

*Meditation alone will not
lead to theosophic development!*



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From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CORRESPONDENCE) IX pp. 169-71.

To the Editors of *Lucifer*.

Several questions have of late occurred to me at the entry of the subject of Theosophy. . . . I am quite new to the study, and must perforce express myself crudely. I gather that an early result of entire devotion to an inner contemplative life, and a life also of fine unselfishness, such a life as is calculated to allow of the growth of faculties otherwise dormant, that a result of this life will be a growing recognition of the underlying unity of man and his surroundings, that to such a man truth will make itself known *from within*, and therefore will claim instant acceptance and unquestionable certitude; that in fact the longer that such a life is lived with unfading enthusiasm, the higher will the central spirit rise in self-assertion, the wider will be the survey of creation, and the more immediate the apprehension of truth; also that with these tends to develop a greater physical command of the forces of nature.

Now I submit that such a life as is here spoken of, *is* led by men who attain to none of these results. Most of us know Christians who seem never to have a selfish thought, who exist in an atmosphere of self-sacrifice for others, and whose leisure is all spent in meditation and in emotional prayer, which surely is seeking after truth. Yet they do not attain it. They fail to rise out of Christianity into Theosophy; they remain for ever limited to, and satisfied with the narrow space they move in. ① It may be replied that they do expand slowly. Granted, for some of them. But my point is that there do exist (and one is enough for my purpose) men, and particularly women, leading lives both of spiritual meditation and of [170] unselfishness, to whom nevertheless is not vouchsafed a clearer view of the great universe, a larger apprehension of Theosophic truth, nor any increased physical command of nature.

② As regards the last point, take for an example John Stuart Mill. Surely he lived always in the white light of exalted contemplation and instant readiness of high unselfishness; yet to him came no dawn of Theosophic light, nor any larger hold upon the forces of material nature. ③ May I ask now for a word of explanation on this point? I apologise for the trouble I give, and for my want of ability in unfolding my difficulty.

H. C.

Editorial response by Madame Blavatsky

① Nowhere in the theosophic teachings was it stated that a life of entire devotion to one's duty alone, or "a contemplative life," graced even by "fine unselfishness" was sufficient in itself to awaken dormant faculties and lead man to the apprehension of final truths, let alone spiritual powers. To lead such life is an excellent and meritorious thing, under any circumstances, whether one be a Christian or a Mussulman, a Jew, Buddhist, or Brahmin, and according to Eastern philosophy it must and will benefit a person, if not in his present, then in his future existence on earth, or what we call *rebirth*. But to expect that leading the best of lives helps one — without the help of philosophy and esoteric wisdom — to perceive "the soul of things" and develops in him "a physical command of the forces of nature," *i.e.*, endows him with abnormal or adept powers — is really too sanguine. Less than by any one else can such results be achieved by a sectarian of whatever exoteric creed. For the path to which his meditation is confined, and upon which his contemplation travels, is too narrow, too thickly covered with the weeds of dogmatic beliefs — the fruits of human fancy and error — to permit the pure ray of any Universal truth to shine upon it. His is a blind faith, and when his eyes open he has to give it up and cease being a "Christian" in the theological sense. The instance is not a good one. It is like pointing to a man immersed in "holy" water in a bathtub and asking why he has not learnt to swim in it, since he is sitting in such holy fluid. Moreover, "unfading *enthusiasm*" and "*emotional prayer*" are not exactly the conditions required for [171] the achievement of true theosophic and spiritual development. These means can at best help to *psychic* development. If our correspondent is anxious to learn the difference between *Spiritual* and *Psychic* wisdom, between *Sophia* and *Psyche*,¹ let him turn to the Greek text (the English translation is garbled) in the *Epistle of James*, iii, 15-16,² and he will know that one is *divine* and the other terrestrial, "sensual devilish."

② The same applies to the second case in hand, and even to the third.

③ Both — *i.e.*, persons in general, leading lives of spiritual meditation, and those who like John Stuart Mill³ live "always in the white light of exalted contemplation," do not pursue truth in the right direction, and therefore they fail; moreover John Stuart Mill set up for himself an arbitrary standard of truth, inasmuch as he made his *physical* consciousness the final court of appeal. His was a case of a wonderful development of the intellectual and terrestrial side of psyche or soul, but Spirit he rejected as all Agnostics do. And how can any final truths be apprehended except by the Spirit, which is the only and eternal reality in Heaven as on Earth?

¹ [Consult "Kamic versus Manasic action," in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [15 οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν καταρχομένη, ἀλλὰ ἐπίγειος, ψυχικὴ, δαιμονιώδης· 16 ὅπου γὰρ ζήλος καὶ ἐριθεία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα. [Greek]

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. KJV]

³ [John Stuart Mill, 1806–1873, English philosopher, political economist, politician and civil servant. One of the most influential thinkers in the history of classical liberalism, he contributed widely to social theory, political theory, and political economy. Dubbed "the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century" by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, he conceived of liberty as justifying the freedom of the individual in opposition to unlimited state and social control. — Cf. *Wikipedia*.

Suggested reading for students.



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- ANCIENT ETHICAL WORSHIPS
- ARCHAIC THEOSOPHY IS PRE-BUDDHIST WISDOM-RELIGION
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- CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF A TRUE THEOSOPHIST
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- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
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- 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
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- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
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- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
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- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
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- THE BRETHREN OF THE ROSY CROSS NO LONGER EXIST
- THE CHALDEAN ORACLES OF ZOROASTER
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- 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)
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- 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)
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- THEOSOPHICAL SYMBOLS (TRUE TYPE FONT)
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- THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
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- TRIBUTES TO DE ROBIGNE MORTIMER BENNETT
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- 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
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- 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



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