

Madame Blavatsky on the Travelling Truthseeker



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The Travelling Truthseeker

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THE THIRD VOLUME of Mr. Bennett's Narrative of his Voyage around the World to investigate the present state of religion, is as interesting as its predecessors, and calls for the same criticism. A fourth and concluding Volume, with a general Index of the contents of the whole series, is still to appear, but alas! the busy pen that wrote them will write no more. As was remarked in a previous notice, Mr. Bennett's style is more pungent than cultivated; a man of the people, he spoke like them as well as for them, and those who regard manner rather than matter, will often take a strong exception to his style as the friends of Western religious orthodoxy will to his ideas. But in a dishonest age like this — an age of shams and cheating semblances, the friends of truth must relish an author like our poor, persecuted colleague, whose manifest honesty and indignation quiver in his every book. The present volumes of travel are crammed with quotations from the standard guide books of all the countries he traversed, and hence are themselves full of useful information about men and things, altogether apart from the religious question. They are therefore worthy of a place in every general library. To the full extent of the circulation the book may attain, Theosophy and its advocates will have the benefit of great notoriety, since Mr. Bennett devotes no less than eighty-seven pages of Vol. III to the subject. Though he was an ardent Freethinker and Secularist, he yet discusses Occultism with a judicial candour which might be profitably imitated by his famous contemporaries of the *National Reformer*. In the hurry of his brief stay at Bombay, he was not able to get everything down correctly, and so it is not strange to find his

¹ De Robigne Mortimer Bennett (1818–1882), *A Truth-Seeker Around the World. A series of letters written while making a tour of the globe*. New York: D.M. Bennett, Liberal and Scientific Publishing House, 1882. Four Volumes: Vol. I, From New York to Damascus. Vol. II, From Damascus to Bombay. Vol. III, From Bombay to Hong Kong. Vol. IV, From Hong Kong to New York. [Library of Congress]

chapter upon Occultism containing some errors. But we shall [369] only point out a single one which might convey a very wrong impression to outsiders. He says (p. 94) about admissions into the Theosophical Society:

It seems that the desirability of every candidate for admission is referred to the Brothers, they approving of some and rejecting others. My case seems to have been laid before them, and they decided favourably upon it.

No such general reference of applications has ever been made, the Brothers leaving to the Founders the entire responsibility in such cases; since it is we who are building up the Society under their auspices, not they who are selecting its membership, with us as passive agents. If the latter were the fact, many unfortunate misjudgements of candidates would have been avoided, and much vexation and scandal spared. Advice was indeed asked as to Mr. Bennett's admission, simply because we foresaw what has since happened, that whatever odium his bigoted persecutors had contrived to cast upon him would have to be shared by us, and this seemed an impolitic step for our young Society to take. The result of that appeal is above stated by Mr. Bennett; who adds that the

. . . response was that I am an honest, industrious man, and fully worthy to become a member . . . I hope their opinion is well founded.

It was so, as we have become more and more satisfied ever since, and now none regret him more than his cautious friends of Bombay — now of Madras. This is not the first instance in which our Masters have looked into the heart of a candidate whom we might have rejected, because of his being under the world's frown, and bade us remember that we ourselves were not so blameless when they accepted *us* as to warrant our turning our backs upon any earnest yearner after truth.¹ Thousands have read with the thrill [370] of sympathy the story of the adulterous woman whom Jesus is said to have abstained from condemning, when her accusers slunk away at the challenge he made to their own spotlessness from sin. The history of our Society contains more than one example of this identical loftiness of compassion having been shown to unhappy candidates, by *our* spiritual Masters and Exemplars, the MAHATMAS.



¹ [As definitely stated, both by Master M. and the Tibetan Brother known as Djual Khool, D.M. Bennett was at the time one of the "agents" used (unbeknown to himself) "to carry out the scheme for the enfranchisement of Western thought from superstitious creeds." The high esteem for him on the part of the Adept-Brothers may be seen by consulting Letters XXXVII and XLIII of *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, and Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Series II, p. 328 *et seq.* — Boris de Zirkoff.]

Also consult "Tributes to De Robigne Mortimer Bennett," a remarkable man held in high esteem by the Founders of the Theosophical Society, in the same series. After being founded in Paris, Illinois, in September 1873, D.M. Bennett relocated to New York City, where his *The Truth Seeker* remained in print until 1964, when it was moved to San Diego, CA. The front page of *The Truth Seeker*, Vol. I, No. 5, January 1874, is presented overleaf. — ED. PHIL.]

The Truth Seeker.

DEVOTED TO

SCIENCE, MORALS, FREE THOUGHT, FREE DISCUSSION, LIBERALISM, SEXUAL EQUALITY, LABOR REFORM, PROGRESSION,
FREE EDUCATION, AND WHAT EVER TENDS TO EMANCIPATE AND ELEVATE THE HUMAN RACE.

OPPOSED TO

Priestcraft, Ecclesiasticism, Dogmas, Creeds, False Theology, Superstition, Bigotry, Ignorance, Monopolies, Aristocracies,
Privileged Classes, Tyranny, Oppression and Everything that Degrades or Burdens Mankind Mentally or Physically.

"Come now and let us reason together;" Let us hear all sides; Let us divest ourselves of prejudice and the effects of early education; Let us "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."

Vol. I, No. 5.

{ D. M. BENNETT, }
EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

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OUR PLATFORM.

WE extend the right hand of fellowship to liberal minds of all grades and classes. We ask them not to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes or to understand with our reason. We are not "hide-bound," nor do we ask others to "measure their wheat in our half-bushel." We embrace, as in one brotherhood, Liberals, Free Religionists, Rationalists, Spiritualists, Universalists, Unitarians, Friends, Infidels, Free Thinkers, and in short all who dare to think and judge for themselves. Let us compare our views; let us canvass each other's opinions and reasons, and see which has the better way. We have no creed or dogmas to ask others to subscribe to, but are in favor of independent thought, free enquiry, free speech, and everything that tends to break the chains of mental bondage, ignorance and superstition. As it is not possible or desirable that all persons should think exactly alike, we do not expect to bring others to our standard of thought.

We wish not needlessly to wound the feelings of any, but hold to speaking frankly what we honestly believe to be true. We are not in favor of a "milk and water" diet for men and women, but something more positive and substantial. We are firmly opposed to priestcraft, the errors, superstitions and false creeds of past dark ages, and in favor of truth and progress.

Demands of Liberalism.

THE following nine propositions by Francis E. Abbot, of *The Index*, we endorse most cordially, and they are approved by liberal minds all over the country:

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from taxation.
2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in congress, in state legislatures, in the army and navy, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.
3. We demand that all public appropriations for any sectarian-educational-charitable institutions shall cease.
4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government be abolished: and especially that the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.
5. We demand the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the governors of the various states, of all religious festivals or fasts shall wholly cease.
6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury, shall be established in its stead.
7. We demand that all laws, directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.
8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights and impartial liberty.
9. We demand that not only in the constitution of the United States and of the several States, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis, and whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end—shall be consistently, unflinchingly and promptly made.

GREETING.

FROM the center of this vast human hive of industry, life and activity—at the beginning of a New Year, we salute the thousands of our readers, scattered throughout the various states and territories of this Union. Fresh from the prairies of the West, where we have toiled and browned in its hot sun, faced its brisk winds, and felt its bleak frosts, and now 'installed in this great City near the Sea, we greet you, Dear Readers, with our best wishes and kindest desires. We wish you "A HAPPY NEW YEAR." We wish that *Eighteen-seventy-four* may be a pleasant portion of your existence—that it may bring you health, tranquility, and contentment, without unduly wearing or wearying you, bodily or mentally; and that when the year just begun shall have run its course, it will still leave you upon *terra-firma*, in the full enjoyment of life, health and all your faculties.

While it is the season for making good wishes and we are in the humor of it, we wish that light and knowledge may increase not only with the readers of *THE TRUTH SEEKER* but with the entire population of our wide country as well as with the whole brotherhood of man.

May the damp, chilly fogs and mists of darkness, superstition and error be dispelled from the minds of men by the majestic rising and coursing of the glorious sun of TRUTH; aided by the vigorous breezes of Reason and Intelligence until the moral atmosphere around us is purified from miasma, stagnation and death, and we be enabled to breathe the pure oxygen of life, health and mental freedom.

May we gradually emerge from the darkening influence of error of all kinds, whether it arises from priestcraft, sectarianism or superannuated dogmas and creeds that have failed to benefit the world of mankind, and may we look to Truth and Reason for light and guidance. May we become familiar with SCIENCE whose revelations are not fallacious or deceptive, but whose utterance and teachings are replete with wisdom, knowledge and beneficence. May we delight to study her unerring pages and enrich our minds from her storehouses of truth, until the blinding effects of ignorance, falsehood and error of all kinds be removed from us and we obtain strength to break the mental chains of bondage that have so long bound the inhabitants of earth.

May we learn to be true men and women—formed in Nature's highest mold. May we learn to search and think and judge and act for ourselves, and feel it no longer necessary to employ and pay a pampered, privileged class to perform this duty for us. In selecting our teachers may we choose those who will enlighten our minds from Nature's fountain of truth and not cloud our perceptions with pretended revelations from an unknown source whose effect has been to bewilder and mislead mankind.

In this course we shall become "reconciled" to the God of Science. We will be free to walk in his glorious paths. Our "salvation" will be secured. We will become our own "Saviors" and will need no mythical demi-god to ignominiously "die" for us, or to buy by the shedding of his own blood "reconciliation" and a continued existence in the presence of the eternal God of Truth.

The cloven-footed Devil of darkness and gloom will have no terrors for us. We will be entirely free from his control, without the slightest fear of his malice or cruelty in this life or any that may succeed it. In fact we will not have the slightest use for his long-tailed majesty, and we can freely resign his offices and attentions in favor of those who deem his existence so necessary in the system that is to bring happiness to man.

May we also through the present and coming years habituate ourselves to walking in the paths of true morality, for they are emphatically the "paths of peace." A life of uprightness, actuated by a desire and effort to do good to our fellow beings is sure to bring happy results. Those lead the happiest, most peaceful lives who seek most to benefit those around them. Our highest duty lies not above the clouds o'er our heads, nor under the soil beneath our feet; neither can we do aught to benefit or affect any being that may be supposed to exist in either locality. Our duty and field of action is here, among the sons and daughters of men, and may we well perform it. May we make it the object of our lives to do all we can to benefit those around us—each to do all in our power to make the world better for having lived in it.

Before closing let us be a trifle selfish and make a wish or two for ourself. May *THE TRUTH SEEKER* live and flourish. May its course so auspiciously begun be onward and upward, until it becomes a positive aid in bringing light, and truth, and mental liberty to the inhabitants of this fair land. May it become a favorite with the liberal, truth-loving people of America, and may its list of subscribers increase five, ten, twenty-fold. It entertains a warm feeling of friendship for its patrons and readers, and wishes they may feel the same toward it. In its search after truth may it be successful as well as in dispensing the same to others.

It shall be our endeavor in the work we have undertaken to do, to the best of our ability. Our highest wish and object is to do all in our power for the good of our brothers and sisters in humanity, and we only ask to be sustained and supported by the friends of mental liberty and human progress in the work we have begun.

We crave also the indulgence and kind consideration of our readers. If they perceive aught of our rusticity or inexperience in the mysteries of Journalism, we know they will be lenient with us and not judge us too harshly.

May we all move unitedly, hand in hand, in the march of freedom, progress and reform through the year just begun, and may 1875 find us still alive and active in the good cause, with a considerable advance made in the interest of Justice, Truth and Right.

WHEN we came on here a few weeks ago to make arrangements for removing *THE TRUTH SEEKER* to this city, we thought we had secured office-room in *The Sun Building*, and so announced it to our readers in the December number. Upon arriving here, however, we were disappointed in this and took an office at NO. 335 BROADWAY,

a point equally as eligible, to say the least, being as good a location as there is in the whole length of this, the greatest street in the world.

When our friends visit the city we invite them to call and see us. If we can sell them some liberal books we will be pleased to do so. If not, we will be glad to take them by the hand and make their acquaintance.

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
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- 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

- 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
- NO THEOSOPHICAL JOURNAL CAN SATISFY ALL CREEDS AND BELIEFS
- 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
- 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 BRETHREN OF THE ROSY CROSS NO LONGER EXIST
- 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 ARCANES 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 RELIGION ITSELF AND SUBLIME CODE OF ETHICS
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- TRIBUTES TO DE ROBIGNE MORTIMER BENNETT
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE
- 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

