

The Eclectic Theosophist

NO. 38

Jan. 15, 1977

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY BY POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS, INC.

P.O. Box 9966 -- San Diego, California 92109

Subscription (6 issues)

\$2.50; foreign \$3.00

Editors: W. Emmett Small, Helen Todd

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WHAT IS THEOSOPHY AND WHO ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS ?

All words are, of course, labels, conveying relative sense and enlightenment to the mind that hears or reads them. And so "Theosophy" is a label, a name—though a noble one. But one must get behind the word to what it represents. That is what people want—meaning. They want the universe to make sense—to them and about them. And so we say, getting as far away from labels as we can, that Theosophy is a representation, report, or statement of the truths of Being. It is the way the universe is, or behaves or works or operates. It is also a description of the intricate (and, may we say, infinite?) being that man is—who, what, and why he is. It also tells the story of evolution, not an end-on Darwinian product, not a God-made-out-of-nothing "creation", but a beginningless and endless unfolding from the Divine of that very divine which is inherent in every particle of space.

From this great store of wisdom each takes what he can, depending on his own essential self, his own awakening; and it will be colored by the individual's way of viewing life, either through the flow of religion, or philosophy, or science, or a combination of all three. And, let us say in passing, essentially religion is no better—or worse—than science, and science or philosophy than religion: they are all *ways* towards an "end". Where they meet, their apex, *that* is the real thing, for which we can give no exact name other than *being* or *law* or *truth*. It is the search for *that*, the study of *that*, that is Theosophy.

And that is what we would have the world respect and understand as Theosophy, not psychic extravaganzas, mostly fantasy with perhaps a modicum of truth; not individual pet theories, no matter how sincere their proponents; but that which can be tested by the strength and quality of its very universality.

Perhaps the broadest, and in some ways the most appealing, answers to the questions heading this article may be found in the first number of *The Theosophist*, issued from Bombay, India, October 1879, in H. P. Blavatsky's two articles "What is Theosophy?" and "What Are The Theosophists?" How alive her words still are, how stirring! "All original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature," she writes in the last article:

"were and are, properly, Theosophists . . . Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the

eternal truth with 'an inspiration of his own' to solve the universal problems."

Those quoted words, 'an inspiration of his own,' refer to a definition of a Theosophist given by the English medieval philosopher and true Rosicrucian, Henry Vaughan. "A Theosophist," he says, "is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis." And in the article "What is Theosophy?" H.P.B. declares: "In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school or philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist . . ." "With every man" (she says in "What Are the Theosophists?") "that is searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied. It is likewise the ally of honest science . . . And it is also the ally of every honest religion . . ."

Let this broad statement encourage in us a truer global view as we struggle with our own more immediate theosophical problems. Let us take heart that, as in the past so today, there are those that form this wider brotherhood, who labor in their own fields inspired by their own inner vision. And let us remind ourselves that their thought, when lifted to and so to say drawn from that plane of Ideation which is the storehouse of Great Ideas, filters through for the general benefit of mankind.

And let us, with renewed courage and good cheer, pursue our own dharma. Our duty, it seems clear in this age of opportunity as well as upheaval, is to know Theosophy in ever growing and deepening measure. A mental-spiritual force thus magnetically comes to life which can become a mighty power to be felt by those unknown others ready to receive yet working in their own way. It is not numbers but depth and dedication that are above all needed—depth in understanding the Teachings as originally given by H.P.B. and her Teachers, and those others who have faithfully followed; dedication to their preservation, to their explication, and to their living.

—W.E.S.

"A NEW CONTINENT OF THOUGHT"

HELEN TODD

The Convention for celebrating the centenary of the founding of the modern Theosophical Society is now part of history. In that history is recorded the affirmation of good will among many branches of the present theosophical effort; accomplishments reviewed and

evaluated; and recognition of a general feeling of optimism for the future. Naturally, in the minds of many is the question: What is our future to be? What is the key thought for the years ahead? The words of the Mahâtma K.H. surely contain a significant answer to our question.

“. . . And we will go on in that periodical work of ours. We will not allow ourselves to be baffled in our philanthropic attempts until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice guided by the Brethren of the Shadow will be found to prevail.”

—(*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 51)

That, then, is our goal. We as Theosophists are privileged to co-operate in upholding and furthering that effort.

It is not by chance that the Great Effort is being re-nunciated at this period of man's evolutionary history. The human race has turned the lowest point in its cycle of development. We are in the early stages of what is called the “upward arc”. Also, we are in the fifth great racial cycle, the cycle of intellectual expansion, when our fifth aspect of unfoldment is destined to receive further help as part of the development of our higher faculties. This is the cycle of an ascent out of the thrall-dom of the matter side of life—an uphill struggle; but we have the aid of “those who have gone before”. Are we not then privileged, in fact obligated to help others in this upward climb? With these thoughts in mind, we might do well to pull ourselves up short and ask: Are we doing our utmost to co-operate in the building of that New Continent of Thought?

When we view the records of the historical past, we find that the initial Message bearing treasures of the Wisdom-Teaching through the centuries has become adulterated, altered, censored, neglected; we find that often some of the fundamental ideas have been omitted—those which form the keystone of the Teaching. It is an easy road to follow because the inertia of many minds tends to divert the teachings into those byways, seemingly attractive but which offer less of a challenge. This is a tendency ever present in human nature.

In theosophical circles there are always the priceless books; and many writers do make use of them in their study and writings. Yet do we discern in some instances the tendency to follow an ‘easier’ path? Perhaps the word ‘technical’ is too forbidding (or forbidden?).

Let us consider one instance that comes readily to mind: the avoidance of any ‘technical’ discussion about the composite nature of man. It is true that we still use the terms spirit, soul, body, i.e. higher, intermediate, lower. But this seems more like an introduction to the subject, rather than an investigation. Moreover, these terms in common parlance have become so vague in meaning that they have a diminished value in a serious study of man's nature. ‘Spirit’ more often than not is ignored as a functioning part of man's makeup; more often it is thought of as something quite outside of

man's constitution, either beneficent or otherwise. It might belong to the realms of “God”, or, to some, it could even refer to something less attractive—spirits in the lower realms.

‘Soul’ can stand for almost anything. It is a very effective word in poetic endeavors! But to be really ‘modern’ one would be likely to toss it out as having no substantial value, certainly not in scientific circles!

‘Body’. Yes, the body is very much with us. In this area science reigns supreme and its dicta are readily accepted as authentic, even the *interpretations* of their findings: Mind becomes a function of the brain; Emotions? Science is now studying the behavior of the Apes in order to discover the motivations of human beings! Individuality is entirely structured by the genetic code.

And what about the virtues? Altruism has been defined by an authority as probably no more the expression of an urge to expiate some guilt feelings! Other virtues have been described by a modern authority as based on self-interest—not necessarily, of course, in a pejorative sense, but to be successful in the social and business world. All the above would seem somewhat of an exaggeration; but we listen, observe and evaluate what we see in the world, and we have to acknowledge that many unthinking people drift along consciously or unconsciously in a sea of false values.

Those who prefer to study themselves by ‘looking within’ and observing the realms of their own consciousness, should be the first to be willing to hear with impartial attention and respect the reports of those who have done just that and have left us a legacy that is completely authentic, completely ‘scientific’ in the true sense. Such sages—for that is what they are—have given untold lifetimes of study, training and practice to learn the inner mysteries of man and the universe. Their first and last injunction is indeed “Look within”; but they offer a light, lest one lose one's way.

If it is argued that much of our *technical* theosophical teaching does not relate to the study of man—for instance investigation into the nature of the sun and its satellites—one who engages in such studies may well ask, Where do you draw the line? He knows that man is a child of the universe; more, that he is himself a universe; and it is within the cosmic principles and energies “mirrored” in man that his centers of ego-consciousness function.

A deep study of man's sevenfold being and the dual aspect of his intermediate nature can lead to the most arcane aspects of pneumatology and psychology. But first steps can be taken, and one finds that he begins to search for sound answers to his questions: What is altruism? What are brotherhood, justice, freedom, compassion? He has begun on a study that fascinates, challenges, teaches, and enlightens.

Further, it can be said without exaggeration that there are no limits to his study; and that it leads him to a recognition of the existence of those Great Ones who have conquered the mysteries of earth-life and remain in its atmosphere to help and inspire those ready to receive.

Who are these Great Ones that we speak of? They are the Nirmânakâyas. Dr. de Purucker describes them thus;

"A nirmânakâya is a complete man possessing all the principles of his constitution, except the Linga-śarîra and its accompanying physical body. He is one who lives on a plane of being next superior to the physical plane, and his purpose in so doing is to save men from themselves by being with them, and by continuously instilling thoughts of self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, of spiritual and moral beauty, of mutual help and compassion and of pity." — (*Occult Glossary*)

RENAISSANCE OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM - RELIGION

Why has not the whole world turned Theosophical? Because the whole world does not know Theosophy. People don't recognize the truth in Theosophy; they are not awake; and all that we Theosophists can do is to keep on budging along, budging ahead, and hammering and hammering the truth home into their minds: until finally these rain-drops of Theosophical words entering into their minds, will succeed in bursting the rigid and crystallized molds of thought.

The time is coming—and I personally believe that it is coming rapidly—when a revolution in human thinking shall take place, stealing into man's minds and hearts from the East: from the sunrise of our being: the great truths of Nature and of Man will become familiar if only by force of Theosophical repetition, of mental repetition, of verbal repetition; and then we shall see a renaissance of the ancient Wisdom-Religion in every civilized country, for it is the Universal Religion, the natural Religion-Philosophy-Science of mankind.

—G. DE PURUCKER: in a public lecture in the Temple, Point Loma, California, June 30, 1929, later published in *Questions We All Ask*, No. 3, October 15, 1929.

ON BEING HALF HUMAN IN AN INHUMAN WORLD

G. CARDINAL LE GROS

The Secret Doctrine tells us that we are living in the Fourth Sub-Race of the Fifth Root-Race in the Fourth Round on Globe D of the sevenfold Planetary Chain, and functioning in the Kâma-Manas (Desire-Mind) part of our sevenfold constitution. And because this Kâma-Manas part of us is the middle part, and because our Manas was awakened by the Lords of Mind, or Mânasapûtras, 18 million years ago at the mid-point of the Lemurian Third Root-Race, it is obvious that we have many millions of years to go before we become fully human.

It could be a lot worse: we could be less than half human, and maybe some of us are. But by making Theosophy a living power in our lives, we can become

more than half human, and eventually fully human, like the Masters, in less than that time. In fact, that is why the Masters and Gods gave us these sublime teachings—so that we need not drag along through those appalling future eons, but instead, hasten our evolution and join forces with the constructive powers that work with Nature and help everything to Godhood.

Some people say, "Poor little me! Dare I aspire to anything so grand?" But every Master and God was once a Poor Little Me with all the doubts and fears common to us half humans. But they found within themselves the courage and faith to step out of these mortal limitations, and become what they are (and we are) in their (and our) Inmost. That's really all—or most of the all — that Theosophy tells us — to rise up and become what we are within—a Master, a God, a Christ, a Savior, a Redeemer of Man (and ourself the first one to redeem).

Yes, it has taken us 18 million years to become half human, and unless we strive to become more than half human, there's a frightful chance that we may fall into inhumanhood. A terrible thought! But none of us is so blind that he can't see all around him the activities of inhumans. It is they who make our wars, who poison earth and air, who enslave and corrupt us. It is they who, in every walk of life, walk in the Shadow of the Destroyers. And every mother's son of us carries their seed within him—the bad seed of Atlantis, the black cancer cell ready to multiply itself a thousand times if we give it half a chance.

And Theosophy says—and it's the Masters and the Gods speaking—don't give it that half a chance. Give it the surgeon's knife of an indomitable will. Cut it out and cast it away forever. And by so doing raise yourself out of half humanhood and see the Gates of Gold. And if Poor Little Me fears that it may thus lose out on the spoils of this world, pray the Gods that its eyes may be opened to the unreality of fame and wealth and power: illusions that vanish with our last breath, and which chain the soul's love to this Mahâmâyâ we call life.

Yes, by all means, by any means, let us break the grip of Yesterday, and reach for that Tomorrow of self-forgetfulness and self-surrender to the Divine God-Life throbbing in our heart of hearts. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Let us take that step now, in the Silence within, in the Beauty of the Spiritual Life. It's high time that we did, and heaven help us if we don't.

—Reprinted from *Messiah*,
No. 21, Aug.-Sept. 1976

MAN DESCENDS FROM - MAN

HENRY T. EDGE

[The following is an extract from the recently published manual *Evolution: Who and What is Man?* No. 6 in the series of 12. It is taken from Chapter IV "The Evolution of Man."—Eds.]

According to the real teachings as to evolution, as given by Theosophy, and speaking for the present only

of evolution in this Fourth Round, man was actually the original and root stock of the mammalians, and the other stocks have sprung from the human stem. This accounts for these primitive and simple conformations in the human body. In the various animal stocks we find specializations of particular organs and functions, such as wings, trunks, claws, horns, gills. These, according to the theory which evolutionists have been trying to establish, are features which have been discarded; but their presence is much more consistent with the Theosophical doctrine of evolution than with the theory of the evolutionists. According to the Theosophical doctrine, the human stem threw off from itself the germs of the future animal stocks, and these germs then proceeded to develop and specialize, each along its own peculiar line, so that as time went on the tendency was towards ever wider divergence. And a candid study of the facts shows that this is the case; for it is found that species do actually tend to specialize along their own lines, rather than to pass by gradation into other species.

In saying that the germs which afterwards developed into the mammals were thrown off from the human stem, it is necessary to add a qualification and to explain why we said 'human stem' rather than 'man'. The events referred to took place in the very far past, and since then the human race has been developing, so that the humanity from which the mammals were thrown off was very different from the humanity of today. It is also necessary to bear in mind that, in a universe where everything evolves, matter itself has been evolving; and that its present stage, which we call 'physical' represents the latest phase of a continuous succession of phases or states through which matter has passed. The process by which the germs or seeds which were afterwards to evolve into the mammalian stocks were thrown off is one that biologists call 'budding' or 'gemination.' The present human organism is not able to produce offspring in this way, though this method of reproduction exists today in some of the lower orders of creatures.

So the question, Did the animals descend from man? can be answered both by Yes and No; they did descend in the way described here, but not in the Darwinian sense. They did not come from men by procreation and as the end product of a single-line upward evolution; the germs of the animal stocks did proceed from the human stock, at a time in the far past when that human stock was not like what it is now. Thus the type of evolution in the animate kingdoms is like a tree with a main trunk, branch trunks, boughs, twigs, and leaves. This is quite different from the single-line type of evolution at first imagined, and science itself is coming more and more to this tree-like form of evolution, as facts accumulate and as studies progress.

The ancestors of man were—man himself; prehuman perhaps, but still man. And this necessitates that something be said as to what man is and whence he has come

"THEOSOPHY" IN THE "BRITANNICA"

[Reprinted from *Theosophy*, United Lodge of Theosophists, Los Angeles, Calif. August, 1976, from the section 'On the Look-out'].

The article on Theosophy in the new *Encyclopedia Britannica* improves on the account in the previous (1953) edition by giving more prominence to the work of H. P. Blavatsky and by providing briefly quoted statements of the three fundamental propositions, found early in *The Secret Doctrine*, as the central ideas of the Theosophical philosophy. The article, which is by Carl T. Jackson, associate professor of history at the University of Texas, begins:

Theosophy is a religious philosophy with definite mystical concerns that can be traced to the ancient world but is of catalytic significance in religious thought in the 19th and 20th centuries. The term theosophy is derived from the Greek *theos*, "god," and *sophia*, "wisdom" and is usually translated as "divine wisdom." The literal translation of the term, however, indicates its meaning only in a general sense. Confusion may be avoided by a recognition of two uses of the word. In modern times it has been widely identified with the doctrines promoted by the Russian-born religious mystic Mme. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91) through the Theosophical Society founded by her and others in 1875. The term may also be employed in a more general sense to refer to a certain strain of mystical thought to be found in such thinkers as the Greek philosophers Pythagoras (6th century B.C.) and Plato (5th-4th century B.C.); the Gnostic teachers (adherents of a dualistic religious-philosophical movement) Simon Magus (1st century A.D.) and Valentinus (2nd century A.D.); the Neoplatonic philosophers Plotinus 3rd century A.D.) and Proclus (5th century A.D.) . . .

Named as later figures in the more general Theosophical movement are Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, and Böhme. "There is," the writer also states, "no question about the validity of the claim of direct Asian influence upon modern theosophical thought." A brief history of the modern movement credits William Q. Judge with "making the American section the most active in the international movement," and lists some of the splits which followed the death of H.P.B. The bibliography at the conclusion of the article gives H.P.B.'s *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy* and names *The Theosophical Movement, 1875-1950* as "a recent full-scale history." The writer identifies the Theosophical Society as "a catalytic force in the 20th-century revival of Buddhism and Hinduism and a pioneering agency in the promotion of a greater Western acquaintance with Eastern thought." While some of the texts suggested for study are likely to be misleading or confusing, the primary emphasis of this *Britannica* article is on H.P.B. and her writings.

The account of the Theosophic teaching of evolution includes the following:

As a phase of this evolutionary process, it is held that man undergoes the same (sevenfold) progression, eventually reaching perfection. Reincarnation and karma (the law of cause and effect) govern the evolution. Man must expect to undergo a series of rebirths or reincarnations in the course of his spiritual ascent since the law of evolution is determined by karma. Each action, desire, or thought produces a result. This is not, it is insisted, a fatalistic viewpoint; each man is free to choose his own course. One's future life, however, will be determined by the actions in the present life. The result is that "As a man soweth, so shall he also reap."

SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS

Question — In reference to capital punishment it is recognized that such entities often are earth-bound seeking much vengeance, and as Judge avers are "a menace to the living." Let us assume a certain entity is beyond rehabilitation and he is put to death. According to certain esoteric researchers, would not this menace be obviated if immediately at death the physical body be consumed by fire? Thus, the entity would have no etheric body and be released from the aura of the earth.—B.D.S.

Elsie Benjamin—There seems to be here a confusion in the mind of the querent, perhaps a matter of theosophical terminology. It is not clear whether he is referring to the astral body, which is the model body, of the physical, or what is known as the kâma-rûpa, which latter lives on for varying lengths of time in the astral world. Cremation affects and hastens the natural dissipation of the astral, but does not affect the kâma-rûpic entity. The kâma-rûpa forms only after death and is an aggregate of the various psychical and lower mental energies which inhere excarnately in the astral worlds until what is known as the "second death", which then permits the higher principles of the once seven-principle being to pursue their onward journey. The kâma-rûpa is the part of man which is held within the earth's atmosphere after death, and which in the case particularly of executed criminals, can incite to deeds of passion and revenge those on earth of a weak or negative nature. Death does not exterminate that influence for a long time. This is the whole rationale against capital punishment.

Question—Without question any form of slavery is an evil. Yet even though the slavers did wrong, if they had not seized the negroes in their native lands their racial evolution would have been retarded for many centuries. I put this as a question to you.—B.D.S.

W.E.S.—It was karma, of course, and, as H. P. Blavatsky says in *The Key to Theosophy*, karma is the ultimate law of the universe. I think it is wise to leave it at that, recognizing that what may appear inscrutable to us is the working out of something based on rigid jus-

tice. An understanding of karma demands great impersonality, great honesty. It is not something to play with (if that could be done!), to seek to shield behind or twist and use as an excuse for acts of omission as well as commission, saying with a shrug, Well, you see, it had to happen, it's karma!—and so absolve yourself. That is sheer sophistry. For what you do—or fail to do—"payment" must be made—though karma tarry long! The old saying holds that though 'evil' must needs be, woe unto the evil doer. Equilibrium must be attained; hence often suffering.

Question—Is it safe to awaken the chakras?

L. Gordon Plummer—The chakras, which are vortices of prânic energies of several kinds, are always awake in the healthy individual. Without their work the body would never have been formed in the first place, and it is in their harmonious working in and through not only the physical body but the entire human constitution that health of mind and body is maintained.

Each of the chakras, wherever situated, is the outer representative, as it were, of the corresponding source of its own prânic fluid in the brain. Each one of our senses is associated with and actually derived from its own particular lobe in the brain. However, we hear, see, feel, taste, and smell without knowing which of the lobes control these senses, and there is no need for us to be concerned with them. We use our senses as Nature intended that we should. Similarly with the chakras; these are active in the normal course of life as Nature intended them to be, and there is no particular need to be concerned with the centers of the brain which are the real seats of these prânas.

It is always dangerous to excite the prânic energies beyond their normal function. Ill health can result. It is something like overloading the electric circuits in our homes. The fuse may blow, and some people may have unwisely bypassed the fuses by one means or another, with the result that uncontrolled amounts of electric currents are allowed to flow in the wires. Fires have resulted from such unwise actions.

Question—Why don't we see a column devoted to the history of the Point Loma T.S. in the pages of the *Eclectic Theosophist*? Many of us are new to Theosophy and need to know the background of the Movement.

—R.N.

Eclectic Editors—Questions about Point Loma do come up and are answered occasionally; but we have been anxious to avoid what might seem as a parochialism in this regard, trying to stress what we feel is necessary these days: an eclecticism that covers the whole Movement and emphasizes the good wherever possible (though warning against what seems error). Your suggestion, however, is one that may appeal to a growing number of readers and we shall take it under careful advisement. The reader will gather some information, however, from Point Loma Publication's special edition of C. J. Ryan's *H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement*, Appendix IV, "Later Point Loma History" added by the publishers.

BOOK REVIEWS

APPLIED THEOSOPHY AND OTHER ESSAYS: Henry Steel Olcott, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 280 pp.

The writer, author, attorney and philosopher, is best known by theosophical students as the co-founder of the Theosophical Society and for his untiring efforts in its administration and in expounding theosophical teachings. He was agricultural editor of the New York Tribune from 1858 to 1860 and special commissioner for the U.S. War and Navy Departments in the Civil War. In 1878 he was commissioned by President Hayes to visit India and report on trade relations. In 1879 he returned to India on a theosophical mission with H. P. Blavatsky, expounding Theosophy and the brotherhood of all religions throughout India and Ceylon. The best appraisal of Col. Olcott's theosophical work in the early days of the Theosophical Society is to be found in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 14, written in 1880, where Master Koot Hoomi writes in part: "Him we can trust under all circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well, come ill."

The nine essays, mostly lectures given between 1875 and 1889, cover theosophical teachings, spiritualism, magic, India, and Eastern religions. The author's legal training may be partly responsible for the excessive verbosity of the essays, making one wish that the Colonel had taken a course in short story writing, restricting him to 500 words for each subject. Nevertheless, there is much of interest in each lecture, all of which are well worth reading.

The author's knowledge of Eastern religions is best shown in the lecture on "The Spirit of Zoroastrianism", perhaps the finest essay in the book.

In *The Life of Buddha* the author takes issue with occidental opinion that Buddhism is an atheistical, nihilistic religion, stating that it postulates that Matter is unreal and that the only reality is in the world of the Spirit. Unfortunately, the essay does not define "Spirit". A more precise explanation of Buddha's basic teachings may be found in G. de Purucker's *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, 81, which reads: "There is no 'eternally unchanging' principle in man which is different from the rest of the universe, which is in constant change and revolution and evolution."

The essay on *India, Past, Present and Future* has an interesting discussion on the antiquity of the Aryan civilization and the relationship of ancient India to ancient Egypt. In *Applied Theosophy* the writer asserts that the Theosophical Society is a living entity whose influence must be along moral lines for the benefit of mankind through the united thoughts and efforts of the membership. In the *Inaugural Address, 1875*, the aims of the newly formed Theosophical Society are broadcast: to free the public mind from theological superstition and from its subservience to a materialistic Science.

It must be remembered that these essays reflect conditions existing in the western world about a century ago. Since then science has made many new discoveries and changed its views on the makeup of matter. There is no longer amazement over psychic phenomena. But the high moral and spiritual aims expressed in the lectures are still in effect and will be a guide to future theosophical activities.—ALAN SHURLOCK.

THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY by Henry Travers Edge: Point Loma Publications Inc., 1974. Paper, 71 pages, \$1.75.

In this Manual, which is one of a set of twelve, there is an amazing amount of informative reading. Every student of Theosophy should be conversant with the facts which are presented so clearly and lucidly in this work. Of especial significance are the words of Dr. Edge where he describes his presentation of the subject: "For the writer, having been brought up in the Church of England, in an atmosphere more genial than that of some of the narrower sects, and having in early life been a sincere Christian, is thereby qualified to speak with more sympathy and understanding than is sometimes the case with those who can view Christianity only from the outside."

Instead of regarding Theosophy and Christianity as separated systems of thought or religions, both are stated to have been derived from the same fundamental source, for as the author puts it: "there can be only one Truth. Religion itself, apart from creeds and churches, is a recognition and observance of the basic laws of the universe." In order to accentuate this observation, the author gives a brief exposition of the historical origins of both Theosophy and Christianity. He quotes St. Augustine and Justin Martyr for the latter, and H. P. Blavatsky for the former. Continuing his account of the historical sketch, early forms of Christianity are considered, as well as various groups which espoused Christianity. Following the historical aspect the major portion of the work is devoted to a consideration of the fundamental teachings of Christianity, and these aspects are considered: the Bible—both the Old and New Testaments; the Creation; the Flood; Redemption and Salvation; the Sacraments—the Eucharist and Baptism; Reincarnation—yes, indeed, for as pointed out by the author there were three periods when this doctrine was actually taught by those who espoused Christianity, namely the period of early Christianity until the Synod of Constantinople in 553, which officially declared the teachings of the Church Father Origen in regard to the nature and destiny of the soul to be 'heretical'; from 553 to 1483, when Georgius Gemistus visited Florence and revived the philosophy of Plato; thence down to modern times.

Other subjects elucidated are: the doctrine of the Trinity, the Cross, the Mysteries, the Second Coming of Christ, the Golden Rule, the Immanent Christ, on God, Prayer, and the Problem of Evil.

—GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA

THEOSOPHICAL TRANSLATIONS INTO GERMAN

A lifetime's dedication to Theosophy is seen in the translation into German of a veritable library of theosophical works. This has been the amazing accomplishment of Mary Linné and the late Emmi Haerter, of Bad Liebenzell, in the Black Forest, Germany. These have been issued under the auspices of Theosophischer Arbeitskreis Unterlengenhardt (7263 Bad Liebenzell, Zwerweg 6) which follows the Blavatsky/Point Loma tradition. For the general interest of our readers and for those particularly reading German, we list below these translations:

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY: *The Secret Doctrine; Isis Unveiled; The Voice of the Silence; Five Messages to the American Conventions; H. P. Blavatsky and her Literary Heritage* (pamphlet); also Lina Psaltis' compilation from H. P. Blavatsky: *The Dynamics of the Psychic World*.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE: *The Ocean of Theosophy; Letters that Have Helped Me; Concentration and Meditation* (pamphlet)

KATHERINE TINGLEY: *Non-Violence—Our Goal*.

G. DE PURUCKER: *Man in Evolution (Der Mensch im Kosmos); Occult Glossary (Theosophisches Wörterbuch); Golden Precepts; The Esoteric Tradition; Dialogues; Who Was Jesus?* (pamphlet).

PHILIP A. MALPAS: *Apollonius of Tyana; The Jesus Problem*.

GERTRUDE W. VAN PELT: *The Archaic History of the Human Race*.

GORDON PLUMMER: *Theosophy and Modern Man*.

GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA: *The Divine Plan; The Christmas Story; Glossary of Sanskrit Terms*.

GIFTS TO LIBRARY

Point Loma Publications Library has recently received 29 volumes of the published works of Talbot Mundy, a valued gift from Mrs. Hetty Manske of Los Angeles.

It may be of interest to *Eclectic* readers to know that what many consider Mundy's finest work, *Om, the Secret of Ahbor Valley*, was written while a guest of Katherine Tingley at the Theosophical Headquarters at Point Loma in 1923-24. In the dedication of the copy of this work presented to Mme. Tingley the author wrote at Christmas 1924:

"Dear Leader: This book was written in your house while I was your guest. What wisdom it contains was learned from you, and its unwisdom is my own. Without your teaching, patience, and encouragement I could not have 'imagined' the wise old Lama or his chela. Be this, therefore, a written record of my gratitude and obligation to you.

(signed) Talbot Mundy."

During the 1920's Mr. Mundy was also a Cabinet Officer of The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society with International Headquarters at Point Loma, California, and a frequent contributor to its official monthly organ *The Theosophical Path*.

Point Loma Publications Library (4877 Gresham St., San Diego, California, 92109) has in recent years received other valuable donations of books from friends, among them Mrs. Marguerite A. Barton of Porterville, California, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Laughlin of Walla Walla, Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Shurlock of Mill Valley, California, Mrs. Elizabeth Hatfield of Orleans, Mass., Mrs. Robert Brittain of San Diego, Calif., Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Amneus of Los Angeles, and others.

This seems an appropriate opportunity to inform a wider public interested in the over-all aims and purposes of Point Loma Publications, Inc., about our library, and to assure them that all contributions, in books or in funds with which to purchase books, will always be gratefully received.

—GERDA DAHL, Librarian

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Cablegram from Adyar, India,
November, 1976

To: Iverson L. Harris, President
Point Loma Publications, Inc.

REAFFIRMING OUR COMMON DEDICATION TO THE
GREAT WORK THIS ONE HUNDRED FIRST FOUNDATION
DAY (STOP) WITH YOU IN BROTHERHOOD.

JOHN COATS AND ALL AT ADYAR

Dr. Emanuel Pekelis, Jasper, Alabama: Life's Riddle by Nils Amneus is a formidable book. Its conciseness, serenity, equanimity and completeness are unmatched in our library . . . Not once had I to stop while reading *Life's Riddle* and shout pounding on the table as I did for years (to my friend in Ojai): 'I do not follow! I fail to understand! I beg to disagree!' Not once. And I grieved, why had I not stumbled on that book ages ago?

*Ian McGregor, London, England:—*I found the *Manual Psychic Powers* extremely helpful in that it exposed, although very basically, the dangers and disappointments which many persons today face when engaged in 'occult' dabbings'.

IN DEFENSE OF H. P. BLAVATSKY

EDITORS: *The Eclectic Theosophist*

On October 12, 1976, I received from a correspondent in Detroit a letter which should be of interest to readers of our bi-monthly, did space permit, beginning with the following: "I have come across an article in *The Humanist* magazine of July-August 1976, that I

thought I should bring to your attention. It is one of the most disgusting, scurrilous packs of falsehoods I have as yet seen. It is part of a series on 'Pseudoscience', entitled 'Little Green Men from Afar' by a Mr. L. Sprague De Camp."

My correspondent quotes at some length extracts from the article referred to, being largely a rehash of slanderous, unproven gossip about H. P. Blavatsky's personal life or repetition of charges against the *bona fides* of her occult phenomena, which have long since been repeatedly refuted, and which she herself characterized as of minor importance in comparison with the philosophic-scientific-religious teachings which it was her mission to promulgate.

Assuming that *The Humanist* magazine might actually be rational, scientific and interested in facts and reliable information, as it claims to be, I wrote the Editor asking for space to answer Mr. De Camp's assault upon H. P. Blavatsky, one who, as a London journalist wrote, "changed the whole current of European thought." I also sent him a copy of my Open Letter to Daniel Cohen, author of *Masters of the Occult*, which letter, under the title "About Madame Blavatsky: Facts vs. Falsehoods, Fictions, and Biassed Surmises," was published in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, July 15, 1972. I also sent him a copy of my book *Mme. Blavatsky Defended*.

In answer to this I received the following: "Thank you for your letter. We appreciate your views on Madame Blavatsky, which we read with interest. Sincerely, (signed) Paul Kurtz."

Since the pages of *The Humanist* are not to be open to me to reach its readers, for whom an answer to the charges against H.P.B. is in fairness fitting, and since the readers of *The Eclectic Theosophist* are presumably well informed as to the real H.P.B. and what she stood for and taught, it would be a waste of time and of space to comment further on Mr. De Camp's article. Non-theosophist readers are referred to H.P.B.'s own writings as the best evidence; and for general information about her life and for refutation of attacks upon her, one can examine the items mentioned in my letter to the Editor of *The Humanist*.

Finally, it seems appropriate and timely here to call attention to the article by William Q. Judge, which was published in the magazine *Lucifer*, London, December 1893, under the title "'Blavatskianism' In and Out of Season", from which we quote the following:

In the years that are gone, necessity existed for repelling mean personal attacks on H. P. Blavatsky's character. To take up arms in her behalf then was wise. Now her works remain. The necessity for constant repulse of attacks on her does not exist. Judgment can be used in doing so. Loyalty is not thrown to the winds when good judgment says there is no need to reply. One of the best replies is to carry on the work in the noble and altruistic spirit she always pointed out.

The whole of Mr. Judge's article is heartily recommended to students of Theosophy as well as to H.P.B.'s

detractors, if any of them are open-minded enough to read it. It was recently republished in a booklet entitled: *H. P. Blavatsky, Articles by William Q. Judge*, issued by The Theosophy Company, 245 West 33rd St., Los Angeles, California, 90007, U.S.A., price 50 cents.

—IVERSON L. HARRIS

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CONTRIBUTIONS

The following contributions have been received since our last reporting in *Eclectic* No. 36, and are here gratefully acknowledged: Anon, \$50.00; R.H., \$15.00; T.A., \$100.00; D.L.G., \$15.00; J.F., \$5.00; E.F., \$6.30; J.F., \$5.00; A.G., \$10.00; V.U. and I.U.S., \$67.50; O.C.B., \$50.00; E.M.G., \$500.00.