion. —(*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* (LMW), 2nd series, pp. 100-01.)

2. *I cannot express any opinion as to their genuineness* [re: the Coulomb letters] (p. 188)

2a. The — poor man [HSO]. So blinded is he, that honestly believing he is thereby *saving* the Society, the CAUSE — as he expresses it — he adopted of late the policy of propitiating the Moloch of public opinion by cautiously admitting that I (HPB) *might* have supplemented at times *bogus* for *real* phenomena!; that I am suffering at times from *mental aberration*—and

*Bracketed words are those of the compiler.

so on.—(*Letters from Blavatsky to Sinnett (LBS)*, p. 111.)

3. Yet not until I have shown why H.P.B. never redeemed her promise to prosecute the Coulombs, for that fact has been used ever since to her discredit and most unjustly . . . Acting without legal advice, she had made a mess of the affair . . . when she threatened to go by herself and “wipe this stain off her character,” I said that I should, in that case, resign my office and let the Convention decide between us . . . She then yielded.—(pp.189-90.)

3a. If, I say, at that critical moment, the members of the Society, and especially its leaders at Adyar, Hindu and European, had stood together as one man, firm in their conviction of the reality and power of the Masters, Theosophy would have come out more triumphantly than ever, and none of their fears would have ever been realized, however cunning the legal traps set for me, and whatever mistakes and errors of judgment I, their humble representative, might have made in the executive conduct of the matter.—(“Why I Do not Return to India,” H.P.B., April, 1890)

4. March 28th was a tempestuous day at Adyar, it seems, for I have written: “A day of disagreeable experiences . . . H.P.B. wild and violent; . . . All this excitement told almost fatally upon my dear chum’s health. It was awful to see her, with her face empurpled by the blood that rushed to her head, her eyes almost standing out from their orbits and dead-looking, as she tramped up and down the floor, denouncing everybody and saying wild things . . .—(p. 222.)

4a. [In a confidential memo about H.P.B., K.H. remarks]: I am painfully aware of the fact that the habitual incoherence of her statements — especially when excited — and her strange ways make her in your opinion a very undesirable transmitter of our messages. Nevertheless, kind Brothers, once that you have learned the truth; once told, that this unbalanced mind, the seeming incongruity of her speeches and ideas, her nervous excitement, all that in short which is so calculated to upset the feelings of sober-minded people, whose notions of reserve and manners are shocked by such strange outbursts of what they regard as her temper, and which so revolt you — once that you know that nothing of it is due to any fault of hers, you may, perchance, be led to regard her in quite a different light.—(*Mah. Let.*, 3rd ed., p. 201.)

5. The European mail of that week brought dispiriting accounts of the feeling among our people: the result, no doubt, of H.P.B.’s not having been allowed to prosecute her slanderers in court.—p. 233.)

5a. [Jinarâjadâsa, in *LMW*, 2nd series, p. 68 on, says]: “. . . After the Coulomb attack in 1884, Col. Olcott almost went out of his way to ignore the occult basis of the Society: so far did he go that, about 1888, the Master K.H. told H.P.B. that ‘the Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence . . .’” [The letter continues, 1st Series, p. 101]: “and we have let it go—we make no unwilling slaves. He [Olcott] says he has saved it? He saved its body, but it is now a soulless corpse . . .”

6. . . . we . . . overbore her [H.P.B.’s] wish and wrung from her an acquiescence in the policy of silence and forbearance towards our enemies . . . she upbraided me in letter after letter for what she called our “cowardice,” and our haste to sacrifice her as our scapegoat. She was utterly wrong, of course . . .—(pp. 310-11.)

6a. [The following is a statement made to Sinnett by Master K.H. re: H.P.B., *Mah. Let.*, p. 309]: You can never know her (HPB) as we do . . . we — judge but after having fathomed the object to its profoundest depth . . . under the garb of eccentricity and folly — we find a profounder wisdom in her inner Self than you will ever find yourselves able to perceive. In the superficial details of her homely, hard-working, commonplace daily life and affairs, you discern but unpracticality, womanly impulses, often absurdity and folly; we, on the contrary, light daily upon traits of her inner nature the most delicate and refined, and which would cost an uninitiated psychologist years of constant and keen observation, and many an hour of close analysis and efforts to draw out of the depth of that most subtle of mysteries — human mind — and one of her most complicated machines, — H.P.B.’s mind — and thus learn to know her true inner Self . . .

7. . . . she does the very unusual thing for her, of asking my pardon, but on the basis of mutuality . . . Fancying this sort of thing as recurring weekly or fortnightly, along with the normal strain of executive duties at that crisis, the reader may gauge the inner life I had to lead until our ship came into smoother waters. For all the grief caused me by her cruel letters I do not now hold her responsible . . . she was not in a state to be reasonable . . .—(p. 313.)

7a. [H.P.B. letter to O., early Sept., 1887]: To hurt people’s feelings commend them to — yourself. To accuse me of “ingratitude,” this and that, are the words of an insane man. You must have been sitting out in the sun. . . . to accuse me of INGRATITUDE(!) is the most ungrateful thing I ever thought possible! Night and day I am working for theosophy . . . Olcott, if it was not the real, more than fraternal affection I have for you, my friendship and *internal* (not external and gushing) loyalty to you as my colleague, chum and co-worker in Master’s work for the last 14 years — I would have never looked into your face in this life any more after the repeated cutting insults I had from you, ever since I was kicked out of Adyar by all of you. Such false accusations, such suspicions, misconceptions and uncalled for insults I never expected from such quarters. Well — useless to go with this . . .

OLD DIARY LEAVES, Fourth Series:

8. . . . the front she presents to me in her letters is unlovely to a degree: language violent, passion raging, scorn and satire poorly covered by a skin of soft talk; . . . her arbitrary and utterly unconstitutional acts; a sniffing at the Council and Councilors whom she did not choose to have stand in her way, a sharp and slashing criticism of certain of her European co-workers, especially of the one most prominent in that part of the movement, whose initials she

parenthesized after the word "Satan," . . . In short, she writes like a mad person and in the tone of a hyperexcited hysterical woman . . . The first count in her indictment against me (for, of course, more suo, it was all my fault) was that I had decided against her favourite in an arbitration I had held at Paris that year, between two opposing parties among the French Theosophists . . .—(Series IV, pp. 53-54.)

8a. [Ransom in commenting on the problems referred to here by H.S.O. states]: "Opinion had grown up that he [Olcott] neglected and did not understand the needs of the West; . . . This sense of grievance against the President was accentuated in Europe when he sent Encausse . . . the charter he had applied for. H.P.B. was opposed to this . . . The President had to suspend the Charter in August . . .—(Ransom, p. 268-69.)

[In a letter received *without any intermediary* on board ship while sailing to Europe to handle the above problems and others (see #10), Olcott was told by K.H.]: "You will be told that the chief originator of most, if not of all these disturbances is H.P.B. This is not so; though her presence in England has, of course, a share in them. But the largest share rests with others, whose serene unconsciousness of their own defects is very marked and much to be blamed. One of the most valuable effects of Upasika's mission is that it drives men to self-study and destroys in them blind servility for persons . . .—(LMW, 1st series, p. 44.)

9. *The sequel is above shown in her revolutionary action with respect to the reorganization at London.*—Series IV, p. 57.)

9a. [Jinarājadāsa, LMW, 2nd series, p. 65]: . . . But Colonel Olcott had striking limitations. He could not break himself of the long established habit of judging from externals. Though he had absolute proofs that H.P.B. was an occultist, and that she was the agent of the Masters and was carrying out Their instructions, again and again he judged from externals, instead of suspending his judgment, when his mind was confused. He had had enough experience of H.P.B. to know that H.P.B. never acted without good motive.

10. . . . *I did not care to be responsible for the fulfillment of any special engagements she might make with the new set of students she was now gathering about her, in her disturbed state of mind.* [Circa 1888] (Series IV, p. 61.)

10a. [Master's letter to HSO, LMW, 1st series, pp. 44-45]: . . . But your revolt, good friend, against her infallibility — as you once thought it — has gone too far and you have been unjust to her, for which I am sorry to say, you will have to suffer hereafter along with others . . .

11. . . . *I got a foolish cablegram from H.P.B. threatening the resignation of herself and the entire Blavatsky Lodge . . . She used the name of the Blavatsky Lodge and of certain of its members so often in her letters as condemning me utterly and backing her views unreservedly, that it became at last tiresome. Considering our personal relations, the identity of our ages, and our joint relationship to our*

Guru, it seemed to me ridiculous that she should imagine that the dicta of a group of junior colleagues, however warm partisans of hers, should influence me to act against my own judgment in questions of management. I wrote her at last that if she sent me any more round robins or protests from the same quarter, I should neither read nor answer her letters: . . . the exasperating documents ceased to arrive.—(Series IV, pp. 73-74.)

11a. [Master's letter to HSO, LMW, 1st series, p. 45, 46]: . . . *With occult matters she has everything to do . . . I warn you against permitting your suspicions and resentment against "her many follies" to bias your intuitive loyalty to her . . . Her fidelity to our work being constant, and her sufferings having come upon her thro' it, neither I nor either of my Brother associates will desert or supplant her. As I once before remarked, ingratitude is not among our vices.*

12. . . . *the unrest provoked by H.P.B.'s revolutionary action in Europe . . .*—(Series IV, p. 201.)

12a. [LMW, 1st series, p. 46]: . . . Only be careful, I say, to discriminate when some emergent interference of hers in practical affairs is referred to you on appeal, between that which is merely exoteric in origin and effects, and that which beginning on the practical tends to beget consequences on the spiritual plane. As to the former you are the best judge, as to the latter, she.

13. *The reader will easily understand the stress and strain that was put upon me at this time by the eccentric behavior of H.P.B. in herself interfering . . . her revolutionary threat that she would break up the Society unless I endorsed their action in reorganizing the movement in Europe with her as permanent President.*—(Series IV, p. 239.)

13a. [Jinarājadāsa in LMW, 1st series, p. 140]: . . . The remarks of Master K.H. may have been one reason why H.P.B. insisted on forming the E.S.T., or in case Colonel Olcott refused, on making a separate division for Europe of the Parent Theosophical Society under her direction.

14. . . . *I had written to H.P.B. my intention to retire from the Presidentship and to give her the entire executive, as well as spiritual, management, which she seemed anxious to acquire: . . . In notifying H.P.B. of my suspended resignation, I told her that my continuance in office would depend upon her readiness to alter the form of obligation which candidates for the E.S. were then taking. It was worded so as to exact the promise of perfect obedience to her in all their relations with the T.S.; in short, giving her quasi-dictatorial powers . . .*—(Series IV, pp. 251-252.)

14a. [Jinarājadāsa in LMW, 2nd series, p. 67]: . . . Yet how much he [Olcott] could have made matters easier for H.P.B. and for the work, had he but understood her complex nature, is evidenced by some of these letters [those of the Masters].

[Excerpt from H.P.B.'s open letter, "Why I Do Not Return to India"]: . . . know, moreover, that any further proof and teaching I can give only to the Esoteric Section, and this for the following reason: its members are the only ones whom I have the right to expel for open disloyalty to their pledge (*not to me*, H.P.B., but

to their *Higher Self* and the *Mahatmic aspect of the Masters*), a privilege I cannot exercise with the F.T.S.'s at large, yet one which is the only means of cutting off a diseased limb from the healthy body of the Tree, and thus save it from infection. I can care only for those who cannot be swayed by every breath of calumny, and every sneer, suspicion, or criticism, whoever it may emanate from.

Thenceforth let it be clearly understood that the rest of my life is devoted only to those who believe in the Masters, and are willing to work for Theosophy as They understand it, and for the T.S. on the lines upon which They originally established it.

[In extant excerpts of letters written by H.P.B. to H.S.O. (in Adyar Archives), regarding his resignation in 1890, she says]: Olcott, I tell this to you seriously and solemnly. It is no speculative theory, no superstition, no invented threat — but sober fact. Do this — resign, and the Karma for the ruin of a whole nation will fall on you. Awaken, I say, again. Put aside your miserable personality, and its petty squabbles and competition with that other wretched, dirty old, rag, called H. P. Blavatsky. Listen to the words of H.P.B. who has ever been true to you, so long as you were true (even only the best you knew how) to the Masters. Do not hate me and other good Theosophists, like T.T., because they love Theosophy and serve it in preference to serving you, and your constitutional hobbies. Do not throw with one stroke of your tongue or pen, the long and arduous work of 15 years to the dogs . . .

(End of excerpts from ODL)

The preceding passages quoted from *Old Diary Leaves* assuredly do not reflect the noble ideals of Brotherhood and Justice. In point of fact they do not really do Colonel Olcott full justice, but accentuate his unfortunate egoism and show his obtuseness along esoteric lines. So it seems, once again, we stand at the threshold where stood so many in those early days who, placed on probation, were left to make their decision about this person—not this person known as Helena, but this Person through whom flowed the Message that was and is to be the Message of the coming Age.

—LINA PSALTIS

TEILHARD AND THEOSOPHY

The following article is reprinted from *Orion Magazine*, May-June 1972, published by the Christian Spiritual Alliance, Inc., a brotherhood at Lakemont, Georgia. The Rev. Tisch heads the Community of Teilhard and Federal anti-poverty programs in Cape Kennedy, Florida (Box 1165, zip 32920). He is a recognized author and translator of Teilhard's works from their original French. This is the first portion of his "Teilhard and Theosophy."—Eds.

With the rise of the ecumenical movement in religion, it has become the custom to compare men of often disparate temperaments and traditions. Probably no man has been more compared than the French Catholic priest, theologian, philosopher, and anthropologist—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. We have witnessed a veritable flood-tide of articles and books bearing titles like—Teilhard and Sri Auribindo, Teilhard and Huxley, Teilhard and McLuhan, etc.

Still another essay in like vein may seem too much, but no disciple of Teilhard who has read literature of the Theosophical movement could help but be amazed at the similarities between the teachings of Teilhard and those of Theosophy.

Yet this similarity is unexpected. For Teilhard was a French Roman Catholic priest, the heir of a long Jesuit tradition, while the founders of Theosophy were often men and women who rejected the West for the mysticism of the East.

[We omit here three paragraphs which deal with the history of the Theosophical Movement of modern times; but its facts are inaccurate, and the author's presentation therefore would only be confusing to readers, as we believe he himself would admit were he given the correct historical data from which he could draw his own conclusions.—Eds.]

Teilhard's Attitude

In view of the obvious similarities between some of the teachings of Theosophy and those of Teilhard de Chardin, at first glance it seems strange that he did not recognize this and devote himself explicitly to pointing out his points of agreement and disagreement with Theosophists. For it was his usual practice to seek out the truth in every man's vision, no matter how far from traditional Catholicism. In fact, I am aware of only one passage in his works where he mentions Theosophy and that disparagingly: "*I feel that Pantheism, like so many other ideological words, has been distorted and falsely identified with Spinoza, Hegel, and Theosophy.*" (from Teilhard's unpublished short essay "Christianity and Pantheism").

To understand Teilhard's attitude, we must recognize certain circumstances. He received his theological training during the years immediately following the Modernist controversy when Theosophy was being singled out as the chief enemy of Christianity. Besides this, Teilhard's travels and experiences in the Orient had brought him in contact only with the lower and grosser aspects of the Eastern religions, and as a result he lacked the necessary basis for an objective analysis of their content. As others have recognized, "Teilhard was not always sympathetic to Asian religions." ((January 1972 Newsletter, American Teilhard de Chardian Association, N.Y.)

Evolution

Both the Theosophists and Teilhard start from the same fundamental point—the fact of evolution. Let us, therefore begin with the theosophical explanation of evolution with brief comments indicating points of similarity and difference with Teilhard.

Science shows in its theory of evolution a vast ordered system of steady unfoldment from the simple to the more complex forms of living things. The theosophical concept goes beyond the Darwinian theory of the evolution of form only, from the simple to the complex, for it adds what seems an essential corollary—the idea of evolving consciousness. Consciousness at first vague and instinctual, but gradually becoming more alert, responsive and specialized and by its own development compelling the evolution of new and subtler vehicles for its expression. The potentials are thus considered to be unlimited.

Life itself is the controlling factor, for as it unfolds, it improves and adapts succeeding forms to its evolving needs. "Wherever there is an atom or a particle of matter, there is

life in it", as Mme. Blavatsky put it. A life-force throbs through space seeking to express itself ever more fully as matter becomes more and more responsive to the great life-forces of the universe.

Teilhard's entire scheme is also based on this concept of the evolution of consciousness. He is in agreement since he allots some amount of "the within" to plants and animals as well as to man. "Spirit, he says, "must always have been in rudimentary form." Everything has some degree of awareness and power of discrimination.

(To be continued)

DYING WITH DIGNITY

To know how to die is in a way as important as knowing how to live. In fact, to the Theosophist the two go hand in hand. From the June 1972 issue of *Theosophy*, published by The Theosophy Company (United Lodge of Theosophists) of Los Angeles, California, we extract from the section "On the Lookout" the following pertinent paragraphs evidencing some of the changing attitudes toward dying.—Eds.

A Better Meaning of Euthanasia

According to the *Wall Street Journal* for Jan. 31 of this year, the Euthanasia Educational Foundation is concerned with death with dignity, without excessive and unnatural prolongation of life, and does not advocate the deliberate taking of life. This seems a far better meaning for the term than its use as a synonym for what used to be called 'mercy killings'. There is, the *Wall Street Journal* reports, growing support among the elderly for the conception of euthanasia for which this foundation stands. By derivation, the word means simply 'good death'—*eu* from the Greek for 'good', and *thanatos* for 'death'. The *Journal* reports:

Ironically, the current interest in euthanasia is co-existent with the results of recent remarkable advances in the field of medical science. Life expectancy has doubled over the past hundred years. The discovery of sulfa drugs, vaccines and antibiotics have tempered the ravages of influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis, which in 1900 were the leading causes of death. Today's hospitals are filled with patients who are slowly dying of long-term degenerative illnesses such as cancer and heart disease. As remarked by Dr. Joseph Fletcher, a theologian and professor of ethics at the University of Virginia's medical school, today's dying patients "die comatose and betubed and sedated and aerated and glucosed and *non compos mentis*."

Dying With Dignity

To prevent this eventuality, many people are signing 'living wills' in which doctors are requested to allow their patients to die rather than to be kept alive by machines or heroic measures. These wills, distributed by the Euthanasia Educational Foundation headquartered in New York, state in part: "I do not fear death as much as I fear the indignity of deterioration, dependence and hopeless pain." The signers further request the right to die in dignity. Although it is recognized that these 'wills' are not legally binding, it is felt that the burden of guilt will be removed from doctors and relatives who might feel compelled to prolong life even in cases where it is realized it is hopeless.

What Is It Like to Die?

The Ladies Home Journal for February, 1972, reports on the researches of Dr. Karlis Osis, director of the American Society for Psychical Research. After polling over 5,000 physicians, he believes that clues to the quality of the afterlife can be found in the *hallucinations* that are a part of the death-bed experience. The *Journal* says that Dr. Osis learned that "many patients briefly revived by doctors report beautiful impressions of magnificent colors—such as those reported under LSD." Some reproached their doctors for bringing them back. According to the *Journal* article, the use of drugs clouds the patient's ability to experience what is happening. "If the moment of death was clear and not affected by drugs or disease," Dr. Osis says, "the patient was more likely to demonstrate a sense of more or less ecstatic anticipation of the end." Many doctors and nurses reported that patients on their death bed have a look of "great surprise, as if they have seen something very attractive." Here, perhaps, was some sort of anticipation of the devachanic dream.

Changing Attitudes

Even more significant than the increasing interest in euthanasia or normal death may be a lessening fear of death itself, while the decline of elaborate funerals in favor of simple ceremonies or cremation is doubtless a sign that orthodox religion is losing its influence. It appears that as materialized doctrines of the soul and life after death decline, so also do the fears of leaving this life. Professional workers as well as laymen have noted that there are definite stages through which a dying person passes; these point to the consideration of death as an experience, instead of a dread finality. Perhaps one of the gains of the present period of upheaval will be that the soul will no longer be identified either with this world or the next, but be recognized as an enduring, independent entity.

H.P.B.'S MESSAGE AND MISSION OF RIGHT ETHICS, DEVOTION, SACRIFICE and DUTY

We are indebted to members of the United Lodge of Theosophists of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, for a comprehensive report of their commemoration last May 7, 1972, of White Lotus Day. Space permits only extracts from one of the addresses, under the above title.—Eds.

We do not follow a person, as it might seem, when we speak tonight about H.P.B. H. P. Blavatsky represents to us a Fact in Nature, and that fact has to have a name. The fact is valuable, because it points to the Source of the Message. If we look upon H.P.B. as something more than an ordinary woman, as a Being of power and knowledge, who had to step down to communicate with us in order to enable us to grasp at least a small part of the great message of Theosophy, then it is that it will be understood why we speak of her in terms of the greatest love and the highest reverence . . .

H.P.B., as her students called her, is not dead; she lives in a twofold manner; first as a powerful individuality which only her superiors could truly gauge, and the like of which appears in the world of men only at rare intervals; and secondly, in her message, her inspiration, the energy of her life and work, which she left behind to instruct, energize and inspire us. As an expert navigator she taught by precept and by example

how every man should direct his own ship of life. Not keeping it a secret, she has left behind her the chart of this boundless Ocean, also a compass which reveals directions, and the manual which contains rules and instructions for the proper use of both . . .

The central idea of her message lies in these two words—compassion and sacrifice. To those who have knowledge, strength, power, her message is: give freely to those who do not possess, lest out of that higher selfishness which springs from the non-use of spiritual possessions, the world would remain plunged in darkness. She taught that only when those who have sacrificed for the sake of those who have not can there be ushered in a new society, a new order of life, a new kingdom of righteousness, where the spiritual socialism of brotherhood would reign supreme and the law of love operate. Hers was the message of brotherhood of all at the highest level, to be realized not through mass movements or through mass proselytism, but through the self-reform of individuals who come out, one by one, from among the herd of men by the power of inner conversion, the power of sacrifice.

She taught the lofty metaphysics of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* because it is not possible to be truly compassionate and self-sacrificing when our minds are clouded with the lower knowledge that begets egotism, when our hearts are full of petty loves which shut out the greater love for the human race as a whole. To purify our minds and hearts it is necessary to see the one Self in all beings. As we go about, let us hear the music of Krishna's flute in every voice, every sound that is heard; see the powers of the Divine in the activities of every man, woman and child; behold the mighty magic of Prakriti, the wonderful panorama of life, dispassionately from where each of us stands as the Immortal Self. Let us pour out the blessings of loving sacrifice in every action of our life, in every word spoken, in every thought sent out, in every emotion expressed . . .

"With each morning's awakening," H.P.B. says, "try to live through the day in harmony with the Higher Self. TRY is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil. Naught else is expected of you. One who does his best, does all that can be asked." H.P.B. gives us through these words what we may well take as our motto on this White Lotus Day: TRY: Our best is all that is expected of us, but what IS our best? None can determine it until he has tried. Whatever the stage we are at, for each the taking of the step nearest to him is what matters most. None can do his best in Masters' Work unless he performs ALL his tasks the best he can, no matter how insignificant they may seem . . .

What is it that is most needed in Theosophy? H.P.B. says: nuclei of earnest students of the Teachings of Theosophy; their earnestness is measured by their sincerity in practicing the virtues, the Pâramitâs, which implies the observance of a standard of morals that strikes the real imagination and awakens the heart aspiration towards the soul growth of other people. Ethics without philosophical knowledge lose their sustaining power; it is knowledge which freshens the mind and gives to ethics a dynamic energization to continuous

elevation. H.P.B.'s message combines in the most accurate proportion ethics and philosophy, or morality and metaphysics. The nuclei of student practitioners who make adequate use of this dual and well-proportioned message are the saviors of mankind in this day and generation . . .

TOWARDS A SPIRITUAL UNITY

[Frans Fonhof, Editor of the Dutch magazine *Manas*, replies in the following letter to our article "Speaking Out" in No. 1 Newsletter—Eds.]

In *The Eclectic Theosophist* of March 1971 W.E.S. invites all friends and Theosophists to speak out honestly, fearlessly, and kindly, expressing their opinions regarding the Theosophical Movement and the 1975 centennial cycle. I am particularly pleased with this initiative which shows that the writer thinks the general theosophical situation by no means hopeless, but even promising a better hundred years to come. To my thinking, nothing is gained by over-estimating serious differences among various Theosophical groups, creating an atmosphere which precludes any constructive rapprochement. Well-intentioned people, focusing strictly on problems still existing today, seem content to lift a warning finger when it comes to talk of renewed effort for better mutual understanding. They are driven by their natural concern to preserve undamaged the great values of the past, and they feel that no one can hold this attitude better than themselves and the group to which they belong. But history has taught us this is one of those tragic misunderstandings on which good intentions are so often stranded; because by feeling that we, and we alone, are the only real guardians of this great intellectual-spiritual inheritance, and forgetting that our insights are only relatively accurate, we isolate ourselves from others who might be serving, or able to serve, the Movement more ably than ourselves. The important question before us is: Must we "trim in", fence in, or limit all theosophic belief to just what H. P. Blavatsky and her associates gave us? The answer is No; but I do think that *all Theosophists can help each other most constructively by maintaining the fundamental values of those original teachings, on which now there is too wide divergence.*

Geoffrey Farthing, former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England, whom Mr. Small quotes in his article, wonders if it is possible to determine our direction anew. I believe it not only possible but that such honest determination must be a *sine qua non* for the very existence of a movement that appeals to and is composed of individuals of greatly varying levels of consciousness.

When Dr. G. de Purucker undertook his fraternization effort among Theosophists (in 1930) this was the basic point of his endeavor. In his beautiful talk to the Dutch Theosophists at The Hague in 1933, he said: "In all the Theosophical Societies there are wonderful people. Oh, I would that they would work with us! They need not leave their own societies; that is not required. Let them remain in their own society, but at least help us in the work of carrying Theosophy into the future, pure and unadulterate, as we have received it from the Masters."

Another quotation from the same address makes this basic appeal: "Let us Theosophists, all of us, unite and be once more as in H.P.B.'s time a spiritual brotherhood, each society remaining distinct if it will, with its own officers and all the rest of it; but let us unite in brotherhood on the essentials where we can agree, and carry forward the torch of the Theosophical teachings into the future."

Thus G. de P. In answer to Mr. Small's challenge I think that the above quoted words of the great Theosophist, and above all the spirit which they reveal, can be a compelling and driving force today which we can apply right here and now. Just because we think we perceive shortcomings in other individuals or groups, blocking possible cooperation, we cannot doubt the universal meaning of these words which call for *spiritual* united action. Mr. Small urges *all of us* to unbind ourselves, so to speak, from the harsh consequences of past mistakes, not dwelling on who or what caused the mistakes, but seeking to rightly evaluate and learn from them. This seems a right attitude to take, having future cooperation in mind.

Mr. Small further asks for plainness of talk. Well, then my suggestion is: Let all Theosophists who want to preserve and promulgate the age-old wisdom pure and unblemished help each other in those essential things, as Dr. de Purucker emphasizes them, in which we can go hand in hand. We could start with inviting members of other groups in the Movement to our yearly conferences. We could also invite individuals from such groups whom we know

to be qualified, as guest speakers. And, finally, we could try to publish Theosophical literature—for which there is growing demand—together, that is co-operatively.

These are a few instances of what certainly can be realized with that little bit of goodwill that may be demanded of all of us. By many Theosophists 1975 is regarded as important. I feel no need to add to the discussion of the real meaning of this cyclic moment in history; but I do think, apart from expectations about it, that it is of extreme importance that today's and future humanity be given the opportunity to know and draw upon the majestic instruction which H.P.B. and her pupils left behind for us. And in my humble opinion this can only be realized when we work, as unitedly as possible, for those great aims which she herself intended.

POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS: A Report From the President

Point Loma Publications, Inc. was chartered by the State of California on January 22, 1971, as a tax-exempt, non-profit religious and educational corporation. Under federal and state laws, contributions to the corporation are deductible by donors from income taxes. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers or gifts to Point Loma Publications, Inc., are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes. Under the By-laws of the Corporation:

"All officers of the Corporation [including the Editors of THE ECLECTIC THEOSOPHIST] are elected or appointed as evidence of trust and as an opportunity offered them for additional responsibility and service to the Corporation. The officers shall receive no remuneration for their service, unless, in the judgment of the Executive Committee, their actual necessities merit financial assistance from the Corporation."

Under the Articles of Incorporation, the first object of Point Loma Publications, Inc., is:

"To publish and disseminate literature of a philosophical, scientific, religious, historical and cultural character, faithful to the traditions and high standards maintained by the Theosophical Society with International Headquarters formerly at Point Loma, California, under the leadership of Katherine Tingley from 1900 to 1929, and of Gottfried de Purucker, from 1929 until 1942."

THE ECLECTIC THEOSOPHIST is published bi-monthly under the authority of Clause VI of the Articles of Incorporation:

"To publish a magazine in which to disseminate the writings of the ablest exponents of Theosophical teachings and to record the achievements in different parts of the world of such dedicated and successful Theosophical workers as are or may become known to the Corporation's directors, whether or not affiliated with any organized group or publishing their own official or personal organs; also to publish contributions of cultural, historical, and/or humanitarian value by competent writers inside or outside the ranks of Theosophists; and to accept advertisements of literary and other material that does not contravene the objects of the corporation."

It should be borne in mind that funds for the launching and operating of Point Loma Publications, Inc. were not raised by an appeal to the public or even to friends, but by the personal contributions of its directors, who themselves provided in the Articles of Incorporation:

"The property of this Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to the publishing or republishing of literature of a philosophical, scientific, religious, historical and cultural character, and no part of the net income or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer or member thereof or to the benefit of any private person."

All to whom the foregoing facts appeal are earnestly invited to help the directors carry on the work inaugurated in 1971. How can you help?

1. By purchasing and distributing our publications.

2. By subscribing to THE ECLECTIC THEOSOPHIST for yourself and acquaintances.

3. By making tax-exempt contributions, large or small, in cash or in bequests to Point Loma Publications, Inc.

IVERSON L. HARRIS, President

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Reply from Author of "Masters of the Occult."

The following letter from Daniel Cohen, dated July 31, 1972, from Monticello, New York, is in acknowledgement of Iverson L. Harris' Open Letter published in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, No. 11.

—Eds.

Dear Mr. Harris:

Your "open letter" to me was forwarded by my publishers. A point by point answer, it seems would be a great waste of time, since the argument would be over opinions and interpretations, not hard facts—and we will never agree. However, there are a couple of things you should know:

My motives are quite simple—I write what I think is the truth. A sensationalized account of the life of a little-known 19th century occultist, is not the stuff of which best sellers are made. Writing any debunking book about occultism, given the present climate of opinion, is no royal road to richness—quite the opposite. If my sole motive were to sell my wares, I would have written that I believed it all, and that it had changed my life.

You say I am biassed, I prefer to say that I have a point of view—but it comes to pretty much the same thing depending on whether one agrees or disagrees. I made no attempt to hide my point of view, in this book or any other that I have written. I started with the assumption that H.P.B. was a fraud, but I arrived at this conclusion by reading H.P.B. herself. Everything she says about science and history runs counter to modern scholarship in those fields. If she was right, then the rest of the world was wrong. I find no evidence that she was right. How then did she get all those absurd ideas. Given my assumptions there are only two possible answers—either she was crazy or she was a fraud. I lean toward the latter point of view.

Sincerely,

Daniel Cohen

A Valuable Source of Esoteric Information

Ralston Skinner's *The Source of Measures* (with Supplement) has been reprinted by Wizards Bookshelf of Savage, Minn. Students of *The Secret Doctrine* will recall its mention (over sixty times) by H. P. Blavatsky, who considered the book a valuable source of esoteric information. Those interested in knowing more about this book, or wishing to purchase other metaphysical, occult, oriental, or Theosophical books can write for information and catalogue to ISIS BOOKS, Kenneth Small, 2404 Broadway, San Diego, California 92102.

"Does Chance or Justice Rule Our Lives?"

This booklet by Nils Amneus (which has been translated into Swedish, Finnish, German, and Dutch) has, by arrangements with the author's son, been added to Point Loma Publication's booklist (\$2.00, 40% to dealers). While Science has demonstrated that every physical effect has a cause which can be found if sufficient research and intelligence is applied, such law and order is not always evident in the events which affect our lives. The author points to the doctrine of reincarnation—that man's present life on earth is only one of many such existences—as a necessary corollary belief to show that apparent injustices can be explained and reconciled with the idea of an orderly universe. The law of cause and effect operates, he declares, in all human affairs as well as in the material world.

"The Sufi Way of Life"

The Editors acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of this and other articles from Dr. K. M. P. Mohamed Cassim, Founder-President of "Perfect Peace Lodge" of Vayangoda, Ceylon, with permission to reprint in *The Eclectic Theosophist*. Other titles include "The Significance of Meditation", "The Key to Self-Knowledge", "The Essence of Yoga," "The Inner Secret of Sufism," and "The Eternity Here and Now."