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HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT, who has just passed away in his loved Indian home, the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras, was a man well-known in his native land long before, in concert with Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, he founded the Theosophical Society.

H. S. Olcott, who came from an old English Puritan family, settled for many generations in the United States, and whose grandmother was a descendant from one of the early members of the Dutch East Indian Company, was born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1832. He was only twenty-three when his success in the model farm of Scientific Agriculture near Newark, led the Greek Government to offer him the Chair of Agriculture in the University of Athens. The young man declined the honour, and in the same year he founded, with Mr. Vail of New Jersey, "The Westchester Farm School," near Mount Vernon, New York, a school regarded in the States as one of the pioneers of the present system of national agricultural education. He there interested himself in the cultivation of sorghum, just brought to the United States, and produced his

first book, *Sorgho and Imphee, the Chinese and African Sugar-canes*, which ran through seven editions and was placed by the State of Illinois in its school libraries. This book brought him the offer of the Directorship of the Agricultural Bureau at Washington, an offer which he declined, as he also declined offers of the managership of two immense properties.

In 1858, Mr. Olcott paid his first visit to Europe, still bent on the improvement of agriculture, and his report of what he saw was published in Appleton's *American Encyclopædia*. Recognised as an expert, he became the American correspondent of the well-known *Mark Lane Express* (London), Associate Agricultural Editor of the famous *New York Tribune*, and published two more books on Agriculture.

This phase of his life concluded with the outbreak of the American Civil War, when his passion for liberty drove him to enlist in the Northern Army, and he went through the whole of the North Carolina Campaign under General Burnside, and was invalided to New York, stricken with fever. As soon as he recovered, he prepared to start again for the front, but the Government, noting his ability and courage, chose him to conduct an enquiry into some suspected frauds at the New York Mustering and Disbursing Office. Every means was adopted to stop his resolute investigation, but neither bribes nor threats could check the determined young officer in his conduct of a campaign more dangerous than the facing of Southern bullets in the field. His physical courage had shone out in the North Carolina Expedition; his moral courage shone out yet more brightly as he fought for four years through a storm of opposition and calumny, till he sent the worst criminal to Sing Sing Prison for ten years, and received from the Government a telegram declaring that this conviction was "as important to Government as the winning of a great battle." Secretary Stanton declared that he had given him unlimited authority because he "found that he had made no mistakes that called for correction." Assistant Secretary Fox wrote that he wished to "bear testimony to the great zeal and fidelity which have characterised your conduct under circumstances very trying to the integrity of an officer." The Assistant Secretary of War wrote: "You will have

from your fellow-citizens the respect which is due to your patriotism and honourable service to the Government during the rebellion." The Judge Advocate-General of the Army wrote: "I cannot permit the occasion to pass without frankly expressing to you my high appreciation of the services which you have rendered while holding the difficult and responsible position from which you are about to retire. These services were signally marked by zeal, ability, and uncompromising faithfulness to duty." These words signalise the qualities most characteristic of H. S. Olcott's life.

Mr. Olcott now became Colonel Olcott, and Special Commissioner of the War Department. After two years the Secretary of the Navy begged for the loan of his services, to crush out the abuses of the Navy yards, and he was made Special Commissioner of the Navy Department. With resolute and unsparing zeal, he plunged into his work, purified the Department, reformed the system of accounts, and at the end received the following official testimony: "I wish to say that I have never met with a gentleman entrusted with important duties, of more capacity, rapidity and reliability than have been exhibited by you throughout. More than all, I desire to bear testimony to your entire uprightness and integrity of character, which I am sure have characterised your whole career, and which, to my knowledge, have never been assailed. That you have thus escaped with no stain upon your reputation, when we consider the corruption, audacity and power of the many villains in high position whom you have prosecuted and punished, is a tribute of which you may well be proud, and which no other man occupying a similar position and performing similar services in this country has ever achieved."

This was the man whom Mme. Blavatsky was sent by her Master to the United States to find, chosen by Them to found with her the Theosophical Society, and then to spend the remainder of his life in organising it all over the world. He brought to his task his unsullied record of public services, rendered to his country, his keen capacity, his enormous powers of work, and an unselfishness which, his colleague declared, she had never seen equalled outside the Âshrama of the Masters.

He was found by Mme. Blavatsky at the Eddy's Farm, whither he had been sent by the *New York Sun* and the *New York Graphic*, to report on the extraordinary spiritualistic manifestations which were there taking place. So valuable were his articles that no less than seven different publishers contended for the right to publish them in book form. So keen was the interest aroused that the papers sold at a dollar a copy, and he was said to divide public attention with the second election of General Grant to the Presidency. The two brave hearts recognised each other, and the two clasped hands in a life-long union, terminated on earth when H. P. Blavatsky left it in 1891, but not terminated, so they both believed, by the trivial incident of death, but to be carried on upon the other side, and when returned again to birth in this world.

Colonel Olcott, who had resigned from the War Department, and had been admitted to the Bar, was earning a large income as Counsel in Customs and Revenue cases when the call came. He abandoned his practice, and in the following year founded the Theosophical Society, of which he was appointed by the Masters President for life, and of which he delivered the inaugural address on November 17th, 1875, in New York. He studied with Mme. Blavatsky, and largely Englished for her her great work *Isis Unveiled*, one of the classics of the Society.

In 1878, the colleagues left for India, and for a time fixed their residence in Bombay. There Colonel Olcott inspired the first exhibition of Indian products, urging on Indians the use of their own goods in preference to those of foreign manufacture; at the first convention of the Theosophical Society in India Swadeshism was first proclaimed, as at a later Convention the Congress was begotten. A vigorous propaganda was carried on all over India, much hindered by Government hostility, but welcomed by the masses of Hindus and Parsis. In 1880 began the great Buddhist revival in Ceylon, which has now three colleges and 205 schools, 177 of which received Government grants this year; 25,856 children were in attendance in these schools on June 30th, 1906. This work is due to the whole-hearted energy and devotion of Colonel Olcott, himself a

professed Buddhist. Another great service to Buddhism was rendered by his visit to Japan in 1889, during which he addressed 25,000 persons, and succeeded in drawing up fourteen fundamental propositions, which form the basis of union between the long divided Northern and Southern Churches of Buddhism.

In 1882 the Founders bought with their own money the beautiful estate of Adyar, near Madras, which they established as the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society. The work done from 1875-1906 may be best judged by the fact that up to the year 1906, the President had issued 893 charters to branches all over the world, the majority grouped in eleven Territorial Sections, and the rest scattered over countries in which the branches are not yet sufficiently numerous to form a Section. The most northerly branch is in the Arctic Circle, and the southernmost in Dunedin, N.Z.

Many difficulties have confronted this lion-hearted man during these thirty-one years. He stood unflinchingly through the discreditable attack on Mme. Blavatsky by the Society for Psychical Research, and has lived to see Dr. Hodgson accept more marvels than he then denounced. He steered the Society through the crisis which rent from it for a time nearly the whole American Section, to see that Section welcome him to his native land with pride and exultation. He saw his colleague pass away from his side, and bore the burden alone, steadfastly and bravely, for another sixteen years, knitting hands with Annie Besant, her favourite pupil, as loyally and firmly as with herself. Through good report and evil report he has worked unwaveringly, until his Master's voice has called him home. At that same order, he appointed his colleague, Annie Besant, as his successor, to bear the burden H. P. Blavatsky and he had borne. He endured his last prolonged sufferings bravely and patiently, facing death as steadfastly as he had faced life, and cheered in the last weeks of his illness by the visits of the great Indian Sages to whom he had given the strength of his manhood, the devotion of his life. He has passed away from earth and left behind him a splendid monument of noble work, and on the other side he still will work till the time comes for his return.

India has had no more faithful helper in the revival of her

religions than this noble American, and she may well send her blessing to the man who loved and served her.<sup>1</sup>

ANNIE BESANT.

HENRY STEEL OLCOTT was a man of large heart, transparent honesty, wide tolerance and sympathy, of sunny disposition, even temper, and optimistic temperament; he was free from malice and of a forgiving disposition; practical and possessed of a shrewd common sense generally; unselfish, devoted and self-sacrificing; persistent and determined, though ever ready to acknowledge an error and set it right. He was neither a scholar nor a mystic, and made no pretence of being either. Indeed he boasted that his "theosophical education" was chiefly picked up in editing *Isis Unveiled*, and that he had since read little even of the literature produced by the members of the Society over which he presided. He was a journalist rather than a writer, a speech-maker rather than an orator.

He believed that he was better suited to keep to what he considered the more practical side of the administration of the Theosophical Movement, and never understood that his affectionate nature and familiarity were not always held sufficient in a Society that looked to the President for a constantly dignified presentation of great truths and wise advice in personal difficulties of a spiritual nature. Olcott, with his good-humoured laughter and jests, kindly sympathy and shrewdness, was frequently a good tonic to wild enthusiasm and unbalanced speculation, but his boisterous spirits were not infrequently out of place and his answers showed that he had not appreciated the nature of the difficulties and the need of a more delicate treatment.

It is, however, almost certain that no man of a more delicate mould could have stood what H. S. Olcott has had to stand; it required a rough diamond and the sturdiness of a blunt pioneer to stand up against the countless difficulties and obstacles, the obloquy, calumny, malice and derision which he has faced so bravely all these years. No other man could have braved it out

<sup>1</sup> This article has appeared in a number of the Indian papers, including *The Pioneer*, *The Indian Daily Telegraph* and *The Hindu*, from which we have received cuttings.

with H. P. B. within and the hostile host without ; his has been the faith that has moved mountains.

Take, for instance, his connection with Buddhism ; he was no scholar of Buddhism, no first-hand knower of its literature, and yet his common-sense *Catechism* has been translated into twenty-three languages, and is used by all the Buddhist children in upwards of 205 schools in Ceylon—schools founded chiefly by his endeavours. Ceylon has reason to bless the memory of H. S. Olcott. He unaided drew up fourteen propositions as a basis of agreement between the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, and Japan, and obtained their acceptance by the chief priestly authorities of these countries.

He has accomplished this in Buddha-lands, while in India he has started a great movement for the education of the Pariahs—a splendid idea ; and these schools, like the Buddhist schools, are developing by their own inherent vitality.

Again, take the Adyar Library, so dear to his heart ; it is now probably the richest MS. library in India. H. S. Olcott could not read a single one of these MSS., but he has got them together for others, housed them handsomely, and procured the beginnings of an endowment for future useful work.

As to the Society, that, whatever his other activities, was always his first interest,—he lived to see it spread into forty-five countries and number some 511 active branches, with a membership of from 10,000 to 12,000.

The chief characteristic of Olcott was his transparent honesty ; no one who reads his *Old Diary Leaves* can judge otherwise. A man of strong physical health, he was at one time a powerful magnetic healer ; he was also always a keen investigator of psychic phenomena, of which he had witnessed many of a remarkable character, but he was not personally psychic ; indeed, he was by temperament a phenomenalist rather than a mystic.

But his chief service to the Society is that he realised fully its international character and the importance of safeguarding the freedom of its platform ; cosmopolitan and tolerant himself, he endeavoured manfully, as long as he had strength, to keep it free from dogmatism and sectarianism.

Henry Steel Olcott has deserved well of us, and his memory will ever be kept green in our hearts. Let any who think little of this brave old man do as much as he has done, and we who love his memory will think well of them though they think little of him, but not otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

G. R. S. MEAD.

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## THE ANTI-CHRIST IN TRADITION AND THEORY

### I.—TRACES OF THE ANTI-CHRIST SAGA

*Qui scit ubi scientia habenti est proximus*

IN the midst of Jewish Apocalyptic literature, ranging from 200 B.C. to about 100 A.D., we come upon the remarkable and persistent tradition of *two* Messiahs, who take part in a great world-drama, accompanied by two witnesses who are always called by the names of Enoch and Elias.

The Mandæan scriptures give us a strange echo of this same tradition, and further a very old Christian sect, the Ebionites, have this double thread worked out in an elaborate scheme of cosmical redemption, the details of which we shall have to refer to later on.

To begin with the ancient Jewish basis of the traditions—in this the Anti-Christ appears as a man controlled by the Devil; occasionally he is identified with Satan, or as Irenæus described him: "Summing up within himself the apostasy of the Devil" (*Adv. Hær.*, v. 25. 1).

And yet again the Jewish legends give us something super-human, something spectral,—demoniacal; the revolt of an aerial spirit called Belial or Beliar, "the man of sin," the Anti-Christ of St. Paul.

<sup>1</sup> The above appeared in *The Vahan* of last month. I had intended to write at greater length for the REVIEW, but my colleague's article covers the ground I have omitted with greater detail than would have been accessible to me.—G. R. S. M.



The Jewish Sibyl, quoted by Lactantius, says :

“ From among the ancients of Samaria (Σεβασηνῶν) shall Beliar [Anti-Christ] come and he shall raise up great mountains, and cause the ocean and the great fiery sun and the glimmering moon to stand still, and the dead he shall cause to arise and do many wonders among men.

“ Nevertheless in him shall not be perfection, but only delusion, and he shall lead many astray, the faithful and the elect among Hebrews, as well as the lawless people who have not heard the voice of God ” (*The Sibylline Oracles*, iii.6 3<sup>1</sup>).

The Anti-Christ legend was originally adopted, according to Bousset, by the Christians from the Jews. With the Jews, he says, “ the idea of a demoniac power hostile to God became the expectation of a false Messiah.”<sup>2</sup>

“ For Paul also the Anti-Christ is this false Messiah, who works by the power of Satan with signs and wonders, and who, above all, is sent by God to the Jews because they refuse belief in the true Messiah.”

Bousset goes on to quote *John*, v. 43 : “ I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” The “ other ” is the Anti-Christ, according to nearly all the Patristic commentaries.

Starting from this legendary Jewish background, we find a ramifying oral tradition in the very early Church, in the Clementine books, in fragments of Syriac Apocalyptic works, in Armenian and Ethiopian, Greek, Latin, and Arabic.

What are we to make of these numerous traditions, so complex and so confused ? Was there at the back of the great World-Drama an Anti-Christ, and if so, what is an Anti-Christ ?

In Mrs. Besant’s *Avatâras*, she says (p. 56) : “ By the Will of the one Supreme, there is *one, incarnated in form*, who gathers up together the forces that make for retardation, in order that, thus gathered together, they may be destroyed by the opposing

<sup>1</sup> From the German of E. Kautzsch, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, ii. 186 (Tübingen ; 1900).

<sup>2</sup> *The Anti-Christ Legend—A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore*. From the German of W. Bousset (London ; 1896), p. 166.

force of good, and thus the balance may be re-established, and evolution go on along its appointed road."

With this we may compare *II. Thessalonians*, ii. 8: "And then that Wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

"The presence," says Mrs. Besant, "of the Avatâra of the forces that threaten evolution, calls forth the presence of the Avatâra that leads to the progress of humanity."

One might quote here practically the whole of Mrs. Besant's small book on Avatâras. It is probably the most occult contribution to christology that has ever appeared in the West. It is true she does not mention Jesus of Nazareth in connection with Avatâras of Evil, but she speaks of "*all*" the great Avatâras or Incarnations. Jesus was "one of these great beings," therefore He did not, He could not, according to a great law, come *alone*. One there was who came with Him—a Black Messiah, whose brow, like Milton's angel,

Deep scars of thunder had entrenched,  
And care sat on his faded cheek.

Who was he, this Angel of the Dark Face? Can we find any trace of him in history? Can we say *how close* he was to the person of the gentle, the noble, and the perfect Jesus whom we all revere?

That perfect Jesus came to us as one of the Mysteries of the Light, and into that Light we cannot look without seeing first a great darkness.

This is the language of mysticism, and perhaps it is to many meaningless; but there are no other words to express these, to me, necessary and axiomatic truths.

"The Lord was seen by the elect in that Form which appeared on the Mount, but by the reprobate in that which was suspended on the Cross."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the carnally minded see only the dead physical body of a man who came to a disgraceful end for trying to assert himself as a king and leader of the people.

<sup>1</sup> This remarkable passage occurs in a highly mystical Dialogue between a Disciple and a Master, called the *Elucidarium*, by Honorius of Autun, 1130 A.D. (Migne, *Patrolog.*, clxxii.).

The author of these lines gives us the tradition of Anti-Christ as the deceiver, as one who works wonders only for vain-glory, and working backwards through history we find it again in a curious old play of 954, by the monk Adso (Migne, ci. 1289), who gives us a Sibylline treatise on his own authority. This Sibyl takes us back to S. Ephrem (373 A.D.), who wrote a Greek discourse on the Anti-Christ (Assemani, iii. 134).

These works connect the whole of the Anti-Christ saga with the Simon Magus legends, for Adso says: "By his [Anti-Christ's] magic art and deception he will deceive men as Simon Magus deceived the man who, thinking to kill him, killed a ram instead."

Also Arnobius (ii. 12) narrates that Simon fell by his own weight when flying to heaven and perished; and in the *Scivias* of S. Hildegard (Migne, cxcvi.) she relates that Anti-Christ "shall say unto the believers in him that he intendeth to go aloft; and lo! as if stricken by a thunderbolt, suddenly coming he strikes his head with such force that he is both cast down from that mountain and delivereth his soul unto death."

Then, again, Simon, in *The Martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul* (Chap. xiv.), "began suddenly to change his forms, so as instantly to become a child, and, after a little, an old man, and again a youth, . . . and he raged, having the devil as an helper." And also, in Chap. xxii.: "In this Simon are two beings, of man and the devil."

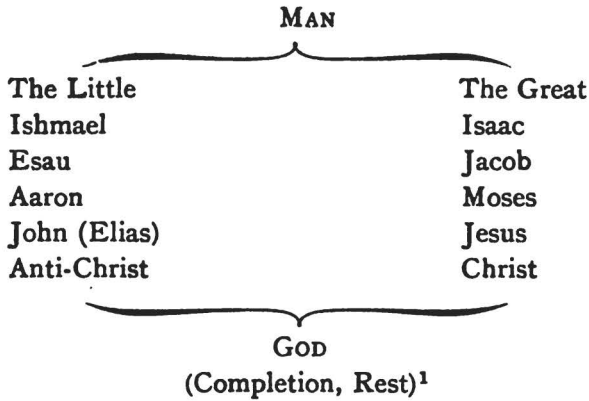
So of the Anti-Christ it is said, in *The Apocalypse of Ezra*: "And he becomes a child and an old man, and no one believeth in him that he is my beloved son."

And in Philip's *Dioptera* (Migne, cxxvii.): "But also altogether like Proteus, by changes of forms and colours [he makes himself] one from another, . . . flying on high like an angel, nay, like a demon, and fashioning portents and wonders unto deception."

Now, it is curious that in conjunction with the mysterious figure of Anti-Christ we find always the equally mysterious figures of two witnesses whose names are invariably Enoch and Elias.

In the ancient Ebionite scheme of Syzygies given in the

Clementine Books, we notice that John the Baptist's mystical name is Elias.



Now the Mandæan tradition gives us the mystical name of Jesus as Enoch—Enoch the Nazarene. These two are followed or overshadowed by the next syzygy in the ascending order; the overshadowing æon of Jesus being the Christ, and that of Elias or John being the Anti-Christ.

As far as we can gather from the Clementine Books, they show that the Head of the School who succeeded John was Simon Magus, the great wonder-worker, whose mysterious personality thus steps in to fill on the physical plane the vacant place of the Baptist.

This Ebionite scheme shows us, therefore, Jesus the Prophet preceding the appearance of Christ, as John or Elias preceded the great Magus or Anti-Christ.<sup>2</sup>

At this point the reader may feel inclined to remark: What are we to make of all these heterogeneous quotations; what are we supposed to conclude?

I do not know, and I should like my readers to feel equally certain of their own ignorance on the question before us. We must begin to realise that the actual facts of the life of Jesus Christ are as hidden pages for us; that there is a great volume

<sup>1</sup> From Gerhard Uhlhorn's *Die Homilien und Recognitionen des Clemens Romanus* (Göttingen; 1854), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> BIBLIOGRAPHY.—Bousset (W.), *Die Jüdische Apokalyptik* (Berlin; 1903); *The Anti-Christ Legend* (London; 1896). Kautzsch (E.), *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Test.* (Tübingen; 1900). Uhlhorn (G.), *Die Homilien und Recognitionen des Clemens R.* (Göttingen; 1854). Froning (R.), *Das Drama des Mittelalters* (1891).

unwritten about Him ; and that the first step for us to take towards getting it written is to admit that we want it.

## II.—THE THEORY OF AN ANTI-CHRIST

τὸ δὲ οὐχ ἅμα πάντες ἴσασιν οὐ γὰρ πάντων πάντα.

*Sibyl. Or.*, x. 290.

Among the Rulers of this world there must always *appear* to be a Demoniac Author of deliberate intellectual evil, cruelty and pain, Something or Someone who wills that pain should be inevitable. This Power, this aspect of God, cannot be thought of as kind or benevolent in our human sense of the words.

People compare the Almighty to a surgeon who is cruel only to be kind, but they forget that there is no surgeon worthy of his profession who would not abolish the necessity of all pain at once if he could ; whereas God, who could do so, does not.

People come by hundreds to this point, and here they stop. The next step is to my mind pure Gnosticism. Will it become a general or a popular one even in this our day ? I do not know. As I have seen it, it is this.

From our suffering human point of view there is a Demoniac side to the Power within the Universe. This is a logical necessity ; it is as inseparable from the Angelic side as the inner side of a curve is inseparable from the outer side. *But* as these two sides are in and of one and the same Being, the Pain is suffered by the same Central Heart that caused it. A Heart that can feel Pain and yet wills the perpetuity of Pain—to this Heart there is no pain in our human sense of the word.

To this Central Chord Pain alone as Pain is impossible, because the other side of Pain is Joy. We are here in deep waters ; but if a man truly and fearlessly grasps the Pain of this Heart, the suffering side which is so close to us in our earthly life, he will find that he has God's own eternal Joy in his hand as well, and a third something which has been named the Peace of God that passes man's understanding, yet though it passes man's understanding it is the home of man's spiritual soul.

But if this is so then Pain is eternal, you may say, and visions of perpetual purgatories will rise before your mind.

What of it? Pain will not be perpetual for us until its counterpart is.

Let us wait till we have had a glimpse of eternal Joy, of that Joy which no man taketh from us, and remember that until we have had that, perpetual Pain is not for us; and when we have had it, Pain is no longer pain.

“To the Greeks foolishness!”

As to the ethical bearing of this problem, we should remember that although all Gnostic systems make one inscrutable Power the Author alike of Evil and of Good, yet Gnosticism teaches moral evolution for the human race as distinctly as any orthodox Christian sect.

Good and evil are no uncertain words, but by taking up a few phrases on these deep truths the unreading public is constantly saying: “How shocking! Gnosticism is really a cloak for anything you please!” People imagine the Divine ideal is destroyed. God is both good and bad. He is as one playing a game of chess against Himself. He is as often black as white. *Then why not I also?*

Ever since human reason framed a Gnostic system this pit-fall has been open, and it has been by no means only the fools who have fallen in.

The answer, if we must put it shortly, must needs be crude. It is this: “Because you are not God.” But, you may urge, we shall find God on the one side of the board just as surely as on the other, therefore why may we not range ourselves on the side of the black?

Because we are as so many small players journeying across the Cosmic Playground of the Gods, and for us to side with the black means defeat; it will mean extermination for us. By a great cyclic law of human evolution, we must face in one definite direction—to live. And I believe personally that a great Power, stronger than ourselves, is continually pushing us in that direction, however much we may talk of our free-will and saunter along with our thumbs in the armholes of our waistcoats—so to speak. This Power is the great “pass-along-please” of evolutionary Law, moving all things towards the perfect completion of the Great Game. As Mrs. Besant says: “The will of Ishvara

for you is evolution ; these forces [of evil] are made to help your evolution—but *only if you strive against them*” (the italics are hers).

To return to the larger question ; if it is true that God is not moral or kind, as a good man is moral and kind, it is also true that He is not evil or cruel as a human sinner is evil and cruel.

Sin, in its most hateful aspect, with its pitiable meanness, its intolerable cowardice and pettiness, is impossible to predicate of the Ruler of both the Darkness and the Light.

It is said popularly that Gnostics teach that “God’s morality is lower than ours.” Nothing of the kind. God is neither moral nor immoral, since He is perfect. Morality is the striving of a growing creature to conform to the laws of its growth.

If it is true that God authorises evil, if He is in the sinner as well as in the saint, if He is in the gambling of the cheat, it is also true that He authorises a very definite penalty for the gambler. God has very definite convictions as to what is right and wrong for you and me. You cannot be at one and the same moment the cheater and the cheated, the winner and the loser.

The utter meanness of your winning on the losses of a fellow-creature makes gambling a sin—your sin.

The Power behind the world that wins with your winning is also losing with the loser, and until you can do *that*, your sin will retain the pettiness and selfishness which is the essence of sin.

The theory of an Anti-Christ seems to present to us a great Power, a Super-Man, who, though having the power to gain with all the world’s gaining, identifies himself with the abjectest failures, and takes upon himself the whole world’s tears.

Not in soft speech was told the earthly story,  
Love of all loves that showed thee for an hour  
Shame was thy kingdom and reproach thy glory,  
Death thine eternity and the Cross thy power.

An old tradition says of Jesus Christ : “No man ever saw him laugh, many have seen him weep.” Was there then One incarnating the whole morbid side of nature—nature human and divine—a Man of Sorrow ?

And may it be that all humanity is also in a sense the

Sorrowing Son of God ; that Humanity, with its ceaseless pain, is destined to be the greatest of God's helpers ; that we each and all of us come into and under the shadow of the physical world to learn to bear God's suffering for *His* sin ?

For the Rákshasa comes not as God coming down with infinite condescension to bear the sins of man, but as the first-fruits of the human race, offering himself to bear the sins of God. He offers himself to God for God's sake, to suffer for God's sin, knowing that without humanity suffering, God Himself can expiate no evil ; that man is, and always will be, involved in the great Balances of debit and credit, which are being for ever swung in Eternity.

Thus man in the person of the Avatára of Evil, the Anti-Christ, offers himself to take a share in the burden of the dark side of the Divine Nature.

This theory appears strange to the Western world, and to a certain class of mind it will probably be painful, perhaps profane, to another unnecessarily subtle and abstruse. Even to attempt to outline it in a few pages may perhaps be presumption ; there may not be in the above lines even a faint echo of a great Truth which still evades and perhaps always will evade the swiftest pen. But however imperfectly it has been put before the reader, we have sufficient indication that it had been definitely formulated and worked out intellectually by at least one very ancient Christian sect, and we see how very numerous are the broken echoes in many tongues and in many centuries.

These ancient traditions, these persistent echoes, haunt one as with a sense of some forgotten Truth, suggesting that there is here a line of thought that may lead to a nearer appreciation of the true and ancient Gnosis of the Incarnation.

A. L. B. HARDCASTLE.

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MEN shall walk without moving, they shall speak with those who are absent, they shall hear those who do not speak.

*A Prophecy of L. DA VINCI.*



## THE MORAL BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

OWING to the prominent position of Mrs. Besant in the Theosophical Society, and her world-wide reputation as a propagandist and a great orator, both in speaking and writing, it has been generally taken for granted by a large number of the members of the Society, and entirely by the outside public, that the views held by her, and her exposition of the various tenets of the Theosophical Society, were more or less binding on all members; her utterances have been considered authoritative.

This was almost inevitable when indiscriminate propaganda became a prominent feature of the Theosophical Society; and as long as it did less harm than good, those members who did not agree with the views and opinions expressed could honourably remain silent. Now, however, that Mrs. Besant has written an article, giving her personal view on a grave and delicate question of morals, which, by its title, involves the whole Society, it becomes imperative for those members who do not agree with it to speak; silence would be culpable. It is for this reason only that I venture to add my protest to others which will be written by far abler pens than mine.

It is obvious that a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood cannot be "all inclusive," and doubtless there are many other nuclei within that universal Brotherhood, some with similar, and others with totally opposed, aims to the avowed objects of the Theosophical Society.

Brotherhood is simply a term that connotes *essential* unity, and must contain both evil and good; but when "a nucleus" of that Brotherhood is formed, it follows that the units of which it is composed have some definite objects to promote, making a common bond between them, different from, and therefore separating them from, other nuclei. These objects may be

avowedly good or avowedly evil ; either are within the bounds of Universal Brotherhood.

The Theosophical Society has always claimed as its promoters the Brothers of the White Lodge rather than the Brothers of the Shadow, though both must be included in "Universal Brotherhood." Surely then some specific aspirations and qualifications should characterise the members of the Society. Mrs. Besant, however, says, and here I join issue with her, that "the only fitness and propriety necessary to membership is a recognition of the truth of Brotherhood." This is a vague statement which would apply equally to a member of any nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood, with either evil or good for its object. Mrs. Besant here takes for granted that anyone entering the Theosophical Society will do so in order to work for unity rather than disintegration, that he will become a vehicle for the forces which construct, rather than for those which destroy. Were this assumption correct it would be worthy of consideration, but it is not. The present difficulty has not arisen from "the *presence* in the Society of a man who falls below the accepted standard of morality"; every religion, every church, every society, contains many such members, but they are not thereby injured; these are the members who especially need help and friends. But religions, churches, societies stand or fall by the examples of their *prominent* members, who are exponents and teachers; and one and all have at times excommunicated or expelled such members, who, instead of being "noble examples," have been the reverse, who, instead of raising "the level of morality," have lowered it by teaching and action; and that is the question with which the Society is now concerned.

Mrs. Besant finds it "difficult to draw the line between wrong-doing which is permissible and wrong-doing which is not permissible in the Society"; but surely, taken on the broad basis of the good of the nucleus of Brotherhood as a whole, and the laws of the country in which the "wrong-doing" takes place, it should not be difficult to deal with specific cases on their merits.

It is by no means an uncommon occurrence for coats, umbrellas, and even books from the Reference Library of the British Section to be stolen. In my opinion the "nucleus" would

be better without such units *if* they could be discovered. But am I to be reproved and told that, "having the root of the matter in them, in desire and effort to help," they "may remain fit and proper" persons to be members? I cannot agree; on the contrary I hold that such units are disintegrating forces, and that the evil is tenfold greater when moral obliquity is the offence. While it is true that the Society has no "moral code binding on its members," it is equally true that its members are not expected to abandon the codes of morals and ethics of the religions to which they respectively belong, or to defy the laws of the countries in which they live. The analogies of polyandry and polygamy are irrelevant; Mrs. Besant knows that in English law bigamy is a criminal offence and no arguments would save one guilty of it from the penalty. But the Theosophical Society does not, any more than the British Government, interfere with the social customs belonging to other countries and races.

Finally, Mrs. Besant admits that "the purer the nucleus the more will spiritual life pour through it," but does not believe that expulsion of those who teach and practise evil will make it purer. Why not? In fact Mrs. Besant has so little hope of a nucleus being pure that she thinks any attempt to achieve purity would result in the end of the nucleus. If she is right, then I agree that we had better end the nucleus, *i.e.*, the Theosophical Society. But this is a pessimistic view I do not share; I believe that as doctors cure disease in the physical body by eliminating the microbes that destroy, and by replacing them with others that build up, so do I believe that in a spiritual body, the Society, an analogous work can be done. Would Mrs. Besant argue that it is useless to disinfect a room after an infectious disease, because the disease or a similar one might recur? I agree "that we best do our share of purifying the nucleus by purifying ourselves, and not by expelling our brothers." But what about a brother who not only does not purify himself, but makes it his business to corrupt others? There is one sentence that is misleading. Mrs. Besant says, "the Theosophical Society does not consist of children but of grown men and women," but that is hardly correct, seeing that for some years a kind of Theosophical Sunday School, the Lotus Circle, has gathered together a large number

of children, who have been taken into most intimate connection with the Society, and who therefore "should be guarded until strong enough to guard themselves." The imperative necessity for such guardianship has only recently been before the Society.

In conclusion, let me emphasise the fact that no member, private or official, has power to alter the basis of the Theosophical Society: "There is no Religion higher than Truth." The article under discussion is of importance as an expression of the writer's opinions. Nobody who disagrees would wish to expel the holder of those opinions, but they are not the law of the Society, nor are they binding on any individual member in it. How far such views might be imposed on the Society in the event of Mrs. Besant being elected President is a further question which members would do well to think over.

L. M. MEAD.

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## THE NEW BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

ONE of the last acts of our late lamented President was, according to the right reserved to him in the Constitution of the Society, to nominate Mrs. Besant as his successor in the President's chair; subject, of course, to confirmation by the vote of the Society, a vote which will shortly be taken. We all of us, each in his degree, know and reverence the Great Soul which casts upon earth the Shadow which bears this beloved name; the noble work it has done for mankind by means of this frail envelope of clay is familiar to us all. Under ordinary circumstances we should need no "vision of Angels" to recommend us to give her a cordial and united welcome as our new head. This much, I think, "goes without saying"; but by the article under the title "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," in the last number of the REVIEW, she herself has introduced very serious complications into what seemed at first sight so simple a matter. Published as the article has been, in the leading

Magazines of our Society, it takes perforce the character of an Election Address, expressing what our American friends would call her "platform"—the modifications which she would desire to introduce, if elected, in the principles and practice of the Society. Whatever our personal opinions of these may be, it cannot be doubted that their application would be attended with very far-reaching effects on the working,—nay, the very existence of the Society; and no one can be astonished if her candidature under this new flag causes to use her own words) "much discussion and many searchings of heart," instead of the delighted acquiescence with which we might otherwise have received it.

We might have wished that Mrs. Besant had chosen another opportunity to bring forward her views, and that the vote might have passed in peace, but this apparently could not be. However, thanks to her candour, the issue on which the voting will have to turn is clear, and our answer can only be a simple yes or no. Whoever gives his vote for Mrs. Besant thereby commits himself and the Society to a position which (lest I should unconsciously misrepresent her) I will put in her own words. It is *this*—that "the desire to help in bringing about the general realisation of Universal Brotherhood, evidenced by work which does help others towards this realisation, is the *only* fitness and propriety that our Society can rightly demand. . . . that a man may do most evil things, things that deserve and that meet with sternest moral condemnation, and yet, having the root of the matter in him, in desire and effort to help, may remain a 'fit and proper' person to be a member of the Theosophical Society." And that this principle may be understood in its full extent, there is added an express reprobation of "some members" who "would not allow a fellow member to hold opinions leading to murder, theft, adultery, any sexual irregularity or other evil ways"; all summed up in the sentence: "I do not consider that the Theosophical Society has *any* moral code binding on its members."

This is a startling expression, and evidently *meant* to startle. It is a touch of the "Annie Besant" of old days; the irrepresible, irresponsible fighter, whose Keltic joy in the fray is only

increased by a chance of a fresh tilt against her old enemy, Mrs. Grundy. In its way it is most admirable, but whether it marks her as one sober and steady enough for the very responsible position of President of the Society is a question which must give us pause. She adds a significant phrase to which I shall have to return further on: "I confess that the acceptance of this view would occasionally keep amongst us members who would discredit the Society in the eyes of the ordinary man of the world, either by falling below the accepted morality of the time and place or by rising so much above it as to be unintelligible, and therefore hated and suspected by the masses of average people."

I think Mrs. Besant has not realised that the "discredit of the Society in the eyes of the world" would fall upon it long before the case of any individual member arose—it would fall upon it in full weight as soon as ever it publicly declared its acceptance of the doctrine she has announced. Questions like these—how far anyone "holding opinions leading to murder, etc.," is likely to be able to help others to the idea of Universal Brotherhood; what time it will take, counted in years or in centuries, to make it "generally understood that the Society seeks to raise the level of morality" *at all*, after a public announcement that it had *no* moral code for its members; and what will come of it and of us in the meantime;—do not seem to have entered into Mrs. Besant's mind; but they are questions which must be seriously considered by the members before voting.

Her suggested analogy from the Society's profound indifference to theological opinions turns, when examined, against her. We do not hold that a man's view of God and the world are of no consequence *to himself*; his whole happiness and usefulness, perhaps for many lives to come, depend on them. The intervention of the Powers which gave rise to our Society was for the purpose of enlightening the world on these very points. But the Society accepts all, whatever their creed, precisely as a solemn public declaration of our conviction that their morality does not depend on their creed, and that their morality is *all* we care about. A great Catholic theologian once said to me: "After all, a religion is only a system of morals." Our Theosophy is no more—and

no less. What meaning can be attached to the words Universal Brotherhood, if they do *not* connote, in the widest sense, a system of morals ?

In the well-known *Words on Daily Life*, the "Master of Wisdom" tells us that "the problems of true Theosophy and its great mission are, first, the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men ; and, second, the adapting these for daily life." This surely means, if it means anything, that the Society exists for the sake of framing a moral code, not for its members only, but for all the world ; and this, one which shall satisfy the demands of human feeling. That there might arise in the Society itself teachers whose conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, instead of commending themselves to the world around, should make them (and this with good reason) "hated and suspected" by it, was a contingency the writer had not contemplated.

It is on this very line that the world treats us at the present time. It tolerates us, though thinking our *teaching* pure nonsense, because nothing has as yet raised a suspicion of anything worse than nonsense in it. But once let the world come to doubt of our *morality*, as that world understands morality, and our Society, at least in Europe and America, is swept away in a moment. Society is not so proud of itself as to deny the possibility of a higher morality than its own ; but this higher morality must at least *include* the lower. For our work's sake, if for no better reason, we must not claim to dispense ourselves from the "morality of the place and time," for it is in this place and time we have to work. A good illustration of failure through neglect of this obvious rule is given by the present position of the missionaries in China. Here their "superior morality" has allowed them little acts of familiarity between the sexes which to them, and to us, are perfectly harmless, but which the people amongst whom they live regard as indicative of the most abandoned licentiousness ; and, naturally, their labours are in vain.

This consideration disposes of some other difficulties which Mrs. Besant raises ; a Mussulman with four wives, a Tibetan

woman with four husbands, are both "moral" in their time and place. I make her a present of the rejoinder that an Indian Thug or a Dyak head-hunter are equally moral in *theirs* ! For who can fail to see by such examples as these last that there *are* actions which *no* time or place can justify, which are essentially *against* Brotherhood, and which cannot be tolerated in *any* society. And the consequences of this admission go far, for it means that a line must be drawn, somewhere.

We must undoubtedly grant to Mrs. Besant that there are great difficulties in formulating a general rule as to *where* the line is to be drawn. I will go farther, and admit to her that, unless the officials exercise the greatest caution, there is danger of encouraging an irresponsible and most unbrotherly inquisition into private morals, which nothing—I say deliberately, *nothing*—can justify. But surely this can be better repressed by recalling to the offenders the spirit of brotherly love which *should* be the mark by which the world may know us, as it was the mark (in that case also too early lost) of the first followers of Jesus ; better than by declaring that the Society knows no difference between right and wrong ! At all events, there are many cases which can be settled without much difficulty, as they arise ; and at this present moment we need not lose ourselves in generalities. There is only one case which arises in our minds in reading Mrs. Besant's article ; and any doubt whether it was also the one in the mind of the writer is removed by her note on Col. Olcott's "Conversation," on p. 95.

To put the matter bluntly, the price we are asked to pay for having Mrs. Besant for our President is, that Mr. Leadbeater is to be restored to his place as a recognised Teacher of the Society, with his "moral lapse" (they are her own words) not only unrepented of, but glorified as the act of one who "rises so much above the accepted morality of the place and time as to be unintelligible, and therefore hated and suspected by the masses of average people."

This, and no other, is the "article by which the Society is to stand or fall," according as the votes go. I use no adjectives—the issue is one of life and death, far too serious for sentiment ; far too serious, also, to be treated as a matter of the personal



merits or demerits of any one member, even of Mr. Leadbeater. I am truly grateful to Mrs. Besant for having put her claim in a way which relieves me from so distasteful a task as that would be. I will answer it, as far as I am concerned, quite generally, and without the smallest hesitation. To no human being upon earth, to no Angel or Master from heaven, will I for one moment concede the claim. It is the old familiar defence raised in all times by the disciples and friends of a good man who has gone wrong, and set his feet for the first time on the downward road of Black Magic. It was urged, to weariness, in every publication of Mr. Judge's defenders; the Society has lately been bombarded with circulars from a private member to the same effect as to Mr. Leadbeater. But even when Mrs. Besant herself, in generous though mistaken defence of her friend, turns her back upon all her previous teaching, and, like Zanoni, is willing to take the Devil's gifts to aid the cause she loves, there can be but one answer— instant and unhesitating rejection of the unclean thing.

But, it will be said, surely you don't deny that the Masters may and do act upon moral laws we cannot understand, and thus try our faith? I reply that the question is not of the Masters, but of Mr. Leadbeater—a very different matter. And as to the Masters Themselves, I am certain that when They act on the physical plane Their wisdom and love will ever keep Them from laying stumbling-blocks in the children's way; and that whatever They do will show itself even to *us*, blind creatures of the earth as we are, as something indeed higher than our highest, not as a "moral lapse." Is it not an offence even to *think* such words?

I must acknowledge that a good deal of what Mrs. Besant has said is not the novelty it must seem to our younger members. Much of it she urged in the early days of the Judge case, before the facts grew too strong for her. How vigorously she laid about her in *his* defence, some of us must have a rueful remembrance to this day. But at last the facts *were* too strong for her, and she gave way. It has seemed until now that history was repeating itself in the present case. In June of last year, when the facts and Mr. Leadbeater's own admissions were laid before her, she had no doubt that he must leave the Society, and expressed

herself in much stronger terms than I myself should have ventured to use as to the extent of his fault.

That, so late as September last, no great change had taken place seems to follow from the fact that in her own *Central Hindu College Magazine* was printed a passage in the "Hindu Catechism," an answer which might have been written for this very case. It runs: "The bachelor orders of Sannyâsis, etc., recruiting their powerful and wealthy orders by inveigling immature boys—whom not unfrequently they abuse—into their ranks, are not only a nuisance from the modern point of view, but are also distinctly prohibited in this age by the Smṛitis." It is precisely such an order Mr. Leadbeater is introducing in the West, where it is as obnoxious to the laws of God and man as we are glad to learn it is in the East also. And it is just this we are resolved to prevent.

What, then, has caused so sudden a change of front? Who shall say? Perhaps a few lines from the *Voice of the Silence* may, enigmatically, as in a glass darkly, give a hint.

"THE HALL OF LEARNING.—The astral region, the psychic world of supersensuous perceptions and of deceptive sights—the world of mediums. No blossom plucked in these regions has ever yet been brought down on earth without its serpent coiled round the stem. It is the world of the *Great Illusion*.

"If freed thou would'st be from the kârmic chains, seek not for thy guru in those mâyâvic regions."

From these considerations I cannot avoid the conclusion that the price asked is more than the Society can afford to pay; and that, with infinite regret, we must decline the honour, and look elsewhere for our new President. Of the melancholy farce enacted by séance-room spooks over our own poor dear Colonel's dying bed I will say this only: that were it all true and the figures of the Masters all they claimed to be—were, in short, the message genuine (which I do not for a moment believe) it could only be, as in M. Wood's well-known story of the *Saint and the Outlaw*, a test, *not* of our obedience, but of our courage and determination to hold fast to our own convictions of right and wrong against all pressure, even seemingly of those we most revere. I am convinced that no course could be so complete a

failure under the trial or a greater disappointment to the Masters who arranged it than for us to sacrifice our conscience to our obedience. I, and those who think with me, will do better than "obey"; we will do Right!

ARTHUR A. WELLS.

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## THEORETICAL AND REAL MORALITY

NOBODY has done more than Mrs. Besant to colour the Theosophical Society with the hall-mark (I had nearly frivolously said the Exeter Hall-mark) of ethics. From the very first, and with astonishing consistency, Mrs. Besant has held up the banner of the ethical ideals in the spirit of Ibsen's "Brand"; and though many of us knew that we were hopelessly unable to live up to those ideals, we nevertheless (with some exceptions), pretended on the platforms and in writing that they were quite practicable to really earnest persons. As one of the exceptions, who has had his knuckles rapped many times for protesting on behalf of himself (and of others), that the thing could not be done, and ought not to be attempted, it is certainly strange that I should find myself now opposed to Mrs. Besant's new attitude. In some respects it is strangely like my own; and once or twice while reading her article my eye gave a little jump as much as to say: You wrote this. Yet I knew that I neither had written it nor could write it. For, in other respects, Mrs. Besant's opinions on the subject of morality are strangely unlike my own, so unlike, in fact, as to be contrary. Now I cannot pretend to regard the whole affair as cosmically important, though doubtless a good deal of energy would be obtained if one could regard it so. On the other hand, I certainly do not look upon the discussion and its origin as trivial. To my mind, the Theosophical Society has shirked the problems of morality in the most cowardly fashion, and has, under Mrs. Besant's leadership, preferred nearly always perorations to common-sense. It is therefore with a feeling of relief that I find the Society compelled at last to make up its mind on a real moral issue, and still further compelled, as I

sincerely hope Mrs. Besant will insist on compelling it, to clear its mind of eloquent cant in the process. If by any means I can contribute to bring about these thoroughly necessary, and, in fact, urgent transformations in the spirit and atmosphere of the Theosophical Society I shall certainly do so, even at the risk of appearing to fight sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other.

For, as I have said, with many of Mrs. Besant's opinions, as expressed in her article, I most cordially and fully agree. It is quite impossible at this time of the European day to pretend that there is a universal morality of any sort or kind. It is quite impossible in the present state of our knowledge of comparative morality and of history to suppose that current English morality is the highest morality. It is quite impossible to bring down from any Theosophical Sinai new tablets of the law, and to impose them on the chosen of all lands. We neither have nor can have any more a formulated code resting on public opinion or on revelation. And with the abandonment of these things there goes (for the time being) the abandonment of every valid claim to hang, draw and quarter for any moral breach of the abandoned moral code. So far, as I say, I agree enthusiastically with Mrs. Besant; the more so because for all these years I and others have been wearying for her to say it.

But, perhaps because her reconversion to these liberal ideas is only recent, there is to be found in Mrs. Besant's article, cheek by jowl with these ruddy-faced truths, a number of hoary errors which in their way are quite as dangerously dogmatic (and, let me say, quite as orthodoxly "moral") as the abandoned positions. To say the truth, it is very difficult for the mind that has just got "beyond Good and Evil" to realise that there is still a Good and a Bad. Few of our modern Dionysian spirits have been able to grasp the nature of the morality that is left when the ordinary conceptions of morality are swept away. Yet, as a matter of fact, there remains after the destruction of the old conception of morality a still older conception, having its roots not in artificial distinctions between what men think right or wrong, but in real natural distinctions between what in actual practice is, and proves itself to be, right or wrong. And it is just the confusion

between these two kinds of morality, between, let us say, theoretical and real morality, that Mrs. Besant as a Dionysian neophyte goes astray.

The proper distinction between theoretical morality and real morality is the distinction between words and actions ; or, again, it is the distinction between ideals (idols in the Old Testament sense) and facts. In real morality we are not concerned with what men ought to do, but with what they do. A man is not praised or blamed for the ideals he holds up—which procedure, by the way, is no more difficult or meritorious than carrying a banner in a procession—but for the actual effect in life-value of his actions. Given a man engaged in expounding the most logical and theoretically complete ideals, and incidentally practising a conduct which is inimical to the fuller life of the race, and real morality declares him a humbug. Not, be it marked, a *sinner* ! For sin is only related to a breach of a theologically designed code, which in itself impertinently presupposes a knowledge of the divine laws of the cosmos. Needless to say, those same divine laws in their totality are still unknown, though the discoveries of science may in time reveal them. The priest, in so far as he is not a scientist, is thereby charged with having ignorantly presumed a knowledge of the laws of nature, for the purpose of attaching theological sanction to his own personal judgments. Real morality knows nothing of sin in the priestly sense of the word. Its words of disgrace are folly and error.

But, having no ideals, real morality is not therefore without a standard of judgment. In fact, a standard of judgment which rests upon ideals is the very thing that real morality repudiates. Everybody knows how easy it is from the ideal standpoint to prove everybody a sinner and yet to induce us to refrain from judgment. Having judged, we then proceed to conclude that we should not judge ! With such a "tolerant" attitude real morality has no sympathy. Nature judges without the least hesitation ; and to the extent to which men are parts of nature, they must judge or perish. But judgment by ideals would involve praise of the man who acts unnaturally and yet preaches ideally ; and blame of the man who acts naturally and preaches the

contrary. In other words, theoretical morality flies in the face of real morality, by placing the superior value on opinions and professions and protestations, and the inferior value on the only real thing in the world, namely, action. That, in fact, is what Mrs. Besant has done in her article. On the one hand, she pleads justly and eloquently that in the matter of the morality of our members, it is the question of actual service to the cause that must be considered. On the other hand, she utterly destroys that position by affirming that the Society lives by "the splendour of its ideals." "The splendour of its ideals" is doubtless a great thing for theoretical and paper morality; but it has no value for the practical morality of conduct. The practical morality of conduct has to do with action, and with action alone. In the eyes of real morality a Society does not live by the splendour of its ideals, but by the effect of its conduct. If its conduct be superior to its ideals, the Society will live though theoretical moralists condemn it. If its conduct is bad, while its ideals are high, theoretical morality will clap its hands, but real morality will cry : "Away with it !"

But let us be quite clear on the nature of the Good and the Bad from the real standpoint. As I have said, it is entirely a question of action. Suppose that men were dumb and could not explain their motives and discuss their ideals. In that case, we should judge each other exactly as we now judge animals and trees and other dumb creatures; that is, we should be driven to a scrutiny of each other's acts, and a classification of our natures in accordance with our observations. And it is plain that our mistakes would be far fewer than they now are. As an extreme instance, we may take the case of a tiger. It is conceivable that by means of clever oratory a tiger might convince the jungle-people that he was really a friend. Granted him the use of the most magical instrument in the world, namely, speech, and I am convinced that the tiger could even persuade the deer that he was their devoted servant. Of course, no such mistake is made by deer. They heed not the voice of the charmer, and, what is more, the tiger is not subtle and cunning, but quite direct and unmistakable.

Now, as I have often observed, man is really the most subtle

of all the beasts of the field. By means of his speech he can disguise his real nature from everybody to whom speech is more important than action. In fact, speech draws off attention from action, and is instinctively intended to do so. That is why speech is the most dangerous gift ever granted to man. It deludes speaker and hearer alike. But real morality gets behind speech, and resumes the old mode of judgment practised amongst the primeval dumb. That is to say, real morality looks at action, and only at action. Real morality is like the deaf adder.

Try to realise the spectacle that unfolds itself before the eyes of the real moralist. It is quite a different spectacle from the oratorical panorama of theatrical and vocal morality. From the standpoint of real morality, men are distinguished in their natures exactly as animals are, namely, by their habits of action, and by their mental and temperamental equipment of teeth, claws, horns and hooves. It is quite useless for the man whose nature is demonstrably cannibal (in the metaphorical sense) to play on his magical pipes the songs of idealism in the hope of charming the real moralist. The real moralist observes simply, "Cannibal!" and either gets out of his way or puts him out of the way. There is no moral condemnation involved either. We do not blame the tiger for being a tiger; nor does the real moralist blame the human tiger for being a human tiger. No, the practical judgment is simply one of expediency. The tiger is a dangerous animal amongst sheep; hence the shepherd must kill it,—kill it without moral bum-bum, but kill it effectively. That is the plain business of the shepherd.

Similarly, it is the plain business of the preservers and shepherds of a Society to keep a sharp look-out for the approach of tigers and wolves within and without. No doubt there are hysterical people in every Society who cry: "Wolf! wolf!" at every footfall. Others are constitutionally liable to attacks of nerves, during which they suspect every sheep of being a wolf. Others again are always fast asleep when the wolf arrives. Still others hear his voice, mistake his imitation of the password, and hasten to introduce him as a friend of the flock. That, in fact, is the general position of society and of societies in relation to

every breach of rules and every departure from custom. Every breach *may* be a wolf or it *may* be a beneficent and friendly act. And it requires careful discrimination to ensure against error.

But in human society, at any rate, there is a simple enough distinction, which may serve as the basis of real morality. Whatever real morality may not be, it is certainly natural; it does not move contrary to the great currents of life. Of course a very liberal interpretation must be placed on the word Nature. Civilisation, for example, is in one sense a highly unnatural concourse of profoundly unnatural habits; but the sense is merely a comparative and not an antithetical sense. I mean that there are myriads of "unnatural" habits that are by no means anti-natural. They are merely devices for regulating the flow of life and the pace of evolution, as it were. Thus tobacco may be regarded as a device for "slowing" certain vital functions; meditation may be regarded as a device for quickening certain functions; and so on. And since civilisation consists very largely of devices such as these, civilisation may be highly unnatural, and, in fact, is highly unnatural.

But a device for regulating the pace of life is very different from a device for stopping life altogether. While the former may be considered from the standpoint of expediency, and is properly the subject of argument, reason and persuasion, the latter is always a matter of urgency, and never the proper subject of discussion. You don't argue with a disease! Once be sure that the action under examination is not merely unnatural (for nearly all our conscious acts are that) but anti-natural, and only a mind corrupted by theoretical morality would hesitate to judge. In fact, life itself in that case condemns what is opposed to life; and the human judgment becomes merely the record of life's valuation of itself. I commend this distinction between the unnatural and the anti-natural to all who are still wandering between theoretical and real morality. Theoretical morality of the ideal type is very often anti-natural; real morality never is.

With regard to the new "Basis of the Theosophical Society," I therefore conclude that Mrs. Besant has understood exactly one half of the question at issue. She has been confused between the unnatural and the anti-natural. Because the un-



natural is universally spread in multitudes of forms Mrs. Besant concluded that the anti-natural was included with it. But the case is just the reverse. Wherever unnatural conduct has been tolerated, there civilisation has spread and prospered. We cannot have in society or in a society too great freedom for unnatural experiments. On the other hand, we cannot have in society or in a society too great condemnation of anti-natural conduct. Wherever anti-natural conduct has been tolerated, there civilisation has already begun to lose its instincts of life, and to decline.

A. R. ORAGE.

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## DE RE PUBLICA

FEW people in their public career have changed their opinions more completely than Mrs. Besant ; with no few of her changes we are in complete sympathy, but her latest is so astonishing that it is impossible to go with her. By such works as *The Path of Discipleship* and *The Outer Court* Mrs. Besant had won a reputation for a quite quixotically sublime ideal of morals ; but in the July number of this REVIEW, in an article on "Discipleship," she has suddenly completely abandoned her former position and reduced discipleship to a very low standard,—indeed to very exiguous proportions, culminating in the astounding proposition :

Actions are the least important part of a man's life, from the occult standpoint—a hard doctrine to many, but true.

These words imply, if they mean anything, that Mrs. Besant is quite sure of what the occult standpoint is. If it be true—and I hold it to be entirely false—then the sooner the "occult standpoint" is jettisoned from the Theosophical Society the better. The profounder ethic preached by the Buddha and the Christ, that sinning in thought and heart as well as in act was to be most strenuously resisted, did not set aside the commission of sins of deed as of less importance, but taking this as

unquestionable and accepted by all Their hearers, added unto it the further teaching of the necessity of inner righteousness.

In the last number of this REVIEW Mrs. Besant has now put forward her new view of "The Basis of the Theosophical Society." How she has changed her standpoint may be seen by putting a quotation from her excellent article on "Brotherhood, True and False,"—which was printed in these pages, in June, 1895, when she and others were striving strenuously to purify the Society from the effects of the fraud and hypocrisy of one in high repute among us—in parallel with some of the statements in her last article.

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Regarding the matter from the standpoint of Brotherhood what is the duty of the Theosophical Society to the world? The movement is meant for human service, for work in the outer world, and its general reputation is therefore a matter of importance. Its members should feel themselves bound not to bring discredit on the movement by conduct that, in any relation of life, outrages the moral sense of any community in which the Society may be at work. They may rightly guide their conduct by a higher rule of morality than that which surrounds them, but they should not sink below it; and if to any one of them, that is right which is absolutely immoral in the view of the surrounding community, such a one should surrender his membership, that he may not, for his own private view, imperil the position of the whole movement in the eyes of those the movement is meant to help.

Mrs. Besant then goes on to say that "no written or printed copy" of such a code can be produced, and seems to consider that this is an unanswerable argument. But surely the

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The first, and perhaps we may find the only, fitness and propriety necessary to membership, is a recognition of the Truth of Brotherhood, the wish to help it to emerge from latency into activity.

The presence in the Society of a man who falls below the accepted standard of morality in any respect can do little harm.

A man may do most evil things, things that deserve and that meet with sternest moral condemnation, and yet, having the root of the matter in him, in desire and effort to help, may remain a "fit and proper person" to be a member of the Theosophical Society.

Does the Theosophical Society impose on its members a moral code, the transgression of which is punishable by expulsion?

I do not consider that the Theosophical Society has any moral code binding on its members.

answer is simple enough: It is impossible to print in our statutes the criminal codes of all the countries in the world in which there are members of our Society,—not to speak of the moral codes of the great religions. We take this for granted as a foundation on which to base our movement, for on any other foundation our house will be built on the sand, or rather on a quagmire. If one of the main objects of the Society is to get at the One Religion underlying all religions; then surely in this is included the intention of practising the One Morality underlying all moralities.

And in whose favour are all these special pleadings invoked? For whose sake are we to sacrifice what most of us regard as incalculably more precious than all the fragments of "astral" information that are "given out"? The pleadings of Mrs. Besant are entirely without point if they have not a special case in view,—the case of one who has deceivably used the authority of great names to take from their parents children to "train," and that, too, on the plea of saving them precisely from the ruinous vice of self-abuse which he has deliberately and systematically taught them in private as an inner practice, and who is still without shame or compunction for his iniquity and hypocrisy.

To this presumably Mrs. Besant refers when she writes:

"Should not we shut out polluting influence from our families?"  
 . . . I answer: "Yes; because in the family there are children, who should be guarded until strong enough to guard themselves: but the Theosophical Society does not consist of children, but of grown men and women, and it does not need the shelter rightly given to the young."

I have always contended, as Mrs. Besant now contends, that the Society is intended for grown men and women, and not for children, and strongly protested against a child being brought into our midst at Avenue Road, but I was then over-ruled by the production of "orders," and soundly rebuked. But what of the children groups and the recent dominant influence in them; and why does Mrs. Besant print her phenomenal "appointment" in her boys' magazine?

As Mrs. Besant herself writes: "Truth alone conquers, not falsehood"; minimising public references have been made to this matter by both our late President and herself, and silence is

no longer possible, though little can be said publicly, owing to the nature of the evidence. What strange influences have surrounded our late venerable President in the days of his dying, when his mind, and memory, and will were so sadly enfeebled, I cannot imagine; but this I know, that the man who while he had his vigour, spat out when reading the evidence, is now on public record as putting to what he thought were apparitions of Masters of Wisdom the quavering question: Was this man wrong?<sup>1</sup> Do Masters appear to answer such absurdities?

But enough of all this, for it is too sorrowful to dwell on, though many pages could be written on the subject. Let us consider the question of the Basis of our Society as to the main principles of it, and treat "De Re Publica" or "About the Common Weal."

The effort to form a conscious nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood is certainly one of our objects; and this already is something different from a vague belief in brotherhood. But it is not the only object, and I have always considered it quite illegitimate that some Lodges have taken upon themselves to print on their syllabuses that belief in brotherhood is the *only* thing required for membership. It is not so stated in the constitution.

The ideal of Brotherhood in the highest sense of the term is a magnificent intuition; but just as it is most beautiful and most sublime, so its corruption is most hideous and infernal. And if the truth must be confessed, I have far more frequently heard the word "brotherhood" invoked in the Society as a cudgel wherewith to break heads and hearts than as the condition of an honourable peace and unhypocritical amity; as a cloak for the covering up of the indefensible, than as a steady light to reveal rottenness. The bitterest letters I have ever read have been concluded with "yours fraternally."

But we have two other objects; and I hold that none is greater or less than the other, but that all three are necessary for the manifestation of our goal and ideal, which is summed up in the right noble motto: "There is no Religion higher than Truth." This is *our* motto; "*Satyân nâsti paro dharmah*" is the family motto of the Mahârâjas of Benares, and may be translated

<sup>1</sup> See the Presidential Address in the last *General Report*, p. 3.

otherwise, if one is so minded. But "There is no religion higher than Truth" is the motto of the Theosophical Society; and so long as we are true to this ideal all will be well for us. This sums up our objects in a sublime positive pronouncement. Truth is our aim, and hypocrisy is our abomination.

Truth is *Âtman*, and *Âtman* is shown most directly in action. A physical society must be judged by and be dependent upon physical tests. Action is the test on the physical plane; we are here to discriminate between right and wrong action, and "judge not that ye be not judged" is not invoked by the man who desires to learn discrimination, and separate out the True from the False.

As to thoughts and motives, we may leave them to the plane of motives and thoughts, where there is, I believe, equally a Theosophical Society and where thoughts and motives can be seen and rightly discriminated. Here we have to deal with actions chiefly and only secondarily with words.

Thought and motive, however, are not more important than action; all three are equally important in Truth.

The evils we do that are screened from the knowledge of the world have to be reckoned with on the day of judgment, which is eternally, as have also our evil thoughts and the secrets of our hearts. But that which is found out or comes into manifestation on the physical plane, or rather that which becomes known in the Society, is intended to be dealt with by the Society.

We are searchers after Truth, and it is only as we live truthfully and uprightly that the realisation of Truth will become possible. Truth is not a thing to be learned with the mind, to be perceived with the brain only; it is something so great, so absolute, that it needs the whole nature of man before it is possible for the man's consciousness to bring itself into direct relation with Truth.

This, I hold firmly, is Divine Wisdom, Theosophy, Truth made manifest. Theosophy in general is an attitude of man towards Truth, not only a mental, an emotional, or a physical attitude, but all three in one; and that is what should constitute a man a member of the real Theosophical Society,—the nucleus we aspire to form.

Of such an one, his whole nature must be turned in the direction of the search for Truth, and his actions and all else must be true. If he is found out in calculated untruth, he is found out of the nucleus, and not in it.

Theosophy in its essential nature is Truth, and therefore have we chosen as the Great Utterance of our Society, "There is no Religion higher than Truth."

The three objects of the Society placed below this great utterance express the three essential principles or component parts which are necessary for the making up or piecing together of this Divine Wisdom or Truth in activity; for wisdom is ever active.

Universal Brotherhood, I believe, expresses that true Love apart from attraction which is the first essential for the birth of any formal idea; it is the very ground of the being of Truth. But though it may be said to be the first in this sense, this does not mean that it is more important or more essential than the objects which follow. It is rather first in time, as it were, or rather more ancient, since power must operate before form can arrive.

Brotherhood, I hold, expresses an essential mutual relationship; more fundamental than even parental love, or the love of husband and wife; these are different. Brotherhood expresses, I believe, some other eternal and even more basic law. It is, as it were, great sympathy. And therefore a member of the Society must be in sympathy with this great law of Universal Brotherhood before he has bequeathed on the root-substance (Buddhi) of his being the power to perceive Truth or make it manifest.

But although this sympathy with the great law of Brotherhood must come first before there can be any true Theosophy or manifestation of this Divine Wisdom, the two other objects must be in equal power—so that there may be a proper trinity.

The second member of our Truth, or Divine Wisdom, is searching the scriptures. The scriptures are attempts to clothe the Truth in ideas or forms, to symbolise Theosophy; and we cannot understand the Truth before we have developed in ourselves this faculty of interpretation.

The third member or root of our trinity is the development

of the powers latent in man, that is to say, the scientific aspect, —how the Truth works and acts; and this we can only know by means of a right use of the body, for it is only possible really to know what one can produce in oneself, what one can scientifically prove on the ground of experience.

All three have to be equally developed in the true Theosophist.

The love and sympathy which are the signs of true Brotherhood are not emotion simply, but that true aspect of Love which is sympathy with the Divine Law, the true union of Will. True Love exists on the plane of Will alone, I hold, and has nothing to do with lower desire and attraction.

Universal Brotherhood should be the phrase used to give forth some idea of this sympathy of the will with the Divine Law which is not sexual, but a Power or Law in which we all live and move and have our being, which keeps us all in a similar relationship to each other, not one more loved than another; and at the same time it should convey the idea of a definite relationship with that mystery which is universally expressed by the word Fatherhood. This Universal Brotherhood, then, is to be thought of as an expression of the true Love-nature, the plane of Will. There is no idea of screening or hiding in it; it is rather the will to make manifest everything, for everything is of Truth.

G. R. S. MEAD.

THE Gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the soul.

FIONA MACLEOD.

FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF A HEARER

BURN what thou dost adore, and adore what thou didst use to burn.

THE hope in my heart hath buoyed me up, O Lord!

IF you are on the look out for wonders you will overlook the true.

A MASTER'S mind is all body and his body is all mind.

## SOME CONFUSED IDEAS OF BROTHERHOOD

THOSE with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—ZECHARIAH.

No doubt the Brotherhood of Humanity is a fine thing—in the abstract—and as long as one need not ask Humanity to tea.—DR. LOMAX.

But in perfect Brotherhood there is a time and place for the austerity of a father, the pitiless home-truths of a sister, the tart indignation of a maiden aunt ; in a word, for all the freedom of speech and action of a strong and self-respecting brother.—A. R. ORAGE.

WHEN a man says that a thing is all very fine in the abstract, and as long as one need not put it into practice, we all know pretty well what he really means.

From the above sentence I gather that Dr. Lomax does not think much of Brotherhood, or of its friends. Hammered out after the method of Mr. Orage, I take him to mean something like this : “The idea of the Brotherhood of Humanity is of no account, since those who recognise it do not fraternise on equal terms with all and sundry. If they really regarded all men as brothers, they would ask them to tea ; they do not do so, therefore Brotherhood is practically all humbug and abstract talk.”

Again, when a man begins to talk about there being a time and place for something, we know beforehand that it will turn out to be something very unpleasant. Mr. Orage does not disappoint us. His brilliant onslaught, which I have quoted, is most amusing, and frightfully true—with the deadly trueness of a half-truth. Summarised in Dr. Lomax’s ironic manner, I think Mr. Orage’s view amounts to this : “No doubt the Brotherhood of Humanity is a fine thing—in the abstract—and as long as one need not tell Humanity the truth.” For in his article he dwells at length on the disastrous results of the insincerity of brotherly love, as practised in Theosophical Lodges.



But, at the same time, we are assured that this recognition of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God, of the Many in the One, and the One in the Many, is the chief sign of spiritual growth. It is the Great Realisation, which profoundly modifies a man's attitude to every single soul he meets, for the rest of his life. It gives the point of view whence universal comprehension becomes natural, and universal good-will inevitable. Why then are those who try to grasp, and carry out in practice, this magnificent idea open to these assaults and batteries without visible means of defence? Why can Dr. Lomax and Mr. Orage, each with apparent justification, lay to their charge the one a lack of love, the other a lack of truth?

The reason seems to be, that beneath the term Brotherhood, there are two distinct types—the family type and the community type, with quite different characteristics. And consequently, the idea of Brotherhood worked out in practice takes two different lines, which have to be carefully discriminated. When this is done, it will be plain, I think, that our critics have each got hold of the wrong end of his stick. Dr. Lomax cuts at the family for the absence of "brotherly love," a characteristic of the community; Mr. Orage thrashes the community for the absence of pitiless truth, a characteristic of the family. The term brotherhood conveys to Dr. Lomax the community idea, to Mr. Orage the family idea—*hinc illæ lacrymæ*.

To myself, and, I think, to most people, Brotherhood means the relationship of life in a monastic or military community; a church or society set apart and fenced off from the world, for some common object or end; while, particularly in this country, the brothers of a family lead such different and independent lives that the term brotherhood seems hardly to apply to their relationship at all. Here it is that a confusion of ideas has arisen. For when we speak of the Brotherhood of Humanity, it is the family type we mean; the family idea spread out to include the race, with the One Source of Life as The Father of All. The community idea, separate, limited, circumscribed, cannot conceivably be expanded to include everybody.

The wide difference between the two types will best be shown by setting their leading characteristics side by side.

## BROTHERHOOD

*Family Type*

1. The uniting bond is a common life, the members work for various ends.

2. The bond of life is unaffected by love or hate between the members. Hence pitiless truth is not destructive and only causes unhappiness.

3. The members choose neither their father nor each other, and may be quite incompatible.

4. The members are unequal, being of different ages, and at different stages of growth emotionally and mentally.

5. The members enter the world, to follow different lines of love and knowledge.

6. Members help each other indirectly by keeping out of each others' way, not by doing each others' work. Only when one is in serious difficulties do the others leave their work to come to his assistance.

7. The family brotherhood exists in perfection while the members are growing up and getting educated. Then each founds a new family and the original one widens out into the clan, the nation and the race.

*Community Type*

1. The uniting bond is a common love, and the members work for one single end.

2. The bond of love is destroyed by hate between members. Hence brotherly love is essential to the existence of the Community, and pitiless truth is destructive.

3. The members choose their father and each other, in accordance with fitness and compatibility.

4. The members are equal, all being of full age, and fully developed emotionally and mentally.

5. The members leave the world, to follow a single line of love and knowledge.

6. Members help each other directly by doing each others' work, because the work is the same for all. When the weaker cannot finish his task the stronger can do it for him. Even then the strong do not work for the lazy.

7. The community brotherhood exists in perfection so long as equality and brotherly love continue, and the common work attracts. As time goes on the Community tends either to disintegration or to fossilisation.

Other differences as to holding property, sharing goods, and so on, could be adduced, but the above seems sufficient to show that the family is the true symbol of the Brotherhood of Humanity. This conclusion is further confirmed by the teaching of Theosophy, which shows us, behind every personality, an Eternal Pilgrim pursuing his development from life to life; himself a being of varying cosmic age, and, therefore, truly symbolised, now by a baby in arms, now by an undergraduate,

both members of the same family. The Great Realisation reveals the souls of men as babes, children, youths, and young men, with but a small possible advance in any given life. Men make the world they live in, and for each Ego it is a nursery, an infant, preparatory, or public school, or a university; according to the kind of experience his growth and past karma enable him to assimilate.

The Brotherhood of Humanity, in which the Theosophical Society proposes to form a nucleus, is, then, symbolised by the family, not by the community. Hence the love and helpfulness which we should try to practise, are symbolised by those which obtain between blood brothers, and not between community brothers.

Now emerges another profound confusion of ideas. We have, most of us, I think, assumed that love between brothers and "brotherly love" are one and the same thing. But when we come to consider it as a matter of experience, they seem to be profoundly different. Love between brothers is, as a rule, just good-natured acceptance of each other, due to instinctive habit. The one that is to ride in front is generally decided by age; in the case of twins, an early tussle or two settles that question for life. Friendship between brothers is rare; we choose friends, brothers are thrust upon us. Brothers live in common, because they depend upon their father, not because they wish to; they invite their friends to tea, not each other.

But, on the other hand, the "brotherly love" necessary to community life, is a most complex blend of qualities, summed up by St. Paul in the word charity, and working out as a gentle, serene, tolerant good-will, by which men of different types and stages are enabled to live together for a given purpose.

It must further be pointed out that it takes two to play the game of brotherly love; and that if we try to set up community relationships with Humanity, which has no conception of anything of the kind, brotherly love on our side will be met by a single eye to the main chance on the other. Humanity will be delighted to share anything that is going in the way of goods, or help, or self-sacrifice; indeed, it is quite ready to take all it can get of anything; but it will not dream of making any return.

Enthusiasts in brotherhood have tried the experiment over and over again, and always with the same result. Believers in the Universal Brotherhood, therefore, do not ask Humanity to tea, and Dr. Lomax is unreasonable in implying that they should.

What guidance then as to conduct can the family type of brotherhood give us? Take four brothers, one in the nursery, one at a preparatory school, one at a public school, and one at the university; let them symbolise four men of correspondingly different cosmic age. Suppose ourselves, who discuss these questions, to be the public school brother. How do we treat our young brother at the preparatory school? Do we do his exercises for him? That will not help his education. Do we play games with him? We leave him to play with boys of his own size. Do we ask him to tea at our school, or go to tea at his? We let him make his own way under the guidance of his own pastors and masters. When we meet him in the holidays we keep him in his place—severely; there is not much “brotherly love” about it. Our relations with our nursery brother are, if possible, less intimate even than this; an occasional game of bears, or a nursery tea, because there is a cake there, is about all.

How about our relations with our school friends and contemporaries? We help them best by competing with them as hard as we can, both in work and games; in minding our own business, and in making them mind theirs. Surely that is evident. How about our elder brother at the university? It is certainly evident that we cannot do his work for him, or play his games; and the less we bother him to stop his work to do ours, the better for both of us. It seems to begin to look as though it were less easy to help our brothers to good purpose than we thought. It is true, of course, that Lao-Tzū did say: “The best charity is letting alone,” but we rather put that down to his being a Heathen Chinese; still there may possibly be some truth in the saying after all.

Then is there no way in which we can actively help our brothers of the race? When a little brother is up a tree, and can't get down by himself, then we can properly help him down, and set him on his feet again. That is all. When our elder brother asks us to do a job for him, we can do it; that is again

all. Even the baby must learn for himself to walk alone; if he is carried for ever he will be a cripple for life. We hear a great deal in some Theosophic circles of the overwhelming importance of helping our brothers, always with the tacit assumption that our Father is dead, and has ceased to look after us all alike.

There is a vast amount of this talk of helping others among some of us; but really it is not so easy, any more than the giving of charitable relief without demoralisation is easy. A life dedicated to the service of one's highest ideal cannot consist in doing everybody else's dirty work, while they laze and loaf. It is doubtless very uplifting to our vanity to do other people's business better than they can do it for themselves; and then they are so grateful, poor dears, and do so enjoy the rest; and so we go on helping more and more, and they go on resting more and more, till at last—but we all know by experience what has to happen *then*. Like indiscriminate charity, indiscriminate helping is a disastrous delusion; the helped become more helpless, the helpers more and more enslaved.

What then is our duty as believers in Human Brotherhood? So far as I can see, it amounts to this: To do our own work, learn our own lessons, fight our own fight, and give others the chance of doing the same; helping, when we meet them, lame dogs over stiles, but making sure that they are lame, and not shamming sick; to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our (inner) God; to be perfectly fair all round, and not be conceited about it.

The great evolution of the race must go its majestic way like a mighty river, to which the swirls and back-washes of wars and tumults, famines and pestilences, lives and deaths, are just temporary accidents.

We have surely, by this time, got rid of the illusion that we can hurry it, or force the growth of any of its own constituent individuals—except our own. It all comes back to this, there is one individual we can help, one we can serve, one we can sacrifice our self for—our own Eternal Pilgrim.

The great service we can render to Humanity is to set him—our Pilgrim—free from the delusions of prejudice, free from the chains of desire, free from personal loves and hates, free from the

bondage of the flesh ; but it can only be done by the uttermost self-sacrifice. All our heart's desires, one after another, have to go ; but of these mysteries Lao-Tzū said : " Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know."

Membership of the Theosophical Society then, does not commit one to the practice of community brotherhood, or to the cultivation of " brotherly love." We can hate each other just as freely as blood brothers do, without breaking the bond of life. But when we join a Lodge we do enter a community ; and in order that it may continue to exist, we must play the community game of mutual tolerance, good-will and courtesy. A wise old man said to a friend of mine on his entering the world : " Society does not expect you to be brilliant, but it does expect you to be pleasant." Obviously, without simple pleasantness, society ceases to be worth while. So with any community, so with a Theosophic Lodge.

Surely between " pitiless home-truths " and " tart indignation," on one side, and " the saccharine stuffiness of perpetual praise " on the other, there is a golden mean of straightforward good-will. The freest criticism, the most trenchant truth-telling, are not incompatible with courteous consideration for the feelings of others. After all, can we be so cock-sure that any given pitiless home-truth is in reality true ? What is required to find out ? We must know our brother's soul through and through, and all the details of his life, his environment and heredity. Further, we must also know all the details of all his past lives, and of all the anterior experiences of his monad ever since it emerged from the bosom of the Father at the beginning.

All this complex of data must be held before our mind which we have, of course, already made absolutely impartial, and weighed and balanced with the uttermost care. Then we are in a position to say that we have shown reasons for accepting the hypothesis that our home-truth is true. After this, a good number of equally skilled observers must repeat our research. When they have all agreed with our conclusion, then, and not before, are we in a position to say that our home-truth is an established fact. This is the scientific method. It is possible that, even after all this, the utterance of our home-truth may still

seem wise; but it is certain that that utterance will not be pitiless.

To my mind, there is a gulf fixed between the "strong and self-respecting brother," and one who slings about pitiless home-truths which he is not in a position to verify.

St. Francis de Sales, a strong and self-respecting brother himself, always regretted that, three times in his life, he had spoken harshly, because it had never done any good. Even the Master's warning command—judge not that ye be not judged—might, in view of the inexorableness of Kârmic Law, be worth a moment's thought in this connection. I suggest, therefore, that Mr. Orage also is unreasonable in demanding freedom to utter pitiless home-truths in Lodge community.

The community brotherhood of the Lodge, however, ceases at the doors, and outside the members revert to the relations of the Universal Brotherhood of daily life. The confusion of these two positions has led to much misunderstanding and trouble in the Society. Because I meet people in Lodge, I do not expect them to know me outside, or ask me to dinner; I expect them to be civil in Lodge, that is all. If they disagree with my views, I expect them to state their reasons without trying to make me look foolish, or trying to blacken my character.

My view may be right or wrong, and this is not settled by firing off the most pitiless of home-truths, but by giving adequate reasons. The tarest indignation is powerless against a logically impregnable position; but a quiet man may not choose to defend such a position at the price of a vulgar squabble. These methods of controversy must be renounced if Lodge work of the least value is to be done.

But there is, I believe, a further possibility in the practice of Brotherhood. There are sons of the spirit, as well as sons of the flesh. Such will be about the same cosmic age, and will draw spiritual life from a spiritual father. In the study-groups which I so strongly advocate, an opportunity arises for spiritual fathers and sons to find each other, and to form family communities linked by spiritual life as well as by brotherly love. In such groups the great example of the Master and his disciples may be reflected, for where life and love are working, light must,

sooner or later, emerge. Of course, in each true group of twelve, there must always be, not only a John, but a Peter, a Thomas, and—a Judas. That is inevitable, for the opposer fulfils a most important function; the doubter is an aid to free discussion; even the traitor is the final touchstone of sincerity.

Let those who recognise their true fathers and brothers join themselves together into study-groups; none of them will ever regret it. For in the relationship of teacher and disciples, united as I have described, there is a vitality and power to which the experience of the ages bears witness. In the united group, thoughts, ideas, and realisations emerge, which could not be reached by any single member alone; for by means of the common effort, the Ideal Trinity may be discerned, and by the aid of that triune Life, Love, and Light, a step may be taken towards the attainment of Perfection.

With this most earnest advice I bring this paper to a close, in the hope that the distinctions I have discussed may help some of us to refute the mockers, and to speak with the enemy in the gate; or at least to reach that inner fortress of comprehension, whence we may contemplate unmoved the vagaries of those who

Utter brawling judgments unashamed  
On all things all day long.

A. H. WARD.

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#### BUDDHIST PROVERBS

**EVEN** a common man by obtaining right knowledge becomes a Buddha.

**LIKE** monkeys trying to snatch the moon's reflection in water. (They get drowned.)

**THE** priest who preaches a foul doctrine shall be reborn as a "fungus."



## THE OBSEQUIES OF H. S. OLCOTT<sup>1</sup>

COLONEL OLCOTT died peacefully at Adyar, at 7.17 a.m. yesterday, in the presence of Mrs. Annie Besant, Mrs. Russak, Miss Renda, and his professional night nurse, Miss Smart, for whose kindness and skill no words of praise can be too high. He was laid in his bier at 12.30, and it was lowered over the parapet into the garden, and carried into the large hall, where a flower-fringed space had been prepared for its reception. At the east were placed small tables, bearing the Vedas, the Zendavesta, the Piṭakas, the Bible, Alkorân, the Âdigrantha, and a Jain MS.—representing the varied faiths of the world. The body, with the head uncovered, draped with his own national flag and the Buddhist flag, lay in the hall, while hundreds of people—even women and children, Westerns and Easterns, Hindus of all castes, Buddhists and Panchamas—filed past it, each casting on it a few flowers, until nothing was visible save the white head and a great mass of blossoms. At 3.30, the representatives of Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity came within the enclosure, and grouped themselves round Mrs. Annie Besant on the platform.

From a very early part of the day, as soon as the news of the Colonel's death got abroad in the city, streams of people began to flow along Brodie's Road to the Adyar Bridge, into the Theosophical Society's premises, to witness the last ceremonies before the cremation of the body of the great departed. Almost all the prominent Theosophists in and out of Madras were in attendance, and many well-wishers and friends of the late Colonel came up to see the last remains of the dead. Among others may be mentioned Mr. Schwartz, a prominent Theosophist from Ceylon; Lieut. Urquhart, a prominent Christian Theo-

<sup>1</sup> This account is taken from the *Madras Hindu* of February 18th, and was evidently supplied directly from Adyar.

sophist; Mr. Nilakanta Sastriar, Executive Engineer; Mr. V. Sundara Rama Iyer, District Registrar; Mr. V. Krishnaswamy Iyer, Mr. G. A. Natesan, Rao Bahadur A. Krishnaswami Iyer, Mr. V. C. Sesha Chariar, Dr. Nanjunda Row, Mr. S. V. Ramaswami Iyengar, and other office-bearers of the Society, and many other Theosophists from the Mofussil.

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The ceremonies of the day began with a speech from the Buddhist representative, who, as representing the faith which the late Colonel believed in, paid his last tribute of respect to the deceased President. Sir S. Subramania Iyer next advanced, and in a few touching words referred to the great and noble work done by the late Colonel. He said that in expressing the feelings of gratitude which the Hindu community have always borne towards Colonel Olcott, he would recall the fact that the Colonel had done not a little in the way of reviving the nearly-dying religions of the various world-faiths. The literature of the Society which had grown under his fostering care and devotion, had assumed dimensions of a really vast and extensive character. It will be for future historians and for posterity, he said, to estimate the real worth and value of the great work the departed President had done, and he would not attempt such an impossible task. He concluded his speech with a feeling and pathetic prayer for the peace of the great soul of the deceased.

Mrs. Russak, who followed, quoted a few apt verses from the Wisdom of Solomon in the Old Testament, of which the following was very apposite: "For God created man to be immortal. He made him to be an image of His own eternity," and "They that put their trust in Him shall understand the Truth, and such as may be faithful in Love shall abide with Him."

Lieut. Urquhart, who next came, made a truly impressive speech. "As a Christian member of the Theosophical Society," he said, "I deem it a great privilege to be present here to bid farewell to the mortal remains of this faithful servant of all religions, who saw in each world-faith a branch of the One Tree of Wisdom, who looked on his own Eastern Master, Gautama Buddha, and his Western Master, Christ Jesus, as brothers in the service of humanity. To him, after his long life of untiring

energy and zeal, it must have been a source of extreme satisfaction to see the fruits of his labours in the great strides that have taken place within recent years, towards the realisation of his ideals. He has now gone to Those whom he served so well, and while our loving thoughts and blessings follow him, may his noble record of unselfish service in the cause of humanity be an example to each of us, and may he enter into the Peace Eternal, and may Perpetual Light shine on him.

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Mrs. Besant then rose and said :

Brothers—We are here to-day, not to bid farewell to our dear President, for there is no farewell between spirit and spirit, but to bid farewell to this cast-off garment of his, in which, for the last thirty-one years, he has so bravely striven to serve humanity. We are here to take, with all love and reverence, this cast-off garment to the fire, which shall give back to the elements that which is theirs, so that Nature, the Mother, may use again these elements for new forms of beauty and of life.

You heard our Buddhist brethren chant their loving farewell, and you heard Buddhist lips, with faltering tongue, say words of gratitude for what this man, their co-religionist, has done for Buddhism.

Then came the solemn rhythm of the familiar Sanskrit, and Hindu lips spoke the same deep gratitude for what he has wrought for Hinduism ; for he found these two ancient faiths despised, he found the men belonging to them ashamed of them ; and he so laboured, that the youth of both faiths respect their scriptures, are proud of their Dharma, and with uplifted heads declare their fealty to the faith of their fathers.

Then Zoroastrianism spoke, and even though you may not have understood the language, you must have been conscious of the power of the chanted words of blessing, and our Pársí brother spoke Zoroastrian gratitude to him who had worked so nobly for their ancient faith, so that in each Pársí community to-day words of benediction will follow him who loved their faith and loved its people too.

Next came a noble passage from the Christian Bible, speaking of man as the image of God's Eternity, and Christian lips

added their testimony to the brotherhood of religions, and prayed that light might rest on him who served the Light.

One faith was missing of the world-faiths, not unwilling, I fain would hope, but only coming too late, to speak Islâm's thanks to one who spoke so well for Islâm, that one of her Moulvis, hearing him, declared that he expounded her faith better than one of themselves.

And I—I am Theosophist ; what shall I say of him, who, loving all religions, yet loved most that God-Wisdom in which all faiths are blended, from which they all proceed ? How shall I speak our gratitude to him who, with his noble colleague, H. P. Blavatsky, founded this Theosophical Society, for the revitalising of religions, and the spiritual good of men ? For this he laboured ceaselessly ; as he lay dying through long weeks of weariness and suffering, this was his constant thought, and even when from excess of weariness, his thoughts began to wander, even then they ever lingered round the welfare of this movement, dearest of all to his heart. This morning came, from their far-off Åshramas, in the snowy Hîmālayas, his own Master wearing the Rājput form, with that other gentlest one in the form of Kashmîri Brāhmaṇa, and yet one other, Egyptian-born, who had had him also in charge, and they, with his dearest friend, H. P. B., came to fetch him to rest with them in their home far north. His own Gurudeva snapped the cord that bound the man to his cast-off garment, and sleeping in his Master's arms, as it were, he passed from earth. Oh, the joy of the suffering over, the weariness at rest, the burden of the flesh laid down ! (Turning to the body.) And now, dear friend, we bear away your body ; we bid you not farewell ; for you, unborn, undying, perpetual, eternal, there is no such thing as death. We have served your body while we could, tended it, loved it, now we give it back to the elements whence it came. Brave soldier of truth, striver for good, we wish you Light and Peace, and by this dead body we pledge you our faith—I, to bear on the standard of Theosophy, fallen from this cold hand, if the Society confirm the choice you made, along the road as you have borne it ; all to serve Theosophy through life to death, as you have served it. So long as this Society endures, through the years of an unmeasured future, so long shall your

name live in and with it. Here is our President's last message, signed by his own hand, on February 2nd, to be read above his body; dear friend, your lips are still, my voice speaks your words:

"To my beloved brothers in the physical body. I bid you all farewell. In memory of me carry on the grand work of proclaiming and living the Brotherhood of religions.

"To my beloved Brothers on the higher planes. I greet and come to you, and implore you to help me to impress all men on earth that 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'; and that in the Brotherhood of religions lie the peace and progress of humanity."



The funeral pyre was arranged after the usual manner of the Hindus, and was made up, for the most part, of sandal wood, and holy incense of various kinds was burnt as the mortal remains of the departed spirit were carried in state to the funeral pyre by a number of devout bearers, consisting of six Brahmins and four Buddhists. And as the remains were reverently and tenderly raised and placed upon the wooded pile, and the last rites had been performed, soon the flashing flames enveloped the grosser vestment of the departed soul, and cast a radiant and picturesque light amidst the luxuriant verdure of the leafy palm-grove, where the great concourse of people were paying the last tribute of respect and reverence to their late President-Founder. Money doles were freely distributed among the poor Panchamas and fishermen on the occasion.

This morning the ashes were collected and a portion was carried out to the sea and scattered over the blue waters, while another portion was placed in an urn, to be deposited later in the bed of the holy Ganges, to mingle with those dropped there similarly of Madame H. P. Blavatsky.

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THE darkness of death is like the evening twilight; it makes all objects appear more lovely to the dying.—RICHTER.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

### MEMORANDUM OF THE LATE PRESIDENT

ADYAR, *January 21st, 1907.*

*To the General Secretary, . . . . . Section.*

As already notified to you I have, under Rule 9, nominated as my successor Annie Besant. It now becomes your duty, under Rule 11, to submit this nomination to your Section for ratification, and to communicate to this office the votes of your members, so that there may be no break of continuity in the Presidential office.

Yours fraternally,  
H. S. OLCOTT.

### INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT

*February 21st, 1907.*

*To the General Secretary, . . . . . Section.*

DEAR . . . . .,

In accordance with Rule 27 of the Rules and Regulations for the management of the Theosophical Society, I have accepted the responsibilities falling upon me by the death of our late lamented President, Colonel Olcott. I shall, in accordance with that rule, "perform the duties of President until a successor takes office," and under the circumstances it may be inevitable that some delay will arise before the succession can be determined. If Colonel Olcott's nomination of Mrs. Besant had simply been made on his own responsibility, without any explanation of the motives by which it was dictated, the Sections could have proceeded without much waste of time to vote on the question thus submitted to them. But, far and wide, documents have been published describing the conditions under which Colonel Olcott believed himself to have been visited by the great Masters of Wisdom, who, in accordance with a belief which many of us reverentially entertain, are especially interested in the welfare of the Theosophical Society, and prompted by them to make the nomination in question.

As you will be well aware, the character of this manifestation is the subject of widely conflicting criticism. The publication of the narratives Colonel Olcott issued for the purpose, is naturally giving rise to expressions of opinion from those who believe the manifestations to have been determined by an occult influence very different indeed from that of the great Masters above referred to.

Under these circumstances it has seemed to me highly undesirable that members of the Theosophical Society all over the world should be called upon to give their votes on the basis of a representation which might lead them to believe that the intervention of the Masters had been generally recognised as authentic. Inasmuch, therefore, as no rule determines the period at which the Society at large shall be asked whether it will ratify the nomination of a new President, I have held myself entitled under Rule 20, which invests me in my acting capacity with "discretionary powers in all matters not specifically provided for in these Rules," to appoint a date for holding the election which shall give time for the general circulation of all papers relating to the recent occurrences at Madras, and I have fixed the month of May as that in which the various Sections shall carry out the election. No election before the 1st of May will be recognised by me as valid, nor will the results of any elections held later than May be taken into account when it becomes my duty to investigate the results of the vote.

As it seems desirable that votes all over the world in this matter should be taken on similar forms, I will at a very early date forward you the form I consider it desirable to use.

Yours very truly,  
A. P. SINNETT.

#### THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN SECTION

The Executive Committee of the American Section has adopted the resolutions of the Executive Committee of the British Section which were printed in the last number under the heading "Two Communications from Adyar."

#### TWO COMMUNICATIONS LEFT BY COL. OLCOTT

(These were directed by Colonel Olcott to be forwarded after his death to the General Secretaries, to be sent by them to all branches as we are informed by Mrs. Marie Barnard Russak, writing from Adyar on February 18th.)

ADYAR, *January 17th, 1907.*

I hereby state and declare that it was by the command of the Mahâtmâs that I wrote for publication the articles referring to the nomination of Mrs. Besant as my successor, and about the discussion of the "glamour" question and imperfect instruments of the Masters.

They were approved by Mrs. Besant, and it was by my order that they were mailed to the different Theosophical publications.

H. S. OLCOTT.

ADYAR, *January 25th, 1907.*

*To the Members of the Theosophical Society.*

I, H. S. Olcott, President-Founder of your Society, do hereby send you this last message, dictated by me to my Hon. Private Secretary this 25th day of January, 1907.

It is sent to you as an appeal from my death-bed, and Mrs. Besant has absolutely no knowledge of my intention.

I know that in the past there has been some confusion in your minds in regard to the exact position of Mrs. Besant and myself concerning Theosophical Society matters, upon which we did not agree, and of which I did not approve.

Since my illness I have been brought into closer touch with her than ever before, and certain doubts that I had hitherto entertained about her character and ability as a Theosophical leader, have been entirely swept away. I wish to state that I have often misjudged her in the past, which I should not have done had she consulted me more often, made matters more clear, and explained her aim and object.

When she came here to the last Convention, I deputed her to act for me as President, as I was confined to my bed by a weak heart, and not allowed to attend the General Council meetings, or to arrange any matters (outside my room) that required my presence. I found that Mrs. Besant was remarkably competent to deal with all executive as well as all other matters, and that her judgment at all times was clear and well-balanced; in fact I could recognise the Power of her Master behind her constantly, and I was sure that He was keeping His promise to overshadow her. I rejoice more and more day by day that the Masters wished her to succeed me, for I feel sure that she is the only person at present so well fitted to be your President. I ask you, all in memory of me, to be loyally devoted to her as your leader, because her ideals are also mine, and she will work for our Society's



welfare faithfully and honestly so long as she lives. Be devoted to her also, because I wish to ask you to help me, in some measure, to repay her for her constant, tender devotion and care during my last illness. I am glad that this side of her character has shown itself to me as I had not seen it before, and it has been the means of establishing a bond of loving friendship between us that can never be broken.

Good-bye to you all, my dear children, until we meet again.

Yours faithfully,

H. S. OLCOTT.

DECLARATION BY MRS. BESANT

*To the Branches of the Theosophical Society*

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

ADYAR, MADRAS, *February 6th*, 1907.

DEAR BROTHERS,

I had not meant to say aught regarding my nomination to be the Head of the Theosophical Society, as the successor of our President-Founder, until your votes were given, confirming or rejecting that nomination. But it has come to my knowledge that statements are being made, throwing discredit on the manifestations of the Masters at Adyar to the President-Founder, and suggesting hallucination, fraud, and even worse things.

Under these circumstances it would be cowardice and treachery on my part to remain silent, without bearing testimony to the truth I know. When I was sitting with the President—the evening before the visible appearance of the Blessed Masters to Their dying servant, to bid him name me as his successor—and we were asking Them to express Their will in the matter, the two Masters appeared astrally, and tried to impress his mind; to me my own Master said: “You must take up this burden and carry it.” The Colonel said: “I have my message, have you anything?” “Yes,” I said. “What is it?” “I will tell you when you have announced yours.” Then he said he would wait till the morning, and see if he received anything further. I then wrote down what had been said to me, sealed it, and locked it away. (Two days before the Master had told me that He would tell Colonel Olcott whom to nominate.) In the morning, the Colonel was clear that he was ordered to nominate me, but he was confused about subsidiary details. I advised him to wait till all was clear, as

some of the details seemed to me to be impracticable. On the evening of that day, he asked me to sit with him again, and ask Them to speak. I refused, as I had had my answer, and I could not properly ask again, and I went downstairs. Then took place the manifestation, borne witness to by the Colonel and his two friends, as already related by him in *The Theosophist* for February. He sent for me and told me what had occurred, while his friends were writing it down in another room. I then informed him of what I myself had been told. The written account exactly corroborated his spoken account, and the Master Himself confirmed it to me that same night as I sat in meditation.

When friends had mooted the question of my becoming President previously, I had said that only my own Master's command, addressed to me personally, would induce me to accept it. I told Colonel Olcott this, when he wished to nominate me before They had spoken. Now, my only duty is to obey.

It hurts me to bring Their Names into what has been made a controversy, but if I remain silent, and allow the Theosophical Society to be swung on to a wrong line, I should be false to my duty.

Let, then, every member record his vote with a full sense of his responsibility. I pledge my word of honour to the truth of what I have written, and to the fact that my old physical plane Guru, H. P. B., is here with her dying colleague and has repeatedly spoken to me. I believe that the members, in their vote, will decide the future fate of the Society, whether it shall continue to be the Servant of its true Founders, who stood behind H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, or shall reject Them as its Masters and Guides. As Their nominee, I accept an office I have never coveted; let each member approve or reject, as he will.

Your faithful servant,  
ANNIE BESANT.

#### COMMENTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE INDIAN SECTION

(Bâbu Upendranâth Basu has made the following comments on the above letter, and also on the "Conversation" document, when printing them in the sectional magazine, *Theosophy in India*, of February 15th.)

In acceding to Mrs. Besant's request to insert the following letter, it behoves me to point out to our readers that, if I am not mistaken,

this is the first time since the organisation of the Theosophical Society that our revered President-Founder has issued any official edict in the name of the Masters. As he is hovering between life and death, it would be uncharitable to hold him responsible for this singular departure from that well-established and wisely regulated practice; but one cannot help being struck with this unfortunate feature in it, that it practically tends to compel the votes of members and thus to defeat the purpose of the constitution. What is still more objectionable is, that it also commits the Theosophical Society to a dogma, or, in the alternative, brands with infidelity the members who refuse to endorse it.

But as neither the Colonel nor Mrs. Besant has ever claimed infallibility, members will do wisely to give their votes independently of what either of them has said, giving of course due weight to their statements, but considering also the other circumstances of the case.

(After printing Mrs. Besant's letter, Upendranâth Bâbu adds :)

With all due deference to Mrs. Besant's opinion, I do not find it easy to imagine that if members of the Theosophical Society give their votes from honest conviction, and with an eye solely to the well-being of the sacred Movement, the great Lovers of Truth and Humanity will desert them, whichever way they may vote.

I am strongly of opinion that neither the "Conversation" nor the circular letter of Mrs. Besant is a proper thing for publication or comment through the Press. If, notwithstanding this, the columns of *Theosophy in India* have been reluctantly opened to them, it is not merely because of Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant's wish in the matter, but because they have been already printed elsewhere, and it appeared to me that they might upset the minds of many unless some light were thrown upon them.

(After printing the "Conversation" our colleague writes :)

As the "Conversation" reported above involves serious issues, and vitally concerns the future interests of the Theosophical Society, I feel it my bounden duty as a responsible officer thereof, much against the grain, to draw the attention of our good brethren to a few important points about it, as also succinctly to express my own view of the matter.

First, then, let there be no mist over the fact that membership in the Theosophical Society does not either imply or call for any

belief in the existence of the Masters, and that perfect liberty is enjoyed by every fellow of the Theosophical Society with regard to all articles of faith.

Secondly, there appears to be a tacit though vague assumption that rejection of the above "Conversation" as genuine means absence of faith in the Masters, and their connection with the Theosophical Society. This assumption is entirely baseless; for not only does such faith rest upon totally different grounds and independent judgment, but to hold that the verdict of any member of the Society, however highly respected and revered, as to the credibility or otherwise of any particular phenomenon, is binding upon all other good and earnest members, would be to establish a sort of popedom, destroying altogether the eclectic foundation of the Society.

Thirdly, the value and loyalty of a member of the Theosophical Society is not estimated by his endorsement of any dogma or of any so-called message from the Master, but by his fidelity and devotion to the motto, as much as to the primary object of the Society; and we should never forget that our motto is: "There is no Religion higher than Truth," and that the essential object of the Theosophical Society is: "To establish a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sect, colour, or sex." An exemplary Theosophist then is one whose life is marked by ardent pursuit of Truth, and selfless love and goodwill for his fellow-beings.

Fourthly, does not our experience of so many years of active membership in the Theosophical Society and of the various storms and trepidations through which it has passed, teach us that the "still small voice of the soul" conveys the message of the Master far more accurately than any phenomenal sound or appearance on the objective plane, where illusion is so rampant, and indiscriminate reliance on which has been in the past the cause of so much suffering to our sacred Cause?

Fifthly, it is also a relevant fact that the Colonel was in an exceedingly low and depressed state of heart and nerve at the time the "Conversation" is said to have taken place, and this considerably affects the weight of his authority.

Sixthly, it appears to me that the Great Founders of a movement like the Theosophical Society, where honest enquiry is everywhere stimulated, and every effort is made to keep the platform broad and as nearly all-embracing as is compatible with truth and purity, are not likely to stifle thought and foster credulity by seeking to impose

upon its members any belief which appeals neither to their reason nor to their moral sense.

Lastly, let me declare—that I cannot see my way to the acceptance of the message contained in the above “Conversation,” as coming from the Lords of Wisdom and Compassion, *though I believe in Their existence and connection with the Theosophical Society as firmly as in mine own; and that this conclusion of mine would remain unaltered even if I were personally present at the “Conversation”*; for this simple reason—that the answers attributed to the Great Ones do not touch the point at issue, but are quite wide of the mark, and so far from being illuminative, they lack even the balance and solemnity of the utterances of an advanced disciple, and have the flavour of spiritualistic communications. Who for instance ever doubted the impracticability of finding perfect instruments on these planes, that a miraculous manifestation and oracular dictum should be necessary to set the misgivings at rest? The real question is as to the need for or propriety of employing, for purposes of spiritual teaching, a man who has not merely trampled alike on the motto and prime object of the Theosophical Society, but also outraged the moral susceptibilities of all decent men and women, and even perpetrated what constitutes under the law of all civilised countries a heinous offence. Is any light thrown on this question? And does Theosophy teach that the path of discipleship may be laid on and trodden with persistent crime and systematic deception?

UPENDRANATH BASU,  
*Gen. Sec. Indian Section T.S.*

#### LETTER FROM MRS. SCOTT-ELLIOT

It is with the greatest amazement and pain that I have read the article by Mrs. Besant in the March number of the REVIEW, entitled “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” as the principle—or rather want of principle—advocated in it is contrary to all which we have hitherto held to be the true basis of Theosophy, and is in direct contradiction of Mrs. Besant’s own previous utterances, whether in her books or her lectures. Therefore I venture to protest most earnestly against this new and “dangerous doctrine,” which is totally subversive of morals.

I also protest against the recent attempt made, in the “Two Communications from Adyar,” and in Mrs. Besant’s own letter to the branches, to force upon the Theosophical Society an entirely new

departure, namely, that it shall be ruled and coerced by personal psychic experiences. The reality or non-reality of these visions is not the point at issue. The question is: Whether a world-wide Society shall be at the mercy of *any* psychic visions whatever, or whether it shall (as heretofore) be guided by reason and calm judgment?

But most emphatically of all do I protest against the manner in which the ideal we hold of the Masters of Wisdom has been desecrated and dragged in the dust through the inane and immoral babblings of the Adyar apparitions being attributed to them. We are asked to believe that They have acted as did old-time electioneering agents, bribing and threatening to secure votes for their "appointed" candidate.

That anyone who has ever held a pure and lofty ideal of Them should for a moment believe Them capable of upholding vice (see the second "Communication from Adyar"), or of ordering members of the Theosophical Society to "refrain" from doing all in their power to protect the victims of vice, is to me incomprehensible. Such a state of mind can only be accounted for by the much-talked-of "glamour." We all talk of this glibly enough but we too often forget that glamour can find no place in a soul filled with the Divine Presence. The Christ told us plainly that glamour must have a house "*empty, swept and garnished,*" before it can "enter in and dwell there," and blind the soul to truth and reason and all—save itself.

Mrs. Besant is right in one thing; the time *has* come for us each to choose whom or what we will serve. We must each of us take up our responsibility, and laying aside all blinding veils of "affection," or "gratitude," or *cowardice*, decide whether we mean to serve God and His Servers, the Masters of Wisdom, or to be the sport of the present Adyar apparitions and of their future manifestations; for let us be well assured that this is only the beginning. The powers of evil having had so easy a triumph now, will be ready for fresh deceptions later on; and Mrs. Besant having once accepted their "glamour," will be even an easier prey to their next attempt. Let us watch and pray lest we, too, enter into temptation.

M. L. SCOTT-ELLIOT.

#### LETTER FROM MR. MEAD

MY DEAR COLLEAGUES,

It is with deep sorrow that I pen the following lines. Recent events, however, compel the public utterance of what is in

the minds of many—all old friends and sincere well-wishers both of our late President and of Mrs. Besant.

The ratification of the present "appointment" under psychic "orders" promulgated by Colonel Olcott, in the last days of his fatal illness, even when regularised by the Acting President, will be resisted by many of us (we hope by the vast majority of the Society) on the following grounds :

This election can under no circumstances be held to be a fair ratification or free choice. It will always labour under the just accusation of being illegitimately forced and of being achieved (if it be achieved) by improper pressure.

This irregular "nomination" by the late President is not according to his own normal best judgment. When last in Europe he informed myself and others categorically that he did not consider Mrs. Besant as suited by temperament for carrying out the duties of a constitutional President, and that he would not nominate her.

Mrs. Besant herself, by her unqualified endorsement of the present attempt to over-ride constitutional procedure by the authority of psychic pronouncements, warns us that we have no guarantee, with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar pronouncements upon us and hold them *in terrorem* over the heads of the unknowing and timorous.

Moreover Mrs. Besant herself is in this acting contrary to her own declared normal better judgment ; for in a letter to myself from Benares, dated December 6th, 1906, referring to this question, she wrote :

"All the circumstances point to —, and that being so, he should be put in. So I shall do my best to persuade Colonel to nominate him."

In a letter of the same date from Benares to Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Besant further wrote :

"I shall do my best to support —, and to win support for him. His attitude to myself does not count in this matter ; it is the interests of the Society only that must be considered, and if — is to be President he must be supported loyally. My influence will be at his service."

On reaching Adyar, however, Mrs. Besant forgot her intention, and after several consultations with Colonel Olcott, the pronouncements of the apparitions finally won the day. Colonel Olcott consulted none of his old colleagues but herself in making this "appointment."

Mrs. Besant is President of the Central Hindu College, Grand Inspector General for Great Britain and the Colonies of Universal Co-masonry and Outer Head of the E.S.; she is, moreover, Editor of *The Central Hindu College Magazine*, and Co-editor of *The Theosophical Review*. In addition to these duties, not to speak of her lecturing, literary work and enormous correspondence, Mrs. Besant now proposes to undertake the Presidency of the Theosophical Society, and presumably also the editorship of *The Theosophist*.

Either of the first two responsible positions would occupy the full time of most of us, while the Outer-Headship of the E.S. requires the undivided attention of even a most highly endowed holder of that most important and intimate office.

Mrs. Besant is, then, already overburdened with grave responsibilities; whereas we require for the Presidency of the Theosophical Society someone who can give his entire services to discharging the onerous duties of that high post.

Again Mrs. Besant is the absolute autocrat of the E.S., and it is highly inadvisable that this autocracy and the constitutional office of President of the Theosophical Society should be in the hands of one and the same person.

The Rules of the Society with regard to the successorship to the life-presidency of Colonel Olcott are unfortunately absurdly drawn. The late President-Founder alone is given the right of nominating his successor. There is no provision for the nomination of other candidates by the General Council—as is the case when the seven years' Presidency comes into force.

The ratification or otherwise of the "nomination" now before us must thus be first decided. Those who desire another nomination or other nominations, can make this possible only by voting against the ratification of the present one. The Acting President can then direct the General Council to put forward other nominations.

I shall, therefore, vote against the ratification of this "appointment"—"nomination," and I hope the vast majority of members will do likewise; for the ratification of it by a two-thirds' majority vote means the death of our constitution and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny.

In repudiating the pronouncements of these apparitions in general, I reject in particular their appointment of myself (as I am informed by Mrs. Russak) to the office of Vice-President.

I believe, with many others, that the truest friendship for Mrs.



Besant can best be shown by safeguarding the freedom and sanity of the Theosophical Society, and it is in this spirit that I have written what I have no choice but to write.

I am, my dear colleagues,  
Yours faithfully,

G. R. S. MEAD.

Cheyne Court, Chelsea.

March 1st, 1907.

(In the last number, when printing the first communications from Adyar, I exercised my editorial right of commenting in the same issue on that which I was forced by circumstances to print, but of which I strongly disapproved, so that my readers might not be in doubt as to my view. I shall not, however, comment on the more recent communications from Adyar printed in this number, but give them a month's grace, as I have already done in the case of Mrs. Besant's article and her phenomenal "appointment." I shall thus be in precisely the same position as the rest of my colleagues and readers.—G. R. S. M.)

#### LETTER FROM MRS. WEBB

It seems desirable that, at the present crisis in the Theosophical Society, many of the ordinary members should express themselves, as well as those we look up to as our leaders. It is a moment at which every member of the Society must bear his or her share of responsibility. We cannot wait for others to decide things or to make up our minds for us. The vote of the newly joined and ignorant member counts for as much as that of the oldest and wisest.

We must remember that this is no ordinary election of a President. This nomination has been put to the Society on an *extraordinary* basis. It is no question now of whether we do or do not wish Mrs. Besant to be President. It is a question of whether we mean or do not mean to allow the Theosophical Society to be governed by the personal psychic experiences of individual members. Everyone must have some opinion as to the principle here at stake. Nor can we stand aside and do nothing, even if we would. To abstain from voting is not to do nothing, it is to add a vote or votes to the side from which we differ, and each member *has* to take a share in deciding the fate of the Theosophical Society in what has become a very critical situation.

Let us then face our responsibilities with courage, not trying to shelter ourselves behind others or to leave them to do our duty for

us. They cannot, and we can. There is no member who is not able to form a judgment as to whether it be wise or not that we should depend in our official acts on inspirations of this kind; and we may well consider whether it be evidence of wisdom in those from whom the messages come that they should suggest our doing so.

For one thing, not all the members of the Theosophical Society believe even in the very existence of Those we call the Masters. This in itself is a strong reason against basing a purely official election on the ground of entirely unprovable assertions as to Their wishes; and this would hold even if the fact of its being Their wish were undoubtedly true. But to many—perhaps most—this will hardly appeal. If they believed these manifestations to be true they would care little for the correct official attitude, or anything else.

And for such, what must be the test of the truth or untruth of these reported interviews? Surely there is none worth having but the test of reason and conscience applied to the interviews themselves. Do they show forth the Holiness and Wisdom of their supposed Source?

I suppose all who believe in the Masters have some ideal which that term connotes for them. Probably most of us believe that this falls immeasurably short of the reality, or, at any rate, few would accept anything lower than that ideal, such as it is. If we take any words that appeal to us as in some measure expressing it, and, putting them over against these supposed revelations, ask ourselves how they correspond, I think the answer will be pretty certain. We might take any of the great words that have come forth to the world from the Highest Sources, but I will take only a few words from a little book that professes no authority whatever, words which the context shows us were written concerning the need for discrimination between the False and the Real in such manifestations:

“Master's words, however much they may be opposed to one's previous thoughts, never fail to bring the most absolute conviction, alike to the intellect and to the moral sense of the person addressed. They come like a revelation, rectifying an error which becomes at once apparent; they stream down like a column of light dispelling the gloom; they make no claim on credulity or blind faith.” (*The Doctrine of the Heart*, pp. 55, 56).

To turn from this to the petty, and paltry, and immoral messages we are offered as coming *direct* from Sources of Light and Truth is a descent so sharp that it must surely give us pause.

The form the present crisis takes is such that in opposing these psychic happenings, we find ourselves in apparent opposition to one who is looked up to, with much reason, as one of our chief leaders,—who is, by many, regarded as a special instrument of Those whom some believe to stand behind the Theosophical movement.

For many members this is a grave difficulty. Their love and respect for one to whom they owe very, very much, and whom they believe to be far beyond them in spiritual and mental development, is on the one hand, and on the other the duty of following truth, at the cost, apparently, of opposing themselves to the leader they love and venerate. But this I believe to be a fallacy. There are different ways of showing love and respect. If the person you revered most in the world were stepping into a quagmire, mistaking it for solid earth, it would be a poor way of showing your devotion to walk in too; and if a leader is mistaken, those who follow knowingly do a cruel wrong, while in refusing to follow they offer their best help. This seems so obvious as not to be worth saying; but one hears of members who, rejecting the truth of these supposed revelations entirely, yet feel it is right to support Mrs. Besant,—because she is Mrs. Besant.

I, for one, have enough faith in Mrs. Besant to believe that she desires Truth and Light far more than I do myself. I believe that for the moment she is holding for truth something entirely false, and so I do not believe that those who oppose her in this are in reality opposing her at all, but that, on the contrary, in fighting for truth here, we are fighting for what she too loves best,—are *with* her and not against her—only *against* some cloud of darkness that has risen up from the Not-Self.

If we doubt there is a cloud, let us look at her article in the last number of the REVIEW, with its shaky morality, and ask ourselves which comes from the real Mrs. Besant, this, or the lofty teachings of *The Outer Court*, and *The Path of Discipleship*? If the latter, then surely her heart is on the side of Light and Truth, whatever she may believe for the moment, whatever cloud or “glamour” may temporarily hide Reality from her.

We have all heard of, and perhaps talked glibly enough of, “glamour” and the “difficulties that bestrew the path” of those who advance, and yet it seems the last thing that most of us take into our calculations as a practical possibility for such. Why should we be dismayed if it be so? Should we not do better to try, from the comparative safety of a lower level, to realise a little what the

dangers and difficulties of those ahead must be, who "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness"?

BEATRICE WEBB.

#### LETTER FROM MR. SCOTT-ELLIOT

The Theosophical Society has passed through many crises, but none has approached in importance that which is impending. For it will now have to be decided whether the Society, as originally constituted, is to continue in existence, or whether it is to assume an entirely new basis; in other words, whether or not it is to be wrecked.

The points at issue are of such importance that they cannot be too prominently brought before the members in all parts of the world who have so momentous a decision in their hands.

Two questions are at stake: first, whether the Society is to be governed by personal psychic vision instead of by the dictates of reason and common-sense; and, secondly, whether adherence to the rules of ordinary morality is or is not to be regarded as a necessary qualification for a member of the Society.

To deal with the second question first, the utterly immoral views expressed by one who aims at the Presidentship of the Society (see Mrs. Besant's article entitled "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" published in last month's REVIEW) are a very definite index of the way in which the Society would be governed if Mrs. Besant were elected President, and they cannot but give reason to many to pause and consider well whether they are not bound to record their votes against one who utters such opinions.

But the first question is, if possible, of even greater importance. That the Theosophical Society, which from the time of its inauguration was privileged to be a mouthpiece of the Ancient Wisdom—the Wisdom which animated and vivified every religion which has arisen upon earth—that this Society should sink to the level of a spiritualistic sect! And yet this is the very result that will be achieved if the ridiculous apparitions at Adyar are taken as genuine, and votes recorded in response to their appeal. That poor old Colonel Olcott—sensible man as he was—should have been made such a sport of on his death-bed is sad enough; but—whether they were "spooks" raised by mediumistic agency, or apparitions animated by the powers of darkness—the universal acceptance of their message would be far sadder

still, for it would be the death-blow to the Theosophical Society. The acceptance of it even by a majority sufficient to return Mrs. Besant to the Presidentship would mean a terrible continuation of the present crisis. Here, in England, we believe that reason and common-sense will carry the day. May it be so in every other part of the world!

W. SCOTT-ELLIOT.

(The following came to hand as these pages were being made up. Mr. Keightley's letter has, we believe, appeared in *Theosophy in India* of March 15th, and Mrs. Besant's declaration in both *Theosophy in India* and *The Theosophist* of March.)

LETTER FROM MR. BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY

*To My Fellow Members in the Theosophical Society.*

Now that our President-Founder has passed to his rest, and wide publicity has been given in the public press to the various phenomena which have recently taken place at Adyar, the considerations of delicacy for the feelings of a dying man and of reticence in regard to matters which many of us consider to be quite unfitted for public discussion, no longer render silence a duty. On the contrary, in view of the actual position of affairs in the Theosophical Society, a duty seems to lie upon its older and more experienced members to state their views and make clear their position in regard to these matters, for the enlightenment of those whose acquaintance with the Society is of more recent date.

As one of the oldest members now left in the Society, having worked in its ranks for twenty-four years, and as one who has for years held responsible office, first as General Secretary of the Indian Section, then as General Secretary of the British Section, and now as a member of the General Council, I feel that this duty is specially imperative upon myself. And I therefore feel bound to state my views on the present situation as simply and briefly as I can.

But first I desire to make it very plain that I do not intend to argue the case either for or against the *advisability* of selecting Mrs. Besant as President of the Theosophical Society in succession to Colonel Olcott; and still less do I propose to say anything either against her qualifications for the post or in deprecation of the claims which her immense services to the movement give her upon any position she desires to hold.

The two questions upon which I feel it a duty to state my position are :

1. The bearing and effect upon the constitution of the Theosophical Society of what has happened at Adyar and of Mrs. Besant's action in connection therewith, as well as the effects they are calculated to produce upon the spirit and character of our Society in the future.

2. The question of the authenticity of the various messages and communications received : *i.e.*, Do they, or do they not, emanate from such exalted Beings as Those who have been spoken of as the Masters ?

As having an important bearing upon the constitutional questions involved, I am bound to say that ever since last Christmas Colonel Olcott has been in no condition of mind or body, either to think clearly, or to take any important decision whatever.

While at Adyar, I had ample evidence that he was wholly at the mercy of any suggestion coming from his immediate surroundings, and entirely incapable of arriving at any independent decision of his own.

It is most painful to have to make this statement, but its importance is obvious, and its accuracy will become more and more apparent as we proceed.

In his letter of January 7th to the Theosophical Society, its officers and members, Colonel Olcott purports to "appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the Theosophical Society" at his death, having just previously written that the Masters had told him "to appoint" her as his successor.

Now Colonel Olcott never had power to "appoint" anyone as his successor. The Theosophical Society's constitution gives him the right only to "nominate," subject to ratification by the members, as is clearly shown by his official notice to the General Secretaries of January 21st.

All who have known Colonel Olcott know his extreme respect for the Society's constitution, and his resolute upholding of proper procedure and strict obedience to its letter and spirit. Can anyone then believe that in sound mind, and with his judgment clear and normal, Colonel Olcott would have violated the constitution and exceeded his own powers by "appointing" a successor, when he was entitled only to "nominate" one, subject to ratification by the Society ? The whole of this letter shows the same lack of that calm

judgment and strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the constitution which always characterised our late President-Founder.

Further, it seems to me quite opposed to the best interests of the Society for decisions vitally affecting its administration to be thus bolstered up by appeals to higher powers or visions of any kind. Of what use are a constitution and rules, if such unrecognised and unverifiable influences are to be brought to bear upon the minds of members ?

That Colonel Olcott or Mrs. Besant should be guided by such visions, or by any form of higher illumination, may be, and indeed is, perfectly right and desirable for them personally ; but that their experiences of such a kind should be made public with the inevitable result of *influencing the votes of members*, seems to me quite opposed not only to the letter and spirit of the Society's constitution, but to the true spirit of Theosophy itself.

These considerations receive only added force in the light of Mrs. Besant's letter of February 6th. Of what avail any process of voting, of what use the form of ratifying a nomination, if members are threatened that unless they vote for Mrs. Besant they will reject the Masters ?

As a matter of fact, a number of letters have been received by the older members, regretting that the supposed "orders" from the Masters left them no choice in the matter.

This letter of Mrs. Besant's seems to me to violate our constitution both in letter and spirit, and I regret with all my heart that one whom I so highly love and honour, should have condescended to use such questionable methods, which were, moreover, the less needed, since it is very unlikely that any considerable body of members would have thought of opposing her election, had she said nothing of all these visions and messages, but simply left Colonel Olcott's official nomination to stand alone and carry its due weight with the Society at large.

Further, this letter of Mrs. Besant's tends to set up a dogma in the Society, and to undermine the free judgment and sense of personal responsibility of its members. Its ultimate effect, if yielded to without protest, must be to make of the Society a popedom, and to transform the most universal movement the world has seen into a dogmatic sect.

For all these reasons I regret most deeply the publication of these matters, and Mrs. Besant's action in issuing the circular just mentioned.

Let us turn now to the examination of the authenticity of the "orders" and contents of these communications.

First let me say that I in no way question the *bona fides* of the witnesses and recipients of these phenomena, nor do I doubt that they actually believed they had the experiences described. Moreover, I am as thoroughly convinced of the real existence of the Masters of Wisdom, and of the fact that They take interest in the Theosophical Society, as I am of my own existence. But I am equally convinced that the contents of these messages and "orders" do not proceed from Them, and that They have had nothing whatever to do with these phenomena.

In the first place, the tone, style and character of these communications are altogether lacking in the elevation and dignity which mark the utterances of even an advanced disciple, and are entirely incompatible with the idea that they proceed from any such exalted source. It is inconceivable that a Master of Wisdom could say: "Most emphatically, yes," and "Decidedly not, I wish you to state this publicly." Such phrases, such language, could never have come from Their lips, or been framed in Their minds.

Secondly, these communications contain various errors of fact and statement, which undeniably exhibit a very fallible and inaccurate origin, and one very imperfectly acquainted with both the history of the Society and the details of recent events in connection with it.

Lastly, the long communication in regard to Mr. Leadbeater neither illuminates the question at issue, nor does it carry any conviction with it—both unvarying marks of any communication really proceeding from a Master of Wisdom.

It is a truism that we are all imperfect—for only Brahman is absolutely perfect—and that therefore They must work with imperfect instruments; but does it necessarily follow that They must choose for that purpose one who not only deliberately violates a moral law recognised by every nation and people, but one who has committed an offence against the criminal law of his own country? Granted that morality is relative, are the Masters of Wisdom forced to seek for instruments among the lower strata of human morality? I cannot for one moment believe such a thing; and therefore this communication, even standing alone, would suffice to show that these visions and communications cannot have even a remote connection with the Masters—that is, if by "Masters of Wisdom" we mean the embodiments of the purest and loftiest ideals of perfected humanity.



Finally, this whole attempt to coerce the wills and overbear the sober judgment of members in the exercise of one of their most important duties is totally opposed to all that has been taught, all that has been verified in experience as to Their methods of action. From the earliest days of my connection with H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott down to the present, the one lesson taught me over and over again is that the Masters *never* over-ride the freewill, even of Their own pupils, and never attempt to overbear their reason and common sense.

For these reasons I absolutely reject these messages and communications, and am convinced that they are] not authentic. And I most earnestly trust that my fellow members will truly exercise their own judgment and good sense, putting entirely aside these visions and "orders," and refusing to allow themselves to be swayed either in one direction or the other by the profoundly regrettable publicity that has been given to these phenomena.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

A FURTHER DECLARATION BY MRS. BESANT

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR, MADRAS,

*February 21st, 1907.*

*To the Members of the Theosophical Society.*

The President-Founder having passed away from earth, the chief authority in the Theosophical Society is vested—by Rule 27 of the Constitution—in the Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett, until the votes of the Society confirm, or reject, the nomination of myself as his successor, made by the President-Founder. As he made me his Deputy for the last months of his life, I am holding the headship of the Headquarters temporarily—Mr. Sinnett being in England—for ordinary business purposes, the officers the President-Founder appointed continuing in their several posts. Should the necessary two-thirds of the recorded votes of the members render valid the late President's nomination, I shall then assume office, and issue an address to the members.

This *interregnum* in the Presidential office will not occur again, as the Council will be bound to nominate the successor of the next incumbent six months before the expiration of his term of office, so that the newly elected President will take up his work so soon as his predecessor leaves office.

It should be remembered that while I, personally, regard myself as the nominee of my Master, as well as of our President-Founder, no member of the Society is bound to take that view, nor to base his vote on any authority save that of his own private judgment. Neither the President-Founder, nor—with all reverence be it spoken—our Master, does more than nominate; each member is free to accept or reject, and the responsibility for his vote is the individual responsibility of the member. Belief in the Masters is not incumbent on any member of the Society; those who believe in Them are not bound to believe in any particular manifestation, asserted as genuine by others. Perfect freedom as to belief or non-belief in any view or statement is the precious heritage of the Theosophical Society, and while I myself know the manifestations to be genuine, I defend the right of every member to disbelieve them, and to vote for or against the President's nomination on any ground chosen by himself.

ANNIE BESANT,  
*Member of the General Council.*

“ APPOINTMENT-NOMINATION ”

GENOA, *March 15th, 1907.*

*To the Editors, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW*

DEAR SIRS,

With reference to the documents and comments published in the March number of your REVIEW, under the heading “Two Communications from Adyar,” and to the constitutional question raised in regard to the first of these communications; I see no mention made of an official circular issued by the late President-Founder to the General Secretaries of Sections of the Theosophical Society, three weeks before his death, which runs as follows :

(The memorandum which stands first under the heading “The Presidential Election” is here quoted.)

In the face of this document, on which more than one General Secretary acted before the Colonel's death, the statement that : “Our President-Founder has unfortunately passed from hence without being able personally to rectify a blunder that must be ascribed largely to his exceedingly weak state of health,” etc., is open to misconstruction, and as a subscriber to the REVIEW I ask leave to call the attention of uninformed fellow-readers to the existence and importance of the above-quoted circular.

Trusting to your courtesy and impartiality for the publication of this letter in your April issue,

I am, Dear Sirs, yours faithfully,

R. G. MACBEAN.

(I will deal with this in the next number.—G. R. S. M.)

## “ THE BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ”

*(Besides the articles published, the following letters have been received)*

I AM unable to follow the arguments used by the able and respected writer of the article “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” or to admit the applicability of her illustrations. I am convinced that anyone disposed to *hostile* criticism could quite easily make out a strong case against Theosophy with that article in his hands. The position of the private member in his anti-theosophical circle will be made difficult, while that of our gifted fellow-members whose names come under public notice will be indeed unenviable, since the publication of the article under the aforesaid title over the signature of no less an exponent than Mrs. Besant. Moreover, her contribution to the communications from Adyar will, in her own words, shake what some of us “had believed to be solid ground under” our “feet.” If, however, we take this uncomfortable experience as a lesson, and resolve to accept *nothing* on the mere statement of *anyone*, which does not receive the sanction of our reason and judgment, good will have grown out of what we now think to be ill.

As to the narration of a certain psychic phenomenon detailed with the spirit of a mandate, I not only regret its publication in that spirit, but I repudiate its claim to exercise authority over the disposal of my vote at the forthcoming election of a successor to the late President; and I cordially endorse the unanimous decisions of the Committee of the British Section.

On this subject we should bring to bear the best judgment that we are severally possessed of, unbiassed either by personal regard or the affection and gratitude of pupil for teacher.

I have endeavoured to do so, and am led to a conclusion indicated by the following considerations.

The holding of more than one important office by any individual, however eminent, is most inexpedient in the best interests of the Society, and is not fair in several directions to the individual. The office of President is, in my opinion, more suitably held by an individual entirely free from other and even more important functions in the Society and its ramifications.

JOHN W. SIDLEY.

You will by now have received numerous letters from many abler and more important members of the Society than myself, and I must apologise for trespassing upon your time and space. I think, however, that the present occasion calls for clear thinking and plain speaking on the part of all those members who have at heart the reputation and welfare of the great Society to which they belong.

Mrs. Besant's article in the March number appears to me both dangerous and misleading, and one would regret to see it in the hands of anybody who was making enquiries as to the real aims and objects of the Theosophical Society. It is also wholly unworthy of the writer.

That what we call morality is relative, no one will deny; but surely a person is called upon to conform to the generally accepted moral ideas of the country and community in which they may happen to be incarnated at any given time.

Mrs. Besant speaks of polygamy and polyandry; no one denies they may be both useful and proper social customs in Turkey and Tibet, but she would surely hardly say that was any reason for our preaching or practising them in the West, where public opinion is against the advisability of such social arrangements.

Mrs. Besant says: "The presence in the Society of a man who falls below the accepted standard of morality can do little harm"; but this cannot be the case when the presence of such a person in the Society gives him the opportunity and power to promulgate ideas which the common consensus of opinion condemns as injurious alike to mind and body.

Mrs. Besant further says: "The Theosophical Society does not consist of children but of grown men and women, and does not need the shelter rightly given to the young." Unfortunately, immaturity of mind does not invariably cease with the passage of years, and it is quite possible that "grown men and women" who absorb ideas more

through sentiment than reason, may be influenced in a direction they may afterwards deeply regret, when they come to mental years of discretion.

I should quite agree that one has no right to criticise or interfere with the private life of any member, as such ; but directly that life is productive of teaching and influence which we consider harmful, it becomes quite another consideration.

I also utterly repudiate the idea of brotherhood as put forward in Mrs. Besant's article. It seems to me there is rather more brotherhood shown in preventing one person from injuring others than in sentimental condonation of offences.

It is true that the grand qualities of tolerance and compassion are what each one of us would fain acquire and show forth in our lives ; but condemnation of sin and the sinner are not at all the same thing, though they would appear to be so in the minds of many.

The publication of this article in the same number of the REVIEW as the communications from the so-called “Masters” at Adyar is significant.

Discrimination is one of the attributes laid down as necessary to be acquired for entrance to the Path. The present state of affairs gives ample opportunity for the practice of this virtue.

HELEN H. ROBBINS.

Towards the end of her article on “The Basis of the Theosophical Society” in last month's REVIEW, Mrs. Besant says : “I know that there are many in the Society, good people whom I respect, who will think that this article embodies a most dangerous doctrine.” From conversations which I have already had with many responsible members of the Society, I can most definitely say that this is so ; and were it not that we all respect and admire Mrs. Besant so much for her splendid work in the past, a chorus of protest would at once be heard against this “most dangerous doctrine.” But unfortunately, although a strong feeling undoubtedly exists, almost every individual member seems to hesitate to express it publicly in the REVIEW, each preferring to leave that to some one else. It is only on this account that I feel bound to undertake the unpleasant task myself, so that this view may at least be expressed, by however humble a member. Our first duty is to the Theosophical Society itself, and if we see its fair reputation endangered in any way whatever, no personal considerations should prevent us from uttering a word of warning.

I will not attempt a detailed criticism of the teaching contained

in this article, trusting that it may be fully dealt with in due course by those most competent to do so. The whole tenour of it gives one the impression of a piece of special pleading, entirely at variance with the high tone of Mrs. Besant's normal writings and unworthy of her true self. One can only surmise that Mrs. Besant is temporarily under the shadow of some dark influence, and earnestly hope that the cloud may soon pass away. I venture to think that a second and careful reading of this article will convince every thoughtful member of the shallowness of its reasoning and the dire results which would inevitably ensue were such ideas to be acted upon by the Society in general.

BERTRAM G. THEOBALD.

I do not remember ever to have written to the REVIEW before, and am very sorry to do so now, for I must say a very painful thing. I know no other way of making public and speaking plainly what must be said as publicly and plainly as possible by members of the Theosophical Society who feel strongly in the matter of Mrs. Besant's article "The Basis of the Theosophical Society."

I cannot imagine a more mischievous article; I cannot imagine how she could write it; but I can imagine that it will mislead many, will confuse many, and will horrify many. I hope that those members who can write will deal with the article critically; I would only say, myself, that I wholly repudiate the view that Mrs. Besant puts forth—namely, that a man is fit for membership in this or in any decent Society who sins openly and deliberately against decency, who teaches vile doctrines to innocent victims, and who still defends those doctrines.

CAROLINE MARSHALL.

As a member of the Theosophical Society and therefore one vitally interested in its affairs, I have read with very disturbed feelings Annie Besant's article, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" in the March issue of the REVIEW. I am in no danger of confusing the Theosophical Society with a Universal Brotherhood, and I have no fear that one expelled from it would go into outer darkness or be put beyond the reach of charity, tolerance and pity. But I do not hesitate to think evil can have no brotherhood save with evil, and acknowledged and confessed evil-doers have no place in a society which has for one of its chief objects the search for truth—"Truth that should be sought by purity of life and devotion to high ideals." While I trust that my "self-righteousness and contempt" are no greater than

the average, I should prefer to carry out my search for truth in the company of the ordinary man of the world rather than be forced into unnatural and unnecessary fellowship with those "whose standard of morality falls below the accepted standard," or (what seems to me a more dangerous position still) with "those who rise so much above it as to be unintelligible and therefore hated and suspected by the masses of average people."

That the Theosophical Society has no written or printed moral code binding on its members, would seem to me to prove not that it has no moral code but that its code in no way differs from that binding on all civilised society. Otherwise I cannot see how it shall answer the condemnation of ordinary men, who would have the right to describe it as a society which protects and encourages every form of licentiousness. Yet Annie Besant says: "I do not see that the Theosophical Society has any moral code binding on its members."

The assumption of great indifference and superiority to the judgments and laws of ordinary men by the Theosophical Society seems to me most hateful, so contrary does it appear to the spirit of true brotherliness. By what rule are we in entering the Theosophical Society lifted above the average man? By what right do we despise his judgments and what higher law makes us free of his laws? There is no question of persecution when the Society exercises its right to expel those who are confessedly immoral and thus proved unfit for that search for truth for which purity of life is necessary. It is not fair to state, as Annie Besant does, that in expelling from this nucleus one here and there whom we may manage to convict of some evil teaching or practice, we leave within it hundreds who are guilty of other evils. And when this unwarrantable implication is made in a public journal it is not only unfair but damaging to the Society. It is the very publicity of this article which has roused me to write this protest against what appears to me the wrong thinking, plausibility and false sentimentality contained in it—a protest I make with sorrow and distress that it should be necessary, for I am one of many who owe to the writer of the article deep gratitude and reverence for her clear showing of helpful truths, and what I have always believed her unquestionable devotion to high ideals. C. A. ECCLES.

Even a humble member may protest; and all of us who are in earnest about the sublime truths that we believe lie at the foundation of our Society must protest against the attitude assumed by Mrs. Besant in her article "The Basis of the Theosophical Society."

We may, or may not, individually, hold lofty conceptions with regard to Those we call Masters; but even the loftiest of the best of us must fall far short of the glorious reality. Can we, then, for a moment imagine that the effort under Their guidance to lead men toward a more perfect and complete realisation of the life Divine,—the effort that we know as the Theosophical Society,—should stoop to call black white? I for one cannot so believe.

LINA ROWAN HAMILTON.

I have read with much interest Mrs. Besant's remarkable article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" and trust you will afford me some little space to comment thereon. No doubt the uninitiated reader may wonder why Mrs. Besant should have taken such great pains to prove that the Theosophical Society has no right to interfere with the opinions or practices of its members in their private capacity, when, probably, every sane member of the Society is in agreement with such a view. So far as I know no member of the Society has been expelled for his or her moral shortcomings or superfluities in private life, nor has any responsible person or body attempted to establish in the Society a moral Inquisition for trying its delinquents.<sup>1</sup> If Mrs. Besant's article has any point at all, and I believe it has, it is aimed at the action of the Advisory Council in recommending the late President-Founder to accept the resignation of a prominent member of the Society. I readily admit that although the form was resignation the spirit was expulsion, but I think it will need few words to justify even that extreme action. The offences with which the member in question was charged were in no sense of the term matters that concerned his private life alone. It was definitely shown that he had used his position in the Society to effect his immoral purposes. Here we have the ground upon which the Society based its right of interference. Whilst no Society would have a right to interfere with a member who held opinions leading to immorality, any Society worth its name would promptly suppress a member who used its organisation for the propagation of such opinions—not to mention their practice. Does Mrs. Besant or anyone else suggest that membership of the Theosophical Society should be permitted to one who so misuses his position? I cannot believe it; I cannot

<sup>1</sup> It is true that a member was recently expelled in America on inadequate grounds, but as this expulsion was obviously wrong and has been or will be cancelled, there could be no need for public comment—besides in this case there was no moral breach either publicly or privately.



think that she can have given that careful consideration to the question that its gravity requires.

You cannot retain anyone as a member and at the same time refuse the privileges of membership, nor would it be possible or desirable to " blacklist " erring members, so that expulsion in serious cases is the obvious course to follow unless the Society is practically to aid and abet offenders. Is it not the duty of those who have knowledge to help the ignorant ; shall we close our eyes when outrage is being perpetrated ? What foolish sentiment is it that would prevent us turning out of doors a member of our family who deliberately and persistently used his position for doing irreparable wrong to weak and defenceless younger brethren ? If we expel a member we do not therefore hate him or wish him ill ; we simply take away, so far as we are able, his power to inflict further injury ; to retain him were to become his accomplice.

To my mind, then, there is no difficulty in coming to a decision as to when the Society is justified in taking action against one of its members ; that time comes the moment it can be shown that membership is being used for the purpose of aiding the commission of a criminal or immoral offence. I wait now Mrs. Besant's reply in the hope that she will speak with no uncertain voice on this most vital question.

W. H. THOMAS.

In the midst of the hurly-burly of discussion into which recent events at Adyar have thrown the Theosophical Society, I would like to put in a plea for calm and dispassionate consideration of all evidence that may be laid before the members of the Theosophical Society, and for a wise tolerance and patience in dealing with the exceptionally difficult and trying conditions which have arisen.

Is it too much to ask members of the Theosophical Society to be theosophical in their attitude and to refrain from embittering the controversy by electioneering methods which later reflection will condemn ? In particular I would venture to suggest that the article contributed by Mrs. Besant to the March number of this REVIEW should not be taken as a pronouncement of her final opinion on the painful case of resignation which was before us last year. I frankly admit that I cannot follow Mrs. Besant in the conclusions she draws in the article entitled " The Basis of the Theosophical Society," but it is only fair to recognise that although appearing unfortunately at a moment when recent pronouncements at Adyar have thickened the

mental atmosphere with astral fog, there is nothing to show that Mrs. Besant (who sent the article for publication before the last pronouncements were made) had more in her mind than the case of Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, whose hasty expulsion Colonel Olcott desired to annul before his death.

The Society has everything to gain and nothing to lose by patience and duly considered action, more especially if it is realised that the distances separating the various sections, make for misunderstanding to a degree that requires supernormal tranquillity to combat.

EDITH WARD.

(With regard to this article the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge sent the following telegram to Mrs. Besant and received from her the following reply.)

*Question* : "Would you as President permit X's [Mr. Leadbeater's] re-admission?"

*Answer* : "If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation, on large majority request of whole Society, would reinstate; otherwise not."

Since my article "A New Basis of the Theosophical Society" was in type I find that a telegram has been received and circulated, which seems to negative the conclusion I have drawn from Mrs. Besant's article. I hope I may be pardoned if I say that I cannot take it to be seriously meant. She has laid down to us that, in her view, opinions leading to murder, theft, or adultery should not be held a disqualification for membership. Certainly Mr. Leadbeater's transgression does not go so far as this; and I fail to see for what reason Mrs. Besant can demand a public retraction, a two years' probation, and a solemn vote of the whole Society, as if for a new President, for a fault which, according to her, should not have been punished by expulsion at all. I can only understand it as a rather ill-timed burlesque on us who differ from her.

A confirmation of this view is given by her requirement of a *public* retraction. In the now notorious "Conversation" the only fault found with the action of the authorities was that there had been "too much publicity." Now, considering how carefully, and with what marvellous success, publicity *has*, in fact, been avoided, this utterance seems to me to point rather to the usual imbecility of the common or garden "spook" than to a Master of Wisdom. But

Mrs. Besant has expressed her full belief in it as the opinion of the Masters ; and how, after that, she can speak of a public retraction, altogether passes my comprehension.

Until further explanation I must decline to give any weight to this mysterious telegram, and hold still to the opinions I have expressed in my article.

A. A. WELLS.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### MR. ORAGE'S REPLY TO HIS CRITICS

*To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW*

SIR,

A reply is certainly due from me to the numerous critics who have honoured me with their attentions. Yet in most cases a re-reading of my articles (if the labour could be recommended) would serve my purpose. Dr. Lomax is quite right in finding my word "acquired" badly chosen, but nevertheless he understood my meaning perfectly well. Could a better word have accomplished my object any better? Mr. Sedlák continues to wrap his pure thought about with a good many folds of pseudo-thinking; but until he takes the trouble (admittedly excessive) of understanding what I said, and of quoting me correctly, I must leave him in all his obscurity. Mr. Wedgwood's naïve and charming discrimination between beliefs and distortions of beliefs is only equalled by his realisation that "emptiness of conviction isn't much good when we come to the profounder experiences of life." I said myself that it was not much good. It is not. But are useful convictions necessarily true? That is the question which Mr. Wedgwood seems to have forgotten.

I am rather pleased that Dr. Wells spoiled the atmosphere of his article on the "Communion of Saints" by interpolating a passage recommending kicks and hard stones for my case. It was so human of him. I remember years ago boo-ing through the keyhole of a Methodist meeting in which a Revivalist was singing "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" And I remember the Revivalist bounding to the door and shouting: "Get away, you little fiend." Well, I seem to have boo-ed through Dr. Wells' keyhole. However, I must

protest against his misquotation of me. I never said, either in words or in effect, that "there is nothing true and that it don't matter." My view is that there is nothing true, and *therefore everything matters*. We become responsible just to the extent that truth becomes doubtful.

Yours faithfully,

A. R. ORAGE.

#### UNDULATORY THEORY OF LIGHT

*To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW*

DEAR SIR,

I am glad to find that I had misread Mr. Sedlák's remark about Koreshanism in your January issue, and to withdraw what I said about the concavity of the earth's surface, but as this had nothing to do with the main point of my letter I need say no more about it.

Perhaps, however, since Mr. Sedlák talks of pointing out the *rationale* of optical phenomena, I may be allowed a short space to make the bearing of the question I asked in your February number quite clear—for Mr. Sedlák appears to misapprehend my position. I was not arguing against ultimate metaphysical truths, as stated either by Hegel or anyone else; as a matter of fact Hegel's philosophy is a system which I have studied, though I do not regard it as having such a monopoly of correct thinking as Mr. Sedlák appears to suppose it to have. Other thinkers have obtained quite as profound insights into truth, though they may have made use of very different terminology in their attempts to make these insights intelligible to others. I do not then quarrel with Mr. Sedlák's statement that "the substratum of light is that of sight or the immaterial 'we'" by itself, but I fail to see that it is any argument against the empirical validity of the undulatory theory of light. Mr. Sedlák might as well have written "the substratum of *sound* is that of *hearing* or the immaterial 'we,'" yet this would not disprove the wave theory of sound which he himself admits (p. 448). We certainly do find that our perceptions in the physical world are accompanied by and dependent on physical facts such as sound waves, and there is nothing in any true system of logical and metaphysical thought to contradict this. I find, by the way, in the very book of lectures by Tyndall from which Mr. Sedlák quoted, the following: "The word 'light' may be used in two different senses; it may mean the impression made upon consciousness, or it may mean the physical agent which makes that impression" (Tyndall, *Light*, p. 128).

Well, the scientific wave theory of light is of course concerned solely with the physical causes operative in our seeing of physical objects, and we should surely avoid muddling up metaphysical truths in an inappropriate way with facts of empirical science. If I might state my question in as unambiguous a way as possible, it would be by first pointing out that the phenomena of diffraction dealt with in Mr. Sedlák's article, are clearly due to the way in which light is propagated; that is to say they are not a mental illusion, like for instance the apparently larger size of the sun or moon when near the horizon than when near the zenith; nor are they an illusion due to physiological causes, like for instance the red cross upon a green background which is seen if one looks for some time at a green cross on a red background and then looks at a white surface, and which is produced probably by the nature of the retina and the intimate association of the mind with the sense organs. It follows then that a photographic plate would be affected by these phenomena as well as a human observer. I therefore ask Mr. Sedlák: *Why, if a photographic plate were appropriately introduced into Tyndall's experiment, would it record a series of rectangles of light?* If he can answer this it would be very interesting to me, but at present he seems to have made out no case at all against the undulatory theory of light as a matter of empirical science.

Some of Mr. Sedlák's playful remarks, however, suggest that perhaps he was speaking more in jest than in earnest, for instance, when on p. 449 he speaks of the luminiferous ether as "a corollary of Mr. Hinton's tesseract." It is true that the phenomena of light are one of several whole classes of phenomena which have been brought forward by Hinton and others in support of the four-dimensional hypothesis, but I have never heard of the latter hypothesis being used to support the former. As a matter of fact, for what it is worth, the wave theory of sound, which Mr. Sedlák admits, supports the four-dimensional hypothesis just as much as the wave theory of light, which he denies; so this question is here unimportant.

W. L.

#### PROFESSOR HYSLOP'S PRECONCEPTIONS

*To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW*

SIR,

I think that Dr. Montagu Lomax, in his review of Professor Hyslop's *Borderland of Psychological Research* (THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW,

March, p. 43), does scant justice to the author's real position. Professor Hyslop, like several other learned investigators in the field of psychical research, is conscious of a sort of "double personality"; as an individual he believes certain things, as an exponent of science he can teach nothing that is not yet capable of being reduced to scientific statement.

Science has suffered in the past from being divided into sections, each having its own laws of evidence and its own methods of research. Mathematics, as applied to such diverse subjects as logic and the constitution of matter, has done much to unite these scattered branches; but religion and "metapsychics," being subjects which rest on personal belief and the evidence of individual experience, are at present outside the range of scientific analysis. It is Professor Hyslop's purpose to push forward the scientific method so as to include as much as possible of these subjective experiences within the four corners of the scientific framework. Science must deal with the phenomena of the universe as inter-related, and she cannot govern an outlying province until she has conquered the intervening territory.

The assertion objected to by Dr. Lomax, that "all new facts and theories must in some way find an assimilation with previous knowledge," and "have some point of contact with the old," is, unfortunately, a scientific truism, and is part of the constitution of the human mind. It is for this reason that it is so difficult, if not impossible, to convey a totally new idea, such as that of a fourth dimension; we can only figure it, even to ourselves, by a series of particular instances, each connected with previous experience, until, by the multiplicity of these, our conception rises almost to a generalisation. Dr. Lomax's example of the Copernican astronomy does not touch the point at issue; it only involved the reversal of the mathematical assumption that the earth was fixed and that the sun moved, and in all other respects was fully in contact with previous knowledge.

We may chide, or even ridicule, the cautious slowness with which science proceeds to assimilate notions and facts by successive contact, but there is this consolation: that facts or beliefs, thus assimilated, thenceforth become integral portions of the connected and synthesized sum-total of undoubted human knowledge. Meanwhile the more advanced thinkers and experimenters are going on ahead, piloting the huge ironclad of Modern Science, and finding safe waters wherein it can float in all the majesty of conquest.

Yours, etc., J. B. S.

## BAHAISM

*To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW*

DEAR SIR,

In the March number I notice a kind criticism of my recent article on Bahaism by Mr. Skeeles.

Mr. Skeeles asks why I have neglected to include in my narrative any mention of Subh-i-Ezel, the half-brother of Baha Ullah.

There was naturally a great deal of interest in connection with the Bahai Movement which I was obliged to omit in my two brief articles, and while an account of Subh-i-Ezel would be of historical interest, I look upon him as an unimportant figure, as a character of no interest to us in our study of Bahaism as it exists to-day.

Subh-i-Ezel did indeed play a certain *role* in the early history of Bábism, but he was never considered by the Bábis to be "He whom God shall manifest," the one foretold by the Báb.

When Baha Ullah announced that he was the one of whose coming the Báb had prophesied, Subh-i-Ezel resented his claim and tried to bring about a schism. For a time he was successful; but his influence, which was never very great, has been steadily on the wane, and to-day the number of Ezelí Bábis is so insignificant that one can hardly dignify their refusal to accept Bahaism as a schism.

It must be remembered that Bábism and Bahaism are not the same, that they differ essentially on many points; therefore a Bábí who does not wish to accept the broader and more advanced teachings of Baha Ullah can hardly be said to create a schism in Bahaism.

Bahaism has had several attempts made to destroy its unity, but it has emerged triumphant from all these trials, showing to cavilling critics that it can preserve within itself that unity which it teaches. Regarding certain charges brought against the Bahais by the Ezels, which Mr. Skeeles mentions, I can only reply: "Ye cannot gather figs of thistles."

When Professor E. G. Browne was investigating Bábism many years ago, he naturally collected all the information he could obtain of the movement both from Bahais and Ezels. Time, the great revealer, has shown, however, on which side truth lay.

One word more in regard to a saying of the present leader of the Bahais, Abbas Effendi, quoted from Myron H. Phelps's book. I think Mr. Skeeles will agree with me that it would indeed be strange for one of the founders of a religion to insist on people

remaining in their old creeds or churches. How could real unity be brought about in this way? It is necessary to study but a few of the writings of Baha Ullah to see that he brought a new revelation, a new religion to the world, and the only claim of Abbas Effendi is that he is the promulgator of his father's teachings.

Now what Abbas Effendi does say is this; that no one should leave his church except by his own free will, when he no longer feels the need of a church.

The true Bahai, however, belongs no more to one church or creed than another, and he regards the very names Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhist, etc., as barriers which separate men one from the other and prevent unity.

The special mission of Baha Ullah was to found a universal religion, broad and comprehensive enough to include all other faiths. Abbas Effendi, who signs himself Abdul Baha, the Servant of Baha, is continuing the work of his father.

I am, yours etc.,

SYDNEY SPRAGUE.

#### THE CHAINING OF FENRIR

"In the prose Edda there is an account of the trouble the gods had with the powers of evil, and of their efforts to chain them up and restrain them. The wolf Fenrir had been bred up among the gods, but he was always getting fiercer and stronger, and oracles announced that he would help in the overthrow of the divinities, were he not securely bound. So the gods devise one kind of fetter after another, of the strongest materials, wherewith to bind Fenrir, but all in vain. He bursts in pieces all the iron bands they can lay upon him and breaks them asunder. At length the White Elves come to the aid of the baffled gods, and forge a chain of strange materials. It is made of the roots of stones, of the breath of fishes, of the beards of women, of the spittle of birds, and of the noise of a cat's footfall—and that holds Fenrir fast. He strives in vain to burst its bonds, and lies securely held down till the end of all things.

"'But,' says the inquirer, or scholar, to Har, the High One, who tells this: 'There are no such things as all these; stones have no roots, nor is there any sound in a cat's tread.' 'How wise art thou,' says Har, 'to find that out. So thou canst know the rest to be as true as that!'

"And thus he laughs the question by. But if you consider it—



the chain which was made for Fenrir, and which restrains the evil one, was an invisible one, and herein was its power. The influences of law, custom, manners, education, example, society, religion, are all invisible, but in reality more powerful than brute force. This is the invisible chain which binds the evil powers down, and gives the world a sense of security. This is the truth underlying the parable of Fenrir and his chaining down."

DEAR SIR,

I was reminded of the above, by reading a paper in the Jan. REVIEW (not yours), and thought you might like it for the lesson it conveys for other readers. "How wise thou art!" etc. The book from which I have taken it is *Memoirs of Arthur Laurenson*, by C. O. Spence. He was a Lerwick man and Norse student.

Yours, etc.,

E. L. F.

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## THE MUNICH CONGRESS

THE advance programme of the forthcoming Fourth Congress of the Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society has been sent round to the various Branches. The Congress will open on Saturday, May 18th, and close on May 21st, and the meetings will be held in the Tonhalle at Munich. Saturday morning and afternoon, Sunday morning and Monday morning and afternoon, will be devoted to lectures and papers on both general and more definitely Theosophical subjects. On Saturday evening there will be a social meeting, at which music will be given. There will also be some music on Monday morning. One interesting feature of the Congress, fixed for Sunday afternoon, will be the performance of a mystery-play. Tuesday morning will be occupied with free discussion of matters Theosophical, and on the afternoon of the same day it is proposed that there shall be meetings of small groups of members interested in subjects of specialised or technical character, such, for instance, as scientific work. And on Tuesday evening another social meeting will take place, to be concluded by the official closing of the Congress. The work of the Congress will be divided

into the usual departments, though arrangements have been made that no two lectures shall take place simultaneously.

It is hoped that members will do their best to promote the success of the Congress by contributing papers, and by attending the meetings. Only members of the Theosophical Society are eligible for admission to the membership of the Congress, tickets being priced at 5 marks (= 5s.).

At a meeting of the British Congress Committee, held on March 16th, Miss Ethel M. Mallet was elected "Travelling Secretary," and co-opted to the Committee. Members, therefore, desiring information as to travelling facilities, accommodation, etc., should address their enquiries to Miss Mallet, at 28, Albemarle Street, W.—not omitting to enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

JAMES I. WEDGWOOD,  
*Hon. Secretary, British Congress Committee.*

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

The New Mysticism, Six Lectures given in Kensington and at Cobham, Surrey, November, 1906, by Adela Curtis.  
(Kensington: Curtis & Davison, 4, High Street.)

THIS book is a characteristic specimen of the produce of the second-rate American mind—so ignorant of the past and of the present also outside of the States, so crude in its conceptions, and yet so clever and "sharp" (it is an undignified word, but it just hits off what I mean) in its expression of what it supposes [its new views. A few lines from the introductory Lecture will show at once the mingled cleverness and crudity of which I speak. "The shrewd, sceptical, popular mind of America, independent of authority, unhampered by tradition, impatient of sentiment, and utilitarian to the point of measuring ideas by the dollar, has achieved the greatest of all the triumphs of Protestantism. Luther's original protest against the Church of Rome and the great Reformation which followed, are child's play compared with the gage flung down to the world by this New

Thought of America!" Surely one hears Emerson's Nature—"So hot, my little friend?"

Yet for all this, if one can for the time put oneself into the author's position, and forget everything which the thousands of years have taught the long chain of true Mystics, the book is worth reading. There is much which is true and *not* new, well and usefully expressed; and when anyone has studied and practised what is here given, he will not be badly prepared to start upon the study of the real Mysticism, which begins where our writer leaves off; provided always that he can shake off the idea that "these rough and ready Americans have discovered a higher order of consciousness than the great heritage of thought and feeling" which the true Mystic has received not only from his Christian forefathers, but from Rishis of millenniums before Jesus taught. Till he can do this, he is hopelessly outside the Sanctuary.

A. A. W.

#### A THEOLOGICAL DODO

God, Man, and the Garden; Puzzles, Problems, and Parables solved by the Word of God. By R. W. Beachey. (London · Elliot Stock; 1907.)

THE most marked feature of this book is that in recounting the great mystical allegories of Scripture it describes them in their literal terms and seems to know them in no other light. The creation of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, the creation of man out of dust, and of woman out of Adam's rib, the Garden of Eden, the speaking serpent, the visions of the Apocalypse—are made to read as if they were extracts from the accident columns of a daily newspaper. It is a belated curiosity that this way of looking at sacred matters should be still surviving, and that the author should have no conception that he is speaking somewhat irreverently of deep things. For the book is written in all seriousness, and actually shows in many places a religious spirit. It is very curious. Open the book anywhere. Take the Chapter on the Garden (p. 127):

Now we can see why the Lord gave the man the garden first. He might have built him a house, or provided him with a suitable garment, or given him a wife; but he does neither of them. He plants a garden and puts him in it. For he could not live without the produce of the ground, but he could do without the rest. But why a garden? Had not the ground everywhere brought forth herbs, trees, and grass? Yes, but the world was

a wide world, and the man had only two legs and no wings nor had he the means of transport and locomotion that we have now. Now a garden is an enclosed piece of land where all that is best and most useful and beautiful is collected together in a small space. So man was placed where he had everything close at hand. The Lord had selected the garden stock—He planted it Himself. And we may infer that the uses of everything were explained to Adam by the great Head Gardener Himself.

**The making of the woman :**

The man had to suffer loss, but his loss proved a gain. His rib was taken from him, but he got it back with interest. A wounded side and bleeding flesh are not pleasant to look at; but the beautiful woman who was builded up on such a repulsive foundation was a thing of joy.

**Temptation by the Devil (p. 213) :**

The Devil did not ask to see Adam. He took them one at a time and began with the weaker vessel. He is not easily seen through at first but one evidence of his being the Devil is that he always disagrees with the Word of God. If the woman had called her husband and consulted him on the subject there would probably have been no fall. . . . Adam appears to have come up at the end of the woman's conversation with the Devil. But it was too late, the mischief was done. When the Devil wants a special pleader he always instructs a woman. She had got the full use of her tongue in the Devil's company and now practises on her husband. He, poor man! had not a word to say. He showed that he had got entirely under what is known as petticoat government, and as a result we very soon find the petticoats made. Neither the government nor the petticoats were a success, for they upset God's order. She was the first woman who preached the doctrine of woman's rights, and the issue was man's wrongs.

It is said that the dodo is an extinct bird. Perhaps he is; but the theological dodo most certainly is not.

C. G. C.

**SERMONS NOT SERMONISING**

Sanctification by the Truth. Sermons by Archdeacon Wilberforce, D.D. (London: Elliot Stock; 1906. Price 5s.)

THE title of this volume of Sermons appeals to us whose motto is "There is no Religion higher than Truth." The twenty-five addresses of which it is composed deal with divers subjects, nevertheless in each one we realise that the writer is accustomed to explore in the higher regions of truth, and to apply the knowledge thus obtained to commonplace subjects, making the dry bones live. Those who are interested in seeing how the advanced thought of the day is permeat-

ing the Church cannot do better than read these vigorous and spiritual expositions. If we might say that there is one dominant idea influencing the whole of this diversity, it could not be expressed more certainly than in this sentence culled from the tenth address: "The Divine Spark in man is the unshakable foundation of the eternal hope for the race."

J. N. D.

#### HEREDITARY DREAMS

Counsels of the Night. By Lucas Cleeve. (London: T. Fisher Unwin; 1906. Price 6s.)

LUCAS CLEEVE'S latest story is pivoted on an original—and painful—idea. A man takes part in, practically causes, a tragedy. His son, on his wedding night, dreams vividly of the father's act. The dream impresses itself upon the mind of the unborn child. Through their lives father and son are haunted by this recurrent dream, which repeats in detail the terrible scene in which the grandfather was concerned. For the way in which the victims act out their visions, and the suspicions thereby caused, we must refer readers to the book. The mystery is very well sustained, and the story contains nothing quite improbable.

If the style were as good as the subject the book could be unreservedly praised. But Lucas Cleeve's notions of English are imperfect; and such things as "diffused" for "suffused" (a "diffused eye" is a horrid picture), "infer" for "imply," and sentences twenty-one lines long, seriously detract from the reader's pleasure in an interesting tale.

A. L.

#### REPETITA CRAMBE

Tekel, or The Wonderland of the Bible. By J. Horton. (London: Philip Wellby; 1906. Price 6s. net.)

"TEKEL—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting," means in this instance that the Bible, the English Bible, has been studied by the author with the most passionate eagerness (see]Preface) for ten years with no satisfactory result. The Christian Scriptures, the standard of our life and conduct, are wanting in truth; Mr. Horton is quite sure of it. Those miraculous stories could not have taken place possibly, and the narratives are again and again inconsistent with one another. If they were published in *The Times*,

nobody would believe a word of them, and *The Times'* standard is that of all sensible people. The Bible is full of myths, and myths of course are fables, which a sensible man, when searching for the truth, will naturally put out of court at once. *Tekel* is a well-printed compendium of Mr. Horton's own discoveries in this line.

There is something pathetic in a man's giving ten years of his life to work of this sort, to the measuring with a foot rule a collection of Oriental books, such as the Bible is, in order to put down to the profit and loss account its material contradictions and inconsistencies. Why, the book is a network of them, like every other mystical book ! As for history, no Oriental that ever lived possessed a historical sense ; to him facts are nothing, spiritual edification is everything. And after all, in the eyes of the wise man, facts *are* nothing, and spiritual edification *is* everything. Of course we cannot expect the author of *Tekel* to understand this. The only scales he knows are material scales ; the only tests are pounds and ounces. The day will come, however, when he will find out—and no one can teach it him—that the concerns of the soul are measurable by other standards altogether.

C. G. C.

#### MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

*Theosophist*, February, opens with a well-timed reprint of the Inaugural Address delivered by Col. Olcott at the first regular meeting of the Society, November 17th, 1875. Then follow Mrs. Besant's article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" which has already appeared in our own columns, the continuation of v. Ginkel's "The Great Pyramid," Dr. Chattopādhyāya's "Zoroasterism," Rama Prasad's "Self Culture," "Buddhist Rules for the Laity," and "Bālabodhint." P. E. Bernard's Paris lecture on "The Soul of India," and a few shorter contributions complete the number.

*Theosophy in India*, February. From M. J.'s "Moksha," which opens this number, we take the conclusion. "True Moksha is not the paralysis but the intensification of life. The repudiation of the bodies is accompanied by an increase of life, not a lessening of it. The personality may be lost, but all that was of value in it has passed into the centre. The individuality may be lost, but the sense of life is all the stronger for the falling away of the limits. Moksha is an ever-increasing consciousness and self-realisation. So we come to realise what was said by the Buddha : ' Because Nirvāṇa is, the passing

worlds exist ; and because the Uncreated is, the created manifests.' Out of that Fullness all the worlds come, and their vanishing does not affect the Reality that is ever-existent." There are notes of a lecture on Astrology, by Prof. Unwalla, and "Studies in the Pedigree of Man," "The Trials of Sukra," and the "Examination of the Dasopanishats" are continued. Appended to the number is the Report of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Indian Section, with a very interesting report of the manifold activities of the Section, which appears to be in a very flourishing condition as regards numbers and (by the Indian standard) as to its financial affairs. We heartily congratulate our Indian brethren.

*Central Hindu College Magazine*, February. The "Crow's Nest" is mainly occupied with the Colonel's illness and matters relating thereto. Mrs. Besant's lecture to the College Boarders on "How to raise the Tone of a School" is of importance to all who have to do with education in East or West ; and the remarks of the "Hindu Catechism" on the cherishing of wrong ideals are as necessary and as outspoken as much in this valuable Catechism which has gone before.

*Theosophy and New Thought*, February. An interesting number whose editorial notes are mainly occupied with the question now pressing upon the Society as to the successor of our late beloved President-Founder.

*The Vâhan*, March. This number opens with the announcement of Colonel Olcott's death, and brief notices from the Vice-President and Mr. Mead ; together with the official documents as to the election of his successor. The questions treated are as to the nature of Prâṇa and the existence of systems of vibrations imperceptible to ordinary senses.

*Lotus Journal*, March. The most important paper in this number is a very thoughtful and valuable study of "The First Object of the Theosophical Society," by E. M. Mallet. Mr. Whyte's life of Mme. Blavatsky is continued ; Mr. Worsdell gives a fresh instalment of his botanical teaching in "The Origin of Flowers" ; and Miss G. L. Mallet's pleasant account of Florence, illustrated with a good engraving of the Cathedral, must not be passed without notice.

*Bulletin Théosophique*, March, in addition to business matters, gives an answer to a question as to the reason of the very different stages of progress to which the monads have attained, and a continuation of the "Culture of the Heart."

*Revue Théosophique*, February, gives a considerable portion of its

space to an original study of the "Problem of Suffering" by G. Chevrier, which would well repay translation into English. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater supply, as usual, the remaining contents.

Also received with thanks: *Theosophische Bewegung*; *Theosophia*, February, containing in addition to "Old Diary Leaves," the conclusion of J. L. M. Lauweriks' "The Use and Object of Art," and a translation of "Hints for the Theosophical Education of Children," by F. Annerley; *Sophia*, February, with Mr. Mead's article on "Heresy," "El Regalo de los Dioses," by Raphael Urbano, and a portion of Garcilaso de la Vega's translation of the interesting "Dialogues of Love," by Rafael Hebreo, one of the most popular writings of the sixteenth century; *Teosofisk Tidsskrift*; *Omatunto*, to which the Editor's own contributions are "The Most Important Social Work," and "Evidences of Reincarnation"; *Theosophy in Australasia*, January; *New Zealand Theosophical Magazine*, February, with an interesting account of the Durga Pûja Festival, by Mrs. Judson, and a serious paper by W. A. Mayers on "The Sources of Authority in the Christian Church"; *Theosophisch Maandblad*; *La Verdad*, in which "Lob Nor" sets forth an uncomfortable prophecy that a great cataclysm will engulf the greater part of South America in about eight years' time; and No. 5 of Mr. Bhandarkar's *Theosophical Thoughts*.

Of periodicals not our own, we have to acknowledge: *Broad Views*, March, with a very interesting and (to us) quite a novel account of the Indian immigrants in the West India Islands, by N. M. Cooper. Mr. Sinnett's own contribution is a further portion of the "Former Lives of Living People" which must be of great interest, even to his readers who are not Theosophists. Loyalty and Filial Piety are discussed in two interesting articles from quite a new point of view, though we are rather inclined to think that Miss Kilroy somewhat overestimates the actual extent to which filial piety survives in modern society, and the practical need of her reform. *Modern Astrology*, March, in addition to Mrs. Leo's always interesting contributions, has a paper by Heinrich Däath, entitled "The Authority of the Stars," which is quite intelligible to us uninitiated; *Indian Review*, January; *The Dawn*; *Siddhanta Deepika*; *Notes and Queries*; *The Rosicrucian Brotherhood*; *New International Review*; *Humanitarian*; *Health Record*; *Herald of the Cross*.

W.