

Subba Row defends Esoteric Buddhism



T. Subba Row's observations on "A letter addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge."

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (INQUIRIES OF AN ENGLISH F.T.S.) V pp. 134-38.¹
Illustrations by Zaw Zaw Aung.

Introductory remarks on the historical background by Boris de Zirkoff

With regard to the Reply to Question No. VI — "Historical Difficulty — Why?"² some light is thrown on its authorship by the following passage from a letter written by H.P. Blavatsky from Adyar to A.P. Sinnett, presumably in January 1884:

. . . she [Dr. A. Kingsford] can hardly be an infallible Seer, or else Maitland would not have attributed to "Mad. Blavatsky" a sentence written by the Tiravellum Mahatma in Reply No. 2 of October, page 3, I have his MSS. I must be deuced clever to have written the "Replies" in *The Theosophist*. I do not understand ten lines in that occult and scientific gibberish.³

This has reference to a document entitled *A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of The Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge*, which Dr. Anna Kingsford and her collaborator Edward Maitland issued in December 1883, and which embodied a severe criticism of the teachings contained in A.P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*. The passage in the October's *Theosophist* referred to by H.P. Blavatsky in her letter to A.P. Sinnett is the following one:

It may be argued that to refer to the remote ancestors and their descendants equally as "Greeks and Romans," is an anachronism as marked as would be the calling of the ancient Keltic Gauls or the Insubres⁴ — Frenchmen. As a matter of fact this is true. But, besides the very plausible excuse that the names used were embodied in a private letter, written as usual in great haste, and which was hardly worthy of the honour of being quoted *verbatim* with all its imperfections, there may perhaps exist still weightier objections to calling the said people by any other names.

¹ This important series of questions and replies pertaining thereto contains some of the most profound teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy given out in the early days of the modern Theosophical Movement "An English F.T.S." who signs the opening letter, stands for Frederick W.H. Myers, co-founder of the Society for Psychic Research. The authoritative replies originated from several distinct sources. Both from the standpoint of their consecutive arrangement, and the nature of their contents, these replies constitute a whole, and it has been thought advisable therefore to publish them in full [*ibid.*, pp. 129-38]. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.

² [Full text of this Reply can be found under the title "Antiquity of the Atlanto-Aryan tribes in Europe," in our Atlantean Realities Series.]

³ *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 63

⁴ [The Insubres or Insubri were a Gaulish population settled in Insubria, in what is now Lombardy.]

The “private letter” spoken of above is the very long one which A.P. Sinnett received at Simla from Master K.H., in October 1882.¹ Passages from it were used by A.P. Sinnett in the Fourth Chapter of his *Esoteric Buddhism*.²

In the early part of 1884, T. Subba Row issued in pamphlet form a reply to Dr. Anna Kingsford and E. Maitland, under the title of *Observations on “A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of The Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge.”* He sent it to H.P. Blavatsky with a covering letter, requesting her to forward it to the London Lodge. She did so on January 27th, 1884.³

In this pamphlet, T. Subba Row writes as follows:

To crown the list of voluntary and involuntary mistakes and misconceptions, we must mention his [Maitland’s] ascription to Madame Blavatsky of certain statements that, considering her relation to the holy personage to whom they refer, could never have been, nor were they made by her. The internal evidence, in the absence of any signature to the article,⁴ in which the sentence occurs,⁵ is strong enough to warn off all careful readers from the unwarranted assumption which Mr. Maitland has made. But it is certainly curious that the gentleman should have never missed a single chance of falling into blunder! The “Replies” — as everyone in our Society is aware of — were written by three “adepts” as Mr. Maitland calls them — none of whom is known to the London Lodge, with the exception of one — to Mr. Sinnett. The sentence quoted and fathered upon Madame Blavatsky is found in the MSS. sent by a Mahatma who resides in Southern India, and who had alone the right to speak, as he did, of another Mahatma. But even his words are not correctly stated, as shown in the footnote.

At this point, Blavatsky appends the following footnote to Subba Row’s text:

I here deny most emphatically of having ever caused to be printed — let alone to have myself written it — the sentence as it now stands quoted by Mr. Maitland in his “Remarks.” *The Theosophist* of October is, I believe, available in England and the two sentences may be easily compared. When the writer of Reply No. 2, referring to “Greeks and Romans,” jocularly remarked that their ancestors might have been mentioned by some other name, and added that

“ . . . besides the very plausible excuse that the names used were embodied in a private letter, written [as many unimportant letters are] . . . in great haste, and which [this particular letter] was hardly worthy of the honour of being quoted *verbatim* with all its imperfections . . . ”

¹ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, Letter XXIII-b, pp. 145-74; the reference to “Greeks and Romans” is on page 153.

² p. 62, original ed.

³ See *Esoteric Writings of T. Subba Row*, compiled by Tookaram Tatya, 2nd ed., Theosophical Publishing House: Adyar, 1931, pp. 391-447.

⁴ “Replies to an English F.T.S.”

⁵ See *The Theosophist*, October 1883, p. 3.

— he certainly never meant his remark to yield any such charge as is implied in Mr. Maitland’s incorrect quotation. Let any one of the London Lodge compare and decide whether the said sentence can lead any person to doubt “the accuracy of the adept Brothers,” or infer “that they are frequently given to write in great haste things which are hardly worthy of the honour of being quoted, *etc.*” And since the word “frequently” does not occur in the alleged quotation, and alters a good deal the spirit of the remark, I can only express my regret that, under the present serious circumstances, Mr. Maitland should have become himself (inadvertently, no doubt) guilty of such an *inaccuracy*. — *H.P. Blavatsky*

Questions VII and VIII are ostensibly answered by T. Subba Row, but their higher source is hinted at in the following two passages. The first is from a letter written by H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett, dated Adyar, November 17th, 1883, wherein she says:

. . . What do you mean by saying that “their Lordships” write too much for your London Society. It is my Boss and two others you do not know. It is *against* science, not for your members that they write. And I always said it was useless and time lost for no one will believe and very few will understand, I *don’t*. What do you mean by abusing Subba Row? Why read his last against Cunningham — the old man wrote to him and has made him hundred questions *for the sake of science and archaeology* — which Subba Row says *he will not answer*. Amen.¹

The second is from a letter of Master K.H. to A.P. Sinnett, written approximately in November–December, 1883, wherein he says:

. . . You are wrong in distrusting Subba Row’s writings. He does not write *willingly*, to be sure, but he will never make a false statement. See his last in the November number. His statement concerning the errors of General Cunningham ought to be regarded as a whole revelation leading to a revolution in Indian archaeology. Ten to one — it will never receive the attention it deserves. Why? Simply because his statements contain sober *facts*, and that what you Europeans prefer generally is *fiction* so long the latter dovetails with, and answers preconceived theories.²

Then there is the following passage written by Master K.H. in a letter to A.P. Sinnett, received in London, October 8th, 1883. It includes a rather definite statement as to the authorship of the Replies. It is as follows:

. . . Be more careful as to what you say upon forbidden topics. The “eighth sphere” mystery is a very confidential subject, and you are far from understanding even its general aspect. You were repeatedly warned and should not have mentioned it. You have unintentionally brought ridicule upon a solemn matter. I have nought to do with the *Replies* to Mr. Myers, but, you may recognize in them, perhaps, the brusque influence of M.³

¹ *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 68

² *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 429

³ *ibid.*, p. 396

The following remarks by H.P. Blavatsky clarify the situation still further. They are contained in an Editorial comment on some excerpts from a letter of G.L. Ditson, F.T.S., who had been a friend of hers for a number of years. The passage is to be found in the *Journal of The Theosophical Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, February 1884, p. 28. It runs as follows:

. . . why should our old and trusted American friend address us as though *we* were the author of the “Replies to an English F.T.S.”? It was explained, we believe, and made very clear that the letter of the English F.T.S. being addressed to the Mahatmas, it was not our province to answer the scientific queries contained in it, even if we had the ability to do so, something we never laid a claim to. In point of fact, however, there is not one word in the “Replies” that we could call our own. We have preserved packs of MSS. in the handwriting of our Masters and their Chelas; and if we got them sometimes copied in the office, it was simply to avoid desecration at the hands of the printer’s devil. . . .

Further, there is the following passage which occurs in a letter written by Col. H.S. Olcott to Miss Francesca Arundale, dated Adyar, February 9th, 1885. Speaking of a certain Hindu Yogi who came to see him, he says:

He had been sent by the Mahatma at Tirivellum [the one who dictated to H.P. Blavatsky the “Replies to an English F.T.S.”] to assure me that I should *not* be left alone.¹

Finally, there is H.P. Blavatsky’s despairing remark which occurs in a postscript to her letter addressed to A.P. Sinnett, dated Adyar, November 26, 1883. She says:

. . . What does Mr. Myers say to the *Replies*? *Disgusted* I suppose? I thought as much. Well that’s all the Adepts will get for their trouble. Adieu!²

It should also be borne in mind that both H.P. Blavatsky and T. Subba Row had the same Teacher, and both were actually amanuenses for that Teacher’s mind, and, upon occasion, for other adepts as well. We have therefore in the present series a case very closely similar to that of *The Secret Doctrine* itself, a great many portions of which were dictated to Blavatsky by Master M., Master K.H., and other adepts. As a matter of fact, certain portions of these replies were actually incorporated by H.P. Blavatsky into the MSS. of *The Secret Doctrine*. Careful study of this series will reveal a remarkable uniformity of style throughout. Even in those portions which are definitely signed by T. Subba Row, there occur passages and expressions strongly reminding one of H.P. Blavatsky’s style. The only distinguishing marks of the various portions of the replies are the little verbal twists and mental colourings that clung to the Master’s original thought as it passed through one or the other of his two amanuenses. The authorship of *The Secret Doctrine* and of the present series being largely similar in nature and transmission, the material under consideration is published *in toto*, for the benefit of the serious student.

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

¹ See *The Theosophist*, Vol. LIII, September 1932, p. 733.

² *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 73

Tallapragada Subba Row defends “Esoteric Buddhism”

There now follows the full text of T. Subba-Row’s observations on *A letter addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge*. This edition was excerpted from T. Subba Row’s *Esoteric Writings*. (1st ed. 1895); Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931 (2nd ed.); § V.2 (THE MASTERS AND THE T.S.), pp. 393-447, and was typographically enhanced. — ED. PHIL.

Pamphlet printed at Madras, India, by the Scottish Press of Graves, Cookson and Co., January 1884; 45pp.

Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford, then President of the London Lodge, T.S., and her collaborator Edward Maitland, issued early in December 1883, a Circular entitled *A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of The Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge*, which embodied a severe criticism of the teachings contained in A.P. Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism*.

At the end of January 1884, T. Subba Row in collaboration with “another still greater scholar,”¹ issued in pamphlet form a Reply to this Circular Letter entitled *Observations on “A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge.”* He sent it to H.P. Blavatsky with a covering letter, requesting her to forward it to the London Lodge. She did so on January 27th, 1884. Full text of the *Observations* may be found in the *Esoteric Writings of T. Subba Row* compiled by Tookaram Tatyā, 2nd revised and enlarged edition, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1931, pp. 391-447.²

H.P. Blavatsky has appended four footnotes to T. Subba Row’s text. They appear below together with those portions of the text to which they immediately refer.

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF³

THERE IS NOTHING SAID IN THE RULES of the Theosophical Society which is likely to induce one into the belief that the Society, as such, has any particular religions doctrines, or owes exclusive allegiance to any definite school or system of philosophy, or to any fraternity of religious teachers. On the other hand, the Rules clearly indicate that the Society is at full liberty to investigate any philosophical system, ancient or modern, with a view to ascertain the broad fundamental principles which form the basis of every school of religions philosophy, properly so called, and thereby “promote the principle of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race or creed.” It is, no doubt, expected that, after carefully inquiring into the doctrines of every such existing system, the Society will be able to “reconstruct religion on a scientific, and science on a religions, basis, and elaborate a perfect system of thought and rule of life”; just as a body of jurists may construct a perfectly scientific system of jurisprudence after investigating and comparing the various codes of law which are in force in all the civilized countries of this world. Before this grand object can be accomplished, every member is expected to study, to the

¹ *Mahatma Letters*, p. 409

² [A PDF of the 1910 reprint of the original edition can be found in the same series.]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES APPENDED TO T. SUBBA ROW’S REPLY TO THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF DR. ANNA B. KINGSFORD AND EDWARD MAITLAND TO THE LONDON LODGE) VI pp. 131-32

best of his abilities, *any* system of religious philosophy which he may select, and place the result of his investigations before his fellow-members for comparison and discussion. But no member is allowed, by the Rules of the Association, to force his own individual opinions or beliefs on his fellow-members, or insist on their being accepted by them. The Society does not constitute a body of religious teachers, but is simply an association of investigators and inquirers.

These are the principles that are definitely laid down for the guidance of the Theosophical Society, with the approval and approbation of the great Himālayan Initiates, who are its real founders. Now as our Mahātmas have not offered themselves as the sole instructors of the members who join our Body, nor have they claimed “to monopolise for themselves their exclusive allegiance,” therefore, no intention can be said to exist on their part to swerve from the above principles, or to interfere, in any way, with the work of any branch, so long as it acts within its prescribed limits. A doctrine, or fragments of a doctrine, although professedly emanating from the Mahātmas, has to rest on its own merits, and no other considerations are ever urged in its favour. Under such circumstances, there cannot be any valid reason for supposing that the system set forth in Mr. Sinnett’s book¹ “was intended by its compilers to supplant every other, and monopolise for themselves the exclusive allegiance of the Theosophical Society.” It thus seems hardly necessary for Mr. E. Maitland to complain that the “choice of instructors” involved no exercise of judgment or that he was compelled to accept any one as an instructor, as nobody has yet, so far as we know, offered himself in this capacity. If Mr. Sinnett has *positively prohibited* any expression of dissent from, or criticism of, his book, or “of its supreme authority,” as is alleged in the letter under examination, he is, no doubt, acting against the Rules of the Society; and it is fully competent for the London Lodge to prevent him from doing so, without any necessity for an appeal to the Headquarters. But if Mr. Sinnett has merely refused to accept the view taken of the doctrines, embodied in his book, by Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland, and has urged in their favour such reasons as he has thought proper, his position is unimpeachable. Mr. Sinnett has as much right to explain his *Esoteric Buddhism* to the members of the London Lodge as Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland have to explain their esoteric significance of Christian symbolism. The latter are no more entitled to interpret Mr. Sinnett’s book in their own way, and claim the sanction of the headquarters, or of the Mahātmas, for so doing, than the former is, to put his own construction on the *Perfect Way* and appeal to an authority from the same source to be regarded as the apostle alike of Eastern and of Western Theosophy. Nevertheless, Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland hold that the doctrines contained in Mr. Sinnett’s book are atheistic, illogical, unscientific, incongruous and non-Buddhistic, if accepted as literally true; and they are under the impression that those doctrines are presented in an allegorical or figurative garb, with the intention of testing the powers of discernment of the Western Theosophists, between truth and falsehood. They feel indignant, moreover, that Mr. Sinnett has been pertinaciously insisting on the correctness of his own interpretation, when that interpretation is such as to bring discredit upon the Himālayan Brotherhood, and their philosophy. This is the gist of their complaint and “the head and front” of Mr. Sin-

¹ [*Esoteric Buddhism*]

nett's offending. The gifted President of the London Lodge may, no doubt, imagine that she has discovered "the true solution of the Sphynx's riddle." The Sphynx in question, however, not being a Christian but a Hindu-Buddhistic Sphynx, may not be altogether prepared to commit suicide, in the manner indicated by the talented "writers of the *Perfect Way*." Rejecting four out of the five distinct hypotheses, proposed by Mr. Maitland, we may admit, with certain limitations, hypothesis the 3rd;¹ namely, "that the system, as presented, is but a portion (or rather several portions picked out at random) of a system which, as a whole, is perfect; and that, when received, it will prove complete and harmonious."

The Egyptian Sphynx propounded riddles, and Œdipus solved them; while now the Buddhist Sphynx speaks the sober language of fact and the Œdipus of the 19th century is grievously misled: perhaps, because "truth is stranger than fiction." Mr. Sinnett's book has, indeed, served the purposes of "a test," but in a direction quite unexpected.

I may be now permitted to examine, in detail, the adverse criticism to which this work has been subjected. It is necessary, however, that I should preface my remarks with a few words regarding the circumstances under which Mr. Sinnett came to write his book, and the sources from which the doctrines, therein embodied, were derived.

After Messrs. Hume and Sinnett were introduced to, and put in communication with, the Mahātmās, they commenced asking them questions on various subjects, first to satisfy their own curiosity, and probably also to gauge the depth of the knowledge, possessed by them, respecting religions and scientific subjects. It was not, and could not have been, their intention, at first, to construct a complete system of philosophy from the meagre answers elicited.

The questions were first asked through Mme. Blavatsky, who, fearing to commit herself by treading upon forbidden ground, submitted them to our Guru, Mahātma M * * * , who checked off most of the questions proposed, as subjects to be explained only to regular Chelas at later initiations, and permitted very little information to be given upon most of the queries. This restriction and secrecy provoked much discontent. Neither Mr. Sinnett nor Mr. Hume could understand such a "policy of selfishness" that allowed them only "painfully doled out glimpses of the hidden higher knowledge," it was "a *sin* in the Teachers not to communicate to the world all the knowledge they possess . . ." which "they are *bound* to give . . ." &c., &c., as Mr. Hume thought. Such accusations expressed publicly in *The Theosophist*,² raised, from the first, a great discontent among the Hindu Chelas; and called forth a PROTEST from them, in the same number of our Magazine. After much solicitation, Mahātma K.H., who had nothing to do with the instructions at first received, promised to give Mr. Sinnett such information and explanation as would be permitted by the strict rules of the Brotherhood. The idea of publication being an afterthought, questions were often put at random. They were not certainly such as to elicit complete and connected instructions on any particular subject; nor were the answers given, calculated to enable one to obtain a faultless, systematic, and complete expo-

¹ p. 25

² See September 1882, pp. 324-26.

sition of department of the Esoteric Doctrine, or of the knowledge possessed by the Esoteric Teachers. The Himālayan Adepts have never professed to instruct any particular section of the Theosophical Association. The Śimla Theosophical Society was distinctly informed by one of them that it would be highly inadvisable, if not altogether impracticable, to depute one of the Adepts, or even an advanced Chela, to become the direct instructor of that Anglo-Indian Society. And when permission was subsequently granted to Mr. Sinnett to publish the *Fragments* (fragments, indeed!) of information obtained by him, it was left entirely to his discretion to present the philosophy embodied therein in the manner he thought proper. It is necessary also to give some idea of the materials that Mr. Sinnett possessed for writing his book, and the difficulties he had to encounter, before deciding upon the proper course to be adopted. Mr. Sinnett, I may here state, had from the Mahātmās, in addition to their letters bearing on the planetary evolution, the Law of Karma, the nature of Devachanic Existence, the Seven Principles in Man, and other cognate subjects discussed by him as fully and as clearly as he was able, a few letters or communications touching the nature of Purusha and Prakriti, the commencement of cosmic evolution, the septenary constitution of the manifested Cosmos, the nature and evolution of the germs of the primary elements in nature (Mahābhūtams), and some isolated subjects connected with physical science. But not one solitary subject among the last named class had he ever received, except in bare outlines. As to the details and their direct bearing upon other and far more important subjects, closely connected with the rest, they have never been even remotely approached by the Masters — *revelations of this nature belonging strictly to the mysteries of Initiation*. Thus, the contents of some of the letters, owing to distinct prohibition, were introduced in a very incomplete form, while other subjects of vital importance, for the correct understanding of the whole, were not even mentioned in the book so severely criticized by Mr. E. Maitland — simply because they could not be given to Mr. Sinnett.¹ With these meagre materials, he undertook to write a book, and give the public in general, and the Theosophists in particular, an approximately correct conception of the system of Esoteric Science and Philosophy in the keeping of the “great Teachers of the Snowy Range.” That he did as well as he has, is as surprising as it is highly creditable to his acute intelligence. But a complete system of Esoteric Philosophy which may be accepted as “a perfect system of thought and rule of life” must not only be able to explain fully and clearly the nature of the primal causes in the Cosmos and their ultimate effects in the manifested system, and to trace the whole current of evolution, in all its as-

¹ [The specification implied in the second word of the title itself [is] misleading to all those who are not aware that “Buddhism” in this application refers entirely to the universal secret Wisdom — meaning *spiritual enlightenment* — and not at all to the religion now popularly known as the philosophy of Gautama Buddha. Therefore, to set off Esoteric *Christianity* against Esoteric *Buddhism* (in the latter sense) is simply to offer one part of the whole against another such part — not one specified religion or philosophy the world over, having now the right to claim that it has the *whole* of the Esoteric truth. Brahmavidyā (which is not Brahmanism or any of its numerous sects) and *Guptavidyā* — the ancient and secret WISDOM RELIGION, the inheritance of the Initiates of the *inner* Temple — have alone such a right. No doubt, Mrs. Kingsford, the gifted author of *The Perfect Way*, is the most competent person in all Europe — I say it advisedly and unhesitatingly — to reveal the hidden mysteries of real Christianity. But, no more than Mr. Sinnett is she an initiate, and cannot, therefore, know anything about a doctrine, the real and correct meaning of which no amount of natural seership can reveal, *as it lies* altogether beyond *the regions accessible to untrained seers*. If revealed, its secrets would, for long years, remain utterly incomprehensible even to the highest physical sciences. I hope, this may not be construed into a desire of claiming any great knowledge for myself; for I certainly do not possess it. All that I seek to establish is, that such secrets *do* exist, and that, outside of the initiates, no one is competent to prove, much less to *disprove*, the doctrines now given out through Mr. Sinnett. — H.P. Blavatsky.]

pects, from its commencement up to the time of Pralaya, but also supply every individual with such a system of physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual training, as would enable him to reach the highest condition of development possible; it must furnish mankind with such a code of morals and such a system of political and social organization as would enable them *en masse*, to move on rapidly and smoothly with the current of progressive evolution, and to reach the desired goal — the condition of spiritual perfection. Such a system, when it reaches the maximum of elaboration, assumes the form of a deductive science in common with every particular branch of science. And just as every branch of science, entitled to the dignity of that name, has to adopt the inductive method in its infancy, so Esoteric Science must also pursue a similar method in the preliminary stages of its progress to be able to construct religion on a really scientific basis. As Mr. Sinnett had neither the knowledge nor the materials that would have enabled him to construct a complete system of Esoteric Science and Philosophy, he had to content himself with simply presenting, in a comprehensible form, to the members of the Theosophical Society and the intelligent public, a collection of interesting and useful information. This he did with regard to the nature and direction of planetary evolution and the constitution of man, and such kindred subjects as are calculated to throw some light, at least, on a few of the profoundest questions of religions philosophy, and indicating, in some measure, the lines on which further enquiry would prove profitable. He thought it prudent to abstain from recording in his book any decisive opinions regarding the real nature of the primal causes, operating in the Cosmos, the highest spiritual principle in man, and the first beginnings of cosmic evolution, or any other subject, equally momentous to religious metaphysics and dogmatic theology. Such isolated remarks as are to be found in his book touching them, are merely intended to convey to the reader's mind some conception, however imperfect, which it is necessary to realise for the purpose of clearly understanding the operation of particular laws, or the nature of a particular group of phenomena. But none of these are intended to supply the place of a complete exposition of the Esoteric Philosophy connected with those subjects; nor do they amount to a denial of the possibility of any other conception, or the correctness of any other view, which may be entertained with respect to other phases of the Cosmos. In elucidating Esoteric Philosophy, it is not seldom necessary to adopt the same course that is almost always adopted, for the sake of convenience, by a teacher of astronomy, in explaining to the student the relation between the zenith, the pole, the equator, the ecliptic and the horizon; the definitions of right ascension and declination, latitude and longitude; the causes of the change of seasons, the application of spherical trigonometry for the solution of astronomical problems, and various other subjects, with reference to the *geocentric* system. The assumption that the Earth is the fixed centre, and that all the heavenly bodies revolve round it, is doubtless wrong; but such a conception is found necessary for the easier explanation of the subjects above enumerated. Again, when at a farther stage of progress the heliocentric system is expounded, the sun is assumed to occupy in space a fixed position. This assumption is equally erroneous, as it is now ascertained that the sun has a proper motion in space. Suppose, a professor of astronomy, taking into consideration all these motions, and ascertaining the complicated and peculiar curve which a given point on the Earth's surface traces in space,

were to begin to account to his pupils for these most ordinary phenomena: is it not evident that he and his students would soon get into a terrible state of confusion? Can it be contended, under such circumstances, that every teacher of astronomy, at the present time, who places the geocentric system before his students, for the purpose of giving certain explanations, is ignorant of the heliocentric system and the proper motion of the so-called fixed stars in space? or that he is giving a wrong explanation of the phenomena dealt with; or that he is speaking in riddles which require an Œdipus for their solution? or that he is employing allegorical language for the purpose of wilfully misleading his students and testing their powers of discrimination between fact and fancy? It will be easily conceded that all such suppositions must be equally unreasonable, the preliminary conception in question being introduced merely for the sake of convenience. This possibility, however, is entirely left out of consideration by Mr. Sinnett's critics. To exclude every ground of misapprehension, it is necessary for me to state, at this point, that the foregoing remarks are applicable only to the particular class of observations in *Esoteric Buddhism* to which reference is already made.

While on the subject, I may as well point out that Mr. Sinnett has not given in his book as much explanation as he might have given even with the scanty information in his possession, regarding cosmogony, the nature of Purusha and Prakriti, the germs out of which the elements were evolved, and some other subjects above alluded to. But, besides the very good reason that his limited knowledge prescribed imperatively such a prudential policy, the following reasons may also be assigned for the course adopted by him. They will, I trust, be found satisfactory when closely and impartially examined:

① Almost every religion, every dogmatic system of theology, and every sectarian doctrine has some decisive opinions to offer regarding these subjects, and it is in connection with these questions that sectarian strife and casuistry have always raged with unmitigated fury, for thousands of years. In these days of inquiry and investigation, such controversy can be set at rest not by appealing to the authority of this or that religious book, or religious teacher, but by introducing into the discussion the same scientific method which is found so very useful in other departments of human inquiry. It is necessary for such a course, that all the phenomena which may throw light on these subjects should be clearly observed and closely examined. The nature of the effects must be scrutinised before any valid inferences can be drawn regarding the nature of their cause. This is the only way open to the public at large. An initiate may be able to perceive the eternal verities by his developed spiritual power, and those who rely upon his statements may take them on trust. But it is impossible to expect the secrets of initiation to be made public, or even if made public, to be accepted unchallenged, in these days, simply on the authority of even the highest adept. Under such circumstances, when religions prejudices are yet so very strong, and when the public is not scientifically prepared to test the correctness of the views of the Himālayan Mahātmas — it is not desirable to publish them in any other but a fragmentary form.

- ② As already pointed out, the Mahātmas have no intention whatsoever of assuming the attitude of world-instructors; nor are they in any way anxious that the public, or any portion of it, or even any of our own members, should relinquish their own settled religious opinions, and accept their views without inquiry. As any explanation regarding the subjects in question is likely to come directly into collision with the religious doctrines prevalent in various parts of the civilized world, it will be premature to give out any such explanation, until the public is prepared to test the correctness of their respective religious dogmas, in the same manner in which the validity of a scientific hypothesis is tested. In a word, they must wait until humanity has evolved up to the plane of spiritual intuitiveness, or take the crushing responsibility of trying to force artificially such a preternatural psychic growth. Very slight occult experience is sufficient to show how futile would be the task, how disastrous the failure, how direful the reaction in its consequences, were the MASTERS to adopt any other policy!
- ③ It is impossible to give *complete explanations* regarding most of the subjects touched upon in *Esoteric Buddhism*, without disclosing some of the secrets of initiation.
- ④ It is extremely difficult to express in English the abstract and metaphysical ideas connected with these subjects. Until many of these ideas are gradually made familiar to the mind of the Western reader, any attempt at a general explanation of these questions in the language of ordinary life, is likely to be resented, to provoke failure, and may even lead to some very dangerous misconceptions.
- ⑤ It must be frankly admitted that Mr. Sinnett himself has not thoroughly understood much of the information given to him by the Mahātmas on several subjects, (as for instance the part played by the Eighth Sphere in the scheme of evolution, and the opprobrium thrown upon the *visible* moon), he, having no time to obtain the required additional explanations, during his short stay at the Headquarters, on his way to England. For these reasons, Mr. Sinnett was obliged to refrain from introducing into his work anything like a systematic discussion of more than one subject from the stand-point of the Esoteric Philosophy of the Himālayan Mahātmas. The plan, however, that he has adopted is in perfect accordance with the intentions of the MASTERS, and is well adopted to the programme laid down for the guidance of the Theosophical Society. *Esoteric Buddhism*, in short, is not intended to be a complete and systematic exposition of the religious philosophy of the Initiated Fraternity, or an authoritative declaration to Theosophists in general of our Teachers' views which they are called upon to accept "as necessarily final and beyond appeal." It is merely intended to be an important contribution to the mass of information, which, it is the object of the Theosophical Society to accumulate, for the purpose of leading ultimately to the evolution of a complete system of philosophy. If any member of the London Lodge was led to anticipate, from the publication of Mr. Sinnett's book, "a formal communication to the world, in a crisis of the gravest description, and for the first time in the world's history, of *(all) the most sacred mysteries of existence*" — he was entirely mistaken; and if any member expected that the publication in question would supply the requirements of "a perfect system of thought and rule of life" and is now disappointed, no one is responsible for his disappointment. It is altogether unfair to condemn Mr. Sinnett's book as wholly misleading or allegorical, and under-

value the important services rendered by him to the Theosophical Association, on the ground that his work does not satisfy the unwarranted expectations of a few Theosophists who are more sanguine than prudent.

In order to show the correctness of my assertions, I shall endeavour to point out how far the criticisms of Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland are justified, and how far they are misdirected and erroneous.

For the sake of convenience, I shall arrange the remarks of Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland on *Esoteric Buddhism* with reference to the subjects to which they relate. That part of their criticism which refers to the views put forth by Mr. Sinnett regarding Purusha and Prakriti claims our attention first.

Mr. Maitland's first and most important objection against *Esoteric Buddhism* is that its doctrine is distinctly atheistic, and that its statements regarding the nature and attributes of Parabrahman are inconsistent with each other. It is admitted, however, that a considerable number of the passages, quoted by the critic from Mr. Sinnett's writings, are not atheistic in their tone; and that the existence of a universal spiritual principle prior to "any organized or derived entities," is distinctly postulated therein, under the name of Parabrahman, which is spoken of as "the motion, that animates Cosmic matter" and as "the energy of the universe." It is, I believe, an acknowledged canon of interpretation, that, when a large number of dispersed statements regarding a particular subject are to be found in any book, the author's views on that subject should be gathered from a careful comparison of all such statements, and a critical examination of the contexts in which they appear, and not from the literal meaning of particular words or phrases. When metaphysical or philosophical difficulties are involved in any subject, and the phraseology in which it has been discussed by various writers has been rendered extremely vague and uncertain by the different connotations attached to the words used, it becomes absolutely necessary to proceed according to this method. And this necessity is considerably enhanced in the case of *Esoteric Buddhism* — as a complete discussion of the subjects involved is not undertaken by the author. But Mr. Sinnett's critic has thought it proper to depart from this principle, for the not overkind purpose of detecting contradictions and absurdities where there are really none. It now remains to be seen, how far he has gained his object even by the false canon of criticism adopted. We are informed by him that the doctrine "openly avowed" in *Esoteric Buddhism* is "distinctly atheistic." So far as I can see, there is no such *open avowal* in any part of the book; nor are we informed on what page we are to search for it. The assertion made by the critic is, therefore, a mere matter of inference; and a very painful and circuitous process of reasoning is adopted to establish the strange proposition. It is stated that the epithet "atheistic" is used "not reproachfully but descriptively." But the required description is not given by the plaintiff though it is so very essential for a just appreciation of the correctness of his reasoning and the validity of his *inference*. It is left to his readers to ascertain the bearing of his conclusions by an examination of the reasons assigned for them. This is by no means an easy task; and the reasons for, and against, his inferences are, moreover, left in a tangled maze of confusion. When extricated from it, the reasons which are intended to support the position may be enumerated in the following order:

- 1 “The Parabrahman or spirit of matter is motion,” we are told, from the standpoint of *Esoteric Buddhism*.
- 2 “Elsewhere¹ it is called Energy.”
- 3 It is declared² that the end of all existence is the “merging by man of his glorified individuality in that sum total of all consciousness, which Esoteric Metaphysicians treat as absolute consciousness, which is non-consciousness.”
- 4 “Objection is taken [by Mr. Sinnett] to the being of God, on the ground that it would be incompatible with freedom of will on the part of man.”

I shall examine these reasons *seriatim*.

1 The first reason for the inference involves a misstatement of the author’s view. Mr. Sinnett says that the unmanifested basis of the manifested cosmos is “matter *animated* by motion, its Parabrahman or spirit.”³ Motion that *animates* Cosmic matter is not equivalent to motion in general. The motion of a cricket ball, for instance, is not to be considered as motion that animates matter. Molecular motion, in the particles of a decomposing body, is, no doubt, motion, but it is not motion that *animates* the dead body. The qualifying clause is used by Mr. Sinnett with a definite object. Parabrahman is often spoken of as “the One Life” by the Buddhist philosophers, and is considered as the Mahāchaitanyam (an equivalent expression) by the Advaitīs. And even Kabbalists have described Ain-Soph as “The life that is no life.” The word “animates” is calculated to draw the reader’s attention to this aspect of Parabrahman. I fail to see the incongruity really involved in further investing Paramātmam with the attributes of motion. When heat, light, and electricity are the manifestations, or effects, of particular kinds of motion, the material plane of action being the same in the opinion of modern science, there is nothing very ridiculous in the assertion that the life existing in Mūlaprakriti and manifesting itself in various forms in differentiated and organized Prakriti, is but the effect of a mysterious kind of motion. Perhaps, we shall be informed by Mr. Maitland that the *First Cause* cannot have the essential attributes of motion, as some pre-existing force or energy is required to produce this motion. But there is no necessity for any such supposition. Every force or energy in nature, when properly examined, will be found to have in itself some kind of motion or other. When correctly stated, the author’s assertion amounts to saying that Parabrahman pervades the infinite expanse of cosmic matter — Mūlaprakriti — and consequently every differentiated and organized form in it; that it has the essential attributes of motion, and that the peculiar characteristic of this motion is, that the life existing everywhere throughout the Cosmos, whether in its primary or secondary aspects, is its manifestation or effect. It is not pretended that this amounts to a *complete* description of Parabrahman. But it is maintained that it is a *correct* representation of one of its phases. The critic is welcome to show, if he can, that this description is wrong; but why should he cover the main question with a cloud of ir-

¹ p. 153

² p. 182

³ p. 183

relevant matter? If this amounts to atheism in his opinion, so be it; Mr. Maitland is fully entitled to have his own definition of the word.

2 The second reason for the inference is likewise based upon a misconstruction of the author's views. On *p.* 153 of his work, Mr. Sinnett has defined Parabrahman from the stand-point of Advaita philosophy, and in the following words: "Brahman or Parabrahman, is thus a passive, incomprehensible, unconscious principle, but the essence, one life, or energy of the universe," and here, Mr. Maitland asserts again that Parabrahman is called energy (in any form apparently) by the author! He further contends that a principle, or entity, possessing the attributes of motion cannot be considered as the "energy of the universe"; evidently forgetting that motion *in the abstract* is one thing, and the object in motion — quite another. Energy is defined by him as the cause of motion, and if motion is not energy under any circumstances, in that gentleman's opinion, one kind of motion can never be the cause of another kind of motion. For instance, it will be wrong, in his opinion, to say that the motion of the particles composing a certain quantity of steam caused by its inherent tendency to expand, produces the motion of the steam engine! This, I believe, will make clear that Mr. Sinnett's statement involves no such absurdity. Energy is but the statical aspect of motion, and motion is but the kinetic aspect of energy. Parabrahman has both these aspects. During Pralaya it is the sum total of the energy of the Infinite Universe, and during the period of Cosmic activity it manifests itself as the motion in Cosmic matter, which is the basis of Life, in all its forms and aspects. And this, again, is atheistic in Mr. Maitland's opinion.

3 It is more difficult to perceive how the third reason is intended to prove the charge of atheism. The author has stated that the consciousness realized in Nirvana is "absolute consciousness," which is "non" consciousness. It is absolute consciousness, because the soul is fully *en rapport* with the universal mind the Adam Kadmon of the Kabbalists, and the Adonai of the Jews: — and it is non-consciousness, because it is not consciousness in any way similar to the consciousness realized by us in any of the conditions with which we are familiar. But we are once more informed that this also is an atheistical doctrine. In Mr. Maitland's opinion, therefore, a doctrine is said to be atheistical when it declares that the consciousness realized in Nirvana, or the highest paradise,¹ is not similar to the consciousness realized by man in his objective condition of existence, because, according to our opponent's Esoteric Philosophy, the case is entirely different. In his ideas, it seems, even in Heaven we are not going to be deprived of our enjoyments and amusements of our picnics, theatres and fashionable dress-parties.

4 The fourth and the last reason, in support of the allegation made, has no foundation whatever, except in the imagination of the learned Vice-President of the "London Lodge." On *p.* 185 of his work, the author merely points out that the doctrines propounded therein are free from the difficulties generally raised in connection with the doctrine of free will and pre-destination, in the ordinary theological sense. To this Mr. Sinnett's opponent replies that the Esoteric Buddhist doctrine has contrived to get rid of the idea of God (Mr. Maitland's "idea" probably) for the purpose of avoiding

¹ It is very unfortunate that the English language has no word to indicate a higher state of existence than what is realized in *Svarga*, or *Devachan*.

these difficulties. This is clearly fallacious. In the Esoteric Doctrine, Parabrahman is not a matter of inference. If the necessities of logic and theoretical metaphysics have not led the students of Esoteric Science to adopt any particular view regarding the “first cause,” it is because their knowledge it derived by a more direct method; and thus, they being most pronounced Gnostics, it becomes the more ridiculous to suspect them of agnosticism. Highly developed spiritual powers, and a keen sense of intuitive perception have enabled them to arrive at the truth without any reference whatever to the difficulties of theoretical religious philosophy, as conceived by Western minds. Mr. Maitland is simply trying to throw discredit on *Esoteric Buddhism* by the dint of far-fetched and strained constructions, in direct connection with those interminable and meaningless controversies regarding free will and pre-destination, which occupy such a prominent place in the arena of Western religious speculation, and are so happily conspicuous by their absence from the plane of Hindu and Buddhist religious thought.

From this it becomes quite clear, that,

- In our critic’s opinion, the denial of a personal God is synonymous with rank atheism; and that
- The teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism*, as really stated by the author, are, in no way, inconsistent, *illogical*, or unscientific; but that simply Mr. Maitland has run away with a very hazy idea of what those teachings are, in truth. Whatever those teachings may be, one thing is certain: they are neither atheistic nor even materialistic in the ordinary sense of the words; for, if anything, they are *pantheistic*. Mr. Maitland’s definition of atheism seems to be one of a very complicated character. From his stand-point, an atheist is to be defined as one who believes the doctrines of *Esoteric Buddhism*, or entertains the same opinions as Mr. Sinnett regarding Parabrahman; and this is to be considered as the outcome of the whole discussion!

The second part of Mr. Maitland’s objection is to the effect that expressions are used in *Esoteric Buddhism*, which imply “a conscious, intelligent and, therefore, personal being as subsisting prior to any organized or derived entities,” and are, therefore, inconsistent with the statements examined above. The reasons assigned for this new objection are equally unsatisfactory, as I shall presently show.

Such expressions as “the purposes of nature,” “the continuous effort made by nature,” and others, similarly worded, do not imply the existence of a “personal” God. I am surprised to find that an argument of this nature is introduced into a serious philosophical discussion. Every man who believes in the diurnal rotation of the earth, ordinarily speaks of sunrise and sunset. Can it be advanced as a serious argument against the existence of this rotation that the very language used disproves the theory? The argument brought forward is precisely similar to the baseless objections advanced against Mills’ Cosmological Theory, on the ground that the ordinary language in use supports the realistic theory. The English language is no more, than any other language, the special creation of philosophers against whose authority there is no appeal. For, it is developed by the national common sense of England and the usages of everyday life; and certainly no great philosophical acumen can be

claimed for it under these circumstances. If Mr. Maitland's objection is admitted, all figurative language will have to be studiously eschewed from philosophical writings. If there is, however, any real foundation beneath the objection, it is tantamount to saying that the existence of a definite method in the order of Cosmic Evolution necessitates the admission of a personal God. This question, however, will be more fully discussed further on, in connection with Mr. Maitland's inferences from the existence of Cosmic Laws.

We are informed by the critic that Theism finds expression in the statements made regarding the 7th principle in man, and thus shows Mr. Sinnett's inconsistency.

Now, Mr. Maitland's endeavours to catch Theism "under yet another mode" of expression are very unsuccessful. Although, "it is urged," the name [of Theism] is repudiated, the idea is retained under the term "Seventh Principle"¹ or "Universal Spirit," which is described as "existing everywhere and operating on matter, provoking the existence of man himself, and the world in which he lives, and the future conditions towards which he is pressing." The Seventh Principle, indefinable for us in our present state of enlightenment, is, we are further assured, "the only God recognized by Esoteric Knowledge, and no personification of this can be otherwise than symbolical." It is, we are told, "the all-pervading Judge, to whom men have to give account." Unfortunately, Mr. Maitland has omitted to define the term Theism, and thus prevented us from examining the process by which he has evolved that faith out of the above quotations from *Esoteric Buddhism*. All that, under the circumstances, remains for us to do is, to show that Mr. Sinnett's statements, although the word "God" occurs therein, do not warrant the acceptance of a personal God. It is not certainly justifiable to convert the "Seventh Principle" or "Universal Spirit" into a Jehovah, from what has been said of it in one place, utterly regardless of the reiterations about it, in other connections. In one passage, for instance,² we find Mr. Sinnett saying: "The one and chief attribute of the Universal Spiritual principle, the unconscious but ever active life-giver, is to expand and shed; that of the Universal Material Principle is to gather in and fecundate." Then on the same page and the following *creation* is denied *in toto*. Without endorsing the phraseology adopted by Mr. Sinnett, which is, however, that of all the Kabbalists and may be even found in Éliphas Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, as in the great book of Kiu-te, I may safely assert that no Theist would be overanxious to claim the author of *Esoteric Buddhism* as a fellow-worshipper. The argument founded upon Mr. Sinnett's use of such words as "God" and "Judge" has already been disposed of. In fact, such criticism only reminds one of 336 Lamb's North Briton friend, whose sense of propriety was outraged by the commonest figures of speech.

The tenor of the whole argument on theistic or atheistic character of *Esoteric Buddhism*, most unmistakably betrays a great want of comprehension on the part of the critic of Buddhism in general, and *esoteric* Buddhism especially. A system, of which one part appears as theistic and another part atheistic, ought certainly not to be placed in either of the categories and then condemned as self-contradictory, so long

¹ p. 179

² p. 176

as a third course remains open. And unless he has shown that the division of religious philosophy, as above, into theism and atheism, is a division by dichotomy, it is unreasonable for him to talk of Mr. Sinnett's wholly untenable "radical inconsistencies and contradictions"; and at the same time, it shows him hardly acquainted with the subtle monism of the pantheistic philosophy as taught in our great schools. Mr. Maitland seems to have endeavoured to lay the doctrines contained in *Esoteric Buddhism* on the Procrustean bed of his own ideas, and, failing in the attempt, is now seeking to discredit them as inconsistent with themselves. As well call Śamkarāchārya, the greatest Occultist and adept of all the ages, the founder, of the *Advaita*, School, the master whose followers are to this day referred to as *Prachchhanna Baudhdhas* (Buddhists in disguise), so identical are the two teachings — one day an atheist, and a theist the next.

The next argument that Mr. Maitland brings forward,¹ comes to this: since law implies a person, the expression of whose will the law is, therefore, Mr. Sinnett by speaking of "the law of evolution" tacitly admits the existence of a personal God, whose impressed will is the law of the Universe. This is a very extraordinary argument. I could hardly believe that the talented Vice-President of the London Lodge would have failed to recognize the difference between the command of the sovereign power in a political body, and the sequence of causation implied in a natural law, especially after such a masterly exposition of the subject by such thinkers as Mill and Austin. My surprise becomes greater still to find Mrs. Kingsford, with her splendid natural gifts, standing sponsor to such an intellectual deformity! It is now perfectly clear that Mr. Maitland's statements that "these citations imply theism," and that they "describe precisely that which the theist means by a personal God," are merely gratuitous assumptions.

Then comes a point, the objection to which involves a *totally* inaccurate presentation of Mr. Sinnett's statements. "This Eternal Something," says Mr. Maitland, "it is further declared, although there is nothing but Matter, Motion, Space, and Duration, consists of two principles, the Universal Spiritual Principle and the Universal Material Principle, which, when separate, are unconscious and non-existing, and only when brought together [by whom or from whence, it is not said] become consciousness and life."

Before proceeding to answer the objections arising out of what Mr. Sinnett is represented to have said above, it is necessary to tally it with what Mr. Sinnett actually says. On page 176 of *Esoteric Buddhism* we read:

The one eternal, imperishable thing in the Universe which Universal Pralayas themselves pass over without destroying, is that which may be regarded indifferently as Space, Duration, Matter and Motion, not as something having these four attributes, but a something which *is* these four things at once, and always. And evolution takes its rise in the *atomic polarity which motion engenders*. In cosmogony *the positive and the negative, or the active and the passive, forces correspond to the mate and female principles*. The spiritual efflux enters into the veil of Cosmic matter; the active is attracted by the passive principle; and if

¹ p. 15

we may here assist imagination by having recourse to old occult symbology — the great Nag — the serpent, emblem of eternity, attracts its tail to its mouth, forming thereby the circle of eternity, or rather cycles in eternity. The one and chief attribute of the Universal Spiritual Principle, the unconscious but ever active life-giver, is to expand and shed; that of the Universal Material Principle, to gather in and fecundate. Unconscious and non-existing when separate, they become consciousness and life when brought together.

If this is not sound, orthodox Kabbalistic and “Hermetic Philosophy” to which Mrs. Kingsford confesses she feels herself “especially attracted,” then Éliphas Lévi has written his *theistic* “Dogma and Ritual of High Magic” in vain? Let the Fellows of the London Lodge open his Vol. I; and see what this great master of *Christian* Esoteric Doctrine says on the subject, on pages 123-26 *et seq.*, and then draw their conclusions. Mr. Sinnett’s language is that of every occultist, who refuses to substitute his own personal fancy for the accepted theories of the ancient Hermetic Philosophy.¹

Now, from an examination of Mr. Maitland’s citations with the original, with special reference to the passages italicised, it will appear that what Mr. Sinnett does say is not that the Eternal Something does “consist” of the two principles named, but that the latter are the two force-emanating poles engendered by Parabrahman, considered the animating motion of the Universe (Purusha), in itself, the exhaustless fountain of material existence (Prakriti). Bearing this explanation in mind, many of Mr. Maitland’s difficulties will entirely disappear. The Universal Spiritual Principle or Purusha does not certainly exist as a separate entity at the time of the Mahāpralaya, but is interblended with Prakriti (the Material Principle) and both exist in their eternal and ineffable state of Parabrahman.² When by the operation of the chain of causation, which is embodied in Parabrahman, the emanating impulse is awakened, the two principles spring forth into Being, and by their mutual action produce the manifested Cosmos. Some reflection might give us a glimpse of the grand fact that prior to the moment when the emanation takes place no duality can possibly exist. The primal duality, Prakriti and Purusha are each the necessary condition of the other’s existence. This fact is sufficiently well implied by what Mr. Sinnett says of the “atomic polarity which motion engendered.” One pole cannot exist without the other. And now will be thrown into bold relief what Mr. Sinnett means when he says: “Unconscious

¹ [I would draw the attention of Mrs. Kingsford, Mr. Maitland, and the other Members of the London Lodge to that whole chapter in the work cited, and ask them to compare its grossly materialistic language with the explanation offered on the same subject by Mr. Sinnett. If Éliphas Lévi’s “number of *gnosis*,” this

. . . Adam, the human tetragrammaton resumed in the mysterious *jod*, the image of the Kabbalistic *phallus* . . . the insertion of the vertical phallus in the horizontal cteis forming the *stauros* of the Gnostics, or the philosophical cross of the Masons, in the mysterious language of the Talmudic Kabbalists,

— as he calls it can be preferred to the chaste images offered by the Eastern Esotericism, it is only by those who are unable to divorce their thoughts from an anthropomorphic God and his *material* progeny, the Adam of the Old Testament. Withal, the idea and substance, if not the language, are identical; for Éliphas Lévi expounding the true Hermetic Philosophy, in the coarse language of the Jewish Seers and for the benefits of a Christian-born public says neither more nor less than what was given to, and written by, Mr. Sinnett in the far more philosophical phraseology of *Esoteric Buddhism*. — H.P. Blavatsky.]

² In the *Rig-Veda* it is said that prior to the period of evolution in the celebrated Mantra beginning, *Nāsadasit nāsadasit* (X, 129) — “neither *asat* or Prakriti nor *sat* or Purusha was” but the one Life latent in the one Element, “was breathing without breath.”

and non-existing when separate, they become consciousness and life when brought together” by their inherent quiddity, the Svabhāva of the Buddhists.¹

The next objection of Mr. Maitland comes to this: If Purusha is “unconscious” and Prakriti is “unconscious,” how can consciousness evolve at all? The first idea to be clearly grasped, is the nature of Prakriti and Purusha. This subject, however, need not be pursued at length, as it has been pretty fully treated by me in an article in *The Theosophist* for July last,² to which reference may be made for fuller information.

Now to turn to the evolution of conscious existence. If it is maintained that the great first cause — Parabrahman — is unconscious, in the sense that it is the negation of all consciousness — it is a great fallacy. If, on the other hand, it is imagined to be conscious in our sense of consciousness — it is equally fallacious. If words are to have any meaning, conscious existence involves three elements — the Knower, the Knowledge, and the Known.³ Now Parabrahman is “Only One without a second” — *ekamevādvītyam* — or, in other words, the unification of the three elements of conscious existence, mentioned above — the break-up of the three receptacles as it is technically called — *triputi bhangam*. Therefore there can be no conscious existence in Parabrahman. On the other hand, if Parabrahman is regarded as absolute unconsciousness violence will be done to the first principles of our philosophy. Unconsciousness is the negation of every form of consciousness, and therefore, without any relation thereto; to derive the latter from the former is to establish some sort of relation between the two, which, as we have seen is impossible. Therefore, Parabrahman is not unconsciousness, and as has been showed before, it is not conscious, in the sense the word must always be used. We are, therefore, reduced to the conclusion that Parabrahman is *absolute* consciousness, or nirupadhikam *mahāchaitanyam*, as the Upanishad says. This, again, is verified by the experience of practical occultists. The emanations of Mūlaprakriti become conscious by the reflection of this absolute consciousness. By the interposition of the veils of Māyā, this absolute consciousness gives rise to conditioned *Sopadkikam* — consciousness, or conscious existence. The details of the process cannot be entered into here, as they touch many grand secrets of initiation.

The next thing I notice, shall be Mr. Maitland’s criticism with regard to the position assigned to the Dhyāni-Chohans in the scheme of Cosmic evolution. His objection relates first to the question — how the first Dhyāni-Chohans could evolve, if there be no personal God to produce them consciously? and then urges, “if the assistance of the Dhyāni-Chohans be indispensable to the production of the universe” how came “the universe to reach such perfection as to produce Dhyāni-Chohans in the first instance, when there were no Dhyāni-Chohans to aid it?” If Mr. Maitland has brought forward these objections for the purpose of eliciting further information, all I have to

¹ The entire chain of Mr. Maitland’s reasoning is vitiated by a false assumption. He seems to think that Prakriti and Purusha existed prior to the period of Cosmic activity as to separate entities and required some motor to bring them together to interact on each other, just as oxygen and hydrogen are caused to combine chemically by the agency of electricity. But the real fact is that Prakriti and Purusha are separate entities to us *only subjectively*. We can only *imagine* that they are separate and then try to comprehend their nature from that standpoint. In point of fact neither of them can exist by itself.

² Vol. IV, No. 10

³ [Cf. the essential parts of a sentence, *i.e.*, subject, verb, and object.]

say is, that such information will be forthcoming when the ground is prepared for it by the doctrines which he now criticises. But if there are intended to imperil the position taken up by Mr. Sinnett, I have only to point out that Mr. Maitland puts entirely out of calculation the agency involved in the ideation of the Universal Mind, the Demiourgos of Western Mystics. It must not, however, be here understood, that the ideation of the Universal Mind is set in motion by an act of that mind's volition; quite the contrary. The ideation of the Demiourgos is governed by an eternal chain of causation, and is absolutely involuntary. A flood of light will be thrown on this subject by [a] letter from one of the Mahātmas, now in the possession of Mr. Sinnett. Then, again, it must be remembered that all Dhyāni-Chohans are not evolved in one and the same way. It may as well be here remarked, that to talk of the first Dhyāni-Chohans — is slightly illogical. The chain of Manvantara and Pralaya — “Cosmic Day and Night” — is an endless one. As there can be no beginning of eternity, so there can be no first Dhyāni-Chohans.

I shall now pass to a question of great importance. The gifted President maintains that the septenary constitution of man is the same as the seven productive *vikāras* or products of Prakriti, as given by Kapila, in his Sāṅkhya philosophy: only inverted and more materialized. I regret to have to point out that the talented lady is here entirely in the wrong. If she takes the last of the seven *vikāras* she would find that it is a subtle element as far removed from the gross outer human body, *the first* principle in Mr. Sinnett's classification — as can possibly be imagined. In the system of Kapila, whatever relation it may bear to the system adopted in *Esoteric Buddhism* the *tattvas* (or principles) are not certainly those mentioned in Mr. Sinnett's book. The true relation has, to a certain extent, been shadowed forth in an article on the “Septenary Principle in Esotericism,” published in *The Theosophist* for July last.¹ But the best exposition of the subject will be found in another letter from the Mahātma to Mr. Sinnett, where, if one will but look for it, the order is correctly given, and special attention is drawn to the difference in the two classifications. The sevenfold division, that appears in *Esoteric Buddhism*, is not given by Kapila in the same form. I am sorry to have to come to the conclusion, that the gifted lady has, besides misunderstanding Kapila, hardly bestowed on Mr. Sinnett's book that degree of attention that should be given to a work, before it is subjected to the fiery ordeal of such merciless criticism.

Further on, the President finds fault with Mrs. Sinnett for having degraded, as she thinks Kapila's Prakriti by calling it “molecular matter,” which, according to her, has the effect of charging it with divisibility. I have carefully gone through Mr. Sinnett's book and have to confess my inability to identify the passage where the peccant expression occurs. But apart from that, it is impossible to conceive how the word “essence,” which she proposes as a better substitute, can be freed from the charge of materialistic degradation attaching to the phrase, against which her own criticism is directed; the more so as ultimate “molecular,” hence, “motion” is entirely unknown to modern science, from which alone Mrs. Kingsford can derive her conception of molecules. She will feel the force of this argument, if she only tries to frame a scientific definition of the word “essence.” Her strictures on Mr. Sinnett's use of the words

¹ Vol. IV, No. 10

“matter” and “motion,” clearly show that she has woefully misconceived the nature of both, and that all her animadversions in this connection hang — like those of her co-worker — upon her own misconceptions.

There is no portion of Mrs. Kingsford’s and Mr. Maitland’s objections which is so full of erroneous notions, as that relating to the Dhyāni-Chohans. Mrs. Kingsford, on page 7 of the pamphlet under notice, says:

There is no doctrine in his [Mr. Sinnett’s] book which is more repugnant to common sense, and to the intuitive perception of the fitness of things, than that which attributes the physical creation of the worlds to perfected men or Dhyāni-Chohans. We are told that they and they alone, are the artificers of the planets and the reconstructors of the Universe.

Here, if nowhere else, we find the gifted President unable to rise entirely above the peculiarities of her sex. This is, indeed, an instance of what Shakespeare calls a “lady’s reason.” Before dealing with that lady’s statement, I shall correct a slight inaccuracy into which she has fallen. Mr. Sinnett does not attribute “physical creation” to the Dhyāni-Chohans. His words are perfectly unequivocal:

All things are accounted for by law, working on matter in its diverse forms, *plus* the guiding and modifying influence of the highest intelligences associated with the Solar System, the Dhyāni-Chohans.

Does this endow the Dhyāni-Chohans with the privilege of creation, physical or otherwise? Further on, Mr. Sinnett says, “they [the Dhyāni-Chohans] can only work through the principle of evolution,” &c. This certainly shows that the Dhyāni-Chohans are not creators at all, at any rate, not in the ordinary sense of that word. Nevertheless, the first objection that she levels against the doctrine is its repugnance “to common sense.” Common sense is, no doubt, a very elastic word, as deceitful as the Greek god Proteus, but I have never yet heard it being appealed to as an arbiter, on the transcendental plane, where admittedly our everyday experience has no room to stand upon. The only other argument against the position is, that it is opposed “to the intuitive conception of the fitness of things.” The doctrine presents a distinct line of cleavage, and I shall endeavour to find out, which of the divisions objection is taken to, on the aforesaid ground. Does it militate against Mrs. Kingsford’s notion of the fitness of things that Dhyāni-Chohans should be allowed to have a hand in the fashioning of the planets, or that human entities should be allowed to rise to the height of Dhyāni-Chohans? The former can scarcely be objectionable. The offending doctrine then is that which teaches that the state of Dhyāni-Chohans is not beyond the reach of humanity. But a little reflection will show the perfect consonance of the doctrine with reason — and justice. If the Dhyāni-Chohans were free from the necessity of passing through all the different stages of evolutionary progress and thus appearing as men, at some time or another, where will be the dominion of absolute justice in the world? Such a monstrous doctrine, in fact, would be but the restatement of the horrid Calvinistic dogma of salvation by election, and damnation by predestination. I would request the gifted lady to consider whether the doctrine as presented by Mr. Sinnett is so much opposed to the fitness of things as she imagines. Mrs. Kingsford lays down that the doctrine of Dhyāni-Chohan is common alike to Buddhism

and Christianity, and then goes on to explain it from her own stand-point. “It is taught” she says, “by the former of these religions [*i.e.*, Buddhism] that whenever a Buddha passes into Nirvana, his Karma is poured out through the worlds as a living moral energy whereby a fresh influx of spiritual life is developed.” To this she offers as a parallel the Christian doctrine embodied in the saying of Christ — “If I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”¹

With all deference, I must here submit that Mrs. Kingsford has taken an entirely wrong view of the nature of the energy, evolved by a Monad in the state of *mukti* (freedom from the wheel of births and deaths), and also of the *Nirvānic* condition. Every human being, on attainment of a certain stage in his spiritual development, begins to shed on the world “a living moral energy, whereby a fresh influx of spiritual life is developed,” and for this, passage into Nirvana (in the sense in which she understands it) is not necessary. The Paraclete that descends has nothing to do with the Dhyāni-Chohans, who are not Monads in the *Nirvānic* condition, contemplated above. When *Videha Kaivalyam* (the union of the disembodied Monad with the absolute Parabrahman) is reached by any Monad, the sum total of its Karma goes to enrich the Universal Mind, wherein lie the archetype of all that is, was, or will be. The fresh influx of realised ideas thus brought in, is showered by the Cosmic energy, called *Fohat* by Buddhist Occultists and the Initiates. This is how the Paraclete (or the manifested *Buddhi*) is made to descend, in the *true* Esoteric Doctrine. But the Dhyāni-Chohans are not in that state of Nirvana from which the *Buddhi* or the *Prajñā*, (the Sophia of the Gnostics, or again the Christian Paraclete) descends. As all Eastern Occultists know, there are fourteen gradations in Nirvana, exclusive of two others (which are but one, the manifested and the unmanifested), some of which, in truth nine, are attained by the adepts even while alive, and others reached only when in the Dhyāni-Chohanic state, and so on. This explanation will clearly show that the doctrine of Dhyāni-Chohans, whether repugnant or not to Mrs- Kingsford’s “common sense,” is certainly not what she takes it to be.

I shall now pass to Mr. Maitland’s objections on this head. The first exception that he takes is, that the presence of the Dhyāni-Chohans interferes with the freedom of the human will. The subject of free-will and predestination is one which has been a bone of contention among Western theologians and metaphysicians, time out of mind, and as such, no doubt, possesses a peculiar charm for the Western intellect; but it must not be forgotten that the metaphysical problem of freewill and predestination has very little importance outside of a religious system which rests upon an almighty and omniscient God, who brings into existence beings from the realms of absolute nothingness by an act of his volition. The Dhyāni-Chohans, as has been already shown, are no more creatures or creators, than we are ourselves. With us, all will is free, because there is no overruling Power to interfere with its exercise. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that there is a law which every will has to obey, because the nature of the ONE and only Substance in the Universe is the embodiment of that Law. I have stated the doctrine quite plainly, I believe, and will now leave it to the reader to find out if it agrees with his notions of free-will and predestination, or not. The objection under notice seems to have arisen from a mistaken apprehension of

¹ [*John* xvi, 7]

the nature of the Dhyāni-Chohans; and, when once explained, the doctrine contained in *Esoteric Buddhism* will be found more scientific than the objectors imagine. The two passages in that book which, according to Mr. Maitland, conflict with human “free-will,” have thus been, again, very strangely misunderstood. It is said on page 189 that the Dhyāni-Chohans “reign in a divine way over the destinies of the world.” Here, perhaps, the word “divine” has led Mr. Maitland to imagine that Mr. Sinnett has invested the Dhyāni-Chohans with all the attributes of the God of the *hoi polloi*. But to any ordinary reader it naturally appears that Mr. Sinnett’s intention was simply to show what is the nearest approach, in truth, to the common idea about God. The other passage¹ runs thus: “[The Dhyāni-Chohans] exercise a guiding and modifying influence throughout the whole progress of evolution, all things being accounted for by law working on matter in its diverse forms, *plus* the guiding and modifying influence of . . . the Dhyāni-Chohans.” No more in this, than in the previous passage, is there anything said which would support Mr. Maitland’s position. All that Mr. Sinnett asserts here is, that a certain amount of the evolutionary energy of the universe operates through the endeavours of a host of exalted beings, the conscious agents of the Immutable Law, inherent in the One Life, which is *non-conscious*, only because consciousness is limited and conditioned. This does by no means show that the Dhyāni-Chohans can, like the so-called personal God, be charged with having created the iron-chain of causation which produces results — to some pleasurable, to others painful.

Mr. Maitland is not more fortunate in his next objection against the doctrine of Dhyāni-Chohans. Stated shortly, his argument comes to this: Esoteric Doctrine and Occultism are perfectly useless, since

. . . the highest, or rather only, objects offered us for worship, are our own perishable selves in an advanced stage of evolution, it is true, but a stage, which is so far from involving our perpetuation, so far from securing to us that “gift of God which is eternal life” — that the attainment of it is but the prelude to inevitable extinction — extinction not of mere existence of manifested being but of being itself.

After reading the above, one feels inclined to drop the pen in despair! Evidently, Mr. Sinnett has written his book in vain for readers of his Vice-President’s stamp! Is the idea, expressed above, that Nirvana, the final goal of man, is nothing but annihilation, justified by the teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism*? For, it is stated on page 163: “All that words can convey is that Nirvana is *a sublime state of conscious rest in omniscience*.” Is the state of Nirvana which is attempted to be shadowed forth by Mr. Sinnett, in the above words, nothing but annihilation? If so, the sooner it is recognised that language has ceased to be the medium of communication between man and man — the better. It is perfectly plain that Mr. Maitland has opened his critical volley on Mr. Sinnett’s devoted head, without even taking the trouble to acquaint himself sufficiently with the subject of his criticism, and must, therefore, submit to the censure which such reckless conduct deservedly calls for.

¹ p. 177

Considering the cloudy mist which seems to surround the subject of Dhyāni-Chohans, it may not be out of place to subjoin a few observations thereon from the Hindu, or rather the Advaita, stand-point — the latter being identical with “Esoteric Buddhism.” I wish it, however, to be distinctly understood that my views are not at all compulsory on any Fellow of the Theosophical Society, in this country or abroad; my object being simply to offer food for reflection, and to lead our Brother-members to more active and independent investigation.

The Dhyāni-Chohans are referred to by a variety of names in the Hindu sacred writings. The Dhyāni-Chohan when incarnating himself as a man, at the first appearance of humanity on our planet, is referred to as Manu Svayambhū (the self-existent)¹ who begets the seven Rishis incorporeally, they being known as his *mānasaputras* — the children of *manas* or mind — and who, therefore, represent the 5th principle of the planet. These are referred to as 7 x 7 in Occult treatises; and it is they again, who are appointed, we are taught, to hold in trust for the nascent human race the sacred Wisdom-Religion. These Rishis beget, *i.e.*, take under their charge, the seven Pitris, the first evolved men on this planet, and ancestors of all the human family. This is one aspect of the thing. As the offspring of Aditi or the “Measureless,” the Infinite (Prakriti) the Dhyāni-Chohans are known as the Ādityas, who are said to be twelve in number, with reference to the different grades among them. These Dhyāni-Chohans, as the guardian spirits of this world, are known also as *Dikpālas* (the keepers of the different points of the compass), a name under which, it will be found, they are constantly referred to in the earlier Buddhist writings. As agents of destruction of our system, when it comes to its proper termination, they are the twelve Rudras (“burning with anger,”² erroneously translated as “Howlers” by Max Müller), who reduce everything back to its undifferentiated state. Mr. Maitland represents Mr. Sinnett to have said that the Dhyāni-Chohans perish like everything else. But, as has been shown before, no entity that has once reached Parinirvāna can be said to perish; though the state of existence known as the Dhyāni-Chohan, no doubt, merges into, or assimilates itself with, the state of Absolute Consciousness for the time being, as the hour of the Mahāpralaya strikes, but to be propelled again into existence at the dawn of the following Manvantara.³ This, by no means, shows that the entities, who existed as Dhyāni-Chohans, *perish*, any more than the water converted into steam perishes. The Dhyāni-Chohans are, in fact, the gods mentioned allegorically in our *Purānas*. These exalted beings, in common with all the other classes of the Deva (god) kingdom are of two types — one consisting of those who *have been* men, and the other of those who *will be* men at some future period. It is distinctly mentioned in our books that those who are now gods lived once on this earth as men. The Dhyāni-Chohans are the Elohim of the Western Kabbalists. I was

¹ [Cf. “Svabhava and Svayambhu” in our Confusing Words Series.]

² [This has reference to the fiery consummation which our system must undergo at the time of the *Solar Mahāpralaya*. Twelve Sūryas (suns) will arise, it is *exoterically* taught, to burn up the Solar universe — and bring on the Pralaya. This is a travesty of the esoteric teaching that our end will come from the exposure of the *real* sun “by the withdrawal of the veil” — the chromo- and photosphere, perhaps, of which the Royal Society thinks it has learnt so much — *H.P. Blavatsky*.]

³ The word *Manvantara* literally means a “different Manu,” or incarnate Dhyāni-Chohan. It is applied to the period of time intervening between two successive appearances of Manu on this earth, as the word *Manu-antara* shows.

obliged to make this somewhat lengthy digression to show that the doctrine of the Dhyāni-Chohans as taught in the Esoteric Doctrine, and faintly delineated in *Esoteric Buddhism*, is essentially the same as taught by the ancient Rishis, by Śamkarāchārya, and even by the present Brāhmanical authorities — however distorted the modern forms. Those who consider this doctrine “as repugnant to common sense,” and yet would, in the face of “the urgency of the demand in the West for fuller enlightenment from the East . . . invite teaching from yet other schools of Occult Science” would only fall from the frying pan into the fire. There is not a school in India, whether esoteric or exoteric, that teaches any other doctrine as regards the Ādityas or the Dhyāni-Chohans — unless, indeed, it be the world-famed Vallabhāchārya or the “Black Tāntrika” school — to whose philosophical tenets Mr. Maitland and his followers are quite welcome to address themselves.

I shall now deal with Mrs. Kingsford’s objection to the whole system of evolution as given by Mr. Sinnett. “The mathematical precision,” it is argued, “of the clockwork arrangement invoked by Mr. Sinnett’s mechanical system” shows its disaccord with the suggestions of scientific and spiritual thought.”

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the system in question, it is very hard to see how any system can be condemned as “unscientific” merely because of its mathematical precision. If everything in the universe is subject to a rigorous chain of causation, then, it cannot be denied that all natural facts are capable of being represented “with the mathematical precision of a clockwork arrangement,” although the official science of the day may not acquire the capacity of so representing them. But, it cannot, for a single moment, be denied that the more precision any science acquires, the closer does it approach its abstract ideal — immutable Law. The only thing that seems to me unscientific in the whole matter is — Mrs. Kingsford’s objections.

Attack is next directed by the gifted lady against the physical existence of the seven planets, which form the planetary chain spoken of in Mr. Sinnett’s book. On the authority of some exoteric Buddhist dogmas, Mrs. Kingsford asserts that the seven planets in question are only “an allegory,” and really indicate so many “spiritual states.” But elsewhere she admits the reality of a diversity of spiritual states, and then with a strange forgetfulness of one of the fundamental axioms of Occult Science — “as it is above, so it is below” — denies diversity to material conditions of existence. If there are several conditions of Devachan, and several states of Nirvana, why should then material existence be limited to only one? I find, however, from a footnote on page 6, that Mrs. Kingsford does not question the fact of “planetary evolution and transmigration;” and I infer therefrom, that her objections apply only to matters of detail. But, as it does not appear what her objections really are, they cannot be examined any further. With regard to the submergence of Atlantis, Mr. Maitland’s idea seems to be¹ that although the sinking of continents is a well-proved geological fact, yet “the tale of Atlantis is a parable” which has a meaning purely spiritual. Although this is no new idea of his, and was only recently expounded at length by another Spiritualist, Mr. Gerald Massey, it is nevertheless as purely fanciful. The au-

¹ p. 22

thor of *Sūrya Siddhānta*¹ lived, in spite of the attempts of Western Sanskritists, to assign to him quite a modern date, in the lost Atlantis, as all our traditions and chronicles declare. In the geographical system given in the above-mentioned astronomical work, mention is made of the seven Islands of Atlantis — Plakśadvīpa and others, and their position is indicated with scientific precision. So much, as regards a work in the possession of European Sanskritists. As to the numerous works in which the subject of the lost continents and the *third* and *fourth* races that inhabited them is fully treated, but which no European eye has ever beheld — no need of mentioning them, since they would only give rise to a very impolite denial. The celebrated astronomer Asuramaya (whom Prof. Weber has transformed into the Greek Ptolemaios) was another, a native of Atlantis. The submergence of this island is also spoken of in *Uttara Rāmāyana*, if people would but understand it, and various other works of unquestionable authority. The real fact, therefore, is, that the disappearance of Atlantis is a geographical, and will soon become an historical fact, although I do not deny that it has also been made to serve as an allegorical representation of certain spiritual truths.

The next point that I notice shall be Mr. Maitland's most extraordinary travesty of Mr. Sinnett's view of Buddha. I do not consider myself justified to speak publicly of the real Esoteric Doctrine of Buddhahship. So, all I can here say is, that Mr. Sinnett's presentation of the doctrine, though incomplete, is correct so far as it goes. The first thing I have to emphasise is, that Christ and Buddha do not signify one and the same thing: Christ is *a principle*, and Buddha is *a state*. It is not necessary for every Monad to pass through Buddhahood in its progress towards Nirvana.² Every man who passes through the last state of initiation does not necessarily become a Buddha. The historical view of the case is after all the correct one, and no confusion has been made by Mr. Sinnett between "similarity" and "identity" as suggested by Mr. Maitland on page 22.

I shall now conclude my review of the misconceptions charged on, and arguments urged against, the teachings contained in *Esoteric Buddhism*, by calling attention to Mr. Maitland's sarcastic reference to the "chief inspiring adept himself," as he calls the MASTER. Mr. Maitland considers it

. . . worthy of note that although the being of God, or of any absolute good, is strenuously denied, that of "absolute evil" is . . . maintained, the phrase being used by the chief inspiring adept himself of the book.

The phrase quoted by him is so completely separated from the context of what the said "adept" really asserts, that to draw inferences from such an isolated expression without having it more clearly defined by what precedes and what follows it — is not far removed from misrepresentation. Begging Mr. Maitland's pardon, it is distinctly stated on page 61, "that when your race, the fifth, will have reached the zenith of its physical intellectuality and developed its highest civilization . . . unable to go on any higher in its own cycle, its progress towards absolute evil will be arrested (as its pre-

¹ [One of the oldest treatises in Hindu astronomy.]

² It must be here borne in mind that no man — Gautama Buddha, Christ, or any other is here referred to. The state which Siddhārtha Gautama attained by placing himself in direct *rapport* with a particular ray of the Absolute Wisdom is called Buddha.

decessors . . . were arrested in their progress toward the same).” Strange, indeed, must be the construction by which, from the above citation, the Vice-President’s proposition can be extracted “that the existence of ‘absolute evil’ is asserted by the adept”! On the contrary, the implication is plain that no such thing “as absolute evil” is ever realised by humanity. If, however, still further elucidation of the subject is sought, I have but to point out another passage, on the same subject, on page 84, and by the same “inspiring adept”; which will render Mr. Maitland’s — I love to think *unconscious* — misrepresentation as clear as day to everyone.

There is more *apparent and relative than actual evil even on earth*, and it is not given to the *hoi polloi* to reach the fatal grandeur and eminence of a Satan every day . . .

— writes the venerated Master on the said page. It is, indeed, very hard to conceive how a person of Mr. Maitland’s undoubted fairness and ability could have so hopelessly sunk in such a slough of serious errors!

To crown the list of voluntary and involuntary mistakes and misconceptions, we must mention his ascription to Madame Blavatsky of certain statements that, considering her relation to the holy personage to whom they refer, could never have been, nor were they made by her. The internal evidence, in the absence of any signature to the article,¹ in which the sentence occurs,² is strong enough to warn off all careful readers from the unwarranted assumption which Mr. Maitland has made. But it is certainly curious that the gentleman should have never missed a single chance of falling into blunder! The “Replies” — as everyone in our Society is aware of — were written by three “adepts” as Mr. Maitland calls them — none of whom is known to the London Lodge, with the exception of one — to Mr. Sinnett. The sentence quoted and fathered upon Madame Blavatsky is found in the MSS. sent by a Mahātma who resides in Southern India, and who had alone the right to speak, as he did, of another Mahātma. But even his words are not correctly stated,³ as shown in the footnote. With this remark, I may begin to wind up this already too prolonged controversy.

To sum up. Our rather lengthy examination of the strictures contained in the joint papers by the President and a “Vice-President of the London Lodge” will now clearly show to our fellow members, and to any impartial reader of *Esoteric Buddhism*, that

¹ “Replies to an English F.T.S.”

² See *The Theosophist*, October 1883, p. 3.

³ [I here deny most emphatically of having ever caused to be printed — let alone to have myself written it — the sentence as it now stands quoted by Mr. Maitland in his “Remarks.” *The Theosophist* of October is, I believe, available in England and the two sentences may be easily compared. When the writer of Reply No. 2, referring to “Greeks and Romans,” jocularly remarked that their ancestors might have been mentioned by some other name, and added that

. . . besides the very plausible excuse that the names used were embodied *in a private letter*, written [as many unimportant letters are] in great haste, and which [this particular letter] was hardly worthy of the honour of being quoted *verbatim* with all its imperfection . . .

— he certainly never meant his remark to yield any such charge as is implied in Mr. Maitland’s incorrect quotation. Let any one of the London Lodge compare and decide whether the said sentence can lead any person to doubt “the accuracy of the adept Brothers,” or infer “that they are frequently given to write in great haste things which are hardly worthy of the honour of being quoted, *etc.*” And since the word “frequently” does not occur in the alleged quotation, and alters a good deal the spirit of the remark, I can only express my regret that, under the present serious circumstances, Mr. Maitland should have become himself (inadvertently, no doubt) guilty of such an *inaccuracy*. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.]

its doctrines are neither unscientific, nor are they entirely allegorical. If, owing to their extremely abstruse character, they are misleading, or rather difficult of comprehension — the author should hardly be blamed for it. He has done his best; and, as the system of philosophy explained by Mr. Sinnett comes assuredly from the highest sources of Esoteric Knowledge known to us in the East — he has deserved, on the contrary, the best thanks, for even the little he has done. His book forms part of a complete system of Esoteric Science and philosophy which is neither Hindu nor Buddhist in its origin, but which is identical with the ancient Wisdom-Religion itself, and which forms the basis or foundation of every system of religion conceived by the human mind since the time when the first Dhyāni-Chohan appeared on this planet to plant the germ of Esoteric Wisdom.

Its form may appear indistinct, and the conceptions put forth may be under the necessity of being expanded or modified, when the whole system in its completeness is given out. Until then, it would be extremely improper to form any hasty ideas as regards the highest aims and objects of the said system, or its insufficiency to serve as “a perfect system of thought and rule of life.” To realise such an expectation, we have to wait till it is presented to us in its most perfect form, not assuredly from the fragmentary doctrines put together in Mr. Sinnett’s work; and it appears equally unreasonable to criticize the doctrines now before the world from the isolated stand-point of Esoteric Christianity. If any of the members of the London Lodge are of [the] opinion that there are higher and purer doctrines in the East, they are at full liberty to investigate them. But the fullest freedom given to them in their option can never justify the many uncalled for remarks, scattered over the two “Letters” against the “inspirers” of Mr. Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism*. To hint at length, as Mr. Maitland has done, “that nothing would be more likely than that . . . we [the members of the L.L.] should . . . be pledging ourselves to an obscure and outlying sect . . . with but a fragment of the truth . . . so perverted, as to represent no longer truth but error” is surely, in the absence of final proof, neither Theosophical, Buddhistic, nor even *Christian*, but simply very uncharitable, and as unjust to our Society at large.

As to the proposal made to split the London Branch into two sections, to be called the Tibetan and the Catholic, in our humble opinion, it is hardly calculated to promote the cause of Theosophy in the West. There may be, as the revered Mahātmās have suggested, two distinct groups in the London Lodge Theosophical Society; but these groups must be on a footing of *perfect equality*. To adopt Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland’s views in their entirety — excepting so far as they coincide with the views of the Master — would be fatal to the Society’s Catholic policy, and as such, the Parent Society would not give to its sanction. According to the rules of the Association, every Theosophical Society is “Catholic” in its aims and intentions, and we do not see the propriety of calling any particular section of the Society Catholic or Universal — in contrast with any other section, to limit it, after all, only to one particular person’s views. I gather further, from Mrs. Kingsford’s letter, that the object of the Catholic section is to proclaim Esoteric Christianity to the Western world. If this is to be its sole object, and if Esoteric Christianity is to be interpreted, agreeably to the authority of two individuals, and every other system of Esoteric Doctrine is to be treated in the same manner in which Mr. Sinnett’s book has been, then the section in question will be as much entitled to the distinctive appellation proposed, as an ob-

scure Hindu sect to identify itself with the Ancient Wisdom-Religion. As for all practical details of administration, the President-Founder, who will be in London within a short time of the receipt of the present, will be best competent to deal with them, in accordance with instructions received by him from the MAHĀTMAS — his, and our guides and MASTERS.

T. SUBBA ROW



True “Buddhism is Inner Wisdom,” in our Confusing Words Series.