
Theosophy to Mankind [4]

THEOSOPHICAL LECTURES

The efficacy of the publicly spoken word as an instrument for sowing the seeds of Theosophy may be considered under the two main headings of the Lecturer and the Lecture.

The Lecturer

As the following descriptions show, the ideal lecturer must be an Adept! The human lecturer, however, is an individual who accepts the task of discovering, assimilating, arranging and spreading knowledge by means of the spoken word. The essentials of success, as ideals to which to aspire and work, might perhaps be described as at least seven in number. They are:

(a) *Sound knowledge*. Effective grasp both of basic Theosophy and of current world-thought is essential to success as a lecturer. Theosophical knowledge, be it remembered, is both experiential and intellectual, is both intuitively perceived and mentally received. To be convincing as a speaker, both processes must be employed. 'There are few voices but many echoes'. More students, deep students, intuitive students, determined students who will master the doctrines to the end of effective, accurate, impersonal exposition — this, I conceive, is the great need of The Theosophical Society at this important period in its history.

(b) *Well ordered and precise arrangement of knowledge.* Efficient mental filing and a logical, scientific habit of thought are essential for full success. Comprehensive charts are valuable as files of reference, as mnemonics and as aids to exposition. Students, and especially would be lecturers, are advised to construct their own Theosophical charts and to add to them as knowledge increases.

(c) *A trained yet flexible mind, a trained natural speech, and a trained yet simple manner.* These three important acquirements need to be effectively co-ordinated into a single trained instrument of exposition.

(d) *Whole-hearted, intuitive conviction* that Theosophy is the panacea for all human ills and a burning aspiration, amounting to a controlled passion, universally to apply this remedy. The true teacher is a dedicated, surrendered individual standing in attention in his or her place in the ranks of those who by proffered wisdom would save the world.

(e) *Good health, good appearance, friendliness of manner.* Good health suggests the successful application to life of sound principles. Good appearance is attractive, and the milk of human kindness often renders acceptable the stern decrees and demands of truth.

(f) *Complete humility, impersonality and dispassion* save for the Cause. The Achilles' heel of self-centredness must be dipped by Thetis (the Ego) in the Styx (of selflessness) with the rest of the body (Personality). Freedom from the curse of egoism and the vice of pride is essential to the attainment of spiritual and therefore of lecturing heights. 'That power which the disciple covets shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men'.

(g) *Karmic freedom.* The absence of this is perhaps the most general external barrier to Theosophical lecturership. The utmost use of existent freedom, however small the amount, will generally lead both to greater freedom and greater opportunity. Theosophy is a liberator of lives. Its practice and its promulgation transmute adversity into advancement, feebleness into faculty, and, frustration into freedom and fulfilment.

Such, it has seemed to me, are the seven essentials to success as a Theosophical lecturer. Such in part is the ideal which, although almost

unattainable, is nevertheless valuable as a guide and goal.

The importance of the establishment of Theosophical training centres or of a system of training for leaders and lecturers is, I think, established, far off though the physical realization still may be.

The Lecture

We now pass from the lecturer to the lecture as a means of spreading Theosophy. The successful Theosophical lecture would seem to be subject to at least ten necessities which I will state without comment.

A lecture should be clearly audible in the back seats: informative and stimulating; irreproachably logical; accurate sane; convincing; founded upon a scientific basis; philosophic in its tenor; culminating in a lofty spiritual message, and last, and also first, a vehicle for power.

As far as externals are concerned, Theosophical lectures should be delivered in a hall of harmonious appointments, good acoustics and comfortable chairs. The meetings should be presided over by an effective, brief and impersonal chairman, supported by efficient stewards, bookstall and library attendants. Satisfying answers to written questions enhance the value of an exposition of Theosophy.

Advertisements for the lecture are almost as important as the lecture itself. Individual recruitment of audience by the lodge members, always carried out with extreme tact, is perhaps the most valuable method of ensuring an interested audience. Those recruited may sometimes be personally assisted in their studies and generally guided in their search for truth. This shepherding of students is a most valuable form of Theosophical service and is open moreover to those who do not as yet aspire to become lecturers.

A large boldly written poster exhibited at the entrance of the lecture hall with the title — always attractive and terse — of the lectures changed progressively, is an inexpensive and valuable form of advertisement.

Press notices of Theosophical lectures could well be headed with a small representation of the Theosophical seal. The public of a City become familiar with this guide to the position in the newspapers of

Theosophical lectures. All other well-tried means of successful advertising should be studied and employed.

Such in part is the ideal for Theosophical lectures.

Much remains to be said concerning a world campaign to bring Theosophy to mankind and mankind to Theosophy. The Library, the Theosophical life and Theosophical conversations are important factors in success. Lodge life and the assistance, encouragement and instruction of new members and young members constitute problems not yet wholly solved. Articles and correspondence in newspapers; and magazines, radio talks and the production of Theosophical plays all offer opportunities still demanding further exploration. As supporting, activities to the production and dissemination of Theosophical literature and the delivery of Theosophical lectures, they all have their importance and value.

Happily the Parent Theosophical Society is in wise and strong hands. The President, as ever, calls to effective action. The Society's resources are being marshalled and directed into the most constructive channels possible. As heretofore, we are assured, the Adept Founders and Their great Brethren inspire and bless the work done in Their Name. The hope, therefore, is not in the least forlorn. Quite the contrary, success is utterly sure. The Theosophical Society with ever growing effectiveness will continue to bring Theosophy to mankind.

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