

*Theosophy is Religion itself
and sublime code of Ethics*



Contents and train of thoughts¹

The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society.

Introductory notes and documents by Boris de Zirkoff.	3
Letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mr. W.Q. Judge.	4
Letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Sinnett.	6
Chatterji and Gebhard on theosophical organization.	8
The “Original Programme” Manuscript.	12
Theosophy first and organization after.	25
Some words on daily life by a Master of Wisdom.	28
The majority of the public Areopagus is generally composed of self-appointed judges, who have never made a permanent deity of any idol save their own personalities, their lower selves.	28

There is no religion higher than Truth.

There is, and can be, but One Absolute Truth in Kosmos.	31
To the Readers of Lucifer.	31

Theosophy is Religion itself, and sublime code of Ethics.

He who believes his own religion on faith, will regard that of every other man as a lie, and hate it on that same faith.	35
Theosophy is not a religion. It is Religion itself, a Divine Science embracing every science in life, moral and physical, and a sublime code of Ethics.	36
Theosophy is Religion and the Theosophical Society the Universal Church.	36
Theosophia: Fountain, Perspectives, Practice (Diagram).	44

The Theosophical Movement is the great moral but silent force.

Human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs, becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. But the world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with open arms by the children.	46
The Theosophical Movement was reborn in 1875.	51
And so the cyclic evolution of theosophical ideals continues.	53

Suggested reading for students.

From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.	55
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¹ Frontispiece and illustration on page 34, by Russell Cobane.

The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society.

Introductory notes and documents by Boris de Zirkoff.¹

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VII pp. 135-75.

There exists in the Archives of The Theosophical Society, at Adyar, India, a twenty-four page manuscript in H.P. Blavatsky's handwriting, signed and dated by her at Ostende, October 3rd, 1886. It contains a most important pronouncement regarding the aims and objectives of The Theosophical Society, and the platform upon which it was founded. It also embodies an outspoken defence of Col. Henry S. Olcott, the President-Founder.

The first page of the ms., containing, however, but a few lines of text (up to the middle of the second numbered item, at the word "races"), is missing. The missing lines have been restored from a typed copy at Adyar of an incomplete rendering of this pronouncement. Owing to the loss of the first page of the ms., the original title of it, if any, remains unknown. The present title is strongly suggested by the last paragraph of the text, and was adopted by C. Jinarājādāsa, when he published this ms. for the second time in the pages of *The Theosophist* (Vol. LII, No. 11, August, 1931, pp. 561-89), where it had been originally published some years earlier (Vol. XLV, June, July, August and September, 1924).

H.P. Blavatsky's ms. represents her Reply to a Statement issued jointly by Arthur Gebhard and Mohini Mohun Chatterji under the title of "A Few Words on The Theosophical Organization," and bearing the date of September 23rd, 1886. It embodied a rather harsh criticism of the Society and its President-Founder, Col. Henry S. Olcott. This joint Statement, in Mohini's handwriting, exists also in the Adyar Archives. On the back of it, Col. Olcott has written: "Manifesto of Mohini and Arthur Gebhard about my despotism. H.P.B.'s cutting reply. 1886."

The sad circumstances underlying what Blavatsky called the Gebhard-Mohini "Manifesto," and her own Reply, are perhaps nowhere expressed more graphically than in the two letters which follow: one to William Quan Judge, written on the very date when she signed her *Reply*, and the other to *The Sinnetts*, written but a few days later.



¹ Compiler and Editor of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

Letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mr. W.Q. Judge.

The original of this letter was held in the official archives of the Theosophical Society with Headquarters at Point Loma, California. It was originally published in *The Theosophical Forum*, New Series, Vol. III, No. 12, August 15th, 1932, pp. 251-53, certain capital letters being substituted, however, for some of the proper names occurring in the text. The following is a *verbatim et literatim* reproduction of the original, including peculiarities of H.P. Blavatsky's punctuation and style.

Ostende Rue d'Ouest 17
October 3rd, 1886

My dear W.Q.J. — Yours received —

Bouton is an old Shylock — & would skin his own mother. I cannot lose over 500\$. I make him an offer of 400\$ in three months instalments — 100\$ each — or 300\$ down. The secret is — does he care to have the *Secret Doctrine* or not — & whether he still wants to have *Isis illustrated* as he proposed to me in a letter. If he does — he will come down. If not, then there is little chance. But I feel sure you could manage it. You know that the copyright of *Isis* is mine — unless he has swindled me in this too. You ought to ascertain it. And if the copyright in Washington is in my *name* — then I suppose you could prevent him to sell even the remainder of the edition I do not know the laws & you do.

But do try to come to some arrangement with him. If he gives me the 400 by instalment — then I want you to have a \$100 out of it — 25\$ each time; & if he gives only 350 down at once then let him send me a cheque for 275\$ — & give you another for \$75. I don't want you to take trouble & bother yourself for me for the Prussian King. But do try to settle something definite with the old devil, so as to close accounts for ever in the matter of *Isis* hitherto printed. And tell me whether you can copyright for me the S.D. and what I have to do for it. Take to him my letter & try to mesmerize him & wig on the *right side*. I tell you seriously the publisher who will have the S.D. will make lots even if I myself do little. But I must fence and guarantee myself, securely in this matter of copyrighting.

And now to other things & far more serious. Arthur is with you now & you will find Arthur changed. One solitary month with Mohini has altered him so, that he is no more the same man. And the fruit of all this is — a *manifesto* written by Mohini & signed by both himself & Arthur. Anything more ungrateful, cold, unjust to poor Olcott and cruel *I have never read*. Nor did I ever expect such a thing from Mohini, who, if he is now regarded as a Jesus on wheels & a *Saint* owes to Olcott's advertisements of him & my enthusiastic claims for him. Now Mr. Mohini Babu (he passed 2 weeks with me) is cold, dignified & *reserved* with me, friendly and "patronizing" — but still never showing his little game right before my nose, but only behind my back. I will give you an example which will show his present drift. Poor old Dr Bergen who is as devoted as devotion itself to the Master's (*ideal* I call it with all those who do not know Them personally) — & who went on purpose to London to hear of, & about Them, and went to see the Arundales, heard to his amazement that the Masters were no longer regarded as the living *actual* Adepts, but either white Magicians with *greyish* tints, or "fictions" or something he could not make out. The Mahatmas he was told were *unreachable* Beings they could neither communicate, nor take concern in

worldly or private affairs could *never write letters* or *send messages* — therefore our Masters could never be MAHATMAS. You see what the consequences of all this have to be don't you? Then when Bergen protested & said that he, at any rate, would never give up the living Masters; would always remain *devoted* to Them etc. Miss Arundale arose & looking him straight in the face, said: "*I thought once as you do*; it took me *six months* to come to Mohini's views; BUT NOW I THINK AS HE DOES." Plain this: Mohini is then exercising for over six months his influence over Miss Arundale to make her lose faith & *belief* even in the Masters. To me Mohini never said it so openly; but so many points more for him in wiliness & cunning. To me he said *he was not of Bowaji's* way of thinking; that he blamed him etc. and his policy seems to be identical. Both are determined, I see, to gradually destroy the Society. They are undermining it slowly but surely; hence the "Manifesto," the sense of which is "Society useless; Brotherhood a flapdoodle; President — a vain, worldly, conceited, *untheosophical* & *unbrotherly* & pernicious fool. Down then, with President, Head-Quarters, Society & all." You will see it, because I answered it, & Sinnett will answer it too and we are going to print it to distribute among Fellows. Such was Mohini's influence on Arthur that he who was all devotion when he arrived, now said to Sinnett in going away, "What matters is, so long you do good that you work *within* or *outside* the T.S." Why should there be any connection with it for us *theosophists*. Now keep this letter *private and confidential* don't say anything to him but watch & see. But then I should not wonder in these days of *Libra*, *Duggas* & universal reckoning if even you found yourself influenced by Arthur, Mohini and Co — Well, when I lose YOU — then will I say — Goodbye Society — "Gone to join her grandmother" Your friend of the "Libra" is right in many ways; but of this later on. Ah, my poor dear Judge, do not be *wiled* away, for pity sake. Things will change & then everyone will be rewarded or — DAMNED. See if it don't.

Olcott is a conceited ass, but there is no one more faithful & true than he is to the Masters & the original *ideal* & no one is more devoted to the Society planned & established under Their Orders — than he is. I must, & *will* defend him publicly, & admit his shortcomings as sincerely in print I tell you we are on the eve of a crisis brought by Mohini and Bowaji and he who will remain true will be saved while all others will go to the Devil. The trouble with you is *that you do not know the great change* that came to pass in you a few years ago. Others have occasionally their *astrals* changed and replaced by those of Adepts (as of Elementaries) & they influence the *outer*, & the *higher* man. With you, it is the NIRMANAKAYA not the "astral" that blended with your astral. Hence the dual nature & fighting. Fakir? Fakir be damned. The man knows not the difference between a *Nirmānakāya* of an Adept & his *astral*.

Do write to me, for mercy sake, I am sending you on the *Reincarnation* as you asked, extracts from the S.D. & a full answer, I believe.

Your ever truly & faithfully (who?!) well, your *friend* anyhow.

H. P. B.

I am *not coming* just now to the U.S. who is the humbug who invented it?

Letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Sinnett.

First published in *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, New York, 1924, pp. 223-24.

October 6th, 1886

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett,

I forward Mohini's *Manifesto* which you please read carefully, if you have not before. I trust it to your care for a few days begging you to send it back to me *intact*, as I have to send it to Olcott and Council. It *cannot* and will not remain unnoticed. He addresses it "to all theosophists interested in the progress of *true* theosophy" and it will be circulated all over America whether printed or not. It *cannot* be left unanswered. If you have changed your mind and will not answer it — as you wanted to — then I must send it to Adyar where it will be made use of, and my *Reply* the same. So as your idea of recasting it is good and you may read it in a new form to your Society or do with it whatever you like — I must beg you to send it me (my MSS) intact also, and as it is; for I have neither time nor desire to copy it and am *ordered* to forward both the *Manifesto* and my *Reply* to Adyar and thence to America.

Of course you can do as you like. Only there are two ways left open before us, now, that Mohini has pronounced himself: either an amicable separation into groups, each according to its harmonious spirit, or — a thundering separation and a collapse of the "L.L. of T.S." The first may be effected by you, and quietly after you have talked it over with Mohini and Miss A.; the other will burst upon you as a thunder-clap, for they are preparing for it. The minds of our best members are poisoned by insinuations and metaphysical and cosmistical assumptions. Even Bm. Keightley has sailed off on the Yogi line. Neither Astrology nor Mesmerism will save it. What those fanatics want is the dark spirit of fanaticism, engrossed in which, they have lost sight of the fact that Mohini has quietly withdrawn from under their noses their *living* Teachers and ideals and substituted for them himself — *instead*.

I do not care for it personally. The days of heart-aching, and struggle and fight are over for me personally. I have done *my duty*, as ordered, and prefer remaining with Mohini on diplomatic friendly terms (an armed peace like the rest of Europe), than in open war. Much of what he says is true, that [but?] unless people are MADE to see the *revers de la médaille* of his "Saintship" — and his black ingratitude and cold-heartedness to Olcott and all — the L.L. will be lost in a fog of Maya created by the young gentleman. He has psychologised them all and all see as he wants them to. You remain indifferent? Very well; so am I. Mrs. K. and Maitland both tell me that the only means of saving the L.L. is to break it into groups or — *best of all* for me to come to London and *proclaim myself President of a group of Occultists!!* They take me for a Battenberg, or a Stambuloff of Bulgaria — verily. Well, it remains for me to wash my hands of the whole matter and ask you again to send me back both MSS — whether you recast mine or not. L'un n'empêche pas l'autre. Do so, and send it me to read and see. My love to Mrs. S.

Yours theosophically,

H. P. B.

It would seem that A.P. Sinnett may have kept both Documents for several weeks, before returning them to H.P. Blavatsky at Ostende. This is evidenced by an undated letter which Blavatsky wrote Col. H.S. Olcott sometime in the latter part of December, 1886 (published in *The Theosophist*, August, 1931, pp. 684-85), just prior to a business trip which Countess Constance Wachtmeister was going to make to London. This trip took place just prior to the New Year of 1887, and into the first days of January. Up to that time, both Documents were still in Blavatsky's hands. In the letter above referred to, she says:

Send with this mail, Mohini's "Few Words" and my answer. I had asked him to write down his grievance *for me to send to you privately* — never to address it to "sincere theosophists" and make public. — Well there is of the Loyola and Pecksniff¹ in him combined. I wish it could be published, *but not by you but by Tookaram* — for they would laugh at you if *you do yourself*, and I do not want to take out what I wrote of you for it is the truth, though you are a d * * * d humbug with me often enough. But I love sincerely, still. Well good bye.

H. P. B.

There is no record or evidence that either the joint Statement or Blavatsky's Reply thereto was ever published, or circulated in any other manner, at the time they were penned.

Both of these Documents are reproduced below in their proper sequence. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]



¹ [An extreme hypocrite, after Seth Pecksniff, a character in Charles Dickens "Martin Chuzzlewit."]

Chatterji and Gebhard on theosophical organization.¹

[Published for the first time by C. Jinarājādāsa in a booklet-form reprint of “The Original Programme” and the “Preliminary Memorandum of the Esoteric Section,” pp. 51-59 (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931). Reprinted by permission of the Publishers.]

As an act of Theosophical duty the following observations on some features of the present organization of the Theosophical Society are submitted to those interested in the progress of true Theosophy. In the “Rules of the Theosophical Society together with an explanation of its objects and principles” for 1885 (the last published) it appears that “The whole Society is under the special care of one General Council, and of the President, its Founder. The members of the General Council shall annually be elected by the Convention and their duties shall consist in advising the President-Founder in regard to all matters referred to them by him.” On pp. 2 *et seq.* is to be found the list of additional members of the Council, which with some variations has continued for years. This list gives the names of those about whom alone there can be any elective rights exercised by the Convention, the rest being members *ex officio*. If the election is at all like what is known in the world outside the Theosophical Society the gentlemen appearing in the list ought at all events to be known to the Convention for some acts in pursuance of the “special care” of the Society vested in them by the Rules. But notoriously that is not the case. Practically they are all appointed by the President-Founder. The power of the General Council extends to “advising the President-Founder in regard to all matters referred to them by him.” But in the meantime the President-Founder is empowered to issue special orders and provisional rules “in the name and behalf of the General Council.” (Rule IV, p. 20) Thus the President-Founder is empowered to pledge the name and credit of the General Council, which enjoys the right “of advising the President-Founder” in the terms of the Rule quoted above. It only remains to add that five, and in emergent cases three, members constitute a quorum of the General Council meetings and that there are over a hundred and fifty members on the Council.

There is no such institution in existence as the Parent Society which by the Rules is competent to issue and nullify charters without which “no Branch can be formed or continued.” If however the Parent Society has any existence its constitution is as mysterious as that of the Venetian Council of Three. The centre of power in the Society is thus vested in [a] President who is further armed with the authority of this mysterious body.²

The Convention mentioned before and described in Rule IX (p. 20) is in no sense a representative or legal body, being nothing more than the gathering of those among the members who pay a visit to Adyar during the Christmas holidays. These gatherings have a value of their own in contributing to mutual instruction of members. But this value is certainly not increased by grossly misconceiving its character. There is no possibility of any gathering of members of the Theosophical Society binding the whole Society by its resolutions. For a member does not give any undertaking beyond

¹ By Mohini Mohun Chatterji and Arthur Gebhard.

² Without a word of explanation the Parent Society has disappeared from the “Rules” dated 1886.

what is implied in his application.¹ From the standpoint of Universal Brotherhood, however, such action would never be contemplated by any meeting calling itself Theosophical. In illustration it may be mentioned that the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society has completely ignored the rules published by the Head-Quarters at Adyar.

Thus it is plain that the Theosophical Society has laws without sanction, a legislative body without legality, a Parent Society without existence and a President-Founder above all rules. How far this is consistent with Theosophy and Brotherhood requires serious consideration. It is also noteworthy that the system of centralization of power discussed above is in contravention of rule II (p. 19) which expects members “to govern themselves in their mutual relations according to that principle” (i.e., of Universal Brotherhood).² The matter is placed in a more striking light by the declaration in rule XIV (p. 24)³ that the Society has “to deal only with scientific and philosophical subjects.” Hence it is quite evident that the power and position claimed in the “Rules” for the President-Founder, the General Council, and the Convention are opposed to the spirit of the declared objects of the Society. There is no *raison d’être* for any controlling authority. The different Theosophic groups can but (a) preach and practise Universal Brotherhood, (b) study ancient religion and philosophy, or (c) investigate psychical phenomena. Now, with regard to these matters Theosophy teaches self-culture and not control. The Society rests upon the declaration of sympathy with its objects, which every member makes before admission. As a Brotherhood it must aspire to bring about the state in which the sense of duty is the only incentive to action. Those amongst us who realize it most can and will but recommend greater simplicity of organization and not the reverse.

The Parent Society⁴ being what is described above, no charter to Branches can be issued. Nor is it necessary to do so. The same holds good of diplomas to members on admission without any test of merit.

The admission fee paid by members to the office at Adyar is of the nature of taxation and therefore inconsistent with the principle of Brotherhood. Nor does it appear that the Theosophical Society ought to be in need of money. The expenses for the maintenance of a central office at Adyar for keeping records and concentrating information cannot be more than would be met by voluntary contributions. Those for the annual gathering would always be paid by such members as perceive its benefit. A forced gift is unbrotherly; and moreover if the Society and its work are so little appreciated that a closer acquaintance with them will dissuade members from helping them with money to the amount now paid, then it can only be that those who join the Society do so only through misconceptions, and in that case it is better that the Society should cease to exist than that it should be the recipient of gifts which might pro-

¹ The form of application given in the “Rules” (1885) requires only *acquaintance* with the rules, while that dated 1886 declares willingness to conform thereto. But neither would validate Rules passed *ultra vires* as by the Convention. The change in the latest Rules is perhaps intended to remedy this illegal proceeding on the part of the Convention.

² This rule is not specifically mentioned in the “Rules” (1886) but is clearly implied.

³ Rule XXV, p. 19 (1886).

⁴ The argument is not affected by the substitution of the Parent Society by a Council of Seven.

duce subsequent regret in the donors. For the Theosophical Society to insist upon the fee of £1 before accepting as a brother one who asks for that recognition is the sale of Brotherhood. It is worse than useless to keep up a Society, call it Theosophical, and yet show no faith in Theosophy and the principle of Brotherhood.

The above was written under the misapprehension that the “Rules” bearing date 1885 were the latest. It has since been found that there is a later version of the rules dated 1886, which have modified the older rules on a great many points. But it is necessary to examine the earlier rules to ascertain the underlying principle which runs through the present ones as well. The chief point is that the Convention has no power to make any rules, as such a power is opposed to the spirit of Theosophy and also because the Convention itself is devoid of legal existence. Is there anything in the declared objects of the Society which allows of the existence of the Convention? Further, the Executive Council constituted or supposed to be so, by the Convention can have no power exceeding that of the Convention. But this it has by rule 14, clause (c), *p.* 17 of the “Rules” (1886), which limits the power of the Convention to the disposal of “all questions of importance *laid before it by the President and Executive Council.*” It has no power of effectually checking either. The whole question turns upon this — Is the Theosophical Society a Brotherhood or not? If the former, is it possible to have any centre of arbitrary power? To hold that there is a necessity for such a centre is only a roundabout way of saying that no Brotherhood is possible, but in point of fact that necessity itself is by no means proved. There have been no doubt Brotherhoods under single Masters, but in such cases the Masters were never elected for geographical or other considerations. The natural leader of men was always recognized by his embodying the spirit of Humanity. To institute comparisons would be little short of blasphemy. The greatest amongst men is always the readiest to serve and yet is unconscious of the Service.

Let us pause before finally tying the millstone of worldliness round the neck of Theosophy. Let us not forget that Theosophy does not grow in our midst by force and control, but by the sunshine of brotherliness and the dew of self-oblivion. If we do not believe in Brotherhood and Truth, let us put ashes on our head and weep in sackcloth and not rejoice in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness. Better it is by far that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as the motto of a papal institution. The fact must be recognized that the highest authority in the Society is to be found exactly where there is the untheosophic demand for authority. By rule 12, *p.* 17 (1886) “no Bye-laws and Rules of Branches shall be valid unless ratified by the President in Council.” What is the meaning of this power? Is it to be understood that the Executive Council sitting at Adyar knows better than the local members what is needed by a distant Branch, never perhaps visited by a single member of the Council?

More words are useless. Enough has been said to show that the organization called Theosophical presents many features seriously obstructive to the progress of Theosophy, and that unless the danger is perceived in time we shall not know what answer to make when the day of reckoning comes.

It would be out of place to suggest any specific measures. For no one who has any faith in Brotherhood and in the power of Truth will fail to perceive what is necessary.

While on the other hand if the foregoing words are but a cry in the wilderness, not evoking any definite perception of duty in members of the Theosophical Society, no Theosophic measures can be suggested for the reform of that which is not Theosophical. There is another reason which determines the present course. The tyranny of majorities over minorities is opposed to the principle of Brotherhood. Truth does not depend on show of hands.

It only remains to express fraternal wishes that every one of our brothers may feel the full sense of the responsibility which he has undertaken in the name of Truth and Brotherhood. It behooves us to bear in mind — Theosophy first and organization after.

Mohini M. Chatterji, F.T.S.,
for self and
A. Gebhard, F.T.S.

The absence of one of the signatories to the foregoing necessitates the ensuing note to rest on the responsibility of the undersigned alone. That the Convention has practically no authority is evident from the following considerations. By rule 21, clause (d), p. 19 (1886)¹ it is laid down that “an annual subscription of two shillings shall always be paid in advance by all the active Fellows of the Society.” It is well known that not only individuals but even Branches have refused to pay this subscription. The refusals have been acquiesced in, to all appearances, without any reference to the Convention. Comments are not necessary to show what bearing this has upon Theosophy and the Organization. Is it better to make demands which are abandoned on resistance being offered, or to leave such contributions to the Theosophical feelings of the members?

The question for consideration is not whether the Theosophical Society is doing good, but whether it is doing that kind of good which is entitled to the name of Theosophy. And also whether it is not doing spiritual wrong by calling a particular and limited line of good work Divine Wisdom thus excluding other similar work which is being done by other organizations upon which a slur is cast by the limitation put upon the term Theosophy by the Society.

Mohini M. Chatterji, F.T.S.,

September 23rd, 1886

77, Elgin Crescent,
Notting Hill,
London, W.



¹ This rule was first adopted at the Convention of 1883-84. In the edition of 1885 it is Rule II (p. 22).

The “Original Programme” Manuscript.

[Words within square brackets, as well as the italicizing of certain words and sentences, in passages quoted from the Chatterji-Gebhard Statement, are H.P. Blavatsky’s own, as careful comparison with the text of the Statement will show. Throughout Blavatsky’s Pronouncement, both in the main text of it, and in some of the footnotes, the occurrence of several dots indicates no elision of words, and is apparently meant to point to the beginning of a new thought which is particularly emphasized.

— Boris de Zirkoff.]

In order to leave no room for equivocation, the members of the T.S. have to be reminded of the origin of the Society in 1875. Sent to the U.S. of America in 1873 for the purpose of organizing a group of workers on a psychic plane, two years later the writer received orders from her Master and Teacher to form the nucleus of a regular Society whose objects were broadly stated as follows:

- 1 Universal Brotherhood;
- 2 No distinction to be made by the member between races, creeds, or social positions, but every member had to be judged and dealt by on his personal merits;
- 3 To study the philosophies of the East — those of India chiefly, presenting them gradually to the public in various works that would interpret exoteric religions in the light of esoteric teachings;
- 4 To oppose materialism and theological dogmatism in every possible way, by demonstrating the existence of occult forces unknown to science, in nature, and the presence of psychic and spiritual powers in man; trying, at the same time to enlarge the views of the Spiritualists by showing them that there are other, many other agencies at work in the production of phenomena besides the “Spirits” of the dead. Superstition had to be exposed and avoided; and occult forces, *beneficent and maleficent* — ever surrounding us and manifesting their presence in various ways — demonstrated to the best of our ability.

Such was the programme in its broad features. The two chief Founders were not told what they had to do, how they had to bring about and quicken the growth of the Society and results desired; nor had they any definite ideas given them concerning its outward organization — all this being left entirely with themselves. Thus, as the undersigned had no capacity for such work as the mechanical formation and administration of a Society, the management of the latter was left in the hands of Col. H.S. Olcott, then and there elected by the primitive founders and members — *President for life*. But if the two Founders were not told *what they had to do*, they were distinctly instructed about *what they should never do*, what they had to avoid, and what the Society should never become.

Church organizations, Christian and Spiritual sects were shown as the future contrasts to our Society.¹

To make it clearer:

- 1 The Founders had to exercise all their influence *to oppose selfishness of any kind*, by insisting upon sincere, fraternal feelings among the Members — at least outwardly; working for it to bring about a spirit of unity and harmony, the great diversity of creeds notwithstanding; expecting and demanding from the Fellows, a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings; mutual help in the research of truths in every domain — moral or physical — and even, in daily life.
- 2 They had to oppose in the strongest manner possible anything approaching *dogmatic faith and fanaticism* — belief in the *infallibility* of the Masters, or even in the very existence of our invisible Teachers, having to be checked from the first. On the other hand, as a great respect for the private views and creeds of every member was demanded, any Fellow criticising the faith or belief of another Fellow, hurting his feelings, or showing a reprehensible self-assertion, unasked (mutual friendly advices were a duty unless declined) — such a member

¹ A liberal Christian member of the T.S. having objected to the study of Oriental religions and doubted whether there was room left for any new Society — a letter answering his objections and preference to Christianity was received and the contents copied for him; after which he denied no longer the advisability of such a Society as the proposed Theosophical Association. A few extracts from this early letter will show plainly the nature of the Society as then contemplated, and that we have tried only to follow, and carry out in the best way we could the intentions of the *true* originators of the Society in those days. The pious gentleman having claimed that he was a *theosophist* and had a right of judgment over other people was told . . . “You have no right to such a title. You are only a *philo*-theosophist; as one who has reached to the full comprehension of *the name and nature* of a theosophist will sit in judgment on no man or action. . . . You claim that your religion is the highest and final step toward divine Wisdom on this earth, and that it has introduced into the arteries of the old decaying world new blood and life and verities that had remained unknown to the heathen? If it were so indeed, then your religion would have introduced the highest truths into all the social, civil and international relations of Christendom. Instead of that as anyone can perceive, your social as your private life is not based upon a common moral solidarity but only on constant mutual counteraction and purely mechanical equilibrium of individual powers and interests . . . If you would be a theosophist you must not do as those around you do who call on a God of Truth and Love and serve the dark Powers of Might, Greed and Luck. We look in the midst of your Christian civilization and see the same sad signs of old: the realities of your daily lives are diametrically opposed to your religious ideal, but you feel it not; the thought that the very laws that govern your being whether in the domain of politics or social economy clash painfully with the origins of your religion — do not seem to trouble you in the least. But if the nations of the West are so fully convinced that the ideal can never become practical and the practical will never reach the ideal — then, you have to make your choice: either it is your religion that is impracticable, and in that case it is no better than a vain-glorious delusion, or it might find a practical application, but it is you yourselves, who do not care to apply its ethics to your daily walk in life . . . Hence, before you invite other nations ‘to the King’s festival table’ from which your guests arise more starved than before, you should, ere you try to bring them to your own way of thinking, look into the repasts they offer to you . . . Under the dominion and sway of exoteric creeds, the grotesque and tortured shadows of theosophical realities, there must ever be the same oppression of the weak and the poor and the same typhonic struggle of the wealthy and the mighty among themselves . . . It is *esoteric philosophy alone*, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with Nature that, by revealing fundamental truths, can bring that much desired mediate state between the two extremes of human Egotism and divine Altruism and finally lead to the alleviation of human suffering . . .”

[So in manuscript. The continuation of this letter from one of the Teachers — we do not know which one — is on page 169 of the present volume, beginning with the words: “Theosophy must not represent . . .” etc.

Certain portions of this letter were used by H.P. Blavatsky in her magazine *Lucifer*, Vol. I, January, 1888, pp. 344-46, under the title of “Some Words on Daily Life,” and credited therein to “A Master of Wisdom.” *Lucifer*’s version begins with the sentence: “It is divine philosophy alone . . .,” and continues with: “Theosophy should not represent . . .” There are changes and considerable amplifications of the main ideas, which are not in the Adyar manuscript.

Nothing further seems to be known about this letter from one of the Teachers, and the whereabouts of the original are unknown. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

incurred expulsion. The greatest spirit of free research untrammelled by anyone or anything, had to be encouraged.

Thus, for the first year the Members of the T. Body who representing every class in Society as every creed and belief — Christian clergymen, Spiritualists, Freethinkers, Mystics, Masons and Materialists — lived and met under these rules in peace and friendship. There were two or three expulsions for *slander* and *backbiting*. The rules, however imperfect in their tentative character, were strictly enforced and respected by the members. The original \$5, initiation fee, was soon abolished as *inconsistent with the spirit of the Association*: members had enthusiastically promised to support the Parent Society and defray the expenses of *machines for experiments, books*, the fees of the *Recording Secretary*,¹ etc., etc. This was *Reform No. I*. Three months after, Mr. H.J. Newton, the Treasurer, a rich gentleman of New York,² showed that no one had paid anything or helped him to defray the current expenses for the Hall of meetings, stationery, printing, etc., and that he had to carry the burden of those expenses *alone*. He went on for a short time longer, then — *he resigned as Treasurer*. It was the President-Founder, Col. H.S. Olcott, who had to pay henceforth for all. He did so for over 18 months. The “fee” was re-established, before the Founders left for India with the two English delegates — now their mortal enemies; but the money collected was for the Arya Samaj of Āryāvarta with which Society the Theosophical became affiliated. It is the Prest.-Founder, who paid the enormous travelling expenses from America to India, and those of installation in Bombay, and who supported the two delegates out of his own pocket for nearly 18 months. When he had no more money left, nor the Corresponding Secretary either — a resolution was passed that the “initiation fee” sums should go towards supporting the Head-Quarters.

Owing to the rapid increase in the Society in India, the present *Rules and Statutes* grew out. They are not the outcome of the deliberate thought and whim of the Prest.-Founder, but the result of the yearly meetings of the General Council at the Anniversaries. If the members of that G.C. have framed them so as to give a wider authority to the President-Founder, it was the result of their absolute confidence in him, in his devotion and love for the Society, and not at all — as implied in “A Few Words” — a proof of *his love for power and authority*. Of this, however, later on.

It was never denied that the Organization of the Theosophical Society was *very* imperfect. *Errare humanum est*. But, if it can be shown that the President has done what he could under the circumstances and in the best way he knew how — no one, least of all a theosophist, can charge him with the sins of the whole community as now done. From the founders down to the humblest member the Society is composed of imperfect mortal men — not gods. This was always claimed by its leaders. “He who feels *without sin*, let him cast the first stone.” It is the duty of every Member of the Council to offer advice and to bring for the consideration of the whole body any incorrect proceedings. One of the *plaintiffs* is a Councillor. Having never used his privileges as one, in the matter of the complaints now proffered — and thus, having no excuse to give that his just representations were not listened to, he by bringing out

¹ Mr. J.S. Cobb. [See Bio-Bibliography. Index under COBB.]

² [See Bio-Bibliography. Index under NEWTON for further data.]

publicly what he had to state first privately — sins against Rule XII. The whole paper now reads like a defamatory aspersion, being full of untheosophical and unbrotherly insinuations — which the writers thereof could never have had in view.

This Rule XIIth was one of the first and the wisest. It is by neglecting to have it enforced when most needed, that the President-Founder has brought upon himself the present penalty.¹ It is his too great indulgence and unwise carelessness that have led to all such charges of abuse of power, love of authority, show, of vanity, etc., etc. Let us see how far it may have been deserved.

As shown for 12 years the Founder has toiled *almost alone* in the interests of the Society and the general good — hence, not his own, and, the only complaint he was heard to utter was, that *he was left no time for self-development and study*. The results of this too just complaint are, that those for whom he toiled, are the first to fling at him the reproach of being ignorant of certain Hindu terms, of using one term for another, for instance of having applied the word “Jīvanmukta” to a Hindu chela, on one occasion! The crime is a terrible one, indeed . . . We know of “*chelas*,” who being Hindus, are sure never to confuse such well-known terms in *their* religion; but who, on the other hand, pursue Jīvanmuktship and the highest theosophical Ethics through the royal road of selfish ambition, lies, slander, ingratitude and backbiting. Every road leads to Rome; this is evident; and there is such a thing in Nature as “*Mahatma*”-*Duggas* . . . It would be desirable for the cause of theosophy and truth, however, were all the critics of our President in general, less learned, yet found reaching more to the level of his all-forgiving good nature, his thorough sincerity and unselfishness; as the rest of the members less inclined to lend a willing ear to those, who, like the said “Vicars of Bray” have developed a hatred for the Founders — for reasons unknown.

The above advice is offered to the two Theosophists who have just framed their “Few Words on the Theosophical Organization.” That they are not alone in their complaints (which, translated from their diplomatic into plain language look a good deal in the present case like a mere “*querelle d’allemand*”) and that the said complaints are in a great measure just — is frankly admitted. Hence, the writer must be permitted to speak in this, her answer, of theosophy and theosophists in general, instead of limiting the *Reply* strictly to the complaints uttered. There is not the slightest desire to be personal; yet, there has accumulated of late such a mass of incandescent material in the Society, by that eternal friction of precisely such “selfish personalities,” that it is certainly wise to try to smother the sparks in time, by pointing out to their true nature.

Demands, and a feeling of necessity for reforms have not originated with the two complainants. They date from several years, and there has never been a question of *avoiding* reforms, but rather a failure of finding such means as would satisfy *all* the theosophists. To the present day, we have yet to find that “wise man” from the East

¹ For years the wise rule by which any member accused of backbiting or slander was expelled from the Society after sufficient evidence — has become obsolete. There have been two or three solitary cases of expulsion for the same in cases of members of *no* importance. Europeans of position and name were allowed to cover the Society literally with mud and slander their Brothers with perfect impunity. This is the President’s *Karma* — and it is just.

or from the West, who could not only *diagnosicate* the disease in the Theosophical Society, but offer advice and a remedy likewise to cure it. It is easy to write: “It would be out of place to suggest any *specific measures* [for such reforms, which do seem more difficult to *suggest* than to be vaguely hinted at]. For no one who has any faith in Brotherhood and in the power of Truth will fail to perceive what is necessary,” — concludes the critic. One may, perhaps, have such faith and yet fail to perceive what is *most* necessary. Two heads are better than one; and if any practical reforms have suggested themselves to our severe judges their refusal to give us the benefit of their discovery would be most unbrotherly. So far, however, we have received only most impracticable suggestions for reforms whenever these came to be specified. The Founders, and the whole Central Society at the Headquarters, for instance, are invited to demonstrate their theosophical natures by living like “fowls in the air and lilies of the field,” which neither sow nor reap, toil not, nor spin and “take no thought for the morrow.” This being found hardly practicable, even in India, where a man may go about in the garment of an Angel, but has, nevertheless, to pay rent and taxes, another proposition, then a third one and a fourth — each less practicable than the preceding — were offered . . . the unavoidable rejection of which led finally to the criticism now under review.

After carefully reading “A Few Words, etc.,” no very acute intellect is needed to perceive that, although no “specific measures” are offered in them, the drift of the whole argument tends but to one conclusion, a kind of syllogism more Hindu than metaphysical. Epitomised, the remarks therein plainly say: “Destroy the bad *results* pointed out by destroying the *causes* that generate them.” Such is the apocalyptic meaning of the paper, although both causes and results are made painfully and flagrantly objective and that they may be rendered in this wise: Being shown that the Society is the result and fruition of a bad President; and the latter being the outcome of such an “untheosophically” organized Society — and, its *worse than useless* General Council — “make away with all these *Causes* and the results will disappear”; *i.e.*, the Society will have ceased to exist. Is this the heart-desire of the two *true and sincere Theosophists*?

The complaints — “submitted to *those interested in the progress of true Theosophy*” — which seems to mean “theosophy *divorced from the Society*” — may now be noticed in order and answered. They specify the following objections:

- ① To the language of the *Rules* with regard to the powers invested in the President-Founder by the General Council. This objection seems very right. The sentence . . . The duties of the Council “shall consist in *advising* the P.-F. *in regard to all matters referred to them by him*” may be easily construed as implying that on all matters *not* referred to the Council by the Prest.-Founder . . . its members will hold their tongues. The Rules are changed, at any rate they are corrected and altered yearly. This sentence can be taken out. The harm, so far, is not so terrible.
- ② It is shown that many members *ex-officio* whose names are found on the list of the General Council *are not known* to the Convention; that they are, very likely, not even interested in the Society “under their special care”; a body they had joined at one time, then probably *forgotten* its existence in the meanwhile, to withdraw themselves from the Association. The argument implied is very valid. Why not point it out

officially to the Members residing at, or visiting the Head-Quarters, the impropriety of such a parading of names? Yet, in what respect can this administrative blunder, or carelessness, interfere with, or *impede* “the progress of *true* theosophy”?¹

③ “The members are appointed by the President-Founder . . . it is complained; the General Council only *advises* on what is submitted to it” . . . and “in the meantime that P.F. is empowered *to issue special orders* and provisional rules,” on behalf of that (“dummy”) Council. (Rule IV, *p.* 20) Moreover, it is urged that out of a number of 150 members of the G. Council, a quorum of 5 and even 3 members present, may, should it be found necessary *by the President*, decide upon any question of vital importance, etc., etc., etc.

Such an “untheosophical” *display* of authority, is objected to by Messrs. M.M. Chatterji and A. Gebhard, on the grounds that it leads the Society to *Cæsarism*, to “tyranny” and papal infallibility, etc., etc. However right the two complainants may be *in principle* it is impossible to fail seeing, the absurd exaggerations of the epithets used; for, having just been accused on one page of “tyrannical authority,” of “centralization of power” and a “papal institution” (*p.* 9) — on page 11, the President-Founder is shown “issuing *special orders*” from that “centre of *Cæsarism*” — *which no one is bound to obey, unless he so wishes!* “It is well known” remarks the principal writer — “that not only individuals but even Branches have refused to pay this [annual] subscription . . . of . . . two shillings” (*p.* 11); without any bad effect for themselves, resulting out of it, as appears. Thus it would seem it is not to a *non-existent* authority that objections should be made, but simply to a vain and useless *display* of power that no one cares for. The policy of issuing “special orders” with such sorry results is indeed objectionable; only, *not on the ground of a tendency to Cæsarism*, but simply because it becomes *highly ridiculous*. The undersigned for one, has many a time objected to it, moved however, more by a spirit of *worldly* pride and an *untheosophical* feeling of self-respect than anything like Yogi humility. It is admitted with regret that the world of scoffers and *non-theosophists* might, if they heard of it, find in it a capital matter for fun. But the real wonder is, how can certain *European* theosophists, who have bravely defied the world to make them wince under any amount of ridicule, once they acted in accordance with the dictates of their conscience and duty — make a crime of what is at the worst a *harmless*, even if ridiculous, bit of vanity; a desire of giving importance — not to the Founder, but to his Society *for which he is ready to die any day*. One kind of ridicule is worth another. The Western theosophist, who for certain magnetic reasons wears his hair long and shows otherwise eccentricity in his dress, will be spared no more than his President, with his “special orders.” Only the latter, remaining as kindly disposed and brotherly to the “individual theosophist and even a Branch” — that snub *him* and his “order,” by refusing to pay what others do — shows himself *ten-fold more theosophical and true to the principle of Brotherhood*, than the former, who traduces and denounces him in such uncharitable terms, instead of kindly warning him of the bad effect produced. Unfortunately, it is not those who speak the loudest of virtue and theosophy, who are the best exemplars of both. Few of them, if any, have tried to cast out the beam from their own eye, before they

¹ Furthermore the writer of the complaints in “A Few Words, etc.” is himself a member of the General Council for over two years (see Rules 1885); why has he not spoken earlier?

raised their voices against the mote in the eye of a brother. Furthermore, it seems to have become quite the theosophical rage in these days, to denounce vehemently, yet never to offer to help pulling out *any* such *motes*.

The Society is bitterly criticized for asking every well-to-do theosophist (the poor are exempt from it, from the first) to pay annually two shillings to help defraying the expenses at Head-Quarters. It is denounced as “untheosophical,” “unbrotherly,” and the “admission fee” of £1, is declared no better than a “sale of Brotherhood.” In this our “Brotherhood” may be shown again on a far higher level than any other association past or present. The Theosophical Society has never shown the ambitious pretension to outshine in *theosophy* and *brotherliness*, the primitive Brotherhood of Jesus and his Apostles,¹ and that “Organization,” besides asking and being occasionally refused, helped itself *without asking*, and as a matter of fact in a *real* community of Brothers. Nevertheless, such action, that would seem highly untheosophical and prejudicial in our day of culture when nations alone are privileged to pocket each other’s property and expect to be honoured for it — does not seem to have been an obstacle in the way of deification and sanctification of the said early “Brotherly” group. Our Society had never certainly any idea of rising superior to the *brotherliness* and *ethics* preached by Christ, but only to those of the *sham* Christianity of the Churches — as originally ordered to, by our MASTERS. And if we do not worse than the Gospel Brotherhood did, and far better than any Church, which would expel any member refusing too long to pay his Church rates, it is really hard to see why our “Organization” should be ostracized by its own members. At any rate, the pens of the latter ought to show themselves less *acerb*, in these days of trouble when everyone seems bent on finding fault with the Society, and few to help it, and that the President-Founder is alone to work and toil with a few devoted theosophists at Adyar to assist him.

④ “There is no such institution in existence as the Parent Society” — we are told (*pp.* 2 and 3). “It has disappeared from the Rules and . . . has no *legal* existence” . . . The Society being unchartered, *it has not* — legally; but no more has any theosophist a legal existence, for the matter of that. Is there one single member throughout the whole globe who would be recognised *by law* or before a Magistrate — *as a theosophist?* Why then do the gentlemen “complainants” call themselves “theosophists” if the latter qualification has no better legal standing than the said “Parent Society” or the Head-Quarters itself? But the Parent-body *does* exist, and will, so long as the last man or woman of the primitive group of Theosophists-*Founders* is alive.



¹ Yet, the Theosophical Brotherhood does seem doomed to outrival the group of Apostles in the number of its *denying* Peters, its unbelieving Thomases, and even Iscariots occasionally, ready to sell their Brotherhood for less than thirty *shekels* of silver!

This — as a body; as for its moral characteristics, the Parent-Society means that small nucleus of theosophists who hold sacredly through storm and blows to the *original programme* of the T.S. as established under the direction and orders of those, whom they recognize — and will, to their last breath — as the real originators of the Movement, their *living*, Holy MASTERS AND TEACHERS.¹

⑤ The complaints then, that the T.S. “has laws without sanction, a legislative body without legality, a Parent Society without existence,” and, worse than all — “a President-Founder *above all rules*” — are thus shown only *partially* correct. But even were they all absolutely true, it would be easy to abolish such rules with one stroke of the pen, or to modify them. But now comes the curious part of that severe *philippic* against the T.S. by our eloquent Demosthenes. After six pages (out of the twelve) had been filled with the said charges, the writer admits on the 7th — that they have been so modified! — “The above” we learn (rather late) “was written under the *misapprehension* that the Rules bearing date 1885 were the latest. It has since been found that there is a later version of the Rules dated 1886, which *have modified the older rules on a great many points*.” So much the better. — Why recall in such case mistakes in the past if these exist no longer? But the accusers do not see it in this light. They are determined to act as a theosophical Nemesis; and in no way daunted by the discovery, they add that nevertheless “it is *necessary* to examine the earlier rules to ascertain *the underlying principle* which runs through the present ones as well.” This reminds of the fable of “the Wolf and the Lamb.” But — you see — “the chief point is that the Convention *has no power to make any rules*, as such a power *is opposed to the spirit of Theosophy*. . . .” etc., etc.

Now this is the most extraordinary argument that could be made. At this rate no Brotherhood, no Association, no Society is possible. More than this: no theosophist, however holy his present life may be, would have the right to call himself one; for were it always found *necessary* to examine *his earlier life*, “to ascertain the *underlying principle*” which rules through the nature of the present man — ten to one, he would be found unfit to be called a theosophist! The experiment would hardly be found pleasant to the majority of those whom association with the T.S. has reformed, and of such there are a good many.

After such virulent and severe denunciations one might expect some good, friendly and theosophically *practical* advice. Not at all, and none is offered, since we have been already told (*p.* 9) that it would be “out of place to suggest any specific measures. For no one who has any faith in Brotherhood and in the power of Truth *will fail* to perceive what is necessary.” The President-Founder, has *no faith* in either “Brotherhood,” or “the power of Truth” — apparently. This is made evident by his having *failed* to perceive:

¹ The members of the T.S. know, and those who do not should be told, that the term “Mahatma,” now so subtly analysed and controverted, for some mysterious reasons had never been applied to our Masters before our arrival in India. For years they were known as the “Adept-Brothers,” the “Masters,” etc. It is the Hindus themselves who began applying the term to the two Teachers. This is no place for an etymological disquisition and the fitness or unfitness of the qualification, in the case in hand. As a *state*, *Mahatmaship* is one thing, as a double noun, *Mahā-ātma* (Great Soul), quite another one. Hindus ought to know the value of metaphysical Sanskrit names used; and it is they the first, who have used it to designate the MASTERS.

(a) That the Head-Quarters — opened to *all* Theosophists of any race or social position, board and lodging free of charge the whole year round — was an *un-brotherly* Organization;

(b) That the “central office at Adyar for keeping records and concentrating information” with its European and Hindu inmates working *gratuitously* and some helping it with their own money whenever they have it — ought to be carried on, according to the method and principle of George Muller of Bristol, namely, the numerous household and staff of officers at Adyar headed by the Prest.-Founder ought to kneel every morning in prayer for their bread and milk appealing for their meals to “miracle”; and that finally,

(c) And all the good the Society is doing, is no good whatever but “a spiritual wrong,” because it presumes to call a “*limited* line of good work [theosophy] Divine Wisdom.”

The undersigned is an ever patient theosophist, who has hitherto laboured under the impression that no amount of subtle scholasticism and tortured casuistry but could find like the Rosetta stone its Champollion — someday. The most acute among theosophists are now invited to make out in “A Few Words” — what the writers or writer is driving at — unless in plain and unvarnished language, it be — “Down with the Theosophical Society, Prest.-Founder and its Head-Quarters!” This is the only possible explanation of the twelve pages of denunciations to which a reply is now attempted. What can indeed be made out of the following jumble of contradictory statements:

- The Prest.-Founder having been shown throughout as a “tyrant,” a “*would be* Cæsar,” “aiming at *papal* power” and a “Venetian Council of Three,” and other words to that effect implied in almost every sentence of the paper under review, it is confessed in the same breath “that the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society has *completely ignored* the *Rules* [of the Pope Cæsar] published by the Headquarters at Adyar”! (p. 4) And yet, the “L.L. of the T.S.” still lives and breathes and one has heard of no *anathema* pronounced against it, so far . . .
- Rule XIV stating that the Society has “to deal *only* with scientific and philosophical subjects,” hence, “it is quite *evident* [?] that the power and position claimed in the *Rules* for the Prest.-Founder, the General Council and the Convention are opposed to the spirit of the declared objects. . . .”

It might have been as well perhaps to quote the entire paragraph in which these words appear,¹ once that hairs are split about the possibly faulty reaction of the *Rules*? Is it not self-evident, that the words brought forward “only with scientific and philosophical subjects” are inserted as a necessary caution to *true* theosophists, who by dealing with politics *within* any Branch Society might bring disgrace and ruin on the whole body — in India to begin with? Has the Society or has it not over 140 Soci-

¹ “XIV. The Society having to deal only with scientific and philosophical subjects, and having Branches in different parts of the world under various forms of Government, does not permit its members, as such, to interfere with politics, and repudiates any attempt on the part of anyone to commit it in favour or against any political party or measure. Violation of this rule will meet with expulsion.”

This rather alters the complexion put on the charge, which seems conveniently to forget that “scientific and philosophical subjects” are not the *only* declared objects of the Society. Let us not leave room for a doubt that there is more *animus* underlying the charges than would be strictly *theosophical*.

eties scattered through four parts of the World to take care of? As in the case of “Mahatmas” and the “Mahatmaship” — active work of the Theosophical Society is confused — willingly or otherwise it is not for the writer to decide — with Theosophy. No need of entering here upon the difference between the jar that contains a liquid and the nature of, or that liquid itself. “Theosophy teaches *self-culture* and not control,” we are told. Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. “Self-culture” is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid association with human beings; and this is a *triple distilled* SELFISHNESS. For real moral advancement — there “where two or three are gathered” in the name of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH — there that Spirit of Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*. To say that theosophy has no need of a Society — a vehicle and centre thereof — is like affirming that the Wisdom of the Ages collected in thousands of volumes at the British Museum has no need of either the edifice that contains it, nor the works in which it is found. Why not advise the British Govt. on its lack of discrimination and its *worldliness* in not destroying Museum and all its vehicles of Wisdom? Why spend such sums of money and pay so many officers to watch over its treasures, the more so, since many of its guardians may be quite out of keeping with, and opposed to the Spirit of that Wisdom? The Directors of such Museums may or may not be very perfect men, and some of their assistants may have never opened a philosophical work: yet, it is they who take care of the library and preserving it for future generations are indirectly entitled to their thanks. How much more gratitude is due to those who like our self-sacrificing theosophists at Adyar, devote their lives to, and give their services gratuitously to the good of Humanity!

Diplomas and Charters are objected to, and chiefly the “admission fee.” The latter is a “taxation,” and therefore “*inconsistent* with the principle of Brotherhood” . . . A “forced gift is *unbrotherly*,” etc., etc. It would be curious to see where the T.S. would be led to, were the Pt.-F. to religiously follow the proffered advices. “Initiation” on admission, has been made away with already in Europe, and has *led to that* which will very soon become known: no use mentioning it at present. Now the “Charters” and diplomas would follow. Hence no document to show for any group, and no diploma to prove that one is affiliated to the Society. Hence also perfect liberty to anyone to either call himself a theosophist, or deny he is one. The “admission fee”? Indeed, it has to be regarded as a terrible and *unbrotherly* “extortion,” and a “forced gift,” in the face of those thousands of Masonic Lodges, of Clubs, Associations, Societies, Leagues, and even the “Salvation Army.” The former, extort yearly *fortunes* from their Members; the latter — throttle in the name of Jesus the masses and appealing to *voluntary* contributions make the converts pay, and pay in their turn every one of their “officers,” none of whom will serve the “Army” for nothing. Yet it would be well, perchance, were our members to follow the example of the Masons in their solidarity of thought and action and at least *outward* Union, notwithstanding that receiving a thousand times more from their members they give them in return still less than we do, whether spiritually or morally. This solitary single guinea expected from every

new member is spent in less than one week, as was calculated, on postage and correspondence with theosophists. Or are we to understand that all correspondence with members — now left to “*self-culture*” — is also to cease and has to follow diplomas, Charters and the rest? Then truly, the Head-Quarters and Office have better be closed. A simple *Query* — however: Have the £1. — the yearly contribution to the L.L. of the T.S., and the further sum of 2/6d. to the Oriental Group been abolished as “acts of unbrotherly extortion,” and how long, if so, have they begun to be regarded as “a *sale* of Brotherhood”?

To continue: the charges wind up with the following remarks, so profound, that it requires a deeper head than ours to fathom all that underlies the words contained in them. Queries the plaintiff:

Is the Theosophical Society a Brotherhood, or not? if the former, is it possible *to have any centre of arbitrary power?*¹ To hold that there is a necessity for such a centre is only a round-about way of saying that no Brotherhood is possible,² but in point of fact *that necessity itself is by no means* proved [!]. There have been no doubt Brotherhoods under single Masters [there “have been” and *still are*. — H.P.B.], but in such cases the Masters were never elected *for geographical* or other considerations [?]. The natural leader of men was always recognized by his embodying the spirit of Humanity. To institute comparisons would be little short of blasphemy. The greatest among men is always the readiest to serve and yet is unconscious of the Service.

Let us pause before finally tying the millstone of worldliness round the neck of Theosophy. Let us not forget that Theosophy does not grow in our midst *by force and control*, but by the *sunshine of brotherliness* and the *dew of self-oblivion*. If we do not believe in Brotherhood and Truth, let us put ashes on our head and *weep in sackcloth* and not rejoice in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness. Better it is by far that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as the motto of *a papal institution*.

Who, upon reading this, and being ignorant that the above piece of rhetorical flowers of speech is directed against the luckless Prest.-Founder — would not have in his “mind’s eye” — an Alexander Borgia, a Caligula, or to say the least — General Booth in his latest metamorphosis! When, how, or by doing what, has our good natured, unselfish, ever kind President merited such a Ciceronian tirade? The state of things denounced exists now for almost twelve years, and our accuser knew of it and even took an active part in its organization, Conventions, Councils, Rules, etc., etc., at Bombay, and at Adyar. This virulent *sortie* is no doubt due to “SELF-CULTURE”? The critic has outgrown the movement and turned his face from the original programme; hence his severity. But where is the *true theosophical charity*, the tolerance and the “*sunshine of brotherliness*” just spoken of, and so insisted upon? Verily — it is easy to preach the “dew of self-oblivion” when one has nothing to think about except to

¹ It is the *first time* since the T.S. exists that such an accusation of *arbitrary* power, is brought forward. Not many will be found of this way of thinking.

² No need taking a *roundabout* way, to say that no Brotherhood would ever be possible if many theosophists shared the very original views of the writer.

evolve such finely rounded phrases; were every theosophist at Adyar to have his daily wants and even comforts, his board, lodging and all, attended to by a wealthier theosophist; and were the same “sunshine of brotherliness” to be poured upon him, as it is upon the critic who found for himself an endless brotherly care, a fraternal and self-sacrificing devotion in two other noble minded members, then — would there be little need for the President-Founder to call upon and humble himself before our theosophists. For, if he has to *beg* for 2 annual shillings — it is, in order that those — Europeans and Hindus — who work night and day at Adyar, giving their services free and receiving little thanks or honour for it should have at least *one meal a day*. The fresh “dew of *self-oblivion*” must not be permitted to chill one’s heart, and turn into the lethal *mould of forgetfulness* to such an extent as that. The severe critic seems to have lost sight of the fact that for months, during the last crisis, the whole staff of our devoted Adyar officers, from the President down to the youngest brother in the office, have lived on 5d. a day each, having reduced their meals to the *minimum*. And it is *this mite*, the proceeds of the “2 shill. contribution,” conscientiously paid by some that is now called *extortion*, a desire to live “in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness”!

Our “Brother” is right. Let us “weep in sackcloth and ashes on our head” if the T.S. has many more such *unbrotherly* criticisms to bear. Truly it would be far better “that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as the motto” — not of *papal authority* which exists nowhere at Adyar outside the critic’s imagination — but as a motto of a “self-developed fanaticism.” All the great services otherwise rendered to the Society, all the noble work done by the complainant will pale and vanish before such an appearance of cold-heartedness. Surely he cannot desire the *annihilation* of the Society? And if he did it would be useless: the T.S. *cannot be destroyed as a body*. It is not in the power of either Founders or their critics; and neither friend nor enemy can ruin that which is *doomed to exist*, all the blunders of its leaders notwithstanding. That which was generated through and founded by the “High Masters” and under their authority if not their instruction — MUST AND WILL LIVE. Each of us and all will receive his or her *Karma* in it, but the *vehicle* of Theosophy will stand indestructible and undestroyed by the hand of whether man or fiend. No; “truth does not depend on show of hands”; but in the case of the much-abused President-Founder it must depend on the show of *facts*. Thorny and full of pitfalls was the steep path he had to climb up alone and unaided for the first years. Terrible was the opposition outside the Society he had to build — sickening and disheartening the treachery he often encountered within the Head-Quarters. Enemies gnashing their teeth in his face around, those whom he regarded as his staunchest friends and co-workers betraying him and the Cause on the slightest provocation. Still, where hundreds in his place would have collapsed and given up the whole undertaking in despair, he, unmoved and unmovable, went on climbing up and toiling as before, unrelenting and undismayed, supported by that one thought and conviction that he was doing his duty. What other inducement has the Founder ever had, but his theosophical pledge and the sense of his duty toward THOSE he had promised to serve to the end of his life? There was but one beacon for him — the hand that had first pointed to him his way up: the hand of the MASTER he loves and reveres so well, and serves so devotedly though occasionally perhaps, unwisely. President elect-

ed for life, he has nevertheless offered more than once to resign in favour of anyone found worthier than him, but was never permitted to do so by the majority — not of “show of hands” but *show of hearts*, literally — as few are more beloved than he is even by most of those, who may criticise occasionally his actions. And this is only natural: for cleverer in administrative capacities, more learned in philosophy, subtler in casuistry, in metaphysics or daily life policy, there may be many around him; but the whole globe may be searched through and through and no one found stauncher to his friends, truer to his word, or more devoted to real, practical theosophy — than the President-Founder; and these are the chief requisites in a leader of such a movement — one that aims to become a Brotherhood of men. The Society needs no Loyolas; it has to shun anything approaching casuistry; nor ought we to tolerate too subtle casuists. There, where every individual has to work out his own Karma, the judgment of a casuist who takes upon himself the duty of pronouncing upon the state of a brother’s soul, or guide his conscience is of no use, and may become positively injurious. The Founder claims no more rights than everyone else in the Society: the *right of private judgment*, which, whenever it is found to disagree with Branches or individuals are quietly set aside and *ignored* — *as shown by the complainants themselves*. This then, is the sole crime of the would-be culprit, and no worse than this can be laid at his door. And yet what is the reward of that kind man? He, who has never refused a service, outside what he considers his official duties — to any living being; he who has redeemed dozens of men, young and old from dissipated, often immoral lives and saved others from terrible scrapes by giving them a safe refuge in the Society; he, who has placed others again, on the pinnacle of Saintship *through their status in that Society*, when otherwise they would have indeed found themselves now in the meshes of “worldliness” and perhaps worse; — he, that true friend of every theosophist, and verily “the readiest to serve and as unconscious of the service” — he is now taken to task for what? — for insignificant blunders, for useless “special, orders,” a *childish*, rather than untheosophical love of display, out of pure devotion to his Society. Is then *human nature* to be viewed so uncharitably by us, as to call *untheosophical*, worldly and sinful the natural impulse of a mother to dress up her child and parade it to the best advantages? The comparison may be laughed at, but if it is, it will be only by him who would, like the fanatical Christian of old, or the naked, dishevelled Yogi of India — have no more charity for the smallest human weakness. Yet, the simile is quite correct, since the Society is the child, the beloved creation of the Founder; he may be well forgiven for this too exaggerated love for that for which he has suffered and toiled more than all other theosophists put together. He is called “worldly,” “ambitious of power” and *untheosophical* for it. Very well; let then any impartial judge compare the life of the Founder with those of most of his critics, and see which was *the most theosophical* ever since the Society sprang into existence. If no better results have been achieved, it is not the President who ought to be taken to task for it, but the Members themselves, as he has been ever trying to promote its growth, and the majority of “Fellows” have either done nothing, or created obstacles in the way of its progress through sins of omission as of commission. Better unwise *activity*, than an overdose of too wise *inactivity*, apathy or indifference which are always the death of an undertaking.

Nevertheless, it is the members who now seek to sit in Solomon's seat; and they tell us that the Society is useless, its President positively mischievous, and that the Head-Quarters ought to be done away with, as "the organization called Theosophical presents many features seriously obstructive to the progress of Theosophy." Trees, however, have to be judged by their fruits. It was just shown that no "special orders" issuing from the "Centre of Power" called Adyar, could affect in any way whatever either Branch or individual; and therefore any theosophist bent on "self-culture," "self-involution" or any kind of *selfness*, is at liberty to do so; and if, instead of using his rights he will apply his brain-power to criticize other people's actions then it is he who becomes the *obstructionist* and not at all the "Organization called Theosophical." For, if theosophy is anywhere practised on this globe, it is at Adyar, at the Head-Quarters. Let "those interested in the progress of true theosophy" appealed to by the writers look around them and judge. See the Branch Societies and compare them with the group that works in that "Centre of Power." Admire the "progress of theosophy" at Paris, London and even America. Behold, in the great "Brotherhood," a true *Pandemonium* of which the Spirit of Strife and Hatred himself might be proud! Everywhere — quarrelling, fighting for supremacy; backbiting, slandering, scandal-mongering for the last two years; a veritable battlefield, on which several members have so disgraced themselves and their Society by trying to disgrace others, that they have actually become more like hyenas than human beings by digging into the graves of the Past, in the hopes of bringing forward old forgotten slanders and scandals!

At Adyar alone, at the Head-Quarters of the Theosophical Society, the Theosophists are that which they ought to be everywhere else: *true theosophists* and not merely *philosophers* and Sophists. In that centre alone are now grouped together the few solitary, practically working Members, who labour and toil, quietly and uninterruptedly, while those Brothers for whose sake they are working, sit in the *dolce far niente*¹ of the West and criticise them. Is this "true theosophical and brotherly work," to advise to put down and disestablish the only "centre" where real brotherly, humanitarian work is being accomplished?

Theosophy first and organization after.

Golden words, these. But where would Theosophy be heard of now, had not its Society been organized before its Spirit and a desire for it had permeated the whole world? And would Vedanta and other Hindu philosophies have been ever taught and studied in England outside the walls of Oxford and Cambridge, had it not been for that organization that fished them like forgotten pearls out of the Ocean of Oblivion and Ignorance and brought them forward before the profane world? Nay, kind Brothers and critics, would the Hindu exponents of that sublime philosophy themselves have ever been known outside the walls of Calcutta, had not the Founders, obedient to the ORDERS received, forced the remarkable learning and philosophy of those exponents upon the recognition of the two most civilized and cultured centres of Europe London and Paris? Verily it is easier *to destroy* than to build. The words "untheosophical" and "unbrotherly" are ever ringing in our ears; yet, truly theosophical acts and words

¹ [Italian for sweet to do nothing, *i.e.*, pleasing inactivity.]

are not to be found in too unreasonable a superabundance among those who use the reproof the oftener. However insignificant, and however *limited the line* of good deeds, the latter will have always more weight than empty and vainglorious talk, and will be *theosophy* whereas theories without any practical realisation are at best philosophy. Theosophy is an all-embracing Science; many are the ways leading to it, as numerous in fact as its definitions, which began by the sublime, during the day of Ammonius Saccas, and ended by the ridiculous — in Webster's *Dictionary*. There is no reason why our critics should claim the right for themselves alone to *know* what is theosophy and to define it. There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the mediaeval Alchemists, who knew the value of the term, it may be supposed. Therefore, when we are told that "the question for consideration is not whether the Theosophical Society *is doing good*, but whether it is doing *that kind of good which is entitled to the name of Theosophy*" — we turn round and ask: "And who is to be the judge in this mooted question?" We have heard of one of the greatest Theosophists who ever lived, who assured his audience that whosoever *gave a cup of cold water to a little one* in his (Theosophy's) name, would have a greater reward than all the learned Scribes and Pharisees. "Woe to the world because of offences!"

Belief in the Masters was never made an article of faith in the T.S. But for its Founders, the commands received from Them when it was established have ever been sacred. And this is what one of them wrote in a letter preserved to this day:

Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit — the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love. Its followers have to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality before they get the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic Unity and singleness of purpose in other associations and individuals. As said before — no Theosophist should blame a brother whether within or outside of the association, throw slur upon his actions or denounce him¹ lest he should himself lose the right of being considered a theosophist. Ever turn away your gaze from the imperfections of your neighbour and centre rather your attention upon your own shortcomings in order to correct them and become wiser . . . Show not the disparity between claim and action in another man but — whether he be brother or neighbour — rather help him in his arduous walk in life . . . The problem of true theosophy and its great mission is the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties which would satisfy most and best the altruistic and right feeling in us; and the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life where they may be applied with most equitableness . . . Such is the common work in view for all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task and will require strenuous and persevering exertion, but it must

¹ It is in consequence of this letter that Art. XII was adopted in *Rules* and a fear of lacking the charity prescribed, that led so often to neglect its enforcement.

lead you insensibly to progress and leave no room for any selfish aspirations outside the limits traced . . . Do not indulge in unbrotherly comparisons between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbour or brother, in the field of Theosophy, *as none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him* . . . Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to, and dealt with justly by KARMA alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathising individual may help you magnetically . . . You are the Free-workers on the Domain of Truth, and as such, must leave no obstructions on the paths leading to it. . . . [The letter closes with the following lines which have now become quite plain, as they give the key to the whole situation] . . . *The degrees of success or failure are the landmark we shall have to follow, as they will constitute the barriers placed with your own hands between yourselves and those whom you have asked to be your teachers. The nearer your approach to the goal contemplated — the shorter the distance between the student and the Master.* . . .

A complete answer is thus found in the above lines to the paper framed by the two Theosophists. Those who are now inclined to repudiate the Hand that traced it and feel ready to turn their backs upon the whole Past and the original programme of the T.S. are at liberty to do so. The Theosophical body is neither a Church nor a Sect and every individual opinion is entitled to a hearing. A Theosophist may progress and develop, and his views may outgrow those of the Founders, grow larger and broader in every direction, without for all that abandoning the fundamental soil upon which they were born and nurtured. It is only he who changes diametrically his opinions from one day to another and shifts his devotional views from white to black — who can be hardly trusted in his remarks and actions. But surely, this can never be the case of the two Theosophists who have now been answered . . .

Meanwhile, peace and fraternal good-will to all.

H.P. BLAVATSKY,
Corres. Secty T.S.

Ostende, October 3rd, 1886



Some words on daily life by a Master of Wisdom.

[For the benefit of the serious student, interested in the historical development of the Theosophical Movement, we append herewith the version of the Teacher's letter, as published in *Lucifer* (Vol. I, January 1888, pp. 344-46).]

The majority of the public Areopagus is generally composed of self-appointed judges, who have never made a permanent deity of any idol save their own personalities, their lower selves.

It is divine philosophy alone, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with nature, which, by revealing the fundamental truths that lie hidden under the objects of sense and perception, can promote a spirit of unity and harmony in spite of the great diversities of conflicting creeds. Theosophy, therefore, expects and demands from the Fellows of the Society a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings, ungrudging mutual help in the search for truths in every department of nature — moral and physical. And this ethical standard must be unflinchingly applied to daily life.

Theosophy should not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics, epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy *must be made practical*; and it has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless digressions, in the sense of desultory orations and fine talk. Let every Theosophist only do his duty, that which he can and ought to do, and very soon the sum of human misery, within and around the areas of every Branch of your Society, will be found visibly diminished. Forget SELF in working for others — and the task will become an easy and a light one for you . . .

Do not set your pride in the appreciation and acknowledgment of that work by others. Why should any member of the Theosophical Society, striving to become a Theosophist, put any value upon his neighbours' good or bad opinion of himself and his work, so long as he himself knows it to be useful and beneficent to other people? Human praise and enthusiasm are short-lived at best; the laugh of the scoffer and the condemnation of the indifferent looker-on are sure to follow, and generally to outweigh the admiring praise of the friendly. Do not despise the opinion of the world, nor provoke it uselessly to unjust criticism. Remain rather as indifferent to the abuse as to the praise of those who can never know you as you really are, and who ought, therefore, to find you unmoved by either, and ever placing the approval or condemnation of your own *Inner Self* higher than that of the multitudes.

Those of you who would know yourselves in the spirit of truth, learn to live alone even amidst the great crowds which may sometimes surround you. Seek communion and intercourse only with the God within your own soul; heed only the praise or blame of that deity which can never be separated from your *true self*, as it is *verily that God itself*: called the HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS. Put without delay your good intentions into practice, never leaving a single one to remain only an intention — expecting, meanwhile, neither reward nor even acknowledgment for the good you may have done. Reward and acknowledgment are in yourself and inseparable from you, as it is your Inner Self alone which can appreciate them at their true degree and value. For each one of you contains within the precincts of his inner tabernacle the Supreme

Court — prosecutor, defence, jury and judge — whose sentence is the only one without appeal; since none can know you better than you do yourself, when once you have learned to judge that Self by the never wavering light of the inner divinity — your higher Consciousness. Let, therefore, the masses, which can never know your true selves, condemn your outer selves according to their own false lights . . .

The majority of the public Areopagus is generally composed of self-appointed judges, who have never made a permanent deity of any idol save their own personalities — their lower selves; for those who try in their walk in life, to follow their *inner light* will never be found judging, far less condemning, those weaker than themselves. What does it matter then, whether the former condemn or praise, whether they humble you or exalt you on a pinnacle? They will never comprehend you one way or the other. They may make an idol of you, so long as they imagine you a faithful mirror of themselves on the pedestal or altar which they have reared for you, and while you amuse or benefit them. You cannot expect to be anything for them but a temporary *fetish*, succeeding another fetish just overthrown, and followed in your turn by another idol. Let, therefore, those who have created that idol destroy it whenever they like, casting it down with as little cause as they had for setting it up. Your Western Society can no more live without its Khalif of an hour than it can worship one for any longer period; and whenever it breaks an idol and then besmears it with mud, it is not the model, but the disfigured image created by its own foul fancy and which it has endowed with its own vices, that Society dethrones and breaks.

Theosophy can only find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity, and brotherly love. Its Society, as a body, has a task before it which, unless performed with the utmost discretion, will cause the world of the indifferent and the selfish to rise up in arms against it. Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance and selfishness, hidden under the mantle of hypocrisy. It has to throw all the light it can from the torch of Truth, with which its servants are entrusted. It must do this without fear or hesitation, dreading neither reproof nor condemnation. Theosophy, through its mouthpiece, the Society, has to tell the TRUTH to the very face of LIE; to beard the tiger in its den, without thought or fear of evil consequences, and to set at defiance calumny and threats. As *an Association*, it has not only the right, but the duty to uncloak vice and do its best to redress wrongs, whether through the voice of its chosen lecturers or the printed word of its journals and publications — making its accusations, however, as impersonal as possible. But its Fellows, or Members, have *individually* no such right. Its followers have, first of all, to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality, before they obtain the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic unity and singleness of purpose in other associations or individuals. No Theosophist should blame a brother, whether within or outside of the association; neither may he throw a slur upon another's actions or denounce him, lest he himself lose the right to be considered as a Theosophist. For, as such, he has to turn away his gaze from the imperfections of his neighbour, and centre rather his attention upon his own shortcomings, in order to correct them and become wiser. Let him not show the disparity between claim and action in another, but, whether in the case of a brother, a neighbour, or simply a fel-

low man, let him rather ever help one weaker than himself on the arduous walk of life.

The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission are:

First, the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and

Second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness.

Such is the common work placed before all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task, and will require strenuous and persevering exertion; but it must lead you insensibly to progress, and leave you no room for any selfish aspirations outside the limits traced . . . Do not indulge personally in unbrotherly comparison between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbours or brothers. In the fields of Theosophy *none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him*. Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to Karma, and can be dealt with justly by that all-seeing LAW alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathising individual may help you magnetically. . . . You are the free volunteer workers on the fields of Truth, and as such must leave no obstruction on the paths leading to that field.

*The degree of success or failure are the landmarks the masters have to follow, as they will constitute the barriers placed with your own hands between yourselves and those whom you have asked to be your teachers. The nearer your approach to the goal contemplated — the shorter the distance between the student and the Master.*¹

¹ From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VII pp. 135-75

There is no religion higher than Truth.

There is, and can be, but One Absolute Truth in Kosmos.

To the Readers of Lucifer.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. 1, No. 5, January 1888, pp. 340-43. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ("TO THE READERS OF LUCIFER") IX pp. 5-10.

Our magazine is only four numbers old, and already its young life is full of cares and trouble. This is all as it should be; *i.e.*, like every other publication, it must fail to satisfy *all* its readers, and this is only in the nature of things and the destiny of every printed organ. But what seems a little strange in a country of culture and free thought is that *Lucifer* should receive such a number of *anonymous*, spiteful, and often abusive letters. This, of course, is but a casual remark, the waste-basket in the office being the only addressee and sufferer in this case; yet it suggests strange truths with regard to human nature.¹

Sincerity is true wisdom, it appears, only to the mind of the moral philosopher. It is rudeness and insult to him who regards dissimulation and deceit as culture and politeness, and holds that the shortest, easiest, and safest way to success is to let sleeping dogs and old customs alone. But, if the dogs are obstructing the highway to progress and truth, and Society will, as a rule, reject the wise words of (St.) Augustine, who recommends that "no man should prefer custom before reason and truth," is it a sufficient cause for the philanthropist to walk out of or even deviate from, the track of truth, because the selfish egoist chooses to do so? Very true, as remarked somewhere by Sir Thomas Browne that not every man is a proper champion for the truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in its cause. Too many of such defenders are apt, from inconsideration and too much zeal, to charge the troops of error so rashly that they "remain themselves as trophies to the enemies of truth." Nor ought all of us (members of the Theosophical Society) to do so personally, but rather leave it only to those among our numbers who have voluntarily and beforehand sacrificed their personalities for the cause of Truth. Thus teaches us one of the Masters of Wisdom in some fragments of advice which are published further on for the benefit of the Theosophists (see the article that follows this).² While enforcing upon such public characters in our ranks as editors, and lecturers, etc., the duty of telling fearlessly "the Truth to the face of LIE," he yet condemns the habit of private judgment and criticism in every individual Theosophist.

¹ "VERBUM SAP" [enough said]. It is not our intention to notice anonymous communications, even though they should emanate in a round-about way from Lambeth Palace. The matter "*Verbum Sap*" refers to is not one of taste; the facts must be held responsible for the offence; and, as the Scripture hath it, "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh"! [*Matthew* xviii, 7]

² [Reference is here made to an important letter from one of the Teachers published under the title of "Some Words on Daily Life." A copy of this letter has been appended at the end of the first part of this compilation.]

Unfortunately, these are not the ways of the public and readers. Since our journal is entirely unsectarian, since it is neither theistic nor atheistic, Pagan nor Christian, orthodox nor heterodox, therefore, its editors discover eternal verities in the most opposite religious systems and modes of thought. Thus *Lucifer* fails to give full satisfaction to either infidel or Christian. In the sight of the former — whether he be an Agnostic, a Secularist, or an Idealist — to find divine or occult lore underlying “the rubbish” in the Jewish Bible and Christian Gospels is sickening; in the opinion of the latter, to recognise the same truth as in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in the Hindu, Parsī, Buddhist, or Egyptian religious literature, is vexation of spirit and blasphemy. Hence, fierce criticism from both sides, sneers and abuse. Each party would have us on its own sectarian side, recognising as truth, only that which its particular *ism* does.

But this cannot nor shall it be. Our motto was from the first, and ever shall be: “THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.” Truth we search for, and, once found, we bring it forward before the world, whencesoever it comes. A large majority of our readers is fully satisfied with this our policy, and that is plainly sufficient for our purposes.

It is evident that when toleration is not the outcome of indifference it must arise from wide-spreading charity and large-minded sympathy. Intolerance is pre-eminently the consequence of ignorance and jealousy. He who fondly believes that he has got the great ocean in his family water-jug is naturally intolerant of his neighbour, who also is pleased to imagine that he has poured the broad expanses of the sea of truth into his own particular pitcher. But anyone who, like the Theosophists, knows how infinite is that ocean of eternal wisdom, to be fathomed by no one man, class, or party, and realizes how little the largest vessel made by man contains in comparison to what lies dormant and still unperceived in its dark, bottomless depths, cannot help but be tolerant. For he sees that others have filled their little water-jugs at the same great reservoir in which he has dipped his own, and if the water in the various pitchers seems different to the eye, it can only be because it is discoloured by impurities that were in the vessel before the pure crystalline element — a portion of the one eternal and immutable truth — entered into it.

There is, and can be, but one absolute truth in Kosmos. And little as we, with our present limitations, can understand it in its essence, we still know that if it is absolute it must also be omnipresent and universal; and that in such case, it must be underlying every world-religion — the product of the thought and knowledge of numberless generations of thinking men. Therefore, that a portion of truth, great or small, is found in every religious and philosophical system, and that if we would find it, we have to search for it at the origin and source of every such system, at its roots and first growth, not in its later overgrowth of sects and dogmatism. Our object is not to destroy any religion but rather to help to filter each, thus ridding them of their respective impurities. In this we are opposed by all those who maintain, against evidence, that their particular pitcher alone contains the whole ocean. How is our great work to be done if we are to be impeded and harassed on every side by partisans and zealots? It would be already half accomplished were the intelligent men, at least, of every sect and system, to feel and to confess that the little wee bit of truth they

themselves own must necessarily be mingled with error, and that their neighbours' mistakes are, like their own, mixed with truth.

Free discussion, temperate, candid, undefiled by personalities and animosity, is, we think, the most efficacious means of getting rid of error and bringing out the underlying truth; and this applies to publications as well as to persons. It is open to a magazine to be tolerant or intolerant; it is open to it to err in almost every way in which an individual can err; and since every publication of the kind has a responsibility such as falls to the lot of few individuals, it behoves it to be ever on its guard, so that it may advance without fear and without reproach. All this is true in a special degree in the case of a theosophical publication, and *Lucifer* feels that it would be unworthy of that designation were it not true to the profession of the broadest tolerance and catholicity, even while pointing out to its brothers and neighbours the errors which they indulge in and follow. While thus keeping strictly, in its editorials, and in articles by its individual editors, to the spirit and teachings of pure theosophy, it nevertheless frequently gives room to articles and letters which diverge widely from the esoteric teachings accepted by the editors, as also by the majority of theosophists. Readers, therefore, who are accustomed to find in magazines and party publications only such opinions and arguments as the editor believes to be unmistakably orthodox — from his peculiar standpoint — must not condemn any article in *Lucifer* with which they are not entirely in accord, or in which expressions are used that may be offensive from a sectarian or a *prudish* point of view, on the ground that such are unfitted for a theosophical magazine. They should remember that precisely because *Lucifer* is a theosophical magazine, it opens its columns to writers whose views of life and things may not only slightly differ from its own, but even be diametrically opposed to the opinion of the editors. The object of the latter is to elicit truth, not to advance the interest of any particular *ism*, or to pander to any hobbies, likes or dislikes, of any class of readers. It is only snobs and prigs who, disregarding the truth or error of the idea, cavil and strain merely over the expressions and words it is couched in. Theosophy, if meaning anything, means truth; and truth has to deal indiscriminately and in the same spirit of impartiality with vessels of honour and of dishonour alike. No theosophical publication would ever dream of adopting the coarse — or shall we say terribly sincere — language of a Hosea or a Jeremiah; yet so long as those holy prophets are found in the Christian Bible, and the Bible is in every respectable, pious family, whether aristocratic or plebeian; and so long as the Bible is read with bowed head and in all reverence by young, innocent maidens and school-boys, why should our Christian critics fall foul of any phrase which may have to be used — if truth be spoken at all — in an occasional article upon a scientific subject? It is to be feared that the same sentences now found objectionable, because referring to Biblical subjects, would be loudly praised and applauded had they been directed against any gentile system of faith.¹ A little charity, gentle readers — charity, and above all — *fairness* and JUSTICE.

Justice demands that when the reader comes across an article in this magazine which does not immediately approve itself to his mind by chiming in with his own peculiar ideas, he should regard it as a problem to solve rather than as a mere sub-

¹ See certain missionary organs.

ject of criticism. Let him endeavour to learn the lesson which only opinions differing from his own can teach him. *Let him be tolerant, if not actually charitable*, and postpone his judgment till he extracts from the article the truth it must contain, adding this new acquisition to his store. One ever learns more from one's enemies than from one's friends; and it is only when the reader has credited this hidden truth to *Lucifer*, that he can fairly presume to put what he believes to be the errors of the article he does not like, to the debit account.



Theosophy is Religion itself, and sublime code of Ethics.

Religion is the best armour that man
can have, but it is the worst cloak.

— BUNYAN¹

He who believes his own religion on faith, will regard that of every other man as a lie, and hate it on that same faith.

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IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY that there never was — during the present century, at any rate — a movement, social or religious, so terribly, nay, so absurdly misunderstood, or more blundered about than THEOSOPHY — whether regarded theoretically as a code of ethics, or practically, in its objective expression, *i.e.*, the Society known by that name.

Year after year, and day after day had our officers and members to interrupt people speaking of the theosophical movement by putting in more or less emphatic protests against theosophy being referred to as a “religion,” and the Theosophical Society as a kind of church or religious body. Still worse, it is as often spoken of as a “new sect”! Is it a stubborn prejudice, an error, or both? The latter, most likely. The most narrow-minded and even notoriously unfair people are still in need of a plausible pretext, of a peg on which to hang their little uncharitable remarks and innocently-uttered slanders. And what peg is more solid for that purpose, more convenient than an “ism” or a “sect.” The great majority would be very sorry to be disabused and finally forced to accept the fact that theosophy is neither. The name suits them, and they pretend to be unaware of its falseness. But there are others, also, many more or less friendly people, who labour sincerely under the same delusion. To these, we say: Surely the world has been hitherto sufficiently cursed with the intellectual extinguishers known as dogmatic creeds, without having inflicted upon it a new form of faith! Too many already wear their faith, truly, as Shakespeare puts it, “but as the fashion of his hat,” ever changing “with the next block.” Moreover, the very *raison*

¹ [It is not known why this saying should be credited here to Bunyan. The statement: “Religion is the best Armour in the World, but the worst Cloak” may be found in Thomas Fuller’s *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British*, London, 1732. It is, however, not ascribed to Bunyan therein. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.

However, in the *Dictionary of Quotations* compiled by James Wood, 1899, this quotation is attributed to Bunyan. Also cf. William Hazlitt’s “the garb of religion is the best cloak for power,” *On the Clerical character*. “Tant de fiel entre-t-il dans l’âme des devôts?” wonders Nicolas Boileau in his *Le Lutrín*, can so much gall find place in godly souls? — ED. PHIL.]

d'être of the Theosophical Society was, from its beginning, to utter a loud protest and lead an open warfare against dogma or any belief based upon blind faith.

It may sound odd and paradoxical, but it is true to say that, hitherto, the most apt workers in practical theosophy, its most devoted members, were those recruited from the ranks of agnostics and even of materialists. No genuine, no sincere searcher after truth can ever be found among the *blind* believers in the “Divine Word,” let the latter be claimed to come from Allāh, Brahmā or Jehovah, or their respective *Korān*, *Purāna* and *Bible*. For:

Faith is not *reason's* labour, but repose.¹

He who believes his own religion on faith, will regard that of every other man as a lie, and hate it on that same faith. Moreover, unless it fetters reason and entirely blinds our perceptions of anything outside our own particular faith, the latter is no faith at all, but a temporary belief, the delusion we labour under, at some particular time of life. Moreover, “faith without principles is but a flattering phrase for wilful positiveness or fanatical bodily sensations,” in Coleridge’s clever definition.

What, then, is Theosophy, and how may it be defined in its latest presentation in this closing portion of the XIXth century?

Theosophy is not a religion. It is Religion itself, a Divine Science embracing every science in life, moral and physical, and a sublime code of Ethics.

Theosophy, we say, is not *a* Religion.

Yet there are, as everyone knows, certain beliefs, philosophical, religious and scientific, which have become so closely associated in recent years with the word “Theosophy” that they have come to be taken by the general public for theosophy itself. Moreover, we shall be told these beliefs have been put forward, explained and defended by these very Founders who have declared that Theosophy is *not* a Religion. What is then the explanation of this *apparent* contradiction? How can a certain body of beliefs and teachings, an elaborate doctrine, in fact, be labelled “Theosophy” and be tacitly accepted as “Theosophical” by nine tenths of the members of the T.S., if Theosophy is not a Religion? — we are asked.

Theosophy is Religion and the Theosophical Society the Universal Church.

To explain this is the purpose of the present protest.

It is perhaps necessary, first of all, to say, that the assertion that “Theosophy is not *a* Religion,” by no means excludes the fact that “Theosophy *is* Religion” itself. A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together — not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our theosophical definition of religion; but the same definition changes again with every creed and country, and no two Christians even regard it alike. We find this in more than one eminent author. Thus Carlyle de-

¹ [Quoting Edward Young; cf. *Mead's Quotations*, p. 139.]

fined the Protestant Religion in his day, with a remarkable prophetic eye to this ever-growing feeling in our present day, as:

For the most part a wise, prudential feeling, grounded on mere calculation; a matter, as all others now are, of expedience and utility; whereby some smaller *quantum* of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger *quantum* of celestial enjoyment. Thus religion, too, is profit, a working for wages; not reverence, but vulgar hope or fear.

In her turn Mrs. Stowe, whether consciously or otherwise, seemed to have had Roman Catholicism rather than Protestantism in her mind, when saying of her heroine that:

Religion she looked upon in the light of a ticket (with the correct number of indulgences bought and paid for), which, being once purchased and snugly laid away in a pocket-book, is to be produced at the celestial gate, and thus secure admission to heaven.¹

But to Theosophists (the genuine Theosophists are here meant) who accept no mediation by proxy, no salvation through innocent blood shed, nor would they think of “working for wages” in the *One Universal* religion, the only definition they could subscribe to and accept in full is one given by Miller. How truly and theosophically he describes it, by showing that

. . . true Religion
Is always mild, propitious and humble;
Plays not *the tyrant*, plants *no faith in blood*,
Nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels;
But stoops to polish, succour and redress,
And *builds her grandeur on the public good*.²

The above is a correct definition of what true theosophy *is*, or ought to be. (Among the creeds Buddhism alone is such a true heart-binding and men-binding philosophy, because it is not a dogmatic religion.) In this respect, as it is the duty and task of every genuine theosophist to accept and carry out these principles, Theosophy *is* RELIGION, and the Society its one Universal Church; the temple of Solomon’s wisdom,³ in building which “there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building”;⁴ for this “temple” is made by no human hand, nor built in any locality on earth — but, verily, is raised only in the inner sanctuary of man’s heart wherein reigns alone the awakened soul.

¹ [Quoting from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, 1856]

² [From *Mahomet: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, translated from the French of Voltaire by Rev. James Miller in 1744.]

³ Whose 700 wives and 300 concubines, by the bye, are merely the personations of man’s attributes, feelings, passions and his various occult powers: the Kabbalistic numbers 7 and 3 showing it plainly. Solomon himself, moreover, being, simply, the emblem of SOL — the “Solar Initiate” or the Christ-Sun, is a variant of the Indian “Vikartana” (the Sun) shorn of his beams by Viśvakarman, his Hierophant-Initiator, who thus shears the *Chrestos*-candidate for initiation of his golden radiance and crowns him with a dark, blackened aureole — the “crown of thorns.” (See *The Secret Doctrine* for full explanation.) Solomon was never a living man. As described in *Kings*, his life and works are an allegory on the trials and glory of Initiation.

⁴ *1 Kings* vi, 7

Thus Theosophy is not *a* Religion, we say, but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck — from gods and mortal down to animals, the blade of grass and atom — can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

Were it otherwise, Theosophy would be but a word added to hundreds other such words as high-sounding as they are pretentious and empty. Viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic of the Mediaeval alchemist. It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed (Christianity included) into the gold of fact and truth, and thus truly produces a universal panacea for the ills of mankind. This is why, when applying for admission into the Theosophical Society, no one is asked what religion he belongs to, nor what his deistic views may be. These views are his own personal property and have nought to do with the Society. Because Theosophy can be practised by Christian or Heathen, Jew or Gentile, by Agnostic or Materialist, or even an Atheist, provided that none of these is a bigoted fanatic, who refuses to recognise as his brother any man or woman outside his own special creed or belief. Count Leo N. Tolstoy does not believe in the Bible, the Church, or the divinity of Christ; and yet no Christian surpasses him in the practical bearing out of the principles alleged to have been preached on the Mount. And these principles are those of Theosophy; not because they were uttered by the Christian Christ, but because they are universal ethics, and were preached by Buddha and Confucius, Krishna, and all the great Sages, thousands of years before the Sermon on the Mount was written. Hence, once that we live up to such theosophy, it becomes a universal *panacea* indeed, for it heals the wounds inflicted by the gross asperities of the Church “-isms” on the sensitive soul of every naturally religious man. How many of these, forcibly thrust out by the reactive impulse of disappointment from the narrow area of blind belief into the ranks of arid disbelief, have been brought back to hopeful aspiration by simply joining our Brotherhood — yea, imperfect as it is.

If, as an offset to this, we are reminded that several prominent members have left the Society disappointed in theosophy as they had been in other associations, this cannot dismay us in the least. For with a very, *very few* exceptions, in the early stage of the T.S.’s activities, when some left because they did not find mysticism practised in the General Body as *they* understood it, or because “the leaders lacked Spirituality,” were “untheosophical, hence, untrue to the rules,” you see, the majority left because most of them were either half-hearted or too self-opinionated — a church and infallible dogma in themselves. Some broke away, again, under very shallow pretexts indeed, such, for instance, as “because Christianity [to say Churchianity, or *sham* Christianity, would be more just] was too roughly handled in our magazines” — just as if other fanatical religions were ever treated any better or upheld! Thus, all those who left have done well to leave, and have never been regretted.

Furthermore, there is this also to be added: the number of those who left can hardly be compared with the number of those who found everything they had hoped for in Theosophy. Its doctrines, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one’s reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the

false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which every old religious scripture was cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws — the only *exact* science — it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale. It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in Society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect. Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal “coach,” a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*, instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.

And let no reader misunderstand these statements. It is Theosophy *per se*, not any individual member of the Society or even Theosophist, on whose behalf such a universal omniscience is claimed. The two — Theosophy and the Theosophical Society — as a vessel and the *olla podrida*¹ it contains, must not be confounded. One is, as an ideal, *divine* Wisdom, perfection itself; the other a poor, imperfect thing, trying to run *under*, if not *within*, its shadow on Earth. No man is perfect; why, then, should any member of the T.S. be expected to be a paragon of every human virtue? And why should the whole organization be criticized and blamed for the faults, whether real or imaginary, of some of its “Fellows,” or even its Leaders? Never was the Society, as a concrete body, free from blame or sin — *errare humanum est* — nor were any of its members. Hence, it is rather those members — most of whom will not be led by theosophy, that ought to be blamed. Theosophy is the soul of its Society; the latter the gross and imperfect body of the former. Hence, those modern Solomons who *will* sit in the Judgment Seat and talk of that they know nothing about, are invited before they slander theosophy or any theosophists to first get acquainted with both, instead of ignorantly calling one a “farrago of insane beliefs” and the other a “sect of impostors and lunatics.”

Regardless of this, Theosophy is spoken of by friends and foes as a religion when not a *sect*. Let us see how the special beliefs which have become associated with the word have come to stand in that position, and how it is that they have so good a right to it that none of the leaders of the Society have ever thought of disavowing their doctrines.

We have said that we believed in the absolute unity of nature. Unity implies the possibility for a unit on one plane, to come into contact with another unit on or from another plane. We believe in it.

¹ [Spanish stew of highly seasoned meat and vegetables]

The just published *Secret Doctrine* will show what were the ideas of all antiquity with regard to the *primeval instructors* of primitive man and his three earlier races. The genesis of that WISDOM-RELIGION, in which all theosophists believe, dates from that period. So-called “Occultism,” or rather Esoteric Science, has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that secret Science which countless generations of subsequent adepts have expanded since then in every age, while they checked its doctrines by personal observation and experience. The bulk of this knowledge — which no man is able to possess in its fullness — constitutes that which we now call Theosophy or “divine knowledge.” Beings from other and higher worlds may have it entire; we can have it only approximately.

Thus, unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially RELIGION, and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of WISDOM-RELIGION.

It is from this WISDOM-RELIGION that all the various individual “Religions” (erroneously so called) have sprung, forming in their turn offshoots and branches, and also all the minor creeds, based upon and always originated through some personal experience in psychology. Every such religion, or religious offshoot, be it considered orthodox or heretical, wise or foolish, started originally as a clear and unadulterated stream from the Mother-Source. The fact that each became in time polluted with purely human speculations and even inventions, due to interested motives, does not prevent any from having been pure in its early beginnings. There are those creeds — we shall not call them religions — which have now been overlaid with the human element out of all recognition; others just showing signs of early decay; not one that escaped the hand of time. But each and all are of divine, because natural and true origin; aye — Mazdeism, Brahmanism, Buddhism as much as Christianity. It is the dogmas and human element in the latter which led directly to modern Spiritualism.

Of course, there will be an outcry from both sides, if we say that modern Spiritualism *per se*, cleansed of the unhealthy speculations which were based on the dicta of two little girls and their very unreliable “Spirits” — is nevertheless, far more true and philosophical than any church dogma. *Carnalised* Spiritualism is now reaping its Karma. Its primitive *innovators*, the said “two little girls” from Rochester, the Mecca of modern Spiritualism, have grown up and turned into old women since the first raps produced by them have opened wide ajar the gates between this and the other world. It is on their “innocent” testimony that the elaborate scheme of a sidereal Summer-land, with its active astral population of “Spirits,” ever on the wing between their “Silent Land” and our very loud-mouthed, gossiping earth — has been started and worked out. And now the two female Mohammeds of Modern Spiritualism have turned self-apostates and play false to the “philosophy” they have created, and have gone over to the enemy. They expose and denounce *practical* Spiritualism as the humbug of the ages. Spiritualists — save a handful of fair exceptions — have rejoiced and sided with *our* enemies and slanderers, when these, *who had never been Theosophists*, played us false and showed the cloven foot denouncing the Founders of the

Theosophical Society as frauds and impostors. Shall the Theosophists laugh in their turn now that the original “revealers” of Spiritualism have become its “revilers”? Never! for the phenomena of Spiritualism are facts, and the treachery of the “Fox girls” only makes us feel new pity for all mediums, and confirms, before the whole world, our constant declaration that no medium can be relied upon. No true theosophist will ever laugh, or far less rejoice, at the discomfiture even of an opponent. The reason for it is simple: —

Because we know that beings from other, higher worlds do confabulate with some elect mortals now as ever, though now far more rarely than in the days of old, as mankind becomes with every civilized generation worse in every respect.

Theosophy — owing, in truth, to the *levée in arms* of all the Spiritualists of Europe and America at the first words uttered against the idea that every communicating *intelligence* is necessarily the Spirit of some ex-mortal from this earth — has not said its last word about Spiritualism and “Spirits.” It may one day. Meanwhile, an humble servant of theosophy, the Editor, declares once more her belief in Beings, grander, wiser, nobler than any *personal* God, who are beyond any “Spirits of the dead,” Saints, or winged Angels, who nevertheless, *do* condescend in all and every age to occasionally overshadow rare sensitives — often entirely unconnected with Church, Spiritualism or even Theosophy. And believing in high and holy Spiritual Beings, she must also believe in the existence of their opposites — lower “spirits,” good, bad and indifferent. Therefore does she believe in spiritualism and its phenomena, some of which are so repugnant to her.

This as a casual remark and a digression, just to show that Theosophy includes Spiritualism — as it should be, not as it is — among its sciences, based on knowledge and the experience of countless ages. There is not a religion worthy of the name which has been started otherwise than in consequence of such *visits* from Beings on the higher planes.

Thus were born all prehistoric, as well as all the historic religions, Mazdeism and Brahmanism, Buddhism and Christianity, Judaism, Gnosticism and Mohammedanism; in short every more or less successful “-ism.” All are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface. The Revealer, the artist who impressed a portion of the Truth on the brain of the Seer, was in every instance a true artist, who gave out genuine truths; but the instrument proved also, in every instance, to be *only a man*. Invite Rubinstein and ask him to play a sonata of Beethoven on a piano left to *self-tuning*, one half of the keys of which are in chronic paralysis, while the wires hang loose; then see whether, the genius of the artist notwithstanding, you will be able to recognize the sonata. The moral of the *fabula* is that a man — let him be the greatest of mediums or natural Seers — is but a man; and man left to his own devices and speculations *must* be out of tune with absolute truth, while even picking up some of its crumbs. For Man is but a *fallen* Angel, a god within, but having an animal brain in his head, more subject to colds and wine fumes while in company with other men on Earth, than to the faultless reception of divine revelations.

Hence the multi-coloured dogmas of the churches. Hence also the thousand and one “philosophies” so-called (some contradictory, theosophical theories included); and

the variegated “Sciences” and schemes, Spiritual, Mental, Christian and Secular; Sectarianism and bigotry, and especially the personal vanity and self-opinionatedness of almost every “Innovator” since the mediaeval ages. These have all darkened and hidden the very existence of TRUTH — the common root of all. Will our critics imagine that we exclude theosophical teachings from this nomenclature? Not at all. And though the esoteric doctrines which our Society has been and is expounding, are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some “unknown, *from above*,” but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men, still, except that which was dictated and written out by those Masters of Wisdom themselves, these doctrines may be in many cases as incomplete and faulty as any of our foes would desire it. *The Secret Doctrine* — a work which gives out all that can be given out during this century, is an attempt to lay bare in *part* the common foundation and inheritance of all — great and small religious and philosophical schemes. It was found indispensable to tear away all this mass of concreted misconceptions and prejudice which now hides the parent trunk,

Of all the great world-religions;

Of the smaller sects; and

Of Theosophy as it stands now — however veiled the great Truth, by ourselves and our limited knowledge.

The crust of error is thick, laid on by whatever hand; and because we *personally* have tried to remove some of it, the effort became the standing reproach against all theosophical writers and even the Society. Few among our friends and readers have failed to characterize our attempt to expose error in *The Theosophist* and *Lucifer* as “very uncharitable attacks on Christianity,” “untheosophical assaults,” etc., etc. Yet these are necessary, nay, indispensable, if we wish to plough up at least *approximate* truths. We have to lay things bare, and are ready to suffer for it — as usual. It is vain to promise to *give* truth, and then leave it mingled with error out of mere faint-heartedness. That the result of such policy could only muddy the stream of facts is shown plainly. After twelve years of incessant labour and struggle with enemies from the four quarters of the globe, notwithstanding our four theosophical monthly journals — *The Theosophist*, *The Path*, *Lucifer*, and the French *Le Lotus* — our wishy-washy, tame protests in them, our timid declarations, our “masterly policy of inactivity,” and playing at hide-and-seek in the shadow of dreary metaphysics, have only led to Theosophy being seriously regarded as a religious SECT. For the hundredth time we are told — “What good is Theosophy doing?” and “See what good the Churches are doing”!

Nevertheless, it is an averred fact that mankind is not a whit better in morality, and in some respects ten times worse now, than it ever was in the days of Paganism. Moreover, for the last half century, from that period when Freethought and Science got the best of the Churches — Christianity is yearly losing far more adherents among the cultured classes than it gains proselytes in the lower *strata*, the scum of Heathendom. On the other hand, Theosophy has brought back from Materialism and blank despair to belief (based on logic and evidence) in man’s *divine* Self, and the immortality of the latter, more than one of those whom the Church has lost through

dogma, exaction of faith and tyranny. And, if it is proven that Theosophy saves one man only in a thousand of those the Church has lost, is not the former a far higher factor for good than all the missionaries put together?

Theosophy, as repeatedly declared in print and *viva voce* by its members and officers, proceeds on diametrically opposite lines to those which are trodden by the Church; and Theosophy rejects the methods of Science, since her inductive methods can only lead to crass materialism. Yet, *de facto*, Theosophy claims to be both “RELIGION” and “SCIENCE,” for theosophy is the essence of both. It is for the sake and love of the two divine abstractions — *i.e.*, theosophical religion and science, that its Society has become the volunteer *scavenger* of both orthodox religion and modern science; as also the relentless Nemesis of those who have degraded the two noble truths to their own ends and purposes, and then divorced each violently from the other, though the two are and *must be one*. To prove this is also one of our objects in the present paper.

The modern Materialist insists on an impassable chasm between the two, pointing out that the “Conflict between Religion and Science” has ended in the triumph of the latter and the defeat of the first. The modern Theosophist refuses to see, on the contrary, any such chasm at all. If it is claimed by both Church and Science that each of them pursues the truth and *nothing but the truth*, then either one of them is mistaken, and accepts falsehood for truth, or both. Any other impediment to their reconciliation must be set down as purely *fictitious*. Truth is one, even if sought for or pursued at two different ends. Therefore, Theosophy claims to reconcile the two foes. It premises by saying that the *true* spiritual and primitive Christian religion is, as much as the other great and still older philosophies that preceded it — *the light of Truth* — “the life and the light of men.”

But so is the *true* light of Science. Therefore, darkened as the former is now by dogmas examined through glasses smoked with the superstitions artificially produced by the Churches, this light can hardly penetrate and meet its sister ray in a science, equally as cobwebbed by paradoxes and the materialistic sophistries of the age. The teachings of the two are incompatible, and cannot agree so long as both Religious philosophy and the Science of physical and external (in philosophy, *false*) nature, insist upon the infallibility of their respective “will-o’-the-wisps.”¹ The two lights, having their beams of equal length in the matter of false deductions, can but extinguish each other and produce still worse darkness. Yet, they can be reconciled on the condition that both shall clean their houses, one from the human dross of the ages, the other from the hideous excrescence of modern materialism and atheism. And as both decline, the most meritorious and best thing to do is precisely what Theosophy alone can and *will* do: *i.e.*, point out to the innocents caught by the glue of the two waylayers — verily two dragons of old, one devouring the intellects, the other the souls of men — that their supposed chasm is but an optical delusion; that, far from being one, it is but an immense garbage mound respectively erected by the two foes, as a fortification against mutual attacks.

¹ [Or *ignis fatuus*, “foolish fire,” ghost lights seen by travellers at night, especially over bogs, swamps, or marshes. It resembles a flickering lamp and is said to recede if approached, drawing travellers from the safe paths. — Metaphorically, will-o’-the-wisps are delusive or misleading hopes.]

Thus, if theosophy does no more than point out and seriously draw the attention of the world to the fact that the *supposed* disagreement between religion and science is conditioned, on the one hand by the intelligent materialists rightly kicking against absurd human dogmas, and on the other by blind fanatics and interested churchmen who, instead of defending the souls of mankind, fight simply tooth and nail for their personal bread and butter and authority — why, even then, theosophy will prove itself the saviour of mankind.

And now we have shown, it is hoped, what real Theosophy is, and what are its adherents. [The] One is divine Science and a code of Ethics so sublime that no theosophist is capable of doing it justice; the others weak but sincere men. Why, then, should Theosophy ever be judged by the personal shortcomings of any leader or member of our 150 branches? One may work for it to the best of his ability, yet never raise himself to the height of his call and aspiration. This is his or her misfortune, never the fault of Theosophy, or even of the body at large. Its Founders claim no other merit than that of having set the first theosophical wheel rolling. If judged at all they must be judged by the work they have done, not by what friends may think or enemies say of them. There is no room for *personalities* in a work like ours; and all must be ready, as the Founders are, if needs be, for the car of Jagannāth to crush them *individually for the good of all*. It is only in the days of the dim Future, when death will have laid his cold hand on the luckless Founders and stop thereby their activity, that their respective merits and demerits, their good and bad acts and deeds, and their theosophical work will have to be weighed on the Balance of Posterity. Then only, after the two scales with their contrasted loads have been brought to an equipoise, and the character of the net result left over has become evident to all in its full and intrinsic value, then only shall the nature of the verdict passed be determined with anything like justice. At present, except in India, those results are too scattered over the face of the earth, too much limited to a handful of individuals to be easily judged. Now, these results can hardly be perceived, much less heard of amid the din and clamour made by our teeming enemies, and their ready imitators — the indifferent. Yet however small, if once proved good, even now every man who has at heart the moral progress of humanity, owes his thankfulness to Theosophy for those results. And as Theosophy was revived and brought before the world, *via* its unworthy servants, the “Founders,” if their work was useful, it alone must be their vindicator, regardless of the present state of their balance in the petty cash accounts of Karma, wherein social “respectabilities” are entered up.¹

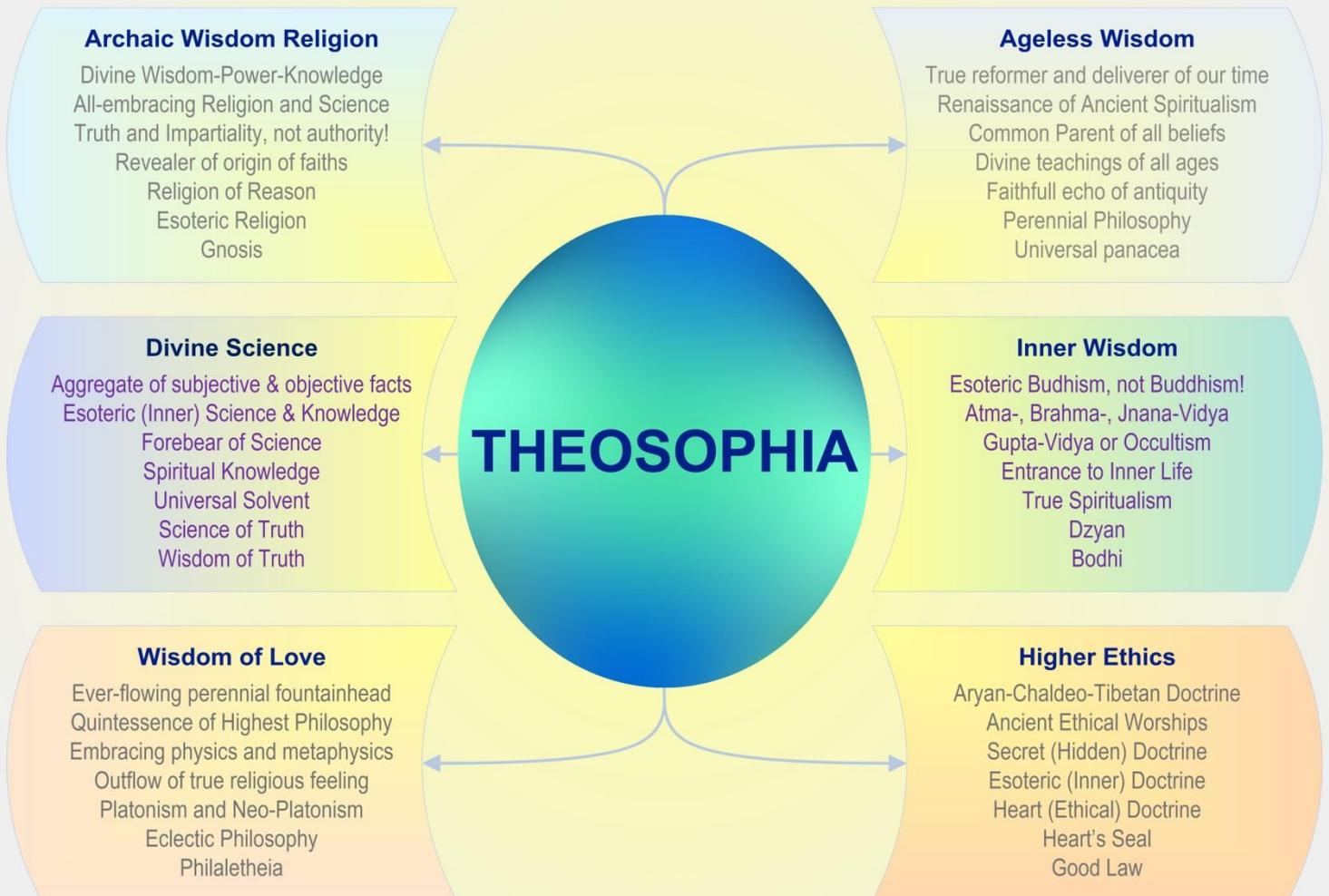


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¹ [Copious excerpts from this powerful Editorial were published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. X, January 1889, with a few connecting editorial comments, probably by Col. Olcott. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

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Blavatsky Collected Writings XII, (E.S. INTRODUCTION) p. 503; [quoting from a Master of Wisdom's Letter.]



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— TENNYSON, *Locksley Hall*, line 182

The goal of yesterday will be the starting point of tomorrow.

— CARLYLE

Human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs, becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. But the world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with open arms by the children.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. VI, No. 31, March 1890, pp. 1-10. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE CYCLE MOVETH) XII pp. 120-32.

The great mystic of the eighteenth century, the ardent disciple of Jacob Boehme — Louis Claude de Saint-Martin — used to say in the last years of his life: “I would have loved to meet more with those who guess at truths, for such alone are living men.”

This remark implies that, outside the limited circle of mystics which has existed in every age, people endowed with correct psychic intuition were still fewer at the end of the last century than they are now. These were, indeed, years of complete soul-blindness and spiritual drought. It is during that century that the chaotic darkness and Babylonish confusion with regard to spiritual things, which have ever reigned in brains too crammed with mere scientific learning had fully asserted their sway over the masses. The lack of soul perception was not confined to the “Forty Immortals” of the French Academy, nor to their less pretentious colleagues of Europe in general, but had infected almost all the classes of Society, settling down as a chronic disease called Scepticism and the denial of all but matter. The messengers sent out westward periodically in the last quarter of every century — ever since the mysteries which alone had the key to the secrets of nature had been crushed out of existence in Europe by heathen and Christian conquerors — had appeared that time in vain. Saint-Germain and Cagliostro are credited with real phenomenal powers only in fashionable novels, to remain inscribed in encyclopaedias — to purblind the better, we suppose, the minds of forthcoming generations — as merely clever charlatans. The only man whose powers and knowledge could have been easily tested by exact science, thus forming a firm link between physics and metaphysics — Friedrich Anton Mesmer — had been hooted from the scientific arena by the greatest “scholar-ignoramus” in things spiritual, of Europe. For almost a century, namely from 1770 down to 1870, a heavy spiritual darkness descending on the Western hemisphere, settled, as if it meant to stay, among *cultured* societies.

But an undercurrent appeared about the middle of our century in America, crossing the Atlantic between 1850 and 1860. Then came in its trail the marvellous medium for physical manifestations, D.D. Home. After he had taken by storm the Tuileries and the Winter Palace, light was no longer allowed to shine under a bushel. Already, some years before his advent, “a change” had come “o’er the spirit of the dream” of almost every civilized community in the two worlds, and a great reactive force was now at work.

What was it? Simply this. Amidst the greatest glow of the self-sufficiency of exact science, and the reckless triumphant crowing of victory over the ruins of the very foundations — as some Darwinists had fondly hoped — of old superstitions and creeds; in the midst of the deadliest calm of wholesale negations, there arose a breeze from a wholly unexpected quarter. At first the significant afflatus was like a hardly perceptible stir, puffs of wind in the rigging of a proud vessel — the ship called “Materialism,” whose crew was merrily leading its passengers toward the Maelstrom of annihilation. But very soon the breeze freshened and finally blew a gale. It fell with every hour more ominously on the ears of the iconoclasts, and ended by raging loud enough to be heard by everyone who had ears to hear, eyes to see, and an intellect to discern. It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition — that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism — that had awakened from its long cataleptic sleep. And, as a result, all those ideals of the human soul which had been so long trampled under the feet of the would-be conquerors of the world-superstitions, the self-constituted guides of a new humanity — appeared suddenly in the midst of all these raging elements of human thought, and, like Lazarus rising out of his tomb, lifted their voice and loudly demanded recognition.

This was brought on by the invasion of “Spirit” manifestations, when mediumistic phenomena had broken out like an influenza all over Europe. However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation, these phenomena being genuine and true as truth itself in their being and their reality, they were undeniable; and being in their very nature beyond denial, they came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life beyond — opening, moreover, a wide range for the admission of every metaphysical possibility. This once the efforts of materialistic science to disprove them availed it nothing. Beliefs such as man’s survival after death, and the immortality of Spirit, were no longer to be pooh-poohed as figments of imagination; for, prove once the genuineness of such transcendental phenomena to be beyond the realm of matter, and beyond investigation by means of *physical* science, and — whether these phenomena contain *per se* or not the *proof of immortality*, demonstrating as they do the existence of invisible and spiritual regions where other forces than those known to exact science are at work — they are shown to lie beyond the realm of materialism. Cross, by one step only, the line of matter and the area of Spirit becomes infinite. Therefore, believers in them were no longer to be browbeaten by threats of social contumacy and ostracism; this, also, for the simple reason that in the beginning of these manifestations almost the whole of the European higher classes became ardent “Spiritualists.” To oppose the strong tidal wave of the cycle there remained at one time but a handful, in comparison with the number of believers, of grumbling and all-denying fogies.

Thus was once more demonstrated that human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs — in which the whole of philosophical and cultured antiquity, headed in historical time by Socrates and Plato, by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, believed — becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. The world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with open arms by the children.

Let us recall to mind how all this came to pass.

It was, as said, between the third and fourth quarters of the present century that reaction set in Europe — as still earlier in the United States. The days of a determined psychic rebellion against the cold dogmatism of science and the still more chilling teachings of the schools of Büchner and Darwin, had come in their preordained and pre-appointed time of cyclic law. Our older readers may easily recollect the suggestive march of events. Let them remember how the wave of mysticism, arrested in its free course during its first twelve or fifteen years in America by public, and especially by religious prejudices, finally broke through every artificial dam and over-flooded Europe, beginning with France and Russia and ending with England — the slowest of all countries to accept new ideas, though these may bring us truths as old as the world.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding every opposition, “Spiritualism,” as it was soon called, got its rights of citizenship in Great Britain. For several years it reigned undivided. Yet in truth, its phenomena, its psychic and mesmeric manifestations, were but the cyclic pioneers of the revival of prehistoric Theosophy, and the occult Gnosticism of the antediluvian mysteries. These are facts which no intelligent Spiritualist will deny; as, in truth, modern Spiritualism is but an earlier revival of crude Theosophy, and modern Theosophy a *renaissance* of ancient Spiritualism.

Thus, the waters of the great “Spiritual” flood were neither primordial nor pure. When, owing to cyclic law, they had first appeared, manifesting at Rochester, they were left to the mercies and mischievous devices of two little girls to give them a name and an interpretation. Therefore when, breaking the dam, these waters penetrated into Europe, they bore with them scum and dross, flotsam and jetsam,¹ from the old wrecks of hypotheses and hazily outlined aspirations, based upon the dicta of the said little girls. Yet the eagerness with which “Spiritualism” and its twin sister Spiritism were received, all their inanities notwithstanding, by almost all the cultured people of Europe, contains a splendid lesson. In this passionate aspiration of the human Soul — this irrepressible flight of the higher elements in man toward their forgotten Gods and the God within him — one heard the voice of the public conscience. It was an undeniable and not to be misunderstood answer of the inner na-

¹ [Specific nautical terms, with legal consequences in the law of admiralty and marine salvage:

Flotsam is floating wreckage of a ship or its cargo.

Jetsam is part of a ship, its equipment, or its cargo that is purposely cast overboard or jettisoned to lighten the load in time of distress and that sinks or is washed ashore.

There is also:

Lagan, cargo that is lying on the bottom of the ocean, sometimes marked by a buoy, which can be reclaimed, and;

Derelict, cargo that is also on the bottom of the ocean, but which no one has any hope of reclaiming (in other maritime contexts, derelict may also refer to a drifting abandoned ship). — Cf. *Wikipedia*.]

ture of man to the then revelling, gloating Materialism of the age, as an escape from which there was but another form of evil — adherence to the dogmatic, ecclesiastical conventionalism of State religions. It was a loud, passionate protest against both, a drifting towards a middle way between the two extremes — namely, between the enforcement for long centuries of a *personal* God of infinite love and mercy by the diabolical means of sword, fire, and inquisitional tortures; and, on the other hand, the reign, as a natural reaction, of complete denial of such a God, and along with him of an infinite Spirit, a Universal Principle manifesting as immutable LAW. True science had wisely endeavoured to make away along with the mental slavery of mankind, with its orthodox paradoxical God; *pseudo*-science had devised by means of sophistry to do away with every belief save in matter. The haters of the Spirit of the world, denying God in Nature as much as an extra-cosmic Deity, had been preparing for long years to create an artificial, soulless humanity; and it was only just that their Karma should send a host of *pseudo*-”Spirits” or Souls to thwart their efforts. Shall anyone deny that the highest and the best among the representatives of Materialistic science have succumbed to the fascination of the will-o’-the-wisps which looked at first sight as the most palpable proof of *an immortal Soul in man*¹ — *i.e.*, the alleged *communion between the dead and living*?² Yet, such as they were, these abnormal manifestations, being in their bulk genuine and spontaneous, carried away and won all those who had in their souls the sacred spark of intuition. Some clung to them because, owing to the death of ideals, of the crumbling of the Gods and faith in every civilized centre, they were dying themselves of spiritual starvation; others because, living amidst sophistical perversion of every noble truth, they preferred even a feeble approximation to truth to no truth whatever.

But, whether they placed belief in and followed “Spiritualism” or not, many were those on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas. The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal — the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are

¹ Let our readers recall the names of the several most eminent men in literature and science who had become openly Spiritualists. We have but to name Professor Hare, Epes Sarjent, Robert Dale Owen, Judge Edmonds, etc., in America; Professors Butleroff, Wagner, and, greater than they, the late Dr. Pirogoff (see his posthumous “Memoirs,” published in *Ruskaya Starina*, 1884-86), in Russia; Zöllner, in Germany; Camille Flammarion, the Astronomer, in France; and last but not least, Messrs. Alfred Russel Wallace, W. Crookes, Balfour Stewart, etc., etc., in England, followed by a number of scientific stars of the second magnitude

² We hope that the few friends we have left in the ranks of the Spiritualists may not misunderstand us. We denounce the bogus “spirits” of *séances* held by professional mediums, and deny the possibility of such manifestations of spirits on the physical plane. But we believe thoroughly in Spiritualistic phenomena, and in the intercourse between Spirits or *Egos* — of embodied and disembodied entities; only adding that, since the latter cannot manifest on our plane, it is the Ego of the living man which meets the Ego of the dead personality, by ascending to the Devachanic plane, which may be accomplished in trance, during sleep in dreams, and by other subjective means.

devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves. Under the influence of that same passionate search for “life in spirit” and “life in truth,” which compels every earnest Theosophist onward through years of moral obloquy and public ostracism; moved by the same dissatisfaction with the principles of pure conventionality of modern society, and scorn for the still triumphant, fashionable thought, which, appropriating to itself unblushingly the honoured epithets of “scientific” and “foremost,” of “pioneer” and “liberal,” uses these prerogatives but to domineer over the fainthearted and selfish — these earnest men and women prefer to tread alone and unaided the narrow and thorny path that lies before him who will neither recognize authorities nor bow before cant.¹ They may leave “Sir Oracles” of modern thought, as well as the Pecksniffs² of time-dishonoured and dogma-soiled lay figures of Church-conventionality, without protest; yet, carrying in the silent shrine of their soul the same grand ideals as all mystics do, they are in truth Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure*. We meet such in every circle of society, in every class of life. They are found among artists and novelists, in the aristocracy and commerce, among the highest and the richest, as among the lowest and the poorest. Among the most prominent in this century is Count L. Tolstoy, a living example, and one of the signs of the times in this period, of the occult working of the ever moving cycle. Listen to a few lines of the history of the psycho-spiritual evolution of this aristocrat, the greatest writer of modern Russia, by one of the best *feuilletonistes*³ in St. Petersburg.

. . . The most famous of our Russian authors, the “word-painter,” a writer of Shakespearean realism, a heathen poet, one who in a certain sense worshipped in his literary productions life for the sake of life, *an sich und für sich*⁴ — as the Hegelians used to say — collapses suddenly over his fairy palette, lost in tormenting thought; and forth-with he commences to offer to himself and the world the most abstruse and insoluble problems . . . The author of the *Cossacks* and *Family Happiness*, clad in peasant’s garb and bast shoes,⁵ starts as a pilgrim on foot in search of divine truth. He goes to the solitary forest *skits*⁶ of the *Raskolniki*,⁷ visits the monks of the Desert of *Optima*, passes his time in fasting and prayer. For his *belles lettres* and philosophy he substitutes the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers; and, as a sequel to *Anna Karenina* he creates his *Confessions* and *Explanations of the New Testament*.

¹ [Singing in a whining way, from the Latin *cantāre*, to sing. Cant was at first a beggar’s whine, hence hypocrisy. Cf. W.W. Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary of English*, 1835-1912. — ED. PHIL.]

² [An extreme hypocrite, after Seth Pecksniff, a character in Charles Dickens “Martin Chuzzlewit.”]

³ [Part of a European newspaper devoted to light literature, fiction, criticism, etc.]

⁴ [Hegel’s “in itself and for itself,” referring to the Idea (*die Idee*) which, by its inherent power and light, reveals itself to itself.]

⁵ [Shoes made bast, a fibre taken from the bark of trees such as linden or birch.]

⁶ *Skit* is a religious hermitage.

⁷ *Raskolniki*, Dissenters; hitherto persecuted and forbidden sect in Russia.

The fact that Count Tolstoy, all his passionate earnestness notwithstanding, did not become an orthodox Christian, nor has succumbed to the wiles of Spiritualism (as his latest satire on mediums and “spirits” proves), prevents him in no way from being a full-fledged mystic. What is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current without almost any transition period? What unexpected idea or vision led him into that new groove of thought? Who knoweth save himself, or those real “Spirits,” who are not likely to gossip it out in a modern séance-room?

And yet Count Tolstoy is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity — a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

The Theosophical Movement was reborn in 1875.

In 1875 the Theosophical Society came into existence. It was ushered into the world with the distinct intention of becoming an ally to, a supplement and a helper of, the Spiritualistic movement — of course, in its higher and more philosophical aspect. It succeeded, however, only in making of the Spiritualists its bitterest enemies, its most untiring persecutors and denunciators. Perchance the chief reason for it may be found in the fact that many of the best and most intellectual of their representatives passed body and soul into the Theosophical Society. Theosophy was, indeed, the only system that gave a philosophical *rationale* of mediumistic phenomena, a logical *raison d'être* for them. Incomplete and unsatisfactory some of its teachings certainly are, which is only owing to the imperfections of the human nature of its exponents, not to any fault in the system itself or its teachings. Based as these are upon philosophies hoary with age, the experience of men and races nearer than we are to the source of things, and the records of sages who have questioned successfully and for numberless generations the Sphinx of Nature, who now holds her lips sealed as to the secrets of life and death — these teachings have to be held certainly as a little more reliable than the dicta of certain “intelligences.” Whether the intellect and consciousness of the latter be *induced* and artificial — as we hold — or emanate from a personal source and entity, it matters not. Even the *exoteric* philosophies of the Eastern sages — systems of thought whose grandeur and logic few will deny — agree in every fundamental doctrine with our Theosophical teachings. As to those creatures which are called and accepted as “Spirits of the Dead” — because, forsooth, they themselves say so — their true nature is as unknown to the Spiritualists as to their mediums. With the most intellectual of the former the question remains to this day *sub judice*. Nor is it the Theosophists who would differ from them in their higher view of Spirits.

As it is not the object of this article, however, to contrast the two most significant movements of our century, nor to discuss their relative merits or superiority, we say at once that our only aim in bringing them forward is to draw attention to the wonderful progress of late of this occult cycle. While the enormous numbers of adherents to both Theosophy and Spiritualism, within or outside of our respective societies, show that both movements were but the necessary and, so to say, Karmically preor-

dained work of the age, and that each of them was born at its proper hour and fulfilled its proper mission at the right time, there are other and still more significant signs of the times.

A few years ago we predicted in print that after a short cycle of abuse and persecution, many of our enemies would come round, while others would, *en desespoir de cause*, follow our example and found mystic Societies. As Egypt in the prophecy of Hermes, theosophy was accused by “impious foreigners” (in our case, those outside its fold) of adoring monsters and chimaeras, and teaching “enigmas incredible to posterity.” If our “sacred scribes and hierophants” are not wanderers upon the face of the earth, it was through no fault of good Christian priests and clergymen; and no less than the Egyptians in the early centuries of the new faith and era, had we, from fear of a still worse profanation of sacred things and names, to bury deeper than ever the little of the esoteric knowledge that had been permitted to be given out to the world.

But, during the last three years all this has rapidly changed, and the demand for mystic information became so great, that the Theosophical Publishing Society could not find workers enough to supply the demand. Even *The Secret Doctrine*, the most abstruse of our publications — notwithstanding its forbidding price, the conspiracy of silence, and the nasty, contemptuous flings at it by some daily papers — has proved financially a success. See the change. That which Theosophists hardly dared speak about with bated breath for fear of being called lunatics but for a few years ago, is now being given out by lecturers, publicly advocated by mystical clergymen. While the orthodox hasten to make away with the old hell and sapphire-paved New Jerusalem, the more liberal accept now under Christian veils and biblical nomenclature our Doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation, and God as an abstract Principle.

Thus the Church is slowly drifting into philosophy and pantheism. Daily, we recognize some of our teachings creeping out as speculations — religious, poetical, and even scientific: and these noticed with respect by the same papers which will neither admit their theosophical origin nor abstain from vilipending the very granary of such mystic ideas — the Theosophical Society. About a year ago a wise criticaster¹ exclaimed in a paper we need not advertise:

To show the utterly *unscientific* ideas with which the work (*The Secret Doctrine*) is crammed, it may be sufficient to point out that its author refuses belief in the existence of *inorganic matter* and endows atoms with intelligence.

And today we find Edison’s conception of matter quoted with approval and sympathy by London magazines, from *Harper’s*, in which we read:

I do not believe that matter is inert, acted upon by an outside force. To me it seems that every atom is possessed by a certain amount of primitive intelligence: look at the thousand ways in which atoms of hydrogen combine with those of other elements . . . Do you mean to say they do this without intelligence? . . .

¹ [a petty critic]

Mr. Edison is a Theosophist, though not a very active one. Still, the very fact of his holding a diploma seems to inspire him with Theosophical truths.

“Theosophists believe in reincarnation!” say contemptuously our Christian enemies. “We do not find one word ever said by our Saviour that *could be interpreted against the modern belief in reincarnation . . .*” preaches the Rev. Mr. Bullard, thus half-opening, and very wisely too, a back door for the day when this Buddhistical and Brāhmanical “inane belief” will have become general.

Theosophists believe that the earliest races of men were as ethereal as are now their astral doubles, and call them *chhāyās* (shadows). And now hear the English poet laureate singing in his last book, *Demeter, and other Poems*:

The *Ghost in Man*, the *Ghost that once was Man*,
But cannot wholly free itself from Man,
Are calling to each other thro’ a dawn.
Stranger than earth has ever seen; *the veil*
Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,
But thro’ the Will of One who knows and rules —
And utter knowledge is but utter love —
Aeonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro’ all the spheres — an ever opening height,
And ever lessening earth — . . . ¹

This looks as if Lord Tennyson had read Theosophical books, or is inspired by the same grand truths as we are.

And so the cyclic evolution of theosophical ideals continues.

“Oh!” we hear some sceptics exclaiming, “but there are poetical licences. The writer does not believe a word of it.” How do you know this? But even if it were so, here is one more proof of the cyclic evolution of our Theosophical ideas, which, I hope, will not be dubbed, to match, as “clerical licences.” One of the most esteemed and sympathetic of London clergymen, the Rev. G.W. Allen, has just stepped into our Theosophical shoes and followed our good example by founding a “Christo-Theosophical Society.” As its double title shows, its platform and programme have to be necessarily more restricted and limited than our own, for in the words of its circular “it is (only) intended to cover ground which the (original or ‘Parent’) Society at present does not cover.” However much our esteemed friend and co-worker in Theosophy may be mistaken in believing that the teachings of the Theosophical Society do not cover *esoteric* Christianity as they do the esoteric aspect of all other world-religions, yet his new Society is sure to do good work. For, if the name chosen means anything at all, it means that the work and study of the members must of necessity be Theosophical. The above is again proven by what the circular of the “Christo-Theosophical Society” states in the following words: →

¹ [*The Ring*, lines 32-43. Italics are H.P. Blavatsky’s. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

It is believed that at the present day there are many persons who are dissatisfied with the crude and unphilosophic enunciation of Christianity put forward so often in sermons and theological writings. Some of these persons are impelled to give up all faith in Christianity, but many of them do this reluctantly, and would gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths which should show them to be in harmony with the conclusions of reason and the testimony of undeniable intuition. There are many others, also, whose only feeling is that the truths of their religion mean so very little to them practically, and have such very little power to influence and ennoble their daily life and character. To such persons the Christo-Theosophical Society makes its appeal, inviting them to join together in a common effort to discover that apprehension of Christian Truth, and to attain that Power, which must be able to satisfy the deep yearnings of the human heart, and give strength for self-mastery and a life lived for others.

This is admirable, and shows plainly its purpose of counteracting the very pernicious influences of exoteric and dogmatic theology, and it is just what we have been trying to do all along. All similarity, however, stops here, as it has nothing to do, as it appears, with *universal* but only sectarian Theosophy. We fear greatly that the “C.-T.S.” — by inviting

. . . to its membership those persons who, while desirous of apprehending ever more and more clearly the mysteries of Divine Truth, *yet wish to retain as the foundation of their philosophy the Christian doctrines of God as the Father of all men, and Christ as His revelation of Himself to mankind.*

— limits thereby “the Mysteries of the Divine Truth” to one single and the youngest of all religions, and *avatāras* to one man. We hope sincerely that the members of the Christo-Theosophical Society may be able to avoid this Charybdis without falling into Scylla.

There is one more difficulty in our way, and we would humbly ask to have it explained to us. “The Society,” states the circular, “is not made of Teachers and Learners. We are all learners.” This, with the hope distinctly expressed a few lines higher, that the members will “gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths . . . in harmony with the conclusions of reason,” etc., leads to a natural query: Which of the “learners” is to present the said truths to the other learners? Then comes the unavoidable reasoning that whosoever the “learner” may be, no sooner he will begin his “presentation” than he will become *nolens volens* a “teacher.”

But this is after all, a trifle. We feel too proud and too satisfied with the homage thus paid to Theosophy, and with the sight of a representative of the Anglican clergy following in our track, to find fault with details, or wish anything but good luck to the Christo-Theosophical Association.



Suggested reading for students.



From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.

- A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO LORD LYTTON
- A LAY CHELA ON OCCULT STUDY
- A LAY CHELA ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- A THEOSOPHICAL LOVE FEAST IN FRANCE
- ALETHEIA IS OUR GOD AND DOGMA
- ANCIENT ETHICAL WORSHIPS
- ARCHAIC THEOSOPHY IS PRE-BUDDHIST WISDOM-RELIGION
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS BLAVATSKY
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY ON ANNA KINGSFORD
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE THEOSOPHY OF DR. N.I. PIROGOV
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES ARGUMENTS AGAINST THEOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES THE ASSERTIONS OF A FRENCH THEOSOPHIST
- BLAVATSKY'S OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW THEOSOPHISTS
- BUCK ON THE NATURE AND AIM OF THEOSOPHY
- COLD METAPHYSICS VERSUS DIVINE WISDOM
- CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF A TRUE THEOSOPHIST
- CORY'S ANCIENT FRAGMENTS (1832)
- COSMOPOLITANISM IS FAR HOLIER AND NOBLER THAN GRASPING GREEDINESS CLOAKED IN PATRIOTISM
- DE ZIRKOFF ON CHARLES JOHNSTON
- DE ZIRKOFF ON EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT
- DE ZIRKOFF ON FRANZ HARTMANN
- DE ZIRKOFF ON GERALD MASSEY

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- DE ZIRKOFF ON HP BLAVATSKY COLLECTED WRITINGS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON SUBBA ROW
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE DREAM THAT NEVER DIES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THREE EMINENT THEOSOPHISTS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN
- DE ZIRKOFF RECALLS HIS FORMATIVE YEARS IN RUSSIA
- EASTERN LIGHT SHINES ON WESTERN MINDS
- EASTERN THEOSOPHY IS NEITHER A CREED, NOR A RELIGIOUS BODY
- ESSENTIAL THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES
- HARTMANN ON HOW TO ENTER THE PATH TO INFINITE LIFE
- HARTMANN ON THE HARMONICAL SOCIETY
- HOW THEOSOPHY REKINDLED TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN INDIA
- HUMANITY SEEMS TO PROGRESS BY INVENTING ONE DISCOVERY AFTER THE OTHER
- IMPORT AND POTENCY OF NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS
- IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED
- JUDGE AND DE ZIRKOFF ON GEORGE MEAD
- JUDGE ON THE HEART DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- JUDGE ON THE TRUE THEOSOPHIST'S PATH
- JUDGE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND WORK
- KEYS TO THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE
- LET THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PERISH, THAN FORSAKE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH
- MYSTERY IS NOT UNREVEALED KNOWLEDGE
- OCCULT TRUTH IS NATURE WITHOUT THE ILLUSORY VEIL OF THE SENSES
- OUR GOD IS HUMANITY AND OUR CULT THE LOVE OF OUR FELLOW-MAN
- OUR ONLY DELIVERER AND SAVIOUR
- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
- PREREQUISITES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
- STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO PATHS
- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
- THE AIMS AND MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY FULFILLED
- THE CHALDEAN ORACLES OF ZOROASTER
- THE CROWN JEWELS OF THEOSOPHY (PHOTO ALBUM)
- THE POWER OF THE TRINITY OF KOSMOS MANIFESTS THROUGH THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAN
- THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY
- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES
- THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IS NOT A NURSERY FOR BUDDING ADEPTS
- THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ARCANE TERMS
- THEOSOPHIA - FOUNTAIN, PERSPECTIVES, PRACTICE (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHIA: INNER WISDOM
- THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, THE GREAT MORAL BUT SILENT FORCE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - ESOTERIC SECTION (LETTERHEAD)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MISSION AND FUTURE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OBJECTS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SYMBOLS (TRUE TYPE FONT)
- THEOSOPHIST IS WHO THEOSOPHY DOES
- THEOSOPHISTS DEFINED ATTITUDINALLY, ETHICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
- THEOSOPHY IS DEEPER MONISM THAN SECULARISM, AND MORE PHILOSOPHICAL
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- TRUTH IS ALWAYS MIXED WITH ERROR AND HINDERED BY TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- TWO JOURNALS DEVOTED TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- VERNAL BLOOMS BY WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- VISTAS OF VIRTUE AND TRUTH
- WADIA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE TS
- WHAT SORT OF MAN THE REAL PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE?
- WHEN PURE LOVE IS PERVERTED, HUMANITY QUIVERS
- WHO CAN MEND THE BROKEN SOCIETY?
- WHO CAN READ THE RIDDLE OF THE SERPENT?
- WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS?
- WHY A BRAHMIN ABANDONED HIS CASTE
- WHY PAGAN SYMBOLISM IS INDESTRUCTIBLE?
- WILDER ON THE WISDOM RELIGION OF ZOROASTER

