

Besant can best be shown by safeguarding the freedom and sanity of the Theosophical Society, and it is in this spirit that I have written what I have no choice but to write.

I am, my dear colleagues,
Yours faithfully,
G. R. S. MEAD.

Cheyne Court, Chelsea.

March 1st, 1907.

(In the last number, when printing the first communications from Adyar, I exercised my editorial right of commenting in the same issue on that which I was forced by circumstances to print, but of which I strongly disapproved, so that my readers might not be in doubt as to my view. I shall not, however, comment on the more recent communications from Adyar printed in this number, but give them a month's grace, as I have already done in the case of Mrs. Besant's article and her phenomenal "appointment." I shall thus be in precisely the same position as the rest of my colleagues and readers.—G. R. S. M.)

LETTER FROM MRS. WEBB

It seems desirable that, at the present crisis in the Theosophical Society, many of the ordinary members should express themselves, as well as those we look up to as our leaders. It is a moment at which every member of the Society must bear his or her share of responsibility. We cannot wait for others to decide things or to make up our minds for us. The vote of the newly joined and ignorant member counts for as much as that of the oldest and wisest.

We must remember that this is no ordinary election of a President. This nomination has been put to the Society on an *extraordinary* basis. It is no question now of whether we do or do not wish Mrs. Besant to be President. It is a question of whether we mean or do not mean to allow the Theosophical Society to be governed by the personal psychic experiences of individual members. Everyone must have some opinion as to the principle here at stake. Nor can we stand aside and do nothing, even if we would. To abstain from voting is not to do nothing, it is to add a vote or votes to the side from which we differ, and each member *has* to take a share in deciding the fate of the Theosophical Society in what has become a very critical situation.

Let us then face our responsibilities with courage, not trying to shelter ourselves behind others or to leave them to do our duty for

us. They cannot, and we can. There is no member who is not able to form a judgment as to whether it be wise or not that we should depend in our official acts on inspirations of this kind; and we may well consider whether it be evidence of wisdom in those from whom the messages come that they should suggest our doing so.

For one thing, not all the members of the Theosophical Society believe even in the very existence of Those we call the Masters. This in itself is a strong reason against basing a purely official election on the ground of entirely unprovable assertions as to Their wishes; and this would hold even if the fact of its being Their wish were undoubtedly true. But to many—perhaps most—this will hardly appeal. If they believed these manifestations to be true they would care little for the correct official attitude, or anything else.

And for such, what must be the test of the truth or untruth of these reported interviews? Surely there is none worth having but the test of reason and conscience applied to the interviews themselves. Do they show forth the Holiness and Wisdom of their supposed Source?

I suppose all who believe in the Masters have some ideal which that term connotes for them. Probably most of us believe that this falls immeasurably short of the reality, or, at any rate, few would accept anything lower than that ideal, such as it is. If we take any words that appeal to us as in some measure expressing it, and, putting them over against these supposed revelations, ask ourselves how they correspond, I think the answer will be pretty certain. We might take any of the great words that have come forth to the world from the Highest Sources, but I will take only a few words from a little book that professes no authority whatever, words which the context shows us were written concerning the need for discrimination between the False and the Real in such manifestations:

“Master’s words, however much they may be opposed to one’s previous thoughts, never fail to bring the most absolute conviction, alike to the intellect and to the moral sense of the person addressed. They come like a revelation, rectifying an error which becomes at once apparent; they stream down like a column of light dispelling the gloom; they make no claim on credulity or blind faith.” (*The Doctrine of the Heart*, pp. 55, 56).

To turn from this to the petty, and paltry, and immoral messages we are offered as coming *direct* from Sources of Light and Truth is a descent so sharp that it must surely give us pause.

The form the present crisis takes is such that in opposing these psychic happenings, we find ourselves in apparent opposition to one who is looked up to, with much reason, as one of our chief leaders,—who is, by many, regarded as a special instrument of Those whom some believe to stand behind the Theosophical movement.

For many members this is a grave difficulty. Their love and respect for one to whom they owe very, very much, and whom they believe to be far beyond them in spiritual and mental development, is on the one hand, and on the other the duty of following truth, at the cost, apparently, of opposing themselves to the leader they love and venerate. But this I believe to be a fallacy. There are different ways of showing love and respect. If the person you revered most in the world were stepping into a quagmire, mistaking it for solid earth, it would be a poor way of showing your devotion to walk in too; and if a leader is mistaken, those who follow knowingly do a cruel wrong, while in refusing to follow they offer their best help. This seems so obvious as not to be worth saying; but one hears of members who, rejecting the truth of these supposed revelations entirely, yet feel it is right to support Mrs. Besant,—because she is Mrs. Besant.

I, for one, have enough faith in Mrs. Besant to believe that she desires Truth and Light far more than I do myself. I believe that for the moment she is holding for truth something entirely false, and so I do not believe that those who oppose her in this are in reality opposing her at all, but that, on the contrary, in fighting for truth here, we are fighting for what she too loves best,—are *with* her and not against her—only *against* some cloud of darkness that has risen up from the Not-Self.

If we doubt there is a cloud, let us look at her article in the last number of the REVIEW, with its shaky morality, and ask ourselves which comes from the real Mrs. Besant, this, or the lofty teachings of *The Outer Court*, and *The Path of Discipleship*? If the latter, then surely her heart is on the side of Light and Truth, whatever she may believe for the moment, whatever cloud or “glamour” may temporarily hide Reality from her.

We have all heard of, and perhaps talked glibly enough of, “glamours” and the “difficulties that bestrew the path” of those who advance, and yet it seems the last thing that most of us take into our calculations as a practical possibility for such. Why should we be dismayed if it be so? Should we not do better to try, from the comparative safety of a lower level, to realise a little what the

dangers and difficulties of those ahead must be, who "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness"?

BEATRICE WEBB.

LETTER FROM MR. SCOTT-ELLIOT

The Theosophical Society has passed through many crises, but none has approached in importance that which is impending. For it will now have to be decided whether the Society, as originally constituted, is to continue in existence, or whether it is to assume an entirely new basis; in other words, whether or not it is to be wrecked.

The points at issue are of such importance that they cannot be too prominently brought before the members in all parts of the world who have so momentous a decision in their hands.

Two questions are at stake: first, whether the Society is to be governed by personal psychic vision instead of by the dictates of reason and common-sense; and, secondly, whether adherence to the rules of ordinary morality is or is not to be regarded as a necessary qualification for a member of the Society.

To deal with the second question first, the utterly immoral views expressed by one who aims at the Presidentship of the Society (see Mrs. Besant's article entitled "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" published in last month's REVIEW) are a very definite index of the way in which the Society would be governed if Mrs. Besant were elected President, and they cannot but give reason to many to pause and consider well whether they are not bound to record their votes against one who utters such opinions.

But the first question is, if possible, of even greater importance. That the Theosophical Society, which from the time of its inauguration was privileged to be a mouthpiece of the Ancient Wisdom—the Wisdom which animated and vivified every religion which has arisen upon earth—that this Society should sink to the level of a spiritualistic sect! And yet this is the very result that will be achieved if the ridiculous apparitions at Adyar are taken as genuine, and votes recorded in response to their appeal. That poor old Colonel Olcott—sensible man as he was—should have been made such a sport of on his death-bed is sad enough; but—whether they were "spooks" raised by mediumistic agency, or apparitions animated by the powers of darkness—the universal acceptance of their message would be far sadder

still, for it would be the death-blow to the Theosophical Society. The acceptance of it even by a majority sufficient to return Mrs. Besant to the Presidentship would mean a terrible continuation of the present crisis. Here, in England, we believe that reason and common-sense will carry the day. May it be so in every other part of the world!

W. SCOTT-ELLIOT.

(The following came to hand as these pages were being made up. Mr. Keightley's letter has, we believe, appeared in *Theosophy in India* of March 15th, and Mrs. Besant's declaration in both *Theosophy in India* and *The Theosophist* of March.)

LETTER FROM MR. BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY

To My Fellow Members in the Theosophical Society.

Now that our President-Founder has passed to his rest, and wide publicity has been given in the public press to the various phenomena which have recently taken place at Adyar, the considerations of delicacy for the feelings of a dying man and of reticence in regard to matters which many of us consider to be quite unfitted for public discussion, no longer render silence a duty. On the contrary, in view of the actual position of affairs in the Theosophical Society, a duty seems to lie upon its older and more experienced members to state their views and make clear their position in regard to these matters, for the enlightenment of those whose acquaintance with the Society is of more recent date.

As one of the oldest members now left in the Society, having worked in its ranks for twenty-four years, and as one who has for years held responsible office, first as General Secretary of the Indian Section, then as General Secretary of the British Section, and now as a member of the General Council, I feel that this duty is specially imperative upon myself. And I therefore feel bound to state my views on the present situation as simply and briefly as I can.

But first I desire to make it very plain that I do not intend to argue the case either for or against the *advisability* of selecting Mrs. Besant as President of the Theosophical Society in succession to Colonel Olcott; and still less do I propose to say anything either against her qualifications for the post or in deprecation of the claims which her immense services to the movement give her upon any position she desires to hold.

The two questions upon which I feel it a duty to state my position are :

1. The bearing and effect upon the constitution of the Theosophical Society of what has happened at Adyar and of Mrs. Besant's action in connection therewith, as well as the effects they are calculated to produce upon the spirit and character of our Society in the future.

2. The question of the authenticity of the various messages and communications received: *i.e.*, Do they, or do they not, emanate from such exalted Beings as Those who have been spoken of as the Masters ?

As having an important bearing upon the constitutional questions involved, I am bound to say that ever since last Christmas Colonel Olcott has been in no condition of mind or body, either to think clearly, or to take any important decision whatever.

While at Adyar, I had ample evidence that he was wholly at the mercy of any suggestion coming from his immediate surroundings, and entirely incapable of arriving at any independent decision of his own.

It is most painful to have to make this statement, but its importance is obvious, and its accuracy will become more and more apparent as we proceed.

In his letter of January 7th to the Theosophical Society, its officers and members, Colonel Olcott purports to "appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the Theosophical Society" at his death, having just previously written that the Masters had told him "to appoint" her as his successor.

Now Colonel Olcott never had power to "appoint" anyone as his successor. The Theosophical Society's constitution gives him the right only to "nominate," subject to ratification by the members, as is clearly shown by his official notice to the General Secretaries of January 21st.

All who have known Colonel Olcott know his extreme respect for the Society's constitution, and his resolute upholding of proper procedure and strict obedience to its letter and spirit. Can anyone then believe that in sound mind, and with his judgment clear and normal, Colonel Olcott would have violated the constitution and exceeded his own powers by "appointing" a successor, when he was entitled only to "nominate" one, subject to ratification by the Society? The whole of this letter shows the same lack of that calm

judgment and strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the constitution which always characterised our late President-Founder.

Further, it seems to me quite opposed to the best interests of the Society for decisions vitally affecting its administration to be thus bolstered up by appeals to higher powers or visions of any kind. Of what use are a constitution and rules, if such unrecognised and unverifiable influences are to be brought to bear upon the minds of members?

That Colonel Olcott or Mrs. Besant should be guided by such visions, or by any form of higher illumination, may be, and indeed is, perfectly right and desirable for them personally; but that their experiences of such a kind should be made public with the inevitable result of *influencing the votes of members*, seems to me quite opposed not only to the letter and spirit of the Society's constitution, but to the true spirit of Theosophy itself.

These considerations receive only added force in the light of Mrs. Besant's letter of February 5th. Of what avail any process of voting, of what use the form of ratifying a nomination, if members are threatened that unless they vote for Mrs. Besant they will reject the Masters?

As a matter of fact, a number of letters have been received by the older members, regretting that the supposed "orders" from the Masters left them no choice in the matter.

This letter of Mrs. Besant's seems to me to violate our constitution both in letter and spirit, and I regret with all my heart that one whom I so highly love and honour, should have condescended to use such questionable methods, which were, moreover, the less needed, since it is very unlikely that any considerable body of members would have thought of opposing her election, had she said nothing of all these visions and messages, but simply left Colonel Olcott's official nomination to stand alone and carry its due weight with the Society at large.

Further, this letter of Mrs. Besant's tends to set up a dogma in the Society, and to undermine the free judgment and sense of personal responsibility of its members. Its ultimate effect, if yielded to without protest, must be to make of the Society a popedom, and to transform the most universal movement the world has seen into a dogmatic sect.

For all these reasons I regret most deeply the publication of these matters, and Mrs. Besant's action in issuing the circular just mentioned.

Let us turn now to the examination of the authenticity of the "orders" and contents of these communications.

First let me say that I in no way question the *bona fides* of the witnesses and recipients of these phenomena, nor do I doubt that they actually believed they had the experiences described. Moreover, I am as thoroughly convinced of the real existence of the Masters of Wisdom, and of the fact that They take interest in the Theosophical Society, as I am of my own existence. But I am equally convinced that the contents of these messages and "orders" do not proceed from Them, and that They have had nothing whatever to do with these phenomena.

In the first place, the tone, style and character of these communications are altogether lacking in the elevation and dignity which mark the utterances of even an advanced disciple, and are entirely incompatible with the idea that they proceed from any such exalted source. It is inconceivable that a Master of Wisdom could say: "Most emphatically, yes," and "Decidedly not, I wish you to state this publicly." Such phrases, such language, could never have come from Their lips, or been framed in Their minds.

Secondly, these communications contain various errors of fact and statement, which undeniably exhibit a very fallible and inaccurate origin, and one very imperfectly acquainted with both the history of the Society and the details of recent events in connection with it.

Lastly, the long communication in regard to Mr. Leadbeater neither illuminates the question at issue, nor does it carry any conviction with it—both unvarying marks of any communication really proceeding from a Master of Wisdom.

It is a truism that we are all imperfect—for only Brahman is absolutely perfect—and that therefore They must work with imperfect instruments; but does it necessarily follow that They must choose for that purpose one who not only deliberately violates a moral law recognised by every nation and people, but one who has committed an offence against the criminal law of his own country? Granted that morality is relative, are the Masters of Wisdom forced to seek for instruments among the lower strata of human morality? I cannot for one moment believe such a thing; and therefore this communication, even standing alone, would suffice to show that these visions and communications cannot have even a remote connection with the Masters—that is, if by "Masters of Wisdom" we mean the embodiments of the purest and loftiest ideals of perfected humanity.

Finally, this whole attempt to coerce the wills and overbear the sober judgment of members in the exercise of one of their most important duties is totally opposed to all that has been taught, all that has been verified in experience as to Their methods of action. From the earliest days of my connection with H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott down to the present, the one lesson taught me over and over again is that the Masters *never* over-ride the freewill, even of Their own pupils, and never attempt to overbear their reason and common sense.

For these reasons I absolutely reject these messages and communications, and am convinced that they are]not authentic. And I most earnestly trust that my fellow members will truly exercise their own judgment and good sense, putting entirely aside these visions and "orders," and refusing to allow themselves to be swayed either in one direction or the other by the profoundly regrettable publicity that has been given to these phenomena.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

A FURTHER DECLARATION BY MRS. BESANT

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR, MADRAS,
February 21st, 1907.

To the Members of the Theosophical Society.

The President-Founder having passed away from earth, the chief authority in the Theosophical Society is vested—by Rule 27 of the Constitution—in the Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett, until the votes of the Society confirm, or reject, the nomination of myself as his successor, made by the President-Founder. As he made me his Deputy for the last months of his life, I am holding the headship of the Headquarters temporarily—Mr. Sinnett being in England—for ordinary business purposes, the officers the President-Founder appointed continuing in their several posts. Should the necessary two-thirds of the recorded votes of the members render valid the late President's nomination, I shall then assume office, and issue an address to the members.

This *interregnum* in the Presidential office will not occur again, as the Council will be bound to nominate the successor of the next incumbent six months before the expiration of his term of office, so that the newly elected President will take up his work so soon as his predecessor leaves office.

It should be remembered that while I, personally, regard myself as the nominee of my Master, as well as of our President-Founder, no member of the Society is bound to take that view, nor to base his vote on any authority save that of his own private judgment. Neither the President-Founder, nor—with all reverence be it spoken—our Master, does more than nominate; each member is free to accept or reject, and the responsibility for his vote is the individual responsibility of the member. Belief in the Masters is not incumbent on any member of the Society; those who believe in Them are not bound to believe in any particular manifestation, asserted as genuine by others. Perfect freedom as to belief or non-belief in any view or statement is the precious heritage of the Theosophical Society, and while I myself know the manifestations to be genuine, I defend the right of every member to disbelieve them, and to vote for or against the President's nomination on any ground chosen by himself.

ANNIE BESANT,
Member of the General Council.

“ APPOINTMENT-NOMINATION ”

GENOA, *March 15th, 1907.*

To the Editors, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

DEAR SIRS,

With reference to the documents and comments published in the March number of your REVIEW, under the heading “Two Communications from Adyar,” and to the constitutional question raised in regard to the first of these communications; I see no mention made of an official circular issued by the late President-Founder to the General Secretaries of Sections of the Theosophical Society, three weeks before his death, which runs as follows:

(The memorandum which stands first under the heading “The Presidential Election” is here quoted.)

In the face of this document, on which more than one General Secretary acted before the Colonel's death, the statement that: “Our President-Founder has unfortunately passed from hence without being able personally to rectify a blunder that must be ascribed largely to his exceedingly weak state of health,” etc., is open to misconstruction, and as a subscriber to the REVIEW I ask leave to call the attention of uninformed fellow-readers to the existence and importance of the above-quoted circular.

Trusting to your courtesy and impartiality for the publication of this letter in your April issue,

I am, Dear Sirs, yours faithfully,
R. G. MACBEAN.

(I will deal with this in the next number.—G. R. S. M.)

“THE BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY”

(Besides the articles published, the following letters have been received)

I AM unable to follow the arguments used by the able and respected writer of the article “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” or to admit the applicability of her illustrations. I am convinced that anyone disposed to *hostile* criticism could quite easily make out a strong case against Theosophy with that article in his hands. The position of the private member in his anti-theosophical circle will be made difficult, while that of our gifted fellow-members whose names come under public notice will be indeed unenviable, since the publication of the article under the aforesaid title over the signature of no less an exponent than Mrs. Besant. Moreover, her contribution to the communications from Adyar will, in her own words, shake what some of us “had believed to be solid ground under” our “feet.” If, however, we take this uncomfortable experience as a lesson, and resolve to accept *nothing* on the mere statement of *anyone*, which does not receive the sanction of our reason and judgment, good will have grown out of what we now think to be ill.

As to the narration of a certain psychic phenomenon detailed with the spirit of a mandate, I not only regret its publication in that spirit, but I repudiate its claim to exercise authority over the disposal of my vote at the forthcoming election of a successor to the late President; and I cordially endorse the unanimous decisions of the Committee of the British Section.

On this subject we should bring to bear the best judgment that we are severally possessed of, unbiassed either by personal regard or the affection and gratitude of pupil for teacher.

I have endeavoured to do so, and am led to a conclusion indicated by the following considerations.

The holding of more than one important office by any individual, however eminent, is most inexpedient in the best interests of the Society, and is not fair in several directions to the individual. The office of President is, in my opinion, more suitably held by an individual entirely free from other and even more important functions in the Society and its ramifications.

JOHN W. SIDLEY.

You will by now have received numerous letters from many abler and more important members of the Society than myself, and I must apologise for trespassing upon your time and space. I think, however, that the present occasion calls for clear thinking and plain speaking on the part of all those members who have at heart the reputation and welfare of the great Society to which they belong.

Mrs. Besant's article in the March number appears to me both dangerous and misleading, and one would regret to see it in the hands of anybody who was making enquiries as to the real aims and objects of the Theosophical Society. It is also wholly unworthy of the writer.

That what we call morality is relative, no one will deny; but surely a person is called upon to conform to the generally accepted moral ideas of the country and community in which they may happen to be incarnated at any given time.

Mrs. Besant speaks of polygamy and polyandry; no one denies they may be both useful and proper social customs in Turkey and Tibet, but she would surely hardly say that was any reason for our preaching or practising them in the West, where public opinion is against the advisability of such social arrangements.

Mrs. Besant says: "The presence in the Society of a man who falls below the accepted standard of morality can do little harm"; but this cannot be the case when the presence of such a person in the Society gives him the opportunity and power to promulgate ideas which the common consensus of opinion condemns as injurious alike to mind and body.

Mrs. Besant further says: "The Theosophical Society does not consist of children but of grown men and women, and does not need the shelter rightly given to the young." Unfortunately, immaturity of mind does not invariably cease with the passage of years, and it is quite possible that "grown men and women" who absorb ideas more

through sentiment than reason, may be influenced in a direction they may afterwards deeply regret, when they come to mental years of discretion.

I should quite agree that one has no right to criticise or interfere with the private life of any member, as such ; but directly that life is productive of teaching and influence which we consider harmful, it becomes quite another consideration.

I also utterly repudiate the idea of brotherhood as put forward in Mrs. Besant's article. It seems to me there is rather more brotherhood shown in preventing one person from injuring others than in sentimental condonation of offences.

It is true that the grand qualities of tolerance and compassion are what each one of us would fain acquire and show forth in our lives ; but condemnation of sin and the sinner are not at all the same thing, though they would appear to be so in the minds of many.

The publication of this article in the same number of the REVIEW as the communications from the so-called “Masters” at Adyar is significant.

Discrimination is one of the attributes laid down as necessary to be acquired for entrance to the Path. The present state of affairs gives ample opportunity for the practice of this virtue.

HELEN H. ROBBINS.

Towards the end of her article on “The Basis of the Theosophical Society” in last month's REVIEW, Mrs. Besant says : “I know that there are many in the Society, good people whom I respect, who will think that this article embodies a most dangerous doctrine.” From conversations which I have already had with many responsible members of the Society, I can most definitely say that this is so ; and were it not that we all respect and admire Mrs. Besant so much for her splendid work in the past, a chorus of protest would at once be heard against this “most dangerous doctrine.” But unfortunately, although a strong feeling undoubtedly exists, almost every individual member seems to hesitate to express it publicly in the REVIEW, each preferring to leave that to some one else. It is only on this account that I feel bound to undertake the unpleasant task myself, so that this view may at least be expressed, by however humble a member. Our first duty is to the Theosophical Society itself, and if we see its fair reputation endangered in any way whatever, no personal considerations should prevent us from uttering a word of warning.

I will not attempt a detailed criticism of the teaching contained

We may, or may not, individually, hold lofty conceptions with regard to Those we call Masters; but even the loftiest of the best of us must fall far short of the glorious reality. Can we, then, for a moment imagine that the effort under Their guidance to lead men toward a more perfect and complete realisation of the life Divine,—the effort that we know as the Theosophical Society,—should stoop to call black white? I for one cannot so believe.

LINA ROWAN HAMILTON.

I have read with much interest Mrs. Besant's remarkable article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" and trust you will afford me some little space to comment thereon. No doubt the uninitiated reader may wonder why Mrs. Besant should have taken such great pains to prove that the Theosophical Society has no right to interfere with the opinions or practices of its members in their private capacity, when, probably, every sane member of the Society is in agreement with such a view. So far as I know no member of the Society has been expelled for his or her moral shortcomings or superfluities in private life, nor has any responsible person or body attempted to establish in the Society a moral Inquisition for trying its delinquents.¹ If Mrs. Besant's article has any point at all, and I believe it has, it is aimed at the action of the Advisory Council in recommending the late President-Founder to accept the resignation of a prominent member of the Society. I readily admit that although the form was resignation the spirit was expulsion, but I think it will need few words to justify even that extreme action. The offences with which the member in question was charged were in no sense of the term matters that concerned his private life alone. It was definitely shown that he had used his position in the Society to effect his immoral purposes. Here we have the ground upon which the Society based its right of interference. Whilst no Society would have a right to interfere with a member who held opinions leading to immorality, any Society worth its name would promptly suppress a member who used its organisation for the propagation of such opinions—not to mention their practice. Does Mrs. Besant or anyone else suggest that membership of the Theosophical Society should be permitted to one who so misuses his position? I cannot believe it; I cannot

¹ It is true that a member was recently expelled in America on inadequate grounds, but as this expulsion was obviously wrong and has been or will be cancelled, there could be no need for public comment—besides in this case there was no moral breach either publicly or privately.

through sentiment than reason, may be influenced in a direction they may afterwards deeply regret, when they come to mental years of discretion.

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I will not attempt a detailed criticism of the teaching contained

in this article, trusting that it may be fully dealt with in due course by those most competent to do so. The whole tenour of it gives one the impression of a piece of special pleading, entirely at variance with the high tone of Mrs. Besant's normal writings and unworthy of her true self. One can only surmise that Mrs. Besant is temporarily under the shadow of some dark influence, and earnestly hope that the cloud may soon pass away. I venture to think that a second and careful reading of this article will convince every thoughtful member of the shallowness of its reasoning and the dire results which would inevitably ensue were such ideas to be acted upon by the Society in general.

BERTRAM G. THEOBALD.

I do not remember ever to have written to the REVIEW before, and am very sorry to do so now, for I must say a very painful thing. I know no other way of making public and speaking plainly what must be said as publicly and plainly as possible by members of the Theosophical Society who feel strongly in the matter of Mrs. Besant's article "The Basis of the Theosophical Society."

I cannot imagine a more mischievous article; I cannot imagine how she could write it; but I can imagine that it will mislead many, will confuse many, and will horrify many. I hope that those members who can write will deal with the article critically; I would only say, myself, that I wholly repudiate the view that Mrs. Besant puts forth—namely, that a man is fit for membership in this or in any decent Society who sins openly and deliberately against decency, who teaches vile doctrines to innocent victims, and who still defends those doctrines.

CAROLINE MARSHALL.

As a member of the Theosophical Society and therefore one vitally interested in its affairs, I have read with very disturbed feelings Annie Besant's article, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" in the March issue of the REVIEW. I am in no danger of confusing the Theosophical Society with a Universal Brotherhood, and I have no fear that one expelled from it would go into outer darkness or be put beyond the reach of charity, tolerance and pity. But I do not hesitate to think evil can have no brotherhood save with evil, and acknowledged and confessed evil-doers have no place in a society which has for one of its chief objects the search for truth—"Truth that should be sought by purity of life and devotion to high ideals." While I trust that my "self-righteousness and contempt" are no greater than

the average, I should prefer to carry out my search for truth in the company of the ordinary man of the world rather than be forced into unnatural and unnecessary fellowship with those "whose standard of morality falls below the accepted standard," or (what seems to me a more dangerous position still) with "those who rise so much above it as to be unintelligible and therefore hated and suspected by the masses of average people."

That the Theosophical Society has no written or printed moral code binding on its members, would seem to me to prove not that it has no moral code but that its code in no way differs from that binding on all civilised society. Otherwise I cannot see how it shall answer the condemnation of ordinary men, who would have the right to describe it as a society which protects and encourages every form of licentiousness. Yet Annie Besant says: "I do not see that the Theosophical Society has any moral code binding on its members."

The assumption of great indifference and superiority to the judgments and laws of ordinary men by the Theosophical Society seems to me most hateful, so contrary does it appear to the spirit of true brotherliness. By what rule are we in entering the Theosophical Society lifted above the average man? By what right do we despise his judgments and what higher law makes us free of his laws? There is no question of persecution when the Society exercises its right to expel those who are confessedly immoral and thus proved unfit for that search for truth for which purity of life is necessary. It is not fair to state, as Annie Besant does, that in expelling from this nucleus one here and there whom we may manage to convict of some evil teaching or practice, we leave within it hundreds who are guilty of other evils. And when this unwarrantable implication is made in a public journal it is not only unfair but damaging to the Society. It is the very publicity of this article which has roused me to write this protest against what appears to me the wrong thinking, plausibility and false sentimentality contained in it—a protest I make with sorrow and distress that it should be necessary, for I am one of many who owe to the writer of the article deep gratitude and reverence for her clear showing of helpful truths, and what I have always believed her unquestionable devotion to high ideals. C. A. ECCLES.

Even a humble member may protest; and all of us who are in earnest about the sublime truths that we believe lie at the foundation of our Society must protest against the attitude assumed by Mrs. Besant in her article "The Basis of the Theosophical Society."

We may, or may not, individually, hold lofty conceptions with regard to Those we call Masters; but even the loftiest of the best of us must fall far short of the glorious reality. Can we, then, for a moment imagine that the effort under Their guidance to lead men toward a more perfect and complete realisation of the life Divine,—the effort that we know as the Theosophical Society,—should stoop to call black white? I for one cannot so believe.

LINA ROWAN HAMILTON.

I have read with much interest Mrs. Besant's remarkable article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" and trust you will afford me some little space to comment thereon. No doubt the uninitiated reader may wonder why Mrs. Besant should have taken such great pains to prove that the Theosophical Society has no right to interfere with the opinions or practices of its members in their private capacity, when, probably, every sane member of the Society is in agreement with such a view. So far as I know no member of the Society has been expelled for his or her moral shortcomings or superfluities in private life, nor has any responsible person or body attempted to establish in the Society a moral Inquisition for trying its delinquents.¹ If Mrs. Besant's article has any point at all, and I believe it has, it is aimed at the action of the Advisory Council in recommending the late President-Founder to accept the resignation of a prominent member of the Society. I readily admit that although the form was resignation the spirit was expulsion, but I think it will need few words to justify even that extreme action. The offences with which the member in question was charged were in no sense of the term matters that concerned his private life alone. It was definitely shown that he had used his position in the Society to effect his immoral purposes. Here we have the ground upon which the Society based its right of interference. Whilst no Society would have a right to interfere with a member who held opinions leading to immorality, any Society worth its name would promptly suppress a member who used its organisation for the propagation of such opinions—not to mention their practice. Does Mrs. Besant or anyone else suggest that membership of the Theosophical Society should be permitted to one who so misuses his position? I cannot believe it; I cannot

¹ It is true that a member was recently expelled in America on inadequate grounds, but as this expulsion was obviously wrong and has been or will be cancelled, there could be no need for public comment—besides in this case there was no moral breach either publicly or privately.

think that she can have given that careful consideration to the question that its gravity requires.

You cannot retain anyone as a member and at the same time refuse the privileges of membership, nor would it be possible or desirable to "blacklist" erring members, so that expulsion in serious cases is the obvious course to follow unless the Society is practically to aid and abet offenders. Is it not the duty of those who have knowledge to help the ignorant; shall we close our eyes when outrage is being perpetrated? What foolish sentiment is it that would prevent us turning out of doors a member of our family who deliberately and persistently used his position for doing irreparable wrong to weak and defenceless younger brethren? If we expel a member we do not therefore hate him or wish him ill; we simply take away, so far as we are able, his power to inflict further injury; to retain him were to become his accomplice.

To my mind, then, there is no difficulty in coming to a decision as to when the Society is justified in taking action against one of its members; that time comes the moment it can be shown that membership is being used for the purpose of aiding the commission of a criminal or immoral offence. I wait now Mrs. Besant's reply in the hope that she will speak with no uncertain voice on this most vital question.

W. H. THOMAS.

In the midst of the hurly-burly of discussion into which recent events at Adyar have thrown the Theosophical Society, I would like to put in a plea for calm and dispassionate consideration of all evidence that may be laid before the members of the Theosophical Society, and for a wise tolerance and patience in dealing with the exceptionally difficult and trying conditions which have arisen.

Is it too much to ask members of the Theosophical Society to *be* theosophical in their attitude and to refrain from embittering the controversy by electioneering methods which later reflection will condemn? In particular I would venture to suggest that the article contributed by Mrs. Besant to the March number of this REVIEW should not be taken as a pronouncement of her final opinion on the painful case of resignation which was before us last year. I frankly admit that I cannot follow Mrs. Besant in the conclusions she draws in the article entitled "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," but it is only fair to recognise that although appearing unfortunately at a moment when recent pronouncements at Adyar have thickened the

mental atmosphere with astral fog, there is nothing to show that Mrs. Besant (who sent the article for publication before the last pronouncements were made) had more in her mind than the case of Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, whose hasty expulsion Colonel Olcott desired to annul before his death.

The Society has everything to gain and nothing to lose by patience and duly considered action, more especially if it is realised that the distances separating the various sections make for misunderstanding to a degree that requires supernormal tranquillity to combat.

EDITH WARD.

(With regard to this article the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge sent the following telegram to Mrs. Besant and received from her the following reply.)

Question : "Would you as President permit X's [Mr. Leadbeater's] re-admission?"

Answer : "If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation, on large majority request of whole Society, would reinstate; otherwise not."

Since my article "A New Basis of the Theosophical Society" was in type I find that a telegram has been received and circulated, which seems to negative the conclusion I have drawn from Mrs. Besant's article. I hope I may be pardoned if I say that I cannot take it to be seriously meant. She has laid down to us that, in her view, opinions leading to murder, theft, or adultery should not be held a disqualification for membership. Certainly Mr. Leadbeater's transgression does not go so far as this; and I fail to see for what reason Mrs. Besant can demand a public retractation, a two years' probation, and a solemn vote of the whole Society, as if for a new President, for a fault which, according to her, should not have been punished by expulsion at all. I can only understand it as a rather ill-timed burlesque on us who differ from her.

A confirmation of this view is given by her requirement of a *public* retractation. In the now notorious "Conversation" the only fault found with the action of the authorities was that there had been "too much publicity." Now, considering how carefully, and with what marvellous success, publicity *has*, in fact, been avoided, this utterance seems to me to point rather to the usual imbecility of the common or garden "spook" than to a Master of Wisdom. But

Mrs. Besant has expressed her full belief in it as the opinion of the Masters; and how, after that, she can speak of a public retraction, altogether passes my comprehension.

Until further explanation I must decline to give any weight to this mysterious telegram, and hold still to the opinions I have expressed in my article.

A. A. WELLS.

CORRESPONDENCE

MR. ORAGE'S REPLY TO HIS CRITICS

To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

SIR,

A reply is certainly due from me to the numerous critics who have honoured me with their attentions. Yet in most cases a re-reading of my articles (if the labour could be recommended) would serve my purpose. Dr. Lomax is quite right in finding my word "acquired" badly chosen, but nevertheless he understood my meaning perfectly well. Could a better word have accomplished my object any better? Mr. Sedlák continues to wrap his pure thought about with a good many folds of pseudo-thinking; but until he takes the trouble (admittedly excessive) of understanding what I said, and of quoting me correctly, I must leave him in all his obscurity. Mr. Wedgwood's naïve and charming discrimination between beliefs and distortions of beliefs is only equalled by his realisation that "emptiness of conviction isn't much good when we come to the profounder experiences of life." I said myself that it was not much good. It is not. But are useful convictions necessarily true? That is the question which Mr. Wedgwood seems to have forgotten.

I am rather pleased that Dr. Wells spoiled the atmosphere of his article on the "Communion of Saints" by interpolating a passage recommending kicks and hard stones for my case. It was so human of him. I remember years ago boo-ing through the keyhole of a Methodist meeting in which a Revivalist was singing "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" And I remember the Revivalist bounding to the door and shouting: "Get away, you little fiend." Well, I seem to have boo-ed through Dr. Wells' keyhole. However, I must

protest against his misquotation of me. I never said, either in words or in effect, that "there is nothing true and that it don't matter." My view is that there is nothing true, and *therefore everything matters*. We become responsible just to the extent that truth becomes doubtful.

Yours faithfully,

A. R. ORAGE.

UNDULATORY THEORY OF LIGHT

To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

DEAR SIR,

I am glad to find that I had misread Mr. Sedlák's remark about Koreshanism in your January issue, and to withdraw what I said about the concavity of the earth's surface, but as this had nothing to do with the main point of my letter I need say no more about it.

Perhaps, however, since Mr. Sedlák talks of pointing out the *rationale* of optical phenomena, I may be allowed a short space to make the bearing of the question I asked in your February number quite clear—for Mr. Sedlák appears to misapprehend my position. I was not arguing against ultimate metaphysical truths, as stated either by Hegel or anyone else; as a matter of fact Hegel's philosophy is a system which I have studied, though I do not regard it as having such a monopoly of correct thinking as Mr. Sedlák appears to suppose it to have. Other thinkers have obtained quite as profound insights into truth, though they may have made use of very different terminology in their attempts to make these insights intelligible to others. I do not then quarrel with Mr. Sedlák's statement that "the substratum of light is that of sight or the immaterial 'we'" by itself, but I fail to see that it is any argument against the empirical validity of the undulatory theory of light. Mr. Sedlák might as well have written "the substratum of *sound* is that of *hearing* or the immaterial 'we,'" yet this would not disprove the wave theory of sound which he himself admits (p. 448). We certainly do find that our perceptions in the physical world are accompanied by and dependent on physical facts such as sound waves, and there is nothing in any true system of logical and metaphysical thought to contradict this. I find, by the way, in the very book of lectures by Tyndall from which Mr. Sedlák quoted, the following: "The word 'light' may be used in two different senses; it may mean the impression made upon consciousness, or it may mean the physical agent which makes that impression" (Tyndall, *Light*, p. 128).

Well, the scientific wave theory of light is of course concerned solely with the physical causes operative in our seeing of physical objects, and we should surely avoid muddling up metaphysical truths in an inappropriate way with facts of empirical science. If I might state my question in as unambiguous a way as possible, it would be by first pointing out that the phenomena of diffraction dealt with in Mr. Sedlák's article, are clearly due to the way in which light is propagated; that is to say they are not a mental illusion, like for instance the apparently larger size of the sun or moon when near the horizon than when near the zenith; nor are they an illusion due to physiological causes, like for instance the red cross upon a green background which is seen if one looks for some time at a green cross on a red background and then looks at a white surface, and which is produced probably by the nature of the retina and the intimate association of the mind with the sense organs. It follows then that a photographic plate would be affected by these phenomena as well as a human observer. I therefore ask Mr. Sedlák: *Why, if a photographic plate were appropriately introduced into Tyndall's experiment, would it record a series of rectangles of light?* If he can answer this it would be very interesting to me, but at present he seems to have made out no case at all against the undulatory theory of light as a matter of empirical science.

Some of Mr. Sedlák's playful remarks, however, suggest that perhaps he was speaking more in jest than in earnest, for instance, when on p. 449 he speaks of the luminiferous ether as "a corollary of Mr. Hinton's tesseract." It is true that the phenomena of light are one of several whole classes of phenomena which have been brought forward by Hinton and others in support of the four-dimensional hypothesis, but I have never heard of the latter hypothesis being used to support the former. As a matter of fact, for what it is worth, the wave theory of sound, which Mr. Sedlák admits, supports the four-dimensional hypothesis just as much as the wave theory of light, which he denies; so this question is here unimportant.

W. L.

PROFESSOR HYSLOP'S PRECONCEPTIONS

To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

SIR,

I think that Dr. Montagu Lomax, in his review of Professor Hyslop's *Borderland of Psychical Research* (THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW,

March, p. 43), does scant justice to the author's real position. Professor Hyslop, like several other learned investigators in the field of psychical research, is conscious of a sort of "double personality"; as an individual he believes certain things, as an exponent of science he can teach nothing that is not yet capable of being reduced to scientific statement.

Science has suffered in the past from being divided into sections, each having its own laws of evidence and its own methods of research. Mathematics, as applied to such diverse subjects as logic and the constitution of matter, has done much to unite these scattered branches; but religion and "metapsychics," being subjects which rest on personal belief and the evidence of individual experience, are at present outside the range of scientific analysis. It is Professor Hyslop's purpose to push forward the scientific method so as to include as much as possible of these subjective experiences within the four corners of the scientific framework. Science must deal with the phenomena of the universe as inter-related, and she cannot govern an outlying province until she has conquered the intervening territory.

The assertion objected to by Dr. Lomax, that "all new facts and theories must in some way find an assimilation with previous knowledge," and "have some point of contact with the old," is, unfortunately, a scientific truism, and is part of the constitution of the human mind. It is for this reason that it is so difficult, if not impossible, to convey a totally new idea, such as that of a fourth dimension; we can only figure it, even to ourselves, by a series of particular instances, each connected with previous experience, until, by the multiplicity of these, our conception rises almost to a generalisation. Dr. Lomax's example of the Copernican astronomy does not touch the point at issue; it only involved the reversal of the mathematical assumption that the earth was fixed and that the sun moved, and in all other respects was fully in contact with previous knowledge.

We may chide, or even ridicule, the cautious slowness with which science proceeds to assimilate notions and facts by successive contact, but there is this consolation: that facts or beliefs, thus assimilated, thenceforth become integral portions of the connected and synthesized sum-total of undoubted human knowledge. Meanwhile the more advanced thinkers and experimenters are going on ahead, piloting the huge ironclad of Modern Science, and finding safe waters wherein it can float in all the majesty of conquest.

Yours, etc., J. B. S.

BAHAISM

To the Editor, THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

DEAR SIR,

In the March number I notice a kind criticism of my recent article on Baháism by Mr. Skeeles.

Mr. Skeeles asks why I have neglected to include in my narrative any mention of Subh-i-Ezel, the half-brother of Baha Ullah.

There was naturally a great deal of interest in connection with the Baháí Movement which I was obliged to omit in my two brief articles, and while an account of Subh-i-Ezel would be of historical interest, I look upon him as an unimportant figure, as a character of no interest to us in our study of Baháism as it exists to-day.

Subh-i-Ezel did indeed play a certain *rôle* in the early history of Bábism, but he was never considered by the Bábís to be "He whom God shall manifest," the one foretold by the Báb.

When Baha Ullah announced that he was the one of whose coming the Báb had prophesied, Subh-i-Ezel resented his claim and tried to bring about a schism. For a time he was successful; but his influence, which was never very great, has been steadily on the wane, and to-day the number of Ezelí Bábís is so insignificant that one can hardly dignify their refusal to accept Baháism as a schism.

It must be remembered that Bábism and Baháism are not the same, that they differ essentially on many points; therefore a Bábí who does not wish to accept the broader and more advanced teachings of Baha Ullah can hardly be said to create a schism in Baháism.

Baháism has had several attempts made to destroy its unity, but it has emerged triumphant from all these trials, showing to cavilling critics that it can preserve within itself that unity which it teaches. Regarding certain charges brought against the Baháís by the Ezelís, which Mr. Skeeles mentions, I can only reply: "Ye cannot gather figs of thistles."

When Professor E. G. Browne was investigating Bábism many years ago, he naturally collected all the information he could obtain of the movement both from Baháís and Ezelís. Time, the great revealer, has shown, however, on which side truth lay.

One word more in regard to a saying of the present leader of the Baháís, Abbas Effendi, quoted from Myron H. Phelps's book. I think Mr. Skeeles will agree with me that it would indeed be strange for one of the founders of a religion to insist on people

remaining in their old creeds or churches. How could real unity be brought about in this way? It is necessary to study but a few of the writings of Baha Ullah to see that he brought a new revelation, a new religion to the world, and the only claim of Abbas Effendi is that he is the promulgator of his father's teachings.

Now what Abbas Effendi does say is this; that no one should leave his church except by his own free will, when he no longer feels the need of a church.

The true Bahaï, however, belongs no more to one church or creed than another, and he regards the very names Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhist, etc., as barriers which separate men one from the other and prevent unity.

The special mission of Baha Ullah was to found a universal religion, broad and comprehensive enough to include all other faiths. Abbas Effendi, who signs himself Abdul Baha, the Servant of Baha, is continuing the work of his father.

I am, yours etc.,

SYDNEY SPRAGUE.

THE CHAINING OF FENRIR

“IN the prose Edda there is an account of the trouble the gods had with the powers of evil, and of their efforts to chain them up and restrain them. The wolf Fenrir had been bred up among the gods, but he was always getting fiercer and stronger, and oracles announced that he would help in the overthrow of the divinities, were he not securely bound. So the gods devise one kind of fetter after another, of the strongest materials, wherewith to bind Fenrir, but all in vain. He bursts in pieces all the iron bands they can lay upon him and breaks them asunder. At length the White Elves come to the aid of the baffled gods, and forge a chain of strange materials. It is made of the roots of stones, of the breath of fishes, of the beards of women, of the spittle of birds, and of the noise of a cat's footfall—and that holds Fenrir fast. He strives in vain to burst its bonds, and lies securely held down till the end of all things.

“‘But,’ says the inquirer, or scholar, to Har, the High One, who tells this: ‘There are no such things as all these; stones have no roots, nor is there any sound in a cat's tread.’ ‘How wise art thou,’ says Har, ‘to find that out. So thou canst know the rest to be as true as that!’

“And thus he laughs the question by. But if you consider it—

the chain which was made for Fenrir, and which restrains the evil one, was an invisible one, and herein was its power. The influences of law, custom, manners, education, example, society, religion, are all invisible, but in reality more powerful than brute force. This is the invisible chain which binds the evil powers down, and gives the world a sense of security. This is the truth underlying the parable of Fenrir and his chaining down."

DEAR SIR,

I was reminded of the above, by reading a paper in the Jan. REVIEW (not yours), and thought you might like it for the lesson it conveys for other readers. "How wise thou art!" etc. The book from which I have taken it is *Memoirs of Arthur Lawrenson*, by C. O. Spence. He was a Lerwick man and Norse student.

Yours, etc.,

E. L. F.

THE MUNICH CONGRESS

THE advance programme of the forthcoming Fourth Congress of the Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society has been sent round to the various Branches. The Congress will open on Saturday, May 18th, and close on May 21st, and the meetings will be held in the Tonhalle at Munich. Saturday morning and afternoon, Sunday morning and Monday morning and afternoon, will be devoted to lectures and papers on both general and more definitely Theosophical subjects. On Saturday evening there will be a social meeting, at which music will be given. There will also be some music on Monday morning. One interesting feature of the Congress, fixed for Sunday afternoon, will be the performance of a mystery-play. Tuesday morning will be occupied with free discussion of matters Theosophical, and on the afternoon of the same day it is proposed that there shall be meetings of small groups of members interested in subjects of specialised or technical character, such, for instance, as scientific work. And on Tuesday evening another social meeting will take place, to be concluded by the official closing of the Congress. The work of the Congress will be divided

into the usual departments, though arrangements have been made that no two lectures shall take place simultaneously.

It is hoped that members will do their best to promote the success of the Congress by contributing papers, and by attending the meetings. Only members of the Theosophical Society are eligible for admission to the membership of the Congress, tickets being priced at 5 marks (= 5s.).

At a meeting of the British Congress Committee, held on March 16th, Miss Ethel M. Mallet was elected "Travelling Secretary," and co-opted to the Committee. Members, therefore, desiring information as to travelling facilities, accommodation, etc., should address their enquiries to Miss Mallet, at 28, Albemarle Street, W.—not omitting to enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

JAMES I. WEDGWOOD,
Hon. Secretary, British Congress Committee.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

The New Mysticism, Six Lectures given in Kensington and at Cobham, Surrey, November, 1906, by Adela Curtis. (Kensington: Curtis & Davison, 4, High Street.)

THIS book is a characteristic specimen of the produce of the second-rate American mind—so ignorant of the past and of the present also outside of the States, so crude in its conceptions, and yet so clever and "sharp" (it is an undignified word, but it just hits off what I mean) in its expression of what it supposes its new views. A few lines from the introductory Lecture will show at once the mingled cleverness and crudity of which I speak. "The shrewd, sceptical, popular mind of America, independent of authority, unhampered by tradition, impatient of sentiment, and utilitarian to the point of measuring ideas by the dollar, has achieved the greatest of all the triumphs of Protestantism. Luther's original protest against the Church of Rome and the great Reformation which followed, are child's play compared with the gage flung down to the world by this New

Thought of America!" Surely one hears Emerson's Nature—"So hot, my little friend?"

Yet for all this, if one can for the time put oneself into the author's position, and forget everything which the thousands of years have taught the long chain of true Mystics, the book is worth reading. There is much which is true and *not* new, well and usefully expressed; and when anyone has studied and practised what is here given, he will not be badly prepared to start upon the study of the real Mysticism, which begins where our writer leaves off; provided always that he can shake off the idea that "these rough and ready Americans have discovered a higher order of consciousness than the great heritage of thought and feeling" which the true Mystic has received not only from his Christian forefathers, but from Rishis of millenniums before Jesus taught. Till he can do this, he is hopelessly outside the Sanctuary.

A. A. W.

A THEOLOGICAL DODO

God, Man, and the Garden; Puzzles, Problems, and Parables solved by the Word of God. By R. W. Beachey. (London · Elliot Stock; 1907.)

THE most marked feature of this book is that in recounting the great mystical allegories of Scripture it describes them in their literal terms and seems to know them in no other light. The creation of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, the creation of man out of dust, and of woman out of Adam's rib, the Garden of Eden, the speaking serpent, the visions of the Apocalypse—are made to read as if they were extracts from the accident columns of a daily newspaper. It is a belated curiosity that this way of looking at sacred matters should be still surviving, and that the author should have no conception that he is speaking somewhat irreverently of deep things. For the book is written in all seriousness, and actually shows in many places a religious spirit. It is very curious. Open the book anywhere. Take the Chapter on the Garden (p. 127):

Now we can see why the Lord gave the man the garden first. He might have built him a house, or provided him with a suitable garment, or given him a wife; but he does neither of them. He plants a garden and puts him in it. For he could not live without the produce of the ground, but he could do without the rest. But why a garden? Had not the ground everywhere brought forth herbs, trees, and grass? Yes, but the world was

a wide world, and the man had only two legs and no wings nor had he the means of transport and locomotion that we have now. Now a garden is an enclosed piece of land where all that is best and most useful and beautiful is collected together in a small space. So man was placed where he had everything close at hand. The Lord had selected the garden stock—He planted it Himself. And we may infer that the uses of everything were explained to Adam by the great Head Gardener Himself.

The making of the woman :

The man had to suffer loss, but his loss proved a gain. His rib was taken from him, but he got it back with interest. A wounded side and bleeding flesh are not pleasant to look at; but the beautiful woman who was builded up on such a repulsive foundation was a thing of joy.

Temptation by the Devil (p. 213) :

The Devil did not ask to see Adam. He took them one at a time and began with the weaker vessel. He is not easily seen through at first but one evidence of his being the Devil is that he always disagrees with the Word of God. If the woman had called her husband and consulted him on the subject there would probably have been no fall. . . . Adam appears to have come up at the end of the woman's conversation with the Devil. But it was too late, the mischief was done. When the Devil wants a special pleader he always instructs a woman. She had got the full use of her tongue in the Devil's company and now practises on her husband. He, poor man! had not a word to say. He showed that he had got entirely under what is known as petticoat government, and as a result we very soon find the petticoats made. Neither the government nor the petticoats were a success, for they upset God's order. She was the first woman who preached the doctrine of woman's rights, and the issue was man's wrongs.

It is said that the dodo is an extinct bird. Perhaps he is; but the theological dodo most certainly is not.

C. G. C.

SERMONS NOT SERMONISING

Sanctification by the Truth. Sermons by Archdeacon Wilberforce, D.D. (London: Elliot Stock; 1906. Price 5s.)

THE title of this volume of Sermons appeals to us whose motto is "There is no Religion higher than Truth." The twenty-five addresses of which it is composed deal with divers subjects, nevertheless in each one we realise that the writer is accustomed to explore in the higher regions of truth, and to apply the knowledge thus obtained to commonplace subjects, making the dry bones live. Those who are interested in seeing how the advanced thought of the day is permeat-

ing the Church cannot do better than read these vigorous and spiritual expositions. If we might say that there is one dominant idea influencing the whole of this diversity, it could not be expressed more certainly than in this sentence culled from the tenth address: "The Divine Spark in man is the unshakable foundation of the eternal hope for the race."

J. N. D.

HEREDITARY DREAMS

Counsels of the Night. By Lucas Cleeve. (London: T. Fisher Unwin; 1906. Price 6s.)

LUCAS CLEEVE'S latest story is pivoted on an original—and painful—idea. A man takes part in, practically causes, a tragedy. His son, on his wedding night, dreams vividly of the father's act. The dream impresses itself upon the mind of the unborn child. Through their lives father and son are haunted by this recurrent dream, which repeats in detail the terrible scene in which the grandfather was concerned. For the way in which the victims act out their visions, and the suspicions thereby caused, we must refer readers to the book. The mystery is very well sustained, and the story contains nothing quite improbable.

If the style were as good as the subject the book could be unreservedly praised. But Lucas Cleeve's notions of English are imperfect; and such things as "diffused" for "suffused" (a "diffused eye" is a horrid picture), "infer" for "imply," and sentences twenty-one lines long, seriously detract from the reader's pleasure in an interesting tale.

A. L.

REPETITA CRAMBE

Tekel, or The Wonderland of the Bible. By J. Horton. (London: Philip Wellby; 1906. Price 6s. net.)

"TEKEL—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting," means in this instance that the Bible, the English Bible, has been studied by the author with the most passionate eagerness (see Preface) for ten years with no satisfactory result. The Christian Scriptures, the standard of our life and conduct, are wanting in truth; Mr. Horton is quite sure of it. Those miraculous stories could not have taken place possibly, and the narratives are again and again inconsistent with one another. If they were published in *The Times*,

nobody would believe a word of them, and *The Times'* standard is that of all sensible people. The Bible is full of myths, and myths of course are fables, which a sensible man, when searching for the truth, will naturally put out of court at once. *Tekel* is a well-printed compendium of Mr. Horton's own discoveries in this line.

There is something pathetic in a man's giving ten years of his life to work of this sort, to the measuring with a foot rule a collection of Oriental books, such as the Bible is, in order to put down to the profit and loss account its material contradictions and inconsistencies. Why, the book is a network of them, like every other mystical book! As for history, no Oriental that ever lived possessed a historical sense; to him facts are nothing, spiritual edification is everything. And after all, in the eyes of the wise man, facts *are* nothing, and spiritual edification *is* everything. Of course we cannot expect the author of *Tekel* to understand this. The only scales he knows are material scales; the only tests are pounds and ounces. The day will come, however, when he will find out—and no one can teach it him—that the concerns of the soul are measurable by other standards altogether.

C. G. C.

MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

Theosophist, February, opens with a well-timed reprint of the Inaugural Address delivered by Col. Olcott at the first regular meeting of the Society, November 17th, 1875. Then follow Mrs. Besant's article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" which has already appeared in our own columns, the continuation of v. Ginkel's "The Great Pyramid," Dr. Chattopādhyāya's "Zoroasterism," Rama Prasad's "Self Culture," "Buddhist Rules for the Laity," and "Bālabodhinī." P. E. Bernard's Paris lecture on "The Soul of India," and a few shorter contributions complete the number.

Theosophy in India, February. From M. J.'s "Moksha," which opens this number, we take the conclusion. "True Moksha is not the paralysis but the intensification of life. The repudiation of the bodies is accompanied by an increase of life, not a lessening of it. The personality may be lost, but all that was of value in it has passed into the centre. The individuality may be lost, but the sense of life is all the stronger for the falling away of the limits. Moksha is an ever-increasing consciousness and self-realisation. So we come to realise what was said by the Buddha: 'Because Nirvāṇa is, the passing

worlds exist; and because the Uncreated is, the created manifests.' Out of that Fullness all the worlds come, and their vanishing does not affect the Reality that is ever-existent." There are notes of a lecture on Astrology, by Prof. Unwalla, and "Studies in the Pedigree of Man," "The Trials of Sukra," and the "Examination of the Dasopanishats" are continued. Appended to the number is the Report of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Indian Section, with a very interesting report of the manifold activities of the Section, which appears to be in a very flourishing condition as regards numbers and (by the Indian standard) as to its financial affairs. We heartily congratulate our Indian brethren.

Central Hindu College Magazine, February. The "Crow's Nest" is mainly occupied with the Colonel's illness and matters relating thereto. Mrs. Besant's lecture to the College Boarders on "How to raise the Tone of a School" is of importance to all who have to do with education in East or West; and the remarks of the "Hindu Catechism" on the cherishing of wrong ideals are as necessary and as outspoken as much in this valuable Catechism which has gone before.

Theosophy and New Thought, February. An interesting number whose editorial notes are mainly occupied with the question now pressing upon the Society as to the successor of our late beloved President-Founder.

The Vâhan, March. This number opens with the announcement of Colonel Olcott's death, and brief notices from the Vice-President and Mr. Mead; together with the official documents as to the election of his successor. The questions treated are as to the nature of Prâṇa and the existence of systems of vibrations imperceptible to ordinary senses.

Lotus Journal, March. The most important paper in this number is a very thoughtful and valuable study of "The First Object of the Theosophical Society," by E. M. Mallet. Mr. Whyte's life of Mme. Blavatsky is continued; Mr. Worsdell gives a fresh instalment of his botanical teaching in "The Origin of Flowers"; and Miss G. L. Mallet's pleasant account of Florence, illustrated with a good engraving of the Cathedral, must not be passed without notice.

Bulletin Théosophique, March, in addition to business matters, gives an answer to a question as to the reason of the very different stages of progress to which the monads have attained, and a continuation of the "Culture of the Heart."

Revue Théosophique, February, gives a considerable portion of its

space to an original study of the "Problem of Suffering" by G. Chevrier, which would well repay translation into English. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater supply, as usual, the remaining contents.

Also received with thanks: *Theosofische Beweging*; *Theosophia*, February, containing in addition to "Old Diary Leaves," the conclusion of J. L. M. Lauweriks' "The Use and Object of Art," and a translation of "Hints for the Theosophical Education of Children," by F. Annerley; *Sophia*, February, with Mr. Mead's article on "Heresy," "El Regalo de los Dioses," by Raphael Urbano, and a portion of Garcilaso de la Vega's translation of the interesting "Dialogues of Love," by Rafael Hebreo, one of the most popular writings of the sixteenth century; *Teosofisk Tidskrift*; *Omatunto*, to which the Editor's own contributions are "The Most Important Social Work," and "Evidences of Reincarnation"; *Theosophy in Australasia*, January; *New Zealand Theosophical Magazine*, February, with an interesting account of the Dûrga Pûja Festival, by Mrs. Judson, and a serious paper by W. A. Mayers on "The Sources of Authority in the Christian Church"; *Theosofisch Maandblad*; *La Verdad*, in which "Lob Nor" sets forth an uncomfortable prophecy that a great cataclysm will engulf the greater part of South America in about eight years' time; and No. 5 of Mr. Bhandarkar's *Theosophical Thoughts*.

Of periodicals not our own, we have to acknowledge: *Broad Views*, March, with a very interesting and (to us) quite a novel account of the Indian immigrants in the West India Islands, by N. M. Cooper. Mr. Sinnett's own contribution is a further portion of the "Former Lives of Living People" which must be of great interest, even to his readers who are not Theosophists. Loyalty and Filial Piety are discussed in two interesting articles from quite a new point of view, though we are rather inclined to think that Miss Kilroy somewhat overestimates the actual extent to which filial piety survives in modern society, and the practical need of her reform. *Modern Astrology*, March, in addition to Mrs. Leo's always interesting contributions, has a paper by Heinrich D  ath, entitled "The Authority of the Stars," which is quite intelligible to us uninitiated; *Indian Review*, January; *The Dawn*; *Siddhanta Deepika*; *Notes and Queries*; *The Rosicrucian Brotherhood*; *New International Review*; *Humanitarian*; *Health Record*; *Herald of the Cross*.

W.

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