

The United Lodge of

THEOSOPHISTS

Its Mission and Its Future

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THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

AND THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

The United Lodge of Theosophists is an association of students of Theosophy which came into being through the determination of a small number of Theosophists to pursue the objectives of the Theosophical Movement without organizational distractions and formalities. The conception of U.L.T. (United Lodge of Theosophists) as a vehicle for Theosophical work derives mainly from the experience and insight of Robert Crosbie, a man who, throughout a long association with the original Theosophical Society, was witness to the schisms and divisions caused in the movement by organizational claims, controversy over "authority" and the competition of personal leaders. In 1909, with the help of a few others who had come to share his insectaria view of Theosophy, Mr. Crosbie formed the United Lodge of Theosophists—a body which was defined by a simple statement of policies and intentions—and set about the task of restoring the record of the Theosophical teachings available to the public and inaugurating a program of practical Theosophical education. There has been no change, from that day to this, in the U.L.T. statement of purpose, called the "Declaration," and little alteration (none in principle) in the modes of work established by Mr. Crosbie during his lifetime.

Although study and understanding of Theosophy are regarded by its advocates and supporters as a lifetime undertaking, a general view of this philosophy is necessary to a comprehension of U.L.T. The basic idea is that there is in every human being the latent capacity for self-knowledge, for self-reliant decision on all the great questions, and for progress in understanding through the study and application of philosophy in daily life. While people may and do learn from one another—and, indeed, learn better and more rapidly in cooperative association than in any other way—each individual is ultimately responsible for his own growth, and is himself the only final authority concerning what he will accept as knowledge and truth. It follows that the best association is one which provides a maximum of individual freedom and at the same time full opportunity for contact and collaboration with others who are endeavoring to move in the same direction.

What, then, is the ground of unity among students of Theosophy in U.L.T.? It is agreement on the Objects of the Theosophical Movement and on the proposition that the teachings of Theosophy are the best available guides to an understanding of those Objects and to the planning of work in their behalf. Stated briefly, they are:

- I. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;*
- II, The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*
- III. The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

Theosophy teaches that human intelligence is essentially an expression of the soul-reality in every man; that this soul is an individual, evolutionary pilgrim engaged in a long series of embodiments (incarnations) through which it grows in knowledge and ethical awareness, moving toward the climactic development of perfection as a human being—perfection in terms of the possibilities of this period of evolution. It teaches that this cycle of growth proceeds under the government of natural law—a law which applies as much to the moral as to the physical life, and which, if studied in its manifold phases and subtle effects, can be understood and relied upon by human beings. (In the East, and increasingly in the

West, this principle or order is known as the Law of Karma.)

Theosophy proposes further that all human souls—as well as the soul-aspect of everything in nature—is rooted in an ultimate principle of Reality which is the source of all. This is the old idea of an unknown and hidden Deity—abstract to intellect, wholly hidden from sense, yet an absolute presence within all life and every aspect of being and nature. It is the changeless and essential unity intuited as the Nameless One, the Primary Reality which supports the Universe. It is the center and undefined *Subject* behind all intelligence, yet not limited or confined by any form. This principle, Theosophy holds, is the source and justification of all ethical conceptions and the deeply felt premise of all ideals of brotherhood.

In consideration of the fact that the mind, in its highest sense, is the place of realization and growth, individual students come to regard these general principles as meaning that human life is a continuous process of learning, and that this learning involves unceasing revision of the terms of individual understanding, which process, as men gain awareness of its operations, becomes the best evidence we have of the reality of the Higher Self in every man. The evolutionary work pursued by the ego throughout incarnation after incarnation is held to be the consequence of what the individual eventually realizes directly of his own destiny as a spiritual being. In the United Lodge of Theosophists, this view of soul-growth or development manifests in primary attention to “self-induced and self-devised efforts” (see the Declaration), as distinguished from formalized programs of education and fixed methods for progress in Theosophy.

These fundamental conceptions or propositions about meaning in human life are really the ground of the U.L.T. form of association of students of Theosophy. Confidence in the capacity of the students to define for themselves their commitments in the service of Theosophy rests upon the evolutionary principle of self-reliance taught by Theosophy. The absence of organizational procedures and apparatus is in recognition of the idea that these mechanisms are not necessary to the study of philosophy. U.L.T. is not concerned with externalities, but with study and growth in philosophical understanding.

A natural question concerns the defining of “Theosophy” and the selection or limitation of the materials for study. The Declaration of U.L.T. affirms loyalty to the “Great Founders of the Theosophical Movement.” The meaning of this phrase grows out of examination of the body of Theosophical literature. The inquirer, if he goes to the sources, finds that the principal founders of the Theosophical Society (formed in New York City, in 1875) were three: H. S. Olcott, H. P. Blavatsky, and William Q. Judge. Two of these three, Blavatsky and Judge, put of record the main body of original literature of the Theosophical Movement. Olcott wrote very little, being mainly a figure in the organizational history of the Theosophical Society. The first and major Theosophical books came from the pen of Madame Blavatsky—including *Isis Unveiled* (1877) *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), and *The Key to Theosophy* (1889). Judge wrote mostly explanatory articles and amplifications of the contents of the basic works of H.P.B. Through articles by Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Judge, a large periodical literature accumulated in the Theosophical magazines of the nineteenth century, and it became the function of *Theosophy* (founded in 1912), a magazine supported largely by U.L.T. students, to reprint material first published in the old magazines.

Many of the difficulties in connection with “authority” in Theosophy have arisen from the statement by H. P. Blavatsky that she was the pupil and emissary of a fraternity of Wise Men, known variously as the Brothers, Great Teachers, and sometimes as Masters or Mahatmas. While the logic of evolution, as taught in Theosophy, could lead to no other conclusion than that such beings must exist, a civilization in which the religious instinct had

been dulled and confused by claims of miracle and divine revelation by a single divine, but historical, Personage could not find it easy to deal intelligently with the idea of perfected beings as the flower of human evolution. Too often, in Theosophical affairs, common sense and rationality were abandoned for mysterious claims and pretensions to high spiritual status. It was forgotten that H. P. Blavatsky, from whom all that was known of such beings initially came, had insisted that the only authority in her books was their inherent reasonableness, however extraordinary the conclusions to which they might lead. It would be quite possible, of course, to escape such hazards by suppressing this portion (concerned with perfected men) of the Theosophical teachings, but to do so would be a misrepresentation of Theosophy as it was brought by the teacher. Not belief, but open-minded investigation, was what she sought, and it is in keeping with this invitation that U.L.T. has, through the years, provided for inquirers the original works of H.P.B., just as she wrote them, and provided also, by reason of the internal evidence of their value, the works of William Q. Judge, U.L.T., then, stands for a consensus concerning the value of these writings and their primary importance in understanding what is meant by the term "Theosophy." The presentation of the works of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge as in fact the original and essential Theosophical literature is validated by historical priority—determined by looking up publication dates—and by the philosophic content of these writings, which is a matter of internal evidence. U.L.T. students would not think of denying value to other writings, whether called "Theosophical" or by some other name, but they simply propose the *unique* importance, because of their inherent consistency, of the writings of the Founders. U.L.T. has chosen to pursue the study and dissemination of the content of these writings and, as far as possible, the understanding of their meaning and implications. To this end U.L.T. maintains public meetings and pursues a publishing program to keep the original Theosophical literature in print.

In the early days, Robert Crosbie wrote:

Let "U.L.T." flourish on its moral worth alone. The work we have to do, the knowledge we have to give out, depends upon no other names than those of the true Teachers, H.P.B. and W.Q.J. Associates must learn to look to them, to point to them and to the Masters whom they served. Nothing else will restore the Movement. Unity is the keynote of our attempt, and living persons, if made prominent, will detract from that attempt, will be attacked, to the injury of the Movement. So we will keep their names out of consideration. Let the curious and antagonistic surmise all they want to—the really earnest will then judge by the fruits, not by persons. Theosophy does not emanate from any society nor from any living persons. So far as the world and all Theosophists are concerned, Theosophy comes from H.P.B. and W.Q.J., or rather, through them. So, to avoid misconceptions, we get back of living persons to the Message and the Messengers.

W.Q.J. was not the "successor" of H.P.B.; he was her colleague and co-worker who retained his body a few years longer than she remained in hers. He was the "stone that was rejected by the builders/ who desired to pose as successors to H.P.B.—to the confusion of all who depended upon them. The real foundation of the ** successor m craze" is the itch for *more instructions*; this begets the hunt after anyone who will promise fresh "revelations. What was given out by H.P.B., and applied by W.Q.J., was not and is not studied by Theosophists at large, or it would have awakened a fuller thought and investigation by the students. All the theosophical follies are the result of ignorance, superstition and selfishness, which knowledge alone can overcome. Our efforts may seem inadequate, but they are in the right direction, and "a little leaven leaven eth the whole lump." We will do what we can and all that we know how to do, enduring the evils of the present while attempting that which will work for greater good in the future....

H.P.B. once wrote: *If any one holds to Buddha's philosophy, let him say and do as Buddha said and did; if a man calls himself a Christian, let Him follow the commandments of Christ—not the interpretation of his many dissenting priests and sects*" The moral is—if anyone desires to be a Theosophist, let him study Theosophy as it was given by those who enunciated it. For one to accept as true what *any* teacher chooses to tell him, without any means given him by which to verify the statements made, or without verifying for himself the facts alleged—is simply to believe on blind faith, as do so many others.

Our own difficult task is to avoid all semblance of authority of any kind, while being at the same time sure of our ground and not afraid to say so. We have, like the Founders, to give everyone an opportunity to see for himself that what we have to say is well founded. We have to strike the key-note for those who come after us; once struck, it will be followed by those who take hold* The others will find it “too absorbing and too lofty *” for them, and will not attempt it. In other words, we have to show the *raison d’etre* of U.L.T., so that others may see it as clearly as we do.

We have undertaken a high mission and a heavy task—not because we think ourselves so eminently fit, but because we see the need and there is no one else to do it; and we also know that we will not be left alone in the doing. So, what we have to give are the salient points, clear and definite, as well as concise in statement, so that thought shall be directed to them ; to make the points so striking that they cannot be passed over, even by the careless reader; and that they shall stand as facts, and facts only, before the mind, verifiable by anyone who cares enough to do so.

As becomes evident from the foregoing, U.L.T. sought from the first to avoid the disruptions and disputes which have resulted whenever the quest for truth has been confined by organizational structures. The United Lodge of Theosophists is not a, nor the “theosophical society/” It is, without other pretensions, a School of Theosophy—an informal and wholly voluntary association of students allied on the common ground of the U.L.T. Declaration, no more concerned with the various theosophical organizations than it is with the similar societies and sects of the various popular religions. The members are not encouraged to proselyte, but welcome to its association those who are or become interested in Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement. The unity U.L.T. stands for among Theosophists, and to which it attempts to contribute, is the spontaneous unity which arises among people who have the same basic aims and a common inspiration, with little or no interest in the formal ties or organization. The latter often prove to be deceptions practiced on inquirers when the primary unity of thought and feeling no longer exists. The U.L.T. Declaration of principles and policy, drawn very largely from the writings of William Q. Judge, was formulated by Mr. Crosbie at the beginning and has ever since been circulated among students and associates to represent and give expression to their bond of union and basis of work. It reads:

The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the Self; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is similarity of aim, purpose and teaching,” and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

“The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all.”

Something of the history and much of the spirit, of the origin and plan of the United Lodge of Theosophists will be found in *The Friendly Philosopher*, a book made up of Mr. Crosbie’s letters and talks. (The paperbound volume, *Universal Theosophy*, is an abridged version of *The Friendly Philosopher*.) The lines of guidance supplied by him through these means have been virtual principles of growth for the United Lodge of Theosophists, through

The years. By the time of his death, in 1919, a strong nucleus of students had gathered to support and carry on the work. During the ten years of his presence and inspiration, it became evident that his vision came from a source accessible to all—the record of the Theosophical philosophy in the books and articles of the teachers. By these means the original inspiration of U.L.T. has been maintained into the present. An important avenue for the spread of these teachings has been the magazine *Theosophy*, founded by Mr. Crosbie in 1912. This made possible republication of the periodical literature of the Movement—essentially, the old magazine writings of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge—and the continuing examination of current events and thinking in the light of Theosophy. The publishing activity within U.L.T. also includes putting into and maintaining in print the books of Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Judge, as well as much pamphlet material and studies of the history of the Theosophical Movement.

Today, in the second half of the twentieth century, U.L.T. Lodges have spread around the world. A beginning toward the founding of a Lodge is usually made by starting a U.L.T. Study Class—or, when the prospective members of the class have no knowledge of U.L.T. methods, it is sometimes referred to as simply a Theosophy Study Group. It is desirable, however, that there be preliminary agreement that the study pursued is to be of the works of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. Without such a simple consensus, little constructive work can be done. Experience has shown that where there is recognition of the role of Judge in the launching of the Theosophical Movement, and use of his text, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, as the basis of Theosophical education, along with the simpler works of H.P.B., such as *The Key to Theosophy*, good foundations for a Lodge result. The Theosophical magazines have a vital function in the formation of U.L.T. centers. These publications—*Theosophy* in the United States, and *The Theosophical Movement* published in Bombay, India—are a means of keeping in touch with the current of Theosophical thought in the world generally. They enable new or isolated students to see how others take hold of contemporary questions and problems in the light of Theosophy. All students are encouraged, should they wish and feel able, to contribute articles to these magazines.

No control is exercised by any Lodge over any other. Lodges are autonomous. It is natural, however, for the founders of new undertakings, first study groups and later Lodges, to seek the counsel of more experienced students. This pamphlet is in part an outcome of such requests for help. The common ground among U.L.T. Lodges is the Declaration, which is a universal statement of aims and purposes, and an explanation of the basis of U.L.T. work. The Declaration is the true bond of union, and while lodges are of necessity local, a member of one Lodge is a member of every other, and the fraternity of the Association is a universal alliance. These conceptions of cooperative yet independent work for Theosophy have proved themselves sufficient for the rooting of U.L.T. centers and their growth into strong nuclei of Theosophical education over a period of more than half a century.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

Successful work in and for Theosophy must engage both mind and heart. The high ethical objectives of the Movement need the support of mental growth and understanding. This was made clear in the beginning by H.P.B., through the books she wrote and in her Prefaces. William Q. Judge may be regarded as setting the example of an ideal “student,” since his writings and letters are so plainly founded upon careful study and assimilation of the writings of H.P.B. Students strive to follow this example.

By means of study inquirers come to recognize and try to avoid repeating the tragic failures of great religious movements of the past. Serious moral reform requires the light of

understanding on the processes of self-regeneration, and an awareness of how human weakness combines with ignorance to produce partisanship and sectarianism. The high ends of altruism and brotherhood cannot be realized without deep insight into the laws of human development and a grasp of where the major obstacles to these ideals lie. Study helps to bring this understanding, and it also enables students to foster in themselves habits of impersonality, since the pursuit of knowledge and truth requires impersonal methods and an objective spirit.

Study of Theosophy, however, is far more than an intellectual activity, although intellectual disciplines are to some extent involved. The temper of the undertaking has been well put by Mr. Judge:

It is not high learning that is needed, but solely devotion to humanity, faith in Masters, in the Higher Self, a comprehension of the fundamental truths of Theosophy and a little, .only a little, sincere attempt to present those fundamental truths to a people who are in desperate need of them.

CLASS METHODS

While there are no hard and fast methods to be followed in the conduct of study classes, certain general views have resulted from the experience of many U.L.T. classes in various parts of the world, over a period of some fifty years. For example, it has been found better not to extend the period of class work for more than an hour and a quarter. It is important to start exactly on time and to close the meeting promptly. Informality in this respect will eventually work a hardship on some members of the class and become a cause of unnecessary in harmony. Best over-all results for the work are obtained by having *two* chairmen, who function, not as teachers, but as students who undertake responsibility for the planning and general mechanics of the class work. The real teachers are the Theosophical books or study materials. The role of the chairmen is nevertheless of great importance in guiding the *use* of these materials. The common practice of chairmen in all U.L.T. study groups is to meet in conference at some time before each class for a planning session and to agree upon procedures. This method of conference is characteristic of all U.L.T. lodge activities and is largely responsible for the impersonal spirit of the work. There may be what is conventionally called "leadership" in the sense of enthusiasm and devotion, contributing to an *esprit de corps*, but U.L.T. has no leaders in the sense of "authorities/" since decisions arise from conference consensus rather than individual judgment alone. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon this principle of U.L.T. work.

Classes usually begin with a few words of friendly introduction by one of the chairmen. These opening remarks do not have the character of a "talk," but are intended to place the meeting in context as a part of U.L.T. work generally. Three minutes are ample for this purpose. The introduction is followed by the reading of the Declaration by one of the members of the class. Reading the Declaration at each session has various purposes, all important. First, it provides the basis of U.L.T. work. Its generality prevents it from becoming any sort of "creed," while the breadth of its ideas prevents monotony so long as fresh thought is given to their implications. Second, the reading of the Declaration by class members supplies the chairmen with clues as to their capacities. Intelligent reading is by no means easy, and work with the Declaration is a means of practice for everyone. Questions on the Declaration may be taken by one of the chairmen immediately following the reading, or at some later time. Such questions have the value of helping the class to gain an awareness of the relationships which may be assumed by individuals with the Theosophical

movement. All kinds of issues may be seen to be involved, such as the matter of “authority” in Theosophy, the meaning of “loyalty” the many grounds for “commitment,” and the generally implied assumptions which are granted in the decision to take part in the programs and to work for the declared objectives of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Clarity on these points has an obvious bearing on the success with which a class will develop a self-conscious focus of intentions. The more these matters are understood, the less will be the inclination to rigidity on the part of those who take the initiative in a Theosophical study class. Finally, it lies with the wisdom of the chairmen to decide when any extended discussion becomes unfruitful and should be terminated or suspended. The preservation of balanced proportions in all the activities of the study class is obviously desirable.

Following the reading of the Declaration, the Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine are presented by a student or students to whom this work has been previously assigned. The fundamentals are found in classic form in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (pp. 13-20), but are endlessly stated in various ways throughout the Theosophical literature- The entire success of the United Lodge of Theosophists as an educational endeavor rests upon the general understanding of these Fundamentals gained by the Associates. It is by means of this discipline and the resulting grasp of first principles that students acquire the philosophical self-reliance which makes them effective, independent workers for the Theosophical Movement. Only philosophical understanding and independence can bring emancipation from authority. Only common appreciation of the importance of first principles as the foundation of all serious Theosophical inquiry can lead to an untrammelled, non-sectarian fraternity of minds and hearts working for the Theosophic Cause. And only serious study and discussion of the Fundamentals can turn H. P. B.'s “claims” in their behalf into individual discovery that what she says about them is precisely true.

In *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 13), Madame Blavatsky prefaces the statement of the Fundamentals by remarking that, for the serious reader—

It is absolutely necessary that he should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought to which his attention is invited. These basic ideas are few in number, and on their clear apprehension depends the understanding of all that follows; therefore no apology is required for asking the reader to make himself familiar with them first, before entering on the perusal of the work itself.

Then, at the conclusion of this section, she adds:

Such are the basic conceptions on which the Secret Doctrine rests.

It would not be in place here to enter upon any defense or proof of their inherent reasonableness; nor can I pause to show how they are, in fact, contained—though too often under a misleading guise—in every system of thought or philosophy worthy of the name.

Once that the reader has gained a clear comprehension of them and realized the light they throw on every problem of life, they will need no further justification in his eyes, because their truth will be to him as evident as the sun in heaven.

Here, in a few words, is put the reason for the existence of the United Lodge of Theosophists, and also the justification of its insistence upon H.P.B. as the true teacher of Theosophy. It is simply not possible for these conceptions to be grasped and what is said of them to be validated without serious study. Here, indeed, lies the only “authority” to which Theosophy can finally lay claim. The study class is the laboratory in which students work to develop their own independent convictions concerning these all-important questions.

The common fruit of this work is it noted, is that students find themselves made free in mind and cosmopolitan in outlook by study of H.P.B. They come to regard this sort of "fundamentalism" as immune to the shallow criticisms which their devotion to H.P.B. occasionally attracts from those who have never pursued determined study of her writings.

The effort to assimilate the Fundamentals may take any one of a multitude of forms. At first, the propositions may be memorized, although as a rule memory work is discouraged in U.L.T. The object is to learn to state these propositions in one's own words, and in a manner which applies to the great questions men ask of themselves and of one another. Various disciplines may be found useful. A student may be asked to put the Fundamentals in three sentences. Or he may be given a time-limit on his talk—say, one, two, or three minutes per Fundamental. He may be invited to isolate in the great religious traditions of the world the ideas which correspond to the Fundamentals of the Secret Doctrine. The end of all such work is to help the individual student to develop in himself the habit of thinking *spontaneously* in terms of these basic conceptions—not as a matter of skilful manipulation of words read in a book, but as his own progressive discovery of the very roots of all knowledge.

So far as the work of U.L.T. lodges is concerned, all speakers, without exception, are developed and trained in this way. Here, again, the guarantee of impersonality and of self-reliance is found in the methods adopted.

In class study of the Fundamentals, questions may be taken by one of the chairmen, or by the student who has stated one or more of the Fundamentals. The answering of questions is the best possible preparation for other work in the dissemination of Theosophy. In time, it wears away the "self-consciousness" of the student and teaches him to think freely, drawing on the resources of past study. The general rule is to answer the *question*, without notice of idiosyncrasies, if any, of the questioner. Frivolous questions, of course, need not be encouraged. It is good practice for either the chairman or the speaker to repeat the question, more or less as asked, to be sure that it is understood by everyone before attempting an answer. Answers given should not be in the form of "personal opinions," but drawn from the text or from some portion of the Theosophical literature, either directly or as an inference. No answer, of course, need be regarded as authoritative or "final." The object of study classes is to develop and sustain the temper of serious inquiry, not to reach settled conclusions or elicit final or dogmatic utterances of any sort. In matters of first principles, however, there can hardly be grounds for dispute.

Various texts may be used by study classes, such as H.P.B.'s *Key to Theosophy* or Judge's *Ocean of Theosophy*. The *Ocean* is often found especially useful for beginning classes. Its author, William Q. Judge, an Irish-American Theosophist, was H.P.B.'s colleague and co-worker from the very beginning and this book is a brief but quite substantial outline of the contents of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is simply written and ideal for study class work.

The main part of the class usually consists of reading aloud from the text selected, going through the book in this way from start to finish. Everyone in the class is invited to read, and may read anywhere from two or three sentences to a full paragraph—depending upon the pace of the class, the skill of the reader, and the amount of material to be covered. Often the class reads two or three pages in this way, people being called upon either by name or in sitting sequence, this to be followed by ten or fifteen minutes of questions or discussion of what has been read. The chairmen may take the questions, or a student may be invited to come before the class and make answers. When a chapter has been completed, a summary or review may be assigned to a class member, or topical summaries may be undertaken on the book as a whole, after it has been read. (An assignment which takes more than ten minutes is

usually too long !) Many students find it good practice to annotate their *Oceans* with cross-references to *The Secret Doctrine*, or to other books, such as *The Key to Theosophy*, and to exchange such references with one another. This linkage of class study with use of the larger Theosophical works is always enriching to the class.

Other books used as texts in the study classes include Mr. Judge's *Epitome of Theosophy*, and his *Echoes from the Orient*. In general, care should be taken to plan and orient the class work with due consideration for the newcomer, so that one who attends for the first time will not feel overwhelmed by an excess of technical terms and complicated doctrinal renderings.

Usually, the classes are brought to an end by one of the chairmen, who will make a few words of summary or speak of what is to take place at the next meeting, and give out assignments for that class. Something should be said, from time to time, about the importance of owning the books offered for sale on a book table, and about the support of the work, to which voluntary contributions are in order.

OTHER MEETINGS

The general public meetings are held for the benefit of inquirers and newcomers, the topics being chosen to elicit statements of Theosophy within their grasp. When a study group "graduates" so to speak, into being a Lodge, it is usual to hold the principal meeting on Sunday evening. This meeting is opened by a brief statement, often called "announcements/* which is intended to acquaint the audience with the purpose and general character of the United Lodge of Theosophists. The available literature is described, with emphasis on the source materials by H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. (The books, *The Theosophical Movement: 1875-19501* and Robert Crosbie's *Friendly Philosopher* provide background for these opening remarks.) Care should be taken not to permit the announcements to take on the quality of a "lecture." What is said should be prefatory, introductory, and informative. Ten minutes is normally ample for opening remarks, which are then followed by a reading from one of the devotional books such as *The Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path* or *The Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold. The talk of the evening, which seldom lasts more than half an hour, considers some fundamental Theosophical subject and is succeeded by a half-hour of questions from the audience. It is the speaker's prerogative to hold the question-period discussions to the announced subject, although any Theosophical question may be examined. The question period is for consideration of Theosophy, and only in this respect is an "open forum"

Another type of meeting is known as a "Question-and-Answer" Meeting. This begins with announcements (usually based, in part, on the Declaration), but without a reading, and is followed by a short talk lasting not more than fifteen minutes, the balance of the time being used for the answering and discussion of questions from the audience. It is always pointed out that the speaker endeavors to reply out of the teachings of Theosophy, rather than with his own ideas. While individual minds of course make their contribution, the point of this policy is to direct the inquirer to the books, which are the only "authority" in Theosophy. The purpose of the meetings is to stimulate individual study, not to develop a "following" for speakers, however impressive. Sometimes the Question-and- Answer Meeting may take up, over a period of weeks, a series of related subjects, such as the History of the Movement, or Great Teachers of the Past, or Reincarnation as found in various traditions and culture.

Theosophy School for children (with classes also for the parents or friends who bring

them) meets on Sunday morning. Persons interested in this work would do well to correspond with or visit a lodge where a Theosophy School has been established for a time. While there are various supplementary books and materials prepared for use with children, the help of those who have had experience in Theosophical education for children is invaluable. The plan of work is basically the same as that for adults, founded on the conference method, with regular preparatory and planning meetings held by the two teachers for each class. Books used are *The Eternal Verities*, which provides material on the Fundamentals in a form suitable for class work, and "*Because—*"for the Children Who Ask Why, a volume of supplementary material. *The Teacher's Manual and Guide to the Eternal Verities* is used by all Theosophy School Teachers for help in preparing work and as a book which provides the fruit of half a century of experience in Theosophical education for children. It is also useful to parents who are looking for suggestions in relation to bringing up their children in the light of Theosophy.

Theosophical Pathfinders is an organization which grew out of the work of Theosophy School. Children from eight to an indeterminate age who attend Theosophy School are eligible for Pathfinders, which provides opportunity for Saturday trips to the country, the mountains, the seashore, and various activities in which nature study, crafts, and artistic undertakings may have a part. The leaders of the Pathfinder work are volunteers, members of the Lodge who have trained themselves for this kind of educational endeavor. To " help Nature and work on with her" expresses the spirit of Pathfinder education. In all its activities, the attempt is made to give the principles of the Theosophical philosophy expression in practical forms, providing children and young people with an approach to fitting companionship with older students and opening the way to increased helpfulness and service in the general work of the Lodge. Inquiries about Pathfinders may be addressed to The Theosophical Pathfinders, care of the United Lodge of Theosophists, in either Los Angeles or New York.

IN GENERAL

It will be seen that the general object of all these Theosophical and educational activities—the individual study, the classes, general meetings, the children's work, and correspondence conducted by Lodges with inquirers—is to bring about more enduring, philosophical conceptions of the brotherhood of man. Instruction in the Theosophical teaching is important, but the importance lies in the study and assimilation of Theosophy which enable the individual to see and to understand for himself. Unity among Theosophists lies in the self-reliant and growing capacity to understand, and in recognition that it is Theosophy which brings this individual growth into being* The bond among Theosophists is thus a philosophical, not an organizational bond. It depends upon perception that Theosophy leads to inner freedom, and therefore to independent moral strength. United Lodges of Theosophists are laboratories for the practical demonstration of this worth in Theosophy and for the development of avenues for the spread of Theosophical ideas throughout the world.

Reasoning of this sort lies behind the resolve of the founders of U.L.T. to keep all organizational apparatus at a minimum: the books, a place to meet, a magazine—these, plus the longing to know and understand are all that is needed. Altruism and the ideal of a universal brotherhood are the deep-lying motives for the work, giving it a quality which helps individuals to surmount personal differences and to develop impartial and open minds. Problems arise, of course, and have to be met on the basis of principle and out of regard for the reason that students have associated together to do Theosophical work. In the final analysis, no problem can be referred to "authority" in Theosophy. The authority may

exist, but it has to be recognized as a matter of inward perception. Unity in Theosophy, therefore, depends upon a commonalty of perception, and upon nothing else. The work of the Theosophical Movement stands or falls with this principle. One great end of the Movement is the progressive demonstration of the reality of soul and the power of soul-knowledge. This means the progressive exhibition of harmony among individuals, arising naturally out of their own growing freedom of mind and their will to understand both the philosophy and one another.

The undertaking of U.L.T. takes place in the general contemporary environment of miscellaneous conceptions of philosophy, religion, and politics which often have little in common with Theosophical ideas of human values, ends, and the means to progress. The problem, then, for working Theosophists, is to give what evidence they can that, *in time*, Theosophy proves itself to all serious inquirers, and that the methods of self-reliance, independent study, and friendly cooperation work to create an effective alliance of workers for brotherhood and human understanding. U.L.T. is the vehicle created by Robert Crosbie for the fulfillment of these demonstrations. It is continued and made to grow by others who have come to recognize the importance of such work.

In all U.L.T. lodges and study classes, it is recognized that the great need of the world is for a wide dissemination of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy. It is understood that people come to the meetings to hear about *Theosophy*—what it is, where it comes from, what it teaches on the great subjects of birth and death, ethics and morality, Karma and Reincarnation, good and evil, and the mysteries of Deity. Tact, skill, patience, and warmth are of course desirable in the conduct of all meetings. At the same time it is well to make clear that U.L.T. meetings are held for the sole purpose of presenting Theosophical teachings. Those who wish to pursue other objectives will have to hire their own hall.

Ideally, Theosophists do not attempt to “convert” people to Theosophy. Theosophical work is carried on under the assumption that all human beings are souls in evolution, that all are capable of making decisions for themselves, and that, soon- € or later, they will come to a study of the great truths of Theosophy. The Lodge is a place for those who have decided to begin now.

SUPPORT OF LODGES

In the beginning, the entire burden of responsibility for the expenses of the Parent Lodge was borne by Robert Crosbie and the few original associates. This was a natural way for such work to be started and the same method of support continues in principle to this day. That is, all contributions of money, and of time given, are voluntary. There is never any solicitation of funds, even though Lodge resources may be desperately low; on the other hand, it is both suitable and necessary to point out during meetings that the work depends upon contributions for its maintenance and support. Gifts to support the work are voluntary for the reason that there can be no “purchase” of truth. Those members of the Lodge who now assume responsibility for keeping it going did not themselves receive help for a price, and they will not so offer it to others. An individual may come for years without giving help, or he may contribute from the very first time he attends; only he will know; only he will measure or influence his selfassumed commitment or obligation.

In a way, the Lodge exists and is directed and maintained more or less as a private college or university is maintained. It was brought into being and is sustained by individuals who see the need for it and resolve to support its activities. From time to time they may be joined by others who, having the same recognition, give their support also. Practical management of the Lodge is in the hands of those who accept major responsibility and make

appropriate division of labor among themselves. All decisions of policy are made by consensus based upon the general principles of the Declaration.

RELATIONS AMONG U.L.T. LODGES

The associates of the other Lodges which have been formed, through the years, since the establishment of the Parent Lodge in 1909, all subscribe to the Declaration as formulated in the beginning by the Parent Lodge. They are in fraternal affiliation with it as with all other Lodges and groups. Locality has little to do with Theosophic brotherhood. Associates are registered locally but their cards are registered and kept by the General Registrar of the Parent Lodge. However, it is to be clearly understood that each Lodge is wholly autonomous. One Lodge may, when asked, offer counsel to another, but there is never any control. While the Parent Lodge in Los Angeles, because of its longer experience and its responsibilities growing out of publishing the books and magazines, naturally assists in whatever way is feasible in the formation of other Lodges, both in the United States and in other parts of the world, it specifically disclaims authority over or responsibility for any other Lodge or any Associate. This policy is a practical expression of the philosophic resolve to avoid any vestige of authority in matters which are essentially spiritual, moral, and intellectual. Further, any exercise of a paternal tendency has the effect of reducing the initiative and self-reliance of others. Theosophists are not concerned with building a big, centralized organization, but with the spread of emancipating ideas and spiritual independence, and the policies of U.L.T. have been shaped with this ideal in mind: Each Associate records his identification with the purposes of U.L.T. work as an individual, not as the member of a group.

Hence the work of the Parent Lodge, or any of the older Lodges, has never been aimed in the direction of establishing new Lodges or a "society" of any kind, for the sake of mere numbers. U.L.T. is devoted to general education in Theosophy, regardless of organizational affiliations or attachments. Members of the various Theosophical societies often become Associates of U.L.T. without disturbing their previous affiliations. In U.L.T., the only allegiance required is to the Teachers and the Teaching, as specified in the Declaration.

INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

One of the difficulties of continuing and maintaining such a free association of students within the matrix of a highly organized, mass society has to do with the practical problems of financial support. It is an undeniable fact that the stability and continuity of work in Theosophical education depends in part upon the physical base of a place to hold meetings, house a library, and (at the Parent Lodge) carry on an extensive publishing program. In the early days, fiscal responsibilities were comparatively slight and uncomplicated. The Lodge could take care of its material needs through a single Business Agent. Today, with the many legal controls and regulations affecting every sort of non-commercial undertaking in which finances are involved, the business of Lodges of any size must be transacted by a non-profit corporation under state laws and in conformity with regulations established (in the United States) by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The Theosophy Company, a non-profit corporation chartered by the State of California, was the first of these eleemosynary institutions to be formed in behalf of the work of the United Lodge of Theosophists. This Company is founded upon the Declaration of U.L.T., issues no stock, sells no "memberships," but is conducted by its trustees, who are all associates of U.L.T. It holds title to Lodge Buildings and publishes the books, pamphlets, and magazine. It holds a U.S. Treasury Department Letter of Tax Exemption covering all contributions, gifts, bequests, etc., made to The Theosophy Company. Its officers and trustees serve without compensation.

There are now several similar non-profit corporations within other U.L.T. Lodges, modeled more or less on The Theosophy Company. This trend of formation of independent non-profit corporations by autonomous Lodges is regarded as constructive, since it confirms the principle of self-reliance in the area of practical affairs as well as in philosophy. However, because of the intricacy of the tax laws, and the need for caution in setting precedents which might have a result under the law which is not wholly anticipated, and with consequences affecting not one but many or all Lodges, consultation with an official of The Theosophy Company of Los Angeles is strongly suggested, when a step in this direction is contemplated by a Lodge. It may be fittingly remarked that The Theosophy Company in Los Angeles has from the first sustained the heavy expenses of publishing costly books such as *The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled*, and of keeping in print (through the Magazine *Theosophy*) the entire periodical literature of the Theosophical Movement. The experience of these undertakings and the accompanying responsibility make The Theosophy Company of Los Angeles a natural source of counsel and help in matters of Lodge business, with corresponding need of support from students generally. Some day, it is hoped, the spread of interest in Theosophy will enable books and magazines to be issued without considerable financial strain upon the publisher, such as has proved unavoidable up to the present. Yet the movement represented by U.L.T., despite obstacles yet to be surmounted, has enjoyed a steady growth throughout the more than half a century of its existence, and gives evidence of continuing to spread, to send down roots, and to further the cause of Theosophical education throughout the entire world. That all this has happened in so short a period of time means that students have given full-hearted devotion, made strong intellectual effort, practiced the brotherhood they preached, and supplied generous material support to the Theosophic cause.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

To bring to a close this consideration of the United Lodge of Theosophists—Its Mission and Its Future, we can do no better than to quote from H. P. Blavatsky, the chief Founder of the Theosophical Movement, a portion of the closing section of her work, *The Key to Theosophy*. In this volume, published in 1889, she wrote :

The future of the Theosophical Movement will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work.

I do not refer to technical knowledge of the esoteric doctrine, though that is most important; I speak rather of the great need of unbiased and clear judgment. Every such attempt has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart ...

But if this danger be averted, then the Society will live on, into and through the twentieth century. It will gradually leaven and permeate the great mass of thinking and intelligent people with its large-minded and noble ideas of Religion, Duty, and Philanthropy. Slowly but surely it will burst asunder the iron fetters of creeds and dogmas, of social and caste prejudices; it will break down racial and national antipathies and barriers, and will open the way to the practical realization of the Brotherhood of all men. Through its teaching, through the philosophy which it has rendered accessible and intelligible to the modern mind, the West will learn to understand and appreciate the East at its true value. Further, the development of the psychic powers and faculties, the premonitory symptoms of which are already visible in America, will proceed healthily and normally. Mankind will be saved from the terrible dangers, both mental and bodily, which are inevitable when that unfolding takes place, as it threatens to do, in a hot-bed of selfishness and all evil passions. Man's mental and psychic growth will proceed in harmony with his moral improvement, while his material surroundings will reflect the peace and fraternal good-will which will reign in his mind, instead of the discord and strife which is everywhere apparent around us today.

If the present effort succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an

organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the 20th century. The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings, and, as I have said, their prejudices and dogmatic illusions will have been, to some extent at least, removed. Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and united body of people ready to welcome the new torchbearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path. Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish. Measure it by comparison with what Theosophy actually has achieved without any of these advantages and surrounded by hosts of hindrances which would not hamper the new leader. Consider all this, and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years—tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now !

Communications from interested persons on any of the subject matters here discussed are always welcome, and every assistance possible gladly rendered by the Correspondent Associates of the Parent Lodge. All such communications should be addressed to

The General Registrar, or
The Theosophy Company,
Theosophy Hall, 33rd and Grand Ave.,
Los Angeles, California 90007, U.S.A.

The address of the Bangalore Lodge is

The United Lodge of Theosophists,
Maitri-Bhavan, 4 Sir Krishna Rao Road,
Basavangudi, Bangalore 4, India.