

Blavatsky on Anna Kingsford



Obituary

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We have this month to record with the deepest regret the passing away from this physical world of one who, more than any other, has been instrumental in demonstrating to her fellow-creatures the great fact of the conscious existence — hence of the immortality — of the inner Ego.

We speak of the death of Mrs. Anna Kingsford, M.D., which occurred on Tuesday, the 28th of February, after a somewhat painful and prolonged illness. Few women have worked harder than she has, or in more noble causes; none with more success in the cause of humanitarianism. Hers was a short but a most useful life. Her intellectual fight with the vivisectionists of Europe, at a time when the educated and scientific world was more strongly fixed in the grasp of materialism than at any other period in the history of civilisation, alone proclaims her as one of those who, regardless of conventional thought, have placed themselves at the very focus of the controversy, prepared to dare and brave all the consequences of their temerity. Pity and Justice to animals were among Mrs. Kingsford's favourite texts when dealing with this part of her life's work; and by reason of her general culture, her special training in the science of medicine, and her magnificent intellectual power, she was enabled to influence and work in the way she desired upon a very large proportion of those people who listened to her words or who read her writings. Few women wrote more graphically, more takingly, or possessed a more fascinating style.

Mrs. Kingsford's field of activity, however, was not limited to the purely physical, mundane plane of life. She was a Theosophist and a true one at heart; a leader of spiritual and philosophical thought, gifted with most exceptional psychic attributes. In connection with Mr. Edward Maitland, her truest friend — one whose incessant, watchful care has undeniably prolonged her delicate ever-threatened life for several years, and who received her last breath — she wrote several books dealing with metaphysical and mystical subjects. The first and most important was *The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ*, which gives the esoteric meaning of Christianity. It sweeps away many of the difficulties that thoughtful readers of the Bible must contend with in their endeavours to either understand or accept literally the story of Jesus Christ as it is presented in the Gospels.

She was for some time President of the "London Lodge" of the Theosophical Society, and, after resigning that office, she founded "The Hermetic Society" for the special study of Christian mysticism. She herself, though her religious ideas differed widely on some points from Eastern philosophy, remained a faithful member of the Theo-

sophical Society and a loyal friend to its leaders.¹ She was one, the aspirations of whose whole life were ever turned toward the eternal and the true. A mystic by nature — the most ardent one to those who knew her well — she was still a very remarkable woman even in the opinion of the materialists and the unbelievers. For, besides her remarkably fine and intellectual face, there was that in her which arrested the attention of the most unobserving and foreign to any metaphysical speculation. For, as Mrs. F. Fenwick Miller writes, though Mrs. Kingsford's mysticism was "simply unintelligible" to her, yet we find that this does not prevent the writer from perceiving the truth. As she describes her late friend,

I have never known a woman so exquisitely beautiful as she who cultivated her brain so assiduously. . . . I have never known a woman in whom the dual nature that is more or less perceptible in every human creature was so strongly marked² — so sensuous, so feminine on the one hand, so *spirituelle*, so imaginative on the other hand.³

The spiritual and psychic nature had always the upper hand over the sensuous and feminine; and the circle of her mystically-inclined friends will miss her greatly, for such women as she are not numerous in the same century. The world in general has lost in Mrs. Kingsford one who can be very ill-spared in this era of materialism. The whole of her adult life was passed in working unselfishly for others, for the elevation of the spiritual side of humanity. We can, however, in regretting her death take comfort in the thought that good work cannot be lost nor die, though the worker is no longer among us to watch for the fruit. And Anna Kingsford's work will be still bearing fruit even when her memory has been obliterated with the generations of those who knew her well, and new generations will have approached the psychic mysteries still nearer.



¹ Both Mr. Maitland and Mrs. Kingsford had resigned from the "London Lodge of the Theosophical Society," but not from the Parent Society.

² The statement made by some papers that Mrs. Kingsford did not find her resting place in psychic force, for "she died a Roman Catholic," is utterly false. The boasts made by the R.C. *Weekly Register* (March 3rd and March 10th, 1888) to the effect that she died in the bosom of the Church, having abjured her views, psychism, theosophy, and even her *Perfect Way*, and writings in general, have been vigorously refuted in the same paper by her husband, Rev. A. Kingsford, and Mr. Maitland. We are sorry to hear that her last days were embittered by the mental agony inflicted upon her by an unscrupulous nun, who, as Mr. Maitland declared to us, was smuggled in *as a nurse* — and who did nothing but bother her patient, "importune her, and pray." That Mrs. Kingsford was entirely against the *theology* of the Church of Rome, though believing in Catholic doctrines, may be proved by one of her last letters to us, on "poor slandered St. Satan," in connection with certain attacks on the name of our Journal, *Lucifer*. We have preserved this and several other letters, as they were all written between September 1887 and January 1888. They thus remain eloquent witnesses against the pretensions of the *Weekly Register*. For they prove that Mrs. Kingsford had not abjured her views, nor that she died "in fidelity to the Catholic Church."

³ ["Woman: Her Position and Her Prospects, Her Duties and Her Doings," *Lady's Pictorial*, London, March 3rd, 1888. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]