

# SOME MEANINGS IN THE DECLARATION

*from the Theosophical Movement, October 1981, p 461 - 467*

Although all that we can say is but a re-statement, there is a different light cast sometimes by a word or an application, which will be helpful and useful to some.

—ROBERT CROSBIE (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 380)

Let us use with care those living messengers called words.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

There is as much stumbling on mere words by students of Theosophy as on anything else.... We should all be careful not only to use the right word to express the idea intended to be conveyed, but also accurately to understand what is the idea the other person is trying to express, and to do this regardless of -; what words may have been used.... Words do no more than shadow forth the ideas, and a great deal depends upon the mental touch, taste, and power of smell of the person to whom the words are addressed.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE: "Stumbling Blocks in Words"  
(*The Path*, August 1890)

**BRIEF** and to the point, the Declaration of the U.L.T. is rich in meaning, pregnant with occult insight, and without parallel as a institution. Yet what difficulties it can offer to the student who tries to put it into his own words! One approach is to look behind key words to examine how they have evolved in common usage, to explore what ideas they provoke, and to identify linkages between them.

Here six words — *Declaration, policy, fundamental, principle, founder and loyal* — are taken up by reference to the two-volume *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. The words chosen all derive from Latin.

**DECLARATION** — from the Latin noun *declaratio*, the action of making clear, of elucidating. Gradually the English word took on a more formal application to indicate a positive statement or an assertion in favour of a position, or against one, leading to the legalistic usage of referring to a proclamation as embodied in a statement, document or

instrument. A notable historical instance of such document is the U.S. Declaration of Independence of 1776 with those memorable opening words:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness....

It will at once be appreciated that, in the transition to a more formal application, *declaration* has acquired two potentially contrary interpretations: on the one hand, that of making clear, and on the other, that of asserting a case. The two meanings do not necessarily go together. An assertion may indeed make clear that opinion or position of the declarer, but will not necessarily clarify what is being asserted and may indeed be wrong or false.

The U.L.T. Declaration has elements of both clarification and assertion. From its spirit, it may be judged to put more emphasis on clarification, the earlier and more fundamental meaning. The assertive parts are chiefly descriptive, *e.g.*:

- "The policy of this Lodge *is* independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy ..."
- "It *is* loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement ..."
- "The work ... and the end ... *are* too absorbing and too lofty ..."
- "It holds that the ... Basis for Union ... *is* similarity of aim, purpose and teaching ..."
- "It *regards* as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity ..."

In all these statements the Declaration clarifies and defines what U.L.T. is all about.

An interesting further nuance of meaning deserves highlighting. In English courts, a witness may make a declaration instead of swearing an oath on the Bible. This is called affirming. It invokes the integrity of the witness, his true self, ultimately in effect his higher self; it comes close to implying a vow and thereby it commands trust in what he says. The promise implicit in such a declaration has these overtones of the sacred which are pertinent to the Declaration of U.L.T.