

THEOSOPHY:

AN APPEAL TO MY COUNTRYMEN,

BY

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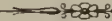
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THEOSOPHY.

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THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN INDIA.

Nowhere does the unrest, which is characteristic of modern India, manifest itself so conspicuously as in the department of religious thought. There is not the slightest doubt of the fact that Young India that has come under Western influence is drifting away from the traditional religion. English education has had the effect of undermining the faith in orthodox Hinduism, without, in most instances, substituting any definite faith in its stead. But though the influences brought to bear upon the educated classes have in most instances been subversive, still we are not justified in regarding the sceptical tendencies of New India as anything more than accidental. A well known American writer, who travelled in India some years ago, said:—"The best Hindus with whom I came in contact, men cultivated, profound, clear seeing, are free thinkers to a man." This, I believe, is not quite the experience of those who have a wider acquaintance with the educated classes. We no doubt notice sceptical tendencies in New India, but these tendencies are the natural products of the stage of transition which the country is passing through. Before any race or nation passes from the stage of instinctive faith and authority to that of reflective faith and private judgment, it generally passes through an epoch of scepticism; but considering the fact that some of the best products of modern India—men such as Ram Mohun Roy and Chunder Sen, Telang and Ranade—have not been content with a purely negative creed, and considering also that other more important fact that the Hindu is instinctively religious, there is no ground for fearing that the new influences will deprive our countrymen altogether

of their essential national characteristic,—the faith in and reliance on an all-pervading Power which

Unseen, it helpeth ye with faithful hands;
Unheard, it speaketh stronger than the storm.

THE NEW INFLUENCES AT WORK.

The absence of vital religious activity within the pale of Hinduism is no doubt one of the most discouraging signs of the times. There is of course Brahmoism which has awakened a section—a very small section—of the educated classes to the necessity of creating around them a social atmosphere, morally invigorating, religiously healthful, intellectually enlightening, but it must be remembered that Brahmoism, as acknowledged by its leaders, owes its vitality to a great extent to the influence of Christianity. “The Brahmo Somaj,” said Keshub Chunder Sen, “is the legitimate offspring of the wedlock of Christianity with the faith of Hindu Aryans. Christianity came and moved with our old oriental faith, and from that time we grew.”

Various external influences are however being brought to bear upon New India to establish a new order of things,—to substitute a definite religious conception in place of orthodox Hinduism, which is ceasing to be a living power in the mind of the educated classes. Among these influences there is one to which the attention of enlightened India is being specially directed at this moment, and that is Theosophy. I wish in this short paper to consider calmly the claims which are put forth on behalf of Theosophy by some of its adherents, and to examine how far this new creed is likely to afford a haven of refuge to India in transition.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THEOSOPHICAL PROGRESS IN INDIA.

A few years ago, Theosophy exercised a marked influence on the educated classes. There were several features in this creed, as propounded by its founders, Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, that were specially attractive to the Hindu mind. But the course of Theosophical progress in India suffered a severe shock by the fearful public

exposures of Madame Blavatsky's frauds, with the aid of which she tried to prop up her new creed. This is how Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, the author of *New India*, sums up the history of Theosophical progress in India in its first stage :—

“The subtleness of its (Theosophical) teaching, and the degree of scope which the supernatural interference of spiritual, or so-called astral, phenomena afford to the imagination, are features peculiarly congenial to the Hindu intellect. A belief in the doctrines of Theosophy is consistent with the tenets of Brahmoism, and even with the professions of orthodox Hinduism. The native mind has also been able to see that in some occult manner, but with a definiteness and force quite unmistakeable, the European adherents of the system have been elevated by a kind of moral regeneration from indifferentism, and sometimes from positive dislike, into sincere and hearty sympathy with the people of the country. The conditions have, therefore, been favourable to the spread of Theosophy among natives. Tossed to and fro by every blast of vain doctrine, they have rallied round the new-fangled ideas of this weird and obscure system with an eagerness which shews the need among them of a more rational and satisfying belief. But already the enthusiasm of the movement has spent itself. The public exposure of some of the directors of the new cult has proved a severe shock to its votaries, and many of them have renounced their allegiance. Although they are full of faith and trust, to an extent to which Englishmen of the nineteenth century are almost incapable of understanding, they cannot but refuse to remain permanently enslaved by a belief in phenomena which are not only incapable of demonstration, but are alleged on credible testimony to be propped up by fraud.”

This was written in 1886 ; since then the cause of Theosophy has been declining rapidly and when Madame Blavatsky died in 1891, it was generally understood that India at all events had heard the last of Theosophy. But Mrs. Besant's visit to India has aroused once more the enthusiasm of my countrymen in this weird and obscure creed, as it is once

more being pressed on their attention with considerable force and eloquence. It is on religion more than on any other subject that individuals need to work out their beliefs independently without taking them second hand, from whatever source it may proceed. As has been well said :—
 “Religion, in order to be *real* religion, a man’s own religion, must be searched for, must be discovered, must be conquered. If it is simply inherited or accepted, as a matter of course, it often happens that in later years it falls away, and has either to be re-conquered or to be replaced by another religion.” But the childish credulity with which the utterances of Mrs. Besant are regarded as gospel truth by my educated countrymen shows clearly the extent to which they bring their own thoughts and feelings to bear upon the momentous subject of religion.

THE INDEFINITENESS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL CREED.

Theosophy is entirely a foreign movement. It had its origin in America in 1875, its founders being Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. Its object, as stated in the original rules of the society, were (1) to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood, without distinction of race, creed and colour; (2) to promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literature; (3) to investigate the hidden mysteries of nature and the psychical powers latent in man. There is nothing in these objects to shew that the movement is a religious movement. If it is a religious movement, what are we to believe? Are we to believe in a personal God? No. This can’t be; for the founders of the Theosophical movement do not recognize a personal deity. Here is a quotation from the *Theosophist*: “Ordinary people rashly jump to the conclusion that we are all believers in a personal deity. No graver mistake could ever be committed. Theosophy with us means *Divine Wisdom*, or rather the knowledge of that which is yet a mystery to the ordinary run of mankind. In this sense even a Materialist is a Theosophist, because he is ever trying to find the operation of such laws of nature as have not yet been discovered.” But we now find Materialism being denounced as something antagonis-

tic to Theosophy. If we ask Mr. Sinnett we shall be told that Theosophy is merely Esoteric Buddhism. Mrs. Besant, on the other hand, has been telling us that the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* contain Theosophical teachings. No two Theosophists are agreed as to what exactly is the teaching of their system. What India needs at present is a plain, positive, practical religion, something that would lift the people from the mire of degradation and superstition in which they are sunk. The maxims and teachings found in the Hindu books of old, though sometimes good in themselves, are far from satisfying the newly awakened feelings, such as the longings after something ideally perfect, the love of God and the inner cravings after goodness of such men as Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen and others. It becomes therefore the duty not only of those who have devoted their lives to the study of different religions, but also of those who value religion and reverence it, to have their faith well grounded on a religion which is not mere mysticism, but a religion which will inspire noble thoughts and deeds, and thus give the truest purpose to the longings for a higher nature and a higher life. When we ask what Theosophy really is? we are treated to such meaningless phrases as the following:—"Identifying ourselves with nothing," "To go out towards the Infinite" &c. I wonder what notion our poor countrymen will have of religion and God when such meaningless phrases are thrust on them.

As regards the establishment of a universal brotherhood of humanity, it is indeed a noble object. But it must be remembered that Theosophy attempts to establish this brotherhood without recognizing the Fatherhood of God. It is needless to point out that Brotherhood without a Fatherhood to inspire and strengthen it, is an idea absurd in its very nature. As regards the second of the original objects of the Theosophical Society—*viz.*, to promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literature, religious and scientific, and vindicate their importance, excellent as this object is, it is to be feared that the promoters of the Theosophical cause have not begun to set about it in the

right way. Not a single individual prominently connected with the society has attempted to study Sanskrit or any of the oriental classics. Mrs. Besant has no doubt been talking learnedly about ancient Hindu philosophy and science, but it is evident that the information which she manages to clothe in eloquent language is all derived secondhand from English magazine articles and reviews. Speaking of Madame Blavatsky's pretensions to ancient Hindu literature, Prof. Max Müller writes :—“ No one can study Buddhism (and as for that matter Brahmanism) unless he learns Sanskrit and Pali, so as to be able to read the canonical books, and at all events to spell the names correctly. Madame Blavatsky would do neither, though she was quite clever enough, if she had chosen, to have learnt Sanskrit or Pali . . . Unfortunately she was without the tools to dig for those treasures in the ancient literature of the world, and her mistakes in quoting from Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin would be amusing if they did not appeal to our sympathy rather for a woman who thought that she could fly though she had no wings, not even those of Icarus.” Mrs. Besant's acquaintance with the ancient literature of the East in the original is even less, but her presumption in expounding Vedic philosophy in her lectures is even more astounding.

THEOSOPHY AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.

I wish to say just a word about the third object of the Theosophical Society: *viz.*, the investigation of the hidden mysteries of nature and the psychical powers latent in man. It is in the carrying out of this object that Madame Blavatsky had recourse to some of the most barefaced tricks and impositions that it has been the misfortune of human beings to witness. It is needless for me to refer here to the strong language with which the scientific world and the press, both English and American, have denounced her as an impostor and a hypocrite. Suffice it here to quote only the verdict of the Psychical Society :—“ The marvellous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (a) to delib-

erate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Madame Blavatsky, or (b) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation, or invention on the part of witnesses."* Madame Blavatsky stands condemned before the world as one of the greatest impostors of the age, and so long as no attempt whatever was made, even during her life-time, to vindicate her character, and so long as her works and writings are regarded as the fountain head of Theosophical lore, so long will the odium attached to her name attach itself to the movement itself. I am aware of the fact that some of the most prominent Theosophists, being thoroughly ashamed of the despicable part played by Madame Blavatsky in order to gain adherents to her cause, now say that the merits or demerits of Madame Blavatsky have nothing to do with the cause itself. "Those who most love and revere Madame Blavatsky," says Mr. Sinnett in that exceedingly tame reply of his to Prof. Max Müller's criticism of Esoteric Buddhism,† "are doing the worst service they can render to the cause she worked for, by pinning her name to Theosophy, and making it look a sect with one fallible mortal at its head." The absurdity of such a position is too clear to need pointing out; for take away Madame Blavatsky's incoherent and mystifying teachings from Theosophy, which are repeated by her followers and others, in still more incoherent language, there will only be left the so-called occult phenomena which the scientific world has pronounced to be clumsy conjuring tricks. Madame Blavatsky is the real founder of Theosophy, and whatever Mr. Sinnett may say, Mrs. Besant at all events pins Madame Blavatsky's name to Theosophy. When Madame Blavatsky died in 1891, it gave an opportunity to all the English papers to re-review her career and the part played by her in the Theosophical movement, and every journal spoke of her as the founder of Theosophy. Nothing could be more humiliating to Theosophists than the final verdict that was then passed on the high-

* *Vide* the publication of the Christian Literature Society entitled, *Theosophy Exposed*.

† *Vide Nineteenth Century*, June 1893.

priestess of Theosophy. Here are just a few of the opinions :—“Had Madame Blavatsky,” said the *Illustrated London News*, “possessed a grain of honesty in her wonderfully complex character she might have been called the most remarkable woman of her age. As she was, she acted the part of a charlatan.” “Madame Blavatsky’s career,” said *Truth*, “ought to encourage every woman who wishes to be the high-priestess of a new religion, and to live in comfort on the money of fools, at once to go into the new sect business. All that she has to do in order to succeed is to take care that her religion is so mystic that no one can understand it; to have some confederates; and to be able with their aid to practise, with more or less of skill, a few of the ordinary tricks of a street conjuror.” “Madame Blavatsky, who died on Friday was an impostor, but in her way she was at least as clever as Clagiosiro in his, and she probably had more dupes.” It is indeed a sickening task to recount the deeds of this personage in connection with the Theosophical Society, but the cause of truth demands that this should be done; for Madame Blavatsky, we must remember, stands in the same relation to Theosophy as Buddha does to Buddhism, or Confucius to Confucianism.

ESOTERIC TEACHING OF THEOSOPHY.

I have not alluded to the so-called Esoteric teaching of Theosophy, for the simple reason that it is perfectly unintelligible to me. Mrs. Besant in her lectures has condescended to give some glimpses of this teaching to her audience, but to the uninitiated what she says is perfectly meaningless. We have a number of high sounding Sanskrit words pronounced most inaccurately, but woven cleverly and eloquently into clauses and sentences; but the audience, beyond being tickled by flattery, returns no wiser than it did before hearing her. But the question is: Is there any Esoteric teaching of any kind in either ancient Brahmanism or Buddhism? On this subject we should prefer to be guided by scholars, such as Prof. Max Müller, Rhys Davids and others, who have studied

the oriental scriptures in the original, than by either Madame Blavatsky or Mrs. Besant, who does not even pronounce the Sanskrit words properly. By the bye, we do not hear so much of Esoteric Buddhism as of Esoteric Brahmanism from the lips of Mrs. Besant. Perhaps Esoteric Buddhism is reserved for Japan or China. What does Prof. Max Müller say about Esoteric teaching?—"If I were asked what Madame Blavatsky's Esoteric Buddhism really is, I should say it was Buddhism misunderstood, distorted, caricatured. There is nothing in it beyond what was known already, chiefly from books that are now antiquated. The most ordinary terms are misspelt and misinterpreted. There never was any such thing as mystery in Buddhism. Altogether, it seems to me that mystery is much more of a modern than of an ancient invention. There are no real mysteries even in Brahmanism, for we can hardly apply that name to doctrines which were not communicated to everybody, but only to people who had passed through a certain preparatory discipline." So far Prof. Max Müller. But even granting that there is an Esoteric element in Brahmanism and Buddhism, I ask of what good is this to the masses of India, who, the Theosophists themselves admit, cannot attain to such knowledge. A creed which appeals only to the enlightened and occultly initiated few, and leaves out of consideration the vast majority of mankind, is hardly entitled to any consideration, and the scheme of life propounded by Theosophy, though possessing a fictitious attraction of its own, makes no provision for the mass of mankind, those who toil and suffer and are nursed in the lap of adversity. Truth is universal, and it can never be made the monopoly of a handful of men and women.

THEOSOPHY *versus* MATERIALISM.

There is one aspect of Theosophy, as represented by Mrs. Besant, which needs a passing remark. This lady begins her theosophical campaign everywhere by attacking Materialism, and in this she does well, though by doing so she departs somewhat from the course adopted by earlier Theosophists,

who did not object to enlisting even Materialists under their banner. The dominant influence of the age is Materialism in some form or other. The advance of science has not been without its advantages. Discoveries in almost every branch of science have transformed human life completely. Knowledge has been accumulated in a way never before dreamt of. Distance has been all but annihilated. Vast conquests have been made over physical pain and disease. But notwithstanding these advantages, the rapid progress of science has not been without its corresponding disadvantages. There is a tendency to subordinate Mind to Matter, to regard consciousness as a function of the nerves, and to ignore spirit and spontaneity. One effect of Materialism is to deny the Freedom of the Will. Materialism exhibits man as a mere sequence of physical action and reaction, it explains will and conscience as merely a little force and heat organized. Though Mrs. Besant attacks eloquently the philosophical basis of Materialism, still she does not appear conscious of the fact that some aspects of Theosophy lean more towards Materialism. For instance the doctrine of *Karma*, which she has been defending in some of her lectures, carried to its logical conclusion, is nothing but pure Fatalism which is the outcome of Materialism. Nowhere does Theosophy refer to Duty and Obligation. Even Tyndall, notwithstanding his materialistic tendency, says that, granting him proper health of body, there is no spiritual experience, no resolve of duty, no work of mercy, no act of self-renouncement, no solemnity of thought, no joy in the life and aspects of nature that would not be still his. Huxley also has said that "the beauty of holiness" and "the ugliness of sin" are perfectly real to him; but we never hear Theosophists speak of the beauty of holiness or the ugliness of sin,—conceptions which are not foreign to Hindus. Mrs. Besant in her lectures attaches little or no importance to the ethical aspect of materialism. This is not surprising, for so long as Theosophists repudiate a belief in a personal God and a personal immortality they cannot help ignoring morality. Nothing but a belief in a

personal God can give a logical and full account of the true nature of the moral ends. The thought that we owe our existence to a personal God, to one whom we can address as 'Our father', who reads the very secrets of our hearts and to whom we are responsible for every thought and action of our life,—such thoughts undoubtedly place the relation in which we stand to our fellowmen in an entirely new light. It has been well said that "it is only from the filial relation that the paternal springs." There is no use placing before man high ideals of life unless a way is pointed out by which he can carry out these ideals to some extent at least into practice ; but man, helpless as he is, bound down to lower aims by ties of self and sin, how can he, unless he trusts implicitly in the Power that worketh all things for good, and with whom he has definite relations, ever hope to have his higher aims realized? Our efforts to improve the world will end in emptiness if we are not sustained by a belief in a personal God. Banish this belief on which the highest system of ethics is based, and the following picture, drawn by a poet of the last century, will soon be realized :

" Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And, unawares, morality expires :
Nor public flame nor private, dares to shine ;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine."

In the present critical state in which my countrymen are placed it is of the utmost importance that the claims of morality should be put forward in all their force and completeness. For the regeneration of India, we need men and women who will prefer self-sacrifice to selfishness, who will appreciate the sacredness of the word "ought," and who will understand Duty to mean abnegation of self and obedience to the unconditioned command of Right. So long as Theosophy is destitute of the ethical element it can prove of very little help to India in transition.

A SPECIMEN OF MRS. BESANT'S LECTURE.

I had the pleasure quite recently of listening to one of Mrs. Besant's lectures in Madras, and I wish to draw atten-

tion to some things that struck me in her lecture. She has a wonderful command of the English language, and she possesses considerable oratorical powers. Her popularity as a lecturer however does not depend so much upon her eloquence or her learning as to the trick which she employs of enlisting the sympathy of the audience by posing as a martyr and to the outrageous flattery in which she indulges. At the lecture which I attended she began by speaking with emotion of the slanderous attacks that had been made upon her and upon those dear to her, and then in pathetic language she spoke of the virtue of forgiveness which she said she had learnt to exercise. Of course this took immensely with the audience, but where was the need for all this exhibition of martyrdom? So far as I know, instead of Mrs. Besant being slandered she has been deified by the Indian public. The Dewan of Mysore is reported to have spoken of her as the incarnation of Saraswati, and the excitedly worded telegrams that appeared in the *Hindu* and other papers clearly show with what enthusiasm she has been welcomed by the Hindu population. There have, no doubt, been some publications exposing Theosophy, and in these publications the writers have been obliged, much against their will, to allude to Madame Blavatsky's frauds, but so far as I know not a word is said against Mrs. Besant's character in these publications. Her attacks on Western Civilization were most illogical. She identified Materialism not only with Western Civilization, but she had the audacity to insinuate that the worst effects of Materialism were partly due to the influence of Christianity. She alluded in her lecture to the evils of social anarchy, to the sensualism and love of ease of the upper classes in England, and to the poverty of the lowest classes, and then turning to her audience asked: 'Are you going to allow these evils to be repeated in your beloved country, by adopting Western Civilization and everything foreign in religion and philosophy?' Alas! such are the arguments which are applauded to the echo by the so-called educated classes. Her allusions to dogmatic Christianity now and then were entirely uncalled for, for her attacks were entirely

based on the assumption that it was the dogmatism of Christianity that drove the working classes in England to scepticism. Now this is a most illogical assumption, for it is evident that the causes of the scepticism in England are innumerable, and yet with a view to cry down Christianity, Mrs. Besant does not scruple to put the whole blame on what she chooses to call dogmatic Christianity. Talking about dogmatism, could anything be more dogmatic than the teachings of Theosophy which we are asked to accept on the authority of Mrs. Besant or Madame Blavatsky? Such are some of the lines of argument which this lady lecturer adopts to mislead the Indian public.

AN OBJECTIONABLE FEATURE OF MRS. BESANT'S MISSION.

A most objectionable feature of Mrs. Besant's mission to India is her outrageous flattery of Indians and of everything connected with India which is beginning to be resented by the thoughtful among my countrymen. Colonel Olcott too resorted to the same course at the commencement; but he has latterly grown wise, after finding that while his own immediate followers swallowed the flattery they did not pay up their subscriptions. We who are aware of the exact condition of our country know more than Mrs. Besant, who is a perfect stranger, with only a few weeks acquaintance with the country, how to estimate at its true value the ancient civilization of India. Nothing has been a cause of such incalculable harm to the cause of progress and truth in this country as the flattering of the vanity of the Indians, by referring in season and out of season, to the greatness of their ancestors and their civilization. Whenever an allusion is made to their ancient and learned forefathers, the great truths embodied in the Hindu Scriptures, the grand lessons which the West has to learn from the East, &c., our countrymen are as a rule flattered immensely, but such talk only helps to keep them in a fool's paradise. It renders them proud and indolent, and makes them oppose blindly every effort made to raise them from the deplorable condition in which they are at present. Does Mrs. Besant,

who extols Eastern civilization at the expense of Western civilization, know the present deplorably low social, moral and intellectual condition of the people of India? Is she aware of the position to which the women of India have been reduced by this very civilization which she praises? Does she know all the horrors connected with enforced widowhood and infant marriage? Men, who are themselves within the pale of Hinduism, are longing for a better state of things, and here we find an English lady, who has come on a brief visit to this country, praise in the most reckless manner ancient Indian civilization. Just imagine what the position of Mrs. Besant herself would be if she came under the sway of the civilization she praises. The very first thing she will have to do is to shut up lecturing, for Hindu civilization will not allow of women going about from place to place by themselves and discoursing in public. Moreover, she will not have two thoughts in her head to speak about in public, for Hindu civilization does not believe in female education, and her lot cannot possibly be anything different from that of the ordinary Indian woman whose sole purpose in life is—

“To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.”

It is difficult to realize that Mrs. Besant is really serious when she talks about the greatness and superiority of Indian civilization. Does Mrs. Besant know what Hindus themselves, who know more about their ancient civilization, than she can ever hope to learn, think what the effect will be if New India were to be guided by past ideals? Here is what one of the foremost among the educated sons of India has said,—I quote the words of Dr. Bhandarkar, the present Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay and one of the most profound Sanskrit scholars of the day :—

“Here I feel myself in duty bound even at the risk of displeasing some of you, to make passing allusion to the most unceritcal spirit that has come over us of praising ourselves and our ancestors indiscriminately, seeing nothing but good in our institutions and in our ancient literature, asserting that the ancient Hindus had made very great progress in all the sciences, physical, moral, and social, and the arts,—greater even by far than Europe has made hitherto—and denying even the most obvious deficiencies in our literature,

such as the absence of satisfactory historical records, and our most obvious defects. As long as this spirit exists in us, we can never hope to throw light on our ancient history, and on the excellencies and defects of our race, and never hope to rise."

Mr. Manomohan Ghose, a leading citizen of Calcutta, is reported to have said some time ago:—

"He felt a legitimate pride in the ancient civilization of India, but he was bound to say that an undue and exaggerated veneration for the past was doing a great deal of mischief. It was quite sickening to hear the remark made at almost every public meeting that the ancient civilization of India was superior far to that which Europe ever had." . . .

"It must be admitted by all who had carefully studied the ancient literature of India that the much-vaunted civilization of India was of a peculiar type, and that it never could bear any comparison to what we call modern European civilization. Whatever might be the case in ancient times, he thought that this frequent appeal to our ancient civilization could serve no good purpose at the present day, while it was simply calculated to make the Bengalis more conceited than they were."

Here again is the testimony of no less an authority than the editor of the leading *Hindu* paper in South India as to what the ancient civilization is likely to do to our country under present conditions. I am quoting from the address on Social Reform delivered recently in Madras by Mr. G. Subramania Iyer:—

"Whether our ancient civilization did good or did not, is not the point; the point is whether in its present changed and decrepit condition and amidst the new environments introduced by the modern contact of the East and the West, and by the modern appliances of civilized life, the outcome of modern, positive sciences our ancient civilization will supply the nation its new wants and protect it from the continually growing pressure from outside. We urge that our social system and our character should undergo change in response to the demand made by the novel surroundings of the country, the fresh life that animates the nation, the new leaven that is leavening the lump. So far as it is possible to accomplish this object without breaking with the past, we are certainly in favour of preserving the old moorings. Indeed no progress is possible without the basis of the past; but at the same time all progress implies some sacrifice and some repudiation of the past, some rupture, and some deviation from it. Nor is it necessary that the reforms that are advocated should mean the Europeanizing, so to speak, of this old Eastern nation. Reforms are

advocated not because the reformers want to introduce into this country the peculiarities of a foreign civilization, but because they feel that for the progressive well-being of their people these changes are indispensable."

A small but earnest band of reformers are trying to do all in their power, in spite of misrepresentation and opposition, to bring about a better state of things socially, and their work would indeed meet with a fatal check if the advice of Mrs. Besant and others to follow past ideals were given effect to practically.

CONCLUSION.

I have stated briefly what I consider to be the defects of Theosophy, and I leave it to my countrymen to judge for themselves whether this weird and obscure creed is in any way worthy of their support. I have pointed out the indefinite nature of the so-called Theosophical creed; I have shewn that not one of the three objects of the Society put forward originally, though excellent in themselves, have been or can be given effect to so long as the search for Theosophical lore is pursued in the way it is being done; I have also pointed out that so long as the founder of the system stands condemned as an impostor, the system itself cannot gain the confidence of the public; that Sanskrit and Pali Scholars assert that there is no Esoteric doctrines in either Brahmanism or Buddhism; that the exponents of Theosophy, however gifted with eloquence, cannot be regarded as the proper expounders of Hindu philosophy or religion, so long as they derive their information second hand from Magazines and Journals; that Theosophy propounds no scheme of salvation for the masses; that by substituting a vague abstraction for a personal God, Theosophy not only renders the doctrine of the Brotherhood of man a mere sham, but also endangers morality; and lastly that its teachings are antagonistic to social progress. That my countrymen, who are now being tossed to and fro by every blast of vain doctrine, should be guided aright in their search after truth, is my earnest wish and prayer.

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