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MRS. ANNIE BESANT AND THE MORAL CODE

A PROTEST

by J. H. FUSSELL

*(Secretary of The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society.
Formerly Private Secretary to the late William Q. Judge.)*

Introduction by KENNETH MORRIS

“The Theosophical Society has no Moral Code.”--- *Mrs. Annie Besant*

“Theosophy is itself the highest Moral Code.”--- *H. P. Blavatsky*

“Verily, there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed ; neither secret that shall not be made known.”

ADDRESSED TO THE PUBLIC:
TO FATHERS AND MOTHERS: TO ALL
LOVERS OF THE HOME: TO ALL SELF-RESPECTING
MEN AND WOMEN---LOVERS OF DECENCY AND
SANENESS OF LIFE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, SS.

JOSEPH H. FUSSELL, of Point Loma, California, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That the quotations and extracts printed in the pamphlet entitled: "Mrs. Annie Besant and the Moral Code," of which this affidavit is a part, are word for word and in all particulars correctly transcribed;

Further, that these quotations and extracts, herein referred to, are taken from documents or pamphlets issued by members or former members of Mrs. Besant's "Theosophical" Society, as follows:

PAMPHLET:—"The Leadbeater Case,—The Suppressed Speeches of Herbert Burrows and G. R. S. Mead." (Published by Herbert Burrows and G. R. S. Mead.)

PAMPHLET:—"The Leadbeater Case,—A Reply to the President's Letter of November 1908." (Published by G. R. S. Mead, Herbert Burrows, W. Kingsland, and Edith Ward.)

JOURNAL:—"The Theosophic Voice"—An Independent Unofficial Journal. (Published at Chicago.)

Also extracts or quotations from the following:

A personal letter from Mrs. Annie Besant to an inquirer, a copy of which is in the possession of the deponent.

H. P. Blavatsky's published writings, viz., "The Key to Theosophy," and Editorial Articles in her Magazine "Lucifer," (published in London).

(Signed)

JOSEPH H. FUSSELL

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, SS.

ON this 24th day of July, in the year one thousand nine hundred and nine, before me, WM. H. FRANCIS, County Clerk and ex-officio Clerk of the Superior Court in and for said County, which is a court of record having a seal, personally appeared *Joseph H. Fussell*, known to me to be the person described in and whose name is subscribed to and who executed the annexed instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said court at my office in the County of San Diego, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.

(Signed)

WM. H. FRANCIS

County Clerk and ex-officio Clerk of the Superior Court

By *S. A. CHARPIOT*, Deputy

SEAL OF THE SUPERIOR COURT,
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CAL.

INTRODUCTION

THERE are certain matters, from dealing with which decent people shrink with disgust. Our minds turn away from them revolting; although they may be perils that are a present menace to society, society will neither, if it can help itself, name nor notice them. Such a matter is unnatural sexual vice.

A human being may descend to such hideous depths of iniquity that the idea of him becomes nauseous, and his name a word not to be spoken. A certain stigma attaches even to those who dare to pull the veil of secrecy from such a one; we have such a desire to be left alone, hearing nothing unpleasant. But all honest teachers of boys know certain things, which are bound at times almost to make them despair of the future of the race; they know of the presence of vices more deadly and more infectious than any disease, and harder to combat; and when such a case as this pamphlet reveals is toward, when there is a man spreading corruption as the man Leadbeater has done, they at least will understand that the time has come to fling convention to the winds. We must have open honesty now, and surgeons who will do a certain work without flinching. We must have brave men who will go in, and handle filth and breathe stench, because humanity is threatened.

It should be understood that Theosophy, as such, is not involved in this matter. The appeal therefore is equally to those favorable and those unfavorable to Theosophy, and to those who have no interest in it. Yet the full necessity of fighting this Besant-Leadbeater influence would not be understood, unless some mention and even explanation of a few of the Theosophical teachings were made.

As will be shown, Mrs. Annie Besant is at the head of a society calling itself "Theosophical," and Mr. Leadbeater her chief colleague and almost her equal in influence. She has spoken of herself and of him as "Initiates." Now Theosophy teaches that men can, through long and steadfast moral and spiritual training, become perfect in wisdom, strength of character, and compassion; and cites as proof of this teaching, the lives of such men as Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, etc., these men being known as Initiates; and it is held that they are worthy to be followed and supported in every way.

Mr. Leadbeater, posing as such an initiate, believed to be such by the parents, has been teaching boys, under pledge of secrecy, a private vice; Mrs. Besant has stood by, endorsed and defended him. Their society is actively engaged in propaganda throughout four continents; and one of their highest officials has declared that this is their inner teaching, to be made public as the world becomes prepared for it. In other words, here is a secret propaganda of vice; is it not time to take action?

MRS. ANNIE BESANT AND THE MORAL CODE

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

THE present Theosophical Movement was originated by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in New York in 1875. The original name of the Society founded by her was "The Theosophical Society and Universal Brotherhood." Associated with her as co-founders were William Q. Judge, Col. H. S. Olcott, and others. Madame Blavatsky, though the founding and whole life of the Society were due to her, did not hold any outer official position except that of Corresponding Secretary. Nevertheless she held the highest authority; she was the inspiration and heart of the Movement; it was through her that the teachings of Theosophy were given to the world, and without her the Theosophical Movement could not have been.

In 1891 H. P. Blavatsky died, and William Q. Judge who had always been held in the highest esteem and confidence by Madame Blavatsky, became her successor as Leader and Inspirer of the Movement.

Soon afterwards a Mrs. Annie Besant and some of her associates attempted to create confusion and stir up strife in the ranks of the Society by actions subversive of the principles of Theosophy and of the purposes for which the Society had been founded. For this reason, the American members determined on a reorganization of the Theosophical Society, which took place at Boston in 1895, when by a vote of 191 delegates to 10, representing a majority of the active members throughout the world, William Q. Judge was elected President for life. Similar action was almost immediately taken by members in other countries, and in each case William Q. Judge was elected President.

By this reorganization all connexion with Mrs. Besant and her associates was repudiated, and the Society thus left free to carry on its legitimate work. And though some of these people continued among themselves to use the name Theosophy and to call themselves Theosophists, it should be understood that they are not connected with the Theosophical Movement.

In 1896 William Q. Judge died and the Leadership of the Theosophical Movement passed into the hands of Katherine Tingley, whom he had designated as his successor. The full title of the organization is now UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

THEOSOPHY INCULCATES THE HIGHEST MORALITY

ALL those who are at all acquainted with the teachings of Theosophy as put forth by H. P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley, know that they not merely inculcate the highest morality, but stand as a menace and protest against everything evil in the world. In view, however, of the fact that many of the public do not know of the distinction that exists between the original Theosophical Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky (the full name of which is now the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, with its International Headquarters at Point Loma, California) and the so-called

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Theosophical Society of which Mrs. Besant is now the head; in view also of the fact that the last-named Society (of which Mrs. Besant is now the head) has recently re-admitted to its ranks a Mr. C. W. Leadbeater who has been accused of gross immorality, and has confessed to the same; and lastly, in order that there may be no confusion in the public mind as to the attitude of Katherine Tingley, of her students, and of the members of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY; nor any mistake as to the teachings of Theosophy in regard to such conduct as that of which Mr. Leadbeater has been accused and to which he has confessed — that they utterly condemn such: it is important that the public be placed in possession of the following information and facts.

MR. C. W. LEADBEATER—A MEMBER OF MRS. BESANT'S SOCIETY—IS ACCUSED OF GROSS IMMORALITY AND CONFESSES

IN 1906 Mr. A. Fullerton, the then General Secretary of Mrs. Besant's Society in America addressed an official circular dated May 18, 1906 to the American members. The statement was therein made that rumors which had been current for years in India, Ceylon, and England had reached America, that Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, who had been put forward most prominently in Mrs. Besant's Society as a lecturer and "Teacher," had been deliberately teaching self-abuse to boys in his charge, stating that these rumors had been verified by direct testimony from boys in the United States. The circular then continues:

A memorial was then addressed to Mrs. Besant containing the testimony up to that date, and signed by the Heads of the Esoteric Section and the Theosophical Society in this country, a duplicate being sent to X. [Note:—X. is Mr. Leadbeater.] Mrs. Besant replied to the Head of the Esoteric Section and X. replied to Mr. Fullerton. X. admitted the facts and explained that he taught masturbation to boys as a protection against relations with women. Mrs. Besant utterly repudiated such doctrine and such practice, but considered X.'s motive as sincere. . . .

This is in part the testimony of still another boy, but even more emphatically the discovery of two notes from X. to two boys. It is impossible to put such writings in print; but their pruriency, their cold-blooded injunctions as to methods and times of indulgence, and the personal satisfaction expressed in the remark all make impossible the defense that the prescriptions were given from honest desire to save the victims from sex relations.

It was very clear that teaching and practice of this kind could not be tolerated in a teacher, more especially because access to the boys had been obtained through a deceptive assertion made to the parents. The assertion was that it was the practice of X. to explain to the boys in his care the nature of the sex function and the danger of its abuse, though without the slightest hint that he gave masturbation as a remedy. If this had been stated, the boys would not have been entrusted to him. The boys thus approached were from thirteen to fourteen years of age.

No direct action has been hitherto possible by other sections because of the absence of proof, but the proof existed here from testimony and from X.'s own admissions, and it was felt that immediate action by the American Section was obligatory.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY CALLED
LEADBEATER ADMITS TRUTH OF CHARGES PERMITTED TO RESIGN

IN response to demand made by the American members a Committee was called by Col. Olcott, the President of the Society to which Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater belonged. In the course of the inquiry Mr. Leadbeater admitted that the charge of teaching this degrading practice to boys was true, and also admitted that he himself had handled the boys indecently.

Before the inquiry Mr. Leadbeater had handed to Col. Olcott his resignation, "to be used if necessary." There was no question of his guilt, for he himself admitted it; the only question that arose was, Should he be expelled from the Society or should his resignation be accepted? The latter course was finally adopted.

A SUMMARY OF FACTS

It is important, as will be seen later, that we do not get away from the facts. So far they are as follows:

(1) The charge was made against Mr. Leadbeater that he taught to certain boys the degrading practice of self-abuse.

(2) Direct testimony was received from some of his victims.

(3) Mr. Leadbeater in his reply to Mr. Fullerton ADMITTED THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGE.

(4) Mr. Leadbeater, before the Inquiry took place, handed in his resignation, and again ADMITTED THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE COMMITTEE.

MRS. BESANT AND MR. LEADBEATER

IN 1906 Mrs. Besant wrote to certain members in America a letter which has since been openly printed and circulated, from which the following is quoted:

Mr. X. [i. e., Mr. Leadbeater] appeared before the Council of the British Section, representatives of the French and American Sections being present and voting; Colonel Olcott in the chair. Mr. X. denied none of the charges, but in answer to questions very much strengthened them, for he alleged that he had actually handled the boys himself and that he had thus dealt with boys before puberty as a prophylactic. So that the advice supposed to have been given as a last resort to rescue a boy in the grip of sexual passion, became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses; and the long intervals, the rare relief, became twenty-four hours in length—a daily habit. It was conceivable that the advice as supposed to have been given had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so in a teacher of Theosophical morality; anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given, in fact such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could be given with pure intent only if the giver were, on this point, insane. . . . Let me here place on record my opinion that such teaching as this given to men, let alone innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex impulse, implanted in men for the preservation of the race; it degrades the ideas of marriage, of fatherhood and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals; it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions, and undermines the health. Worst of all is that it should be taught under the name of the Divine Wisdom, being essentially "earthly, sensual, devilish."

And in answer to a proposal emanating from some members in America to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater, Mrs. Besant wrote in August 1907:

Any proposal to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the membership of the Theosophical Society would be ruinous to the Society. . . . If such a proposal were carried in America—I do not believe it possible—I should move on the T. S. Council, the supreme authority, that the application of membership should be rejected.

If Mrs. Besant had let the matter rest there, if she had sustained her position as last above indicated, doubtless this pamphlet would not have been written. But in view of her later utterances, in which she has departed utterly from the position above indicated; and because Mrs. Besant stands before the public as a lecturer professing to teach Theosophy; and because many of the public, ignorant of the true history of the Theosophical Society, identify her name with Theosophy; *therefore* I deem it a duty to protest in the name of Theosophy and of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, and to place the public in possession of certain facts that they may judge intelligently and act accordingly.

ANNIE BESANT DECLARES THAT
"THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HAS NO MORAL CODE"

IN 1907 there was published an article over Mrs. Besant's signature in which the statement is made: "The Theosophical Society has no moral code."

Without any mincing of words such a statement is an infamous libel on the Theosophical Society, on H. P. Blavatsky, and on every member of the Society. Mrs. Besant may speak for herself, she may have the right to speak for the Society of which she is now President; but if her Society has no moral code, then for that reason alone, that Society has no right to the name Theosophical.

Anyone who knows anything at all about Theosophy knows that, in respect to the Theosophical Society (the only one with any right to the name) founded by H. P. Blavatsky, such a statement is utterly false and misleading. And let it be clearly understood that by Theosophy I mean the teachings of Madame Blavatsky, of William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley and those who are true students of these Teachers. I do not mean anything that Mrs. Besant or her followers or associates may have written or put forward as Theosophy.

For the sake of those who are not acquainted with the teachings of Theosophy it is sufficient to refer merely to the following:

INQUIRER: Have you any ethical system that you carry out in the Society?

THEOSOPHIST: The ethics are there, ready and clear enough for whomsoever would follow them. They are the essence and cream of the world's ethics, gathered from the teachings of all the world's great reformers.

INQUIRER: Have you any prohibitory laws or clauses for Theosophists in your Society?

THEOSOPHIST: Many, but alas! none of them are enforced. They express the ideal of our organization,—but the practical application of such things we are compelled to leave to the discretion of the Fellows themselves.—(*Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky)

And in her magazine *Lucifer*, published in London, H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

Theosophy is itself the highest moral code.

Theosophy . . . is Divine Science and a code of ethics so sublime that no Theosophist is capable of doing it justice.

And again she speaks of

. . . the code of ethics which ought to guide every Theosophist aspiring to *become one in reality*. . . In a Society with pretensions to an exalted system of ethics — the essence of all previous ethical codes — which confesses openly its aspirations to emulate and put to shame by its practical example and ways of living the followers of every religion, . . .

And a host of other references might be given, but it is not necessary to give more; I have quoted sufficient to show that Mrs. Besant's statement that "the Theosophical Society has no moral code" is a baseless assertion.

"MY FRIEND AND FELLOW-INITIATE"

LATER in the same year, in an address before the Convention of her "Theosophical" Society held in Chicago, September 1907, Mrs. Besant spoke of Mr. Leadbeater as "my Friend and Fellow-Initiate." Did anyone who knows anything of Theosophy, or who knows the significance of the term "Initiate," ever hear of anyone calling him or herself "an Initiate" and in public, too? Surely, this is playing to the gallery. It is quite pertinent, also, to ask, "Initiate in what?" for, bear in mind, Mr. Leadbeater has confessed to gross immorality. Certainly not an Initiate in Theosophy, for Theosophy teaches purity, saneness, and commonsense.

Also in the same year 1907, in answer to an inquiry from a young man interested in Theosophy, but disturbed over the Leadbeater affair, Mrs. Besant wrote:

One falsehood I may perhaps note. Mr. Leadbeater was not even accused of any crime; his life is a very pure and noble one. But he gave what some of us think very dangerous advice in the effort to rescue some boys from evil ways, and he resigned in order that the T. S. might not be held responsible for his advice.

When Mrs. Besant penned this note she could never have dreamed it would come into the hands of anyone cognizant of the facts. Let us briefly analyse this remarkable statement, not forgetting Mrs. Besant's previous statement to the American members, to which I shall advert later. Mrs. Besant says: "Mr. Leadbeater was not even *accused* of any crime." How does this agree with the facts? how does it agree with Mr. Leadbeater's confession twice made? Is Mrs. Besant simply juggling with the English language? or would it be charity to assume that a cloud had come over her mind and that maybe she meant something else? Is it, or is it not, a crime to give such teaching to boys, and to "handle them" as Mrs. Besant herself and Mr. Leadbeater himself acknowledged he did? "Mr. Leadbeater's life is a very noble and pure one," says Mrs. Besant; how does this agree with Mr. Leadbeater's own admissions? or perhaps nobility and purity have some other meaning for Mrs. Besant, different from that which you and I give to these words.

And so, "he resigned," Mrs. Besant says, "in order that the T. S. might not be held responsible for his advice," for she still acknowledges that he gave "very dangerous advice." But perhaps even this may be denied later.

THE ALLEGED REASON FOR THE ADVICE

AND, says Mrs. Besant, this "very dangerous advice was given in the effort to rescue some boys from evil ways." She acknowledges the giving of the advice, which was that of self-abuse, and then says it was given "*to rescue some boys from evil ways.*" Let us turn to what Mr. Leadbeater himself says in his letter of Feb. 27, 1906. He there distinctly advocates the teaching of self-abuse *before* "the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on," — to quote his exact words.

Commenting on this, Mr. Herbert Burrows, one of the most prominent of the English members of Mrs. Besant's Society (since resigned, I understand), says:

So we have the terrible fact of these innocent boys being taught self-abuse, unknown to their parents, under a pledge of secrecy and because the teaching was Theosophy, by a Theosophical teacher who is claimed as a seer and an Initiate, under whose charge their boys were, AND WHO REGULARLY TOOK THEM TO SLEEP WITH HIM, ALTHOUGH THEY STRONGLY OBJECTED, AND BEGGED FOR A SEPARATE ROOM, AS I HAVE ACTUAL PROOF.

What does the thoughtful reader think? Is this indeed the XXth century? Think you that Mr. Leadbeater's advice and *conduct* — for that cannot be overlooked — was calculated "to rescue boys from evil ways"? Is there any sane man or woman who could take that position? Or was not such advice and conduct calculated to "initiate" (and I use the word intentionally) them into evil ways from which perhaps in this life they may never be able to extricate themselves? And, it is pertinent to ask, FOR WHAT PURPOSE? The last statement quoted from Mr. Herbert Burrows does not seem to have been gone into.

ONE STEP FURTHER

IN November 1908, Mrs. Besant wrote a long letter to the British members of her Society in response to a protest by some of them; and (to express frankly my opinion of her letter) it is nothing less than an attempt to begot the whole issue with sanctimonious moralizing, platitudes, and talk, talk, talk — in which she would make out the man Leadbeater a saint and martyr, and herself another. Only one or two points can be referred to. She says:

But now that I am appealed to, I will speak, and the more gladly because I also wronged him, believing that he had admitted certain statements as true;

What about Mr. Leadbeater's letter to Mr. Fullerton, himself acknowledging the truth of the charges? What about his acknowledgement before the Committee? Is Mrs. Besant in her right mind? Does she know what she is saying? Has she become a monomaniac on Mr. Leadbeater? She continues:

I wrote in 1906: "On June 7th, I received an account of the acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater before the Committee of the facts alleged in the evidence"; I thus accepted on what I believed to be his own word, that which, on the word of others, I had rejected as impossible, and that which I ought to have continued to reject even coming as from himself; both he and I have suffered by my blunder, for which I have apologized to him, to an extent which our unmerciful critics little imagine; but it is over, and never the shadow of a cloud can come between us again.

Is it believable that, in the face of Mr. Leadbeater's own letter and his admissions made before the Committee, we are now expected to accept this statement of Mrs. Besant in good faith? For let us not forget that in February 1906 she herself was the first to receive the charges and original evidence from America; and it is stated that—

Mr. Leadbeater, to whom also a copy had been forwarded, was then with Mrs. Besant at Benares. After consultation with her, Mr. Leadbeater wrote a letter of confession and excuse (dated February 27) to the then American General Secretary, and Mrs. Besant also sent a letter to the chief officer of the E. S. in which she repeated Mr. Leadbeater's excuses, but expressed disagreement with his teaching.

What are we to think of a woman who makes excuses for such teaching, and apologizes for having spoken of such teaching as "worthy of the sternest reprobation"?

FEEBLE EXCUSES

MRS. BESANT, in the same letter just referred to (of November 1908), says, "as to the 'evidence,' he stated at the time [i. e., of the Inquiry]: 'I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents, except the first letter,'" etc. In heaven's name what has this to do with his misconduct and the vile teachings to which he has confessed? Why did he confess if the charges were not true? It is impossible to believe that any man would confess to the truth of such charges if the charges were not true. He in his own consciousness must have known the truth of the charges, and evidence or documents have only to do with proving the truth to others. To my thinking the inference is only too plain: he feared the evidence then at hand was really much stronger than it actually was—and the actual evidence as has been shown is bad enough—and knowing his guilt, he took the easier course and confessed. All the talking, and all the platitudes and moralizing will not get around the fact of his twice-told confession, once in a letter and once before the Committee.

But Mrs. Besant says in the same letter: "The so-called trial was a travesty of justice." Why this unseemly attack on her late colleague, Col. Olcott, since dead? Has she come to such straits that she will sacrifice anything and anybody to gain her point and shield her "Fellow-Initiate"? But there is the stenographic report of the Committee's inquiry:

COL. OLCOTT: "I should like to ask Mr. Leadbeater if he thinks I have acted impartially?"

MR. LEADBEATER: "Absolutely."

And Col. Olcott made perfectly clear the nature of the Committee of Inquiry, stating twice to the members thereof as follows:

(a) Of course you know the executive power is vested in me. You are here to advise me and to hear what Mr. Leadbeater has to say, and to act according to your judgment after hearing him.

(b) We should not keep in anything, but have frank disclosure. You are not sitting judicially, but to advise me what to do.

This abuse of members of the Committee shows indeed to what straits Mrs. Besant is put in defense of Mr. Leadbeater; and defense of him implies,

in spite of anything said to the contrary, defense of that to which he has *twice confessed*.

In concluding her letter, Mrs. Besant throws aside every pretense of protest against Mr. Leadbeater's conduct and teachings, and says :

If the Theosophical Society wishes to undo the wrong done to him, it is for the Convention of each Section to ask me to invite his return, and I will rejoice to do so. Further, in every way that I can, outside official membership, I will welcome his co-operation, show him honor, and stand beside him.

So we have Mrs. Besant accusing her Society of having done *wrong* to this self-confessed violator of the innocence of youth, this teacher of vile habits. It is no longer Mr. Leadbeater who has done wrong; though he has confessed *twice*, and resigned, even handing in his resignation *before* any action of the Committee was determined on. No, Mrs. Besant's "Friend and Fellow-Initiate" could not do wrong; the wrong is entirely on the part of those fastidious people who object to having their boys taught self-abuse. It is these who have done wrong, mark you, if we accept Mrs. Besant's statement. And if you ask, how? The answer is, in protesting; in insisting that their children shall be protected from vile, degrading teachings; to the giving of which Mr. Leadbeater confessed twice. But remember, Mrs. Besant says: "THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HAS NO MORAL CODE," and so perhaps it is no wonder after all that she characterizes Mr. Leadbeater's immoral, vile teachings as a "chimera." She says: "Is it not time to cease warring against chimeras," and the context admits of no other explanation to be given to the word than that it refers to Mr. Leadbeater's conduct and teachings, to which he has confessed twice — once in writing, and once before the Official Committee.

MRS. BESANT'S PLEDGES

IN view of the above it will hardly be surprising to learn that certain pledges made by Mrs. Besant to her members in regard to Mr. Leadbeater have not been fulfilled, but broken. These emphatic pledges were given to her followers at the time of her election to the Presidency of her so-called Theosophical Society. Were they simply "election" pledges?

Yet it is of interest to note in what light a pledge or promise is held by a Theosophist. H. P. Blavatsky declares :

Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars — absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and *moral power*, which makes the fourth support and equipoises the other three — is an insecure building.

This statement is so clear that its application may be left to the reader.

In April 1907, in answer to a telegram from British members "Would you as President permit X.'s (Mr. Leadbeater's) readmission?" Mrs. Besant replied :

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

The meaning given by Mrs. Besant to the word "repudiates" is clear from her letter to her British members, dated March 24, 1907, which, note, was

written nine months after Mrs. Besant had received the official Minutes of the Committee's Inquiry, and her opinion, therefore, could not then have been based on alleged false information. In this letter she says:

As regards his [Mr. L.'s] readmission to the Society . . . I shall continue to oppose it, as I have hitherto done, until he says publicly that the teaching is *wrong*. [Mrs. Besant's own italics],

And in another of her election addresses, "The Testing of the Theosophical Society," she declares:

I may add that the "Conversation" in no way suggests Mr. Leadbeater's reinstatement, and we at Adyar could not read that into it, as we were told at the same time that — [whom Mrs. Besant recognizes as the highest authority] in answer to a suggestion to that effect, has sternly refused his approval.

But these pledges and the disapproval of the highest authority as recognized by Mrs. Besant, go for nothing, and are only mentioned here, as throwing another sidelight on Mrs. Besant's position.

THE "HIGHEST AUTHORITY" CONTRADICTS HIMSELF

IF, however, we are to accept the word of the present General Secretary of Mrs. Besant's Society in America, Dr. Weller van Hook, who is also a member of the General Council of Mrs. Besant's "Theosophical" Society and therefore one of the highest officials of that Society, we find a distinct contradiction of Mrs. Besant's statement as to what the above-mentioned "Highest Authority" declared. So that either Mrs. Besant's "Highest Authority" has changed his position totally upon the question, perhaps also committed a "blunder" in "sternly refusing his approval"; or else she has repudiated both him and his disapproval. For her present position in welcoming back "with honor" her "Friend and Fellow-Initiate" is in entire accord with that of Dr. van Hook who sees in Mr. Leadbeater a martyr and to whom the outraged and protesting parents and the self-respecting members who have resigned, are the persecutors and wrongers of this self-confessed teacher of self-pollution to boys.

The General Secretary, who has declared the statement made by him from which the following is taken, to have been dictated *verbatim* by the "highest authority" referred to, says:

Now it was most easy for Mr. Leadbeater with clairvoyant vision to see what thought-forms were hovering about certain boys not yet addicted to this degrading practice. . . . Hence the "crime" or "wrong" of teaching the practice alluded to was no crime or wrong at all, but only the advice of a wise teacher who foresaw an almost limitless period of suffering for his charge if the solution for his difficulties usually offered by the World, were adopted and relief obtained by an associated instead of an individual and personal act.

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer World. Mr. Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. [etc., etc., *ad nauseam*] . . .

No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it.

Will any sane man accept such a monstrous, flimsy excuse as that given above, that Mr. Leadbeater saw "what thought-forms were hovering about

boys NOT YET ADDICTED TO THIS DEGRADING PRACTICE” and THEREFORE taught this “degrading practice” to those boys. The boys were not yet, according to Dr. van Hook, “addicted to this degrading practice.” He acknowledges that the practice is degrading; he admits that Mr. Leadbeater taught it to these boys, and makes the monstrous statement that in so teaching it, Mr. Leadbeater made no mistake, committed no crime, did no wrong.

I have no hesitation in asserting it to be my conviction that if Mr. Leadbeater saw, as is claimed by Dr. van Hook, any such thought-forms hovering about the boys, those thought-forms must have emanated from his own filthy and perverted imagination. This does not seem to have suggested itself to Dr. van Hook, nor to the authority whose dictum he declares himself to be voicing.

DR. VAN HOOK BLAMES THE PARENTS

BLAME must be placed somewhere, however, and so Dr. van Hook blames the parents of the boys for objecting to Mr. Leadbeater’s teachings. He says, still from the “highest authority”:

If any mistake was made it was a mistake of judgment in [Mr. L.’s] trusting too much to the confidence of the parents of the boys who, he thought, knew and loved him so well that they would accept his judgment on matters about which ordinary people have little or no knowledge, and about which he, by the nature of his occult training, had a full comprehension.

Betrayal of confidence on the part of some parents of the boys resulted in the scandal which brought this problem to the attention of Theosophists as a preliminary to its introduction to the world. Woe to those who violated their vows in making disclosures in this case.

Thank heaven there are still a few “ordinary people” left in the world, a few people with clean minds and a love of the welfare of their children, who will protest. “Occult training,” forsooth! Not of the Right Hand Path, but verily of the Left, and students of Theosophy well know what this means, indeed its meaning will be plain to all and require no explanation, except to say, repeating the words quoted by Mrs. Besant in her 1906 letter, that it is essentially “earthly, devilish, sensual.”

Once again we have an unbelievable reversal of all decency and sanity. Note, Dr. van Hook speaks of betrayal of confidence on the part of the parents of the boys, and that this — *this* — it was that resulted in the scandal. It is monstrous. Look at the matter squarely and in the light of everything that is clean and honorable. Whose was the betrayal of confidence? Was it or was it not on the part of Mr. Leadbeater, to whom these parents had entrusted their boys? Did Mr. Leadbeater tell these parents that it was his intention to teach them this vile unclean habit? Would they have entrusted their boys to him if he had declared it was his intention to do so? On whose part then was the betrayal of confidence? And this man has the effrontery to declare that parents who refused to permit their boys to be taught self-abuse — and this by a man who was posing as a spiritual teacher, and under cover of secrecy — he has the effrontery, the unparalleled audacity, to declare that in protesting *they* were guilty of a betrayal of confidence!

THE SENSE OF PROPORTION

Mrs. Besant in her letter of November 1908 above referred to, says :

My wish is to lift the present controversy out of the turmoil of passion in which all sense of proportion has been lost, and to submit the whole case to the judgment of the Theosophical Society, free from the exaggerations and misunderstandings which have surrounded it.

In other words, those who have expressed the horror that any self-respecting man or woman must feel at the teachings of self-abuse to which Mrs. Besant's "Friend and Fellow-Initiate" has twice confessed; those who protest against permitting their boys to be in the care of such a man as Mr. Leadbeater, who, to quote Mr. Herbert Burrows, "regularly took them to sleep with him, although they strongly objected and begged for a separate room" — all these have lost the sense of proportion, and we are to infer that to regain it they must turn to Mrs. Besant, listen to her contemptible juggling with words, leave the facts alone, pay no regard to the TWICE TOLD CONFESSION of Mr. Leadbeater, nor to the testimony of the boys, but accept *her* statement that this man, being *HER* "FRIEND AND FELLOW-INITIATE" can do no wrong. Is any further evidence needed as to who has lost all sense of proportion, who has made exaggerations and sought to confuse the issue with misrepresentations? It is Mrs. Besant who has lost all sense of proportion, in falsely stating that "The Theosophical Society has no moral code." It is Mrs. Besant who now is bringing discredit on the sacred name of Theosophy by the excuses that she makes for her "Friend and Fellow-Initiate," — excuses that he taught self-abuse to young boys "with pure intent." To teach evil with pure intent! Such a thing is monstrous, jesuitical, devilish. It is she, saying that he has not been "even accused of any crime" (her own words), virtually denying *in toto* the twice-made confession of this man. But Mrs. Besant is not the judge or arbiter in the matter; it is before the public.

TO THE PUBLIC

IN conclusion, why do I, not a member of Mrs. Besant's Society, take it upon myself to bring these things out before the public? Having been a member of the Theosophical Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky (now the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY) for some 19 years; having been intimately associated with William Q. Judge as his private secretary during the last three years of his life; having since that time been intimately associated as Secretary with the work of the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Movement throughout the World, under the direction of Katherine Tingley, successor to H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, I have had unusual opportunities of keeping in touch with the progress and history of the work.

The facts and statements quoted in the foregoing are from statements circulated by members of Mrs. Besant's Society, with one exception, that of a letter written by Mrs. Besant, a copy of which was sent to me. My reason for publishing this pamphlet is to call the attention of the public to what I hold is a danger to public morals; to call attention to the fact that Mrs. Besant and those

of her followers who support her in her defense of Mr. Leadbeater are in no way to be considered as identified with the Theosophical Movement.

Let it not be supposed that I include all members of Mrs. Besant's society in this protest; for some, I feel confident in asserting, are not aware of the facts connected with Mr. Leadbeater's conduct, having doubtless been kept in ignorance intentionally. For it can easily be seen that it has been to Mrs. Besant's interest to suppress the facts, and had it not been for the brave action of the outraged parents and a few others, the evil courses of Leadbeater might be still unknown. A very large number, too, of Mrs. Besant's former followers have since resigned in protest, refusing any longer to be identified with a Society which would welcome back to its ranks such a man as Leadbeater, twice self-confessed of teaching vile habits to boys.

But Mrs. Besant is before the public, having just concluded (July 1909) a lecture tour in Europe, and now lecturing in America; also she makes a business of her profession of Theosophy, charging admission to her lectures—uniformly charged during her recent visit to England—and thus asking the public to contribute to her expenses and the financial support of her Society. Mrs. Besant's Society, though not a large one, has established centers in different parts of America and Europe, public lectures are held, the public is invited to attend, application papers for admission to membership are freely distributed to the public, and for all these reasons the public has the right to demand that what is seeking a place in its midst shall not be a danger to public morality, nor threaten to destroy the innocence of the young.

Mrs. Besant and her Society have endorsed a self-confessed teacher of self-abuse to innocent boys. This man has been readmitted to Mrs. Besant's Society, welcomed back as Mrs. Besant says "with honor."

One of the highest officials in Mrs. Besant's Society, the American General Secretary and member of the Supreme Council, has declared that:

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer World.
... No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater. . . .

It is to bring these things to the attention of the public, and to the attention of the public press, that this pamphlet has been written, as the quickest way in which to put a stop to this threatened propaganda of corruption. For, once the public is aroused to the enormity of the evil that is thus proposed to be introduced into the thought of the outer-world there will be such a revulsion of feeling that it will take means to protect itself and the innocence of childhood and the purity of home life.

These teachings thus put forward by Mr. Leadbeater, supported by Mrs. Besant, are the more subtle, the more devilish, because these people profess "Theosophy," which stands for everything that is clean and pure.

Finally: it is as a student of Theosophy, as an humble disciple of H. P. Blavatsky, of William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley that I make this protest; and more than all as a man, as a lover of HOME and all that that sacred word implies.

Point Loma, California

JOSEPH H. FUSSELL



September 22, 1915.

Mr. Joseph H. Fussell,
Secretary, The Universal Brotherhood and
Theosophical Society,
International Headquarters,
Point Loma, Cal.

Dear Sir:

Your exceedingly kind and gratefully appreciated favor of September 17 is at hand. In accordance with your desire I am inclosing a complete list of all the publications in this library which relate to Theosophy. We should be glad to accept any favors ^{others} which you are prepared to present to us. We should particularly be glad to receive the recently published volume by Mrs. Katherine A. Tingley entitled "Theosophy and some of the vital problems of the day", and also a complete set of the New Way, *and current issues as published*

Very sincerely yours,

J. Rowell
Librarian.