

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

1875 -1950

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“Night before last I was shown a bird’s eye view of the theosophical societies. I saw a few earnest reliable theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general and with other—nominal and ambitious theosophists. The former are greater in number than you may think, and they prevailed—as you in America will prevail, if you only remain staunch to the Master’s programme and true to yourselves.”

—H. P. B., 1888

PREFACE

IN 1925, just fifty years after the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York, the first accurate and thorough history of the Theosophical Movement was published by E. P. Dutton and Company. This volume, entitled *The Theosophical Movement, 1875-1925, a History and a Survey*, was compiled by the editors of *Theosophy*, a monthly journal devoted to the original objects of the Theosophical Movement. It provided theosophical students and others interested in the subject with a detailed and documented study of the lifework of H. P. Blavatsky and other leading figures of the Theosophical Movement. Encompassed in the 700 pages of the book were careful accounts of all the major events of Theosophical history, with enough evidence assembled for every reader to form his own conclusions regarding matters of controversy; or at least, sufficient to place serious inquirers well along on the path of individual investigation.

During the years since publication of *The Theosophical Movement*, no material errors, either of fact or of interpretation, have been disclosed, although, due to the various claims of “successorship” and “spiritual leadership” that have been maintained by some of the Theosophical organizations, the appearance of the book was the occasion for discomfort and complaint in some quarters. Actually, the volume was published in the face of a threatened libel suit, but no action was brought, doubtless for the reason that the statements made are all supported by facts.

The present book is a continuance of the earlier work published in 1925. Since that time there have been many developments in the Theosophical area. "Leaders" have died, and other personalities have taken their places. The vicissitudes of the various Theosophical Societies are now of less concern to the inquirer, and the philosophy itself, in the form of the original teachings, is gradually replacing organizational activities and disputes as the focus of Theosophic interest. Even the enemies of the Theosophical Movement are showing

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by their methods of attack that its real vitality lies in the life and work of H. P. Blavatsky. Other figures of the early days of the Movement are increasingly forgotten, but the power and influence of H.P.B. grows with the years, as students of Theosophy, regardless of organization, seek the inspiration of her undiluted teachings. Thus, pseudo-Theosophy is more easily recognized, and theosophical "sects" find it more difficult to maintain a distinctive identity. The course of these developments in the Theosophical Movement since 1925 gives occasion for the new material in this book, as well as for the consolidation of the treatment of earlier events. The 1925 volume will remain as the more detailed work of reference on the initial cycle of Theosophical history, its existence making possible the publication of another book, briefer in some respects, and covering the later phases of the Movement to 1950.

For those who find in this book their first contact with Theosophy, something may be said on the subject of "authority." It will soon become evident to such readers that the study of Theosophy is an undertaking with more than ordinary implications. What, it may be asked, is the authority for statements which seem to go far beyond the familiar facts of experience? Obviously, any philosophy attempting to grapple with the dilemmas of Western civilization must draw upon some source of explanation relatively unfamiliar to Western man. It is virtually certain that any real analysis of the deep dissatisfactions of the modern world will contain hitherto unconsidered or neglected elements; and these, therefore, ought not to be set aside simply because they are unfamiliar. On the contrary, sole reliance on the well-known formulas of what men commonly esteem as knowledge—either scientific or religious—may well be responsible for the multiplying failures of Western civilization. In contrast to the odd mixture of empirical science, eclectic speculation, and dying religious tradition that passes for "knowledge" today, Theosophy offers for consideration the teaching of the Gnosis, a body of practical psychological and moral truth which can be tested and verified by each man for himself.

The Theosophical teachings were defined by Madame Blavatsky as constituting, in essence, a synthesis of working principles. By learning to use these principles, she said, any

man can gain independent knowledge of the laws of nature and the underlying realities of human experience. This proposition she founded on the actual existence of men whose lives reveal a mastery of the use of those principles. Such men, Madame Blavatsky said, were her teachers. But while Theosophy was thus identified by its nineteenth-century expositor, inquirers were repeatedly warned against accepting its teachings “on faith.” The Theosophical Movement sought no credulous devotees, but serious students.

In Theosophy, the inquirer will find much to think about, little to believe. There are “teachings,” it is true—definite metaphysical conceptions, which give the Theosophical philosophy its systematic character. These teachings were presented by Madame Blavatsky, without claim of “originality,” as the natural heritage from the intellectual and moral evolution of the human race. She offered them, not as dogmas, but as metaphysical developments of principles verifiable in experience. A doctrine or teaching which forms part of this heritage, before it has been tested by the individual inquirer, may be compared to the “hypothesis” of the scientist. It invites neither belief nor denial, but investigation.

This book, it is hoped, will serve as an introduction to further study of the Theosophical philosophy. Basically, Theosophy is an outlook on life which should have natural appeal for all men and women who believe in the inalienable spiritual potentialities of every human being, and who sense the futility of both scientific scepticism and sectarian religion. Most of all, Theosophy should appeal to those who are weary of human hatred, of the incessant conflicts, born of fear and ignorance, among men and nations, and who have resolved to discover, if they can, a practical philosophy of soul—a way of thinking and acting that will slowly but surely change the world.

April 13, 1951

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CHAPTER I

THE PATH OF PROGRESS

WHEREVER THOUGHT has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there is to be discerned that great surge of moral evolution which H. P. Blavatsky described and named as the Theosophical Movement. It may, therefore, be considered simply as the path of spiritual progress, individually and collectively, of human beings. The continuous effort of men to act upon their aspiration toward a higher and nobler life is always pressing against and bursting through the limitations of the established social order. Organized religion, invariably a bastion of the status quo, gives formal structure to the compromise between idealism and the forces of human timidity—the longing of men for external security. In this sense, churches, governments, parties, sects, are all “political” adaptations—expedient arrangements on behalf of the “practical” rather than the ideal. They all in time become irredeemably corrupt, and must change, as the times change, as human defects come out, and as the necessities of intellectual and moral evolution compel such alterations.

The Protestant Reformation, while ending in a multitude of Christian sects, began as a revolutionary challenge to sacerdotal authority, and was thus a part of the greater Theosophical Movement. Masonry, with its constructive ideals and devotion to religious liberty, served the purposes of the Movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and still does to some extent, through its elevating symbolism and by its continuing defense of freedom of thought. The formation of the American Republic with its noble Declaration of Independence, its equality of all men before the law, its ideals of

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brotherhood and non-sectarianism, must be accounted a great forward step in the Theosophical Movement. And with the abolition of human slavery by all the great Western nations during the nineteenth century, another stride toward the emancipation of the race may be acclaimed.

Notable achievements in human liberation are commonly marked by the successful overthrow of some form of religious oppression. The “divine right” of an orthodox God speaking through a vested clergy was repudiated by every voice raised against the presumptions of Catholic hierarchy. The “divine right” of kings became an empty superstition after the American and French Revolutions. The “divine right” of one man or caste of men to enslave others was the real issue of the American Civil War. It is a fact attested by countless social historians that the heavy hand of religious authority always adds to the burdens of the simple and the poor. Religion, while containing keys

to the highest mysteries, in its organized forms has seldom failed to confirm the hold of the intelligently selfish over the great mass of mankind—either directly, by siding with autocratic government, or more subtly, through fear-laden dogmas and by a “spiritual” escapism which ignores evil conditions and human injustice. Since the Renaissance, men devoted to the cause of human freedom have been anti clerical almost by instinct, having discovered through long experience the numerous common interests allying established religion with the agencies of social oppression. Thus the secular movements of recent centuries, Democracy and Socialism, the drive for universal suffrage, the Class Struggle and the endless controversies between capital and labor, have all been characterized at some stage in their history by a yearning for freedom of thought, for moral emancipation as well as for an end to economic and political bondage. In this aspect, they represent the rising current of the Theosophical Movement, however mistaken, misguided, or perverted to narrow or destructive purposes and ends.

The nineteenth century was above all a period of conflict between the old and the new, a time of ferment in the intellectual and moral world, and of growing self-consciousness in the field of social philosophy. Nineteenth-century science was the fecund parent of scores of new doctrines and theories

about the nature of things. The first half of the century was a sort of Indian summer, in which both Europe and America gathered in the rich harvest of Revolutionary freedom secured by the struggles of the eighteenth century. Transcendentalist idealism brightened the Western world, concealing for a time the maturing forces of materialism in science and masking the decline of revolutionary ideals into mere shibboleths of reorganizing conservatism. During the middle years of the century, however, two new factors of disturbance emerged—Darwinism and Spiritualism.

The far-reaching effects of Darwin’s publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 are still to be measured. The most important result of this theory was the final transformation of the idea of progress from the confining theological teaching of salvation into the modern concept of evolution. While the eighteenth century had opened up undreamed-of possibilities of political reform, and while the old relationships of caste and status, fixed institutions during the Middle Ages, were dissolving into other social patterns, there was, until Darwin, no popular idea of Evolution. Darwin provided an integrating principle for the loose rationalist conception of Progress. According to his theory, a desirable future for mankind was to be obtained only by furthering the growth-processes possible under natural law, and he supported this idea by exhaustive researches in natural history. It was a principle easy to grasp, and soon seen as an attractive alternative to dependence on “divine grace”—the latter being a thoroughly irrational affair.

The response of free-thinking men to this doctrine was enthusiastic and immediate. The Theory of Evolution would serve as the foundation for deliberate human striving in all fields of human betterment. Its social and philosophical implications were endless. The materialism of the theory was hardly an objection; to the scientifically minded, eager for weapons in the war on theology, any plausible materialistic theory was welcome, and Evolution had the advantage of a great mass of scientific evidence in its support. Although the Darwinian theory was bitterly opposed by the clergy, and its author subjected to every form of ridicule, slander and calumny that religious bigotry could invent, the doctrine gained headway through the years, and Darwin himself lived to see

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his facts admitted, his conclusions adopted, in whole or in part, even by many of his detractors.

While limited in its view of “evolution” from the stand point of occult philosophy, the Darwinian Theory was nevertheless the greatest advance in basic scientific inquiry since the time of Newton, and was indispensable in preparing the ground for the conception of spiritual evolution outlined in *The Secret Doctrine*. Whatever the defects of the Darwinian Theory, they are due to no lack of honesty, zeal or industry on the part of its great author, but rather to his mode of research, the assumptions of his age, and the inherent limitations of all inductive reasoning. So immense has been the influence of the Darwinian doctrine of evolution on the prevailing ideas of recent generations that it is difficult for the average mind of today to realize how this theory of physical evolution could ever have been questioned, denied, or opposed.

The impact of Darwinism on modern thought is well known, but the effects of Spiritualism have been seriously neglected by contemporary historians. Quite possibly, Spiritualism had more to do than any other single factor in producing among millions that transitional state of mind into which the rigid ideas of previous centuries had already begun to disintegrate. It struck a death-blow at all priestly claims to special knowledge of post-mortem existence, for the clergy had no better explanation of psychic phenomena than any one else. To the bereaved, who are often indifferent to orthodox vagaries on a future life, Spiritualism offered the prospect of immediate assurance and consolation. To the unreligious but curious, it brought a fascinating area for experimentation, resulting, in later years, in the semi-respectable science of Psychic Research. Spiritualistic phenomena also served as contemporary “miracles” on which might be founded a strongly emotional religion, undemanding in its moral requirements, and powerful in “conversion.” One could become a Spiritualist without too great sacrifice of cherished religious ideas. It is a fact of incidental interest that Spiritualist doctrines permitted an illegitimate union of religious fervor with the new scientific idea

of evolution—for the “Summer land” of departed “spirits” soon assumed the character of an evolutionary series of states or degrees of progress after

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THE FUNCTION OF SPIRITUALISM

death. But the multiplicity of “revelations” offered by mediums, who sprang up by the hundreds, each providing another version of the processes and modes of life after death, made any unity of doctrine or consistent philosophy out of the question. The function of Spiritualism was iconoclastic toward dogma, and personal for its believers. It disturbed, rather than replaced, conventional religious ideas.

The last half of the nineteenth century, therefore, formed an epoch during which old orthodoxies were undermined and discredited, while the possibilities of new faiths seemed limitless, although the chaotic expression of these new tendencies remained unharnessed by any central belief. In retrospect, nearly every cry for intellectual or moral unity during those troubled years may now be recognized as a partisan appeal which ignored or denied some important aspect of human affairs. It was, pre-eminently, an age of enthusiastic and specialized research, giving birth to at least a dozen new departments of science, and stirring the human imagination to strike out in directions overlooked by earlier generations. At its conclusion, the cosmopolitan thinker, William James, summed up the philosophical issue of its rich productiveness with the term, “Pluralism,” so naming the agnostic credo that Reality is not one, but many, and that a unified conception of human experience is not possible for the modern world. The skepticism of James, apparently justified by the overwhelming flood of unrelated “brute facts” pouring from every field of inquiry, gave sophisticated sanction to the conscious materialism of the twentieth century.

The same broad forces which undermined the speculative idealism of philosophers swept away the common man’s security in traditional religion. While the extraordinary progress in applied science filled for a time the ethical vacuum left by the decline of religious faith, so-called “practical” interests and labors blinded the great majority of men to the accumulating moral contradictions of Western civilization. Pseudo-philosophies founded on the biological concept of evolution, on the Freudian interpretation of emotions, and on the Rotarian slogans of business and trade, withheld for a time the ultimate disillusionment of the twentieth century, but these rule-of-thumb moralities lacked the vigor to with-

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stand the physical and moral destruction of modern war. The world of today is a world without faith. It is a world, therefore, in somber preparation for despair—the condition

of mind and feeling reached by men who have no foundation for their aspirations, no resting place for hopes.

One purpose of this book is to show that the Theosophical Movement, in the conception of its Founders, was inaugurated with a clear perspective of the historical forces that were recreating the mind and society of the Western world in the nineteenth century, and with foresight of the social and moral dilemmas that would confront all mankind during the present epoch. The Theosophical Society of 1875 opened a great channel for labors on behalf of the general welfare and enlightenment of the human race. It was not founded as a cult or sect to bring personal deliverance or special knowledge to the fortunate few who might accept its doctrines. The Founders of the Theosophical Movement had little interest in starting "societies," or groups for "occult study," as such. Their concern was with the long-term view of human evolution, with the spiritual and moral needs of the race for generations and centuries to come.

If Theosophy does indeed offer knowledge of the laws of human evolution, then the course of the Theosophical Movement, its progress, as well as the character of the obstacles impeding its advance, provide the means of testing the validity of that teaching in practical experience. At this point, therefore, certain basic Theosophical conceptions of evolutionary law may be stated.

So far as humanity is concerned, Theosophy teaches a triple evolutionary scheme, in which, at the present time, the physical is subordinated to the processes of intellectual and spiritual, or moral, development. In short, Evolution is soul evolution, proceeding under moral law which is an essential part of the natural order. The ideal goal toward which man kind slowly moves is a great brotherhood of all human beings, in which, finally, will flower every evolutionary potentiality. Reaching this goal, however, is conditional upon deliberate human striving toward it, upon the achievement of knowledge of man's nature and destiny, and upon the factors of moral decision which make every human being a free agent, capable

of choosing to become either a Christ or a Judas, either an altruist or a self-seeking egotist. For the race, as for the individual, Theosophy preaches the doctrine of "salvation by works." Such "works," however, must be informed by knowledge of human needs; hence, mastery of Theosophy means study of the philosophical doctrines which it teaches, as well as their practical application in individual life and toward larger social ends.

If there is an underlying spiritual and intellectual evolution with visible effects in history, a study of the past should disclose that the formation of the Theosophical Society and the permeation of the mind of the race by Theosophical ideas were preceded

and accomplished by numerous collateral efforts. In his *History of Civilization in England*, a work foremost among such influences, the great English historian, H. T. Buckle, sums up the lessons of the past in a statement which may serve equally as a prophecy of the future of Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement. In the first volume of this work, Buckle wrote:

Owing to circumstances still unknown, there appear, from time to time, great thinkers, who, devoting their lives to a single purpose, are able to anticipate the progress of mankind, and to produce a religion or a philosophy, by which important effects are eventually brought about. But if we look into history, we shall clearly see that, although the origin of a new opinion may be thus due to a single man, the result which the new opinion produces will depend on the condition of the people among whom it is propagated. If either a religion or a philosophy is too much in advance of a nation, it can do no present service, but must bide its time, until the minds of men are ripe for its reception. . . . Every science and every creed has had its martyrs; . . . According to the ordinary course of affairs, a few generations pass away, and then there comes a period, when these very truths are looked upon as commonplace facts; and a little later, there comes another period, in which they are declared to be necessary, and even the dullest intellects wonder how they could ever have been denied.'

According to the Theosophic view of history, Buckle's "circumstances still unknown" are in fact due to what may be termed the karmic provision of spiritual and intellectual evolution. Under the great moral Law, called "Karma" by the Buddhists, and at transitional periods in the cyclic progress

of humanity, wise teachers restore to mankind through both direct and indirect channels some of the knowledge once known in the past, but which in the lapse of time has become lost or obscured by the complexities of psychic and personal evolution. These teachers, sometimes termed "Elder Brothers," in the Theosophical literature, are themselves at the forefront of the stream of evolution to which we belong. As such, they have a natural function to perform, taking an active, although often undisclosed, part in human history. And while this aspect of the operation of cyclic law is frequently delayed, even obstructed, by the ignorance of human beings, each rise and fall of civilization is succeeded by a regeneration and further progression.

The scene of the nineteenth-century cycle of the Theosophical Movement included the United States, Europe and India. In America, the rising energies of a new nation gave promise of great success for this movement of self-reform based upon a psychology of soul-knowledge. India, an ancient source of the Wisdom-Religion, was slowly awakening from the lethargy of centuries, getting ready for a cultural renaissance

that would revive her former glory and give contemporary vigor to the Eastern heritage of spiritual philosophy. England, where Madame Blavatsky made her headquarters during the closing years of her mission, was a natural link between the ancient East and the youthful West, both politically and geographically, and served also as a vantage-point from which to affect the main continent of Europe.

The flow of Theosophic ideas from these centers entered the ferment of nineteenth-century thought, leavening its spirit, and challenging both the bigotry of inherited religion and the arrogant assurance of scientific materialism. The establishment of the Movement in the West followed close upon a cycle of sudden progress in material achievement by Western nations. Change was in the air. The practical consequences of the great developments in invention, scientific discovery, transportation, manufacture and communication were bringing the members of the human family closer together. Old ways of life were rapidly transformed. Traditions died. Customs were altered. Natural as well as cultural barriers to human fraternity were falling all about.

These great transitions were signaled in the political field by the careers of such leaders and reformers as Lincoln, Mazzini, Garibaldi, John Bright, and others who served the Rights of Man. The moral apathy of the Churches was exposed by freethinkers of enduring fame—Robert G. Ingersoll in America, Charles Bradlaugh in England, and in the church itself by such men as Charles Kingsley and W. E. Channing. By these and many others, trip-hammer blows were struck at complacent orthodoxy. Whether apparently pursuing the path of agnosticism, of a purely socialistic or materialistic altruism, or of a liberalized version of conventional belief, the efforts of these reformers commanded a wide following and to a large extent broke down the habitual acceptance of provincial and intolerant opinions.

Philosophical speculations like those of Herbert Spencer, the esthetic revolt of men like Ruskin, the penetrating truculence of Carlyle, and the rejection of conventional attitudes by such writers as Dickens, Eliot, Balzac, Tolstoy, Whitman, and Dostoevsky, all aided in the pioneer work of the Theosophical Movement. All fought for the unrestricted domain of individual conscience, a larger outlook upon human life and human duty, as opposed to anyone's *ipse dixit* or "thus saith the Lord."

Another tide of change began with the discovery by scholars and travelers of the philosophic wealth of the Orient. Until the nineteenth century, the masses of the West existed in almost complete isolation from the living East with its immense but alien stores of psychological and metaphysical teachings. The sources of Western culture had been limited by natural barriers to ancient Greece and Rome, and it was little suspected that the first civilized peoples of Europe, no less than their modern successors, had in

fact derived both their inspiration and their learning from the exhaustless treasury of Oriental thought.

The first translation of *The Bhagavad-Gita* by Charles Wilkins, appeared toward the close of the eighteenth century. In 1807 William Jones rendered into English the Hindu classic, *The Institutes of Manu*, telling his readers that an understanding of Hindu custom and belief would assist in the administration of a colony destined to “add largely to

the wealth of Britain.” A little later, Arthur Schopenhauer read a Latin translation of the Upanishads, done from a Persian version by Anquetil-Duperron, pioneer in Avesta scholarship, and its inspiration became manifest throughout the writings of the great German pessimist. Emerson’s journals teem with references to Oriental literature. *Manu*, the *Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the *Vedas*, and numerous other works found place in his library beside the riches of Platonism. Thoreau also, and Edward Bellamy, the prophet of social reform, were steeped in the mysticism and philosophy of the ancient East.

Sir Edwin Arnold’s *Light of Asia* arrived in America in 1879, arousing extraordinary admiration among the Transcendentalists. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote twenty-six pages about it in a contemporary review. Lafcadio Hearn, having read this poetic account of the life and teachings of Buddha, predicted that “Buddhism in some esoteric form may prove the religion of the future.” He dreamed of a revolution in “the whole occidental religious world” through this Oriental faith. Many thousands in the West were led by this book to realize for the first time in their lives that the great ethical ideas of Jesus were all anticipated by Buddha, and were joined in his teaching with a rational philosophy entirely absent from the Christian tradition.

Multiplication of influences of this sort began to wear away the familiar Western contempt for “heathen” teachings, and with the appearance of many-volumed editions of Oriental religion, such as Max Muller’s *Sacred Books of the East*, the world of learning was forced to admit that in many respects the Eastern sages were our peers, if not our superiors, in matters of philosophy and ethical insight.

These, then, were some of the factors which had opened up the Western mind to new possibilities, had made men question old beliefs, causing them to look about for some affirmative doctrine that might synthesize the widening diversities of human experience and knowledge. The latter years of the nineteenth century offered great opportunity to one who could present facts rather than theories, principles rather than beliefs. Thus, in founding the Theosophical Society and making her first public exposition of the

Theosophical philosophy, H. P. Blavatsky maintained that the hour had come for bringing some unified explanation to the besetting problems of the modern world. Religion claimed man to be a creature, tainted from his origin, ensouled by an outside God on whose favor depended all human happiness, in both this world and the next. Science, while challenging the authority of all religious beliefs, offered the alternative of bestial ancestors for the human species, traced from a ferment in the primordial slime, and allowed no idea of moral reality or spiritual existence to color the consistency of its materialism. Spiritualism, the third combatant in the struggle for human faith, was an intruder with no allies but its own fanatical conviction—a weird apostle from another world, bringing promise of release from great personal sorrow for some; for others, a nauseous revival of medieval witchcraft and necromancy.

It was among the Spiritualists, the friendless outcasts of both Science and Religion, that H. P. Blavatsky began her mission, because they had penetrated somewhat into the hidden realms of nature, and had brought to light the reality of forces disbelieved and laughed at for generations in the West. Understood and controlled, those forces might be used to restore a living faith in the immortal soul—in the godlike potentialities of the entire human race.

CHAPTER II

NINETEENTH CENTURY SPIRITUALISM

AS THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY in its earliest days, found most of its supporters among the more thoughtful of the Spiritualists, or among those stirred by Spiritualistic phenomena to investigate the subject of psychic powers, it is pertinent to notice some of the events and fortunes of the Spiritualistic movement before 1875. Modern Spiritualism began with the mediumistic manifestations of the Fox sisters at Hydesville, New York, in 1848. Within a few years it had spread throughout the Western world. In the words of Alfred Russel Wallace, “other mediums were discovered in different parts of the country, as if a special development of this abnormal power were then occurring.” Famous mediums travelled Europe, demonstrating their wonders and gaining the patronage of royalty. Psychics and sensitives were found among all classes and the forthcoming revelations and physical manifestations shook to their foundations the established authorities of the day. Men began to wonder at these strange happenings, to ask questions, and some—although only the few—to think for themselves. It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition—that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism—which had awakened

from its long cataleptic sleep. However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation, these phenomena came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life beyond—opening, moreover, a wide range for the admission of every metaphysical possibility.

By 1850, seances were being held in California, Oregon, Texas, and in several southern states. Spiritualist revealers bloomed like the Hebrew prophets of old, and occasionally some figure of eminence made public admission of his interest in Spiritualism. Horace Greeley, famous editor of the New York Tribune, testified to the genuineness of the “rappings” produced by the Fox sisters, exonerating them from charges of fraud. J. W. Edmonds, a Justice of the New York Supreme

Court, known for his integrity, defended mediums in the press. N. P. Tallmadge, a former Governor of Wisconsin, publicly supported the claims of the mediums. During the years 1851 and 1852, sufficient interest in Spiritualism developed to support the establishment of several journals entirely devoted to its phenomena and their interpretation.

From these beginnings, modern Spiritualism gained wide spread popular attention, and while nearly all scientists of any reputation maintained a lofty skepticism, the few exceptions to this rule had the effect of increasing the fascination that the subject held for the man in the street. The impressive personal-experience aspect of Spiritualism commonly led to a fierce will-to-believe on the part of people hungry for spiritual verity, so that the handful of intellectually honest scientists who dared to admit the reality of psychic phenomena became heroes ceaselessly quoted by intoxicated enthusiasts. One such American scientist was Dr. Robert Hare, professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, who in 1854 published *Spiritualism Scientifically Demonstrated*, an account of elaborate experiments which convinced him the manifestations were genuine. He had originally undertaken the task of investigation in order, he said, to destroy with scientific weapons “the gross delusion called Spiritualism,” but was soon overwhelmed by concrete evidences of the supernatural. He failed, however, to interest the American Association for the Promotion of Science, which at one of its conventions rejected all his proposals for scientific study of psychic phenomena. No more successful in overcoming the unbelief of his colleagues was Prof. James J. Mapes, president of the Mechanics Institute of New York, a distinguished chemist who had been honored internationally by scientific bodies. Beginning a study of Spiritualism to redeem respected friends, who, he declared, were “fast running to mental seed and imbecility,” he ended as a determined witness for the phenomena.

The appeal of Spiritualism was unique in the nineteenth century. With the rise of the rationalist spirit, fairly established by the revolutionary thinkers of the preceding epoch,

Western intellectuality had made disbelief in ghostly or “occult” phenomena into a virtual dogma—a dogma, moreover,

enjoying the emphatic endorsement of scientific authority. But Spiritualism, as a historical influence, was much more than an “intellectual” affair. It dealt directly with feelings, hopes and fears that are basic in all humans. “Death,” as The Bhagavad-Gita says, “is certain to all mortals.” Psychic or “spiritual” phenomena, promising more than empty theological phrases about life after death, were events which could arouse the intense interest and excitement of thousands who had despaired of any instruction on this subject from either religion or science. The facts of Spiritualism, if genuine, implied a whole universe of human experience untouched by modern thought. Investigators of psychic phenomena found themselves in possession of a stupendous discovery; they spoke to the world with impassioned declarations. Meeting disdain or contempt from the representatives of orthodoxy, they proceeded to form societies, cults and religious sects which rapidly grew to astonishing proportions, drawing a host of followers from the disillusioned, the bereaved, and the honestly curious. The shock of immediate psychic experience was a force that could not be denied.

The first serious attempt to investigate the possibility of metaphysical or psychic phenomena by a quasi-scientific body was instituted in 1869 by the London Dialectical Society. For eighteen months the Society’s Committee of thirty-four well-known persons took evidence, submitting a full Report to the Council of the Society in 1870. The Council, however, declined to publish the Report, whereupon the Committee itself published the results of the investigation, including a collection of startling opinions as to the “supernatural origin” of psychic phenomena. “A large majority of the members of your Committee,” the Report stated, “have become actual witnesses to several phases of the phenomena without the aid or presence of any professional medium, although the greater part of them commenced their investigations in an avowedly skeptical spirit.” The Report concludes:

your Committee, taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the sub-committees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion

of the phenomena; . . . the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilized world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and to the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, deem it incumbent upon

them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received. One would suppose that a report of this sort, conservatively drawn by serious-minded and reputable persons, but with findings that seemed of extraordinary significance, would gain immediate and serious attention. However, the unwillingness of the Council of the Dialectical Society to publish the Report was symptomatic of the public reception it received when independently printed by the Committee. That organ of enthroned respectability, the *London Times*, called the Report ‘a farrago of impotent conclusions, garnished by a mass of the most monstrous rubbish it has ever been our misfortune to sit in judgment upon.’ Other expressions of the London press were in a similar vein. *The Saturday Review* denounced spiritualism as “one of the most unequivocally degrading superstitions that have ever found currency amongst reasonable beings.” The *Sporting Times* recommended that “a few of the leading professional Spiritualists should be sent as rogues and vagabonds to the treadmill for a few weeks,” characterizing their ‘dupes’ as “contemptibly stupid” or “insane.”

A few papers were more reserved, admitting the Report to be worth reading and allowing justification for the Committee’s belief that its evidence called for “further cautious investigation.” Strangely enough, it was the medical journals in particular which regarded the Report with some respect. The *Medical Times and Gazette* spoke of the volume as “a very curious one, and deserving of attention for several reasons.” The *London Medical Journal* found it “a mine of information,” throwing light “upon both sides of many important psychological questions.” The *London Spiritualist* offered this pertinent comment: “So the Report, when it was presented, was in favour of Spiritualism; at this unexpected result the Dialectical Society took fright. The Council ran away and refused to publish it, leaving its Committee in the lurch.” What the Dialectical Society avoided by “running

away” was evident from the public scorn heaped upon the members of the Committee, despite the presence among them of so eminent a scientist as Alfred Russel Wallace. Except for Wallace and one or two others, the pioneers of modern psychic research found it difficult to persuade any scientist of note even to attend psychic demonstrations. Thomas Huxley, famous champion of the Darwinian theory, replied to an invitation of the Committee to cooperate by saying that he “had no time for such an inquiry.” He added:

“But supposing the phenomena to be genuine—they do not interest me.” The physicist, John Tyndall, was aggressively opposed to Spiritualism, as shown by a passage in his *Fragments of Science*: “The world will have a religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of Spiritualism.” Dr. Wm. B. Carpenter, a leading physiologist and Vice President of the Royal Society, glibly explained as “unconscious cerebration” all spiritualistic manifestations not the result of “intentional imposture.” The full weight of scientific disapprobation of Spiritualistic inquiry in England fell upon the shoulders of William Crookes, then known to science as the discoverer of the element Thallium, and as the editor of *Chemical News*. In July, 1870—the month in which the Council of the Dialectical Society refused to publish the Report of its Committee—Crookes announced in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* his intention of “investigating spiritualism, so-called.” His biographer, E. E. Fournier d’Albe, is certain that the scientist was already much inclined toward Spiritualism and hoped “to furnish, if possible, a rigid scientific proof of the objectivity and genuineness of the ‘physical phenomena of spiritualism,’ so

as to convert the scientific world at large and open a new era of human advancement.” Accordingly, after conducting experiments with the best mediums available, Crookes described his results in a series of articles which appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* during the years 1870-72. For the most part, his conclusions were based on sittings with three mediums—D. D. Home, famous for levitation and other notable phenomena, Miss Kate Fox, youngest of the renowned Fox sisters who had so startled the world in 1848; and Miss Florence Cook, from whom he obtained manifestations among

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the most extraordinary in the annals of psychic research. The articles recounting these experiments, together with a general summary of the results, and the controversial correspondence in which their author became involved, were later presented in book form under the title, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*.

This book records a fundamental achievement in psychic research. It may be said that no subsequent work, similar in scope, has added anything essentially new to the dramatic report of these researches. Crookes brought the patience and meticulous care of a man trained in scientific method to the strange problems of Spiritualism, and he had the good fortune to become acquainted with mediums worthy of his attention. In his ‘Summary,’ he describes thirteen classes of phenomena which he observed personally, including the levitation of human beings; the rising off the ground of heavy objects without human or other physical contact; alteration in the weight of human bodies; the appearance of luminous objects, and of human hands which were either self-luminous or visible by ordinary light; phantom forms and faces; sounds of various sorts; direct writing without human agency; and finally, in some notes of Miss Cook’s mediumship, Crookes reported full materializations in which the “apparition” acted and talked like a living person.

After spending four years in a fruitless attempt to win the scientific world to impartial psychic research, Crookes withdrew from the public arena, thereafter devoting himself to strictly scientific pursuits. The response he had gained from other scientists was contemptuous, at times abusive, and he concluded that the loss of his professional reputation was too great a price to pay for continued championship of psychic wonders, however much he might believe in them himself. Crookes had learned, to his chagrin, that the boasted willingness of scientists to regard with interest *all* the facets of human experience, was, in this case at least, more of a pose than a principle. He resigned himself to the view which he clearly expressed, some twenty-five years later, as President of the British Association: “I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. I only regret a certain crudity in those early expositions which, no doubt justly, militated

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against their acceptance by the scientific world.” Crookes allowed the words of an old friend, written to him in a letter, to account for the strange reluctance of men of science to admit the facts disclosed by his experiments. This friend, a scientist of some eminence, had said:

“Any *intellectual* reply to your facts I cannot see. Yet it is a curious fact that even I, with all my

tendency and desire to believe spiritualistically, and with all my faith in your power of observing and your thorough truthfulness, feel as if I wanted to see for myself; and it is quite painful to me to think how much more proof I want. Painful, I say, because I see that it is not reason which convinces a man, unless a fact is repeated so frequently that the impression becomes like a habit of mind, an old acquaintance, a thing known so long that it cannot be doubted. This is a curious phase of man's mind, and it is remarkably strong in scientific men—stronger than in others, I think. For this reason we must not always call a man dishonest because he does not yield to evidence for a long time. The old wall of belief must be broken down by much battering.”

The granitic impenetrability of this “old wall of belief” was such that Crookes could do little more than scratch its surface. Some sixty-five years later, a leading American psychologist, Dr. Joseph Jastrow, gave a similar though less sympathetic explanation of scientific scepticism. In a discussion of Spiritualistic phenomena, and of the experiments in extra sensory perception carried on at Duke University, Dr. Jastrow referred to the unbelief in telepathy by psychologists as growing “out of a profound philosophical conviction.” This view was expressed to him by a colleague:

‘ESP [extra sensory perception) is so contrary to the general scientific world picture, that to accept the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. I am unwilling to give up the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired in the Western world during the last 300 years, on the basis of a few anecdotes and a few badly reported experiments.’

If, well along in the twentieth century, Jastrow could confidently claim the support of “four-fifths of the psychologists” in discrediting telepathy, how much more certain it was that in the nineteenth century, scientists would give no hearing at all to the daring experiments of William Crookes!

In his contention for the reality of psychic phenomena, Crookes had one eminent scientific ally—Lord Alfred Wallace, who shared with Darwin the fame of originating the theory

of Natural Selection. In 1875 Wallace published a small volume entitled *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, devoted to the thesis that what men commonly call “miracles” may be capable of explanation in terms of cause and effect, by reference to superphysical agencies acting under unfamiliar laws, and contending that such apparently miraculous events do in fact occur. Wallace presented many sober arguments, drawing on both reason and human experience, to persuade his readers that the phenomena called “Spiritual” would bear looking into. He subjected the scepticism of David Hume to effective criticism and collected much historical testimony for the occurrence of psychic wonders. But so far as his fellow scientists were concerned, Wallace's appeal to facts was ignored, and his appeal to reason fell upon ears more attuned to denunciation of the Spiritualists than to impartial arguments on their behalf. In those days, as many years later, the challenge of psychic phenomena to “the general scientific world-picture” was so unwelcome to the men who had played a major part in its construction that neither Crookes nor Wallace nor anyone else could obtain a fair hearing for what seemed to them to be the revolutionary discoveries of psychic research. The robust and proudly materialistic intellectuality of the West had just gained emancipation from the confining doctrines of the Christian religion, and it was, perhaps, too much

to expect that the victorious combatants, flushed with triumph over the theological dogma of a seven days' Creation, would now turn eagerly to a theory which seemed founded on equally abhorrent assumptions of supernatural power. This characteristic mind-set of modern science is so firmly established as to invite a brief examination of its origins. The positive bent of science to practical experiment and its demand for evidence perceptible to the senses were of course due to the extraordinary achievements of such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Boyle, Harvey, and many others. The negative side of the scientific spirit, resulting in the great struggle described by John W. Draper as *The Conflict between Religion and Science*, drew inspiration from the critical reflections of the Enlightenment, which preceded and prepared for the French Revolution. The themes developed by the early English Deists, by Lamettrie, d'Holbach, Rousseau, Voltaire

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and Diderot in France, and by David Hume and the historian, Gibbon, were either covert or open attacks on historical Christianity, its theology, its creeds, and its priests. Whatever the subject ostensibly considered by these founders of modern scepticism, "God," as a historian has put it, "was on trial." Although many of them were condemned as "atheists" during their lifetime, and avowed infidels like Lamettrie and d'Holbach were shunned in pious horror by polite society, their iconoclastic work was well done. In the succeeding century, however, the doctrines of the Enlightenment became rationalist dogmas which were as bigoted as any religion in their contempt for the superphysical. Thus the materialism of the nineteenth century grew from an embattled rejection of priestcraft by freedom-loving men—thinkers who over-reached their original inspiration and bequeathed to their scientific successors an *a priori* denial of even the possibility of psychic phenomena. The French intellectuals of the time of Louis XVI had already adopted this blindly sceptical position. In **1784**, when the Academicians were invited by the King to investigate the extraordinary claims made on behalf of Franz Anton Mesmer, a Viennese physician exciting much comment in Paris, the Commission of learned men who interviewed Mesmer and attempted to duplicate his methods reported that they could discover no merit in his "cures," and that, in fact, Mesmer's famous "fluid" was nonexistent. Among the members of this Commission were several of the most illustrious men of the eighteenth century—one, Benjamin Franklin, ambassador from the United States, another, the famous Lavoisier, soon to die by the machine invented by the eminent Dr. Guillotin, who was also a signer of the Commission's final report. The scholars of the French Academy of Sciences were interested only in "mechanical" explanations of the processes of Nature. They believed, with David Hume, that the whole world was nothing but "one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions. How, then, could they listen seriously to Mesmer, who explained his cures by a series of metaphysical propositions concerning an invisible fluid called "Animal Magnetism," by which, he claimed, nervous diseases could be

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cured directly, and other diseases indirectly? The thing was impossible—mere "imagination." This was precisely the charge laid against William Crookes nearly a century later when he dared to argue for the strange phenomena produced by the invisible forces of Spiritualism. Crookes, said his critics, was bemused by an appetite for miracles, and had lost his capacity for scientific judgment. Mesmer and Crookes were but two of many victims of the materializing spirit of the

age, which drew deep emotional support for its denials from memories of a millennium of priestly imposture and of endless crimes and oppressions in the name of supernatural religion.

Mesmer, however, has a more important connection with modern Spiritualism than simply as an illustration of how scientific scepticism would deal with innovators in psychic research. Mesmer's theories and experiments bore hidden relationships with the Spiritualistic phenomena of the nineteenth century, as later history would make plain. Had his views been widely accepted, Spiritualists might have been spared many of their delusions, and scientists the embarrassment of having to recant certain categorical denials. Fortunately, the conservative institutions of medicine, of academic scholarship and organized science, are not the sole arbiters of human belief. Mesmer's mission was at least partially accomplished. The broad, popular effect of his work was to turn the attention of thousands of inquiring minds to the mysteries of man's inner life.

The reality of Mesmerism might be denied by scientific authority, but its influence was irrepressible. There were numerous students of medicine who recognized in Mesmer's ideas the clue to physiological and psychological mysteries. Despite the extravagances so often found in doctrines developed in defiance of accepted authority, these ideas made their way into the thought of the time. During the **1840's**, two English doctors courted professional martyrdom by demonstrating that surgical operations could be performed without pain to patients in mesmeric trances. In Germany, Joseph Ennemoser wrote his comprehensive study of Animal Magnetism, bringing such scholarship to the subject that William Howitt entitled his translation of it a *History of Magic*

(London, **1854**). Another German physician, J. F. C. Hecker, compiled a history of the *Epidemics of the Middle Ages* in which the Black Plague was explained as an effect of a cosmic sickness of the earth's "organism"—a theory wholly conformable to Mesmer's ideas.

In the area of practical psychological experiment, while his metaphysical philosophy was increasingly neglected, Mesmer's disciples and imitators worked tirelessly with various aspects and correlations of Animal Magnetism. The results, however, were not always the most desirable. The Hypnotism of James Braid was an illegitimate offspring of Animal Magnetism, and Mesmer, had he been alive, would have been the first to oppose both the theory and the practice of the English hypnotists. He would have looked with equal disfavor on the doings of the French magnetizers, who, by **1850**, were devoted to "mind-reading" demonstrations and other forms of miracle-mongering with somnambulistic subjects. Persons like these later unhappy victims of psychic experiment were soon to be known as the "mediums" of nineteenth-century Spiritualism. Before he died, Mesmer noticed the beginnings of such tendencies in some of his followers. He spoke regretfully of the methods of the Puységurs, who inducted their subjects into a trance-like sleep. "Their experiments," he said, "which show a lack of understanding, may harm the cause."

Early in the nineteenth century, European mesmerists visited America, stirring to activity the latent psychic capacities that were later to burst forth in Spiritualistic phenomena. Andrew Jackson Davis, the chief prophet and leader of the Spiritualistic movement in the United States, underwent a period of psychic "development" as the somnambulistic subject of a traveling mesmerist,

William Levingston. In **1830**, John Bovee Dods lectured in New England on “Electrical Psychology,” proclaiming electricity to be the connecting link between mind and matter. A Frenchman, Charles Poyen, began giving public demonstrations of Mesmerism in America in 1836. Instructed by Poyen, Phineas Quimby of Belfast, Maine, learned to diagnose the ills of the people of his village, using the clairvoyant perception of a sensitive. He found by experiment that it made little difference what medicine he advised, becoming convinced that his cures were effected by mental

nfluences alone. Quimby evolved the idea that all disease is a mental delusion which can be eradicated by thought, and in 1859 he began to set down his theories—now familiar to many as “Christian Science”—in what became the famous Quimby Manuscripts. ALL these developments proceeded in alienation from orthodox scientific inquiry. While great and original thinkers were too wise to deny the hidden potentialities of the human soul, strong barriers of scepticism prevented the great majority from even considering the idea of superphysical realities. It remained for a cultured elite, on the one hand, to acknowledge and adopt some of the implications of psychic inquiry, while half-educated fanatics and outcasts from conventional science carried them in degraded form to the masses, practising their strange lore among the humble and the ignorant. Meanwhile, the unbelief of the scientific fraternity drove William Howitt, Ennemoser’s translator, to write: How can a petrified man believe? And the scientific, as a class, are petrified by their education in the unspiritual principles of the last generation. These principles are the residuum of the atheistic and materialistic school of the French Revolution. The atheism is disavowed, but the disbelieving leaven remains, and will long remain. It will cling to the scientific like a death-pall, and totally disqualify them for independent research into the internal nature of man, and of his properties and prospects as an immortal being. This education has sealed up their spiritual eye, and left them only their physical one. They are as utterly disqualified for psychological research as a blind man for physical research. . . . Our scientific and literary men stick by the death-creed of Hobbes, Diderot, and Co., and yet, not knowing it, *cannot* believe any great new spiritual fact on *any amount* of *evidence*.

Howitt’s analysis of scientific scepticism obtains interesting confirmation from the later opinion of William Crookes’ friend and correspondent. The world of physical inquiry that was so hospitable to Faraday’s dynamo found nothing of interest in the weird aspect of the human “dynamo” that Crookes’ experiments revealed. Enormously preoccupied with the evolution of bodies, biologists fascinated by the Darwinian Theory had no ear for a scientific revelation which might bear upon the evolution of *souls*. Spiritualistic phenomena and claims were regarded as disgraceful distractions from the main business

of science, which was to establish on undoubted ‘physical’ facts the laws of the physical world, leaving no place for “spiritual” theories of any sort. And because Science, as an increasingly authoritative cultural institution, would not allow even the beginnings of a rational explanation of psychic phenomena, no hypothesis, however cautious, to explain these wonderful events was available to assist the few individuals who did approach them with open and inquiring minds. The

result, therefore, was a chaotic growth of sectarian fanaticism around the facts of Spiritualism, rather than disciplined investigation of their meaning. One reads with dismay the curious expressions of faith in the supernatural by men who distinguished themselves as careful thinkers in other fields. The deficiencies of the nineteenth century are nowhere more evident than in the enthusiastic acceptance by intelligent men of the sentimental Spiritualistic doctrines of an after-life. Persuaded of the reality of the phenomena by undeniable personal experience, they could find no principles of explanation, no acceptable *rationale* of psychic phenomena, in either scientific theory or religious tradition. With minds confused, therefore, such investigators accepted the inadequate explanations of the mediums and the “spirits.”

A curious and lonely exception to this baffling ignorance of psychic phenomena appeared in the United States in 1854, under the intriguing if pedantic title, *The Apocatastasis, or Progress Backwards*. The author of this scholarly work, Dr. Leonard Marsh, a professor of physiology at the University of Vermont, was by no means a Spiritualist; rather, he opposed the Spiritualistic movement with all the resources his prodigious classical learning could bring to bear upon the subject. What is of interest in his book is the fact, clearly disclosed, that the Neoplatonic philosophers and other learned men of antiquity were well acquainted with the strange events which Spiritualists hailed as introducing a new and great dispensation of miraculous religion. Dr. Marsh began by quoting from Synesius the doctrine of cycles—teaching a return, at regular intervals, of “lives on earth, generations, educations, dispositions and fortunes,” which, as Synesius put it, “will be the same with those that formerly existed.” Spiritualistic phenomena, Dr. Marsh declared, were a return of

what had been before, and he found cause for disturbance in what seemed to him a modern acceptance of the “heathen” teachings of “spirits”—a “progress backwards.” His book nevertheless reveals the superior knowledge of the ancients with respect to the identity of the spirit “guides” and “controls” of the mediums. He repeats the opinion of Porphyry, “a very competent judge of them in the ancient period, that *‘it is their very nature to lie!’*” Porphyry, Iamblichus, Plutarch, Minutius Felix and many others are made to testify concerning “spirits” which are “depraved demons”—entities that deceive and obsess human beings, and which are invoked by the necromantic practices of men who, in Porphyry’s phrase, “lead, as it were, to things of a divine nature in an illegal and disorderly manner.” Such was the ancient opinion of “seances.”

Somewhat against his pious purpose, Dr. Marsh was obliged by his extensive quotation of pagan authorities to expose the inability of the Christian religion to account for the wide variety of psychic phenomena known to both the Platonic philosophers and the modern Spiritualists, although in radically different terms. Without this classical support, his attempt to controvert the claims of the Spiritualists would have been weak indeed. But despite the help of the theurgists, his learned strictures against Spiritualism could bear little weight at a time when ancient psychology—that of the Neoplatonists in particular—was indiscriminately classed with medieval superstition by the “physical” scientists of the nineteenth century. The *Apocatastasis* remained a curiosity of erudite research which, in later years, may have influenced a few independent thinkers like William James to conduct investigations of their own, but which certainly left unaffected the minds of both the Spiritualists and the scientists of the same generation as its author.

The nineteenth century, however, was not wholly without psychological and philosophical interests that might help the West to understand Spiritualistic phenomena. The genius of Baizac had created a suggestive atmosphere for mystical events, his *Seraphita* containing many germs of occult teaching. Bulwer Lytton's novels, also, were destined to serve, in Theosophical literature, as illustrations of certain obscure tenets of the Wisdom Religion. Europe had its own occult tradition in the lore

of the Rosicrucians, and there was something like a philosophy of Spiritualism in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. A few learned Masons and Kabalists in Europe and America still pored over ancient volumes and sought the elusive secrets of ceremonial magic from medievalists who concealed more than they taught. Writers like Wallace, Howitt, and Catherine Crowe with her curious *Night Side of Nature*, helped to acquaint the Spiritualist Movement with earlier cycles of psycho-religious phenomena, providing the beginnings of a contemporary literature on the subject. The treatises of Reichenbach, Du Potet and Deleuze, dealing with important ramifications of mesmeric or magnetic phenomena, showed that a new universe of subjective life awaited exploration by Western man.

But who would provide the charts for such exploration? Who could gather into one great scheme of man's psychic and spiritual existence these disparate currents of experience and bizarre and bookish learning? Was there anyone who could reduce this clamor and competition of ideas, theories and unrelated facts to some semblance of order? And who could add—what was needed most of all—a foundation of moral verity which, in a world of decaying faiths, the heart of man might welcome, and his intellect accept?

This was the great task assumed by H. P. Blavatsky, and after her, by the men and women who became disciples in the course of the Theosophical Movement.

CHAPTER III THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND ITS FOUNDERS

THE HISTORY of the Theosophical Society, as the first practical vehicle of the Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century, is inextricably bound up with the life and work of H. P. Blavatsky. Whatever the outward steps leading to the formation of the Theosophical Society, it was her sense of mission that recognized the need for the Society and generated the interest of others who became associated with her in that enterprise. By birth a Russian of noble family, Madame Blavatsky had been a wanderer for more than twenty years in many lands, both East and West. The record of these journeyings is partly contained in her own writings, and an account of her early years is provided by A. P. Sinnett in his *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*. Although the events of this period may at times cast a suggestive light on obscure

problems of the Movement, such details have no fitting place in the present work, nor could they be properly understood without a thorough grasp of the Theosophical philosophy. We are at present concerned with her public work in the world, which began soon after her arrival in New York in July of **1873**. She lived in retirement in Manhattan and Brooklyn for more than a year. In October of **1874** she visited the Eddy farmhouse near Chittenden, Vermont, where the brothers, William and Horatio Eddy, had gained notoriety by the production of extraordinary spiritualistic phenomena. There she became acquainted with Col. Henry S. Olcott, who had been commissioned by the New York *Graphic* to investigate the Eddy phenomena and to report on them for its readers. Olcott was an American who had acquired his title during the Civil War. At the time of meeting Madame Blavatsky, he was forty-two years old—her junior by a year. He had been agricultural editor of the New York *Tribune*, had written numerous articles on various subjects for many publications,

and was at the time a well-known lawyer with a wide acquaintance among prominent men. For years a Spiritualist, he had written an eye-witness account of the mediumship of the Eddy brothers for the New York *Sun*, earlier in the year, and in September returned to the Eddy Homestead for the *Graphic*.

The phenomena of the Eddy brothers, described in detail by Col. Olcott in letters to the *Graphic*, and later, in his book, *People from the Other World* (published in January, **1875**), were of the sort known to Spiritualists as “materializations.” His dramatic account of these phenomena, including his careful precautions against fraud, aroused much attention, likewise his description of the remarkable effect of the presence of Madame Blavatsky on the “Spiritual” manifestations. As he relates, the phenomena changed greatly in character and variety immediately after her arrival at the Eddy homestead, Asiatic “ghosts” in bizarre native dress being added to the throng of American Indian and other “spirit guides” of William and Horatio Eddy. Intrigued by these developments, Olcott continued his acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky after their return to New York. The first communications by Madame Blavatsky that appeared publicly in the United States were her letters to the *Daily Graphic*, dated October **27** and November **10, 1874**, in which she defended the Eddy brothers against charges of fraud by Dr. George M. Beard, “an electropathic physician of New York City.” Beard’s arrogant assault on the genuineness of the Eddy phenomena brought a fiery and brilliant reply from the Russian woman, who, through this and similar letters to the press, soon gained the reputation of being one of Spiritualism’s ablest advocates. In the character of a champion of honest mediums, her letters and articles were frequently reprinted in Spiritualistic journals, with the result that her fame spread rapidly among all serious students of psychic or spiritual phenomena. During the winter of **1874-5**, Madame Blavatsky visited Philadelphia, where she made the acquaintance of several leading Spiritualists, among them Robert Dale Owen, author of *Footfalls from Another World*, and a son of Robert Owen, the economic reformer. While in this city she became involved in another defense of mediums,

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this time of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Holmes, who were charged with imposture by an erstwhile

colleague. In defending the Holmes', Madame Blavatsky was placed in the difficult position of **having to admit** that some of their phenomena were fraudulent, while other exhibitions, she maintained, were unmistakably genuine. Her skill in marshalling facts and in intellectual controversy is effectively displayed in these early articles on behalf of authentic psychic phenomena. (A number of Madame Blavatsky's articles and letters to the press, published in **1874** and **1875**, were **reprinted** in *A Modern Panarion*, a volume issued in 1895 by the Theosophical Publishing Society.)

Through these writings, she attracted the attention of the more intelligent Spiritualists, and upon returning to New York, her days were crowded with correspondence, her evenings given to long discussions with numerous visitors. A newspaper reporter dubbed her apartment at 46 Irving Place "the lamasery," and the name quickly became current as typifying the flavor of mystery surrounding her and the subjects discussed at these soirees. Olcott was nearly always present, and also a young lawyer, **William Q. Judge, whom** Olcott had introduced to Madame Blavatsky at her request. Judge, then in his early twenties—he was born in 1851—was of Irish parentage and had come to America while still a boy. His youth had been characterized by an intense interest in religious philosophy, mysticism, mesmerism and Spiritualism.

With the coming together of these three, the Founders of the Theosophical Movement were joined in an association that was to last throughout their lives: Madame Blavatsky, who was soon to excite public attention by extraordinary demonstrations of occult power, and by equally extraordinary, though less sensational, teachings of occult philosophy; H. S. Olcott, journalist, man of the world, and well-known Spiritualist; and W. Q. Judge, young, ardent, and, as the years would show, endowed with a rare sagacity and an unparalleled fixity of purpose, although, in those days, he was an unknown quantity, and would so remain for a decade or more.

During the early months of **1875**, Olcott and Judge were made to realize that Madame Blavatsky was no ordinary "Spiritualist" —if, indeed, she was a Spiritualist at all. While

she began her public work as a militant defender of honest mediums, another note, guarded, but unmistakable, soon became apparent in her writings. Although of necessity adopting much of the Spiritualistic vocabulary, she wrote with increasing philosophic power, displaying an obvious familiarity with the conceptions and practices of both the ancient and the medieval theurgists. To certain of her correspondents she disclosed hints of a great mission with which she had been entrusted by occult Teachers. On February 16, **1874**, she wrote to Professor Hiram Corson, of Cornell University, who had been attracted by her analysis of the mediumship of the Holmes' of Philadelphia:

"I am here in this country sent by my Lodge on behalf of Truth in modern spiritualism, and **it** is my most sacred duty to unveil what is, and expose what is not. Perhaps did I arrive here one hundred years too soon. May be, and I am afraid **it** is so, . . . in this present state of mental confusion. . . . In my eyes, Allan Kardec and Flammarion, Andrew Jackson Davis and Judge Edmonds, are but school boys just trying to spell their ABC and sorely blundering sometimes."

First public evidence of her knowledge and purpose appeared in the *Spiritual Scientist*, an independent Boston weekly devoted to the Spiritualist cause. Under instruction from her “Lodge,” and because this paper, edited by Elbridge Gerry Brown, had shown philosophic qualities absent from most Spiritualist journals, Madame Blavatsky began to support it and to contribute to its pages. In the *Spiritual Scientist* for April 17, 1875, there appeared a notice headed, “Important to Spiritualists,” and signed, “Brotherhood of Luxor.” Olcott had written this notice, known as the “Luxor” circular, at the request of this occult brotherhood of which Madame Blavatsky was a member. The circular reviewed briefly the situation of Spiritualism in the United States. Noting that twenty-seven years had passed since the outbreak of Western Spiritualism in 1848, it reproached American Spiritualists for teaching “so few things worthy of a thoughtful man’s attention,” and proposed that the *Spiritual Scientist* become the organ of a more fundamental inquiry into “the laws which lie back of the phenomena.”

This announcement, of course, drew fire. One writer challenged the existence of the “Brotherhood of Luxor.” Another,

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over the signature, “Hiraf,” contributed to the *Spiritual Scientist* an article devoted to the lore of the Rosicrucians, thus providing Madame Blavatsky with an opportunity to launch a discussion of occultism, which appeared during July (later reprinted in *A Modern Panarion* under the title, “Occultism or Magic”). This exposition, referred to by Col. Olcott as the “Hiraf” letter, and by Madame Blavatsky as her “first occult shot,” is of peculiar importance in that it outlines several of the major conceptions of what was later to become known as the Theosophical philosophy; and establishes, also, certain historical facts relating to the theosophical movement in the West.

“Hiraf” was the pseudonym of a young lawyer named Failes who apparently had read much on the Rosicrucians. His article, **which ran** in two issues of the *Spiritual Scientist*, was said by Olcott to be “full of theosophical ideas interpreted in terms of Rosicrucianism.” Madame Blavatsky, however, while considerate of this effort to explore a subject that was virtually unknown in America, turns the “Hiraf” article to her own purpose. Her answer to “Hiraf” lays the foundation for themes that would recur again and again in the literature of the Theosophical Movement. At the outset, she stresses the inadequacy of “book-learning” alone, in the field of Occultism, emphasizing the necessity for “personal experience and practice.” She refers to her own “long travels throughout the length and breadth of the East—that cradle of Occultism” and assures the reader of the fact (doubted by “Hiraf”) that colleges for the training of neophytes in occult science still exist in India, Asia Minor, and other countries. She finds erroneous the assumption by “Hiraf” that practical knowledge of the secret science died out with the Rosicrucians and criticizes his identification of all “adepts” as Rosicrucians.

To correct these misconceptions she reviews the history of the Rosicrucian order, from its founding by the German ritter, Christian Rosencranz, and tells her readers that the Rosicrucian Kabbalah is based on the more ancient and complete Oriental Kabbalah, which treatise, she says, “is carefully preserved” at the headquarters of an Eastern Brotherhood—a mysterious Lodge which still exists and “has lost none of the primitive secret powers of the ancient Chaldeans.” The lodges of this Brotherhood, she continues, are few in number and “are divided

into sections and known but to the Adepts; no one would be likely to find them out, unless the Sages themselves found the neophyte worthy of initiation.” We are informed that the doctrines of the Oriental Kabbalah, possessed by these living sages, have been transmitted from generation to generation of wise men, and their purity jealously guarded by the initiates of Chaldea, India, Persia and Egypt, suffering distortion only in the Hebrew Kabbalah, in which some of the symbols of the ancient teaching were purposely misinterpreted. But the Oriental Kabbalah remained uncorrupted, and Madame Blavatsky declared her adherence to its doctrines by saying:

“As a practical follower of Eastern Spiritualism, I can confidently wait for the time, when, with the timely help of those ‘who know,’ American Spiritualism, which even in its present shape has proved such a sore in the side of the materialists, will become a science and a thing of mathematical certitude, instead of being regarded only as the crazy delusion of epileptic monomaniacs.”

Previous to the appearance of the “Hiraf” letter, Madame Blavatsky’s public writings had been restricted to polemics on behalf of mediums who were unjustly attacked, or to letters advocating impartial investigation of psychic phenomena. After July, **1875**, her contributions became powerful asseverations of the reality of occult science. By this time her personal correspondence was full of inquiries concerning occultism, and in another article for the *Spiritual Scientist* she established the principles that, she said, would have to be adopted in the quest for secret knowledge. Occultism, she wrote, was not for dabblers, the half-hearted, nor the merely curious. She would recommend no books on this mysterious subject, for the reason that—“What may be dear to one who is intuitional, if read in the same book by another person might prove meaningless. Unless one is prepared to devote to it his whole life, the superficial knowledge of Occult Sciences will lead him surely to become the target for millions of ignorant scoffers She continued:

If a man would follow in the steps of the Hermetic philosophers, he must prepare himself beforehand for martyrdom. He *must* give up personal pride and all selfish purposes, and be ready for everlasting encounters with friends and foes. He must part, once for all, with every remembrance of his earlier ideas, on all and on everything. Existing religions, knowledge,

science, must rebecome a blank book for him, as in the days of his babyhood, for if he wants to succeed he must learn a new alphabet on the lap of Mother Nature, every letter of which will afford a new insight to him, every syllable and word an unexpected revelation. To science it will be the duty—arid and sterile as a matter of course—of the Kabbalist to prove that from the beginning of time there was but one positive science—Occultism; that it was the mysterious lever of all intellectual forces, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil of the allegorical paradise, from whose gigantic trunk sprang in every direction boughs, branches and twigs, the former shooting forth straight enough at first, the latter deviating with every inch of growth, assuming more and more fantastical appearances, till at last one after the other lost its vital juice, got deformed, and, drying up, finally broke off, scattering the ground afar with heaps of rubbish. To theology the Occultist of the future will have to demonstrate that the Gods of the mythologies, the Elohim of Israel as well as the religious and theological mysteries of Christianity, to begin with the Trinity, sprang

from the sanctuaries of Memphis and Thebes; that their mother Eve is but the spiritualized Psyche of old, both of them paying a like penalty for their curiosity, descending to Hades or hell, the latter to bring back to earth the famous Pandora's box, the former to search out and crush the head of the serpent—symbol of time and evil—the crime of both expiated by the pagan Prometheus and the Christian Lucifer; the first delivered by Hercules, the second conquered by the Saviour.

Here was more than Spiritualist controversy, however brilliant and skillful.

Mastery of her subject is evident in every line of this article by Madame Blavatsky. She writes with accents of certainty and power, projecting the far-seeing gaze of the disciplined occultist upon the contemporary scene; she defines with the surety of one who has triumphed over them the obstacles which stand in the way of the seeker after secret truth. The authentic credentials of H. P. Blavatsky, as Teacher and Adept, are in these articles printed in the *Spiritual Scientist* in **1875**. Intimate, first-hand *knowledge* is the context of what she wrote; her words are joined with meaning that grows, not from "literary research," but from evident personal power based on practical experience in the science of occultism.

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Having vividly described the ardors of the path to certain knowledge, she passes to the hazards that face every occultist who would use what he has discovered for the general good—the contemptuous negations of scientific materialism, and the vindictive opposition of orthodox religion. Prophetic of her own tragic future, and of the attacks that the Theosophical Movement would sustain, she wrote of the vicious enmity of Public Opinion, ever responsive to the demagogue's whip, that would condemn without a hearing the efforts of occult students to lead the masses to truths ignored by both science and religion. Occultists, she said, must be prepared to meet and deal with the pitiless forces of bigotry and prejudice—enemies which seldom err in recognizing any genuine threat to their control over the minds of the masses, and—which "never conspire except against *real* Power."

Even before the founding of the Theosophical Society. Madame Blavatsky made her true opinion concerning mediums and Spiritualistic phenomena unequivocally clear. When a prominent Spiritualist editor, Luther Colby, of the *Banner of Light*, implied that "the notion that there is such a thing as magic" is mere "humbug," she contributed a challenging article to the *Spiritual Scientist*, offering a scientific definition of magic, and distinguishing the exercise of magical or occult powers from the involuntary phenomena of the Spiritualist mediums. She addresses Mr. Colby:

Did you suppose that Magic is confined to witches riding astride broomsticks and then turning themselves into black cats? Even the latter superstitious trash, though it was never called Magic, but Sorcery, does not appear so great an absurdity for one to accept who firmly believes in the transfiguration of Mrs. Compton into Katie Brinks.

The exercise of *magical* power is the exercise of powers *natural*, but superior to the ordinary functions of Nature. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people.

Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world. Spiritualism in the hands of an Adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an experienced medium, Spiritualism becomes *unconscious sorcery*; for, by allowing himself to become the helpless tool of a variety of spirits,

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of whom he knows nothing save what the latter permit him to know, he opens, unknown to himself, a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of Nature lurking in the astral light, as well as good and bad spirits.

This candor regarding mediums was to earn Madame Blavatsky the hatred of many a “spirit-guide,” and evoked streams of vituperation from emotional Spiritualists who quickly forgot her courageous defense of their phenomena and thereafter devoted themselves to venomous attacks upon theosophists and the Theosophical teachings. She was not done, however, in this important article, with her critical comparison between Magic and Spiritualism. Spiritualist writers had been claiming all great teachers and wonder-workers of the past as “mediums”—a misconception which had to be corrected:

To doubt Magic is to reject History itself, as well as the testimony of ocular witnesses thereof, during a period embracing over **4,000** years. Beginning with Homer, Moses, Hermes, Herodotus, Cicero, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon the Magician, Plato, Pausanias, Iamblichus, and following this endless string of great men—historians and philosophers, who all of them either believed in Magic or were magicians themselves—and ending with our modern authors, such as W. Howitt, Ennemoser, G. des Mousseaux, Marquis de Mirville and the late Eliphas Levi, who was a magician himself—among all of these great names and authors, we find but the solitary Mr. Colby, editor of *The Banner of Light*, who ignores that there ever was such a science as Magic. He innocently believes the whole of the sacred army of *Bible* prophets, commencing with Father Abraham, including Christ, to be merely mediums; in the eyes of Mr. Colby, they were all of them acting under control!

Fancy Christ, Moses, or an Apollonius of Tyana, controlled by an Indian guide! The venerable editor ignores, perhaps, that spiritual mediums were better known in those days to the ancients, than they are now to us, and he seems to be equally unaware of the fact that the inspired sibyls, pythonesses, and other mediums were entirely guided by their high priest and those who were initiated into the esoteric theurgy and mysteries of the temples. Theurgy was Magic; as in modern times, the sibyls and pythonesses were *mediums*; but their high priests were magicians. All the secrets of their theology, which included Magic, or the art of invoking ministering spirits, were in their hands. They possessed the science of *discerning spirits*; a science which Mr. Colby does not possess at all—to his great

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regret, no doubt. By this power they controlled the spirits at will, allowing but the good ones to

absorb their mediums. Such is the explanation of Magic—the real, existing, *White* or Sacred Magic, which ought to be in the hands of science now, and would be, if science had profited by the lessons which Spiritualism has inductively taught for these last twenty-seven years.

Magic exists, and has existed, ever since prehistoric ages. Beginning in history with the Samothracian Mysteries, it followed its course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of Christianized Greece; then reappeared for a time again with the Neoplatonic, Alexandrian school, and, passing by initiation to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the medieval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such Adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and finally died out in Europe with the Count St. Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from frozen-hearted scepticism in its native country of the East.

In India, Magic has never died out, and blossoms there as well as ever. Practiced, as in ancient Egypt, only within the secret enclosure of the temples, it was, and still is, called the “Sacred Science.” For it is a science, based on the occult forces of Nature; and not merely a blind belief in the poll-parrot talking of crafty elementaries, ready to forcibly prevent *real, dis-embodied* spirits from communicating with their loved ones whenever they can do so.

The Spiritualists of **1875** knew nothing of these matters; one need only turn the pages of the journals devoted to Spiritualistic phenomena and religion to discover the striking contrast between the philosophic vigor of the writings of Madame Blavatsky and the psychic fancies of conventional Spiritualism. The doctrines of the Spiritualists were a shallow reflection of wishful thinking, well-intentioned, but without either intellectual strength or firm moral foundation. Lacking in philosophy, the religious ideas of the Spiritualists drew support from fanatical conviction rather than from metaphysical depth, tending to repel rather than to invite intelligent inquiry. Theirs was a faith in which inherited sentiments united with intense emotionalism—a faith cut off from the possibilities of rational development. To accept, therefore, the line of investigation proposed by H. P. Blavatsky meant for the Spiritualists a willingness to admit the pitiful inadequacy of their explanations of psychic phenomena and to con-

fess the moral weaknesses of all their doctrines. Would they be willing to forego the slack simplicity of trusting to Indian “spirit guides” for their teachings? Could they acknowledge that twenty-seven years of seances had brought them no genuine progress, but only a vast accumulation of trivial psychic messages, of no particular importance save for the “miraculous” manner of their communication?

The task assumed by Madame Blavatsky involved winning the attention of the public for the teachings she had to impart. Her defense of the Spiritualists, so far as the reality of their phenomena was concerned, had made the members of this outcast sect her friends and temporary allies; but what would they say when she repudiated as false and even dangerously misleading their claims and theories of “spirit survival”? As she disclosed that her intent was to expose the errors of

Spiritualism, as well as to establish the fact of psychic phenomena, would the devotees of nineteenth-century Necromancy be able to recognize the larger meaning of their movement, and to become, like the ancient hierophants, masters of psychic phenomena instead of its fetish-worshipping slaves? What she could say openly on behalf of the Spiritualists, she did, with that generosity of spirit which characterized all her public utterances. And while the majority of them drew back in injured alarm at the occult critique of spiritualistic theories, there were a few who saw the promise of these ideas, and were reflective enough to admit the justice of Madame Blavatsky's strictures on the low moral tone of most séance communications. Her real labors were with these few, and with Olcott and Judge, who met with her night after night during **1875**, to be instructed in the philosophy of occultism and the rationale of psychic or spiritualistic phenomena. From Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, published many years later in the *Theosophist*, we learn how the hours of his early acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky were spent. To the evening gatherings in her "lomasery" came Spiritualists, Kabalists, Platonists, students of science and of ancient religion, the skeptical, the curious, and seekers after the marvelous. Olcott's own interest was heavily weighted by his spiritualistic tendencies. Slow to grasp the full significance of Madame Blavatsky's analysis of the dangers of mediumship

and phenomena-hunting, his account of these days during **1875** places undue emphasis on occult powers and reveals his limited understanding of the great intent of the movement he was to help found. He never quite quenched his Spiritualistic thirst for "miracles," and his ingenuous boasting of the wonders performed by Madame Blavatsky, his letters to the press concerning occult phenomena, and his failure to realize what the inevitable results of this emphasis would be, were to exact heavy penalties in the future—obscuring, for the public, the authentic moral inspiration of the Theosophical Movement, and exposing his teacher and benefactress to popular ridicule and unjust accusations. Read between the lines, the pages of *Old Diary Leaves* help to explain why Madame Blavatsky has been ignorantly called a "medium" and a Spiritualist, and show, also, her incalculable patience with Olcott's personal weaknesses and love for "phenomena." His admiration for her was too much based upon awe of her powers, and his devotion to her work, which became the cause of the Theosophical Society, often found expression in verbal extravagances. He was nevertheless determined in his efforts, and a true friend and co-worker, despite many mistakes. For this, he gained the undying gratitude of Madame Blavatsky.

William Q. Judge, the youthful Irish-American lawyer, left no detailed record of the period before the founding of the Society, but certain of his published statements reveal the character of his relationship with Madame Blavatsky. On the occasion of her death, in **1891**, he referred to their first meeting at her rooms in Irving Place, in January, **1875**. The meeting of these two, thereafter to be inseparably joined in labors for the Theosophical Movement, was no casual event. In Judge's words:

"It was her eye that attracted me, the eye of one whom I must have known in lives long passed away. She looked at me in recognition at that first hour, and never since has that look changed. Not as a questioner of philosophies did I come before her, not as one groping in the dark for lights that schools and fanciful theories had obscured, but as one who, wandering many periods through

the corridors of life, was seeking the friends who could show where the designs for the work had been hidden. And true to the call she responded, revealing the plans once

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again, and speaking no words to explain, simply pointed them out and went on with the task. It was as if but the evening before we had parted, leaving yet to be done some detail of a task taken up with one common end; it was teacher and pupil, elder brother and younger, both bent on the one single end, but she with the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages."

Judge, like Olcott, was witness to numerous demonstrations of occult powers by Madame Blavatsky, done in illustration of some principle or tenet in which they were being instructed. Her purpose, in these demonstrations, was to establish the difference between the perfectly controlled powers of the *adept*, and the involuntary wonders produced by mediums in Spiritualistic trance. Judge's later works show the fruit of this training, for he discusses occult subjects as one writing from personal experience—a quality lacking in most Theosophical authors other than Madame Blavatsky herself. Years afterward, he spoke of these "amazing feats of magic, hundreds of which I witnessed in broad daylight or in blazing gas-light, from **1875** to **1878**."^o During **1875**, Olcott and Judge learned from Madame Blavatsky more or less of her travels and their purpose. Among many other things, she told them of her unsuccessful attempt to establish a group at Cairo, Egypt, in **1871**, to investigate the rationale of mediumship and its phenomena. Moved by what he had seen and heard, and by his ardent desire to explore more deeply the phenomena which fascinated him, Col. Olcott, in May, 1875, proposed the formation of a private "Miracle Club" for psychic research. This project, however, failed for lack of a medium. Olcott next became interested in the "occult" promises of a Mr. George Felt, an Egyptologist who claimed to be able to control the "elementals" or nature-spirits. On the evening of September 7, **1875**, Mr. Felt lectured in Madame Blavatsky's apartment on "The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians." While those present were discussing the talk, Col. Olcott passed a note to Judge bearing these words: "Would it not be a good thing to form a society for this kind of study?" Mr. Judge read the note, passed it to Madame Blavatsky, who nodded assent, and Judge proposed that the assemblage come to order and that Col. Olcott act as chairman to consider the proposal. It was unanimously

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agreed that a society should be formed, and on the following evening, sixteen persons met and expressed their desire to join in founding a society for occult study. Other meetings were held at Col. Olcott's law offices, and at the residence of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, a well-known Spiritualist author. The name, "The Theosophical Society," was chosen on September **13** and several new members were then added to the list of "Founders." On October **30**, Olcott's Preamble was approved, by-laws were adopted, and officers and a Council were elected. Among the officers were Col. Olcott as President, Madame Blavatsky as Corresponding Secretary, and Mr. Judge as Counsel. On the evening of November 17, a formal meeting was held at Mott Memorial Hall, 64 Madison Avenue. Col. Olcott delivered an "Inaugural Address" and **500** copies were ordered for "immediate distribution."

Looking back on the event of the founding of the Society, Madame Blavatsky wrote in 1881: -

Our Society as a body might certainly be wrecked by mismanagement or the death of its founders, but the IDEA which it represents and which has gained so wide a currency, will run on like a crested wave of thought until it dashes upon the hard beach where materialism is picking and sorting its pebbles. Of the thirteen persons who composed our first board of officers, in 1875, nine were Spiritualists of greater or less experience. It goes without saying, then, that the aim of the Society was not to destroy but to better and purify spiritualism. The phenomena we knew to be real, and we believed them to be the most important of all current subjects for investigation. For, whether they should finally prove to be traceable to the agency of the departed, or but manifestations of occult natural forces acting in concert with latent psycho-physiological human powers, they opened up a great field of research, the outcome of which must be enlightenment upon the master problem of life, Man and his Relations. We had seen phenomenalism running riot and twenty millions of believers clutching at one drifting theory after another in the hope to gain the truth. We had reason to know that the whole truth could only be found in one quarter, the Asiatic schools of philosophy, and we felt convinced that the truth could never be discovered until men of all races and creeds should join like brothers in the search. So, taking our stand upon that ground, we began to point the way eastward.

This was Madame Blavatsky's attitude toward Spiritualism in **1875**—a qualified interest in the possibilities of psychic

research, as a door to knowledge of the inner nature of man. Spiritualist phenomena, for her, were a point of departure, not ends in themselves. Olcott partly understood this viewpoint, but enthusiasm for "occult" revelations unbalanced his judgment. His state of mind is faithfully reflected in the Inaugural Address delivered on November **17**. Not content with defining the broad philosophical purpose of the Society, Olcott made extravagant claims for Mr. Felt's "magical" powers, ending on a note of gleeful anticipation of the embarrassment which he expected would overtake the Spiritualists when Felt's experiments were successful. While Madame Blavatsky, during this early period, exercised great tact in her effort to open up a wider horizon of understanding for the Spiritualists, Olcott's naïve assertions made many of the Spiritualists furious. Professor Corson, the scholarly Spiritualist whom H.P.B. had visited in Ithaca, attacked Olcott rather unjustly in a letter to the *Banner of Light*, but there was some substance in his charges. It was Madame Blavatsky, of course, in this case as in so many others, who bore the brunt of the reaction to Olcott's injudicious behavior. She at once wrote to Corson, attempting to moderate the sting in Olcott's boasting address, and to qualify his strictures on Spiritualist morality. Taking her learned friend into strict confidence, she accounted for the extreme tone of the Inaugural Address by describing the sudden reform in Olcott's personal life, due to his occult aspirations. She wrote:

"Olcott is a fanatic, so much so, that I am afraid that this abrupt change from a comfortable life, good eating and drinking and indulging in all sorts of worldly things, will either bring him to insanity or death. . . . He eats no more meat, renounces supper and wine; his only aim in life is to become purified, as he says, of his past life, of the stains he has inflicted on his soul. I can do nothing with him. I have evoked the spirit of fanaticism in him, and now I cruelly repent, for this

man does nothing by halves. . . . Because Olcott views spiritualism perhaps too exultingly, and expresses himself in too strong terms,—for I agree with you in that—why should people misunderstand him for that which never entered his mind? Many and many times, day after day, I repeat to him that he must not brag of what is not done yet

Of Felt's claims, she said, "I do not know whether or when he will make his promise good." Prof. Corson was mollified

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by this letter, but his main interest was Spiritualism, not Theosophy, as later became plain. This incident is of importance chiefly as illustrating Olcott's habitual emphasis on the phenomenal aspects of occultism, and his tendency, never entirely overcome, to hope for conversion of others to Theosophy through miraculous demonstrations, for which he turned, usually in vain, to his wiser colleague. Olcott's folly in promoting Felt as one who would amaze the world with occult phenomena was soon evident, for that gentleman, after obtaining one hundred dollars for "expenses" from the Society's treasury, failed to produce any Elementals at all—"not even the tip end of the tail of the tiniest Nature spirit," as Olcott mournfully related. He found this a "mortifying disappointment" which resulted in the departure from the Society of several whose interest was limited to sensation-seeking.

At this time, the affairs of the Society were largely in Olcott's hands. Meetings were held irregularly, and many plans for occult experimentation were proposed. Neither Madame Blavatsky nor Judge took any active part in the meetings after the first few sessions. The former, Olcott complains in *Old Diary Leaves*, "refused to do the slightest phenomenon." She was then extremely busy with correspondence, with letters to the press and with the steady stream of visitors to the "lamasery." She had also begun the writing of her first book, *Isis Unveiled*. Mr. Judge was occupied with practicing law during the day, and he gave his evenings to study under Madame Blavatsky's direction.

As originally constituted, the Theosophical Society was entirely democratic in its by-laws and organization. All officers were elective. The by-laws provided for three classes of Fellows: Active, Corresponding, and Honorary. The earlier Societies established after the foundation of the Parent body adopted its preamble and made additional rules and by-laws, not in conflict, to suit themselves. Intercourse between the various Societies was more or less desultory and informal, but all Fellows received their diplomas from the Parent Society until branch Societies began to be formed in India, when diplomas were signed by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. There were various arrangements in the issuing of diplomas until

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1885, after which time, Madame Blavatsky being in Europe, Mr. Judge in America, and Col. Olcott in India, all regular diplomas were signed by Col. Olcott as President of the Theosophical Society. These diplomas were recognized as certificates of Fellowship by all lodges, wherever situated.

No formal Convention of all the Societies was ever held during the existence of the Parent body, but in India a species of gathering or “Anniversary Convention” was held as early as 1880, and thereafter annually at the end of each year. These were attended by delegates from the Indian and Ceylon Lodges and by occasional visitors from Europe and America

CHAPTER IV OBJECTS AND LITERATURE

THE PARENT THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY had three declared Objects, known to some from the first, and formally adopted by the Society and most of the branches in the 1880’s. They were:

- I.** To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.
- II.** The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- III.** The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.’

From the vantage-point of the twentieth century, these Objects may seem unexceptionable, but seventy-five years ago they represented almost entirely new ideas. It should be realized that Brotherhood, as a universal ideal, is now frequently spoken of chiefly because of the extensive sufferings that distinctions of race, creed and color have brought about in recent years. The Theosophical Movement sought to make universal brotherhood the basis for human relations *before* the wars of the twentieth century. The present interest in ancient philosophy, particularly that of the Orient, grows from recognition of the weaknesses of Western religion, which has proved incapable of uniting Christian peoples in peace, and it may be noted that theosophical books have played an important part in bringing the great scriptures of India to the attention of the West. The Third Object was equally a pioneering conception, anticipating the complex psychological problems of the present period. No great argument should be necessary to show that these objects formulated three great needs of the future, and that the Theosophical Movement, established to serve those needs, was intended as a great and beneficent force in human history.

The “Three Objects” of the original Theosophical Society are now well known to all serious

students of Theosophy and the subject of no dispute. They were not, however, explicitly stated at the time of the founding of the Society. Olcott, in *Old Diary Leaves*, asserts that when the idea of the Society was first proposed, “the idea of Universal Brotherhood was not there,” and did not occur until, in **1878**, the Society’s “sphere of influence extended so as to bring us into relations with Asiatics and their religions and social systems,” thus making “the Brotherhood plank . . . a necessity, and, in fact, the corner-stone of our edifice.” The by-laws adopted in 1875 simply state, “The objects of the society are to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.”

Discussing the Objects in *Old Diary Leaves*, Olcott quotes a press account of the founding of the Society, which said:

“[His Olcott’s] plan was to organise a society of Occultists and begin at once to collect a library; and to diffuse information concerning those secret laws of Nature which were so familiar to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but are totally unknown by our modern world of science.” This, the Colonel comments, “shows conclusively what I had in mind when proposing the formation of our Society.” As he understood it, the Society was primarily a body devoted to “occult research.”

In repeating the events of these early days, Olcott seems determined to limit the conception of the Society to the ideas which he held at that time. An almost childlike vanity convinced him that the Society was his personal “creation,” and he was quick to reject any implication that others beside himself might have possessed a larger vision of its purposes than his own. His easily wounded self-esteem caused him to fall into the habit of petty criticisms of his comrade and teacher, Madame Blavatsky, and it played a similar part in his belittling attitude toward William Q. Judge. Many of the later difficulties of the Society may be attributed to these weaknesses in Olcott’s character, which made it difficult for him to distinguish between the dynamic moral reform represented by the Theosophical *movement* and the organization or society of that name.

Madame Blavatsky often referred to the founding of the Society as the result of occult direction from her Teachers. In the *Theosophist* for July, **1882**, she wrote that “our Society was founded at the direct suggestion of Indian and Tibetan adepts,” and during the course of her life she made many similar statements, both in print and in correspondence. In a letter dated December 6, 1887, she reminded Olcott that she came to the United States “to see what could be done to stop necromancy and the unconscious black magic exercised by the Spiritualists.” She continued:

“The Society was formed, then gradually made to merge into and evolve hints of the teachings from the Secret Doctrine of *the oldest school of Occult Philosophy in the whole world*—a school to reform which, finally, the Lord Gautama was made to appear. These teachings could not be given abruptly. They *had* to be in stilled gradually.

As one who came to the modern world in the service of an ancient “occult school,” Madame Blavatsky was confronted by peculiar difficulties. First of all, the idea of occult or “secret” knowledge and of its possessors was virtually unknown or forgotten, with only a handful of obscure Kabalists to represent the fading tradition of the *Gnosis* in the West. Since the persecution

of the Gnostics in the early centuries of Christian History, occasional revivals of adept teachings in Europe had been zealously suppressed by the heresy hunters of the Church, until, with the rise of scientific scepticism, belief in secret fraternities of wise men came to be classed with the fantasies of the Arabian Nights, or on a par with medieval superstition. While the phenomena of the Spiritualists had opened the way to acceptance of super-physical power, this was true only of a small minority of enthusiasts, and Spiritualism itself was rapidly becoming a fanatical sect whose believers would give occult ideas small welcome. Madame Blavatsky might win the interest of the Spiritualists by phenomenal demonstrations, but she could not retain their support without adopting the Spiritualist version of soul-survival and “spirit intercourse,” and, as she later explained, it was her mission to controvert these crude teachings by presenting the Theosophic explanation of psychic phenomena. -----

While in her public statements Madame Blavatsky took account of the need for a gradual introduction of the idea of

adept teachers, to her friends, her intimates in the work of the Theosophical Movement, she explained much more, telling them at almost the very first of the source of her wisdom. The sages under whose direction she had traveled to America she called her “Masters”—certain Eastern adepts she had come to know during her travels in India and Tibet. These Masters, she said, were the inspirers of the Theosophical Movement, its true founders, for whom she acted as agent in the world. Olcott, as he reports in *O/d Diary Leaves*, came under the influence of more than one of these Teachers before the Society was formed, becoming firmly convinced of their reality and wonderful powers. As a Spiritualist, however, Olcott was more easily affected by the occult phenomena of this Eastern fraternity than by their project of moral reform. His diary is a naïve record of the fascination which phenomena held for him, and of how his mind fed on dreams of startling the world with miraculous occurrences, to be produced at his suggestion by Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical adepts. It is not remarkable, therefore, that he failed to appreciate the full meaning of the Movement at the outset, and could suppose that “the Brotherhood plank” was virtually an after thought. The understanding, and memory, of William Q. Judge were different. Years after, writing in the *Path* for April, 1888, he said:

At that first meeting I proposed Colonel Olcott as President of the *Society*, and was made temporary Secretary myself. A Committee appointed to select a name for the infant met several times after that at Olcott’s office, 7 Beckman Street, New York, and decided upon the present name. The objects of the Society had been given to Col. Olcott by the Masters before that; they were adopted and have never been changed.

In her *Key to Theosophy*, a text for students, Madame Blavatsky wrote that the objects of the Society “are three, and have been so from the beginning.” In **1878**, three months before her departure with Col. Olcott for India, she wrote to an inquirer:

“It [the Society] is a brotherhood of humanity, established to make away with all and every dogmatic religion founded on dead-letter interpretation, and to teach people and every member to

believe in but one impersonal **God; to rely upon his (man's) own powers; to consider himself his only savior; to learn the**

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infinitude of the occult psychological powers hidden within his own physical man; to develop these powers; and to give him the assurance of the immortality of his divine spirit and the survival of his soul; to make him regard every man of whatever race, color, or creed, and to prove to him that the only truths revealed to man by superior men (not a god) are contained in the Vedas of the ancient Aryas of India. Finally, to demonstrate to him that there never were, will be, nor are, any miracles; that there can be nothing super-natural' in this universe, and that on earth, at least, the only god is man *himself*."

With the Society established and its public activities *under way*, Madame Blavatsky turned to the work of recording the Theosophical philosophy. In Olcott's words:

H.P.B., then working night and day upon her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, soon refused to even attend our meetings, let alone do so much at them as make the smallest phenomenon—though she was continually astounding her visitors with them at her own house—and so, naturally enough, the leading Spiritualists in the Society became dissatisfied and dropped out. Forced, contrary to all my expectations, to keep up interest at the meetings and carry the whole load myself, while at the same time attending to my professional business and helping H.P.B. on "Isis," I did what I could in the way of getting psychometers, clairvoyants, mesmerisers, and spiritual mediums to show us sundry phases of psychical science.

In the beginning, the Parent Theosophical Society and the other Theosophical bodies had no literature of their own. For students of the present generation, to whom "Theosophy" means the specific doctrines found in the Theosophical books, it is difficult to realize the difference between the outward character of the Movement, then and now. These teachings, as H.P.B. wrote to Olcott in 1887, "could not be given abruptly." Her task, quite literally, was to "incarnate" progressively in the English language an entire system of principles, metaphysical tenets, and ethical teachings, and this meant the slow elaboration of appropriate intellectual forms for these ideas. Until the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, in **1877**, the Society was limited in materials for study to Kabbalistic works, translations of Plato and the Neoplatonists, the available books on Oriental philosophy and religion, the Spiritualist literature, writings of the Christian mystics, and various works on magic, mesmerism, hypnotism and related subjects. *Isis*, as its sub-title states, was to be "A Master-Key to the

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Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology." Actually, it was an attempt to gather into a single work those elements of the cultural heritage of the West which could serve as the foundation of a new religious philosophy, and to unite them by means of the occult and spiritual teachings she had learned in the East. As part of Madame Blavatsky's purpose was to declare the reality of occult forces and secret knowledge, she began her preface to *Isis Unveiled* with these words:

The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science. **It** is offered to such as are willing to accept truth wherever it may be found, and to defend it, even looking popular prejudice straight in the face. It is an attempt to aid the student to detect the vital principles which underlie the philosophical systems of old. That “popular prejudice” would be aroused by a book so introduced was a foregone conclusion. Who were these mysterious “Eastern adepts” who dared to challenge the accepted truths of religious orthodoxy, and to question the conclusions of Western Science? Such a book could expect support only from those open-minded enough to form their judgments of it by a careful study of its contents, instead of invoking orthodox opinions. The evidence for the existence of “adepts” presented by Madame Blavatsky was their philosophy—the “master-key” referred to in her title. She might, of course, have suppressed all mention of these Teachers whom she met in the Orient, and have presented simply a synthesis of religious philosophy and scientific conceptions, as the culmination of painstaking research. Little or no animosity against her would have resulted from this method. Her book would have been classed with many others of a similar character, eclectic compilations of religious ideas drawn from many obscure sources, and fused into the philosophic unity of speculative metaphysics.

But this Madame Blavatsky would not, could not, do. The concept of adeptship, of perfected human beings, was a necessary conclusion from the logic of spiritual evolution; it was also the key to her explanation of the phenomena of the Spiritualistic mediums. A further reading of the Preface to *Isis* shows

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how inseparable in this book are its philosophic teachings from the idea of human perfection. She continues:

When, years ago, we first travelled over the East, exploring the penetralia of its deserted sanctuaries, two saddening and ever-recurring questions oppressed our thoughts: *Where, **WHO, WHAT** is GOD? Who ever saw the **IMMORTAL** SPIRIT of man, so as to be able to assure himself of man's immortality?*

It was while most anxious to solve these perplexing problems that we came into contact with certain men, endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that we may truly designate them as the sages of the Orient. To their instructions we lent a ready ear. They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Tell one who had never seen water, that there is an ocean of water, and he must accept it on faith or reject **it** altogether. But let one drop fall upon his hand, and he then has the fact from which all the rest may be inferred. After that he could by degrees understand that a boundless and fathomless ocean of water existed. Blind faith would no longer be

necessary; he would have supplanted **it** with **KNOWLEDGE**. When one sees mortal man displaying tremendous capabilities, controlling the forces of nature and opening up to view the world of spirit, the reflective mind is overwhelmed with the conviction that if one man's spiritual *Ego* can do this much, the capabilities of the **FATHLR SPIRIT** must be relatively as much vaster as the whole ocean surpasses the single drop in volume and potency. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God!

These statements, offered at the outset, showed the character of the authority claimed for the Theosophical teachings: it is the authority within each human being, his own potential powers of perception and understanding. But pending the full development of those faculties within himself, the reader or student is invited to consider the philosophical validity of the Wisdom-Religion, the analyses of history and tradition, of religious symbolism and scientific evidence of various sorts,

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THE NEED FOR ANCIENT RELIGIONS

as the basis of acceptance or rejection of the Theosophical method of inquiry.

From the idea of highly evolved human beings as the source of her teaching, Madame Blavatsky passed, in the introductory chapter of *Isis Unveiled*, to the need for study of ancient religions. Reviewing the corruptions of Western religion and the reaction of animalism taught by science, she introduced the subject of Spiritualism as offering “a possible last refuge of compromise between the two.” But neither religion nor science was competent to explain the phenomena of the Spiritualists. She comments:

while the clergy, following their own interpretations of the *Bible*, and science its self-made *Codex* of possibilities in nature, refuse it [Spiritualism] a fair hearing, *real* science and *true* religion are silent, and gravely wait further developments.

The whole question of phenomena rests on the correct comprehension of old philosophies. Whither, then, should we turn, in our perplexity, but to the ancient sages, since, on the pretext of superstition, we are refused an explanation by the modern? Let us ask them what they know of genuine science and religion; not in the matter of mere details, but in all the broad conception of these twin truths—so strong in their unity, so weak when divided. Besides, we may find our profit in comparing this boasted modern science with ancient ignorance; this improved modern theology with the “Secret doctrines” of the ancient universal religion. Perhaps we may thus discover a neutral ground whence we can reach and profit by both. In this quest among the ancients, Madame Blavatsky turns first to Plato. She calls the Platonic philosophy “the most elaborate compend of the abstruse systems of old India,” which “can alone afford us this middle ground.” In Plato she saw the link between eastern and western thought: He [Plato] was, in the fullest sense of the word, the world's interpreter. And the greatest philosopher of the pre-Christian era mirrored faithfully in his works the spiritualism of the Vedic philosophers who lived thousands of years before himself, and its metaphysical expression. Just as Plato had summed up the knowledge of the ancient East in his philosophy, transmitting to the Western world the accumulated wisdom of the prehistoric

past, so Madame Blavatsky, also, became a transmitter of ancient teachings, “the world’s interpreter” of the nineteenth century. Starting from

the plateau of Platonic philosophy, *Isis Unveiled* explores the entire continent of human experience and thought, gathering evidence for the few fundamental ideas which constitute the first principles of the Theosophical philosophy. The existence of Adepts and their common philosophy of moral regeneration is the central theme. Also discussed are the missions and teachings of great adepts through history, as the source of the universal belief in gods, Saviors and “divine incarnations”; their teachings regarding the “mysteries” are investigated as ancient sources which provided the materials for the greatest philosophical and ethical treatises. Madame Blavatsky shows that everywhere, from the remotest antiquity, there are abundant indications that the arts and sciences, as re-discovered in our times, were known and practiced in the distant past; and further, that the ancients knew many things which are hidden from modern civilization.

The postulates laid down in *Isis Unveiled* form the foundation for subsequent theosophical study. The most important among them may be summarized as follows:

I. The reality of man as a *spiritual* being, with a life independent of as well as in a physical body.

II. An almost incredible antiquity for the human race, through millions of years of rises and falls in civilization, the vicissitudes of which are governed by the great law of Cycles (Karma), which law does not affect all mankind at one and the same time, thus explaining the existence of the most advanced races side by side with tribes sunk in savagery.

III. An intellectual and spiritual evolution as well as the physical evolution of modern science, the former proceeding under well-defined principles of soul-development.

The last chapter of the second volume of *Isis* provides a recapitulation of the entire work, in ten basic propositions, which state in substance: (1) There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal and ever active. (2) Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal and indestructible. The

lower two constantly change; the higher third does not. (3) Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity. (4) Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature’s forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice. (5) Arcane knowledge misapplied, is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or *Wisdom*. (6) Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies. (7) All things that ever were, that are, or will be, having their record upon

the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known. (8) Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality; among some peoples seer-ship naturally prevails, among others mediumship. (9) One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. (10) The corner-stone of magic is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man. To sum up all in a few words, Magic is spiritual wisdom; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. These ideas were not presented by Madame Blavatsky as merely theoretical considerations, but as principles of practical explanation to which she constantly referred. Applying them to Spiritualist mediums, she showed that their phenomena could be accounted for as the involuntary productions of aberrant psychic factors in man's nature. The various forms of clairvoyance are explained as functions of the astral light.

The message of *Isis Unveiled* is predominantly ethical, but, unlike either the precepts of contemporary religion or the moral speculations of Western philosophers, an endeavor is made in this book to correlate ethical ideas with super-physical laws of nature; to show, in short, that religion can have a basis in scientific law and fact. Starting with the interests of her age—both popular and learned—the phenomena of Spiritualism, the conflict of Science and Religion, and the researches of students of symbology and mysticism—Madame Blavatsky examined these several aspects of human experience in the light of the Theosophical teachings, drawing them together for study and review in the single perspective of a philosophy of *soul*. Her method, in this sense, was inductive and scientific, for *Isis Unveiled* rejects no fact, whether of past history or contemporary development, but it is deductive in the crucial process of *relating* the data of man's moral and psychic life, individual and collective, under general laws which serve, in the Theosophic scheme, as integrating principles.

Much of *Isis Unveiled* is devoted to a critique of historical and theological Christianity. The closing paragraphs of the Preface to the second volume say:

An analysis of religious beliefs in general, this volume is in particular directed against theological Christianity, the chief opponent of free thought. It contains not one word against the pure teachings of Jesus, but unsparingly denounces their debasement into pernicious ecclesiastical systems that are ruinous to man's faith in his immortality and his God, and subversive of all moral restraint.

We cast our gauntlet at the dogmatic theologians who would enslave both history and science; and especially at the Vatican, whose despotic pretensions have become hateful to the greater portion of enlightened Christendom. The clergy apart, none but the logician, the investigator, the dauntless explorer should meddle with books like this. Such delvers after truth have the courage of their opinions. In this volume is to be found an explanation for the bitter enmity Madame Blavatsky provoked among representatives of religious orthodoxy, particularly the Roman

Catholic Church. Throughout her life she was the object of vicious attacks by certain spokesmen of organized Christianity, who sought to bring her into personal disrepute and who lost no opportunity

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to assert that she was a fraud and a charlatan. Actually, the best evidence for the sincerity of Madame Blavatsky is her courageous study of the psychological and temporal power of religious institutions. One who dares to examine the hoary sanctions of revealed religion invariably exposes himself to vindictive retaliations, and all history is witness to the fact that hell hath no fury like an angry priest, whose authority to speak in the name of the Deity has been challenged, and whose casuistry is subjected to the light of reason. *Isis Unveiled* was a book which could be understood, and would be welcomed, only by those few who were prepared, or at least willing, to do their own thinking. It was a text for those who had resolved to make the Objects of the Theosophical Society the guiding principles of their own lives. Its author dedicated its two volumes to the Theosophical Society, which was founded, she declared, “to study the subjects on which they treat.”

CHAPTER V INDIA

WITH THE DEPARTURE OF Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky from New York on December 18, **1878**, the scene of Theosophical activity shifted from the United States to India. For H.P.B., the journey was to “India and **HOME!**” For Olcott, it was the beginning of a great adventure—a new life in the mysterious East, where the part he would play was much more than that of a curious traveler, coming from the New World to the Old. He arrived in India already apprenticed in the service of a secret fraternity of Eastern adepts, sages held in extreme reverence by all Indians who still believed in the ancient traditions of Rishis and Mahatmas. For a Westerner, an American business man and former Army officer, to have personal contact with these august personages was an extraordinary distinction, making him unique in the eyes of many of the Indian people.

The establishment in India of a public center of Theosophical education was an essential part of the larger scheme of the Theosophical Movement. India was the Motherland of both ancient and modern Western civilizations, and her great scriptures and traditions were indispensable source-materials for metaphysical studies and research into the original meaning of world religions. In India, too, there still existed among the people an intuitive faith in the spiritual nature of man. Hindu and Buddhist teachings afforded conceptions of moral psychology and of inner, psychic development more in harmony with the doctrines that H.P.B. intended to disclose than could be found in any other religious or philosophical system. Further, the founding of a Theosophical headquarters in India might be the means of awakening a genuine renaissance of ancient Hindu culture, by restoring old philosophic truths to recognition and reviving the devotion of modern Hindus to their ancestral religious philosophy. Finally, it was in India, or rather, in the high country to the north of the Indian peninsula included within the bounds of *ancient* India, or *Aryavarta*—

that Madame Blavatsky had come into intimate contact with her Adept teachers, and the inauguration in India of the work of the Society gave opportunity for the relation of those Teachers to the Theosophical Movement to become publicly known. These were the advantages for the spread of Theosophical ideas from an Indian headquarters. The disadvantages, however, were considerable. India had been subjected to Mohammedan domination for many centuries. After the tolerant rule of the great Mogul sovereign, Akbar, the power of the Mohammedan kingdoms decreased, giving way, in some regions to a Hindu uprising led by the Mahrattas, a people of mixed origin. The control of India by Great Britain resulted from the ascendancy of the East India Company, one of the largest trading corporations known to history, which first settled in coastal cities in 1653, gradually taking over the rule of the Mahratta Empire. Early in the nineteenth century the domination of India passed into the hands of the British Government, and after the suppression of the Sepoy Rebellion, in 1857, the rule of the East India Company ceased to exist.

Filled with memories of their ancient glory, the Indian people found this subjection to Western invaders a severe blow to national pride. Cultivated Indians in particular, who regarded European civilization as barbarous in comparison with their own, suffered deep humiliation from the British colonial policy of race superiority, withdrawing behind barriers of proud reserve. In British India there was little or no natural mingling of the two races, the Indians never forgetting their bondage to a conquering race, the white-skinned rulers always maintaining their exclusive position of political authority. Formal relationships, of course, between eminent Indians and the officials of the British Government were maintained, and numerous young Hindus of the higher castes were sent to England to be educated and learn the ways of the ruling nation, leading, in time, to a hybrid "Anglo-Indian" culture. As a result, an increasing number of Hindus came by degrees to adopt European standards of civilization and to assimilate attitudes which may be termed simply "Western materialism." The prestige of British arms and the evident helplessness of

the Indian people to accomplish their freedom increased the native respect for Western ideas, and by the latter part of the nineteenth century the devotion of the younger Hindus to their own religious traditions was waning rapidly. While these tendencies affected the youth of India, the learned men of the earlier generation remained secure in the belief that their inheritance of the great treatises of Oriental religion made them superior to all others in moral philosophy. This was a habit of mind confirmed by the extensive caste system which governed the social relationships among the Hindu people, establishing "spiritual distinctions" sanctified by the usage of centuries and justified by the priestly authority of the Brahmins. There were, in the 1880's, a total of some eighty-four sub-divisions in the Brahmanical caste alone, each with its specifications of status and rules that separated its members from other castes and subdivisions. Worst among the abuses of the caste system was "untouchability," which for centuries barred some forty million Hindus from all contact with members of the higher castes. "Untouchability" was at last outlawed by an official act of the Constituent Assembly of India in **1947**, the year in which the British Government pledged itself to relinquish control over the Indian people and to transfer all authority to a free National Government of India. The Indian National Congress had campaigned for generations against "untouchability," but not until the added moral impetus of national freedom came to India

was this inhuman practice finally abolished. Untouchability, child-brides, and similar degrading customs illustrate the social and religious decadence of India in the nineteenth century. There was also a characteristic passivity among the people, partially due to centuries of subjection to first the Mogul and then the British conquerors, which had weakened the will of this once free and independent race. It was widely believed, too, that in the Dark Age or *Kali Yuga*—a period of moral decline prophesied in the Sacred Books of the Hindus—nothing could be done to revive the spirit of the past, but that all oppressions must be suffered in weakness and patient despair. Such religious pessimism made India apathetic and gained for her the reputation of being “backward” in comparison with the vigorous and aggressive policies

of Western nations. These, then, were some of the circumstances and difficulties under which Madame Blavatsky labored in coming to India in **1879**. Her purpose was to revive the spirit of *ancient* India, to replace sectarian pride with mutual understanding and respect, and to dissolve the barriers of caste and religious differences in a renaissance of true philosophic inquiry.

Before leaving the United States, Col. Olcott had been in correspondence with a Hindu acquaintance—Moolji Thackersey—whom he had met during an Atlantic voyage in **1870**. Moolji, when told about the Theosophical Society and its objectives, referred Olcott to one Hurrychund Chintamon, who was president of the Bombay branch of the Arya Samaj, an organization devoted to the resuscitation of Vedic religion in India. Hurrychund wrote to Olcott concerning the work of a Hindu pandit, Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, to whom the Samaj movement owed its existence, and proposed an amalgamation of the two societies. Some steps in this direction were taken, but later information convinced Olcott of the sectarian character of the Arya Samaj, and instead he formed a third, intermediate” society, the “Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryavart,” which Western theosophists could join or not, as they pleased. The two societies remained in this friendly relation until later difficulties, which developed in India. The voyage to India was broken by a stay of two weeks in England, where H.P.B. and Olcott were welcomed by London friends and correspondents. On January 5, **1879**, Olcott presided at a meeting of the British Theosophical Society, which had been organized some six months earlier as the result of a visit to London by John Storer Cobb, Treasurer of the Parent Society. Also active in forming the London group was C. C. Massey, a London barrister and writer on Spiritualism, who had been in New York in **1875** and had joined the Society at the organization meeting on September 8. While in London, the two Founders stayed at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Billing, the latter being a medium of unusual integrity who also had joined the Society in New York.

The *Speke Hall*, which carried Olcott and Madame Blavatsky to India, left English shores on January **19**, steaming

into the harbor of Bombay on February 16—twenty-nine days later. The Founders were met by Hindu members of the Society, among them the Samajist, Hurrychund Chintamon, who soon installed them in a small house on Girgaum Back Road. At once a round of receptions and interviews began, Hindus, Parsis and members of the Arya Samaj coming by the hundreds to greet

and talk with Madame Blavatsky. The arrival of H.P.B. and Olcott in India was marred by one unpleasant event, occurring when Hurrychund amazed the newcomers by presenting an enormous bill for rent and other services, and it developed that a sum sent to him from America for the Arya Samaj had never left his hands. Exposed before a meeting of the Samaj, Hurrychund promised restitution, but the Founders at once moved to a house of their own, at 108 Girgaum Road, which became their headquarters for two busy years. Soon after settling in Bombay, Moolji Thackersey found for H.P.B. the Hindi boy, Babula, then only fifteen years old, who was to be her personal servant for many years. From her arrival in **1879** until the end of March, **1885**, when H.P.B. left India for the last time, was a period of rapid growth for the Theosophical Movement. During this time the Theosophical Adepts—H.P.B.'s Teachers—were brought into public notice by the English journalist, A. P. Sinnett; the Society gained numerous members among the learned men of India; the first number of H.P.B.'s magazine, *The Theosophist*, appeared in October, **1879**; branches of the Society were established in many parts of India and Ceylon. and in general. the Movement was launched on a course leading to international recognition and respect. In the same period, however, powerful adverse forces threatened the progress of the Movement from without, while disloyalties, faint-heartedness and betrayals from within kept the Society in turmoil, greatly weakening its power and harming its reputation before the world. It must be realized that the principles of Theosophy, while apparently without offence to anyone, were uncompromisingly opposed to all forms of sectarianism, and that any effort to establish the spirit of universal brotherhood on rational foundations must inevitably conflict with the interests of partisan religious institutions. The Christian missions in India, therefore, soon learned to regard the Theosophical Society as a dangerous

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enemy, neglecting no opportunity to discredit Theosophy and attack the founders of the Movement.

A less obvious opposition to the Theosophical Movement arose from the complex egotism of Western civilization, which was offended by the idea of a quest for truth not in the European centers of academic learning, nor in the laboratories of science, but in the “superstitious”—even the “barbarous”—East. There were at least three reasons for this Western conceit. First of all, European culture was nominally Christian, and if the ethics of Jesus have been ignored by Western nations, the Christian claim of exclusive Revelation, maintained through many centuries, had infected the people of both Europe and America with a moral arrogance which remained long after effective belief in Christian dogmas had died away. The epithet “heathen” or “pagan” still flatters its user with the presumption of a superior religion, regardless of his personal beliefs. Second, the triumph of science and technology in the West, as contrasted with the primitive ways of the Orient, gave practical justification to this feeling of superiority. Finally, the ease with which European arms subjected the East to modern imperialism made it virtually impossible for fighting and trading Westerners to respect the conquered nations—peoples which could be held in political bondage by a few regiments of troops belonging to the “superior” white race!

Today, in the perspective of nearly seventy-five years, the power of these psychological barriers to Theosophical ideals can be more easily appreciated than when Madame Blavatsky, assisted by a single American supporter, began her revolutionary labors in India in **1879**. At the outset **H.P.B.**

made no effort to attract the interest of members of the ruling race in India. Her time was wholly occupied in discussions of philosophy with Hindu scholars and pundits. "The soul," Olcott writes, "was the burning topic of debate." Questions of politics, color, business or wealth were scarcely mentioned. Because of this unconventional neglect of the European circle in Bombay, the Society was soon suspected by the British officials as being a cover for political machinations, and Government agents were set to watch Madame Blavatsky, whose Russian origin also excited suspicion. In view of the unpopularity of the Society with the ruling class, it was the more remarkable,

therefore, that only nine days after the landing of the Founders at Bombay, Col. Olcott received a letter from Mr. A. P. Sinnett, the editor of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, expressing a desire to meet them and to publish any interesting facts concerning their work in India. The *Pioneer* was a strong pro-Government organ, and this attention of its editor to the purposes of the Theosophical Movement brought the Society to the notice of the more cosmopolitan English residents. Mr. Sinnett's unusual interest in Theosophy, which soon became manifest, was also the means of disabusing officials of the British Government of the notion that Madame Blavatsky was a Russian spy, and Olcott her tool.

In December, 1879, the Founders visited the Sinnetts in Allahabad. Experiences during the six weeks of this visit convinced Sinnett that H.P.B. possessed powers unknown to ordinary persons and his interest in occultism was thereby intensified. In his first book, *The Occult World*, he tells of the character of these experiences and gives his impressions of Madame Blavatsky. Sinnett, like Olcott, was greatly affected by the "phenomena" performed by H.P.B. He was, however, a man of unusual intellectual capacity, as his early writings on Theosophy show, and, despite the materialistic outlook common to his generation, was able to present a fairly comprehensive account of the Theosophical metaphysics. Through Madame Blavatsky he gained contact with the personages described by her as her "occult teachers," with whom he carried on an extensive correspondence. The first several letters received by Mr. Sinnett from one of these adepts are printed in *The Occult World*. The entire series of letters by the Theosophical Adepts to Mr. Sinnett and to another eminent Englishman—Allan O. Hume, former Secretary of the Government of India—was published many years later, in **1923**, in a volume called *The Mahatma Letters*.

Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World*, appearing in **1885**, unfolded a strange story of seeming miracles to the complacent world of the nineteenth century. The book is a sober account of happenings which none of the laws of nature known to Western science could explain. Probably the most startling of the phenomena it describes is the "precipitation," secure within the double lining of a small cushion, of a brooch belonging to

Mrs. Sinnett. With it, among the feathers, was a brief note to Mr. Sinnett. His book provides many descriptions of similar occult phenomena, adding the testimony of various other witnesses. Of far greater interest, however, are the letters which Mr. Sinnett received from one of the adepts, who are called, in this book, simply "the Brothers." The first of these communications was in reply to

a proposal Sinnett had made, forwarded to his correspondent by H.P.B., suggesting that if the adepts would produce in Simla—where the Sinnetts were then living—a copy of the London *Times* on the day of its appearance in England, then he would undertake to “convert” everyone in that community to the fact of occult powers “beyond the control of ordinary science.” The answer, which he found on his writing table one evening, began directly with this proposal, explaining the reluctance of the adepts to perform “miracles” a la *carte*. The following extracts are taken from *The Occult World*.

“Precisely,” the Mahatma wrote, “because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of the sceptics,” it was inadmissible. “See it in what light you will, the world is yet in its first stage of disenthralment . . . hence unprepared. Very true we work by natural, not supernatural, means and laws. But as on the one hand science would find itself unable, in its present state, to account for the wonders given in its name, and on the other the ignorant masses would still be left to view the phenomenon in the light of a miracle, everyone who would thus be a witness to the occurrence would be thrown off his balance, and the result would be deplorable. Believe me it would be so especially for yourself, who originated the idea, and for the devoted woman who so foolishly rushes into the wide open door leading to notoriety. This door, though opened by so friendly a hand is yours, would prove very soon a trap and a fatal one, indeed, for her. And such is not surely your object. . . . Were we to accede to your desires, know you really what consequences would follow in the trail of success? The inexorable shadow which follows all human innovations moves on, yet few are they who are ever conscious of its approach and dangers. What are, then, they to expect who would offer the world an innovation which, owing to human ignorance, if believed in, will surely be attributed to those dark agencies the two-thirds of humanity believe in and dread as yet “The success of an attempt of such a kind as the one you propose must be calculated and based upon a thorough knowledge of the people around you. It depends entirely upon the social and

moral conditions of the people in their bearing on these deepest and most mysterious questions which can stir the human mind—the deific powers in man and the possibilities contained in Nature. How many, even of your best friends, of those who surround you, are more than superficially interested in these abstruse problems ?” Of the spirit and methods of modern science, the adept wrote:

“We doubt not but the men of your science are open to conviction; yet facts must be first demonstrated to them; they must first have become their own property, have proved amenable to their modes of investigation, before you find them ready to admit them as facts your modern men of science are less anxious to suggest a physical connection of facts which might unlock for them many an occult force in Nature, than to provide a convenient classification of scientific experiments, so that the most essential quality of a hypothesis is, not that it should be *trite*, but only *plausible*, in their opinion.

So far for science—as much as we know of it. As for human nature in general it is the same now as it was a million years ago. Prejudice, based upon selfishness, a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought—and occult study requires all that and much more—pride and stubborn resistance to truth, if it but upsets their previous notions

of things—such are the characteristics of your age.

“What, then, would be the results of the most astounding phenomena, supposing we consented to have them produced? However successful, danger would be growing proportionately with success. No choice would soon remain but to go on, ever *crescendo*, or to fall in this endless struggle with prejudice and ignorance, killed by your own weapons. .

“The ignorant, unable to grapple with the invisible operators, might some day vent their rage on the visible agents at work; the higher and educated classes would go on disbelieving, as ever, tearing you to shreds as before. In common with many, you blame us for our great secrecy. Yet we know something of human nature, for the experience of long centuries—ay, ages, has taught us. And we know that so long as science has anything to learn, and a shadow of religious dogmatism lingers in the hearts of the multitudes, the world’s prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush. . . the only salvation of the genuine proficient in occult sciences lies in the scepticism of the public: the charlatans and the jugglers are the natural shields of the adepts. The public safety is only ensured by our

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keeping secret the terrible weapons which might otherwise be used against **it**, and which, as you have been told, become deadly in the hands of the wicked and selfish.”

This letter, received by Mr. Sinnett during the summer of 1880, reveals the contrast between the European mind, anxious for “scientific demonstrations,” and the profoundly educational purposes of the Theosophical Adepts. The next letter, which concerned Mr. Hume as well as Sinnett, deals with the elevated moral ideas upon which the Theosophical Movement is based. Hume had read the first letter Sinnett received and together they had proposed the formation of a small group of cultured individuals for the study of occultism, which would be under the direct tutelage of their adept- correspondents, with the two Englishmen as intermediaries.

The second reply to Sinnett continued the explanation of the first letter, enlarging on the difference between the spirit of Eastern occultism and the mental and moral attitudes of even the most cultivated Europeans brought up under the influence of Western materialism and Christian ideas in religion.

It begins:

“We will be at cross purposes in our correspondence until **it** has been made entirely plain that occult science has its own methods of research, as fixed and arbitrary as the methods of its antithesis, physical science, are in their way. If the latter has its dicta, so also has the former; The mysteries never were, never can be, put within the reach of the general public, not, at least, until that longed-for day when our religious philosophy becomes universal. At no time have more than a scarcely appreciable minority of men possessed Nature’s secrets, though multitudes have witnessed the practical evidences of the possibility of their possession. The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of inquirers; and to become one, he must obey the inward impulse of his soul, irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly science or sagacity.”

The writer now passes to the question of favoring Mr. Sinnett with personal instruction, in order that he may transmit the secrets of occultism to the public in an "appropriate" manner. Sinnett, in the early pages of *The Occult World*, shows his disapproval of Madame Blavatsky's unconventional ways, referring to her failure to give "the British ruling classes of India" the proper attention. He speaks of her "attitude of obtrusive sympathy with the natives of the soil as compared

with the Europeans," deploring "mistakes" which, in his opinion, retarded the establishment of the Theosophical Society on a "dignified footing." It is evident that Mr. Sinnett regarded Madame Blavatsky as an extraordinary woman, possessing many admirable qualities, but sadly incompetent for the task of instructing the intellectual classes of the nineteenth century. His attitude of condescension toward her, while less obvious than Olcott's proprietary airs and fits of personal pique, is evinced by such judgments as these, implying that he, Sinnett, was far better fitted than H.P.B. for teaching Theosophy or occultism to *civilized* people. The fact is that this cosmopolitan British journalist was quite unable to lay down the "White Man's Burden." His ways of doing things were undoubtedly the best. In after years, Sinnett's inability to understand Madame Blavatsky slowly transformed his annoyance at her "eccentricities" into a jealousy which finally ended his usefulness to the Theosophical cause.

In this second letter, Mr. Sinnett is given reasons why Madame Blavatsky is the agent of the adept-fraternity, and reminded of the sacrifices that she, and Olcott also, have made in order to serve the Theosophical Movement. Concerning the motives and manner of life of those who would have direct correspondence with the adepts, the letter says:

Your desire is to be brought to communicate with one of us directly, without the agency of Madame Blavatsky. Your idea would be, as I understand it, to obtain such communications, either by letters, as the present one, or by audible words, so as to be guided by one of us in the management, and principally in the instruction of the Society. You seek all this, and yet, as you say yourself, hitherto you have not found sufficient reasons to even give up your modes of life, directly hostile to such modes of communication. This is hardly reasonable. He who would lift up high the banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand must give the example to others. He must be the first to change his modes of life, and, regarding the study of the occult mysteries as the upper step in the ladder of knowledge, must loudly proclaim it as such, despite exact science and the opposition of society.

The letter proceeds with an analysis of the motives causing Sinnett to make his proposal, which are said to be, briefly, a personal desire to know the nature of and to possess power over the occult forces in Nature; to demonstrate their existence

to "a few chosen Western minds"; to assure himself of the reality of a life after death, and, finally, to gain positive knowledge that the "adepts" spoken of by Madame Blavatsky actually exist, and

are not “fictions of a disordered, hallucinated brain.” The letter continues:

“To our minds, then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear *selfish*. (You have to pardon me what you might view as crudeness of language, if your desire is that which you really profess—to learn truth and get instruction from us who belong to quite a different world from the one you move in.) They are selfish, because you must be aware that the chief object of the Theosophical Society is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow-men, and the real value of this term ‘selfish,’ which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you; therefore, to begin with, you must not accept it otherwise than in the former sense. Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness, if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself. Yet you have ever discussed, but to put down, the idea of a Universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. These early letters of the Adepts, like all the others that were to come, leave no doubt as to the basic intent of the occult fraternity. The Adepts cared only for the great ethical ideal of human brotherhood. They would teach, assist and lend their powers of occult demonstration only to those who held the cause of brotherhood first in their hearts, and who would steadfastly labor for its realization in the world of men. These were the conditions, laid down with unending emphasis, to all who applied for instruction from the Theosophical Teachers.

A. O. Hume, who joined with Sinnett in suggesting the formation of a society in which they would be the leading lay figures, also received a letter which states even more forcibly the conditions of success in occult philosophy. Hume was a man of exceptional intelligence and personal discipline, but, like most Westerners, he found it difficult to understand why the teachers of H.P.B. would not meet him on *his* terms, in

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stead of their own. The letter to Hume is a long one, answering several questions. It begins by a consideration of the idea of a special Society, explaining what might be practicable in this direction, and welcoming the interest of so cultivated and capable an Englishman. This done, the abyss which separates occultism from Western conceptions is again described:

You say there are few branches of science with which you do not possess more or less acquaintance, and that you believe you are doing a certain amount of good, having acquired the position to do this by long years of study. Doubtless you do; but will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between the modes of physical (called exact often out of mere compliment) and metaphysical sciences. The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr. Tyndall with the fictions of poetry. The realistic science of fact on the other hand is utterly prosaic. Now, for us, poor unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of moral results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent to everyone and everything, or more bound to nothing but the selfish requisites for its

advancement, than this materialistic science of fact? May I ask then what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity, viewed as an intelligent whole? What care they for *Man* as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him? .

“Exact experimental science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy—therefore, can make no claim upon our help until it blends itself with metaphysics. Being but a cold classification of facts outside man, and existing before and after him, her domain of usefulness ceases for us at the outer boundary of these facts; and whatever the inferences and results for humanity from the materials acquired by her method, she little cares. . “Were the sun, the great nourishing father of our planetary system, to hatch granite chickens out of a boulder ‘under test conditions’ to-morrow, they (the men of science) would accept it as a scientific fact without wasting a regret that the fowls were not alive so as to feed the hungry and the starving. But let a *shaberon* cross the Himalayas in a time of famine and multiply sacks of rice for the perishing multitudes—as he could—and your magistrates and collectors would probably lodge him in jail to make him confess what granary he had robbed. This is exact science and your realistic world. And though, as you say, you

are impressed by the vast extent of the world’s ignorance on every subject, which you pertinently designate as a *few* palpable facts collected and roughly generalized, and a technical jargon invented to hide man’s ignorance of all that lies behind these facts,’ and though you speak of your faith in the infinite possibilities of Nature, yet you are content to spend your life in a work which aids only that same exact science.

In answer to Hume’s query as to what good he might accomplish from the study of occultism, his correspondent wrote:

“When the natives see that an interest is taken by the English, and even by some high officials in India, in their ancestral science and philosophies, they will themselves take openly to their study. And when they come to realize that the old ‘divine’ phenomena were not miracles, but scientific effects, superstition will abate. Thus, the greatest evil that now oppresses and retards the revival of Indian civilization will in time disappear. The present tendency of education is to make them materialistic and root out spirituality. With a proper understanding of what their ancestors meant by their writings and teachings, education would become a blessing, whereas now it is often a curse.

“The same causes that are materializing the Hindu mind are equally affecting all Western thought. Education enthrones skepticism, but imprisons spirituality. *You* can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. The era of blind faith is gone; that of inquiry is here. Inquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm, from its very destructiveness, can give nothing; it can only raze.

But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans.

“He who observes what is going on to-day, on the one hand among the Catholics, who are breeding miracles as fast as the white ants do their young, on the other among the free-thinkers, who are converting, by masses, into Agnostics—will see the drift of things. The age is revelling at a debauch of phenomena. The same marvels that the spiritualists quote in opposition to the dogmas of eternal perdition and atonement, the Catholics swarm to witness as proof of their faith in miracles. The skeptics make game of both. All are blind, and there is no one to lead them.

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“You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science, and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice? And if, after reflection, you should decide to enter this new career, let it be known that your society is no miracle-mongering or banqueting club, nor specially given to the study of phenomenalism. Its chief aim is to extirpate current superstitions and skepticism, and from long-sealed ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter, if he only wills, and that all ‘phenomena’ are but manifestations of natural law, to try to comprehend which is the duty of every intelligent being.”

The correspondence begun by these letters continued for a number of years, and while the foregoing extracts will serve to illustrate the general character of the Mahatma letters, later communications became long treatises on the occult philosophy—statements of the Theosophical teaching upon which Mr. Sinnett based his second book, *Esoteric Buddhism*. Although Sinnett developed a deep human affection and reverence for his distant instructor, and for a time gave unstinting service to the work of the Theosophical Movement, his antagonism and injustice to H.P.B. were his undoing. He finally fell back into spiritualistic practices, losing all touch with the real inspiration of the Theosophical Movement. Hume became disaffected in **1882** and later left the Society completely. He never gave himself whole-heartedly to the Theosophical Movement, and the reservations which he maintained in his correspondence with the adepts led to an estrangement ostensibly caused by philosophic differences with them, but actually by his immeasurable vanity, making it impossible for him to *learn* from anyone but himself.

For the first few years, however, the interest of these highly placed Englishmen was an important factor in the spread of Theosophy, in both India and Europe. Sinnett’s book, *The Occult World*, attracted wide attention throughout the West, and when he returned to England he became active in the London branch of the Theosophical Society. Hume, although he finally severed himself from the Theosophical Movement, continued in humanitarian pursuits, becoming a prime mover

in the formation of the Indian National Congress. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi's book on Indian Home Rule, Hume's counsels to Indian patriots are more than once quoted as the wise words of a Founding Father. There is no question but that, whatever the final outcome of their affiliation, the Theosophical Movement was furthered by both Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume, during the period of their active participation in its work.

CHAPTER VI THEOSOPHISTS IN INDIA

THE GREATEST EVENT of Madame Blavatsky's stay in India, so far as the future work of the Movement was concerned, was the starting of her magazine, *The Theosophist*, in October, **1879**. This publication became a primary record of the Theosophical literature, printing many basic articles on both the philosophy and the educational activities of theosophists. The early issues at once established the editorial tone which was to pervade the magazine so long as H.P.B. remained in India. The first issue contains four articles giving categorical statements of the nature and purposes of the Theosophical Movement. "What Is Theosophy?"—which follows the opening editorial—makes clear that Theosophy is neither a new "revelation" nor a man-made creed, but, fundamentally, a *spirit of impartial inquiry* moving from philosophical first principles which are to be found in every great religion and metaphysical system. Theosophy, however, is shown to be much more than a merely speculative inquiry: the profound conceptions of Vedic philosophy and of Buddhism, the teachings of the Egyptians hierophants, of Pythagoras and Plato, the Neoplatonic system, Gnostic mysticism, the metaphysical ideas of Leibniz and Spinoza, Hegel and Fichte, as well as Kabalistic doctrines and the medieval teachings of alchemical regeneration, and finally, the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, are all related in this article and considered as either direct or indirect expressions of "the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*." Having outlined these various historical sources of Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky adds: -----

Every Theosophist, then, holding to a theory of Deity "which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis," may accept any of the above definitions or belong to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of Theosophy. For the latter is belief in the Deity as the **ALL**, the source of all existence, the infinite that cannot be either comprehended or known, the universe alone revealing *It*, or, as some prefer it, Him, thus giving a sex to that, to anthropomorphize which is *blasphemy*.

This article also refers to the doctrine of Reincarnation, pointing out that numerous great thinkers of the West, from Pythagoras down to David Hume and Shelley, have inclined to this conception of soul evolution.

The second article—"What Are the Theosophists ?"—speaks of the Objects of the Theosophical

Society, “the most important of which is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas, and make the various nations remember that they are “children of one mother.” Madame Blavatsky now deals with the question of what theosophists “believe”:

With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics,...does the Society agree? Our answer is:—with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will *be*:—“*as a body—Nothing.*” The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself—the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. The religion of the Society is an algebraical equation, in which, so long as the sign—of equality is not omitted, each member is allowed to substitute quantities of his own, which better accord with climatic and other exigencies of his native land, with the idiosyncrasies of his people, or even with his own. Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation. As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature, whether materialist—those who find matter “the promise and potency of all terrestrial life,” or spiritualists—that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. . . . It will be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—God-ward—he is a theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with an inspiration of his own” to solve the universal problems.

Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky writes, is the friend and supporter of scientific inquiry, so long as scientists avoid

dogmatizing in the domains of psychology and metaphysics. It is also allied with every effort to understand the manifestations of the Divine Principle. True to its motto, “There is no Religion Higher than Truth,” the Society was conceived as a vehicle for the exercise of absolute religious freedom:

Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Mother Land. The latter, omitting the name of God from its constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to make a state religion, gives absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modelled upon this constitution, may fairly be termed a “Republic of Conscience.” The importance of these fundamental conceptions of the Theosophical Movement hardly needs emphasis in the troubled years of the twentieth century. There have been numerous reform movements and organizations expressing verbal devotion to non-sectarian ideals, but in time almost all lapse into some form of dogma or creed, or become academic debating societies. The principles of the Theosophical Movement, however, so clearly expressed in the years of its foundation, contain implicit safeguards against the usual fate of such

benevolent organizations or societies. Students of Theosophy, if once they attain to genuine understanding of these principles, will find themselves unable to fall into sectarian habits of mind. First of all, the aim of forming a nucleus of Universal brotherhood is a dynamic which calls forth from men the spiritual resources which no lesser ideal can command. Second, the idea of gaining knowledge through experience—from the “Book of Nature”—is uncompromisingly opposed to the moral and intellectual passivity which characterizes Western religion, and which is the root-cause of sectarianism. Finally, the joining of metaphysical study with mystical religion introduces the factor of gradual growth in *mind*, making progress in Theosophy a matter of definite steps to be taken by the inquirer. This progress, moreover, cannot be neglected without losing the spirit of the Theosophical ideal, for Theosophy, as defined in these early articles by Madame Blavatsky, must be studied, practiced and *lived* in order to be understood. It is these requirements which differentiate Theosophy from any particular religion or “faith,” and which establish the high responsibilities of those who undertake to tread the Theosophic path.

75 ————— NO CONCERN WITH POLITICS

Toward the close of “What Are the Theosophists ?” Madame Blavatsky writes:

In conclusion, we may state that, broader and far more universal in its views than any existing mere scientific Society, **it** has *plus* science its belief in every possibility, and determined will to penetrate into those unknown spiritual regions which exact science pretends that its votaries have no business to explore. And, it has one quality more than any religion in that it makes no difference between Gentile, Jew or Christian. It is in this spirit that the Society has been established upon the footing of Universal Brotherhood. Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and Communism, which it abhors—as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labor; the Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed towards the occult truths of the visible and invisible worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his Soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his Judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Here the implication is that the Theosophical Movement is an endeavor to brush aside all superficial “solutions” to the problems of life and to approach them in their essential nature. Theosophy is impatient of the scientific rule that human knowledge is dependent upon evidence perceptible to the physical senses. It postulates the reality of inner senses which may be used with scientific exactitude by those who develop them. The indifference to politics expressed by Madame Blavatsky is in cognizance of the fact that the mere manipulation of social relationships, whether by violent over-turnings of established government, or through ordinary legislative processes, can accomplish no lasting good when separated from the larger purposes of moral education. The achievements of politics, conceived as the quest for power, will always disappoint humanitarians who choose this method of reform, for the reason that the rearrangement of social organization can never of itself bring about the betterment of human beings in any real sense; the betterment of *man* is the betterment of human understanding, and when this is gained, the difficulties of social organization will take care of themselves, or at least will no longer be the apparently insoluble problems they represent today.

Preoccupation with politics obscures the real processes of moral and social change which ought to be the study of men of good will. Madame Blavatsky's strictures against Socialism might puzzle the modern liberal, save for the undoubted fact that she warmly approved of the ethical principle of absolute sharing and had little use for the entrenched selfishness of the economic system of private property. In this passage, she is obviously castigating the brutal conception of the class struggle common to European socialist doctrine. Elsewhere, speaking of the indigenous American socialism of Edward Bellamy, she calls the organization of society as depicted in *Looking Back Ward* a representation of "what should be the first great step towards the full realization of universal brotherhood." She refers to both Buddha and Jesus as "ardent philanthropists and practical *altruists*—*preaching most unmistakably Socialism* of the noblest and highest type, self-sacrifice to the bitter end." Plainly, Socialism of this sort is unconnected with any special economic or political theory, but embodies that generous spirit of human brotherhood which is the principal inspiration of the Theosophical Movement.

The two remaining articles of the four referred to are "The Drift of Western Spiritualism" and "Antiquity of the Vedas." The first reiterates the Theosophical attitude toward Spiritualistic phenomena, the second corrects the mistakes of Christian scholars and Western orientalist who have attempted to prove that the sacred Literature of the East is of recent historical origin. Many more discussions of these important subjects were to appear in later numbers of the *Theosophist*.

As interest in Theosophy spread in India, the pages of the *Theosophist* reflected the progress of the Society. The issues are filled with profound discussions of Hindu metaphysics, commentaries and translations of sacred literature. European contributors provided articles dealing with various phases of Western metaphysics and mysticism, making the magazine the most cosmopolitan philosophical publication of its time; and, while conducted by H.P.B., it was pervaded with a living devotion to truth that inspired and energized theosophists everywhere in the world.

The following gained by the Society among the Hindus soon aroused concerted opposition from Christian missionaries in India. While these enemies of the Society could accomplish nothing by direct criticism of Theosophical ideas, Madame Blavatsky herself suffered considerable annoyance and harrassment from the false reports concerning her life and work that were circulated by the missionaries. She, of course, was outspoken in her condemnation of all attempts to pervert the Hindus from their ancestral religion, regarding them as an impudent invasion of the personal affairs of the Indian people. This attitude of hers toward the Christians, as well as her great reverence for the Vedic philosophy of India, naturally increased her popularity with learned Hindus, whom the missionaries had never been able to affect at all. Sensing the danger that the Theosophical Society constituted toward their proselytizing activities, the missionaries imported from the United States one Rev. Joseph Cook, who came ostensibly on a tour, but who occupied himself with a series of public lectures misrepresenting Theosophy. He was repeatedly challenged to meet the theosophists in debate, but always avoided so conclusive a test of his statements. After being publicly denounced by a British Army officer, he left the country. The attacks of the Christian Missions on the work of the Theosophical Movement, which began with a whispering campaign against the

Founders of the Society, but came to a climax in connection with the affair known to theosophists as the “Coulomb Conspiracy,” would have been relatively harmless irritations, had it not been for the weakness and vacillations of theosophists themselves.

H.P.B. and Olcott continued to live in Bombay until December, **1882**, when the headquarters of the Theosophical Society were permanently established at Adyar. During these first years in India, the Founders traveled much, the adventures encountered on one of their journeys, which included a visit to the Karli Caves, becoming the basis for H.P.B.’s collection of writings entitled *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan* (originally a series of letters appearing in a Russian newspaper) A visit to Rajputana is also chronicled in that volume. In 1880 the two went by boat to Ceylon, where Theosophical meetings were held and on May **25** both Olcott and **H.P.B.**

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“took *pansil*,” and were formally acknowledged as Buddhists. Both, as Olcott says, had previously declared themselves Buddhists many times, their allegiance, however, being to the original teaching of Gautama Buddha which is the same as the Wisdom Religion of the Upanishads, and not to any Buddhist sect. Olcott later returned to Ceylon alone to work for more effective education of Buddhist youth and to help in the raising of a National Education Fund. During his second visit he compiled the *Buddhist Catechism* and obtained for this succinct statement of southern Buddhism the approval of the High Priest Sumangala of Widyodaya College. Olcott was stimulated to do this work by the general ignorance of Buddhism and by the absurd misrepresentations of Buddha’s teachings spread by Christian zealots in Ceylon and elsewhere. He discovered that eight out of the eleven schools of the island of Ceylon were entirely in the hands of the Missionaries, and he wrote the *Catechism* to help young Buddhists to cope with the false statements of these foes of their religion.

In **1882**, Olcott again visited Ceylon, infusing new life in the campaign for Buddhist and national education. He was now fifty years old. It was at this time, while in Galle, a city of Ceylon, that Olcott first performed the mesmeric cures for which he became famous. The Catholics were attempting to convert the house-well of one of their communicants into a healing shrine, after the fashion of Lourdes. Concerned for the progress of his education fund, Olcott feared that ignorant Buddhists might be converted to Catholicism in the hope of being cured of their ills. It was soon after this problem arose that Olcott, meeting a half-paralyzed Buddhist of Galle, felt an inner suggestion to attempt a mesmeric treatment of the sufferer. The result was extraordinary, for the paralytic was soon able to sign a statement testifying to his cure with a hand that had been entirely useless. Within a few days, Olcott found himself surrounded by crowds of suppliant sick, and for years, until instructed by the Theosophical Adepts to stop in order to preserve his health, he continued to use his mesmeric power to bring relief to persons whom doctors had been unable to help.

Among the Hindus attracted to the Society were two Brahmins of exceptional capacity. The first was Damodar K. Mavalankar,

79 ————— DAMODAR AND SUBBA ROW

who became a member of the Society in August, 1879. Damodar was like William Q. Judge in his loyalty and devotion to H.P.B. Contact with her, and study of the teachings of Theosophy caused a sudden revolution in his life, to the extent that it brought a break with his orthodox Brahmin family, although not with his wife, who understood and upheld him in his course. Damodar gave all his energies to the service of the Theosophic cause, working early and late for the Movement. In 1880 he abandoned his status in the Brahman caste and announced his action in an article in the *Theosophist* entitled "Castes in India." In this article, Damodar pointed out the unbrotherliness of all caste distinctions and called upon his brother Hindus to break away from the evils of the caste system by following his example. Damodar remained a tireless servant of the Society until H.P.B. left India for the last time. Then, after several months, he disappeared, it being reported that he had gone to Tibet at the call of the Theosophical Adepts.

T. Subba Row, also a Brahmin, was a man of extraordinary learning and was capable of great philosophic subtlety. Although reserved in his relations with Europeans, as were nearly all Hindu scholars, Subba Row recognized the importance of the Theosophical Movement and for a while contributed excellent articles to the *Theosophist*. He joined the Society in **1882**, while H.P.B. and Olcott were visiting in Madras. His brilliance, Olcott relates in *Old Diary Leaves*, was a factor in the determination of the Founders to establish the headquarters of the Society in the Madras Presidency. In **1883**, Subba Row took part in a controversy which developed around Mr. Sinnett's second volume, *Esoteric Buddhism*. With the approval of H.P.B. he issued a pamphlet discussing this book, largely in its defence, but adding also some corrections to cover certain mistakes of the author in explaining occult tenets. That Subba Row was able to do this is itself evidence of his own great learning, and even, perhaps, of his occult discipleship. His most notable work was a series entitled, "Lectures on the Bhagavad-Gita," which revealed his mastery of Oriental metaphysics. Brahmin pride, however, was his undoing, and in **1887** he began to dispute with Madame Blavatsky on the number of "principles" in the human constitution. Subba

Row was a Vedantin and insisted upon the Brahmanical division, while H.P.B. held to the seven-fold classification of the trans-Himalayan "Arhat Esoteric School." In consequence of this difference, Subba Row withdrew his cooperation with H.P.B.

The relationship of the Arya Samaj with the Theosophical Society, originally established while the Founders of the Society were in New York, continued for a time in India on much the same footing—that of sympathy and cooperation without any organic connection between the two organizations. Olcott and H.P.B. met with Dayanand Saraswati on several occasions and they published a series of autobiographical articles by the Swami in the *Theosophist* and reported his public tilts with Christian missionaries. In 1882, however, the leader of the Arya Samaj turned against the Society, charging that its founders had renounced for Buddhism their "belief" in the Swami's interpretation of the nature of Deity. After this attack, Olcott printed Dayanand Saraswati's own self-contradictory statements in parallel columns in the *Theosophist* and the friendly alliance between the two movements was at an end. The Swami's bitterness against the theosophists seemed chiefly based on the fact that they would not adopt his theological teachings derived from orthodox Hinduism. He also accused the theosophists of forsaking the Vedas and of doing no practical good for India. When these charges became known, numerous Hindus contributed letters to the *Theosophist* dissociating themselves from the strictures of the aggrieved

Swami and expressing deep gratitude to the Society for its labors on behalf of the Aryan philosophy. However, on the occasion of Dayanand's death, in October, 1883, the *Theosophist* published a moving tribute to the memory of his life, which was spent in a determined effort to clear away the superstitions which had become associated with Vedic religion. Today, works of reference speak of him as a forerunner of modern Indian nationalism, one who helped to check the disintegrating influences of European culture on India's educated youth.

A curiosity of occult phenomena which was to have later repercussions was disclosed in **1883**, in connection with *The Occult World*. During the summer of that year, the London Spiritualist publication, *Light*, printed a review of this book,

81 ————— THE "KIDDLE INCIDENT"

which elicited from Henry Kiddle, an American spiritualist, a letter charging Mr. Sinnett's Himalayan Teacher with having plagiarized an address given by Mr. Kiddle in August, **1880**, at Lake Pleasant, New York. In a letter to *Light*, Kiddle reproduced portions of his address in comparison with extracts from one of the occult communications as evidence supporting his charge. Pleased with this apparent proof of fraud, the Spiritualists began a triumphant hue and cry, eager to discredit the "adepts" of the Theosophists. Little or no explanation was given at first by Mr. Sinnett, but in the course of time Subba Row wrote for the *Theosophist* a cautious account of what had happened. An Anglo-Indian member of the Society, Major-General Morgan, gave further hints, and finally, in the fourth edition of *The Occult World*, Mr. Sinnett printed in full the explanation provided him by his adept-correspondent. It had to do with the recondite process of occult precipitation, involving also the imperfect perception of a youthful disciple who had served as the amanuensis of the author of the letter. On the whole, the "Kiddie" incident afforded a useful check on the tendency of religious-minded theosophists to regard the Theosophical adepts and all their activities as entirely infallible. It also served as theoretical instruction in the occult method of thought-transference and precipitation used by the adepts, which doubtless had been regarded by many as a kind of Theosophical "miracle." Theosophists, as a body, were rather puzzled than disturbed by the affair, being wholly satisfied when they learned the explanation given in the Appendix to *The Occult World*. The theosophists were already familiar with the considerable body of philosophical teaching made public in *Esoteric Buddhism*, which appeared in **1883**, and in the pages of the *Theosophist*, and that the authors of these profound teachings should need to copy from a spiritualist orator was not a serious possibility for any informed member of the Society.

From the time of the first publication of *The Occult World*, in June, 1881, an increasing number of Europeans sought out Madame Blavatsky in India. The headquarters of the Society soon became a focus of attraction for all those whose interests went beyond the limits of conventional thought. Besides this influence of the Theosophical publications, Madame

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Blavatsky, as Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society, maintained a swelling correspondence with inquirers in all parts of the world. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, while egocentric in viewpoint and garrulous to excess, allows no doubt that the Founders worked unceasingly through all their waking hours for the progress of the Theosophic cause. While some

visitors came from mere curiosity, others were drawn to H.P.B. by an inner yearning to know the truth, and these, if they were able, often remained to give of their time and energy to the work. Thus the headquarters was increasingly a center where volunteer workers were to be found, each helping according to his talents and capacity. Madame Emma Coulomb, an English woman, who had befriended H.P.B. in Egypt, early appeared on the Indian scene. In August, **1879**, she wrote to H.P.B. a pathetic appeal from Ceylon where she and her husband were stranded and penniless. The Coulobms were sent for, and in 1880 were installed at the Bombay headquarters, Madame Coulomb helping with the household tasks, Mr. Coulomb working as a carpenter and gardener. These two were to be a source of much difficulty to H.P.B. in years to come, for, although they pledged themselves as members of the Society, Madame Coulomb was a Spiritualist and a bigoted Christian, and her husband a willing tool in her later plot to avenge fancied injustices against them. The shrewish temperament of the wife was a source of frequent quarrels in the Theosophical household, leading, in 1881, to the desertion of two of the workers who found the Coulobms intolerable companions. H.P.B., however, bore their presence with patience, mindful of the obligation she had incurred in **1870** in Cairo, when Madame Coulomb had taken her in after a disastrous shipwreck which left her temporarily without either personal possessions or financial resources.

When the Coulobms felt their position in India to be fairly secure, and as they became acquainted with various members, visitors and inquirers, they began to express dissatisfaction with their relatively humble lot. Before long Madame Coulomb tried to extort or beg money from wealthy persons interested in the Society, notably from the native prince, Harrisinji Rupsinji. Madame Coulomb whispered about tales of her own powers and of her ability to find “hidden treasures,”

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sometimes intimating that Madame Blavatsky’s powers were from the “Evil One.” The Coulobms were more or less constantly in communication with the establishments of the missionaries near by, and Madame Coulomb, in particular, engaged in fractious religious disputes with resident members of the Society. Col. Olcott took her to task for these needless difficulties on several occasions, but in general, the Coulobms were looked upon as harmless meddlers. Their misfortunes caused them to be viewed with charity, and the known gratitude of H.P.B. helped to reconcile the theosophists to the annoyance and disturbances they created. Just prior to the departure of H.P.B. and Col. Olcott for Europe in February, **1884**, a Council was appointed to take charge of affairs at headquarters during the absence of the Founders. Among the members of the Council were Dr. Franz Hartmann and Mr. St. George Lane-Fox, with whom the Coulobms had been in almost constant wrangles. They desired to dispense with the Coulobms altogether, but on the prayers of Madame Coulomb, H.P.B. permitted the couple to remain, and, in order to remove sources of disagreement as much as possible, she gave the Coulobms “authority” to do the housework, to have charge of the upkeep of the premises, and to keep her own rooms in order.

With H.P.B. and Olcott gone, the Coulobms refused to accept any orders or obey any instructions from the resident members of the Council; they opposed access to H.P.B.’s apartments and declared that she had placed them in independent control of her quarters and the conduct of the household. On the other hand, the members of the Council living at headquarters, distrusting the Coulobms utterly, were more or less harsh and contemptuous toward them, communicating

with them only by letter, and refusing to eat with them, or to eat the food provided by Madame Coulomb. Her they charged with extravagance and waste, and suspecting that she profited personally from the handling of the domestic funds, they set about auditing her daily expenditures. Vain, sensitive, and smarting under their grievances, both real and imaginary, the Coulombs planned a dual revenge. They wrote to H.P.B., reciting their wrongs, asserting their own loyalty and innocence of any wrong-doing, and making sundry charges against

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the Council members. At the same time the Council members were also writing the Founders, telling circumstantially the actions of the Coulombs and their whispered insinuations against *the* good faith of the theosophists and H.P.B. While this war of charges and recriminations was going on by mail, there can be little doubt but that the Coulombs were busy fortifying themselves for their ultimate treachery by constructing false doors and sliding panels in the so-called “occult room” in H.P.B.’s apartments, so as to give such an appearance of mechanical contrivance as might support charges of fraud in the phenomena taking place at headquarters. It seems clear that at this time the Coulombs were already in active conspiracy with the missionaries and were carefully following able but sinister instructions. By temporizing with the resident members of the Council, by their written denials and protestations to H.P.B. and Col. Olcott, they were gaining the time needed to perfect the foundation for their subsequent accusations.

Both H.P.B. and Olcott wrote the Coulombs and the Council, endeavoring to patch up the quarrel, and appealing to all to exercise mutual forbearance and tolerance for the sake of the Society and its work. This effort at reconciliation failing, the Council members summoned the Coulombs before a meeting to answer charges of bad faith, of treachery, and of circulating false stories about H.P.B. and the phenomena at headquarters. The Council also discovered what had been going on in the “occult room.” The Coulombs neither affirmed nor denied the statements made in the several affidavits read concerning their behavior. When they declined to produce any evidence to support their allegations, they were expelled from the Society and ordered to vacate the premises. Legal proceedings were then threatened to eject them, and in the wrangling St. George Lane-Fox struck M. Coulomb, who had him arrested and held for assault and battery. The Coulombs offered, during the disputes and negotiations, to leave the country and go to America if paid **3,000** rupees and given their passage. This was refused. Finally, at the end of May, **1884**, on the direct approval of **H.P.B.**, to whom both the Coulombs and the Council members had appealed, and after Madame Coulomb had threatened H.P.B. with what Franz

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Hartmann called a “blackmailing letter,” the Coulombs were compelled to leave.

The resentful couple went at once to the missionaries and were received with open arms. They were given money and their living was provided them. In the ensuing three months, plans were perfected for an assault intended once and for all to destroy the reputation of Madame Blavatsky, and, as a result, to ruin the Theosophical Society. The purpose of the Coulombs became plain when the September, **1884**, issue of the *Christian College Magazine* began a series of articles containing letters alleged to have been written by Madame Blavatsky to Madame Coulomb. The obvious

intent in publishing these letters was to make H.P.B. appear a conscienceless swindler, and her phenomena, frauds.

The immediate effect of the publication of Madame Coulomb's charges in the *Christian College Magazine* was to touch off the resentments of every orthodoxy in both India and England which had reason to dislike the idol-smashing tendency of the Theosophical Movement and which feared the undogmatic philosophical appeal of Theosophy. All possible capital was made of the Coulomb accusations, with, of course, a renewal of every old and exploded charge against Madame Blavatsky, her teachers, and the Theosophical Society. The Christen sects, the Spiritualist publications, the daily press which welcomed any sensation as "copy," all exploited the "revelation" of the missionary magazine. When news of the attack reached Madame Blavatsky in England, she at once took steps to protect the good name of the Society by offering her resignation as Corresponding Secretary to Col. Olcott. Because of the pressure from leading English members, he refused to accept it. H.P.B. then wrote the following letter, which appeared in the *London Times* for October :

Sir,—With reference to the alleged exposure at Madras of a dishonourable conspiracy between myself and two persons of the name of Coulomb to deceive the public with occult phenomena, I have to say that the letters purporting to have been written by me are certainly not mine. Sentences here and there I recognise, taken from old notes of mine on different matters, but they are mingled with interpolations that entirely pervert their meaning. With these exceptions the whole of the letters are a fabrication.

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The fabricators must have been grossly ignorant of Indian affairs, since they make me speak of a "Maharajah of Lahore," when every Indian schoolboy knows that no such person exists.

With regard to the suggestion that I attempted to promote the financial prosperity" of the Theosophical Society by means of occult phenomena, I say that I have never at any time received, or attempted to obtain, from any person any money either for myself or for the Society by any such means. I defy anyone to come forward and prove the contrary. Such money as I have received has been earned by literary work of my own, and these earnings, and what remained of my inherited property when I went to India, have been devoted to the Theosophical Society. I am a poorer woman to-day than I was when, with others, I founded the Society. -----

Your obedient Servant,

H. P. Blavatsky

On October **23**, 1884, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a long interview with H.P.B., in which she denied authorship of the letters attributed to her by the Coulombs, repeated the facts of the Coulombs' bad faith, and called attention to the further fact that two letters attributed by the Coulombs to other members of the Society had already been proved forgeries.

Immediate preparations were made by the Founders to return to India. Col. Olcott arrived at headquarters in November. H.P.B. stopped off in Egypt to obtain information in regard to the Coulombs and did not reach India till December. On her arrival she was met and presented with an Address signed by hundreds of the native students of the Christian College, expressing gratitude

for what she had done for India, and disclaiming any part or sympathy in the attacks of the *Christian College Magazine*.

The Convention of the Society in India met at headquarters near the end of December. From the first H.P.B. had insisted that the Coulombs and the proprietors of the *Christian College Magazine* must be met in Court by legal proceedings for libel. The future of the Society, the authenticity of her teachings, she declared, were wrapped up in the assaults made upon her own reputation, and if her good name were destroyed, both the Society and Theosophy would suffer irreparable injury. For herself, she avowed, she cared nothing personally, but the fierce onset was in reality directed against

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her work, and that work could not be separated in the public mind from herself as its leading exponent. To destroy the one was to inflict disaster on the other.

Col. Olcott was irresolute. His long personal friendship and common spiritualistic past with Mr. W. Stainton Moses and Mr. C. C. Massey, both of whom believed that H.P.B. had been the agency both for genuine and spurious phenomena, undoubtedly affected him powerfully. He knew that Mr. Sinnett had ideas similar to his own regarding the nature of **H.P.B.** On his return to India he found that A. O. Hume, formerly a responsible Government official and, next to Mr. Sinnett, the most influential friend of the Society in India, had become infected with doubts and suspicions and believed that, while some of H.P.B.'s phenomena were undoubtedly genuine, others had been produced by collusion with the Coulombs. Olcott found, also, that the more prominent Hindu members of the Society, although willing to speak politely in favor of H.P.B., were wholly opposed to legal proceedings in which religious convictions and subjects sacred to them would be publicly argued and dissected by the defendants' attorneys in an alien Court. On every hand Olcott was urged to consider that psychical powers and principles could be proved only by actual production of phenomena in Court—a thing forbidden alike by their religious training and the rules of Occultism. Others insisted that a judgment, even if obtained, would be valueless before the world, since the mischief was already done; those who believed the phenomena fraudulent would still think so, judgment or no judgment; those who believed them genuine would continue to hold that view if the matter were allowed to drop, while an adverse judgment would forever brand H.P.B. and destroy the Society beyond any hope of resuscitation.

But H.P.B. stood firm for legal prosecution of the defamers, declaring her own innocence; the Masters, she said, would not countenance disloyalty and ingratitude, and that, at worst, it would be better for the theosophists to go down fighting for what they held to be true than to live on by evading the issue. Torn by his fears and doubts, Col. Olcott took what was doubtless to him the only possible road. He proposed a compromise which was in effect a betrayal; he demanded that

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H.P.B. place the matter in the hands of the Convention and abide by its decision, threatening, if this were not done, that he and others would abandon the Society. Deserted by her only friends, H.P.B. agreed. Accordingly, the Convention appointed a Committee which unanimously reported:

Resolved—That the letters published in the *Christian College Magazine* under the heading "Collapse of Koot Hoomi" are only a pretext to injure the cause of Theosophy; and as these letters

necessarily appear absurd to those who are acquainted with our philosophy and facts, and as those who are not acquainted with those facts could not have their opinion changed, even by a judicial verdict given in favour of Madame Blavatsky, therefore **it** is the unanimous opinion of this Committee that Madame Blavatsky should not prosecute her defamers in a Court of Law.

This report, unanimously adopted by the Convention, was received by the Indian and sectarian press with prolonged jeers. The great majority of public journals and intelligent observers considered it to be a tacit admission by Theosophists that the Coulomb charges were true.

The blow was well-nigh mortal to the body of **H.P.B.** During the succeeding three months she was rarely able to leave her bed. Finally, toward the end of March, yielding to the solicitations of the few who still remained devotedly loyal to her, she prepared to leave India and go to Europe. On March **21** she once more tendered her resignation as Corresponding Secretary, closing her letter with these words:

I leave with you, one and all, and to every one of my friends and sympathizers, my loving farewell. Should this be my last word, I would implore you all, as you have regard for the welfare of mankind and your own Karma, to be true to the Society and not to permit **it** to be overthrown by the enemy. Fraternally and ever yours—in life or death.

H. P. Blavatsky.

Her resignation was accepted by the Council with fulsome compliments, even as the cowardly action of the Convention and its Committee had been accompanied with brave words.

The failure of her closest associates in India to give H.P.B. anything more than nominal support was the crucial disaster. Prejudiced and vindictive attacks from without she was used to, but against betrayal from within, covered over with verbal solicitude, she had no defense. The behavior of Olcott, Sinnett, and the Indian theosophists had placed the Society in a

class with all the other convention-bound bodies which prefer an existence of dubious “respectability” to the hazards of a militant stand on principle. H.P.B. had come to India to lay the foundations for a vital, non-sectarian movement, and now the allies she found there hid dragged the Society down to the level of a timid church organization, unwilling to face a public test of their convictions. This was the first real trial of the Theosophical Society. Others were coming.

If the claims of the Theosophic teaching were not mere verbiage, then individuals who adopted the high aims of the Society might have expected to meet the ordeals which every occult disciple must face sooner or later. Occultism, they had been told, is a school of *experience* as well as of theory and metaphysical study. The occultist must prove himself capable of absolute self reliance in any situation. He must be loyal to principle to the very end. Few, however, of the members of the Theosophical Society were able to recognize occult trials in the commonplace guises of the nineteenth century. They supposed that true initiations must be conducted in subterranean crypts, according to literary tradition; that tests would be announced according to some ritual. Threatened loss of social prestige, the merciless impersonality of public ridicule, the vulgar laughter and contempt of the ignorant masses—these were dragons more fearsome than any bold hero of old had to conquer, and the theosophists of India, unable to realize that *their* weaknesses were psychological and moral, failed miserably without even knowing what had happened. Their

desertion of H.P.B. had the further consequence of setting the stage for another and even more damaging attack on the Theosophical Movement.

CHAPTER VII THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

TODAY, THE LONDON Society for Psychical Research is a well-known and respected body, with records of its investigations more voluminous than any other research organization in the field. Less known is the fact that it was founded in **1882** by a group which included several prominent members of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society. The latter were Prof. F. W. H. Myers, W. Stainton Moses—who wrote under the pseudonym of “M. A. (Oxon)”—and C. C. Massey. It is evident that these founders of the Society for Psychical Research had been more attracted to Theosophy by its connection with psychical phenomena than by the ethical principles which were the primary consideration of H. P. Blavatsky.

In any event, the preliminary announcement of the new Society declared that “the present is an opportune time for making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and Spiritualistic.” Committees were to be appointed to investigate and report upon such subjects as telepathy, hypnotism, trance, clairvoyance, sensitives, apparitions, etc. The announcement stated that “the aim of the Society will be to approach these various problems without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated.” The new Society almost immediately attracted to its Fellowship some hundreds of men and women of reputation and ability in their several fields. By **1884** the Society had made numerous investigations, had begun publishing its *Proceedings*, and was established in the public confidence as a serious scientific body.

The announcement of the formation of the London Society for Psychical Research received a warm welcome in the *Theosophist*. An editorial called attention to the similarity of the

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aims of the new Society to some of the Theosophical objectives and offered full cooperation, concluding:

The new Psychic Research Society, then, has our best wishes, and may count upon the assistance of our thirty-seven Asiatic Branches in carrying out their investigations, if our help is not disdained. We will be only too happy to enlist in this movement, which is for the world’s good, the friendly services of a body of Hindu, Parsi and Sinhalese gentlemen of education, who have access to the vernacular, Sanskrit and Pali literature of their respective countries, and who were never yet brought, either by governmental or any private agency, into collaboration with European students of Psychology. . . . Let us, by all means, have an international, rather than a local, investigation of the most important of all subjects of human study—PSYCHOLOGY.

There is no evidence that the London group accepted this invitation to collaborate. The London Lodge was largely under the influence of Mr. Sinnett, who had returned to England, and the interest

of most of the members was upon the phenomenal aspect of “the occult.” The London Lodge, therefore, was a center of eager investigations and experiments nominally in line with the Third Object of the Theosophical Society. Rumors were afloat regarding “astral appearances,” “Occult letters” and other phenomena connected with the mysterious “Brothers” supposed to be the invisible directors behind the Theosophical activities. When Col. Olcott arrived in London early in the summer of 1884, followed a little later by H.P.B., interest rose to a genuine excitement. This excitement, coupled with the fact that a number of members of the Society for Psychical Research were also Fellows of the Theosophical Society, made it natural and plausible for the S.P.R. to turn its attention to the inviting possibilities at hand. Accordingly, on May 2, 1884, the Council of the S.P.R. appointed a “Committee for the purpose of taking such evidence as to the alleged phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society as might be offered by members of that body at the time in England, or as could be collected elsewhere.” Out of this beginning grew the famous “exposure” that for a time threatened the ruin of the Theosophical Society.

The S.P.R. Committee as originally constituted consisted of Profs. E. Gurney, F.W.H. Myers, F. Podmore, and J. H. Stack.

To these were subsequently added Prof. Henry Sidgwick, Mrs. Sidgwick, and Mr. Richard Hodgson, a young University graduate.

In May the Committee questioned Col. Olcott, he narrating the details of various phenomena he had witnessed during the years of his connection with H.P.B. Mohini M. Chatterji, a young Hindu who had accompanied the Founders from India, was also questioned. Mr. Sinnett repeated to the Committee his observations on the phenomena described in his *Occult World*. During the summer the meetings of the Cambridge Branch of the S.P.R. on several occasions invited Col. Olcott, Chatterji, and Madame Blavatsky to attend. According to the preliminary Report, the visitors permitted themselves to be questioned on many topics.” Additional reports were obtained by the Committee from many sources testifying to a wide range and variety of phenomena through the preceding ten years, in America and Europe as well as in India. All the witnesses were persons of repute.

In the autumn of 1884 the Committee published “for private and confidential use” the “first report of the Committee,” a pamphlet of 130 pages, now very rare. It contains a description of the basis and nature of the investigations, the Committee’s comments and tentative conclusions, and two notes, one relating to the Coulobms, the other, by Prof. Myers, giving a brief digest of the Theosophical views and explanations of the phenomena in question. Also included in this Report were a number of appendices summarizing the evidence obtained from the many witnesses.

The phenomena investigated by the Committee were chiefly (1) “astral appearances” of living men; (2) the transportation by “Occult” means of physical substances; (3) the “precipitation” of letters and other messages; (4) “Occult” sounds and voices. In the earlier portion of the Report the Committee says that in considering evidences of abnormal occurrences it “has altogether declined to accept the evidence of a paid medium as to any abnormal event.” It goes on to say that, “in dealing with these matters, it is admitted that special stringency is necessary, and one obvious precaution lies in the exclusion of all the commoner and baser motives to fraud or exaggeration.” But with regard to suspicion of the motives of the Theosophical

exponents it says, "we may say at once that no trustworthy evidence supporting such a view has been brought to our notice." -----

Although the witnesses emphasized that the Theosophical phenomena were not of the kind familiarly known as mediumistic, and although Madame Blavatsky declined to produce any phenomena for the consideration of the Committee, as her purpose was to promulgate certain doctrines, not to prove her possession of Occult powers, the Committee's approach and its theories to account for the phenomena were the familiar ones employed in Spiritualistic investigations. The Committee stated that there were three points calling for the greatest care on its part. The first of these is "that it is certain that fraud has been practiced by persons connected with the Society." This refers to the charges brought by the Coulombs, who were members of the Theosophical Society, against Madame Blavatsky; to the "Kiddie incident," and to certain "evidence privately brought before us by Mr. C. C. Massey." On this matter the Committee says that it suggests, "to the Western mind at any rate, that no amount of caution can be excessive in dealing with evidence of this kind." The second point raised by the Committee is that "Theosophy appeals to Occult persons and methods." Accustomed to dealing with mediums and mediumistic manifestations, where the moral and philosophical factors have no bearing, accustomed to believe that where there is reticence there must be fraud, the Committee did not like the idea made plain at all times by H.P.B. that the subject of Occult phenomena, their production and laws, would not be submitted to scientific exploitation, but would only be made known to those who qualify themselves under the strictest pledges of secrecy and discipleship. Finally, the Committee recognized that—Theosophy makes claims which, though avowedly based on occult science, do, in fact, ultimately cover much more than a merely scientific field. This, also, is not agreeable to the Committee, which remarks:

The history of religions would have been written in vain if we still fancied that a Judas or a Joe Smith was the only kind of apostle who needed watching. . . . Suspicions of this kind are necessarily somewhat vague; but it is not our place to give them definiteness. What we have to point out is that it is our

duty, as investigators, in examining the evidence for Theosophic marvels, to suppose the possibility of a deliberate combination to deceive on the part of certain Theosophists. We cannot regard this possibility as excluded by the fact that we find no reason to attribute to any of the persons whose evidence we have to consider, any vulgar or sordid motive for such combination.

But in spite of its suspicions, its doubts, fears and mental reservations, occasioned by ignorance of the laws governing metaphysical phenomena; by the absolute refusal of **H.P.B.** to disclose the processes of practical Occultism; by the atmosphere of mystery surrounding the whole subject of the hidden "Brothers" and their powers; by the charges of fraud laid by the Coulombs at the door of H.P.B.; by the undisclosed "evidence privately brought before us by Mr. C. C. Massey"—in spite of all these disturbing elements, the testimony amassed by the Committee was so absolutely overwhelming as to the *fact* of the alleged phenomena that the Committee found itself compelled to make certain admissions:

It is obvious that if we could account for all the phenomena described by the mere assumption of clever conjuring on the part of Madame Blavatsky and the Coulombs, assisted by any number

of Hindu servants, we could hardly, under present circumstances, regard ourselves as having adequate ground for further inquiry. But this assumption would by no means meet the case. The statements of the Coulombs implicate no one in the alleged fraud except Madame Blavatsky. The other Theosophists, according to them, are all dupes. Now the evidence given in the Appendix in our opinion renders it impossible to avoid one or other of two alternative conclusions: Either that some of the phenomena recorded are genuine, or that other persons of good standing in society, and with characters to lose, have taken part in deliberate imposture. Accordingly, the Committee expressed these conclusions:

On the whole, however (though with some serious reserves), it seems undeniable that there is a *prima facie* case, for some part at least of the claim made, which, at the point which the investigations of the Society of Psychical Research have now reached, cannot, with consistency, be ignored. The Committee decided to send one of its members to India to investigate the charges made by the Coulombs, to interview the numerous witnesses to phenomena testified to by Hindus and Europeans in India, and to report on the results of such examination. Mr. Richard Hodgson was the member chosen.

95 _____ MR. HODGSON'S REPORT

His report is the foundation and superstructure of the celebrated exposure" embodied in Volume **III** of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research.

Hodgson arrived at headquarters in December, passed three months in pursuing his inquiries, and returned to England in April, **1885**. He was, therefore, present in India during the period of fierce attack and witnessed the wavering defense. He saw the bold confidence of the accusers and observed the timid, the cautious, the doubting and fearing attitude of Col. Olcott and other leading theosophists. Had there been no other influence at work upon his mind, these alone might have been ample to persuade him that Theosophy, the Theosophical Society, the "Adept Brothers" and their teachings were, with the phenomena of H.P.B., nothing but a vast fraud devised and perpetrated for some secret purpose.

Mr. Hodgson's report of his investigations was submitted to the Committee of the S.P.R. by them endorsed, and at the General Meeting of the Society on June **24, 1885**, Prof. Sidgwick of the Committee read its Conclusions. Certain difficulties developing, the ensuing six months were spent by Mr. Hodgson in revising his report. As time passed it became generally understood that the report of the Committee of the S.P.R. was entirely adverse to the Theosophical phenomena. But, as in the Coulomb case, the preparations for this more "respectable" attack were carried on in secrecy and silence. No opportunity was given the Theosophists to inspect Mr. Hodgson's report, no chance was offered for correction, criticism, objection, or counter-statement, and during the long delay, rumors of the Committee's conclusions were allowed to prejudice public opinion before any evidence had been presented. Meanwhile, the Theosophists could only await the production of charges the particular character of which they knew nothing and to which, therefore, no reply was possible. The Conclusions of the Committee and the full text of Mr. Hodgson's report were finally embodied in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., Vol. III, pp. **201-400**, issued in December, 1885.

The essential conclusions of the Committee are embodied in the following extracts:

After carefully weighing all the evidence before them, the Committee unanimously arrived at the following conclusions.

(1) That of the letters *put* forward by Madame Coulomb, all those, at least, which the Committee have had the opportunity of themselves examining, and of submitting to the judgment of experts, are undoubtedly written by Madame Blavatsky; and suffice to prove that she has been engaged in a long-continued combination with other persons to produce by ordinary means a series of apparent marvels for the support of the Theosophic movement.

(2) That, in particular, the Shrine at Adyar, through which letters, purporting to come from Mahatmas were received, was elaborately arranged with a view to the secret insertion of letters and other objects through a sliding panel at the back, and regularly used for this purpose by Madame Blavatsky or her agents.

(3) That there is consequently a very strong general presumption that all the marvelous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (a) to deliberate 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 the witnesses.

(4) That after examining Mr. Hodgson's report of the results of his personal inquiries, they are of the opinion that the testimony to these marvels is in no case sufficient, taking amount and character together, to resist the force of the general presumption above mentioned. Accordingly, they think that it would be a waste of time to prolong the investigation.

With reference to Madame Blavatsky herself, the Committee says:

For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history.

The preliminary and final reports of the Committee should be taken together. A careful examination of these documents will prove as nothing else can the monstrous injustice of the S.P.R. investigation and report. In the first place, the investigation was entirely *ex parte*. The Committee laid out its own course of procedure, determined its own basis, admitted what it chose, rejected what it chose, reported what it chose of the evidence—subject to no supervision, no safeguards to insure impartiality or afford redress if bias were present. Of its own motion and decision it declared itself court, judge, and jury;

at its pleasure it finally took upon itself the role of prosecutor without allowing or permitting to those it thus constituted “defendants” any right of cross-examination or rebuttal. That which began ostensibly as a mere inquiry into the evidences available concerning the Theosophical phenomena degenerated into something very like a criminal prosecution, in which a verdict of “guilty” was pronounced upon H. P. Blavatsky—without a hearing, without appeal, without recourse. Had the Committee been a duly and legally constituted Court, its procedure would have been likened to that of the Committee of Public Safety of the French Revolution. But in fact the Committee was that of a rival society whose objects, methods, and purposes were radically different from those

proclaimed by H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society for ten years preceding the investigation. The Society for Psychical Research was interested solely in phenomena and was moved by mere scientific curiosity. It specifically disclaimed any interest in philosophical research, any concern in Occult laws, any regard for the moral factor. The Theosophical Society and H.P.B., on the contrary, specifically avowed that the primary Object of its existence was the moral factor of Universal Brotherhood, its second Object the serious study and comparison of religions and philosophies, and its third Object the investigation of *laws* and *powers* as yet unexplained and misunderstood; not phenomena at all, save as these might be incidental and illustrative. These differences were recognized by the Committee. The preliminary report says:

The difference between The Theosophical Society and the Society for Psychical Research is . . . almost diametrical. The Society for Psychical Research exists merely as a machinery for investigation. . . . The Theosophical Society exists mainly to promulgate certain doctrines already formulated, those doctrines being supported by phenomena which are avowedly intended and adapted rather for the influencing of individual minds than for the wholesale instruction of the scientific world.

The Committee's attitude toward the "certain doctrines already formulated" for the promulgation of which the Theosophical Society "mainly exists" is shown by its own reports. In the preliminary report it is said that "The Theosophical Society was founded . . . for certain philanthropic and literary

purposes, with which we are not now concerned." In the final report the statement is made: "The Theosophical Society was founded *ostensibly* for certain philanthropic and literary purposes . . . with these doctrines (or so-called "Wisdom-Religion") the Committee have, of course, no concern."

It should be understood in connection with this use of the word "ostensibly" that not a shred of evidence is introduced to show that the Theosophical Society ever had any other objects than its proclaimed ones.

The Committee took enough note of the Theosophical doctrines to recognize their extensive implications:

The teaching . . . comprises a cosmogony, a philosophy, a religion. With the value of this teaching *per se* we are not at present concerned. *But it is obvious that were it widely accepted a great change would be induced in human thought in almost every department, To take one point only, the spiritual and intellectual relationship of East to West would be for the time in great measure reversed. "Ex oriente lux" would be more than a metaphor and a memory; it would be the expression of actual contemporary fact.* (Italics added.)

Why was the Committee "not concerned" with the value of this teaching? Was it because the West or the Committee already possessed abundant knowledge as to the existence of superphysical phenomena and the laws and processes by which such phenomena are produced? Here is what was proclaimed in the prospectus of the S.P.R. in **1882**:

The founders of this Society fully recognize the exceptional difficulties which surround this branch of research; but they nevertheless hope that by patient and systematic effort some results of permanent value may be attained.

And the Committee itself declares in the preliminary report that the evidence for these phenomena "is of a kind which it is peculiarly difficult to disentangle or to evaluate. The claims

advanced are so enormous, and the lines of testimony converge and inosculate in a manner so perplexing that it is almost equally hard to say what statements are to be accepted, and what inferences as to other statements are to be drawn from the acceptance of any.”

To have concerned itself seriously with Madame Blavatsky’s teachings, to have investigated and studied the principles and processes she inculcated would have called for the same self-

sacrificing devotion that was expected of the theosophists themselves. There was no middle ground. Rejection of this course left the Committee stranded on the shores of conventional opinion. Its members chose the “safe” policy of avoiding any direct challenge to the “cosmogony, philosophy and religion” of the times. Nor did they in any way question the prevailing idea of the complete superiority of “the spiritual and intellectual relationship” of the West to the East. Apparently the Committee had no urge to conduct researches in a direction that *might* result in making *ex oriente lux*” something more than “a metaphor and a memory.”

The next question involves the *competency* of the Committee to inquire into the Theosophical phenomena. The history of Spiritualistic phenomena without exception shows that the occurrences are *involuntary* on the part of the *medium*, as regards both their production and control, and that their rationale and processes are not understood by either mediums or investigators. On the other hand, all the evidence amassed by the Committee shows that the Theosophical phenomena were *voluntary*—that is, consciously produced and consciously controlled by the operators, and those operators themselves claimed that the explanation of laws and processes could be acquired *only* through the Theosophical teachings. Nevertheless, the Committee and Mr. Hodgson took the position that the Theosophical phenomena were of the same character as Spiritualistic manifestations, and were to be approached in the same way. Their deliberations increasingly assumed a tone of suspicion, their serious hypotheses concerning the phenomena becoming limited to those founded on presumption of fraud. The preliminary report shows that the Coulomb accusations, the “Kiddle incident,” and Mr. Massey’s “private evidence” weighed heavily on the minds of the members of the Committee. Nevertheless, other phenomena were so overwhelmingly convincing that the Committee is obliged to conclude:—“Either that some of the phenomena recorded are genuine, or that other persons of good standing in society, and with characters to lose, have taken part in deliberate imposture.” It should be realized that no evidence can be found in the final Report to controvert this testimony, nor to impeach the “persons of good standing in society, and with characters

to lose.” These witnesses, at least, are not charged with having taken part in deliberate imposture.”

How, then, does the Committee explain the phenomena so overwhelmingly testified to? It says they were due “to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of the witnesses.” But no evidence is offered to support this wholesale “explanation.”

Neither the members of the Committee nor Mr. Hodgson were able themselves to produce any phenomena, nor, with one or two exceptions, had they been witness to any of the Theosophical phenomena. They did not claim for themselves any knowledge of their own as to how such phenomena could or could not be produced. All that they had originally set out to do *was* to secure

the testimony of witnesses who had seen phenomena. The two reports show that, except for the accusations of the Coulombs, and the testimony of one or two others, such as that of Major Henderson, chief of the Indian Secret Service, the more than one hundred persons whose statements were obtained all testified to the occurrence of phenomena under circumstances that precluded any other conclusions than that the phenomena were genuine.

Upon what, then, did the Committee rely for its conclusions? Upon the Coulombs; upon the “Kiddie incident”; upon Mr. Massey’s “private evidence”; upon the “expert opinions” of Netherclift and Sims on handwriting; most of all, on the “opinions” of Mr. Hodgson.

The Coulombs and their charges have already been discussed. Their story had no independent corroboration of any significance; it was directly denied by Madame Blavatsky and contradicted point-blank by the testimony of scores of actual witnesses of the phenomena. William Q. Judge, who arrived in India soon after the Coulombs had been sent away from headquarters, made a detailed examination of the false doors M. Coulomb had constructed in Madame Blavatsky’s “occult room.” He showed the product of Coulomb’s interrupted labors to some three hundred witnesses, who signed their names to a description of the place. He then removed the “shrine,” in which the Coulombs had attempted to plant evidence of fraud. Hodgson never saw this portion of the “evidence” for his case, but relied upon the second-hand reports of H.P.B.’s enemies.

Judge relates that after the Coulombs were caught at their work and sent away, the Principal of the Christian College visited headquarters, asking to see the occult room. Mr. Judge writes: “He [the missionary] was then asked in my presence by Dr. Hartmann what he had paid to Coulomb for his work, and replied, somewhat off his guard, that he had paid him somewhere about one hundred rupees.” Hartmann himself reported that Coulomb came to him and said that ten thousand rupees were at his disposal if he could ruin the Society—which was doubtless an exaggeration of the amount offered him. Apparently, the Coulombs hoped by such means to extort more money for their silence. It is evident that the unfinished work of the Coulombs was supplemented by the imagination of the missionaries and the lies of the former, and that Hodgson preferred the testimony of these witnesses to the ingenuous and confusing statements of many of the theosophical witnesses. Hindu students, in particular, were appalled by the whole idea of an “investigation,” and Hodgson made no effort to understand their attitude.

So far as Hodgson is concerned, however, there is no extenuation for his failure to make a more critical examination of the letters which Madame Coulomb claimed to have received from H.P.B. He did not submit *these* letters to handwriting experts to determine their true authorship. In claiming them to be genuine, he ignored the illiterate French they contain—as though the cosmopolitan Madame Blavatsky could have composed these passages! Hodgson, it seems, gave way to his predisposition to believe Madame Blavatsky guilty of fraud; his impartiality succumbing to prejudice, he became the self-righteous representative of conventional society—its defender against any disturber of the status quo and its well-established beliefs.

Hodgson was under a similar necessity to brand the “Mahatma Letters” as spurious. After his return to England, he found himself in a quandary on this phase of his report. Hodgson and the Committee had declared that, in their opinion, Madame Blavatsky had herself written the adept letters to Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume. But when some of the letters were submitted to Mr. Sims of the British Museum, and F. G. Netherclift, a London handwriting expert, along with samples

of the writing of H.P.B., both these “experts” concluded independently that the Mahatma letters were *not* written by H.P.B. But if she did not write them, *who did?* The investigator for the Psychical Research Society thereupon presented “new evidence” to the experts, and agreeably, they reversed their opinions and decided that the letters *were* written by Madame Blavatsky! The need for this change in expert opinion was one of the causes of the delay in publication of Mr. Hodgson’s report. (Further evidence of the fallibility of this sort of “expert” opinion is furnished by Mr. Netherclift himself, for a few years later, in the case of Charles Parnell against the London *Times*, he swore positively that the signature to the famous “Pigott letters” was in Parnell’s handwriting; then later on, Pigott confessed in open court that he had forged the signatures.)

“The Kiddie incident” has been described, and whatever opinion may be formed in regard to it, there is no evidence whatever of fraud in connection with it, or of any bad faith on the part of Mr. Sinnett or H.P.B. or any other theosophist. Mr. Massey’s “private evidence” is given at page 97 of the S.P.R. Report and anyone who reads it can determine for himself that, whatever of the mysterious and the unexplained there may be in connection with the matter, there is *no evidence whatever of any fraud on H.P.B.’s part*. As in other cases, something occurred which Mr. Massey could not understand; his doubts were aroused; H.P.B. denied absolutely any wrongdoing, but refused as absolutely to explain the mystery; hence she was “guilty of fraud.”

The “prosecution” of Madame Blavatsky by the Society for Psychical Research was for the crime of nonconformity to the “accepted” methods of the nineteenth century. Science, said the authorities of the day, must maintain complete ethical neutrality. “Facts,” they maintained, may be discovered without reference to their moral implications. This element in the theory of scientific method was categorically rejected by H.P.B., who said that the ultimate facts of life are essentially moral in nature, as man is essentially a moral being, and that the quest for truth can never be divorced from the study and practice of natural moral law. She would not submit to the

methods of “psychic research” evolved according to the theories of Western science, but demanded that its investigators adopt the principles and method of Occult science. The choice was a hard one for the average Westerner. Either he must acknowledge that his canons of knowledge were inadequate for occult inquiry, and humbly accept the conditions prescribed by H.P.B., or disregard occultism as a subject unworthy of his attention.

The latter course would have been easy, except for the Theosophical phenomena. These extraordinary happenings, *if they were real*, could not be ignored. Occult phenomena had intruded themselves into his circumstantial world of familiar fact and experience; there they were, and they could not be accounted for by any known theory. Fraud, therefore, was the only “comfortable” explanation of them, the alternative being an acceptance of the revolutionary views of the theosophists. Thus the relation of the London Society for Psychical Research with the Theosophical Movement was far more than an “investigation” of certain phenomena and of the occult powers of Madame Blavatsky: it was the collision of two radically opposed and fundamentally incompatible theories of knowledge. The dramatic character of the phenomena precipitated this trial of theory, and the force of prejudice—the moral inertia of the age—predetermined the result. In no one thing, perhaps, is the weakness of the S.P.R. investigation more fatally self-betraying than in the motive assigned to account for the “long-continued

combination and deliberate deception instigated and carried out by Madame Blavatsky.” That anyone should for ten or more years make endless personal sacrifices of effort, time, money, health, and reputation in three continents, merely to deceive those who trusted her, with no possible benefit to herself; should succeed in so deceiving hundreds of intelligent men and women that they were convinced of the reality of her powers, her teachings, her mission as well as her phenomena, only to be unmasked by an investigator who, after interviewing some of the witnesses and hearing their stories, is able infallibly to see what they could not see, is able to suspect what they could find no occasion for suspecting, is able to detect a sufficient motive for inspiring H.P.B. to the most monumental career of

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chicanery in all history—this is what one has to swallow in order to attach credibility to the elaborate tissue of conjecture and suspicion woven by Mr. Hodgson to offset the solid weight of testimony that the phenomena were genuine. What, then, was the motive attributed by Mr. Hodgson and the Committee to make credible their conclusion that she was “one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history”? *She was a Russian spy, and her motive was to destroy British rule in India!* It is interesting to observe the successive steps of the Committee’s struggle with this question of the possible motive of H.P.B. In the preliminary report the Committee raises the question of “all the commoner and baser motives to fraud or exaggeration,” and dismisses them: “*We may say at once that no trustworthy evidence supporting such a view has been brought under our notice.*” Next the Committee considers the possibility of “good” motives for bad conduct: *Now we know, indeed, that the suspicions which the Anglo-Indian authorities at first entertained as to the political objects of the Theosophical Society have been abandoned as groundless.*” Next the Committee says, “But we can *imagine* schemes and intentions of a patriotic kind . . . we must be on our guard against men’s *highest* instincts quite as much as their lowest.” In the final report Mr. Hodgson goes over the grounds of possible motives: “The question which will now inevitably arise *is—what induced Madame Blavatsky to live so many laborious days in such a fantastic work of imposture?* . . . I should consider this Report *incomplete* unless I suggest what I myself *believe* to be an *adequate explanation of her ten years’ toil on behalf of the Theosophical Society.*”

Was it egotism? “*A closer knowledge of her character would show such a supposition to be quite untenable.*”

Was she a plain, unvarnished fraud? “She is, indeed, *a rare psychological study*, almost as rare as a ‘Mahatma’! *She was terrible exceedingly when she expressed her overpowering thought that perhaps her ‘twenty years’ work, might be spoiled through Madame Coulomb.*”

Was it religious mania, a morbid yearning for notoriety? “I must confess that the problem of her motives . . . caused me *no little perplexity.* . . . The sordid motive of pecuniary

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gain would be a solution still less satisfactory than the hypothesis of religious mania. . . . *But even this hypothesis I was unable to adopt*, and reconcile with my understanding of her character.”

What, then, *was* the compelling motive that induced the labors of a Hercules, the sacrifices of a Christ, to carry on a career of deception worthy of the Prince of Deceivers himself? “*At last a casual conversation opened my eyes.* I cannot profess, myself, after my personal experiences with

Madame Blavatsky, to feel much doubt that her *real object has been the furtherance of Russian interests. . . . I suggest it here only as a supposition which appears best to cover the known incidents of her career during the past 13 or 14 years.*”

H. P. Blavatsky lived and died a martyr, physically, mentally, and in all that men hold dear; she forsook relatives, friends, ease and high social standing, became an expatriate and naturalized citizen of an alien land on the other side of the globe; she founded a Society to which she gave unremitting and unthanked devotion; she wrote *Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine. The Voice of the Silence*, all of which were proscribed in Russia; she became a veritable Wandering Jew devoted to the propagation of teachings and ideas hateful to the world of “reactionary forces”; she eschewed all concern with political objects of any kind, all attachment to “race, creed, sex, caste, or color,” and formed and sustained with her lifeblood a Society sworn to the same ideals; she lived and she died without personal possessions of any kind—slandered, calumniated, betrayed, and misunderstood; she never, from 1873 to the day of her death, set foot on Russian soil, an exile from family and country. Why did she do these things? “*In furtherance of Russian interests*”!.

CHAPTER VIII FAREWELL TO INDIA

MADAME **BLAVATSKY** sailed from India on March **30, 1885**. She was seriously ill and had to be carried on board the vessel. Accompanied by her physician and an attendant she voyaged to Naples, where she remained for several months. In August she went to Wurzburg, Germany, where she was visited and sustained by the Gebhards, devoted admirers living nearby in Elberfeld, whom she had met during a visit to Europe the year before. H.P.B. was later joined in Wurzburg by the Countess Wachtmeister, widow of the late Swedish Ambassador to England, who had become a member of the London Lodge in **1884**. On her way to Italy in the summer of 1885, the Countess had stopped at Elberfeld to spend some time with the Gebhards, and learning of H.P.B.'s illness and isolation in Wurzburg, went to see her. What she saw and felt caused her to remain, and to become the companion, secretary, friend and voluntary servant of **H.P.B.** Here, in Wurzburg, where she lived for nearly a year, Madame Blavatsky began the enormous task of writing *The Secret Doctrine*, which was to be the systematic treatise of the Theosophical teachings.

In May, 1886, H.P.B. was ordered by physicians to find a more favorable climate, if she were to regain her health. Her next place of residence was Ostend, Belgium, where, less than a year later, she nearly died. In the spring of **1887** she yielded to the pleas of a small group of English students, who brought her to England. She passed the summer in a small cottage in Norwood, and in the autumn was installed in the house at **17** Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, West, where she lived until her death. These last five years of H.P.B.'s life were spent in the kindly care of English theosophists who shared her household and gave her the assistance she needed to complete *The Secret Doctrine*.

With **H.P.B.** no longer in India, the Movement there began to sink to the level of faint-heartedness and timidity which had characterized the Society's “defense” against the attack

of the Coulombs. Olcott, recalled from a tour by the extreme sickness of Madame Blavatsky, early in **1885**, before her departure, found many of the Indian Lodges lapsing into dormancy, others threatening to dissolve. Some members, filled with a growing realization of the injustice done to H.P.B. by the Convention of **1884**, were inclined to blame Olcott for the multiplying weaknesses of the Movement in India. Olcott found his autocratic rule of the Society's affairs called into question by a growing number, and only H.P.B.'s support enabled him to smooth over the dissatisfaction and to regain the security of his position. Meanwhile, he tried to make amends to H.P.B., although his attempt to persuade Hodgson to adopt a more impartial or friendly attitude was hardly a course to inspire the confidence of the young investigator of the Society for Psychical Research.

The theosophists of India convened their December, **1885** Convention in a chastened spirit. Resolutions passed by the delegates invited H.P.B. to resume the office of Corresponding Secretary when her health would permit, affirmed that the charges against her were unproved, and refused to consider Olcott's retirement as President-Founder. Olcott's critics in the Society had questioned his competency for this office, and the action of the Convention helped to restore his confidence. H.P.B. made a will leaving Olcott her interest in the *Theosophist*. She gave him the entire revenue of the publication and continued to send him articles for publication from Europe. These several expressions of fraternal accord strengthened the Society and hastened the revival of the work in India. The Movement there, however, never regained the vigor it had possessed in the early days. It is evident, too, that Olcott could not make full moral recovery from his vacillation during the Coulomb attacks. Both his articles in the *Theosophist* and the asides in *Old Diary Leaves* show that, separated from H.P.B., he increasingly cherished and guarded his personal authority and prestige as the head of an organization, instead of giving his best energies to cooperation with the one who had been his teacher and closest friend from the beginning.

Insight into the disastrous effects of Olcott's attitude is provided by some notes left by **H.P.B.** in the form of a memorandum

of a talk with one of the Theosophical Adepts. A portion of this memorandum, written in pencil by H.P.B., reports the Master as saying: the Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence and we have let it go—we make no unwilling slaves. He (Col. Olcott) says he has saved **it**? He saved its body, but he allowed through sheer fear, . . . its soul to escape, and **it** is now a soulless corpse, a machine run so far well enough, but which will fall to pieces when he is gone. Out of the three objects the second alone is attended to, but **it** is no longer either a brotherhood, nor a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the Great Range. His kindness and love of peace are great and truly Gautamic in their spirit; but he has misapplied that kindness; This this [his] policy has done more harm to the spirit of the Society and its growth than several Coulombs could do. . The history of the Society in India after **1885** becomes a monotonous record of the politics of religious organization, of personal frictions and legalistic disputes. These controversies are reflected in the pages of the Supplements to the *Theosophist*, which were devoted to the activities of the Society. For the living spirit of the Theosophical Movement, Olcott substituted the Theosophical Society as his object of worship, and he tended to identify the Society with himself as President-Founder. His subsequent conflicts with H.P.B. were always the result of his mistaking the human institution of the "Society" for the dynamic cause which H.P.B. served. She always subordinated the merely mechanical arrangements of "organization" to the larger

purposes for which the organization was created. Olcott, however, interpreted her policy as the erratic behavior of a crotchety woman, and he found endless occasions to express himself to this effect, both directly and by innuendo. His opposition to Judge, in later years, was primarily due to the same cause. As the basic conceptions of the philosophy were gradually made into dogmas by Olcott and others who wanted formulas and rules, Judge continued to embody the original spirit of the teaching—a course which, *by contrast*, violated Olcott's crystallized ideas and made him Judge's bitter and self-righteous enemy. Two of Madame Blavatsky's writings, one a letter addressed to the Indian theosophists, the other an article published in *Lucifer* in **1889**, provide a summary of the Indian cycle of the

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nineteenth-century Theosophical Movement. In the letter, addressed "To my Brothers of Aryavarta," H.P.B. explains why she never returned to India after **1885**. The article, "Our Three Objects," lists some of the achievements that may be attributed to the work of the Movement in India.

The letter, which was written in **1890**, five years after H.P.B. left India, begins by speaking of the warm communications she had received from Hindu theosophists. These friendly demonstrations, she explains, make her feel obligated to tell why she does not return to India. Ill health, she says, is not the only reason: There is a far more serious reason. A line of conduct has been traced for me here, and I have found among the English and Americans what I have so far vainly sought for in India. I have met with hundreds of men and women who have the courage to avow their conviction of the real existence of the Masters, and who are working for Theosophy on *Their* lines and under *Their* guidance, given through my humble self.

In India, on the other hand, ever since my departure, the true spirit of devotion to the Masters and the courage to avow it has steadily dwindled away. At Adyar itself, increasing strife and conflict has raged between personalities; uncalled for and utterly undeserved animosity—almost hatred—has been shown towards me by several members of the staff. There seems to have been something strange and uncanny going on at Adyar, during these last years. No sooner does a European, most Theosophically inclined, most devoted to the Cause, and the personal friend of myself or the President, set his foot in Headquarters, than he becomes forthwith a personal enemy to one or other of us, and what is worse, ends by injuring and deserting the Cause. . . Of the Coulomb attack and the S.P.R. Report, she writes:

If, I say, at that critical moment, the members of the Society, and especially its leaders at Adyar, Hindu and European, had stood together as one man, firm in their conviction of the reality and power of the Masters, Theosophy would have come out more triumphantly than ever, and none of their fears would have ever been realized, however cunning the legal traps set for me, and whatever mistakes and errors of judgment I, their humble representative, might have made in the executive conduct of the matter. But the loyalty and courage of the Adyar Authorities, and of the few Europeans who had trusted in the Masters, were not equal to the trial when it came. In spite of my protests, I was

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hurried away from Headquarters. Ill as I was, almost dying in truth, as the physicians said, yet I protested, and would have battled for Theosophy in India to my last breath, had I found loyal

support. But some feared legal entanglements, some the Government, while my best friends believed in the doctors' threats that I must die if I remained in India. So I was sent to Europe to regain my strength, with a promise of speedy return to my beloved Aryavarta. Then, in Europe—

In a letter received from Damodar in 1886, he notified me that the Masters' influence was becoming with every day weaker at Adyar. . . . Finally, he urged me very strongly to return, saying that of course the Masters would see that my health should not suffer from **it**. I wrote to that effect to Colonel Olcott, imploring him to let me return, and promising that I would live at Pondicherry, if needed, should my presence not be desirable at Adyar. To this I received the ridiculous answer that no sooner should I return, than I should be sent to the Andaman Islands as a Russian spy, which of course Colonel Olcott subsequently found out to be absolutely untrue. The readiness with which such a futile pretext for keeping me from Adyar was seized upon, shows in clear colours the ingratitude of those to whom I had given my life and health. Nay more, urged on, as I understood, by the Executive Council, under the entirely absurd pretext that, in case of my death, my heirs might claim a share in the Adyar property, the President sent me a legal paper to sign, by which I formally renounced any right to the Headquarters or even to live there without the Council's permission. This, although I had spent several thousand rupees of my own private money, and had devoted my share of the profits of *The-Theosophist* to the purchase of the house and its furniture. Nevertheless I signed the renunciation without one word of protest. I saw I was not wanted, and remained in Europe in spite of my ardent desire to return to India. How could I do otherwise than feel that all my labours had been rewarded with ingratitude, when my most urgent wishes to return were met with flimsy excuses and answers inspired by those who were hostile to me?

The result of this is too apparent. You know too well the state of affairs in India for me to dwell longer upon details. In a word, since my departure, not only has the activity of the movement there gradually slackened, but those for whom I had the deepest affections, regarding them as a mother would her own sons, have turned against me. While in the West, no sooner had I accepted the invitation to come to London, than I found people—the S.P.R. Report and wild suspicion and hypotheses

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rampant in every direction notwithstanding—to believe in the truth of the great Cause I have struggled for, and in my own *bona fides*. Acting under the Master's orders I began a new movement in the West on the original lines; I founded *Lucifer*, and the Lodge which bears my name. Recognizing the splendid work done at Adyar by Colonel Olcott and others to carry out the second of the three objects of the T. S., *viz.*, to promote the study of Oriental Literature, I was determined to carry out here the two others. All know with what success this has been attended. Twice Colonel Olcott was asked to come over, and then I learned that I was once more wanted in India—at any rate by some. But the invitation came too late; neither would my doctor permit it, nor can I, if I would be true to my life-pledge and vows, now live at the Headquarters from which the Masters and Their spirit are virtually banished. The presence of Their portraits will not help; They are a dead letter. The truth is that I can never return to India in any other capacity than as Their faithful agent. And as, unless They appear among the Council *in propria persona* (which They will certainly never do now), no advice of mine on occult lines seems likely to be accepted, as the fact of my relations with the Masters is doubted, even totally denied by some; and I myself having no right to the Headquarters, what reason is there, therefore, for me to live at Adyar?

The fact is this: In my position, half-measures are worse than none. People have either to believe entirely in me, or to *honestly* disbelieve. No one, no Theosophist, is compelled to believe, but it is worse than useless for people to ask me to help them, if they do not believe in me.

The only claim, therefore, which India could ever have upon me would be strong only in proportion to the activity of the Fellows there for Theosophy and their loyalty to the Masters.

The letter ends with an appeal to the Theosophists of India to “turn a new leaf in the history of the Theosophical Movement” and to join with other loyal theosophists, bidding defiance “to all calumniators and ambitious malcontents—both without and within the Theosophical Society.”

This communication shows, as nothing else could, the tragic situation of the Theosophical Movement in India after **1885**. The members there wished to remain theosophists, yet feared to support H.P.B. in her hour of need. Their attempt to compromise, with “half-measures,” had placed them in the curious position of having virtually conceded to the opposition that **H.P.B.** was not to be wholly trusted—that she was

only *half-honest* !—while they still pretended to be followers of a movement of which she had been, and still was, the living inspiration. A Society with this sort of leadership was worse than none, for its policy was one of semi-conscious hypocrisy, justified by fear. It may be added that there has been no appreciable change in the Adyar Society from that day to this. In **1929**, when portions of the letter quoted above finally appeared for the first time in the *Theosophist*, all passages reproachful of the members in India were carefully excised. To this day, readers of the *Theosophist* are ignorant of H.P.B.’s real feelings concerning the Adyar Society and what it became after her departure. But whatever the ingratitude and betrayal H.P.B. met in India, she was uncompromising in her own defense of the Indian people, especially when they were deprecated in comparison with European civilization. In 1886 Mr. Sinnett sent her an article on Mesmerism which he had published in the July *Transactions* of the London Lodge. In this discussion he chanced to express the opinion that the people of India “are on a somewhat lower level of cosmic evolution” than those of Europe. H.P.B.’s reply was characteristically vigorous:

Thanks for the *Transactions*. Very interesting, your mesmerism. Only why can’t you ever write about India or Indians without allowing your pen to run away with your ineradicable prejudices at the expense of truth and fact? . . . You want to write *esoteric* facts and you give instead English race prejudice. Believe me, I speak seriously. You cannot remodel esoteric History to suit your little likings and dislikes. . . . How many times have I told you that if, as a race, they are lower than Europeans it is only *physically* and in the matter of civilization or rather what you yourselves have agreed to regard as civilization—the purely external, skin deep polish, or a *whitened sepulchre* with rottenness inside, of the Gospel. Hindus are spiritually intellectual and we are physically spiritual. Spiritually they are immensely higher than we are. The physical point of evolution we have reached only now—they have reached it **100,000** years ago, perhaps. And what they are now *spiritually* you may not hope to reach in Europe before some millenniums yet. . . . You must have written your *Transaction—in sulks*. However it may be I am sorry to have to contradict you in the *Secret D*. I have written that long ago—and it is diametrically opposite to what you say—and as it was *dictated* to me.⁴

The article, “Our Three Objects,”⁵ reviews the accomplishments of the Theosophical Movement

in India, under the headings of Brotherhood, the study of Aryan literature, and occult science. H.P.B.'s observations concerning the work of the Society on behalf of Universal Brotherhood will illustrate both the spirit of her undertaking and its practical result. She wrote:

“When we arrived in India, in February, **1879**, there was no unity between the races and sects of the Peninsula, no sense of a common public interest, no disposition to find the mutual relation between the several sects of ancient Hinduism, or that between them and the creeds of Islam, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Between the Brahmanical Hindus of India and their kinsmen, the modern Sinhalese Buddhists, there had been no religious intercourse since some remote epoch. And again, between the several castes of the Sinhalese—for, true to their archaic Hindu parentage, the Sinhalese do still cling to caste despite the letter and spirit of their Buddhist religion—there was a complete disunity, no intermarriages, no spirit of patriotic homogeneity, but a rancorous sectarian and caste ill-feeling. As for any international reciprocity, in either social or religious affairs, between the Sinhalese and the Northern Buddhistic nations, such a thing had never existed. Each was absolutely ignorant of and indifferent about the other's views, wants or aspirations.

“Finally, between the races of Asia and those of Europe and America there was the most complete absence of sympathy as to religious and philosophical questions. The labours of the Orientalists from Sir William Jones and Burnouf down to Prof. Max Muller, had created among the learned a philosophical interest, but among the masses not even that. If to the above we add that all the Oriental religions, without exception, were being asphyxiated to death by the poisonous gas of Western official science, through the medium of the educational agencies of European administrations and Missionary propagandists, and that the Native graduates and undergraduates of India, Ceylon and Japan had largely turned agnostics and revilers of the old religions, it will be seen how difficult a task it must have been to bring something like harmony out of this chaos, and make a tolerant if not a

friendly feeling spring up and banish these hatreds, evil suspicions, ill feelings, and mutual ignorance.

“Ten years have passed and what do we see? Taking the points *seriatim* we find—that throughout India unity and brotherhood have replaced the old disunity; one hundred and twenty-five Branches of our Society have sprung up in India alone, each a nucleus of our idea of fraternity, a centre of religious and social unity. Their membership embraces representatives of all the better castes and all Hindu sects, and a majority are of that class of hereditary savants and philosophers, the Brahmans, to pervert whom to Christianity has been the futile struggle of the Missionary and the self-appointed task of that high-class forlorn hope, the Oxford and Cambridge Missions. The President of our Society, Col. Olcott, has traversed the whole of India several times, upon invitation, addressing vast crowds upon theosophic themes and sowing the seed from which, in time, will be garnered the full harvest of our evangel of brotherhood and mutual dependence.

The growth of this kindly feeling has been proven in a variety of ways: first, in the unprecedented gathering of races, castes, and sects in the annual Conventions of the Theosophical Society; second, in the rapid growth of a theosophical literature advocating our altruistic views, in the founding of various journals and magazines in several languages, and in the rapid cessation of sectarian controversies; third, in the sudden birth and phenomenally rapid growth of the patriotic movement which is centralized in the organisation called the Indian National Congress. This

remarkable political body was planned by certain of our Anglo-Indian and Hindu members after the model and on the lines of the Theosophical Society, and has from the first been directed by our own colleagues; men among the most influential in the Indian Empire. At the same time, there is no connection whatever, barring that through the personalities of individuals, between the Congress and its mother body, our Society. It would never have come into existence, in all probability, if Col. Olcott had suffered himself to be tempted into the side paths of human brotherhood, politics, social reforms, etc., as many have wanted him to do. We aroused the dormant spirit and

warmed the Aryan blood of the Hindus, and one vent the new life made for itself was this Congress. All this is simple history and passes unchallenged. "Crossing over to Ceylon, behold the miracles our Society has wrought, upon the evidence of many addresses, reports, and other official documents heretofore brought under the notice of our readers and the general public. The castemen affiliating; the sectarian ill-feeling almost obliterated; sixteen Branches of the Society formed in the Island, the entire Sinhalese community, one may almost say, looking to us for counsel, example and leadership; a committee of Buddhists going over to India with Col. Olcott to plant a cocoanut—ancient symbol of affection and good-will—in the compound of the Hindu Temple in Tinnevely, and Kandyan nobles, until now holding aloof from the low-country people with the haughty disdain of their feudal traditions, becoming Presidents of our Branches, and even travelling as Buddhist lecturers. "Ceylon was the *foyer* from which the religion of Gautama streamed out to Cambodia, Siam and Burma; what, then, could be more appropriate than that there should be borne from this Holy Land a message of Brotherhood to Japan! How this message was taken, how delivered by our President, and with what magnificent results, is too well known to the whole Western World to need reiteration of the story in the present connection. Suffice it to say, it ranks among the most dramatic events in history, and is the all sufficient, unanswerable and crowning proof of the vital reality of our scheme to beget the feeling of Universal Brotherhood among all peoples, races, kindreds, castes, and colours."

Thus the Theosophical Movement, under the inspiration of H.P. Blavatsky, sought to overcome the divisions of sectarianism in organized religion, not merely by criticism, but by providing the philosophic verities which could dissolve the superficial differences of doctrine among the religions of the world, showing them all to have the common foundation of the archaic Wisdom Religion.

We turn, now, to the United States, where a new cycle of activity began about the time Madame Blavatsky left India.

CHAPTER IX THEOSOPHY IN AMERICA

THE REAL BEGINNING of the work of the Theosophical Movement in the United States came in 1886, when William Q. Judge established *The Path*, an independent Theosophical magazine. Until

this time, not much had been accomplished in the way of growth of the Society in America. Even before the departure of Olcott and H.P.B. for India, as early as the close of 1876, as Olcott says, "The Theosophical Society as a body was comparatively inactive: its By-laws became a dead letter, its meetings almost ceased." When the journey of the two Founders to India was decided upon, General Abner Doubleday was chosen to serve as the President in America, pro tem., and Judge was made Recording Secretary.

While Judge kept in close contact with both H.P.B. and Olcott through correspondence, there was little if any organizational activity for the next several years. The difficulties confronting him during this period are illustrated by a biographical passage written by Mrs. Archibald Keightley and included by her in the second volume of *Letters That Have Helped Me*. It was a time when Madame Blavatsky—she, who was then the one great exponent, had left the field, and the curiosity and interest excited by her original and striking mission had died down. The *T. S.* was henceforth to subsist on its philosophical basis, and this, after long years of toil and unyielding persistence, was the point attained by Mr. Judge. From his twenty-third year until his death, his best efforts and all the fiery energies of his undaunted soul were given to this Work. We have a word picture of him, opening meetings, reading a chapter of the *Bhagaz'ad Gila*, entering the Minutes, and carrying on all the details of the same, as if he were not the only person present; and this he did, time after time, determined to have a society. In these early days, Mr. Judge was a young practicing lawyer who had to give much of his time to earning a living. He had married in 1874, shortly before meeting H.P.B. There was only one child, a girl, who died while very young. Business affairs took him to South America in 1876, where he contracted

Chagres fever, and he was ever after a sufferer from this torturing disease. Other phases of his South American experiences are recorded in his writings, often allegorical, suggesting the character of the occult contacts which may have been established on this journey. In **1883**, with some others, Mr. Judge established a branch society, the Aryan Theosophical Society of New York, which was chartered by Col. Olcott. In later years, under Judge's guidance, the Aryan Society was to set an example to all other American branches in effective promulgation of Theosophy. In the first number of the *Path*, Mr. Judge described the Aryan Society as a branch "formed with the idea of cementing together the New York members taken into the Parent Society while Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky were here." He adds, however, that "it was found that a good many had joined [the Parent Society] under the impression that it was a new kind of spiritualism, and then had retired." The real activity of the Aryan branch began in 1886, with the publication of the *Path*. In 1884, at Judge's suggestion, Col. Olcott had organized an American Board of Control for the government of the Society in the United States. This executive body superseded the Presidency of Abner Doubleday. Early in 1884, Judge went to London, where he met Sinnett and other English members. A few weeks later he went to Paris where, on March **28**, he was joined by H.P.B. and Olcott, who had come from India. Judge remained in Madame Blavatsky's company for several weeks in France—for him a pleasant change from the moral atmosphere of London, which he had found extremely depressing. Actually, this period early in **1884** seems to have been a critical interlude in the preparation of Mr. Judge for the work which lay ahead of him. Correspondence to friends, written in London, and some of his Paris letters also, reveal that he was suffering from an extraordinary despondency which lasted several weeks or months. It was a time, he explained to his intimates, when certain influences from the distant past

returned to disturb his psychic well-being. Both the simplicity and the strength of the young Irish-American are shown by this passage from one of his Paris letters:

“These last days (12) have been a trial to me. Quite vividly the question of sticking fast or letting go has come up. I believe

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that I have been left alone to try me. But I have conquered. I will not give up; and no matter what the annoyance or bitterness, I will stand. Last night I opened the *Theosophist* that Mme. has here, and almost at once came across those articles about chelaship, its trials and dangers. It seemed like a confirmation of my thoughts, and while the picture in one sense was rather dismal, yet they strengthened me. In April, 1884, intimations of the plot of the Coulombs were received in Paris and Judge was sent to India with, as he put it, “full power from the president of the society to do whatever seemed best for our protection against an attack we had information was about to be made in conjunction with the missionaries who conducted the Christian College at Madras.” He arrived at Adyar shortly after the Coulombs had been expelled and at once took charge. He called a number of witnesses to see the handiwork of the Coulombs, and then closed H.P.B.’s quarters to the public. As an interesting footnote to the attack of the missionaries on H.P.B., Judge makes this statement: The very next day Missionary Patterson, expert Gribble & Co., came to examine. It was too late. The law was already in existence; and Mr. Gribbie, who had come as an “impartial expert,” with, however, a report in full in his pocket against us, had to go away depending on his imagination for damaging facts. He then drew upon that fountain.

Mr. Judge remained in India only long enough to attend to his duties in connection with the Coulomb conspiracy, but during this period he strengthened the bond of fraternity with Damodar and other Hindu members whom he knew only by correspondence. In 1885, after his return to America, he set to work to revitalize the Movement in the United States. Seeing that the Board of Control established by Olcott provided a “somewhat paternal and unrepresentative government” for the American branches, he appealed to Olcott and H.P.B. to cooperate with him in establishing an “American Section” of the Parent Society, in which all the branches would have a voice. This was finally accomplished through a meeting of the Board of Control in Cincinnati in October, 1886. Following the suggestion of a resolution by the General Council in India, the American theosophists at this meeting dissolved the Board of Control and “formed the American

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Section of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, but deferred the question of adopting a formal constitution and laws until some other date when a more complete representation could be secured.” In 1887 a second meeting was held and the Constitution of the American Section was regularly adopted by instructed delegates. At the time of the 1886 meeting of the Board of Control, there were twelve branches of the Theosophical Society in the United States. These were in Rochester, Chicago, Boston, Malden (Mass.), Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, St. Louis, San Francisco, Washington, D. C., and two in New York. The members of these branches made up a total of 264. By the 1887 Convention, held in New York City, there were still twelve branches, but the membership had increased to 302. At the second annual convention of the American Section—its first large meeting—in Chicago, April 22 and 23, 1888, Mr. Judge, who was General Secretary, reported the addition of ten new branches, and an aggregate membership of

about **460**. This extraordinary rate of the Society's growth in America continued for a number of years. By 1896, there were **103** branches in the United States.

The first number of the *Path* appeared in April, 1886. Its opening editorial struck the keynote of the policy it was to maintain for ten years, under the editorship of Mr. Judge. He began by explaining that the magazine was not the official organ of the Theosophical Society, but an independent journal "the impulse for which arose directly from Theosophical teachings and literature." The magazine's founders, he said, have resolved to try on the one hand to point out to their fellows a Path in which they have found hope for man, and on the other to investigate all systems of ethics and philosophy claiming to lead directly to such a path, regardless of the possibility that the highway may, after all, be in another direction from the one in which they are looking. From their present standpoint **it** appears to them that the true path lies in the way pointed out by our Aryan forefathers, philosophers, and sages, whose light is still shining brightly, albeit that this is now Kali Yuga, or the age of darkness.

The editorial concludes:

The very first step in true mysticism and true occultism is to try to apprehend the meaning of Universal Brotherhood, without

which the very highest progress in the practice of magic turns to ashes in the mouth.

We appeal, therefore, to all who wish to raise themselves and their fellow creatures—man and beast—out of the thoughtless jog trot of selfish everyday life. It is not thought that Utopia can be established in a day; but through the spreading of the idea of Universal Brotherhood, the truth in all things may be discovered. Certainly, if we all say that it is useless, that such highly-strung, sentimental notions cannot obtain currency, nothing will ever be done. A beginning must be made, and it has been, by the Theosophical Society. Although philanthropic institutions and schemes are constantly being brought forward by good and noble men and women, vice, selfishness, brutality, and the resulting misery, seem to grow no less. Riches are accumulating in the hands of the few, while the poor are ground harder every day as they increase in number. Prisons, asylums for the outcast and the magdalen, can be filled much faster than it is possible to erect them. All this points unerringly to the existence of a vital error somewhere. It shows that merely healing the outside by hanging a murderer or providing asylums and prisons will never reduce the number of criminals nor the hordes of children born and growing up in hot-beds of vice.

What is wanted is true knowledge of the spiritual condition of **man**, his aim and destiny. This is offered to a reasonable certainty in the Aryan literature, and those who must begin the reform are those who are so fortunate as to be placed in the world where they can see and think out the problems all are endeavoring to so he, even if they know that the great day may not come until after their death. Such a study leads us to accept the utterance of Prajapati to his sons: "Be restrained, be liberal, be merciful"; it is the death of selfishness.

While Madame Blavatsky wrote about Theosophy with great erudition and out of her immense store of occult knowledge, Mr. Judge addressed the common man in homely language and with simple reason. The *Path*, from its beginning, was evidence that he had completely found himself, and was now intent upon cultivating the area of his greatest usefulness to the Movement. His natural interest in the welfare of others affected everything he did, so that his articles and Theosophical talks are cast in the idiom of the man in the street. There was nothing of the *poseur* in Mr. Judge, and his simple, unaffected style sometimes has the effect of concealing his wisdom

from those who expect certain mannerisms or pretensions in “occult” or “deep” writing. As the years went by, Mr. Judge revealed himself as a skillful organizer and a

self-effacing administrator who knew how to help other men to develop their talents and take responsibilities. He wrote for the *Path* under a variety of pseudonyms, thus hiding from the public his large personal part in that publication, although he signed with his own name all decisive statements of policy for which individual responsibility ought to be assumed.

His knowledge of Theosophy emerged in the pages of the *Path* in the form of endlessly varied applications of the philosophy. His method is suggestive rather than dogmatic. Everything he wrote of a metaphysical nature can be found supported, directly or indirectly, in the works of Madame Blavatsky. He attempted no new “revelation,” but illustrated in his own works the ideal use of the concepts of the Theosophical teachings. At the conclusion of the first volume of the *Path*, he presented a view of the law of cycles showing that, to him, this law was no abstraction, but a principle having direct bearing on the work of the Movement and on the psychological and moral needs of the human race at this time. He wrote:

The “Christian” nations have dazzled themselves with the baneful glitter of material progress. They are not the peoples who will furnish the clearest clues to the Path. A few short years and they will have abandoned the systems now held so dear, because their mad rush to the perfection of their civilization will give them control over now undreamed of forces. Then will come the moment when they must choose which of two kinds of fruit they will take.

In the year just passing we have been cheered by much encouragement from without and within. Theosophy has grown not only in ten years, but during the year past. A new age is not far away. The huge, unwieldy flower of the 19th century civilization, has almost fully bloomed, and preparation must be made for the wonderful new flower which is to rise from the old. We have not pinned our faith on Vedas nor Christian scriptures, nor desired any others to do so. All our devotion to Aryan literature and philosophy arises from a belief that the millions of minds who have trodden weary steps before ours, left a path which might be followed with profit, yet with discrimination. For we implicitly believe that in this curve of the cycle, the final authority is *the man himself*. In former times the disclosed Vedas, and later, the teachings of the great Buddha, were the right authority, in whose authoritative teachings and enjoined practices were found the necessary steps to raise Man to an upright position. But the grand clock of the Universe

points to another hour, and now Man must seize the key in his hands and himself—as a whole—open the gate. Hitherto he has depended upon the great souls whose hands have stayed impending doom. Let us then together enter upon another year, fearing nothing, assured of strength in the Union of Brotherhood. For how can we fear death, or life, or any horror or evil, at any place or time, when we well know that even death itself is a part of the dream which we are weaving before our eyes. Our belief may be summed up in the motto of the Theosophical Society: ‘There is no religion higher than Truth,’ and our practice consists in a disregard of any authority in matters of religion and philosophy except such propositions as from their innate quality we feel to be true.

This editorial was Judge’s way of repeating the doctrine—implied in *Isis Unveiled* and to be stated explicitly in *The Secret Doctrine* and in numerous articles and letters by Madame

Blavatsky—that the twentieth century would be a period of vast psychic mutation in human history, during which the faculties of the human mind would be heightened and the psycho-emotional susceptibilities of all men would be greatly increased. The need, in this coming cycle, would be for greater moral stability and intellectual self-reliance, in order to avoid the catastrophic psychological disorders which would afflict the race unless this stability were gained. Here, in his *Path* editorial, Mr. Judge put into simple terms a teaching of crucial importance to the future of Western civilization, but it was not labelled or accompanied by any fanfare to attract attention. The ideas were given, and readers were left to recognize their significance for themselves.

It was natural that in the course of years Mr. Judge attracted to the Movement in America a nucleus of devoted individuals who supported and helped with the work in various ways. One of these was J. D. Buck, who became a member of the Society in 1878, after reading *Isis Unveiled*. Dr. Buck maintained a correspondence with H.P.B. while she was in India. Col. Olcott appointed him to serve on the American Board of Control, which met in Dr. Buck's home in Fregonia, N.Y., in **1884** to consider plans for a Theosophical revival in the United States. Other meetings of the Board convened in **1885** and 1886 in his house in Cincinnati. Dr. Buck wrote numerous excellent articles for the *Path*, both under his own name and under the pseudonym of

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“Hiraj.” His personal affection for Mr. Judge made him a loyal worker throughout the former's life, but after Judge died, Dr. Buck was confused by the various claims to “spiritual authority” and became a follower of “TK,” an “occult” writer with pretensions to higher Masonic knowledge.

Another worker was Julia Campbell VerPlanck, later Mrs. Archibald Keightley, who was probably more help to Judge than any one else in getting out the *Path*. She wrote for the *Path* under the names of “Julius,” “August Waldensee,” and “Jasper Niemand.” She used the latter name as editor of the volume of Mr. Judge's letters to her, which she published as *Letters That Have Helped Me*.

Alexander Fullerton, an Episcopalian clergyman who had been Mrs. VerPlanck's pastor, was attracted to Theosophy by her and gave up his **position** in the church, in **1890** he became a member of the Council of the American Section of the T. S. He was well educated, could write and speak, and his offer of services at the busy headquarters of the General Secretary was gladly accepted. Mr. Fullerton soon became known as Mr. Judge's right-hand man. He contributed many articles to the *Path*, edited the *Forum*—a small periodical devoted to Theosophical questions and answers—and attended to much of the correspondence coming to the *Path* editorial office and the headquarters of the American Section. Another prominent American worker was Jerome A. Anderson, active on the Pacific Coast, who was author of elementary books on Reincarnation and Karma, Immortality, and Septenary Man. Mr. Anderson was a frequent contributor to the pages of the *New Californian*, a Theosophical monthly founded in Los Angeles in **1891**. The editor of this magazine, Miss Louise A. Off, was among the most active members on the Pacific Coast, writing on Theosophical subjects for the California newspapers as well as in the *New Californian*. She also conducted in her home well-attended weekly meetings for the discussion of Theosophy. Although Miss Off was not physically strong, having to discontinue publication of the magazine after two volumes were completed, she worked strenuously for Theosophy and continued to write in the service of the Movement until her death in **1895**.

The spirit of the work of the Movement in America is best discovered by a reading of the first ten volumes of the *Path*, of Jasper Niemand's compilation of *Letters That Have Helped Me*, and of the letters of H. P. Blavatsky to the annual conventions of the American Section. There were five of these messages from H.P.B. to the American Theosophists. The first, which was read to the delegates to the convention held in Chicago in April, **1888**, she addressed to Mr. Judge as "Brother and Co-Founder of the Theosophical Society." This letter is of particular interest for several reasons, among them the evidence it provides of the position occupied by Mr. Judge in her regard. She began with greetings to the Delegates and Fellows of the Society, adding—"and to yourself [Judge]—the heart and soul of that Body in America." The letter continues:

We were several, to call **it** to life **in 1875**. Since then you have remained alone to preserve that life through good and evil report. It is to you chiefly, if not entirely, that the Theosophical Society owes its existence in **1888**. Let me then thank you for it, for the first, and perhaps for the last, time publicly, and from the bottom of my heart, which beats only for the cause you represent so well and serve so faithfully.

The remainder of the letter is occupied with practical advice for carrying on the work of the Theosophical Movement. H.P.B. expressed herself on the various problems confronting the Society, noting both the opportunities and the dangers which lay ahead. She wrote:

Theosophy has lately taken a new start in America which marks the commencement of a new Cycle in the affairs of the Society in the West. And the policy you are now following is admirably adapted to give scope for the widest expansion of the movement, and to establish on a firm basis an organization which, while promoting feelings of fraternal sympathy, social unity, and solidarity, will leave ample room for individual freedom and exertion in the common cause—that of helping mankind.

The multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a centre of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a

centre from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed. But let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally. We are all fellow-students, more or less advanced; but no one belonging to the Theosophical Society ought to count himself as more than, at best, a pupil-teacher—one who has no right to dogmatize. Since the Society was founded, a distinct change has come over the spirit of the age. Those who gave us commission to found the Society foresaw this, now rapidly growing, wave of transcendental influence following that other wave of mere phenomenalism. Even the journals of Spiritualism are gradually eliminating the phenomena and wonders, to replace them with philosophy. The Theosophical Society led the van of this movement; but, although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. The days of old are gone to return no more, and many are the Theosophists who, taught by bitter experience, have pledged themselves to make of the Society a "miracle *club*" no longer. The faint-hearted have asked in all ages for signs and wonders, and when these failed to be

granted, they refused to believe. Such are not those who will ever comprehend Theosophy pure and simple. But there are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy—the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets—is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.

This should never be forgotten, nor should the following fact be overlooked. On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission—namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not on a labour with selfish motives—on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realization of which Humanity is vainly waiting for the last **18** centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.

H.P.B. spoke prophetically in this letter. She wrote also of the awakening interest in Theosophy in England. In addition to *Lucifer*, H.P.B.'s magazine, English theosophists were supporting a new organization, the Theosophical Publication Society, which was issuing literature for public use—undertaking, as the letter said, “the very necessary work of breaking down the barrier of prejudice and ignorance which has formed

so great an impediment to the spread of Theosophy.” She wrote also that *The Secret Doctrine*, her great work for which so many students were waiting impatiently, was now ready for the printer. She ended by expressing her intention of staying in England—“where for the moment the hardest fight against prejudice and ignorance has to be fought”—but added that “much of my hope for Theosophy lies with you in the United States, where the Theosophical Society was founded, and of which country I myself am proud of being a citizen.”

These annual messages to the American theosophists from H.P.B. continued until her death in **1891**. Taken together, they form an inspiring manual of Theosophical work and counsel, full of the enthusiasm of the most tireless worker of them all, and pervaded by that practical knowledge of human needs which all true philanthropists must possess. The “five messages” are regarded by most theosophists as a succinct statement of the “lines” of Theosophical work, to be followed carefully in order to make the Theosophical Movement of the greatest possible benefit to the modern world.

CHAPTER X LUCIFER AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

MADAME BLAVATSKY had come to England in May, **1887**, living for several months in the cottage, “Maycot,” occupied by Mabel Collins. in Norwood. Miss Collins was a psychic. in the sense that many writers are, who in 1885 had published *Light on the Path*, a devotional manual bearing internal evidence of high spiritual inspiration. She was eager to be of assistance when H.P.B. arrived, and her small cottage was soon transformed into a working center for Theosophy. Three projects were afoot: revision and final preparation for the press of *The Secret Doctrine*; publication of another Theosophical magazine, *Lucifer*, which was to be H.P.B.'s own

organ of expression, and the formation of an active Lodge for the promulgation of Theosophy in England. Miss Collins' home was found too small for these extensive undertakings, and in October H.P.B. removed to London, establishing headquarters in a more capacious house at 17 Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill Gate. Countess Wachtmeister arrived from Sweden, bringing two servants to run the household. The two Keightleys, Bertram and Archibald, who had helped to bring H.P.B. to England, were on hand to continue the work of organizing the MS. of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Bertram Keightley tells of the formation of the Blavatsky Lodge in his memoir, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky*:

H.P.B. from the day of her arrival at "Maycot" wanted "something done"—something active and more or less public. So we decided—as the London Lodge seemed altogether hopelessly asleep, if not dead—that we would form a new Lodge of the Theosophical Society on our own, and to emphasize our position and by way of nailing our colours to the mast, we decided to take the name of "The Blavatsky Lodge."

After a time, the weekly meetings of the Blavatsky Lodge drew a large attendance of those who wished to hear H.P.B. speak on the recondite matters dealt with in *The Secret Doctrine*. Her answers to questions proposed at these meetings were later published as the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* and include discussions of abstruse scientific problems as well as her comment on metaphysical profundities. A

unique value of the *Transactions* is a long appendix on the subject of Dreams, in which the psychology of dreaming is explained according to the Theosophical philosophy.

Sheltered, cared for, and aided in her work by her English friends, H.P.B. measurably regained strength, with which she poured new energy into the Theosophical Movement. From May, 1887, she had but four years more to live, but these were years of extraordinary industry and fruitfulness for the Theosophic cause. During this period she completed and published *The Secret Doctrine*, wrote *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and the *Theosophical Glossary*. The first issue of *Lucifer* appeared September 15, 1887. This "Theosophical Monthly" was edited by Madame Blavatsky with the assistance of Mabel Collins, and in it were printed a number of important editorials dealing with contemporary events and social conditions. For *Lucifer*, H.P.B. wrote her most challenging commentaries on modern civilization. Her contributions to the *Theosophist* had been largely concerned with the philosophy itself and the work of the Movement. Now, in *Lucifer*, her editorial articles carried the struggle of the Theosophical Movement into "enemy" territory, for they amounted to direct challenges to the bigotry of established religion and were calculated to shock the complacency of the well-to-do classes into an awareness of the moral contradictions in their lives.

The title of the magazine was alone sufficient to arouse adverse comment, even before the first issue appeared, giving H.P.B. opportunity to expose the identification of "Lucifer" with the "Evil One" as a theological fallacy. The opening editorial provided this explanation:

Now, the first and most important, if not the sole object of the magazine, is expressed in the line from the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, on its title page. **It** is to bring light to "the hidden things of darkness" (iv.5); to show in their true aspect and their original real meaning things and names, men and their doings and customs; **it** is finally to fight prejudice, hypocrisy and shams in every nation, in every class of Society, as in every department of life. The task is a laborious one but it is neither impracticable nor useless, if even as an experiment.

Thus, for an attempt of such nature, no better title could ever be found than the one chosen. "Lucifer" is the pale morning-star, the precursor of the full blaze of the noon-day sun—the "Eosphoros" of the Greeks. It shines timidly at dawn to

gather forces and dazzle the eye after sunset as its own brother "Hesperos"—the radiant evening star, or the planet Venus. No fitter symbol exists for the proposed work—that of throwing a ray of truth on everything hidden by the darkness of prejudice, by social or religious misconceptions; especially by that idiotic routine in life, which, once that a certain action, a thing, a name, has been branded by slanderous inventions, however unjust, makes *respectable* people, so called, turn away shiveringly, refusing to even look at it from any other aspect than the one sanctioned by public opinion. Such an endeavour then, to force the weak-hearted to look truth straight in the face, is helped most efficaciously by a title belonging to the category of branded names.

The only "sin" of Lucifer, or Satan, H.P.B. pointed out, was his "assertion of free will and independent thought." The name, Lucifer, means "light-bringer," and by using it for her magazine H.P.B. threw "*the first ray of light and truth*" on a ridiculous prejudice which ought to have no room made for it in this our 'age of facts and discovery'." The readers of *Lucifer* soon learned that the announced policy of the maga.zine was no rhetorical boast. Its second number began a probing analysis of hypnotism as then practiced in the name of "research." The cases described showed the unlimited criminal possibilities implied by hypnotic experiments. H.P.B. wrote:

From the moral standpoint, such processes and *suggestions* leave an indelible stain upon the purity of the subject's nature. Even the innocent mind of a ten year old child can thus be inoculated with vice, the poison-germ of which will develop in his subsequent life. . . . Suffice to say that it is this characteristic feature of the hypnotic state—the absolute surrender of will and self-consciousness to the hypnotiser—which possesses such importance, from its bearing upon crime, in the eyes of legal authorities. Noting the attempt at control of hypnotism in France, she concluded:

But the keynote has been struck, and many are the ways in which this *black art* may be used—laws notwithstanding. That it will be so used, the vile passions inherent in human nature are sufficient guarantee. Many and strange will be the romances yet enacted; for truth is often stranger than fiction, and what is thought fiction is still more often truth.

No wonder then that occult literature is growing with every day. Occultism and sorcery are in the air, with no true philosophical knowledge to guide the experimenters and thus check

evil results. 'Works of *fiction*,' the *various* novels and romances are called. . . . These are *no fictions*, but true *presentiments* of what lies in the bosom of the future, and much of which is already born—nay corroborated by *scientific* experiments. Sign of the times! Close of a psychic cycle! The time for phenomena with, or through mediums, whether professional or otherwise, is gone by. . . . the tree of Occultism is now preparing for "fruiting," and the Spirit of the Occult is awakening in the blood of the new generations. If the old men only "dream dreams," the young ones see already visions, and—record them in novels and works of fiction. Woe to the ignorant and the unprepared, and those who listen to the sirens of materialistic science!

These *Lucifer* editorials were themselves "visions" into the future, laying the foundation for the

self-protection of humanity against the psychic crimes and abuses that would emerge with the maturing of the next cycle of race evolution in the West. The month following this analysis of hypnotism, H.P.B. discussed the difficulties involved in practical philanthropy and social welfare work, bringing the light of Karma and Reincarnation to bear on these questions. The theosophists, she wrote, “cannot pose as a body of philanthropists, though secretly they may adventure on the path of good works. They profess to be a body of learners merely, pledged to help each other and all the rest of humanity, so far as in them lies, to a better understanding of the mystery of life, and to a better knowledge of the peace which lies beyond it.” She continued:

Schemes for Universal Brotherhood, and the redemption of mankind, might be given out plentifully by the great adepts of life, and would be mere dead-letter utterances while individuals remain ignorant, and unable to grasp the great meaning of their teachers. To Theosophists we say, let us carry out the rules given us for our society before we ask for any further schemes or laws. To the public and our critics we say, try to understand the value of good works before you demand them of others, or enter upon them rashly yourselves. Yet it is an absolute fact that without good works the spirit of brotherhood would die in the world; and this can never be. Therefore is the double activity of learning and doing most necessary; we have to do good, and we have to do it *rightly*, with knowledge. It is well known that the first rule of the society is to carry out the object of forming the nucleus of a universal brotherhood. The practical working of this rule was explained by those who laid it down, to the following effect:—

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“HE WHO DOES NOT PRACTISE ALTRUISM; HE WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO SHARE HIS LAST MORSEL WITH A WEAKER OR POORER THAN HIMSELF; HE WHO NEGLECTS TO HELP HIS BROTHER MAN, OF WHATEVER RACE, NATION OR CREED, WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HE MEETS SUFFERING, AND WHO TURNS A DEAF EAR TO THE CRY OF HUMAN MISERY; HE WHO HEARS AN INNOCENT PERSON SLANDERED, WHETHER A BROTHER THEOSOPHIST OR NOT, AND DOES NOT UNDERTAKE HIS DEFENSE AS HE WOULD UNDERTAKE HIS OWN—IS NO THEOSOPHIST.”!

In December, the fourth number of *Lucifer*, H.P.B. printed an open letter (written by a contributor) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, examining the pretensions of organized Christianity and inviting the Lord Primate of England to reply. This editorial letter gave evidence to show that “in almost every point the doctrines of the churches and the practices of Christians are *in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus*.” The Archbishop remained silent, but correspondence elicited by the open letter indicated widespread approval and admiration for the bold course adopted by *Lucifer*. Fifteen thousand reprints of the article were issued to give general circulation to this challenge to organized religion in England. As a result of the vigorous policy of its editor, *Lucifer* soon gained circulation among theosophists and others, in both England and the United States. Its finances, however, remained uncertain until a special appeal for help was made. In **1891**, less than a month before her death, H.P.B. wrote to the American theosophists thanking them for their support:

The mention of *Lucifer* reminds me that the now assured position of that magazine is very largely due to the help rendered at a critical moment by the American Fellows. As my one

absolutely unfettered medium of communication with Theosophists all over the World, its continuance was of grave importance to the whole Society. In its pages, month by month, I give such public teaching as is possible on Theosophical doctrines and so carry on the most important of our Theosophical work. The vitality brought to the Movement by *Lucifer* was the climax of developments in Europe that had been under way since H.P.B. left India. Her presence on the Continent resulted in a revival of courage, confidence and action on the part of those who had remained steadfast during the Coulomb charges, the S.P.R. investigation and report, and the attacks on H.P.B.

and the Society in the press. Work began in Germany and France with fresh interest, and new lodges were formed in addition to the existing ones. Many new fellows entered the Society, some of them persons of considerable reputation. Two new Theosophical periodicals were established, *The Sphinx* in Germany, and *Le Lotus* in France. After the removal of H.P.B. to England, additional lodges were formed in Ireland, Scotland and several English cities.

The revival of the Movement during these years was helped appreciably by the work of Mr. Sinnett, who early in 1886 published a strong reply to the S.P.R. Report. Both this and other of his writings in defense of H.P.B. went far to stem the tide of unfavorable press comment growing from the S.P.R. Report. Publication in the summer of 1886 of his *incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky* had a further constructive influence. The common sense and pervading sincerity of this book helped the reading public to see H.P.B. as an extraordinary person, but exceedingly human and warmly sympathetic, steadily giving herself, soul, mind, and heart, to the cause that was sacred to her. She appears, in its pages, as a good-natured, unvengeful fighter, undismayed by the mountains of hatred and calumny heaped upon her, and one whose personal life was filled with astonishing phenomena and ever-present elements of the mysterious. The *incidents* created a profound impression far and wide, turning to good account the curiosity aroused by the adverse report of the S.P.R. and bringing many into the ranks of the Society.

The Secret Doctrine, on which Madame Blavatsky had been laboring for years, appeared in December, 1888. The first edition, of 500 copies, was immediately exhausted and succeeding editions were printed to satisfy the demand for this epoch-making work. Its two volumes, totalling some 1,500 pages, placed the Theosophical philosophy on record in systematic form. The first volume deals with Cosmogogenesis, the second with Anthropogenesis. Here, for the first time in the history of Western thought, was a work which dealt exhaustively with the problem of physical and human origins from a viewpoint which included both religion and science. In form, *The Secret Doctrine* was an extended commentary on the Stanzas of an extremely ancient treatise—the “Book of Dzyan.”

The Stanzas are presented as forming the occult history of the earth, and are followed by H.P.B.’s explanation of their meaning. The symbolism of the great religions of the world is shown to have originated in the archaic teachings of the Book of Dzyan, and discoveries by modern science are interpreted in the light of the same spiritual doctrines. Madame Blavatsky was under no illusion as to the reception that would be accorded her work by the world of learning. In the section entitled “Introductory,” she referred to certain secret records of Eastern Adepts as the source of her

teachings. The founders of all the great religions, she said, “were all *transmitters*, not original teachers.” All drank at the same fountain of spiritual inspiration:

They were the authors of new forms and interpretations, while the truths upon which the latter were based were as old as mankind. Selecting one or more of those grand verities—actualities visible only to the eye of the real Sage and Seer—out of the many orally revealed to man in the beginning, preserved and perpetuated in the *adyta* of the temples through initiation, during the **MYSTERIES** and by personal transmission—they revealed these truths to the masses. Thus every nation received in its turn some of the said truths, under the veil of its own local and special symbolism;

Speaking of herself as author, Madame Blavatsky says:

she now transmits that which she has received and learnt herself to all those who will accept it. As to those who may reject her testimony,—i.e., the great majority—she will bear them no malice, for they will be as right in their way in denying, as she is right in hers in affirming, since they look at **TRUTH** from two entirely different stand-points. Agreeably with the rules of critical scholarship, the Orientalist has to reject *a priori* whatever evidence he cannot fully verify for himself. And how can a Western scholar accept on hearsay that which he knows nothing about? Indeed, that which is given in these volumes is selected from *oral*, as much as from written teachings. This first instalment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their

own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a “scholar,” in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously. They will be derided and rejected *a priori* in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas. This is no pretension to *prophecy*, but simply a statement based on the knowledge of facts. Every century an attempt is made to show the world that Occultism is no vain superstition. Once the door [is] permitted to be kept a little ajar, it will be opened wider with every new century. The times are ripe for a more serious knowledge than hitherto permitted, though still very limited, so far.”

Madame Blavatsky was never devious as to her own basic position when appealing to the world for a hearing. She stated openly that she was the pupil—and representative—of wise men, hidden from the rest of the world, whom she called *Adepts*. Willing to use Western methods of scholarship whenever possible, she never rested her case on scholarly apparatus. She acknowledged the basis for learned skepticism toward the Theosophical teachings, according to technical standards of research, but she herself rejected academic limitations in the search for truth and invited her readers to do likewise. Science, religion, philosophy, all figure in her writings, but, essentially, she was neither scientist, religionist nor philosopher; she was one who gave to the world fundamental moral teachings to be judged on their merits by each man for himself. Her Preface concludes:

It is needless to explain that this book is not the Secret Doctrine in its entirety, but a select

number of fragments of its fundamental tenets, special attention being paid to some facts which have been seized upon by various writers, and distorted out of all resemblance to the truth.

But it is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings, however fragmentary and incomplete, contained in these volumes, belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from **it** in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into

their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed, and become materialised.

It is more than probable that the book will be regarded by a large section of the public as a romance of the wildest kind; for who has ever even heard of the book of Dzyan?

The writer, therefore, is fully prepared to take all the responsibility for what is contained in this work, and even to face the charge of having invented the whole of it. That it has many shortcomings she is fully aware; all that she claims for it is that, romantic as it may seem to many, its logical coherence and consistency entitle this new Genesis to rank, at any rate, on a level with the working hypotheses” so freely accepted by modern science. Further, it claims consideration, not by reason of any appeal to dogmatic authority, but because it closely adheres to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy. The aim of this work may be thus stated: to show that Nature is not “a fortuitous concurrence of atoms,” and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe; to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring; finally, to show that the occult side of Nature has never been approached by the Science of modern civilization.

If this is in any degree accomplished, the writer is content. It is written in the service of humanity, and by humanity and the future generations it must be judged. Its author recognizes no inferior court of appeal. Abuse she is accustomed to; calumny she is daily acquainted with; at slander she smiles in silent contempt **H.P.B.**

The title of this work, “The Secret Doctrine,” gave deliberate prominence to an idea which has pervaded every expression of the Theosophical Movement throughout human history. It was H.P.B. ‘s declaration of the reality of *esoteric* teachings. Jesus, when asked by his disciples why he spoke to the multitude in parables, answered: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Similarly, the wise among the ancient Greeks were “initiates” into the Mysteries—those entitled to receive from the hierophants the secret teachings handed down from generation to generation of adepts. Every great religion bears evidence of occult or hidden lore, explained only to the few. To call attention to the idea of *occultism* and to identify the contents of her work as in large

part an exposition of hitherto secret teachings, Madame Blavatsky employed a title that described precisely the book she had written. By the year 1888, the conception of secret or esoteric teachings was by no means new to members of the Theosophical Society. In the revised Rules and By-Laws published in the *Theosophist* for April, **1880**, it was announced that “The Society consists of three sections”— The highest or First Section is composed exclusively of proficients or initiates in

Esoteric Science and Philosophy, who take a deep interest in the Society's affairs.

The Second Section embraces such Theosophists as have proved by their fidelity, zeal, and courage, and their devotion to the Society, that they have become able to regard all men as equally their brothers, irrespective of caste, colour, race, or creed; and who are ready to defend the life or honour of a brother Theosophist even at the risk of their own lives.

The administration of the superior Sections need not be dealt with at present in a code of rules laid before the public. No responsibilities, connected with these superior grades, are incurred by persons who merely desire ordinary membership of the third class.

The Third is the Section of Probationers. All new Fellows are on probation, until their purpose to remain in the Society has become fixed, their usefulness shown, and their ability to conquer evil habits and unwarrantable prejudices demonstrated. In the years following 1880, H.P.B. printed in the *Theosophist* several articles which described the qualifications for discipleship and set forth the laws of accelerated spiritual evolution to which all disciples must conform. Long known in India, the term "chela" gradually became familiar to European and American theosophists, as indicating the special relationship existing between the aspirant to occult knowledge and his adept teacher. An early discussion of this subject, "Chelas and Lay Chelas," provided students with definitions and amplifications:

A "Chela," ... is one who has offered himself or herself as a pupil to learn practically the "hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man." The spiritual teacher to whom he proposes his candidature is called in India a *Guru*. and the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection

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of the **WILL**; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being:—this is the real Guru. To offer oneself as a candidate for Chelaship is easy enough, to develop into an Adept, the most difficult task any man could possibly undertake. There are scores of "natural-born" poets, mathematicians, mechanics, statesmen, etc., but a natural-born Adept is something practically impossible. For, though we do hear at very rare intervals of one who has an extraordinary innate capacity for the acquisition of occult knowledge and power, yet even he has to pass the self-same tests and probation, and go through the same self-training as any less endowed fellow aspirant. In this matter it is most true that there is no royal road by which favorites may travel.

For centuries the selection of Chelas—outside the hereditary group within the *gonpa* (temple)—has been made by the Himalayan Mahatmas themselves from among the class—in Tibet, a considerable one as to number—of natural mystics. The only exceptions have been in the cases of Western men like Fludd, Thomas Vaughn, Paracelsus, Pico di Mirandola, Count St. Germain, etc., whose temperamental affinity to this celestial science more or less forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings.

Madame Blavatsky then gave seven qualifications for chelaship—requirements so exacting as to seem to make it quite impossible for an ordinary Westerner to hope for acceptance. She added, however, that "since the advent of the Theosophical Society, one of whose arduous tasks it was to re-awaken in the Aryan mind the dormant memory of the existence of this science and of those

transcendent human capabilities, the rules of Chela selection have become slightly relaxed in one respect.” Some members of the Theosophical Society were permitted to pledge themselves as chelas. The results, far from encouraging, led H.P.B. to publish this article of clarification and warning. She wrote to explain the numerous failures among the chelas and lay chelas (married individuals) of European descent:

Now there is a terrible law operative in nature, one which cannot be altered, and whose operation clears up the apparent mystery of the selection of certain “Chelas” who have turned out sorry specimens of morality, these few years past. Does

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the reader recall the old proverb, “Let sleeping dogs lie”? There is a world of occult meaning in it. No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is *tried*. Thousands go through life very respectably, because they were never put to the pinch. This is a truism doubtless, but it is most pertinent to the present case. One who undertakes to try for Chelaship by that very act rouses and lashes to desperation every sleeping passion of his animal nature. For this is the commencement of a struggle for the mastery in which quarter is neither to be given nor taken. It is, once for all, “To be, or Not to be”; to conquer, means **ADEPTSHIP**; to fail, an ignoble Martyrdom; for to fall victim to lust, pride, avarice, vanity, selfishness, cowardice, or any other of the lower propensities, is indeed ignoble, if measured by the standard of true manhood. The Chela is not only called upon to face all the latent evil propensities of his nature, but, in addition, the whole volume of maleficent power accumulated by the community and nation to which he belongs. For he is an integral part of those aggregates, and what affects either the individual man, or the group (town or nation) reacts upon the other. And in this instance his struggle for goodness jars upon the whole body of badness in his environment, and draws its fury upon him. If he is content to go along with his neighbours and be almost as they are—perhaps a little better or somewhat worse than the average no one may give him a thought. But let it be known that he has been able to detect the hollow mockery of social life, its hypocrisy, selfishness, sensuality, cupidity and other bad features, and has determined to lift himself up to a higher level, at once he is hated, and every bad, or bigoted, or malicious nature sends at him a current of opposing will power. If he is innately strong he shakes it off, as the powerful swimmer dashes through the current that would bear a weaker one away. But in this moral battle, if the Chela has one single hidden blemish—do what he may, it *shall* and *will* be brought to light. The varnish of conventionalities which “civilization” overlays us all with must come off to the last coat, and the Inner Self, naked and without the slightest veil to conceal its reality, is exposed.’ This was the ordeal which over-ardent theosophists were inviting upon themselves, by insisting that they be accepted as “chelas” to the Theosophical adepts. As the failures increased, it became evident that the average Westerner had no conception of the seriousness of this first step upon the path of practical occultism. Warnings such as “Chelas and Lay Chelas” appeared frequently in the Theosophical publications, until, in the course of time, some glimmering realization

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of the true meaning of discipleship was gained by the more intuitive members of the Society. Then, in 1888, in the October number of *Lucifer*, the following announcement appeared:

Owing to the *fact* that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the

formation of a body of Esoteric students. to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the *real* founders of the T. S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founder:—

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organized a body, to be known as the ‘Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.’”

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H. P. Blavatsky, as its Head; she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with :—Mme. H. P. BLAVATSKY, 57 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(signed) H. S. OLCOTT

Attest:—H. P. BLAVATSKY

President in Council

With the formation of the Esoteric Section, a new influence began to make itself felt in Theosophical history. While little was printed in the Theosophical journals concerning the Section—all its activities being carried on under strict pledge of secrecy—the effect of this new organization was to consolidate the energies and devotion of the most ardent members of the Society, with obvious benefits to the work of the Movement. As head of the Section, H.P.B. was freed of organizational procedures in her relations with esoteric students, whom she regarded as her pupils, and she gave such private teachings to them as would serve the cycle of inner development they were undergoing. In December, 1888, Madame Blavatsky wrote to one of her correspondents:

“The Esoteric Section is to be a School for earnest Theosophists who would learn more (than they can from published works) of the true Esoteric tenets. . . . There is no room for despotism or ruling in it; no money to pay or make; no glory for me, but a series of misconceptions, slanders, suspicions, and ingratitude in almost an immediate future: but if out of the...

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Theosophists who have already pledged themselves I can place on the right and true path half a dozen or so, I will die happy. Many are called, few are chosen. Unless they comply with the lines you speak of, traced originally by the Masters, they *cannot* succeed. [The person to whom she was writing had quoted the Simla letter in *The Occult World*, extracts from which appear in Chapter V of this volume.) I can only show the way to those whose eyes are open to the truth, whose souls are full of altruism, charity, and love for the whole creation, and who think of themselves *last*. . . . The Esoteric Section is not of the earth, earthy; it does not interfere with the exoteric administration of Lodges; takes no stock in *external Theosophy*; has no officers or staff; needs no halls or meeting rooms. . . . Finally, it requires neither subscription fees nor money, for ‘as I have not so received it, I *shall* not so impart it,’ and that I would rather starve in the gutter than take one penny for my teaching the sacred truths.

While Olcott issued the public announcement of the Esoteric Section, it was William Q. Judge, in America, who had urged H.P.B. to bring it into being. Immediately after the formation of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, in April, 1887, Judge wrote to H.P.B.: “So many people are beginning to ask me to be Chelas that I must do something. . . . I know a good many good ones who will do well and who will form a rock on which the enemy will founder.”

A year or so later, Mr. Judge went to London and there, at the request of H.P.B., he drew up the plans and wrote the rules for the guidance of the forthcoming esoteric section. In the meantime, both *Lucifer* and the *Path*, since 1887, and before, had been printing articles concerned with chelaship. "Practical Occultism," which appeared in *Lucifer* for April, 1888, gave the "rules" of the Eastern school of occultism, and, in the month following, "Occultism versus the Occult Arts" stressed the dangers of impure chelaship and the appalling consequences of using for selfish ends the powers gained by occult training. Mr. Judge, in his turn, contributed "Living the Higher Life" to the *Path* for July and August, 1886. In March, **1887**, he printed "Considerations on Magic," an article among the most powerful of all his writings, dealing with the gravity of undertaking the study of practical occultism. "To Aspirants for Chelaship," *Path*, July, 1888, contains

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counsel for those desiring to come into more direct contact with the Theosophical adepts. The quality of his writing on this subject may be seen in a passage from "Occultism: What Is It?" appearing in the *Path* for May, **1890**:

Not only in the Theosophical Society, but out of it, are tyros in Occultism. They are dabblers in a fine art, a mighty science, an almost impenetrable mystery. The motives that bring them to the study are as various as the number of individuals engaged in it, and as hidden from even themselves as is the centre of the earth from the eye of science. Yet the *motive* is more important than any other factor. These dilettanti in this science have always been abroad. No age or country has been without them, and they have left after them many books—of no particular value. Those of today are making them now, for the irresistible impulse of vanity drives them to collate the more or less unsound hypotheses of their predecessors, which, seasoned with a proper dash of mystery, are put forth to the crowd of those who would fain acquire wisdom at the cost-price of a book. Meanwhile the world of real occultists smiles silently, and goes on with the laborious process of sifting out the living germs from the masses of men. For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed and pretension will go for nothing.

Any estimate formed of the occult position of William Q. Judge—or of anyone else—in the Theosophical Movement must be based on evidence inherent in his life and works. From **1875** until the present day, there have been many claims and counter-claims to occult or spiritual "authority," leading to a great confusion in the public mind regarding Theosophy, and a still greater confusion among Theosophical students themselves. If those calling themselves theosophists had followed the example of Madame Blavatsky and made no claims at all, but simply relied upon the inherent merit of the philosophy they taught—its appeal to reason and analogy, to natural law—the question of "occult status" and "apostolic succession" in the Theosophical Movement would never have arisen. The viewpoint adopted in the present volume is that a comparison of the writings and activities of Mr. Judge with those of Madame Blavatsky is quite sufficient to show that he was in fact her true colleague in an occult sense, even as she declared him to be on several occasions.

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It is important for the reader to clarify his own view of this question, for the reason that, after the death of H.P.B. serious differences arose between Olcott and Judge, ending, finally, in a split in the Society. The basis for understanding this phase of Theosophical history lies in an extended investigation of the contributions to and influence upon the Theosophical Movement of both Olcott

and Judge. Judge, for example, was the one whom H.P.B. called upon to assist her in the formation of the Esoteric Section. She had written to Olcott in July, 1886, from Ostend, recommending that such a step be taken in India. "You ought," she said to him, "to form an *inner* occult group among yourselves. I tell you, Olcott, without the Mahatma and occult element you will not have such devoted fellows as . . . Damodar and a few others." Olcott, however, ignored this advice.

Although, a year after the formation of the E.S., H.P.B. appointed Olcott as her "confidential agent and sole official representative of the Esoteric Section for Asiatic countries," he remained apart in spirit from the esoteric aspect of the Movement. In *Old Diary Leaves*, Fourth Series, Olcott ungraciously explained his reason for making the official announcement of the E.S. read that H.P.B. is "solely responsible to the members for results." "The reason," he said, "for my throwing the whole responsibility for results upon H.P.B. was that she had already made one failure in this direction at Adyar in **1884**, when she, with T. Subba Rao, Oakley, Damodar, and others, tried to organize a secret class or group, whose members were to have been brought more closely into relations with the Masters, but which failed, and I did not care to be responsible for the fulfilment of any special engagements she might make with the new set of students she was now gathering about her, in her disturbed state of mind." He went on to say that he had helped H.P.B. prepare some of her occult teachings, and that when he found those who entered the E.S. "were satisfied with what they were getting," he "took a more decided stand in the matter...." His personal attitude, throughout, however, was that of a reluctant participant, chiefly concerned with guarding the exoteric Society against "undue influence" from the members of the Esoteric Section.

CHAPTER XI THE COUES-COLLINS CHARGES

BY 1889, despite the numerous obstacles in its path, the Theosophical Movement had gained such headway that the word "Theosophy" was part of the vocabulary of every intelligent person. The Theosophical Society was established in every civilized country and in every large city. The work was expanding in both England and America, and three Theosophical magazines provided ample material for reading and study. It was during this and the following year that Madame Blavatsky sustained another vicious attack upon her character. On May **11, 1889**, the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, a leading Spiritualist publication of Chicago, printed a letter from Prof. Elliott Coues embodying a letter to him from Miss Mabel Collins, the young woman in whose house H.P.B. lived upon first arriving in England in 1887. The Coues-Collins letters, and other communications from the same source in later issues of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, made grave charges against H.P.B. The gist of Miss Collins' claim was that she had been persuaded by H.P.B. to write Prof. Coues that one of the Theosophical adepts had dictated the text of *Light on the Path* to her. She now denied this to be the fact and told Coues that her original statement had been made "merely to please" Madame Blavatsky. In brief, Mabel Collins sought to damage H.P.B.'s reputation by exactly the same means as those adopted by Madame Coulomb—by "confessing" that she had collaborated with H.P.B. in a Theosophical "hoax."

Elliott Coues, who used Miss Collins in his attempted exposé, was a man of some standing in scientific and literary circles. His education and cultivation were sufficient to secure him an invitation to edit that portion of the *Century Dictionary* dealing with his specialties. His multifarious interests led him, early in the 80's, to conduct psychic experiments, and he soon

became a member of the London Society for Psychical Research. While in London during the summer of **1884**, he met

Col. Olcott and joined the Theosophical Society. Olcott, impressed by Coues' background and obvious capabilities as a writer and speaker, appointed him a member of the American Board of Control, of which, in the course of time, he was elected chairman. Prof. Coues organized the "Gnostic" branch of the Society in Washington, **D.C.**, a body which seems to have served principally as a sounding board for its founder and presiding officer. By 1886, it was evident that the Board of Control, originally established by Col. Olcott at Mr. Judge's request in order to avoid delays in official routine, was in the hands of Prof. Coues a mere exchange of the paternal autocracy of Col. Olcott for the arbitrary autocracy of Prof. Coues. Judge's request for an American Section resulted in a plan, sent by Olcott from India, for the absorption of the Board of Control by the General Council of the American Section. Apparently disliking this development, Coues returned to Washington and issued an announcement headed, "American Board of Control—Office of the President," declaring that the *Occult Word*, a magazine published in Rochester by Mrs. J. W. Cables and William T. Brown—both known to be disaffected with the Society—would henceforth be "the official organ of the American Board of Control of the Theosophical Society." A few months later both Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown broke openly with the Society, to return to the fold of "the Master, Jesus." Later in the year, Olcott issued his official order for the formation of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, and the first convention of the new Section was held in New York in April, **1887**.

Meantime, a "lively interchange of letters," as Olcott phrased it in *Old Diary Leaves*, was going on, not only between H.P.B. and Col. Olcott over the threatening breach between them on matters of policy and the forthcoming Esoteric Section, but as well among Prof. Coues, Mr. Judge, Col. Olcott, and H.P.B. concerning affairs in America. Olcott, doubtless, found himself sympathetic to elements of the position assumed by Coues. In a letter to the latter, Olcott spoke condescendingly about H.P.B.'s telegraphic request that he "abolish the Board of Control," saying that he (Olcott) would "neither ratify what she has done, nor anything of the

sort she may in future do." With encouragement of this sort from the President-Founder, and well informed of the critical feelings of Mr. Sinnett toward H.P.B., Coues probably thought he could successfully effect a change in the leadership of the Society in America and win all the disaffected to his support. Audacious as well as clever, he was writing in one strain to Col. Olcott, in another to H.P.B., and in a third to Judge. But like so many others, he was entirely unaware that H.P.B. and Judge, working together as one, made no important moves without mutual consultation, nor ever wrote letters on moot Theosophical matters without supplying each other with copies. It appears evident, also, that Coues supposed the occultism of both H.P.B. and Judge to be either some form of mediumship or simply spurious.

Coues' own methods received some special publicity in the *Chicago Tribune* following the Chicago Convention of the American Section in **1888**. Without disclosing the source of its "news," the *Tribune* published the text and facsimile of an alleged "message from a Mahatma" to Prof. Coues. Judge wrote to Coues about the affair, and in his reply Coues tacitly admitted he had

released the story to the press. In another letter, he accused Judge of standing in the way of his advancement in the Society. His correspondence with H.P.B. included one letter urging her to use her influence to have him elected President of the American Section. The height of his egotism was reached in a letter dated April **17, 1889**, in which he said to H.P.B.:

do you know you are getting great discredit in this country and for what do you suppose? for being *jealous of me!* . . . You are not moved by abuse, but you want to know how people think and what they say, and a great many are talking loudly and wildly, that your silence respecting my books in the ‘Secret Doctrine,’ and the absence of my name from “Lucifer” (as well as from ‘The Path’) means that you are afraid of my growing power.

Failing entirely to enlist H.P.B.’s support, Coues remained absent from the **1889** convention, held later that month, and soon after he received from her a letter in which she dealt patiently but plainly with his claims and behavior, and added:

“You speak of your earnestness ‘to defend and help a woman who has been sadly persecuted, because misunderstood.’ Permit

me to say to you for the last time that no bitterest enemy of mine has ever misunderstood me as you do. In May, after his hopes for the Presidency of the American Section had been dashed, Coues gave his letter containing Mabel Collins’ “confession” to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*. The June **1** issue contained additional correspondence attacking H.P.B. In England, a similar campaign raged, the Spiritualist journal, *Light*, repeating the charges first published in the United States. Prof. Coues also found an ally in a renegade theosophist, Michael Angelo Lane, who had been exposed as a carrier of slanderous tales about Madame Blavatsky. Coues based his charges against H.P.B. on an unsigned and undated note from Mabel Collins which he claimed she sent him in **1885**, in response to his inquiry to her concerning the authorship of *Light on the Path*. This note, which Coues published in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* for June **1**, read as follows:

The writer of “The Gates of Gold” is Mabel Collins, who had it as well as “Light on the Path” and the “Idyll of the White Lotus” dictated to her by one of the adepts of the group which through Madame Blavatsky first communicated with the Western world. The name of this inspirer cannot be given, as the personal names of the Masters have already been sufficiently desecrated.

Prof. Coues asserted that after receiving this answer to his question on *Light on the Path*, he had no further word from Miss Collins until May **2, 1889**, when her letter “recanting” the above explanation arrived. With her cabled permission to publish this second letter, Coues rushed into print in the *Religio*, thinking he had proved H.P.B. a fraud. Actually, he only convicted himself of slandering H.P.B., since she had refused to further his ambition to be President of the American Section of the Society. In saying that he had received the above brief note from Mabel Collins in 1885, he inadvertently revealed that he was “building a case” against H.P.B., for *The Gates of Gold* was not written until 1826, and was published early in **1887**. The *Idyll of the White Lotus* was written before Mabel Collins ever met H.P.B., and Miss Collins had told several persons how it had been “inspired.” The first edition of the *Idyll* was published with the dedication,

“To the True Author, the Inspirer of this work.” A note in the *Theosophist* for March, **1885**, written by Bertram Keightley, reports that the writing of the *Idyll* commenced in **1877**, and that the work

was resumed by Miss Collins after she had been treated for a serious illness by Col. Olcott. To his kindness and encouragement she attributed in large part “the successful restoration of her interrupted communication with the adept who had inspired the book.”

The claim in **1889** that H.P.B. “dictated” Mabel Collins’ answer to Coues’ alleged inquiry of **1885** was transparently an invention, for Miss Collins had previously let it be widely known that she believed her inspirer to be a member of the occult brotherhood. After the Coues-Collins charges had been printed in *Light*, H.P.B. contributed a letter to that journal, observing:

“When I met her [Mabel Collins] she had just completed the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, which, as she stated to Col. Olcott, had been dictated to her by some ‘mysterious person.’ Guided by her description, we both recognized an old friend of ours, a Greek, and no Mahatma, though an Adept; further developments proving we were right. This fact, acknowledged by . . . her dedication of the *Idyll*, sets aside the idea that the work was either inspired or dictated by Koot Hoomi or any other Mahatma.” H.P.B. did not circulate the story that one of the Theosophical Mahatmas—her own Teachers, and the correspondents of Sinnett and Hume—was the inspirer of *Light on the Path*. And not until Mabel Collins had met the theosophists, and had told them of her psychic experiences, did she have any idea of the nature of the personage from whom she received these elevating communications. All she was able to say was that they came from some “mysterious person.” That this was her impression regarding the source of the *Idyll* was well known to all the members of Sinnett’s London Lodge in 1885. But in her “confession” to Coues, she claimed that H.P.B. had “begged and implored” her to say that *Light on the Path* had come from “one of the Masters who guide Madame Blavatsky.” She then asserted to Coues that she had lied to him in her first letter, that *Light on the Path* “was not inspired by anyone,” but that she “saw it written on the walls of a place I visit spiritually

H.P.B., commenting on the dedication of the *Idyll*, had this to say: -----

Was the dedication *invented*, and a Master and inspirer” suggested by [Mme. Blavatsky] before the latter had ever seen his *amanuensis* [Mabel Collins]? For that only she proclaims herself in her dedication, by speaking of the “*true author*,” who thus must be regarded *as some kind of Master*, at all events. Moreover, heaps of letters may be produced all written between **1872** and 1884, and signed Δ: the well-known seal of one who became an *adept* only in 1886. Did Mme. Blavatsky send to “Miss Mabel Collins” this signature, when neither knew of the other’s existence? As the evidence piled up, showing Mabel Collins to be the “*fraud*” rather than H.P.B., the former’s sister wrote to *Light* saying that Miss Collins was too ill to speak for herself, but that she would reply in “a few days.” Months passed, but Miss Collins made no statement. In the meantime, pamphlets by Judge and H.P.B., and statements by the two Keightleys, both of whom had been intimately acquainted with Miss Collins in **1887**, proved beyond doubt the baseless character of the Coues-Collins charges. Prof. Coues was thoroughly exposed. The charter of the Gnostic branch of the Society was revoked and Coues was expelled from membership.

Mabel Collins brought suit against H.P.B. for libel in London in **1890**. When the case came up for trial, in July, a certain letter written by Miss Collins was shown by H.P.B.’s attorney to the counsel for Miss Collins, who thereupon asked the Court to take the case off the docket, which was done. It will be recalled that Mabel Collins began as co-editor of *Lucifer* with H.P.B. in September, 1887, when that magazine first appeared. With the issue of February 15, **1889**, the name of Mabel Collins disappeared from the magazine. No explanation was offered for this

change, either in *Lucifer*, or by Miss Collins, who retired into privacy until her letter to Prof. Coues appeared in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* in May. Sometime later it became known that Miss Collins had pleaded with H.P.B. to accept her in the Esoteric Section, but that H.P.B. was reluctant to do so. She was finally placed on probation, and within four days, in the words of H.P.B., she “broke her vows, becoming guilty of the blackest treachery and disloyalty to her **HIGHER SELF**. And when I could no

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longer keep in the E.S. either herself or her friend, the two convulsed the whole Society with their calumnies and falsehoods.” The question naturally provoked by these events is, How could Mabel Collins have been chosen as the channel for high spiritual teachings, when the defects in her character were so great? First of all, her case gives emphasis to the difference between *psychic* and *spiritual* development. To be “psychic” is merely to be sensitive to impressions at a subtle level of perception, making possible the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-transference, and the like. This capacity Mabel Collins undoubtedly possessed. In addition, her egoic affinities must have been such as to allow her to be the recipient of psychic communications from an Adept—a fact that rests upon the internal evidence of *Light on the Path*. But psychic sensitivity may or may not be allied with moral stability. In many, many cases, a strong moral nature is precisely what is lacking in the psychic, for the reason that vanity—pride in a “gift” not manifested in the ordinary man—tends to make the psychic individual intensely personal, vain, and prone to acts of impulsive egotism. In the perspective of the Theosophical teaching, it appears that Mabel Collins had in past incarnations allowed herself to drift into mediumistic habits, at the same time maintaining some connection with the adepts of the occult school. During the nineteenth-century cycle of the Theosophical Movement, she had, perhaps, an opportunity to recover her balance and to return to the disciplined life of an aspirant on the path of adeptship. The philosophic treatise for which she was the instrument of transmission could have been itself the best corrective for her personal weaknesses, for *Light on the Path* is peculiarly addressed to those in whom psychic tendencies are strong. She was, therefore, in a position to help, not only others of similar nature, by affording a channel for publication of this book, but also to gain help from it herself. Her failure and its train of ugly consequences illustrate the dangers in any attempt to “mix” psychic and mediumistic practices with occult aspirations.

Expelled from the Society and discredited among theosophists, Prof. Coues plotted revenge upon H.P.B. He used

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his scientific reputation to gain access to the pages of the New York *Sun*, where, in the form of an interview with him as a staff member of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, he spread the most complete set of libelous statements and innuendoes ever directed at Madame Blavatsky. The attack began with a preliminary editorial in the *Sun* for June **I, 1890**. The editorial writer calls Theosophy a “humbug religion” and claims that Prof. Coues “showed up the lying and trickery of the Blavatsky woman after having been one of her dupes for several years.” The rest of the editorial is in this vein. In the Sunday edition of July **20**, the *Sun* printed a full-page feature interview with Prof. Coues, entitled, “The history of a Humbug,” in which he accused H.P.B. of immorality, fraud, plagiarism, and systematic deception of her followers.

The Coues interview fills seven closely printed columns of small type. The charges made and the alleged evidence procured by Prof. Coues ostensibly exposed the facts of H.P.B.'s career from 1857 onward. They include virtually every one of the multitude of attacks, before and since, upon H.P.B. and Theosophy. On the statements of D. D. Home, the medium, and of W. Emmette Coleman (a writer of malicious slanders against H.P.B. in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*), Prof. Coues charged H.P.B. with having been one of the *demi-monde* of Paris in 1857-58, and mistress of a Russian nobleman by whom, he asserted, she bore a deformed son who later died. Besides these and similar lies concerning her private life, Coues turned the events of Theosophical history to his purpose, quoting Hodgson's S.P.R. Report and other assaults upon H.P.B.'s character. Judge, also, was the object of attack, he being represented as Madame Blavatsky's tool. Following the *Sun* articles, Mr. Judge in *The Path* for August, 1890, advised all whom it might concern that he had brought suit for libel. Manifestly he had done this only for the protection of the Society and the good name of H.P.B., and to head off similar attacks in other publications, for he himself had been mentioned only incidentally and as rather dupe and tool than arch deceiver, and the same as to Col. Olcott. In his notice Mr. Judge made the significant statement:

The animus of the writer is so plainly disclosed that it might well serve as an ample answer to the attack. Inasmuch, however,

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as certain moral charges cannot be permitted utterance with impunity, I have brought suit for libel . . . and am awaiting instructions from Madame Blavatsky as to her own course.

In *The Path* for September, 1890, is printed a letter from Madame Blavatsky whose tone and spirit is in shining contrast with the course and animus of her calumniators. The letter reads:

While I fully agree to the proposition that we should forgive our enemies, yet I do not thereby lose "my appeal unto Caesar," and in that appeal, which is now made to the Law and not to the Emperor, I may keep the command to forgive, while for the protection of the name of a dead friend and the security in the future of Theosophists, I hale into the Courts of the land those who, having no sense of what is right or just, see fit to publish broadcast wicked and unfounded slanders.

For some fifteen years I have calmly stood by and seen my good name assailed by newspaper gossips who delight to dwell upon the personal peculiarities of those who are well known, and have worked on for the spread of our Theosophical ideas, feeling confident that, though I might be assailed by small minds who try their best to bring me into reproach, the Society which I helped to found would withstand the attacks, and, indeed, grow under them. This latter has been the case. It may be asked by some members why I have never replied to those attacks which were directed against Occultism and phenomena. For two reasons: Occultism will remain forever, no matter how assailed, and Occult phenomena can never be proved in a Court of Law during this century. Besides, I have never given public currency to any of the latter, but have always objected to the giving out of things the profane cannot understand.

But now a great metropolitan daily in New York, with no knowledge of the facts in the case, throws broadcast before the public many charges against me, the most of which meet their refutation in my life for over a decade. But as one of them reflects strongly upon my moral character and brings into disrepute the honorable name of a dead man, an old family friend, it is impossible for me to remain silent, and so I have directed my lawyers in New York to bring an action against the New York *Sun* for libel. This paper accuses me of being a member of the *demi-*

monde in '58 and '68 and of having improper relations with Prince Emile Wittgenstein, by whom the paper says I had an illegitimate son. The first part of the charge is so ridiculous as to arouse laughter, but the second and third hold others up to reprobation. Prince Wittgenstein, now dead, was an old friend of my

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family, whom I saw for the last time when I was eighteen years old, and he and his wife remained until his death in close correspondence with me. He was a cousin of the late Empress of Russia, and little thought that upon his grave would be thrown the filth of a modern New York newspaper. This insult to him and to me I am bound by all the dictates of my duty to repel, and am also obliged to protect the honor of all Theosophists who guide their lives by the teachings of Theosophy; hence my appeal to the Law and to a jury of my fellow Americans. I gave up my allegiance to the Czar of Russia in the hope that America would protect her citizens; may that hope not prove vain !—H.P.B.

At the time, the *Sun* was perhaps the most widely circulated and influential of American newspapers. It had at its command every resource of ability, influence, and money, and it is not to be supposed that it was unfamiliar with the technicalities of the New York State laws relating to libel or the difficulties in the way of any one who might try to obtain a verdict against it in such a suit. It had but to establish in court its own good faith and prove or show reasonable cause for belief in and circulation of a single one of its major charges, and the whole history of American jurisprudence in similar cases showed that it would be acquitted. But one thing favored the suit of H.P.B.: the fact that this time, quite the contrary of the Coulomb charges, the S.P.R. report, and the numerous prior attacks upon her and her mission—this time the charges were direct, made as statements of fact, not of opinion, hearsay, conclusion, inference, or innuendo. If H.P.B. was actually *guilty* of a single one of the offenses charged against her, she was ruined, ineradicably branded with the stigma of a convicted rogue—her enemies triumphant, her Society exploded, her followers buried in ignominy, her mission and her “Theosophy” a thing of contempt and of derision.

The issue was squarely joined, with no possibility of evasion by either party to the suit. This time it was not a friendless and slandered woman forced into the position where she must suffer in silence or essay the hopeless task of proving herself innocent of the fabrications of irresponsible evil and malicious minded assassins of her good name. It was a great and powerful newspaper faced with the simple task of proving her

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guilty of a single one of its numerous charges by the simple process of bringing into Court in its behalf all the living “witnesses” who had fathered or circulated the “evidence” which for so many years had been industriously spread before the public to “prove” H.P.B. a fraud, her phenomena bogus, her teachings a theft or a plagiarism. Certainly, on the assumption that at some time in her life H.P.B. had been indiscreet in her relations with men, at some time participant in questionable transactions, at some time engaged in anything disreputable, at some time party to fraudulent phenomena, at some time profiting by her “hoax”—the task before the *Sun* was an easy one.

The case was pressed with the utmost vigor by H.P.B.’s attorneys, but the usual “law’s delays”

were invoked and taken advantage of in the defense. In *The Path* for March, **1891**, a statement of what was then the status of the suit was published under the caption, "The Libel Suits Against New York *Sun* and Elliott Coues." The article reads:

Several letters inquiring about these suits having been received, and various rumors about them having arisen, facts are given. It is not possible to bring any suit to trial in New York very quickly, as all the calendars are crowded and suitors have to await their turn. It is not possible in New York to have newspapers notice the progress of suits for libel against other newspapers, as an agreement exists between the various editors that no such publication will be made. Hence the silence about the above-mentioned actions. The actions were begun in earnest and are awaiting trial. They will be continued until a verdict is reached or a retraction given.

One victory has been gained in this way. The New York *Sun* put in a long answer to Mme. Blavatsky's complaint and her lawyers demurred to its sufficiency as a defence. That question of law was argued before Judge Beach in the Supreme Court, and on the argument *the lawyers for the Sun confessed in open court their inability to prove the charge of immorality on which the suit lies*, and asked to be allowed to retain the mass of irrelevant matter in the answer. These matters could only have been meant to be used to prejudice a jury. But Judge Beach sustained Mme. Blavatsky's objection and ordered that the objectionable matter be stricken out. The case now looks merely like one in which the only question will be the amount of damages, and

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everything must now stand until the case is reached in the Trial Term. This decision on the demurrer was a substantial victory. The suit against Dr. Elliott Coues is in exactly the same condition.

Madame Blavatsky died in May of the same year—1891—and, under the Laws of New York, her death automatically terminated the suit brought by her against the *Sun*. Mr. Judge, however, continued to press his suit, although the allegations originally made against himself were rather ridicule than slander. Finally, on September **26, 1892**, the *Sun*, which by this time had become convinced of the great wrong perpetrated in its pages, voluntarily published, in partial amends, an editorial article repudiating the Coues interview, and a long article by Mr. Judge devoted to a tribute to the life-work and character of H. P. Blavatsky. The retraction reads:

We print on another page an article in which WILLIAM Q. JUDGE deals with the romantic and extraordinary career of the late Madame HELENA P. BLAVATSKY. We take occasion to observe that on July 20, 1890, we were misled into admitting into the *Sun's* columns an article by Dr. E. F. COUES of Washington, in which allegations were made against Madame BLAVATSKY'S character, and also against her followers, which appear to have been without solid foundation. Mr. JUDGE'S article disposes of all questions relating to Madame BLAVATSKY as presented by Dr. Coues, and we desire to say that his allegations respecting the Theosophical Society and Mr. JUDGE personally are not sustained by evidence, and should not have been printed.

"The Esoteric She," the article written by Mr. Judge on H.P.B. at the invitation of the *Sun*, received editorial sanction from the words, "Mr. Judge's article disposes of all questions relating to Madame Blavatsky as presented by Dr. Coues." Thus this article and its editorial endorsement amounted to a complete reversal of the position of the *Sun*. This can be accounted

for on only two grounds: (1) that the *Sun* after vigorous and prolonged efforts to find evidence to support even one of the charges found that they were mere calumnies, and (2) that its publishers were men honorable enough voluntarily to make amends for the wrong done by publishing a retraction, even after the death of H.P.B. had freed them from all risk of damages.

All those who have in any way benefitted by the message of Theosophy would do well to inform themselves fully on

the Coues-Collins attack and the *Sun* case, for they cover every accusation ever directed at H.P.Blavatsky; and they constitute the only case where the charges were made directly, and by a responsible channel. The outcome of the case constitutes an absolute vindication of H.P.B. and an equally emphatic exposure of the bad faith or the ignorance of those who have since repeated those slanders. Yet years later one and another of the Coues-Collins-Sun charges have been repeated and have gained very wide publicity because of the supposed high character of the parties making them, for example, by “Margot Tennant” (wife of Herbert Asquith, ex—Prime Minister of Great Britain, in her “Intimate Diary”), and by the late Count Witte, for many years one of the leading Ministers of the Russian Empire under the *regime* of the last *Czar*. Count Witte was a cousin of H.P.B., but as he was very much her junior, he saw her but a few times when a mere boy. In his published “Memoirs” the old charges of immorality first directly made by Coues and the *Sun* are circumstantially repeated. He does not profess to speak from knowledge, but for the same inscrutable reasons that have prompted so many others, does not hesitate to repeat these abominable calumnies at second-hand. The outcome of the *Sun* case gives the lie to the Witte slanders upon the dead. Students may be interested to know that Count Witte’s **own** mother, a devoted member of the orthodox Greek Catholic Church, remained to her dying day the warm friend and champion of H.P.B. Vile as must be considered the characters of those who originate or circulate unverified base charges against the living, they are respectable in comparison with those who continue to revile the defenseless dead. After the battle in the *Sun* and its sequence, Dr. Coues fled ingloriously from the field; his Gnostic society melted away like a shadow, his prestige waned, and he died in obscurity **in 1899**.

CHAPTER XII H.P.B.’S DEATH AND AFTER

IN MAY, 1889, the month in which Prof. Coues launched his public attack on Madame Blavatsky, the society gained a new member who was destined to dominate its future history for many years. This new member was Annie Besant, already famous throughout England as a crusader for Secularism and Free thought. Mrs. Besant became a socialist in **1885**, thereafter dividing her energies between the Socialist and Free-thought causes. She was by this time an accomplished speaker and a writer, well-known and respected in liberal circles. During the next few years, she began to have doubts as to the philosophic sufficiency of materialism. She read A. P. Sinnett’s *Occult World* and was impressed by the larger conceptions of natural law contained in this work. Then, early in **1889**, Mr. William T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, gave her the two large volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* to review. The illumination she found in this work stirred her deeply. She said later of this experience:

I was dazzled, blinded by the light in which disjointed facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole, and all my puzzles, riddles, problems, seemed to disappear. The effect was partially illusory in one sense, in that they all had to be slowly unravelled later, the brain gradually assimilating that which the swift intuition had grasped as truth. But the light had been seen, and in that flash of illumination I knew that the weary search was over and the very Truth was found.

Mrs. Besant secured an introduction to Madame Blavatsky through Mr. Stead, and with Herbert Burrows, a Socialist colleague, as her companion, she called at 17 Lansdowne Road. She soon went a second time, requesting information about the Theosophical Society. H.P.B. asked her: "Have you read the report about me of the Society for Psychical Research?" . . . "Go and read it, and if, after reading it, you come back—well." Mrs. Besant was not deterred in her interest in Theosophy by Hodgson's report. On the contrary, she found its allegations "incredible" and joined the Society at once. She then returned to 17 Lansdowne Road, offering

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herself as worker for Theosophy and pupil to Madame Blavatsky. This was on May 10, **1889**, just two years before H.P.B.'s death. Mrs. Besant became a member of H.P.B.'s household, was admitted to the Esoteric Section, and was made co-editor of *Lucifer*. Within a few months, her reputation, her ardor, and her intellectual abilities made her the right hand of H.P.B. In the eyes of the world and of most members of the Society, she was, next to Madame Blavatsky, by far the most capable person in the Society. It was largely through the efforts of Mrs. Besant that the movement to establish H.P.B. in charge of an autonomous Society in Europe was successful in **1890**, thus freeing the English and Continental members from Olcott's "political" control.

Early in **1890**, difficulties had arisen in the Paris Branch of the Society, and Olcott intervened to "settle" the dispute. The various European Lodges, the English branches and numerous unattached Fellows in Britain and on the Continent bombarded H.P.B. with letters, resolutions and petitions to clear the situation once and for all from any further "orders" from Adyar. On July 2, **1890**, the Council of the British Section held an extraordinary session with Mrs. Besant in the chair. After full discussion, "it was proposed that a requisition, embodying the following views, be drawn up and addressed to the President of the Society":

The Continental Lodges and unattached members having made an appeal to **H.P.B.** that they may place themselves directly under her authority, the British Section joins in their demand that the constitutional powers at present exercised by Colonel H. S. Olcott in Europe, shall be transferred to H.P.B. and her Advisory Council, already appointed to exercise part of such functions in the United Kingdom.

With typical circumlocution, Olcott printed in the Supplement to the *Theosophist* for August, **1890**, a "cancellation" of this resolution of the British section, as "a usurpation of the Presidential prerogative," but published also an order conforming with H.P.B.'s cabled request that he accept the decision of the resolution. In *Lucifer* for September, **1890**, H.P.B. announced her new responsibilities, assumed "in obedience to the almost unanimous voice of the Fellows of the Theosophical Society in Europe," and added that she would

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be assisted in her presidential duties by an advisory Council which included Annie Besant, William Kingsland, Herbert Burrows, A. P. Sinnett, H. A. W. Coryn, E. T. Sturdy and G. R. S. Mead. She

appointed this Council, she said, “to avoid even the appearance of *autocracy*.”

Some ten months later, on May 8, **1891**, H. P. Blavatsky died, leaving behind her the record of her stupendous achievement in her books, in the world-wide activities of the Theosophical Society, and in the moral power unleashed in the lives of hundreds and thousands of individuals who had been stirred to give their energies to the Theosophic cause. She died, in her sixtieth year, only because her body would no longer hold together and permit her to continue working. Already weakened by her previous illnesses, she was overtaken by a high fever, diagnosed as influenza, on April **23**. Within a few days, a quinsy had formed in her throat, and next her bronchial tubes became infected. On May 6 she told her doctor she was dying, and two days later H.P.B. left the body quietly in the presence of Claude Falls Wright, Walter R. Old, and Laura Cooper. Her last moments were spent sitting in the chair in which she had worked during the final years in England. Laura Cooper described the end: “. . . suddenly there was a further change, and when I tried to moisten her lips I saw the dear eyes were already becoming dim, though she retained full consciousness to the last. In life H.P.B. had a habit of moving one foot when she was thinking intently, and she continued that movement almost to the moment she ceased to breathe.”

At this time, Mr. Judge was in New York, Mrs. Besant in mid-ocean on her homeward voyage from America where she had been H.P.B.’s messenger to the Convention of the American Section, and Col. Olcott in Australia. Hearing the news, Judge cabled that he would come at once to London, requesting that H.P.B.’s effects be kept intact until his arrival. Olcott, also, left for England. H.P.B.’s death naturally aroused uncertainties as to the future of the Society, and in particular, of the Esoteric Section. Although her “official” position in the Parent-Society was the almost nominal office of Corresponding Secretary, H.P.B. had been in reality the inspiring genius of its foundation, and her steady hand and unifying influence

had guided its course through many difficult situations. Members everywhere were asking what would happen, now that she was gone. The circumstances confronting Mr. Judge in London grew out of this great question, as well as from other complicating factors. On the one hand was the jealousy felt by Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and others, over the influence of the Esoteric Section. On the other hand was the problem of Mrs. Besant, as placed before him by H.P.B. in a letter dated March **27**, **1891**, shortly before her death. Although of great ability, strong will, and intense feeling, Mrs. Besant was described in that letter as “not psychic or spiritual in the least—all intellect.” From being a confirmed materialist for many years, she had been a student of Theosophy, and a probationer in the Esoteric Section for only two years, while the rules of Occultism, according to H.P.B.’s teaching, required a minimum of seven years’ probation before *accepted* chelaship could be attained. Mrs. Besant’s trials and ordeals of discipleship, therefore, were yet to come. She was nevertheless the most prominent member of both the exoteric Society and the Esoteric Section, and looked to for leadership by the English and Continental members.

Upon reaching London, Judge, as Vice-President of the Society, called a preliminary meeting of the members of the European and British Councils, and it was decided to hold a special Convention at the London headquarters in July. He also convened a meeting of the Advisory Council of the Esoteric Section on May **27**. This meeting was attended by Mrs. Besant, and both she and Mr. Judge, with the approval of the Council, issued a memorandum to E. S. members declaring “that the highest officials in the School for the present are Annie Besant and

William Q. Judge,” its “full charge and management” resting with these two. In this conference of the Advisory Council, Mr. Judge represented the American Councilors, and he also “attended as the representative of H.P.B. under a general power”—which “general power” was contained in an E. S. document written by H.P.B., dated December 14, 1888, stating Mr. Judge’s position of sole authority as representative of H.P.B. in America.

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The circular making this general announcement concerning the conduct of the Esoteric Section (now called the Eastern School of Theosophy, or E.S.T.) was signed by the members of the Advisory Council. The circular stated that H.P.B.’s last words in reference to the Esoteric School were: **“KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE.”** The crisis in the School occasioned by the death of H.P.B. was met by the decision embodied in this circular, and the participants in its announcement declared that the School would henceforth be conducted “on the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure.”

Col. Olcott arrived in England at the end of June, Mr. Judge remaining to meet him and to take part in the Convention of the European Section called for July 9. Olcott, while never a member of the Esoteric Section, had been appointed by H.P.B. as her agent in Asia concerning esoteric affairs, and it was natural that he be informed in a general way as to what had taken place concerning the affairs of the Section. The time was auspicious for a new beginning in the work of the Society. With H.P.B. no longer among them, the theosophists now had opportunity to shoulder larger responsibilities themselves, and thought of the future helped to allay frictions, dispel rivalries, and to arouse the spirit of fraternity—at least for a time. Inasmuch as the best known and most respected leaders of the Society from Asia, England and America were gathered at the London headquarters, the Convention held on July 9 was actually the first general convention of the whole Society since its foundation.

Col. Olcott presided as President-Founder. Mr. Judge was present as Vice-President of the Society and General Secretary of the American Section, Mrs. Besant as President of the Blavatsky Lodge. The various British and Continental lodges were represented by delegates or proxies. In addition there were numerous visiting fellows from the United States, from India, and from Australia. The London Lodge, however, was not represented, either by Mr. Sinnett as President, or by any proxy. The London Lodge held itself aloof from the general activities of the Society. Mr. Sinnett’s interests were turning more and more to psychic phenomena and his Lodge

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held only closed meetings. The formation of the Blavatsky Lodge, publication of *The Secret Doctrine* with its corrections of the errors in his book, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and other matters which he did not approve, had tended to alienate his sympathies from the work of the Movement at large. The friendly efforts of Olcott, Judge, and Mrs. Besant had only the effect of gaining a reserved and formal letter from the London Lodge to the Convention, signed by its Secretary, C. W. Leadbeater. The letter recapitulated the history of the London Lodge, which was that of complete autonomy from the beginning. It remained outside the British Section, organized by H.P.B. in 1889, and was only nominally included in the European Section formed under H.P.B.’s presidency in 1890. It now reverted to its former status of autonomy, and, as the letter stated,

“while heartily in sympathy with all bodies recognized as parts of the world-wide Theosophical Society, which Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott founded, it the London [Lodge] will not take any share in the administration or control of any other branches, and will continue responsible alone to the original authority from which it sprang in reference to the conduct of its own affairs.”

The convention concluded its business on the strong note of continuing the mission undertaken by H.P.B., Col. Olcott, Mr. Judge, and Mrs. Besant spoke feelingly of the need for unity and cooperation. Judge offered a resolution providing for an H.P.B. Memorial Fund to issue publications tending “to promote that intimate union between the life of the Orient and the Occident, to the bringing about of which her [H.P.B.’s] life was devoted.” In his final remarks as President, Olcott said:

The outside world are looking with curiosity to see what effect the death of H.P.B. will have upon us. The answer is to be obtained in the proceedings of this Convention. In her death H.P.B. speaks more potently to us even than she did in her life. The tattered veil of the personality has been drawn aside, and the individuality which we knew only as a light shining from afar, is now before us to guide us on our way. • • • No greater shock could possibly have come to us than the death of Mme. Blavatsky, and if the movement has survived it, then take my assurance that nothing whatever can affect us so long as we keep in view the principles upon which our

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movement is based and go fearlessly on to what lies to our hand to do. . .

Lucifer for June, July, and August, **1891**, contains a great number of articles on H.P.B. by leading members of the Society. These articles were reprinted in a volume entitled “H.P.B., in Memoriam, by Some of Her Pupils.” Like the proceedings of the Council of the Esoteric Section and those of the European Convention, these articles breathe the best and purest spirit, betokening a renaissance of the gratitude, the loyalty, the reverence felt for H.P.B. Jealousies, ambitions, vanities, misunderstandings of all kinds were for the moment dormant. It was as if, for the time being, her freed spirit enveloped them, putting lesser feelings aside and lending to each and all some measure of the inspiration which for so many years burned in her with an unwavering flame.

After the Convention, Mrs. Besant took entire charge of the conduct of *Lucifer*, with Mr. G. R. S. Mead associated with her as sub-editor. She herself plunged into incessant activities, writing, lecturing, encouraging and inspiring all those who surrounded her to an energy and devotion second only to her own. This as to the public work of the exoteric Society. Within the ranks of the Esoteric Section she was not less earnest and untiring. As Co-Head of the Section with Mr. Judge, practically the entire interests of the School in Britain, on the Continent, and in the Orient were in her care. Her reputation, gained before her entrance into the Theosophical world, made of her a constant subject of newspaper comment, and her presence at any meeting was enough to attract a large audience. Theosophical activities and growth doubled and tripled in England under her influence and example, and a secondary benefit throughout the world was felt by every worker in every land. Wherever her name was mentioned, Theosophy was equally the subject of discussion. Wherever Theosophy was spoken of, Annie Besant was naturally looked upon as its unequalled exponent and she was hailed by members and outsiders alike as the great and worthy successor of H.P.B.

Mr. Judge returned to America and resumed the active conduct of his magazine, the *Path*. The work of the American

Section made heavy inroads upon his time and energies. The active American membership in the T. S. was at that time larger than in all the rest of the world, and growing rapidly. The American membership of the Esoteric Section comprised two thirds of the entire body and called for unceasing attention. Next to H.P.B.'s, Mr. Judge's personal correspondence with members throughout the world was by far the heaviest. His health had been undermined by the drain of recent years and by the relentless and sustained attacks and antagonisms without and within the Society, but the good-will and good feeling reached during the London conferences gave him new vigor and a strength sufficient for his increased burdens. Col. Olcott, now past sixty, patriarchal in appearance, cordial by nature, looked upon with the utmost respect and reverence by the rank and file of the membership as being the President-Founder of the Society, the earliest as the life-long colleague of H.P.B., and the one chosen by the Masters as Head of the Society, might be said to have had his cup of glory full at this epoch. His journey had restored his physical health; the reception accorded him at London had reassured him as to the solid place he held in the affections of the membership in the Occident as in the Orient; the pledges of devotion by all the Western leaders in the Society to H.P.B., to the Cause, to his beloved Society, and to him personally, had brought out all that was generous, genial, and optimistic in his nature. He could see everywhere the work to which he had given his all through long years of hardship, often of ignominy, now sustained by able and devoted lieutenants, respected where it had once been despised, spoken of in flattering terms where once both it and himself had been received with contumely. Wherever he went he was the Chief. He determined to return to India by America, and his journey was broken from city to city by meetings at which he was the commanding figure. His entire journey during the months of his absence from Adyar was a kind of triumphal progress, strewn with testimonials of the love and gratitude of his colleagues and of the world-wide membership of the Society. Returned to India, his arrival was signaled by the Indian members in a manner not less warmly appreciative of his services.

In December, 1890, while H.P.B. lay between life and death, Mrs. Besant had published without the knowledge of H.P.B., a ringing article in *Lucifer* entitled "The Theosophical Society and H.P.B." The occasion for this article was the private propaganda that was diligently being promoted in derogation of H.P.B. by adherents of Col. Olcott and Mr. Sinnett for her action in taking over the Headship of the newly formed Theosophical Society in Europe. In this article Mrs. Besant wrote with great force and conviction in support of H.P.B.:

Now touching the position of H.P.B. to and in the Theosophical Society, the following is a brief exposition of it, as it appears to many of us:

- (1) *Either she is a messenger from the Masters, or else she is a fraud.*
- (2) *In either case the Theosophical Society would have had no existence without her.*
- (3) *If she is a fraud, she is a woman of wonderful ability and learning, giving all the credit of these to some persons who do not exist.*
- (4) *If H.P.B. is a true messenger, opposition to her is opposition to the Masters, she being their only channel to the Western World.*
- (5) *If there are no Masters, the Theosophical Society is an absurdity, and there is no use in keeping*

it up. But if there are Masters, and H.P.B. is their messenger, and the Theosophical Society their foundation, the Theosophical Society and H.P.B. cannot be separated before the world. From these propositions, Mrs. Besant concluded:

If the members care at all for the future of the Society, if they wish to know that the Twentieth Century will see it standing high above the strife of parties, a beacon-light in the darkness for the guiding of men, if they believe in the Teacher who founded it for human service, let them now arouse themselves from slothful indifference, sternly silence all dissensions over petty follies in their ranks, and march shoulder to shoulder for the achievement of the heavy task laid upon their strength and courage. If Theosophy is worth anything, it is worth living for and worth dying for. If it is worth nothing, let it go at once and for all. It is not a thing to play with, it is not a thing to trifle with. . . . let each Theosophist, and above all, let each Occultist, calmly review his position, carefully make his choice, and if that choice be for Theosophy, let him sternly determine

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that neither open foes nor treacherous friends shall shake his loyalty for all time to come to his great Cause and Leader, which twain are one.

Such a proclamation as this, coming from one who was, in the eyes of the world, even more than in the Society, the foremost power in the movement, after H.P.B. herself, could but align the ranks and silence, for the time being, all covert as well as open belittling of the Teacher.

After the death of H.P.B., as the no less clear proclamation in the E. S. circular became common knowledge throughout the Society, the determination of the Council, of Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant, to follow strictly the aims and lines and teachings of H.P.B. produced such a revival of activity, such an exhibition of common Brotherhood and loyalty to the First Object and, no less, to H.P.B., the Teacher, as had never been witnessed during her lifetime. Followed the Convention of the British and European Sections with their renewed asseverations, and the many articles breathing the most profound respect and devotion to H.P.B. and her mission from the lips of every well-known Theosophist.

On August **30, 1891**, Mrs. Besant bade farewell to the Secularists with whom, in collaboration with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, she had labored for so many years. Her address was entitled "**1875 to 1891: A Fragment of Autobiography.**" This memorable speech was circulated far and wide. After recounting her fifteen years of battle and achievement, her hard-won steps of progress to her conversion to Theosophy through her reviewing *The Secret Doctrine*, her meeting with H.P.B., her examination of the famous S.P.R. *Report* with its charges of fraud against H.P.B., Mrs. Besant astounded the meeting, the world, and the members of the Theosophical Society with this bold and categorical statement:

You have known me in this hall for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me tell a lie to you. My worst public enemy has never cast a slur upon my integrity. I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left I have had letters in the same handwriting [the same as the handwriting of the disputed 'Mahatma' letters alleged in the S.P.R. *Report* to have been written by H.P.B.] as the letters which she received. Unless you think dead persons can write, surely that is a remarkable fact. You are surprised; I do not ask you to believe me; but I tell you it

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is so. All the evidence I had of the existence of Madame Blavatsky's teachers and of the so-called abnormal powers came through her. It is not so now. Unless every sense can at the same time deceive me, unless a person can at the same time be sane and insane, I have exactly the same certainty for the truth of the statements I have made as I know that you are here. I refuse to be false to the knowledge of my intellect and the perception of my reasoning faculties. Every month which has passed since Madame Blavatsky left has given me more and more light.

Lucifer for October, **1891**, contained another unequivocal declaration by Mrs. Besant in its leading article, "Theosophy and Christianity." She says:

THEOSOPHY is a body of knowledge, clearly and distinctly formulated in part and proclaimed to the world. Members of the Society may or may not be students of this knowledge, but none the less is it the sure foundation on which the **MASTERS** have built the Society, and on which its central teaching of the Brotherhood of Man is based. Without Theosophy Universal Brotherhood may be proclaimed as an Ideal, but it cannot be demonstrated as a Fact.

Now by Theosophy I mean the 'Wisdom Religion,' or the "Secret Doctrine," and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. **BLAVATSKY**. Knowing what she taught, we can recognise fragments of the same teachings in other writings, but her message remains for us the test of Theosophy everywhere. . . . Only, none of us has any right to put forward his own views as "Theosophy," in

conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from her. When she says "The Secret Doctrine teaches," none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but **it** remains "the Secret Doctrine," or Theosophy; she always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented difference of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation "The Secret Doctrine *is*" so-and-so.

Theosophists have it in charge not to whittle away the Secret Doctrine. . . . Steadily, calmly, without anger but also without fear, they must stand by the Secret Doctrine as she gave it, **who** carried unflinchingly through the storms of well-nigh seventeen years the torch of the Eastern Wisdom. The condition of success is perfect loyalty. . .

These several proclamations referred alike to those within and without the Society who found it to their interest to disparage or calumniate H.P.B. In the months following, the

natural impulse of inchoate gratitude on the part of the rank and file of the membership toward H.P.B. gained articulate expression in Mrs. Besant's affirmations of the status of H.P.B. Those who before had belittled publicly and privately the authoritative character of H.P.B. as the Messenger of the Masters, now found it prudent to remain silent.

But after Col. Olcott's tour and return to India, it is clear that the testimonials of the respect accorded to him and his position of President-Founder reinforced his feeling of security and strength. Likewise, from his past conduct, it is evident he had expected that with the death of H.P.B. she would no longer remain a living power in the Society. That part of his nature which so often had risen in rebellion against H.P.B. living, as the dominant factor in the Society of which he felt himself the true and competent Head, once more became restive and decisive of his action. The current of his thoughts is clearly discernible in his Address to the "Sixteenth Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at the Headquarters, Adyar, Madras," India, at the end

of December, **1891**. He made this address an occasion for warning against any “idolatry” of H.P.B.:

As the Co-Founder of the Society, as one who has had constant opportunities for knowing the chosen policy and wishes of our Masters, as one who has, under them and with their assent, borne our flag through sixteen years of battle, I protest against the first giving way to the temptation to elevate either them, their agents, or any other living or dead personage, to the divine status, of their teachings to that of infallible doctrine. .

If she [H.P.B.] had lived, she would have undoubtedly left her protest against her friends making a saint of her or a bible out of her magnificent, though not infallible writings. I helped to compile her *Isis Unveiled*” while Mr. Keightley and several others did the same by “*The Secret Doctrine*.” Surely we know how far from infallible are our portions of the books, to say nothing about hers. She did not discover, nor invent Theosophy, nor was she the first or the ablest agent, scribe or messenger of the Hidden Teachers of the Snowy Mountains. The various scriptures of the ancient nations contain every idea now put forth, and in some cases possess far greater beauties and merits than any of her or our books. We need not fall into idolatry to signify our lasting reverence and love for her, the contemporary teacher, nor offend the literary world by pretending that she wrote with the pen of inspiration. Nobody living was a more staunch and

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loyal friend of hers than I, nobody will cherish her memory more lovingly. I was true to her to the end of her life, and now I shall continue to be true to her memory. But I never worshipped her, never blinded my eyes to her faults, never dreamt that she was as perfect a channel for the transmission of occult teaching as some others in history have been, or as the Masters would have been glad to have found. As her tried friend, then, as one who worked most intimately with her, and is most anxious that she may be taken by posterity at her true high value; as her coworker; as one long ago accepted, though humble, agent of the Masters; and finally, as the official head of the Society and guardian of the personal rights of its Fellows, I place on record my protest against all attempts to create an H.P.B. school, sect or cult, or to take her utterances as in the least degree above criticism. The importance of the subject must be my excuse for thus dwelling upon it at some length. I single out no individuals, mean to hurt nobody’s feelings. I am not sure of being alive very many years longer, and what duty demands I must say while I can.

Mr. Judge, during the same period, sounded a different key in the *Path*:

The death of H. P. Blavatsky should have the effect on the Society of making the work go on with increased vigor free from all personalities. The movement was not started for the glory of any person, but for the elevation of Mankind. The organization is not affected as such by her death, for her official positions were those of Corresponding Secretary and President of the European Section. The Constitution has long provided that after her death the office of Corresponding Secretary should not be filled. The vacancy in the European Section will be filled by election in that Section, as that is matter with which only the European Branches have to deal. She held no position in the exoteric American Section, and had no jurisdiction over it in any way. Hence there is no vacancy to fill and no disturbance to be felt in the purely corporate part of the American work. The work here is going on as it always has done, under the efforts of its members who now

will draw their inspiration from the books and works of H.P.B. and from the purity of their own motive.

All that the Society needs now to make it the great power it was intended to be is first, *solidarity*, and second, *Theosophical education*. These are wholly in the hands of its members. The first gives that resistless strength which is found only in Union, the second gives that judgment and wisdom needed to properly direct energy and zeal.

Read these words from H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*:

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"If the present attempt, in the form of our Society, succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the XXth century. The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings, and, as I have said, their prejudices and dogmatic illusions will have been, to some extent, at least, removed. Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path. Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish. Measure it by comparison with what the Theosophical Society actually *has* achieved in the last fourteen years, without *any* of these advantages and surrounded by hosts of hindrances which would not hamper the new leader. Consider all this, and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses, through the next hundred years—tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now!

In the *Path* for August, **1891**, appeared an article that, in the course of later years, was to create turmoil in the ranks of the Society. The article began with this quotation:

INGRATITUDE IS NOT ONE OF OUR FAULTS." WE ALWAYS HELP THOSE WHO HELP US. TACT, DISCRETION, AND ZEAL ARE MORE THAN EVER NEEDED. THE HUMBLEST WORKER IS SEEN AND HELPED.

The text immediately following runs thus:

To a student theosophist, serving whenever and however he could, there came very recently—since the departure from this plane of H. P. Blavatsky—these words of highest cheer from that Master of whom H.P.B. was the reverent pupil. Attested by His real signature and seal, they are given here for the encouragement and support of all those who serve the Theosophical Society—and through it, humanity—as best they can; given in the belief that it was not intended that the recipient should sequester or absorb them silently, but rather that he should understand them to be his only in the sense that he might share them with his comrades, that his was permitted to be the happy hand to pass them on as the common right, the universal benediction of one and all

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The article is signed "Jasper Niemand." This pen name had by that time become known and

respected throughout the Theosophical world as the recipient of the famous “Letters That Have Helped Me” from “Z.L.Z., the Greatest of the Exiles,” originally published in the *Path* during the lifetime of H.P.B., and supposed by many Theosophists to have been written by her. Not till some years later was it made known that “Z.L.Z.” was Mr. Judge, and “Jasper Niemand” Mrs. Archibald Keightley (previously Julia Campbell-Ver Planck). The article quoted above was written and published during the absence of Mr. Judge in England following H.P.B.’s death, and without his knowledge, as Mrs. Keightley edited the *Path* whenever he was away. The article, and especially the message from the Masters, stirred Col. Olcott to the depths. He wrote to Mr. Judge about it in strong terms, as he saw in it nothing but an attempt to attract attention to H.P.B., Masters and Mr. Judge himself. Mr. Judge replied at length to Col. Olcott, and his letter was later published in *Lucifer*.

Succeeding issues of the *Path* gave respectful attention to Col. Olcott’s place in the T.S. and noted Mrs. Besant’s claim to the receipt of messages subsequent to H.P.B.’s death. In January, 1892, the *Path* had for its leading article, “Dogmatism in Theosophy.” This article was evidently written by Mr. Judge, partly to make clear the real position to be assumed by all theosophists, partly to moderate the intemperate zeal of enthusiasts who were wont to quote H.P.B. triumphantly to opponents whose views of H.P.B. or her teachings were not the same as their own; and partly in response to Col. Olcott’s criticisms and public statements. Mr. Judge wrote:

The Theosophical Society was founded to destroy dogmatism. This is one of the meanings of its first object—Universal Brotherhood. . In the *Key to Theosophy*, in the “Conclusion,” H.P.B. again refers to this subject and expresses the hope that the Society might not, after her death, become dogmatic or crystallize on some phase of thought or philosophy, but that it might remain free and open, with its members wise and unselfish. And in all her writings and remarks, privately or publicly, she constantly reiterated this idea. .

171———JUDGE STRIKES AT DOGMATISM

If our effort is to succeed, we must avoid dogmatism in theosophy as much as in anything else, for the moment we dogmatise and insist on our construction of theosophy, that moment we lose sight of Universal Brotherhood and sow the seeds of future trouble. Even though nine-tenths of the members believe in Reincarnation, Karma, the sevenfold constitution, and all the rest, and even though its prominent ones are engaged in promulgating these doctrines as well as others, the ranks of the Society must always be kept open, and no one should be told that he is not orthodox or not a good Theosophist because he does not believe in these doctrines. . But at the same time it is obvious that to enter the Society and then, under our plea of tolerance, assert that theosophy shall not be studied shall not be investigated, is untheosophical, unpractical. and absurd, for it were to nullify the very object of our organization; .

And as the great body of philosophy, science, and ethics offered by H. P. Blavatsky and her teachers has upon it the seal of research, of reasonableness, of antiquity, and of wisdom, it demands our first and best consideration. So, then, a member of the Society, no matter how high or how low his or her position in its ranks, has the right to promulgate all the philosophical and ethical ideas found in our literature to the best ability possessed, and no one else has the right to object, provided such promulgation is accompanied by a clear statement that it is not authorized or made orthodox by any declaration from the body corporate of the T. S.

CHAPTER XIII THE SOCIETY VERSUS THE MOVEMENT

ALTHOUGH A CAUSE with the highest conceivable ideals, capable of drawing out from men their best efforts and stirring them to unselfish determination, the Theosophical Movement was nevertheless subject to the common weaknesses and failures of human nature. Again and again, the Movement suffered setbacks from the failure of theosophists to distinguish between the real work they had to *do*—*popularizing* the fundamental ideals of brotherhood, moral law, and cyclic spiritual evolution—and the merely incidental issues of personality and organization. H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge are singled out in the present volume as the real founders of the Theosophical Movement, not because of any particular regard for them as personalities, but because their work reveals that they understood and practiced the principles of soul-education, that they knew the needs of the race and time and met those needs with self-effacing devotion and unparalleled efficiency.

Until her death in **1891**, H.P.B. bore the brunt of the inner and outer reactions generated by the moral power of the Theosophical Movement. Fated from the beginning to suffer alike from the enmity of sceptics and the emotional enthusiasm of mere “believers,” she did her work without regard for any personal consideration. She found Olcott, instructed him in as much as he could learn, and with his help established the Society. In Judge she nurtured the seed of inner perception and made him her colleague in the occult tasks she had undertaken. She wrote down the Theosophical philosophy in systematic form, re-established in the West the School for Disciples of the Wisdom-Religion, and bore with fortitude the vicious attacks that seemed to dissolve all that she had attempted to accomplish, always returning to her labors with undaunted vigor and an infinite supply of energy and inspiration.

173—————OLCOTT’S ATTITUDE TOWARD H. P. B.

H.P.B. cared nothing for the nominal achievement of a large “Society.” She cared only for the Theosophical *Movement*, which was, for her, a living power in the hearts of men. More than once she found it necessary to declare to Olcott that if he continued to obstruct her work, or if he failed to support her in some important decision, she would leave the Society entirely and work with those who understood what she was trying to do. Olcott, on his part, was fanatically devoted to the Society as an institution. From the attack of the Coulombs to the machinations of Prof. Coues, Olcott’s policy was always to protect the Society first, with the result that if he believed H.P.B. had acted injudiciously in relation to the Society’s welfare, his defense of her was half-hearted at best. The President-Founder’s reverence for “organization” naturally led him to oppose those of H.P.B.’s actions which, as he saw them, might disturb the harmony or lessen the prestige of the Society. He complains repeatedly in *Old Diary Leaves* of H.P.B.’s “interference” in the practical affairs of the Society and attempts to convey the impression to his readers that he was the long-suffering wheel-horse of the Theosophical Movement, who patiently endured the results of H.P.B.’s erratic policies and adjusted as best he could the conflicts and difficulties arising from her mistakes. Olcott’s attitude toward **H.P.B.** in 1888 is disclosed by events which followed his visit to Europe in that year. He had traveled from India in order to deal with a quarrel among the Paris members, and in arbitrating the issue he acted against the wishes of H.P.B. As the differences between them became increasingly evident to the members of the Society, the two Founders felt it

advisable to issue a joint note, which appeared in both the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer*, affirming “that there is no enmity, rivalry, strife, or even coldness, between us, nor ever was; nor any weakening of our joint devotion to the Masters, or to our work, with the execution of which they have honoured us. Widely dissimilar in temperament and mental characteristics, and differing sometimes in views as to methods of propagandism, we are yet of absolutely one mind as to that work.”

In the same issue of *Lucifer* in which the Joint Note of the Founders appeared (October, 1888), Olcott permitted publication

of extracts from a letter he had received a few weeks previously from one of the Theosophical adepts. This letter, he recounts in *Old Diary Leaves*, was received “phenomenally” in his cabin aboard the *Shannon*, the boat which brought him to England in **1888**. It is to Olcott’s credit that he authorized publication of passages from the letter, for it is a direct warning to him as to his feelings toward H.P.B. Years later, this letter was published in its entirety in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, a slim volume issued by the Adyar Theosophical Society in **1919**. In *Lucifer*, lines seriously critical of the President were excised, as needlessly exposing Olcott’s weaknesses. A portion of the letter appears below, with brackets around lines omitted from the *Lucifer* extracts:

[Put all needed restraint upon your feelings, so that you may do the right thing in this Western imbroglio. Watch your first impressions. The mistakes you make spring from failure to do this. Let neither your personal predilections, affections, suspicions nor antipathies affect your action.] “Misunderstandings have grown up between Fellows both in London and Paris, which imperil the interests of the movement. You will be told that the chief originator of most, if not of all these disturbances is H.P.B. This is not so; though her presence in England has, of course, a share in them. But the largest share rests with others, whose serene unconsciousness of their own defects is very marked and much to be blamed. One of the most valuable effects of Upasika’s mission is that it drives men to self-study and destroys in them blind servility for persons. Observe your own case, for example. But your revolt, good friend, against her infallibility—as you once thought it—has gone too far and you have been unjust to her, for which I am sorry [to say, you will have to suffer hereafter along with others. Just now, on deck, your thoughts about her were dark and sinful, and so I find the moment a fitting one to put you on your guard.]

Try to remove such misconceptions *as you will find*, by kind persuasion and an appeal to the feeling of loyalty to the Cause of truth if not to us. Make *all* these men feel that we have no favourites, nor affections for persons, but only for their good acts and humanity as a whole. But we employ agents—the best available. Of these for the past thirty years the chief has been the personality known as H.P.B. to the world (but other wise to us). Imperfect and very troublesome, no doubt, she proves to some; nevertheless, there is no likelihood of our finding a better one for years to come—and your theosophists

should be made to understand it. Since **1885** I have not written, nor caused to be written save thro’ her agency, direct or remote, a letter or line to anybody in Europe or America, nor communicated orally *with*, or *thro’* any third party. Theosophists should learn it, You will understand later the significance of this declaration, so keep it in mind. Her fidelity to our work being constant, and

her sufferings having come upon her thro' it, neither I nor either of my Brother associates will desert or supplant her, As I once before remarked, *ingratitude* is not among our vices.

“To help you in your present perplexity: H.P.B. has next to no concern with administrative details, and should be kept clear of them [so far as her strong nature can be controlled]. But this *you must tell to all*:—*With occult matters she has everything to do*. We have *not* abandoned her; she is *not* ‘given over to chelas.’ She is *our direct agent*. [I warn you against permitting your suspicions and resentment against ‘her many follies’ to bias your intuitive loyalty to her.] In the adjustment of this European business, you will have two things to consider—the external and administrative, and the internal and psychical. Keep the former under your control and that of your most prudent associates, jointly; *leave the latter to her*. You are left to devise the practical details. . . . Only be careful, I say, to discriminate when some emergent interference of hers in practical affairs is referred to you on appeal, between that which is merely exoteric in origin and effects, and that which beginning on the practical tends to beget consequences on the spiritual plane. As to the former you are the best judge, as to the latter, she.....

The importance of this counsel to Olcott cannot be overestimated.* It was he, not she, who “interfered,” and in a way calculated to disturb and subvert the real work of H.P.B..

In April, 1886, H.P.B. wrote a long letter to Franz Hartmann, who, it will be remembered, was at Adyar during the Coulomb episode, and who witnessed the Indian Convention’s practical desertion of H.P.B. Hartmann had written to her at length, asking a number of questions. Her reply throws light on Olcott’s shortcomings:

As to . . . that portion of your letter where you speak of the “army” of the deluded—and the “imaginary” Mahatmas of

* As early as **1884**, Olcott had received from the same source another letter bearing much the same advice: “You have *never* understood Upasika, nor the laws thro’ which her *apparent* life has been made to work since you knew her. You are ungrateful and unjust and even cruel, You take *maya* for reality and reality for illusion,” (See *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, Adyar, **1925**, pp. 87, 89-90.)

Olcott—you are absolutely and sadly right. Have I not seen the thing for nearly eight years? Have I not struggled and fought against Olcott’s ardent and gushing imagination, and tried to stop him every day of my life? Was he not told by me . . . that if he did not see the Masters in their true light, and did not cease speaking and enflaming people’s imaginations, that he would be held responsible for all the evil the Society might come to?

Ah, if by some psychological process you could be made to see the whole truth! . . . I was sent to America on purpose and sent to the Eddys. There I found Olcott in love with spirits, as he became in love with the Masters later on. I was ordered to let him know that spiritual phenomena without the philosophy of Occultism were dangerous and misleading. I proved to him that all that mediums could do through spirits others could do at will without any spirits at all Well, I told him the whole truth. I said to him that I had known Adepts, . . . That, whether they were called Rosicrucians, Kabalists, or Yogis, Adepts were everywhere Adepts—silent, secret, retiring, and who would never divulge themselves entirely to anyone, unless one did as I did—passed seven and ten years’ probation and given proofs of absolute devotion, and that he, or she, would keep silent even before a prospect and a threat of death. I fulfilled the requirements and am what I am; and this no Hodgson, no Coulombs, . . . can take away from me.

When we arrived [in India], and Master coming to Bombay bodily, paid a visit to us . . . Olcott

became crazy. He was like Balaam's she-ass when she saw the angel! Then came other fanatics, who began calling them "Mahatmas"; and, little by little, the Adepts were transformed into Gods on earth. They began to be appealed to, and made *puja* to, and were becoming with every day more legendary and miraculous. . . . Well, between this idea of the Mahatmas and Olcott's rhapsodies, what could I do? I saw with terror and anger the false track they were all pursuing. The "Masters," as all thought, must be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. . . . The Masters knew all; why did they not help the devotee? If a mistake or a flapdoodle was committed in the Society—"How could the Masters allow you or Olcott to do so?" we were asked in amazement. The idea that the Masters were mortal men, limited even in their great powers, never crossed anyone's mind. . .

Is **it** Olcott's fault? Perhaps, to a degree. Is it mine? I absolutely deny it, and protest against the accusation. It is no one's fault. Human nature alone, and the failure of modern

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society and religions to furnish people with something higher and nobler than craving after money and honors—is at the bottom of it. Place this failure on one side, and the mischief and havoc produced in people's brains by modern spiritualism, and you have the enigma solved. Olcott to this day is sincere, true and devoted to the cause. He does and acts the best he knows how, and the mistakes and absurdities he has committed and commits in this day are due to something he lacks in the psychological portion of his brain, and he is not responsible for it. Loaded and heavy is his Karma, poor man, but much must be forgiven to him, for he has always erred through lack of right judgment, not from any vicious propensity. Olcott's understanding of the adepts—the "Theosophical Mahatmas"—was thus a modified conception of "miraculous" beings. He lacked a rational grasp of the idea of *natural* adepts, as products of evolution, and tended as a result to surround his statements concerning H.P.B.'s teachers with an atmosphere of miracle. But Madame Blavatsky's work and interest were in precisely this field which Olcott could not understand—the actual *processes* of moral evolution. Debarred from any real collaboration with her on this plane, he became wholly absorbed in the work of the Theosophical Society. This concentration of his energies was an important factor in shaping his attitude toward H.P.B. He writes in *Old Diary Leaves* of a letter he received from her shortly after she had moved to London, in the summer of 1887:

At Chupra, among my foreign letters I received one from H.P.B. which distressed me much. She had consented to start a new magazine with capital subscribed by London friends of hers, while she was still editor and half proprietor of the *Theosophist*—a most unusual and unbusiness-like proceeding. Besides other causes, among them the persuasion of English friends, a reason which strongly moved her to this was that Mr. Cooper-Oakley, her own appointee as Managing Editor [of the *Theosophist*], had more or less sided with T. Subba Row in a dispute which had sprung up between him and H.P.B. on the question whether the "principles" which go into the make-up of a human being were seven or five in number. Subba Row had replied in our pages to an article of hers on the subject, and her letters to me about it were most bitter and denunciatory of Cooper-Oakley, whom she, without reasonable cause, charged with treachery. It was one of those resistless impulses which carried her away sometimes into extreme measures. She wanted me to take away his editorial authority, and even sent me a

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foolish document, like a power-of-attorney, empowering me to send him to Coventry, so to say, and not allow any galley-proof to pass to the printer until initialed by myself. Of course, I remonstrated strongly against her thus, without precedent, setting up a rival competing magazine to hurt as much as possible the circulation and influence of our old-established organ, on the title-page of which her name still appeared. But it was useless to protest; she said she was determined to have a magazine in which she could say what she pleased, and in due time *Lucifer* appeared as her personal organ, and I got on as well as I could without her. Meanwhile, a lively interchange of letters went on between us. She was at strife then, more or less, with Mr. Sinnett, and before this was settled, a number of seceders from his London Lodge organized as the Blavatsky Lodge, and met at her house in Lansdowne Road, where her sparkling personality and vast knowledge of occult things always ensured full meetings.

Here Olcott appears as the patient and judicial observer, sitting out H.P.B.'s temperamental storms. The fact was that Subba Row's Brahman pride had got the better of him, and the papers printed by Cooper-Oakley in 1887 in the *Theosophist* amounted to a virtual betrayal of H.P.B. in a connection concerning which, for occult reasons, she could say very little that was explicit. She did, however, make a friendly reply to his criticisms. Subba Row continued the controversy, imputing to H.P.B. the authorship of the "sevenfold classification" given in Sinnett's book, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and holding her likewise responsible for statements in another work, *Man: Fragments of Forgotten History*. H.P.B. replied to these charges in the *Theosophist*:

This is hardly fair. The first work [*Esoteric Buddhism*] was written absolutely without my knowledge, and as the author understood those teachings from letters he had received, what have I to do with them? . . . Finally "Man" was *entirely rewritten* by one of the two "chelas" and from the same materials as those used by Mr. Sinnett for "Esoteric Buddhism"; the two having understood the teachings, each in his own way. What had I to do with the "states of consciousness" of the three authors, two of whom wrote in England while I was in India? .

This will do, I believe. The *Secret Doctrine* will contain, no doubt, still more *heterodox* statements from the Brahminical view. No one is forced to accept *my* opinions or teaching in the Theosophical Society, one of the rules of which enforces only mutual tolerance for religious views.

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Both Subba Row and Cooper-Oakley eventually left the Society. A later effort to invite them to return to membership was prevented by H.P.B., who cabled Olcott in December, 1888, that the entire Blavatsky Lodge would resign from the Society if Cooper-Oakley were re-admitted to membership.

Richard Harte, said to be author of the famous *Lucifer* editorial addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, had returned to India with Olcott in the fall of 1888, to assist in the conduct of the *Theosophist*. Harte was an old-time friend of Col. Olcott, a former New York newspaper man who had joined the Society in 1878. The part he was to play in India, as Olcott's supporter and aide, soon became evident in the pages of the Supplement to the *Theosophist*. The January, 1889, issue, immediately following the 1888 Convention at Adyar, contained a report of the "Revised Rules" of the Society, involving various changes in policy. Elaborate "Introductory Explanations" were attached to these rules, signed "F.T.S." This was succeeded in February by an article by "F.T.S.," entitled "The Theosophical Society," which took up the theme begun in January.

Briefly, "F.T.S." wrote in a studied effort to subordinate the vital aspect of the Theosophical Movement to the exoteric Society as an organization. Both the "Explanations" and the article on

the Society enjoyed the position and reflected the authority of an editorial expression, justifying the conclusion that they were written by Mr. Harte. In his "Explanations," F.T.S. speaks knowingly of the "apparent antagonism between the esoteric and exoteric aspects" of the Society and deploras as an evil the neglect by Branch members of the "Parent Society." The "supreme central authority" of the Society is defined as the Adyar General Council. The January article, "The Theosophical Society," attempts to convey the impression that the development of the *Movement* was nothing more than the "constitutional" evolution of the Society, that the "Universal Brotherhood" established as the first Object was dependent upon the "rules" of the Society. "F.T.S." reported the action of the 1888 Convention as "in favor of unity," so that, "as a 'nucleus of Universal Brotherhood' the Society is saved from a lamentable and ridiculous failure." The account

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of the "evolution" of the Three Objects given in this article was such that Mr. Judge, during the April, 1889, Convention of the American Section, felt it necessary to observe:

in a paper published in the . . . [February] *Theosophist* signed "F.T.S." an attempt is made to show that the "objects have never been definitely formulated." This article is full of misconceptions, and, therefore, of wrong conclusions, because the gentleman who wrote it was not acquainted with the facts nor in possession of the Records. He refers to the printed "Rules" of each year, and says that in 1882 for the first time they appeared as they were printed last year, but on looking over my records I find, not only that they have been always the same—except in minor elaborations not affecting the substance,—but that they were originally formulated in the shape they appeared before the last Convention in India, at the time that this Society was organized in 1875."

In June, 1889, the leading editorial of the *Theosophist* again offered its readers a "comfortable" brand of organizational Theosophy. The writer, again probably Mr. Harte, whittles away at both the purpose and the philosophic content of the Theosophical Movement. Of the first Object—that of forming "the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood"—he says that "it becomes vague and confused when the attention is directed to it, and to most Fellows this Object is about equivalent in practice to the formation of a nucleus for the recurrence of the Golden Age, or for the re-establishment of the garden of Eden As for the body of ideas constituting the Theosophical philosophy, he says:

Here and there a Fellow of the Society outside of India may be found who is willing to accept the Eastern Initiates, whether ancient or modern, as teachers; but the majority prefer to think and theorize for themselves, which is, after all, the best way for anyone to learn who can think and theorize logically. The title of this article is "Applied Theosophy," and its writer, having shown the idea of universal brotherhood to be "vague," virtually "impractical," and having asserted that "the majority" prefer their personal theories to the teachings of "Eastern Initiates," is now ready to present his own thesis: that *practical* Theosophy is possible only "through the Society." The editor waxes poetic:

It is this mystic individuality, "the sum total," that gives strength to all societies and congregations of men, and becomes

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the real dominating power, to which all contribute some of their force, and which stands behind

every unit and lends its whole strength to **it**. It is from the *Society* that radiates the “dominating power”; from the *Society* that members are to draw their sustenance and support, not from any Teacher or philosophic principles. The model to follow, the example for theosophists to emulate, is pictured by the editorial: Who speaks when a priest of the Roman Catholic Church utters a command? *The united power of the Church of Rome*. Who speaks when a disrobed priest says something? *A nonentity*. Who speaks when the Judge, the General, the Statesman open their mouths? The State,”—the tremendous and often tyrannical personality that comes into life and action when the units that compose it [are] bound together, through organization, by a common will and a common purpose. This idea that it is only “through organization,” through making the *Society* the prime object of devotion, with its “authority” through the voice of its officials supreme over the individual conscience and action, that “applied Theosophy” can be a success, is argued at length, reaching, finally, its culmination in the suggestion that the Adyar Headquarters must be made a second Rome, and, by implication, the President-Founder of the Society a Theosophical Pope! The editorial continues:

ADYAR is a principle and a symbol, as well as a locality. **ADYAR** is the name which means on the material plane the Head-quarters of an international, or, more properly speaking, world-wide Society. . . . Every loyal Fellow has in his heart a little *ADYAR*, for he has in him a spark of the spiritual fire which the name typifies *ADYAR*,” is symbolical of the principle of unity, as well as of the material life of the Society, and in every sense loyalty to *ADYR* means loyalty to the objects of the Society and to the principles of Theosophy. In the same issue of the *Theosophist*—for June, 1889—Mr. Harte printed over the signature, “F.T.S.,” another article entitled “The Situation.” The purpose of this article, quite obviously, was to establish certain ideas as “facts” in the minds of the readers. At the outset, “F.T.S.” suggests that the formation of the Esoteric Section was due to and dependent upon the order of the President-Founder, and that the reason for its organization was to *separate* the “esoteric element from the exoteric” in the Society. The view is intimated that

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an influential Society must have a *worldly* basis and authority in order to “be a moral and spiritual power in the world.” It must use “such methods in its dealings with that world as the latter can appreciate and understand, or which, at all events, will not excite its prejudices, and put it into a fury of opposition at the very first go off.” What is needed, therefore, is not the basis and methods of H.P.B., which have been the disturbing factor, but the basis and methods of Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and others who were eminent in the exoteric Society.

Mr. Harte finds in the Adept communication to Olcott while aboard the *Shannon* a mandate from the occult fraternity for insisting that H.P.B. should “mind her own business” regarding the conduct of the Theosophical Society. He speaks of her obligation to abstain “in future from any *direct* interference with the worldly or exoteric management of the Society.” This separation of “functions,” the article declares, produced a feeling of relief “on both sides.”

Occultism [it continues] is above all “rule” or “bye-law” emanating from the will of the governed, which is the only possible basis of a popular government such as that of the Theosophical Society. The result of trying to make two such different things work harmoniously was like that which might be expected from harnessing together a “sacred bull” and a draft horse. . . . Now, happily, there has been a division of labour, each driver has got his own animal to himself.

Taken as a whole, this article suggests the following conclusions: (1) that H.P.B. and Olcott were originally on a plane of entire equality with regard to the Theosophical Adepts; (2) that the

“interference” of H.P.B. in the affairs of the Society was as displeasing to the adepts as it was to Olcott; (3) that the adepts instructed Olcott to “order” the formation of the Esoteric Section to set some definite limitation upon H.P.B.’s activities, leading to a “bargain” between the leaders of the Society that H.P.B. should be let alone in her esoteric division, while Olcott should not be interfered with in the Society as a whole.

Mr. Harte’s own attitude toward the Esoteric Section becomes plain from the mood of his description of it:

The head of the Esoteric Division is at liberty to impose pledges, institute degrees, and ordain exercises, and without let

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or hindrance to issue instructions and orders to those who place themselves under her guidance;

With the affairs of the Esoteric Division this article has nothing to do. That Division seems to be a kind of Annex to the Theosophical Society proper, having two doors of exit—one leading up to higher levels, the other leading down and out. Not only do advanced students seek entrance to it, but it appears to have especial attractions for many who are spiritually somewhat crippled. The halt, the maimed and the blind, blissfully unaware of their infirmities, and oblivious of their utter want of preparation, knock incontinently at the door, and the Head of the Division cannot always refuse them a chance. At the first little “trial” these weak brothers lose their heads and their holds, fall flat on their noses, and go off howling.

Next, notice is served on the various sections of the Society that they “have got somewhat too high an opinion of their own importance.” This is directed primarily at the American, British, and Esoteric Sections, the members of which looked to the philosophy and to the example and guidance of H.P.B. and Judge, rather than to Olcott and the “Rules and Bye-laws” of the Parent Society. Readers are told that the all-powerful President-Founder could easily end the existence of any local group:

They {the Sections and Branches} exist only by virtue of Charters issued by the President of the Theosophical Society. It is the fact of the possession of those Charters that makes them different from other little collections of students of Theosophy in the countries where they exist, and gives them what credit they enjoy. . . . Suppose it became necessary to withdraw the Charters of certain Sections, does anyone believe for a moment that the Theosophical Society would eventually suffer? If every existing Charter of Section and branch of the Theosophical Society were withdrawn tomorrow, the Society would, in all probability, be a stronger body in a short time than it is now, and certainly it would not be a weaker one. . . . The Theosophical Society would then exist as a homogeneous whole, composed of loyal Fellows animated by a common spirit, and Adyar would be what it ought to be—the centre of a system for the circulation of Theosophical ideas and literature, and for the organization of Theosophical activities all over the globe.

To complete the symmetry of his dream of centralization of authority and power, Mr. Harte printed in the July *Theosophist* a letter sent to him privately by Bertram Keightley, in which the latter, who was Secretary of the Esoteric Section,

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disclaimed any intention on the part of esotericists to control the work or policies of the public Society. Mr. Keightley had written:

“We are all, H.P.B. first and foremost, just as loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar as the Colonel can possibly be. . . . I have nothing more to say, except to repeat in the most formal and positive manner my assurance that there is not a word of truth in the statement that the Esoteric Section has any desire or pretension to boss’ any other part or Section of the T. S.”

To appreciate fully the force and bearing of the editorials and articles printed by Mr. Harte, it should be remembered that the *Theosophist* was the official organ of the Society; the *Path* and *Lucifer* being Theosophical, not organizational, publications; further, that the *Theosophist* was the only one of the three with any circulation in India, and was, in addition, sent officially to every Branch throughout the world and had a wide circulation among the Fellows in England, France, and the United States. For a large portion of the membership it was the only means of information concerning the Society, and, in India, the only channel both for Theosophy and the Society. Indian members, therefore, were entirely dependent on it for the accuracy, completeness and authenticity of its statements.

Immediately following the Convention of 1888, Col. Olcott had departed on a tour in Japan from which he did not return until the latter half of **1889**. During his absence Mr. Harte was in entire charge of the *Theosophist*, and was one of the three “Commissioners” to whom he had delegated his powers as President, the other two being Hindu members of his “General Council.” Harte, therefore, was editorially responsible for what appeared in the *Theosophist* at this time. As soon as the advance proofs of the two articles quoted from reached America, Mr. Judge prepared a long communication taking issue with the facts, the implications, the spirit, and the tendencies thus expressed with every appearance of authority and Presidential sanction in the official organ of the Society. This was sent privately by Mr. Judge direct to Col. Olcott with request for its insertion in the *Theosophist*, on the assumed ground that the articles complained of were written without Col. Olcott’s knowledge and that he, no less than Mr. Judge,

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would hasten to correct the misstatements and false suggestions conveyed by the articles in question.

In the September, **1889**, *Theosophist*, Col. Olcott published as the leading editorial and over his own signature an article entitled “Centres of The Theosophical Movement.” He refused to print Mr. Judge’s article in full, declaring that it—contains passages of a far too personal character for me to admit them. . . . I have taken no part, nor shall I, in the various unseemly quarrels, public and private, which the friction of “strong personalities” among us has and probably always will engender. They are mostly unimportant, involving no great principle or vital issue, and therefore beneath the interest of those who have the high purposes and aims of the Society at heart.

He calls Mr. Judge’s criticisms “mayavic delusion.” He then quotes Mr. Judge that the “Centre” is wherever H.P.B. may be; that it was originally in New York, then in Bombay, then “a short time at Adyar” (while she was there)—for where she is burns the flame that draws its force from “the plane of ideas” her mere location of the President in Adyar, and the existence of a library there, do not make that spot our “Rome.” ... What would become of this new Rome—Adyar—if an order were received for Col. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky to betake themselves to America once more and there set up the Theosophical Society Headquarters? Such a thing might happen. It happened before, and the channel for the order was H. P. Blavatsky. Does any one suppose that either Col. Olcott or H. P. Blavatsky would be obstructed in their actions by the “Revised Rules” ?*

This query rouses Col. Olcott over what he calls his “irascible” colleague’s questions and

conundrums. He proceeds to argue at length from the record of the various minutes and changes of by-laws and rules that the President-Founder is the real fountain of authority in the Society and the real-

* In Judge's original article (printed in full in *The Theosophical Forum*, July, 1950), this passage continues: "And let me tell the writer of 'Applied Theosophy' that on an occasion many years ago when the then form of Constitution seemed to conflict with our 'order' received, causing hesitation on the part of Col. Olcott, a message was delivered from the same source saying, 'If the Constitution conflicts with your duty as laid down in your orders, then tear up the Constitution.' The progress of this movement, which has to do with realities, with the deep unseen springs of human action, must not be impeded by blind obedience to fixed Constitutions, nor by **Rules** long drawn out and verbose in their effort to deal with every imaginable contingency."

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"Rome" is wherever the President-Founder may be domiciled. He does not claim "spiritual authority," he says, but he does claim he has been "granted absolute and unlimited discretion as to the practical management of our affairs." He has never interfered with H.P.B.—who taught and introduced me to my Initiators, but it was I who gave officially to her last year, a charter to form her Esoteric Section. Between her and myself there was never any dispute upon these points, she sustaining my exoteric authority as loyally as I have ever recognized her superior connection with the "Founders Col. Olcott did *not* move the Headquarters to India by any one's order: his "orders" came from the depths of his own heart, . . . If in the course of the Society's development the transfer of Head-quarters should ever be advisable—which neither I nor Mr. Judge can now forecast—doubtless I shall receive direct notice with ample time to make all the necessary arrangements in a business-like and constitutional manner. But when it is a question of papal infallibilities and Romes, it is just as well to say it was I who proposed the formation of the Society, who had all the early burden of guiding its infant steps, and who, after the collapse of the original legislative scheme of Rules and Bye-Laws, had—as above remarked—all the executive responsibility

Olcott, it appears, was not altogether unwilling to wear the robes of papal authority offered him by Mr. Harte.

In *Lucifer* for August, **1889**, under the caption, "A Puzzle from Adyar," H.P.B., like Mr. Judge, assumes that the *Theosophist* articles have been written without the concurrence of Col. Olcott and without intention to aid and abet the enemy. "Now what," she asks,—may be the meaning of this extraordinary and *most tactless "sortie"* of the esteemed *acting* editor of our *Theosophist*? Is he . . . like our (and his) editor-enemies across the Atlantic, also dreaming uncanny dreams and seeing lying visions—or what? And let me remind him at once that he must not feel offended by these remarks, as he has imperatively called them forth himself. LUCIFER, the PATH and the THEOSOPHIST are the only organs of communication with the Fellows of our Society, each in its respective country. Since the acting editor of the *Theosophist* has chosen to give a wide publicity in his organ to abnormal fancies, he has no right to expect a reply through any other channel than LUCIFER. Moreover, if he fails to understand all the seriousness of his implied charges *against*

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me and several honourable men, he may realise them better, when he reads the present.

H.P.B. then reprints the "Disclaimer" from the Supplement to the July *Theosophist*, and

analyzes the several insinuations in regard to members of the E.S., who, she says, “stand accused by Mr. Harte . . . of ‘*arbitrary and under hand proceedings*’.” She asks, “Is not such a sentence a gross insult thrown into the face of honourable men—far better Theosophists than any of their accusers—and of myself?” Of the plain intimation that the American or British Sections or the Blavatsky Lodge or the E.S. wanted to “boss Adyar,” she says:

That the E. S. had never any pretensions to “boss the T. S.” stands to reason: with the exception of Col. Olcott, the President, the Esoteric Section has nothing whatever to do with the Theosophical Society, its Council or officers. It is a Section entirely apart from the exoteric body and independent of it, *H.P.B. a/one being responsible for its members*, as shown in the official announcement over the signature of the President-Founder himself. It follows, therefore, that the E.S., as a body, owes no allegiance whatever to the Theosophical Society, *as a Society*, least of all to Adyar.

Next she takes up another statement in the “Disclaimer”:

It is pure nonsense to say that “H.P.B is loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar” (!?). *H.P.B. is loyal to death to the Theosophical CAUSE, and those great Teachers whose philosophy can alone bind the whole of Humanity into one Brotherhood.* Together with Col. Olcott, she is the chief Founder and Builder of the Society which *was* and *is* meant to represent that **CAUSE**; and if she is so loyal to H. S. Olcott, it is not at all because of his being its “President,” but, firstly, because there is no man living who has worked harder for that Society, or been more devoted to it than the Colonel, and, secondly, because she regards him as a loyal friend and co-worker. Therefore the degree of her sympathies with the “Theosophical Society and Adyar” depends upon the degree of the loyalty of that Society to the **CAUSE**. Let it break away from the original lines and show disloyalty in its policy to the **CAUSE** and the original programme of the Society, and H.P.B., calling the T. S. *disloyal*, will shake it off like dust from her feet.

And what does “loyalty to Adyar” mean, in the name of all wonders? What *is* Adyar apart from that **CAUSE** and the *two* (not *one* Founder, if you please) who represent it? . . . Adyar is the present Headquarters of the Society, because these “Headquarters are wherever the President is,” as stated in the rules. To be logical, the Fellows of the T. S. had to be loyal to Japan

while Col. Olcott was there, and to London during his presence here. She then makes the memorable declaration of the actual existing status of affairs:

There is no longer a “Parent Society”; it is abolished and replaced by an aggregate body of Theosophical Societies, *autonomous*, as are the States of America, and all under one **Head President, who, together with H. P. Blavatsky, will champion the CAUSE against the whole world. Such is the real state of things.**

The theory of government of the Society held, practiced and preached by Col. Olcott and his pliant supporters, is next covered by her declaration made in that regard also:

Whenever “Madame Blavatsky does not approve” of “an action of the General Council” (or “Commissioners” of whom Mr. R. Harte is one), she will say so openly and to their faces. Because (a) Madame Blavatsky does not owe the slightest allegiance to a Council which is liable at any moment to issue silly and *untheosophical ukases*: and (b) for the simple reason that she recognizes but one person in the T. S. besides herself, namely Colonel Olcott, as having the right of effecting fundamental re-organizations in a Society which owes its life to them, and for which they are both *karmically* responsible. If the acting editor makes slight account of *a sacred pledge*, neither

Col. Olcott nor H. P. Blavatsky are likely to do so. H. P. Blavatsky will always bow before the decision of the majority of a Section or even a simple Branch; but she will ever protest against the decision of the General Council, were it composed of Archangels and Dhyan Chohans themselves, if their decision seems to her unjust, or untheosophical, or fails to meet with the approval of the majority of the Fellows. No more than H. P. Blavatsky has the President Founder the right of exercising autocracy or *papal* powers, and Col. Olcott would be the last man in the world to attempt to do so. It is the two Founders and especially the President, who have virtually sworn allegiance to the Fellows, whom they have to protect, and teach those who want to be taught, and no to tyrannize and rule over them. Here, as always, where the weaknesses, the foibles, and the derelictions of her associates and students are involved, H.P.B. writes only under the gravest compulsion, with extreme reluctance, and in such terms as to hold wide the door of return to right action with the least possible humiliation to the pride and vanity of human nature. She sums up, and conveys at the same time her appeal to the best in her colleagues, in these terms:

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And now I have said over my own signature what I had to say and that which ought to have been said in so many plain words long ago. The public is all agog with the silliest stories about our doings, and the supposed and real dissensions in the Society. Let every one know the truth at last, in which there is nothing to make any one ashamed, and which alone can put an end to a most painful and strained feeling. This truth is as simple as can be. The acting editor of the *Theosophist* has taken it into his head that the Esoteric Section together with the British and American Sections, were either conspiring or preparing to conspire against what he most curiously calls “Adyar” and its authority. Now being a most devoted fellow of the T. S. and attached to the President, his zeal in hunting up this mare’s nest has led him to become more Catholic than the Pope. That is all, and I hope that such misunderstandings and hallucinations will come to an end with the return of the President to India. Had he been at home, he, at any rate, would have objected to all those dark hints and cloaked sayings that have of late incessantly appeared in the *Theosophist* to the great delight of our enemies. But it is time for me to close. If Mr. Harte persists still in acting in such a strange and untheosophical way, then the sooner the President settles these matters the better for all concerned. Owing to such undignified quibbles, Adyar and especially the *Theophkt* are fast becoming the laughing stock of Theosophists themselves as well as of their enemies. And, lest her unflinching clemency should again be misconstrued and abused to their own injury, and that of the Cause to which they, no less than herself, are pledged, she concludes with an appeal mingled with warning to those at fault:

I end by assuring him [Mr. Harte] that there is no need for him to pose as Colonel Olcott’s protecting angel. Neither he nor I need a third party to screen us from each other. We have worked and toiled and suffered together for fifteen long years, and if after all these years of mutual friendship the President Founder were capable of lending ear to insane accusations and turning against me, well—the world is wide enough for both. Let the new Exoteric Theosophical Society headed by Mr. Harte, play at red tape if the President lets them and let the General Council expel me for “disloyalty,” if, again, Colonel Olcott should be so blind as to fail to see where the “true friend” and his duty lie. Only unless they hasten to do so, at the first sign of *their* disloyalty to the **CAUSE**—it is I who will have resigned my office of Corresponding Secretary for life and left the Society. This will not prevent me from remaining at the head of those—who will follow me.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

CHAPTER XIV COL. OLCOTT, ANNIE BESANT, AND W. Q. JUDGE

IN 1892, the future course of the Movement depended in large part on Annie Besant—upon whom she would trust for counsel, and upon the position she assumed with respect to H.P.B. Would she side with Olcott and become “organization-minded,” or would she stand with Judge, who held that the Movement could be no greater than the moral vitality of its members? Mr. Judge might hope that Mrs. Besant would see where the real work of the Movement lay, but he could only set an example and encourage her own efforts in the right direction; meanwhile, he was himself the constant target of all those who had come to adopt what may be called the “Adyar attitude” of reliance on organization, rules, and “official” authority.

The first important event that was to shape the circumstances in which Mrs. Besant made her choice was the announcement by Col. Olcott of his resignation from the Presidency of the Society. The notice of this decision, which appeared in the *Path* for March, 1892, came as a complete surprise to all but a handful of the members of the Society. While Col. Olcott attributed his retirement to ill-health, the real reason came to light several years later, in a letter by Herbert Burrows to the *English Theosophist* for November, 1895. Explaining his own resignation from the Society, Mr. Burrows referred to the “accusations of grave immorality against Col. Olcott, laid before him by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge, and in consequence of which the Colonel resigned his presidency.”

Mrs. Besant had planned to go to India toward the close of 1891. Instead, she traveled to New York to discuss with Mr. Judge the accusations against Col. Olcott which had been brought to her attention in London. She repeated the charges to Mr. Judge in the presence of confidential witnesses, one of whom was E. August Neresheimer, and demanded immediate action, requesting that Judge, as Vice-President of the Society, ask Col. Olcott to resign. Mr. Judge thereupon wrote a letter

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to Col. Olcott, not as Vice President, but as an old friend, advising him of the charges and the evidence supporting them. He suggested to Olcott that if the charges were true, he had better resign. Mrs. Besant sent Mr. Judge’s letter to India by special messenger. Upon receiving it, Col. Olcott denied the charges against him, but put in his resignation as President of the Society. This should not, however, be construed as certain evidence of Olcott’s “guilt,” but rather of his desire to protect the Society from any breath of scandal. According to F. T. Sturdy, who was Mrs. Besant’s emissary, the charges related to an incident in Col. Olcott’s private life.

At the Sixth Annual Convention of the American Section, held at Chicago, April 24-25, 1892, the members selected William Q. Judge as their choice for Col. Olcott’s successor in the Presidency, but at the same time requested the Colonel to revoke his resignation. In accordance with the instructions of the Convention, Mr. Judge cabled this resolution of the American theosophists to Olcott, who at once replied: “Am willing to do anything that is just and fair; I must stop here [Adyar] until I hear definitely from you (by Mail).” Col. Olcott also published in the *Theosophist* some brief announcements implying practical difficulties in the way of his

retirement and suggesting that his health was improving.

Meanwhile, in *Lucifer* for May, 1892, Mrs. Besant noted the action taken by the American Convention, remarking that its “resolutions, of course, do not bind the Society and no definite arrangement can be come to until the European Section has added its voice to those of the other Sections.” A letter of greeting from the American Theosophists, signed by Mr. Judge, was presented to the European Section, which convened on July 14, 1892. This letter referred to Col. Olcott’s resignation:

At our Convention in April last we asked you to unite with us in a request to Colonel Olcott to revoke his resignation. This we did in candour and friendship, leaving it to you to decide your course. We recollected what was so often and so truly said by H. P. Blavatsky, that this organization, unique in this century, partook of the life of its parents. One of them is Col. Olcott. It would be disloyal to our ideals to hurry in accepting his resignation, even though we knew that we might get on without his presence at the head. And if he should hold to his deter-

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mination our loving request would fill his remaining years with pleasing remembrances of his brothers without a trace of bitterness. The European Convention, however, instead of following the example of the American Section, proceeded to elect William Q. Judge to the Presidency, and explained in a resolution that “we consider that the answer of the President-Founder renders any further action impossible.” The action of the European Section placed Olcott in a difficult position. He solved the problem by inserting a notice in the *Theosophist* explaining that the London Convention had acted under the misapprehension that he “had definitely and finally refused to revoke my [his] January letter of resignation.” He continued:

The fact being that the terms of my May note upon the subject . . . left the question open and dependent upon the contingencies of my health and the proof that my return to office would be for the best interest of the Society.

A long rest in the mountains has restored my health, and renewed my mental and physical vigor, and therefore, since further suspense would injure the Society, I hereby give notice that I revoke my letter of resignation and resume the active duties and responsibilities of office; and I declare William Q. Judge, Vice-President, my constitutional successor, and eligible for duty as *such* upon his relinquishment of any other office in the Society which he may hold at the time of my death.

The episode of Olcott’s “resignation” might have ended without further repercussions, had it not been for an injudicious action by Mrs. Besant, soon after the President-Founder’s decision to resign was first made public. Having put pressure on Mr. Judge to request Olcott to resign, she returned to London and there advocated the election of Mr. Judge to the Presidency. On March 10, 1892, she sent to all members of the Esoteric Section a circular letter urging the choice of Judge as Olcott’s successor. She did this without Mr. Judge’s knowledge, full of zeal to influence others to act according to her ideas. Judge, when he learned of Mrs. Besant’s Circular, quickly prepared another, defining the relationship between the E.S. and the Society. This Circular, which was dated July 29, contained an “Important Notice” which read as follows:

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The E.S.T. has no official connection with the Theosophical Society. When first organized it was known as a section of the T. S. but it being seen that the perfect freedom and public character of

the Society might be interfered with, H.P.B., some time before her departure, gave notice that all official connection between the two should end, and then changed the name to the present one. This leaves all T. S. officials who are in the E.S.T. perfectly free in their official capacity, and also permits members if asked to say with truth that the School has no official connection with the T. S. and is not a part of it. Members will please bear this in mind.

This notice was signed by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge. The Circular continued:

Members must carefully remember that the School has no official connection with the Society [T.S.], although none are admitted who are not F.T.S. [Fellows of the T. S.]. Hence the T. S. must not be compromised by members of the School. We must all recollect that the T. S. is a free, open body. So if one of the Heads is also an official in the T. S., his or her words or requests as such T. S. official must not under any circumstances be colored or construed on the basis of the work of this School. This caution is necessary because some members have said to the General Secretary of the U.S. Sect. T. S. [Mr. Judge] that they regarded his words as such official to be an order. This is improper and may lead to trouble if members cannot see their plain ethical duty under the pledge. They are, surely, to work for the T. S., but must also use their common-sense *and never let the T. S. become dogmatic*. Following the Convention of the European Section, partisans and friends of Col. Olcott voiced the suspicion that the whole affair of the resignation and the failure of the European Section to ask Col. Olcott to reverse his decision were part of a political maneuver by Mr. Judge to gain the Presidency. Mrs. Besant's E.S. circular of March 10, urging that Judge be elected, seemed to confirm this supposition, as it was known that Mrs. Besant had great confidence in Mr. Judge at that time. (Olcott himself probably shared the suspicion, for among the charges preferred against Judge in July, **1894**, was one alleging "lack of straightforwardness" on the part of Mr. Judge in connection with Col. Olcott's tenure of the Presidency.) Another Circular issued by Mrs. Besant, and signed also by Mr. Judge, was sent to all E.S. members on August 1,

1892, in which Mrs. Besant affirmed that her previous Circular (of March 10), expressing the hope that "the choice of the Society would fall upon William Q. Judge, as President," had not been made by her as "one of the Outer Heads" of the E.S. By this means an attempt was made to show that the exoteric Society was not "controlled" by "private orders" in the Esoteric Section. Thereafter, the question of Judge's action in connection with Olcott's resignation remained quiescent until two years later, when Annie Besant turned against Mr. Judge.

During these troubled years, the real work of the Movement in America was carried on without serious disturbance from organizational problems. By the **1892** Convention of the American Section, the number of local branches in the United States had risen to sixty-nine, giving tangible evidence that the American Section was now the strongest of all, with more active branches and workers than either the European or the Indian Section. As a matter of fact, Col. Olcott, in his Presidential Address before the Indian Convention in December, **1892**, felt obligated to refer to the "intense action" of the American Section, while noting a "marked lassitude" in the Indian work.

The explanation for the progress of the work in America is to be found in the efforts and impersonal methods of William Q. Judge. His *Path* magazine breathes a different spirit from that of the European and Asiatic publications, and even the Convention reports of the American Section reflect the devotion of Judge and his close associates to the real ideals of the Theosophical Movement. In America, reference to Brotherhood was more than rhetorical flourish, with emphasis upon the practical spread of Theosophical teachings rather than upon organizational structure.

The *Path* took its tone from the writings of Mr. Judge. Hardly a month went by without some useful article from his pen. His style of writing, while unpretentious and even homely, was clear and penetrating, and the subjects he chose for discussion always bore some particular relation to the needs of the *Path* readers. In 1892, for example, he contributed articles on Hatha Yoga practices, metaphysical healing, mesmerism, and a discussion of disease. There were also several articles on reincarnation

in this volume, and a notable contribution in two parts: "The Synthesis of Occult Science." Concerning the Movement, he wrote with great insight on "Dogmatism in Theosophy," "The Future and the Theosophical Society," and "On the Future: A Few Reflections." His articles, "Mesmerism," and "Sheaths of the Soul," taken together, form an exhaustive treatise on the astral body, invaluable to students. In this year alone, Mr. Judge's articles seem to give thorough coverage of the many facets of the Theosophical teaching, and the provocative manner of his discussions maintained a constant stimulus to further investigation on the part of readers of the *Path*. A study of the early volumes of this magazine will show as nothing else can the difference between the Theosophy of William Q. Judge and the "political" activities which occupied so much of the time of the other Sections of the Society.

Above all, there is to be discerned in the *Path* a continuous loyalty to H.P.B. and a faithful representation of her philosophical teachings. This loyalty, however, was not of the blind, emotional variety, nor was the fidelity to H.P.B.'s teachings a slavish repetition of Theosophical "dogmas." Judge was loyal to his colleague and co-founder of the Movement because, as the history of that Movement shows, he understood the character of her mission and was himself continuing the work she had begun. To make dogmas of her statements would have been a betrayal of her great educational purpose; on the other hand, to neglect the Message she had recorded would have rendered her labors without effect. Judge would do neither. He simply continued doing as he had been doing while H.P.B. was alive, defending her when she was attacked or belittled, appealing to common sense when she was referred to with ostentatious "reverence" as an infallible prophet, but always making evident his own conviction that she was the Teacher, the Agent of the Adepts, and the one who set the example for successful work on behalf of the Theosophical Movement.

Judge also showed his philosophic grasp of the teachings of Theosophy by the way in which he took note in the *Path* of the distortions and mistakes of other Theosophical writers. He never sought a quarrel, but neither did he allow serious

errors in the philosophy to go by without comment. Thus, when Mr. Sinnett published a book on Mesmerism, in which he asserted that the Higher Self of man is the acting agent in mesmerized subjects who show clairvoyance and clairaudience, Judge was obliged to contradict him. The higher self, Mr. Judge wrote, "is a part of the supreme spirit, and as such cannot be made to go and come at the beck of a mesmerizer." The gross physical power of mesmerism, he pointed out, can neither act on nor affect the spiritual man, but only the astral and psychic nature. In a similar instance, Mr. Sinnett had found occasion to revive his differences with H.P.B. concerning the occult doctrine of planetary evolution. Here, again, Mr. Judge felt it necessary to call attention to the fact that Mr. Sinnett's views on this subject, as expressed in *Esoteric Buddhism*, had been

corrected by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine*, many pages being given to a detailed discussion of the points at issue. This controversy over the teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism* came to new prominence through a paper by W. Scott Elliott, in the form of a “Transaction” of Mr. Sinnett’s London Lodge, in which Sinnett’s materialistic version of the “planetary chains” was repeated. Mr. Elliott also offered other “facts” claimed to be now “given out to the world for the first time.” Alexander Fullerton, who had charge of much of the editorial routine in the *Path* office, made the mistake of printing an enthusiastic review of Elliott’s paper. Mr. Judge, who probably did not see a proof of Fullerton’s review, met the situation in the next issue of the *Path* (July, 1893), stating in a signed editorial:

In the June **PATH** there was printed a review of a pamphlet issued by the London Lodge T. S., and this magazine may perhaps be construed as committed to an approval of everything contained in the pamphlet, although the private initials of the reviewer were annexed to the remarks. The pamphlet referred to brings up an old dispute which we had thought was settled by what is found in *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B., the only person in actual and constant communication with the Masters, corrected the mistake made by Mr. Sinnett. . . . Her correction of the misconception was made upon the written authority of the same Masters who sent through her the letters on which *Esoteric Buddhism* was written.

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On the ground of authority in respect to this question, about which none of the Theosophical writers have any information independent of what the Masters have written, we must conclude that the statement in *The Secret Doctrine* is final. If no other point were involved, there would be no necessity for going further with the matter, but as the consistency of the entire philosophy is involved, it is necessary to advert again to this subject.

Mr. Sinnett regarded this as a direct challenge, which he answered in the *Path* for September. After a page of introduction, he said, “. . . the really important point developed by the controversy has to do with the question, What was Madame Blavatsky’s position really in the occult world, and what kind of authority should be attached to the writings she has left behind her?” While Mr. Sinnett makes no categorical answer to this question, his own opinion soon becomes plain. He concedes “that she [H.P.B.] was truly in close relations with the great Masters of esoteric wisdom,” but merely as “one of their partly initiated disciples.” Then, after speaking of his “debt of gratitude” to H.P.B. for bringing him into contact with the Theosophical Adepts, he continues: “It is not my business here to offer hypotheses to account for the strange misapprehensions into which Madame Blavatsky fell when writing the *Secret Doctrine*, not merely as regards these questions of Mars and Mercury, but also in regard to some other points which have not yet attracted attention.” He reviews the controversy regarding the planets and then announces that “within the last few months” he has received vindication from “the Master himself.”

At this point, Mr. Sinnett launches into the claim that even during H.P.B.’s lifetime, he enjoyed “private and personal” channels of communication with the Master, of which intercourse H.P.B. knew nothing. His previous silence as to these communications is accounted for in the following passage:

Madame Blavatsky disliked anything that savored of interference with her rights as founder of the Theosophical Society, and while she lived no one else would have been allowed to speak on behalf of the Masters to the Society at large. But it will be obvious on reflection that unless the whole design of occult teaching is a delusion also, fresh neophytes as time goes on must come

within the scope of the personal teaching of the Masters. In this respect we are moving forward now in a

new era. . . . as it had been my duty in the past to put the teaching of the Mahatmas before the world, so it looks probable that such tasks will present themselves again, and on this account it is that I am bound at the present crisis to speak rather more plainly than inclination in other circumstances would have prompted. To this bid by Mr. Sinnett for recognition as a “channel” to the Masters in the “new era,” Mr. Judge replied simply and briefly, by pointing out: In her *Secret Doctrine*, availing herself of the same teachers to whom she introduced Mr. Sinnett, she corrected two errors into which she said he had fallen, *i.e.*, respecting Devachan and our companion planets. It is a perfectly unthinkable proposition to say that she was not advised by the Masters when writing the *Secret Doctrine*. I who saw many of the Masters’ letters in 1888 in reference to the *Secret Doctrine* certainly cannot give up the evidence of my inner and outer senses. I know as surely as I know any fact that the same teachers were giving her in 1887 and 1888, as before, information for that book, in black upon white, and I am certain they dictated the corrections given in *Secret Doctrine* upon the points now before us. In the next issue of the *Path*, Mr. Judge reprinted the letter received from the Master by Col. Olcott while in mid-ocean, en route to London in 1888. One passage in particular served as a commentary on Mr. Sinnett’s innuendoes and claims:

“Since 1885 I have have not written nor caused to be written save through her [H.P.B.’s] agency direct or remote a letter or a line to anybody in Europe or America, nor communicated orally with or through any third party. Theosophists should learn it. You will understand later the significance of this declaration, so keep it in mind.”

The bearing of this statement on later events *is* significant, as years after it became known that Mr. Sinnett believed H.P.B. to be a deliverer of bogus messages from the Masters. A letter by him, published in 1895, accuses her of fabricating messages to further her policies in the Society, and he asserts that he discovered she did this about the year 1887. In view of the opinion held by the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, it is not difficult to understand the ease with which he contradicted the statements of *The Secret Doctrine*. The real explanation, however, is that Mr. Sinnett had himself lapsed into Spiritualism, the London Lodge becoming little more than a cultured Theosophical séance circle, with results of a quality that

might be expected. (See Sinnett’s *Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*, written in **1919**, but posthumously published.) In the controversy between Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Judge concerning planetary evolution, Mrs. Besant chose “to follow H. P. Blavatsky’s teachings,” saying that “for the teaching she brought us we are deeply grateful, and we do not care to benefit by the message and constantly cavil at and find fault with the messenger.” From Col. Olcott, who published Mr. Sinnett’s reply to Mr. Judge in the *Theosophist*, there came as comment only repetition of his old refrain regarding the “human fallibility of H.P.B.,” and the admonition that “loyalty to an idea” does “not imply willful blindness as to the merits or deficiencies of its exponents.”

By this time, Col. Olcott’s habit of warning students against believing too much in H.P.B. had become a major theme in nearly all of his written and spoken utterances. A year before, in

the *Theosophist* for March, **1892**, he had begun publishing the series of rambling autobiographical articles entitled “Old Diary Leaves,” in which he recounted his personal recollections of the Movement. “Old Diary Leaves” is written in an easy, lucid and interesting style, overflowing with stories of marvelous and mysterious phenomena. It deals graphically with the human and anecdotal side of the Movement—a side purposely ignored in all the writings of H.P.B. and W. Q. Judge. Olcott explained his purpose in writing these reminiscences three years later, in **1895**, when the first series of “Old Diary Leaves” was issued in book form. He said in his Foreword:

The controlling impulse to prepare these papers was a desire to combat a growing tendency within the Society to deify Mme. Blavatsky, and to give her commonest literary productions a quasi-inspirational character. Her transparent faults were being blindly ignored, and the pinchbeck screen of pretended authority drawn between her actions and legitimate criticism. Those who had least of her actual confidence, and hence knew least of her private character, were the greatest offenders in this direction. It was but too evident that unless I spoke out what I alone knew, the true history of our movement could never be written, nor the actual merit of my wonderful colleague become known. In these pages I have, therefore, told the truth about her and the beginnings of the Society—truth which nobody can gainsay. . . . I have pursued my present

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task to its completion, despite the fact that some of my most influential colleagues have, from what I consider mistaken loyalty to “H.P.B.,” secretly tried to destroy my influence, ruin my reputation, reduce the circulation of my magazine, and prevent the publication of my book.

Karma forbid that I should do her a feather-weight of injustice, but if there ever existed a person in history who was a greater conglomeration of good and bad, light and shadow, wisdom and indiscretion, spiritual insight and lack of common sense, I cannot recall the name, the circumstances or the epoch. Olcott continued writing the “Old Diary Leaves” series, publishing its chapters in the *Theosophist* from month to month, with occasional interruptions, until his death in **1907**. Protected from public criticism by both H.P.B. and Judge, and honored and respected throughout the Society for his long service and unquestioned sacrifices on its behalf, Olcott naturally enjoyed the full confidence of most of the members of the Society, particularly in India and Europe. The statements in *Old Diary Leaves*, therefore, were accepted without question by many, whose opinions concerning H.P.B. and Judge were shaped, as a result, by Olcott’s judgments of these two. When he began writing *Old Diary Leaves*, Olcott was more than sixty years old, broken in health, deeply wounded in his feelings over the charges which had caused him to offer his resignation, and over the seeming unconcern with which his resignation was received by theosophists at large. Judge’s loyalty to H.P.B. in this period was doubtless a thorn in Olcott’s side, for Judge—who must have seemed but a boy to the Colonel when he was bearing the brunt of the struggle—was next in line for the Presidency of the Society, and Olcott was already anticipating a lonely and neglected old age. The attack on William Q. Judge, which threw the Society into turmoil during the years **1894-95**, originated with the correspondence between Olcott and Judge concerning the extract from an adept communication which Jasper Niemand (Mrs. Archibald Keightley) had placed at the head of an article she contributed to the *Path* for August, **1891**. (See Chapter xii, p. **169**.) When Annie Besant was in America during the winter of **1892-93**, Mr. Judge showed her his correspondence with Olcott, including his reply to Olcott’s strictures concerning the Niemand article. Mrs. Besant obtained

from Judge permission to print this letter in *Lucifer*, where it appeared in the April, 1893, issue, as a letter addressed to "An Indian Brother," Col. Olcott's name not being given. In this letter, Mr. Judge spoke of the importance of keeping before the general public the idea of the existence of Masters. "The assertion of that fact," he wrote, "made so often in America has opened up channels in men's minds which would have remained closed had silence been observed about the existence of those Beings." Concerning the message itself, he said:

It is true I had later the privilege of seeing his [Jasper's] message, but only read the text, did not examine the signature, and do not remember if even it had a signature. The signature is not important. The means for identification are not located in signatures at all. If you have not the means yourself for proving and identifying such a message, then signature, seal, papers, watermark, what not, all are useless.

Mr. Judge expressed a similar unconcern over the matter of the "seal," to which Olcott attached much importance, and emphasized what Olcott seems to have ignored—the intrinsic value of this particular message:

The qualities spoken of [he wrote] were more than ever needed at that crisis [the death of H.P.B.], and words of encouragement from Masters, however trite, were useful and stimulating. We do not—at least I do not—want Masters to utter veiled, mystical, or portentous phrases. The commonplace ones suit me best and are best understood. Perhaps if you were satisfied with simple words from Them you might have had them. Who knows?

Mr. Judge corrected Olcott's supposition that he (Judge) was Jasper Niemand, and defended from the viewpoint of policy the publication of the message: when we come to examine the work and the foundation of the T. S. and its policy, I find it perfectly proper for me to assert, as I do, in accordance with my own knowledge and belief, that our true progress lies in fidelity to Masters as ideals and facts. . . . I have the right to say that I think a constant reliance on Masters as such ideals and facts—or either—will lead the T. S. on to greater work.

I belong to that class of persons in the T. S. who out of their own experience know that the Masters exist and actually help the T. S. You belong to a class which—as I read your letters and those of others who write similarly—express a doubt on this, that, or the other, seeming to question the expediency, propriety, and wisdom of a man's boldly asserting confidence and belief in Beings who are unprovable for many, although

you say (as in your present letter) that you believe in and revere the same Masters as I do. What, then, must I conclude? Am I not forced to the conclusion that inasmuch as you say you believe in these Beings. you think **it** unwise in me to assert publicly and boldly my belief? Well, then, if this is a correct statement of the case, why cannot you go on your way of belief and concealment of **it**, and let me proceed with my proclamations? I will take the Karma of my own beliefs. I force no man to accept my assertions. When the copy of *Lucifer* containing this article reached India, Olcott's supporters hastened to reply. In the *Theosophist* for July, 1893, N. D. Khandalavala, a prominent Indian member, compared Judge's statement about the importance of "reliance on Masters as ideals and as facts" with the "canting" of Christian missionaries, and he attacked also Judge's view that the means of identifying a genuine message from the Masters must be "within" the recipient himself. In the same issue of the *Theosophist*, another article, "Theosophic Free-

thought," by Walter R. Old and Sidney V. Edge, condemned Judge's statements as dogmatism. Mr. Judge, these writers said, must provide "proof" of his intercourse with the adepts, and they branded his personal declaration of belief as "extremely inimical to the spirit of our Society."

Meanwhile, Olcott, in the early chapters of the "Old Diary Leaves" series, was proclaiming that H.P.B. was the "subject of a distinct mental evolution"; that she knew nothing of reincarnation until 1879, when she was instructed in this doctrine in India. in a somewhat absurd justification of this opinion, Olcott hazards the guess that possibly H.P.B.'s adept-teacher was himself ignorant of reincarnation in the early days of the Movement, "and that he [the Adept], as well as H.P.B., had to learn it subsequently. In **1893**, Annie Besant came to the United States to attend the World's Parliament of Religions to be held September **15-16** at the Chicago Fair. Included in her party was G. N. Chakravarti, a Brahmin member of the T. S. who had been invited to represent the Brahmin religion at the Parliament. Prof. Chakravarti was a scholarly Hindu who had greatly impressed Bertram Keightley as being possessed of occult knowledge, and the latter, while in America, had urged the selection of Chakravarti as the Brahmin representative. In

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Chicago, the Hindu emissary soon rose to the position of an unique presence. His share in the Parliament grew with his prestige. and he was invited to participate in the dedicatory ceremonies at the opening of the Congress of Religions. The Theosophical program during the Congress was a noteworthy success, and in this distinction Prof. Chakravarti and Mrs. Besant held the leading place. The effect of all this upon the general public and the membership of the Theosophical Society was immediate and marked. An immense interest in everything Theosophical sprang up. The whole Theosophical world was elated. To be called a "theosophist" was equivalent to "honorable mention"; to enjoy the personal acquaintance of Chakravarti and Mrs. Besant, a coveted privilege. Meanwhile, Mrs. Besant was slowly succumbing to the Oriental charm of her Brahmin companion. She had already adopted the external forms of occultism—she was a strict vegetarian, even carrying her own table utensils with her on trips—and she was alert to the various "practices" advocated in the Orient for "development." She now discovered that Chakravarti possessed "psychic powers," and became in effect his disciple. Prof. Chakravarti, it should be noted, was not a member of the Esoteric School of Theosophy. Dr. Archibald Keightley, in the *Path* for June, **1895**, described in some detail the psychic subordination of Mrs. Besant to Chakravarti. Dr. Keightley had personally witnessed some of Mrs. Besant's "psychic experiences" under the influence of the Brahmin, who frequently "magnetized" her, making her hear what she supposed was the "Master's" voice. Dr. Keightley commented:

"I soon saw the mental effect of this in Mrs. Besant's entire change of view, in other matters besides those of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge." Dr. Keightley said also that Mrs. Besant "admitted occult ties with a group of Brahmins in India, such ties being prohibited by the rules of a private body to which we and she then belonged."

Mrs. Besant returned to London with Chakravarti and a little later followed him to India. After the December Convention she toured India until March, **1894**, when she set sail for England. In all the annals of the Theosophical Society, there is nothing comparable to this Indian visit of Mrs. Besant's.

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Natives and Europeans, members and non-members of the Society, crowded her with attentions. She was christened *avatara Annabai* by the enthusiastic Hindus. Her visits to sacred places were religious fetes. She conferred with leading priests, proclaimed herself an Indian at heart, and took the Brahmanical thread. Olcott, at the 1893 Convention, declared that the Masters had sent him *Annabai* to share his burden, and that this new helper would in time be “able to render service that her Teacher [H.P.B.] could not, by her peerless oratory and her scientific training.” He spoke of his accord with Mrs. Besant concerning the Esoteric Section—which, he said, had previously been the cause of “misunderstandings,” *i.e.*, while H.P.B. was alive—and hoped that Mrs. Besant would devote part of her future to work in India. Olcott then referred to *recent* assurances from the Masters of the future success of the Society, together with a warning to expect “fresh disagreeable surprises,” after which the Society would emerge “purer and stronger than ever.”

The first of these “surprises” was not far off. Early in February, Mrs. Besant, Col. Olcott, and their party reached Allahabad—the home of Prof. Chakravarti. Here, fittingly enough, Mrs. Besant handed Col. Olcott the following: -----

Allahabad, Feb. 6th, 1894.

To the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society.

Dear Sir and Brother,—

Some little time ago an appeal was made to me by members of the T. S. belonging to different Branches, to set their minds at rest as to the accusations made against the Vice-President of the Society, Bro. W. Q. Judge, with reference to certain letters and sentences in the alleged writings of the Mahatmas. As it is to the detriment of the whole Society that such accusations—believed to be true by reputable members of the Society—should be circulated against a prominent official without rebuttal and without investigation, I ask you, as the President of the Society, to direct that the charges made shall be formulated and laid before a Committee, as provided by Art. VI, Secs. 2, 3 and 4.

Fraternally yours,
ANNIE BESANT

On the next day Colonel Olcott wrote the following official communication to Mr. Judge:

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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Agra, Feb. 7th, 1894.

To William Q. Judge, Vice-President T. S.

Dear Sir and Brother,—

I enclose herewith a certified copy of Annie Besant’s formal letter to me, dated Allahabad, Feb. 6th inst. In it she demands an official enquiry, by means of a Committee, into the matter of your alleged misuse of the Mahatmas’ names and handwriting. By virtue of the discretionary power given me in Art. VI of the Revised Rules, I place before you the following options

(1) To retire from all offices held by you in the Theosophical Society and leave me to make a merely general public explanation; or—

(2) To have a judicial Committee convened, as provided for in Art. VI, Sec. 3, of the Revised Rules, and make public the whole of the proceedings in detail.

In either alternative, you will observe, a public explanation is found necessary: in the one case to be limited as far as possible and made general; in the other to be full and covering all the details.

I suggest that if you decide for a Committee you fix London as the place of meeting, as by far the most central and convenient to all concerned. But whether you choose New York, London, or elsewhere, I shall in all probability be represented by proxy, unless something now unforeseen should arise to make it imperative that I shall personally attend. As it will be much better that I should know your decision before Annie Besant leaves India (March **20th**), I would ask you to kindly cable me the word “first” if you choose to resign; or “second” if you demand the Committee.

Fraternally yours,
H. S. OLCOTT,
President Theosophical Society

CHAPTER XV THE CASE AGAINST WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

COLONEL OLCOTT'S LETTER of February 7 reached Mr. Judge on March 10, **1894**. He at once sent the following cable to the President of the Society. “Charges absolutely false. You can take what proceedings you see fit; going to London in July.” (The trip to London was for the purpose of attending the annual convention of the European Section.) On March **15**, Mr. Judge issued a four-page printed statement concerning the attack upon him. He begins, in this statement, by explaining that the accusations transmitted by Col. Olcott have previously existed for some time in the form of “vague and suppressed rumors,” and that the action of the President of the Society now compels him (Mr. Judge) to speak, “to the end that all members of the Society and friends of my own in all parts of the world shall be in possession of facts, so that surprise and perhaps confusion may be prevented.” Mr. Judge goes on to say, “The assertion is made in India that I have been guilty of *“misuse of the names and handwriting of the Mahatmas”*,” and that this has been “officially communicated to the President.” He does not mention Mrs. Besant's name at all in connection with the action of the President-Founder, but merely reports that “an investigation is demanded through an official inquiry,” and that Col. Olcott, “conceiving himself required and authorized to take action,” has repeated the charges in an official letter, offering Mr. Judge the “options” of resigning or inviting “trial.” Mr. Judge next makes clear the reason for his cablegram of March 10, and the form of his reply: The charge is made against me as Vice-President: I have replied as an individual and shall so continue, inasmuch as in my capacity of Vice-President my duties are nominal. . . . The only charges that could be made against the Vice-President would be those of failing to perform his duties, or misusing the office when there were any duties attached to it. On the face of this very vague charge, then, it is evident that there is nothing in it relating to the official Vice-President.

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He then considers the charge as related to himself, as one of the most active members of the Society:

Inasmuch as I was the first presiding officer of the Theosophical Society at its preliminary meeting in September, 1875, and its first Secretary at such meeting; that I was not only H. P. Blavatsky's intimate friend and direct pupil but that I have been conspicuous as an upholder of Theosophical doctrine, as also an upholder, with many other friends in every part of the globe, of H. P. Blavatsky's good name, high motive, and great powers against the ridicule of the world and much opposition from certain members of the Society she founded; that I have been elected to succeed Col. Olcott as President of the Society and have been officially declared his successor by him; it is important and imperative that I should make this matter public, and I now do so, and state my unqualified, explicit, exhaustive denial of the said charge, asserting most unreservedly that it has absolutely no foundation. Having explained why he felt compelled to face and publicly deny the charges, Mr. Judge discusses constitutional considerations and concludes this part of his circular by saying:

"Perhaps when the Committee is convened I shall, for the first time, have particulars as to persons, dates, and the like of the charges made, none of which up to this time I have had except in the form of rumor." Mr. Judge refers to the second of the two "options" placed before him by the President-Founder, and says that he refused to cable the word "second," as requested by Col. Olcott's letter, for the reason that thus to do would be to mean "I *demand* a Committee." He continues:

The reason is not that an investigation is avoided. Such an investigation will not be avoided. But on constitutional and executive principle I shall object from beginning to end to any Committee of the Theosophical Society considering any charge against any person which involves an inquiry and decision as to the existence, names, powers, functions, or methods of the "Mahatmas or Masters." I shall do this for the protection of the Theosophical Society now and hereafter, regardless of the result to myself. The Society has no dogma as to the existence of such Masters; but the deliberations of an official committee of the Society on such a question, and that is the first inquiry and decision necessarily beginning such a deliberation, would mean that the Theosophical Society after over nineteen years of unsectarian work is determined to settle this dogma and affix it to the Constitution of the Society. To this I will never consent,

but shall object, and shall charge the Committee itself with a violation of the Constitution if it decides the question of the existence of "Masters" or Mahatmas; if it should affirm the "Masters" existence it will violate the law; if it should deny Their existence a like violation will result; both decisions would affirm a dogma, and the negative decision would in addition violate that provision of our law, in Art. XIII, Revised Rules, which makes it an offense to "wilfully offend the religious feelings of any Fellow" of the Society, inasmuch as the belief so negatived is religiously held by many hundreds of the Fellows of the Society. I intend to try once for all to definitely have settled this important question, and to procure an official decision affirming now and forever the freedom of our Society.

Hence the President's alternatives . . . are mistakes, and are the initial steps to the promulgation of the dogma of belief in the "Masters." The first alternative is furthermore a judgment in advance, ridiculous in itself yet serious as emanating from our highest official. It precludes him from sitting on the Committee, and that point also I shall raise before the Committee. The whole proposal he makes brings up serious and complicated questions of occultism touching upon the matter of the existence, powers, functions, and methods of those "Masters" in whom many Theosophists believe

but as to whom the Theosophical Society is perfectly agnostic and neutral as an organized body. For that reason no one in official position ever thought of making a public matter of the many assertions made here and there by members of the Society, that they individually communicated with beings whom they called "Masters, Mahatmas," nor of the assertions publicly made by prominent members that certain philosophical statements recently published in our literature were directly from the very "Masters" referred to by Col. Olcott, although those statements contradicted others made by H. P. Blavatsky on the declared authority of the same "Masters."

On all these grounds, then, I shall object to a Theosophical Society Committee, while of course there will never be any objection from me to a proper investigation by a body of persons who know enough of Occultism as well as of Theosophy to understandingly inquire into these matters.

The closing paragraphs of the statement meet the remainder of the queries likely to arise from both the President-Founder's letter and Mr. Judge's reply. Forced by circumstances to speak directly concerning his own convictions, Mr. Judge says:

But some of you may wonder if all this leaves in doubt the question whether I believe in the "Masters." I believe the Masters exist, that They actually help the T. S. Cause, that They energise and make fruitful the work of all sincere members; all this I can say to myself I know, but to prove objectively

to another that such beings exist is impossible now so far as my intelligence can perceive. "Letters from Mahatmas" prove nothing at all except to the recipient, and then only when in his inner nature is the standard of proof and the power of judgment. Precipitation does not prove Mahatmas, for the reason that mere mediums and non-mahatmas can make precipitations. This I have always asserted. By one's soul alone can this matter be judged, and only by his work and acts can one judge at first as to whether any other person is an agent of the Masters; by following the course prescribed in all ages the inner faculties may be awakened so as to furnish the true confirmatory evidence. I have not lost any of my belief in these beings, but more than ever believe in Their existence and in Their help and care to and over our Society's work. Finally I may say that my personal belief in Mahatmas is based on even stronger evidence than Theosophical arguments or the experience of others. As is known to some Theosophists, I have not been entirely without guidance and help from these exalted friends of the T. S. The form which the whole matter has taken now compels me to say what I have never before said publicly, namely, that not only have I received direct communications from Masters during and since the life of H. P. Blavatsky, but that I have on certain occasions repeated such to certain persons for their own guidance, and also that I have guided some of my own work under suggestions from the same sources, though without mentioning the fact.—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

This statement by Mr. Judge was mailed to as many members of the Society as possible. Copies reached London and were seen by Mr. Geo. R. S. Mead, then Editor of *Lucifer* under Mrs. Besant, and General Secretary of the European Section. Mr. Bertram Keightley, still General Secretary of the Indian Section, was at the time in London and he also read Mr. Judge's circular. Both were well-meaning men, and however they had previously regarded the hints and suspicions against Mr. Judge, their sense of fair play was outraged by the highhandedness and injustice of the President-Founder's letter. Even if Mr. Judge were guilty, he was entitled to the preliminary assumption of his innocence until that guilt was conclusively established. Moreover, by what process of reasoning could Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott take upon themselves the duty of holding star-chamber

proceedings to condemn any member or tender him “options” to “resign” or be “tried” by a Committee, when the very proceedings already so unwarrantably taken were in fact a violation

of the Rules of the Society? At all events, it is evident that both Mead and Keightley saw at once that Mrs. Besant and the President-Founder had grossly violated the principles all professed, as well as the plain provisions of the Constitution of the Society. Under the date of March 27, 1894, therefore, they issued over their joint official signatures as the General Secretaries of the two sections, the European and the Indian, a circular entitled: *For the information of the Members of the European and Indian Sections of the Theosophical Society.*”

The writers begin by reciting that they have read unofficial copies of the letter of Mrs. Besant of February 6 and of Col. Olcott’s of February 7. Addressing themselves to Col. Olcott as President-Founder of the T. S., they insist that any further proceedings must be “strictly constitutional and impartial,” and continue:

It is therefore our plain duty as the General Secretaries of two out of the three Sections of the T. S. and members of its General Council, to call your attention officially to the following points with a view to safeguarding (1) the Constitution, (2) the non-sectarian character, and (3) the impartiality of the Theosophical Society.

First: by Art. VI, Sections 2 and 3, of the “Constitution and Rules of the Theosophical Society” as officially ratified and promulgated by yourself on Dec. 31st, **1893**, it is enacted that, in the event of charges being preferred against the President, or Vice-President, (a) the said charges shall be in writing, and (b) copies thereof shall “at once” be forwarded to the accused and “to each member of the General Council.”

We now desire to point out that you have *not* followed the procedure laid down in either of these respects, for:

1. Your official letter to Mr. W. Q. Judge above referred to, contains no copy in writing of any charges, does not give the names of the persons who bring such, and even contains no *specific* statement of what are the exact charges brought.
2. No official copy either of “charges in writing” or even of your above-mentioned letter to Mr. Judge has reached either of us; although sufficient time has elapsed since your letter reached Mr. Judge in America for an unofficial copy thereof to be received in England.

Therefore, as members of the General Council of the T. S. we emphatically protest against this departure from the rules of procedure laid down in the Constitution and also against this

ignoring by yourself of your official duty as President toward your colleagues on the General Council of the Society.

Second: We recognize that, acting under the general discretionary power conferred upon the President by Art. VI, Sec. i, it was competent for you as President to take action in the matter. But we feel strongly that, in order to protect and maintain that very Constitution whose guardian you are, it was your duty in your *official* letter to Mr. Judge to have insisted upon and resolutely maintained the following points:

1. That the free platform of the Society precludes *any official* declaration by the T. S., or any Committee representing it, upon the question whether “Mahatmas” do or do not exist (see Art.

XIII, Secs. 2 and 3, "Offenses");

2. That, therefore, no enquiry into the conduct of any officer of the Society *in his official capacity*, which would involve as its basis a declaration of Yea or Nay upon the above question, can be carried out by any *official* committee of the T. S.;

3. That, accordingly, Sections 2, 3 and 4 of Art. VI are not applicable to the charges indicated by your letter to Mr. Judge;

Third: We desire further to point out that in *officially* giving Mr. Judge the alternatives of resigning all his offices in the T. S. or submitting to the enquiry proposed, you have again departed from the procedure laid down by the Constitution.

Moreover by so doing you place yourself *officially* in the position of having prejudged the case and virtually announce before any enquiry has taken place or even any *specific* charges have been formulated, that you believe Mr. Judge guilty.

It appears to us that such an attitude is inconsistent with that strict impartiality and justice which ought to characterize at least the official actions of the President of the T. S., and that **it** is calculated to bring discredit upon the Society by laying its chief executive officer open to the charge of condemning a colleague without even giving him a hearing.

In conclusion we hereby place on record our most emphatic protest against the above-cited departures from constitutional procedure; and we officially request a formal reply and declaration thereupon from yourself as President-Founder of the T. S. and official guardian of its free Constitution.

This we call for as General Secretaries for Europe and India respectively, and as members of that General Council of the Theosophical Society from which, as recited in Art. VI, Sec. **i**, you derive your authority" as President of the T. S., and to which, as therein provided, you "are responsible for its exercise."

Finally we beg to inform you that we shall forthwith notify our respective Sections of the present correspondence, and shall

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also communicate to them your reply when received, as the members are already unofficially informed of the matter.

We are, dear Sir and Brother,

Fraternally yours,

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY,

Gen. Sec. Indian Sec. T. S.

G. R. S. MEAD, Gen. Sec. European Sec. T. S.

Before Col. Olcott had opportunity to realize that the procedure he had followed was exciting extreme disapproval, even from those whom he might regard as solid supporters, such as Bertram Keightley, secretary of the Indian Section, he received from Mr. Judge the cable declaring the charges false and ignoring the options extended to him. Olcott thereupon sent two more official letters to Mr. Judge. The first is formally addressed to him as General Secretary of the American Section, stating that the charges will be laid before a Judicial Committee of the Society, to meet in London on June **27**. Mr. Judge was invited to request the Executive Committee of the American Section to appoint two members to serve on the Judicial Committee, "to sit as representatives of the American Section, and consider and dispose of the charges."

The second letter was directed to Mr. Judge as “Vice President, T. S.” This letter declared him suspended from the office of Vice-President and remarked, “As the accused party you will, of course, be debarred from sitting and voting in the Committee . . . but you are entitled to enjoy the full opportunity to disprove the charges brought against you.”

The first of these letters would compel Mr. Judge as its General Secretary to himself place the charges and the correspondence before the forthcoming Convention of the American Section due to be held at San Francisco in April, **1894**, and thus put him on the defensive before his own Section against charges sanctioned by the President-Founder and Mrs. Besant, the two most important and influential members of the Society—the two who had posed hitherto as his dear friends and colleagues in the Society and the Movement.

The second of these letters would force Judge as Vice-President to inform the members that he had been suspended by the President-Founder and thus himself be made the medium of conveying to them the information that the President

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of the whole Society felt himself compelled by the gravity of the case to suspend the Vice-President in advance of the Judicial Committee.

The eighth annual convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society met in San Francisco, April **23-24, 1894**. The report of its proceedings shows that there was no hint of the dissensions within the Society in Mr. Judge’s address as General Secretary, which reported the progress of the Theosophical Movement in the United States, and referred to Mrs. Besant’s work on behalf of Theosophy with praise and appreciation. First mention of the charges formulated against Mr. Judge by Mrs. Besant occurred with presentation to the American delegates of a letter from G. R. S. Mead. In this letter, addressed to Mr. Judge as Secretary of the American Section, Mr. Mead requested that the correspondence between the members of the General Council of the Society be placed before the American Convention. He enclosed a copy of the official letter, by himself and Bertram Keightley, to the President-Founder, objecting to the procedure followed by Col. Olcott in bringing charges against Mr. Judge.

The members of the American Section were already familiar with the statement of the European and Indian General Secretaries, which had been generally distributed throughout the Society in the form of a printed circular, and it was referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Mr. Judge then read to the Convention a letter to him by Elliott Page, a fellow of the American Section, and his own reply, dealing with the same question. Mr. Page gave as his own opinion that the Society ought not to entertain any sort of investigation or inquiry to determine whether “the sending of messages purporting to come from a Master, or Masters, is untheosophical.” Such a course, he wrote, “would only tend to raise a dogma in the Society,” and he added that “it seems desirable that some official statement of a general character should be made defining the Society’s position on questions of this nature.”

Mr. Judge’s reply, which he presented to the delegates, was as follows:

Dear Sir and Brother: I have your letter of **12th** inst. informing me that a member of the T. S. (whose name you have

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privately given me) has sent you at various times “letters and messages which purport to emanate

from one of the Masters spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky and supposed to be interested in the welfare of the said Society, and that one of the letters is signed with the name in full of the Master whose message it purports to be, but that in the letters there is no attempt to imitate the supposed handwriting of the Masters, etc.” and asking me officially whether a committee could be properly appointed to consider the matter on the ground that such actions by said member are untheosophical. This could only be considered by the Society acting through a committee on the ground of being an offence under the Constitution of the T. S.; it is also a matter which should first be submitted to the Council and the President; it is competent in my opinion for you to raise the question as one of information, asking for a decision or opinion from the proper officers or Council. I shall therefore give you my opinion officially and then forward the same to the President and the Council. My opinion is:

First: The matter stated is not one which the Society or its officers can consider; it stands on the same ground as the affirmation of a member that he or she has seen or heard of or from a Mahatma. On this see the public utterances of the President, Colonel Olcott; also those of Mrs. Besant; and the late publication by Mr. Sinnett, President of the London Lodge, to the effect that what he (Mr. Sinnett) published was directly from said Mahatmas. These are not offences in the T. S. for the reason that cognizable offences are these: Slander of members; violation of the T. S. neutrality on questions of legislation, politics, religion, caste, and social rules; violation of the rule that we have no dogma by proclaiming a dogma or belief as that of the T. S.; wilfully hurting the religious feelings of members at a meeting of Branch or Section; conviction of crime under the law of the land, and the like. In no place are the Mahatmas, their powers, existence, or functions mentioned. It is solely and simply a personal matter whether one shall or shall not affirm he has messages from the Mahatmas; it is also a personal matter whether other members shall or shall not believe him.

Second: It would be a violation of the Constitution to decide either negatively or affirmatively under the official shield of a T. S. Committee whether a person had or had not a message from the Mahatmas, and to consider the facts cited by you would involve preliminarily that affirmative or negative. The Society would thus through its Committee fix a dogma one way or the other; either the dogma that Mahatmas exist and may be heard from, or the opposite dogmatic statement that such Mahatmas do not exist.

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On this I beg to refer you to the official statement by the President in his Executive Notice of May **27, 1893**, respecting the T. S. Congress at the Parliament of Religions. He said:

Of course it is to be distinctly understood that nothing shall be said or done by any delegate or committee of the Society to identify it, as a body, with any special form of religion, creed, sect, or any religious or ethical teacher or leader; our duty being to affirm and defend its perfect corporate neutrality in these matters.”

This goes directly to the point, and was meant, as intimated to me by the President, to cover precisely the existence of the Mahatmas under the word “teacher” and to prevent any fixing of the T. S. to H. P. Blavatsky by means of the use of the word “leader.” Hence we have in advance the decision in general of the President, in which the other members of the Council will concur, as I now do in advance.

Fraternally yours,
WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,

Col. Olcott's two letters, dated March **20**, to Mr. Judge, one of them suspending him from office, were also read.

At this Convention of the American Section, there were present delegates and proxies from all of the sixty-one active Branches. The charges against Mr. Judge and the action of Col. Olcott in bringing them were dealt with in a series of Resolutions. The members voted that the expense to which Mr. Judge had been put in printing and circulating his own statement should be borne by the American Section; that "this Convention, after careful deliberation, finds that such suspension of the Vice-President is without the slightest warrant in the Constitution and altogether transcends the discretionary power given the President by the Constitution, and is therefore null and void"; and that "this Section, in Convention assembled, hereby expresses its unqualified protest against the said illegal action by the President of the Society, and can see no necessity for such action, and that even did the Constitution contain any provision for a suspension such action would be wholly needless and unbrotherly, inasmuch as, by the Constitution, the Vice-President has no duties or power save in case of death, resignation, or accusation of the President."

The existing situation on the entire subject of Mahatmas and Messages from Mahatmas or Masters, and the actual

status of the whole problem, under the Objects and Constitution of the Theosophical Society, were declared in two Resolutions introduced by Dr. Jerome A. Anderson. Both of these Resolutions were unanimously adopted. They are of such value and importance in giving a matter-of-fact formulation of the issues that we quote them at length: -----

WHEREAS, many members of the Theosophical Society, including the late Madame Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, W. Q. Judge, Mrs. Annie Besant, A. P. Sinnett, and others, have at various times and places expressed their belief in the existence of certain Mahatmas or Masters, and have claimed to be in communication with the same; and WHEREAS, the President, Col. Olcott, at the request of one of the members, Mrs. Annie Besant, has recently demanded an official investigation by means of a Judicial Committee of the Theosophical Society, to decide whether or not Wm. Q. Judge is in communication with the said Mahatmas, and whether or not the said Wm. Q. Judge has misused the names and handwriting of the said Mahatmas"; and WHEREAS, under the Constitution and Rules of the Theosophical Society it is declared that the Society, as such, is not responsible for the personal opinions of its Fellows, nor for any expression thereof, and that no Fellow, Officer, or Council, of the Theosophical Society, or of any Section or Branch thereof, shall promulgate or maintain any doctrine, dogma, or belief as being that advanced or advocated by the Society (Art. XIII); and the President having officially and constitutionally in his executive order of May 27th, **1893**, relative to the World's Religious Parliament, declared this neutrality, . . . Therefore,

RESOLVED: That, in the opinion of this Convention, the action of the President, Col. Olcott, in calling such Judicial Committee to consider said charge was uncalled for, unconstitutional, illegal, and improper.

RESOLVED: That this Convention hereby cordially endorses the interpretation of the Rules and Constitution of the T. S. recently expressed in a circular to members, signed by the General Secretaries of the European and Indian Sections, and in the private circular of March 15th, 1894,

issued by William Q. Judge.

RESOLVED: That this Convention hereby reaffirms the entire freedom of the platform of the T. S. and the religious and other opinions of its members, which entitles all and any of them to claim to be in communication with, to receive letters from, or to act as agents for, those above referred to as Mahatmas or Masters; or, on the other hand, to express disbelief in the proper title of any member to make such claim or claims or disbelief in the existence of said Mahatmas.

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RESOLVED: That this Convention declares its unswerving belief in the integrity and uprightness of the Vice-President of the T. S., Wm. Q. Judge, and expresses to him the most cordial thanks of the Section for his unrecompensed and self-sacrificing years of labor on behalf of the T. S. as a whole.

WHEREAS: This Section regards official investigation into the existence and methods of Mahatmas, and a dogmatic verdict rendered upon such investigation, as not only illegal under the Constitution but impossible in the absence of more profound knowledge of the science of Occultism, and, therefore, absurd in the present instance, although such inquiry and investigation are always proper privileges of individual members as such, therefore.

RESOLVED: That, if in the face of this protest and opinion of this Section, there is to be an investigation to decide whether or not William Q. Judge is or was in communication with said Mahatmas, and whether or not he has ‘misused the names and handwriting of said Mahatmas,’ or whether or not pretended or real communications or orders from said alleged Mahatmas have been issued or given out by him, then, in the opinion of this Section, an investigation should also be had to decide whether or not Col. Olcott, A. P. Sinnett, Annie Besant, and others have had, given, or promulgated such or any communication from the Mahatmas, whether real or pretended; and that they be required to show evidence of the possession of a commission from said Mahatmas, and of the truthfulness of their claims as heretofore frequently made and announced by them in public.

RESOLVED: That, in the opinion of this Section, only a Body of Mahatmas appearing at the Sessions of the Committee could decide whether or not any communication was or is a genuine or fraudulent Mahatmic message.

The *Theosophist* for May, **1894**, contained Col. Olcott’s notice that the “Judicial Committee” to hear the charges against Mr. Judge would meet in London on June **27**. This Committee, under the Rules as revised during **1893**, was to be constituted of (1) the members of the General Council of the Society, (2) two additional members nominated by each Section of the Society, and (3) two members selected by the accused. (The General Council, as provided in the Constitution adopted in December, **1890**, consisted of the President, Vice-President, and General Secretaries of the Sections of the Society.) In calling this meeting of the Judicial Committee, Col. Olcott expressed regret that the decision of the Committee

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could no longer be arrived at “privately,” due to the action of the General Secretaries of the European and Indian Sections, who published their criticism of the President’s course. Col. Olcott also stated that his own action in placing the charges before the General Council had been in response to a “written demand” from Mrs. Besant—a fact which Mr. Judge had not mentioned in his four-page statement on March 15—and the President deplored that the accuser was unnamed,

“if the public was to be taken into confidence at all at this preliminary stage.”

This “Executive Notice” in the *Theosophist* was apparently an attempt by Col. Olcott to give the impression that high-minded impartiality and strict legality has characterized his course in arranging the meeting of the Judicial Committee to “try” Mr. Judge. It suggests, further, that Mr. Judge and Messrs. Mead and Keightley erred in making known the actual facts in relation to the procedure taken against Mr. Judge. Olcott’s emphasis on the fact that Mrs. Besant was the accuser tends to hide his own primary responsibility for the charges—a responsibility which he later admitted in a signed statement explaining that she had acted directly at his instigation and request.

The President-Founder arrived promptly in London, but the Enquiry was not held on the date set, June 27. The time until July 7 was occupied in various abortive attempts to reach a compromise that would obviate official disposition, but Mr. Judge insisted that since the whole procedure up to date had been taken officially by the President-Founder, with himself as defendant against charges of dishonorable conduct, and with issues raised prejudicial to the Society as well as himself, it could only properly be disposed of by formal official action. Accordingly, Col. Olcott summoned a meeting of the General Council on July 7,8 There were present Col. Olcott, who presided, Mr. Bertram Keightley, who was chosen as Secretary of the Council meeting, Mr. G. R. S. Mead; and Mr. Judge who took no part in the proceeding. Col. Olcott read to the meeting a formal letter by Mr. Judge, stating (1) that he had never been *elected* Vice-President of the Society, and was not, therefore, *legally* the Vice-President of the Society; (2) that even if adjudged *de facto* Vice-President of

the Society, he *was* not thereby amenable to charges of “misuse of Mahatmas’ names and handwriting,” since, even if guilty, such offenses would be those of a private individual and not as an officer of the Society; hence not subject, under the Constitution, to a trial by a Judicial Committee of the Society as an official malfeasance. A legal opinion from a New York lawyer, Mr. M. H. Phelps, a member of the Society, was then read in support of Mr. Judge’s contentions.

The matter was then debated, Mr. Judge remaining silent. Colonel Olcott informed the meeting that at the Adyar Convention of 1888 he had himself “appointed” Mr. Judge Vice-President by virtue of his own “prerogative” to make such an appointment and had published such title in the official list of Officers of the Society, and that this appointment was unanimously “confirmed” by vote at the Indian General Convention of 1890, although the “official report” of that Convention “did not record the fact.” Hence, he declared, Mr. Judge “was and is Vice-President *de facto* and *de jure*.”

Having heard what Col. Olcott had to say as to the first point raised by Mr. Judge, the Council meeting made no decision, but passed to the second question. On this point renewed discussion took place, Mr. Judge remaining silent as before. The minutes read:

The matter *was* then debated. Bertram Keightley moved, and G. R. S. Mead seconded:

‘That the Council, having heard the arguments on the point raised by ‘William Q. Judge, declares that the point is well-taken; that the acts alleged concern him as an individual; and that consequently the Judicial Committee has no jurisdiction in the premises to try him as Vice-President upon the charges as alleged.

The President concurred. Mr. Judge did not vote. The motion was declared carried.

“On Mr. Mead’s motion, it was then voted that the above record shall be laid before the Judicial Committee. Mr. Judge did not vote.”

Col. Olcott laid before the Council meeting a further point raised by Mr. Judge: that Mr. Judge's election by the American, the British, and Indian Sections, as successor to the President in **1892** (at the time of Col. Olcott's resignation), "became *ipso facto* annulled upon the President's resumption of his office as President." "On motion," reads the official

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minutes, "the Council declared the point well taken, and ordered the decision to be entered upon the minutes. Mr. Judge did not vote."

Colonel Olcott then called the meeting's attention to the resolution of the American Section Convention which declared in effect that the suspension of Mr. Judge was without warrant in the Constitution and transcended the President's discretionary powers. On this it was moved, seconded, and passed, Mr. Judge not voting, that "the President's action was warranted under the then existing circumstances" and that the American Section's "resolutions of protest are without force."

Next, by motion (Mr. Judge not voting), "the council then requested the President to convene the Judicial Committee at the London Headquarters, on Tuesday, July 10, **1894**, at 10 a.m. The Council then adjourned at call of the President."

The Judicial Committee met on July 10, as required. There were present all the members of the Committee, as follows:

Col. Olcott as President-Founder, in the chair; Messrs. G. R. S. Mead and Bertram Keightley as General Secretaries of the European and Indian Sections; Messrs. A. P. Sinnett and E. T. Sturdy as delegates of the Indian Section; Messrs. Herbert Burrows and Wm. Kingsland as delegates of the European Section; Dr. J. D. Buck and Dr. Archibald Keightley as delegates of the American Section; Messrs. Oliver Firth and E. T. Hargrove as special delegates representing the accused—all as provided for under the "revised Rules" adopted at the Adyar Convention in December preceding. Mr. Judge was present as the accused, but not voting as General Secretary of the American Section. Mrs. Besant was present as the accuser. It should be noted that of the eleven members of the Judicial Committee, the Chairman, Col. Olcott, and Messrs. E. T. Sturdy and A. P. Sinnett were already fully convinced in advance of the guilt of Mr. Judge; Messrs. Bertram Keightley and G. R. S. Mead convinced of Judge's guilt, but equally convinced that he could not be "tried" for his offenses; Messrs. Herbert Burrows, Wm. Kingsland, and Oliver Firth, strong friends of both Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott, but still in doubt as to Mr. Judge's guilt and the legality of the whole proceedings.

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Of the remaining members of the Judicial Committee, Dr. Buck and Dr. Archibald Keightley were fast friends of both the accused and the accuser, as well as of Col. Olcott; Mr. F. T. Hargrove was a young barrister of excellent family just then coming into prominence among the London members of the Society, friendly to all parties, but, as the after events showed, well assured in his own mind, like Dr. Buck and Dr. Archibald Keightley, both that Mr. Judge was innocent of any wrong-doing and that the whole affair was a colossal blunder as well as legally defective.

The meeting of the Judicial Committee being opened by the President-Founder, he read to the assembled Committee a formal letter from Mr. Judge as General Secretary of the American Section, stating that in the opinion of the Executive Committee of the American Section that

Section was entitled to an extra vote in the Judicial Committee by reason of the fact that its General Secretary, being the accused, would not vote in the proceedings. On motion James M. Pryse, well known in both New York and London, was added to the Judicial Committee as a substitute for the General Secretary of the American Section.

Colonel Olcott, as Chairman, then declared the Judicial Committee to be duly constituted, and at once proceeded to read the following remarkable address as President-Founder of the Society. We give it in full, omitting only those parts already covered in the various documents quoted from: *Gentlemen and Brothers*:

We have met together today as a Judicial Committee . . . to consider and dispose of certain charges of misconduct preferred by Mrs. Besant against the Vice-President of the Society, and dated 24th March, **1894** [it should be noted that the two letters to Mr. Judge, purporting to give the “charges” as an enclosure, and ‘suspending’ the Vice-President in consequence, were both dated March 20th, 1894, four days *before* this date].

In compliance with the Revised Rules, copies of the charges brought by the accuser have been duly supplied to the accused and the members of the General Council.

Upon the receipt of a preliminary letter from myself, of date February 7th, 1894, from Agra, India, Mr. Judge, erroneously taking **it** to be the first step in the *official enquiry* into the charges, from my omission to mark the letter ‘Private,’ naturally misconceived it to be a breach of the Constitution, and vehemently

protested in a public circular addressed to “the members of the Theosophical Society,” and of which five-thousand copies were distributed to them, to all parts of the world. The name of the accuser not being mentioned, the wrong impression prevailed that I was the author of the charges, and at the same time intended to sit as chairman of the tribunal that was to investigate them. I regret this circumstance as having caused bad feeling throughout the Society against its Chief Executive, who has been the personal friend of the accused for many years, has ever appreciated as they deserved his eminent services and unflinching devotion to the whole movement, and whose constant motive has been to be brotherly and act justly to all his colleagues, of every race, religion, and sex. Having thus followed up the line adopted in the Notice of April 27 which we have given, Col. Olcott proceeds in his Address to the Judicial Committee to argue and give his own opinions and conclusions on the various questions raised by Mr. Judge at the meeting of the General Council three days preceding, as recited, and concludes this portion of his Address by stating:

From the above facts it is evident that W. Q. Judge is, and since December, **1888**, has continuously been, *de fare* as well as *de facto*, Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. The facts having been laid before the General Council in its session of the 7th inst., my ruling has been ratified, and is now also concurred in by Mr. Judge. He is, therefore, triable by this tribunal for “cause shown.”

The President-Founder then passes to the second point raised by Mr. Judge. It is interesting to note that in this passage he enlarges the original charge as contained in his letter of February 7. He says:

The second point raised by the accused is more important. If the acts alleged were done by him at all—which remains as yet *sub judice*—and he did them as a private person, *he cannot be tried by any other tribunal than the Aryan Lodge, T. S., of which he is a Fellow and the President. Nothing can possibly be clearer than that.* [Italics added.] Now, what are the alleged offenses?

That he practiced deception in sending false messages, orders, and letters as if sent and written by “Masters”; and in statements to me about a certain Rosicrucian jewel of H.P.B.’s.

That he was untruthful in various other instances enumerated.

Are these solely acts done in his private capacity, or may they or either of them be laid against him as wrong-doing by the

223 ————— OLCOTT SWITCHES THE ISSUE

Vice-President? This is a grave question, both in its present bearings and as establishing a precedent for future contingencies. We must not make a mistake in coming to a decision.

In summoning Mr. Judge before this tribunal, I was moved by the thought that the alleged evil acts might be separated into (a) strictly private acts, *viz.*, the alleged untruthfulness and deception, and (b) the alleged circulation of deceptive imitations of what are supposed to be Mahatmic writings, with intent to deceive; which communications, owing to his high official rank among us, carried a weight they would not have had if given out by a simple member. This seemed to me a far more heinous offense than simple falsehood or any other act of an individual, and to amount to a debasement of his office, if proven. . . . The issue is now open to your consideration, and you must decide as to your judicial competency.

Although the original charge was “misuse”—i.e., imitating —“the handwriting of the Mahatmas,” yet Col. Olcott proceeds to give it as his opinion that—the present issue is not at all whether Mahatmas exist or the contrary, or whether they have or have not recognizable handwritings, and have or have not authorized Mr. Judge to put forth documents in their name. I believed, when issuing the call, that the question might be discussed without entering into investigations that would compromise our corporate neutrality. The charges as formulated and laid before me by Mrs. Besant could in my opinion have been tried without doing this.

After this extraordinary admission and affirmation Col. Olcott proceeds to hasten to his own defense for having brought matters thus far and for what he now finds himself compelled to do—that is, to reverse himself completely:

I must refer to my official record to prove that I would have been the last to help in violating a Constitution of which I am, **it** may be said, the father, and which I have continually defended at all times and in all circumstances. On now meeting Mr. Judge in London, however, and being made acquainted with his intended line of defense, I find that by beginning the inquiry we should be placed in this dilemma, *viz.*, we should either have to deny him the common justice of listening to his statements and examining his proofs (which would be monstrous in even a common court of law—much more in a Brotherhood like ours, based on lines of ideal justice), or be plunged into the very abyss we wish to escape from. Mr. Judge’s defense is that he is not guilty of the acts charged; that Mahatmas exist, are related to our Society and in personal contact with himself; and

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he avers his readiness to bring many witnesses and documentary proofs to support his statements. At this point, it may be noted that Col. Olcott, and therefore Mrs. Besant, through this statement of the President-Founder, are forced to admit (1) that the constitutional questions raised by Mr. Judge were raised for the sake of the Society and not to evade “trial”; and (2) that his “line of defense”—which makes the real “dilemma” for his accusers—is simply that Mr. Judge “avers,” as Col. Olcott states, not only that he is not guilty, but that he is prepared to offer “proofs” in his

own defense. And although these very constitutional questions and Mr. Judge's very avowal of innocence and readiness to meet an investigation were stated in Mr. Judge's circular of March 15, and although Col. Olcott six weeks later (in the Notice of April 27) declares that in the opinion of "eminent counsel" as well as himself the trial can properly take place as summoned, the President-Founder at London finds himself in a dilemma indeed. Not to listen to Mr. Judge's defense would be so monstrous that not even the dumbest or most prejudiced would fail to see its inequity, however they may have been blinded to the monstrous inequity of bringing these hearsay "charges" in the first place. How Col. Olcott evaded the real issue and at the same time did in fact what he had just characterized as "monstrous even in a common court of law, much more in a Brotherhood like" the Theosophical Society, may be seen in his next words:

The moment we entered into these questions we should violate the most vital spirit of our federal compact, its neutrality in matters of belief.—For the above reason, then, **I** declare as my opinion that this inquiry must go no farther; we may not break our own laws for any consideration whatsoever. It is furthermore my opinion that such an inquiry, begun by whatsoever body within our membership, cannot proceed if a similar line of defense be declared. If, perchance, a guilty person should at any time go scot-free in consequence of this ruling, we cannot help **it**; the Constitution is our palladium, and we must make it the symbol of justice or expect our Society to disintegrate.

Thus, in this one paragraph, is the admission in Col. Olcott's own words and decision, of the impropriety and illegality of the original bringing of the "charges"; the admission that every constitutional contention raised by Mr. Judge was correct;

225 ————— OLCOTT REVOKES JUDGE'S SUSPENSION

the admission that Mr. Judge was ready and willing to "stand trial"; the admission that such a "line of defense" upset the whole procedure, and that the Enquiry "must go no farther"—thus debarring Mr. Judge, charged with dishonorable conduct, from the promised "full opportunity to *disprove* the charges brought against you," as Col. Olcott had written him March **20**, when suspending him from the Vice-Presidency pending the meeting of the Judicial Committee.

The facts of the situation made it necessary for Olcott to continue:

Candor compels me to add that, despite what I thought some preliminary quibbling and unfair tactics, Mr. Judge has traveled hither from America to meet his accusers before this Committee, and announces his readiness to have the charges investigated and decided on their merits by any competent tribunal. These statements by Col. Olcott should be carefully noted, for later on the reader will find both Col. Olcott and Mrs. Besant solemnly affirming over and over again that Mr. Judge was "guilty," as if that "guilt" had been *proved*; that he *evaded* and *escaped* trial through pleading what the lawyers call a demurrer. After the foregoing remarks, Col. Olcott argues in extenuation of himself against the resolutions adopted by the Convention of the American Section, then reverses his action complained of therein:

It having been made evident to me that Mr. Judge cannot be tried on the present accusations without breaking through the lines of our Constitution, I have no right to keep him further suspended, and so hereby cancel my notice of suspension, dated 7th February, **1894** [actually, the date of the letter of suspension, as *officially* forwarded, was March 20], and restore him to the rank of Vice-President. The remainder of the President-Founder's Address to the Judicial Committee is a half-apology for the "inconvenience" caused the members and others by the convocation of the Committee, and a plea for "brotherhood."

Mr. Mead then submitted to the Judicial Committee the minutes of the General Council meeting of July 7, as given. The Judicial Committee then adopted the following resolutions:

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Resolved: That the President be requested to lay before the Committee the charges against Mr. Judge referred to in his address. The charges were laid before the Committee accordingly. After deliberation, it was *Resolved:* That although it has ascertained that the member bringing the charges Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge are both ready to go on with the inquiry, the Committee considers, nevertheless, that the charges are not such as relate to the conduct of the Vice-President in his official capacity, and therefore are not subject to its jurisdiction.

It will be observed from the foregoing that the report merely states that the resolutions were “adopted” by the Committee without giving the votes, pro and contra. The reader should understand that the delegates favorable to Mr. Judge left it to the others to decide whether to proceed or not. Another resolution affirmed that a trial of the kind under enquiry would violate the neutrality of the Society in matters of religious opinion. On this “four members abstained from voting,” according to the report. Their names are not given. Another resolution adopted the President’s Address, and still another resolution was adopted asking the General Council to print and circulate a report of the proceedings. The question was then raised whether the charges against Mr. Judge should be included in the printed report. On this Mr. Burrows moved and Mr. Sturdy seconded a resolution that “if the Proceedings were printed at all the charges should be included.” However, when the assembled delegates came to see the full iniquity of officially spreading broadcast a series of charges after having denied the accused the opportunity of meeting and rebutting them, this motion was too much for even the most prejudiced to be responsible for. The report says: “On being put to the vote the resolution was not carried.” Once more, the report carefully abstains from mentioning who voted for and who voted against this infamous resolution. After this, the report states, “The Minutes having been read and confirmed the Committee dissolved.”

It will be noted that every resolution adopted by the General Council in its session of July 7, and all the proceedings of the session of the Judicial Committee on the 10th were in

227 ————— JUDGE MAINTAINS SILENCE

full accord with the remarks of the President-Founder in his Addresses to the two bodies. Of equal interest is the fact that, in the entire proceedings, both of the General Council meeting and those of the Judicial Committee, Mr. Judge and those representing him took an entirely passive part. Having in his formal letters addressed to the two bodies, raised the necessary legal questions, and avowed his readiness to meet directly any trial of the real issues at stake, Mr. Judge remained silent throughout, leaving it to his accusers to take what steps they would.

CHAPTER XVI AFTERMATH OF THE JUDGE CASE

THE VIRTUAL FIASCO of the July 10 meeting of the Judicial Committee called by Col. Olcott left a troubled atmosphere in the Theosophical Society. Mr. Judge's accusers had proceeded with a great show of righteousness and "legality," expressing profound solicitude for the welfare of the Theosophical Movement at large. Both Col. Olcott and Mrs. Besant asserted that they felt compelled by duty to undertake the unpleasant task of instituting the investigation in order to free Mr. Judge from the taint of calumny and to afford him the opportunity to meet directly the accusations and rumors concerning his conduct, and to disprove them if he could. But when the inquiry, thus heralded, reached its climax in an official "hearing," the entire procedure collapsed of its own weight, and its sponsors retired in confusion.

The London Convention of the European Section of the Society was to hold its first session on July 12. Possibly in the hope that a more conclusive result of the inquiry might be presented to the European delegates, Mrs. Besant proposed to Dr. J. D. Buck that a "Jury of Honor" be impaneled to pass on the "charges." She suggested the names of Messrs. Sinnett, Bertram Keightley, Sturdy, Burrows, and Firth for membership on such a jury. This was declined on the grounds that Mr. Judge had not yet been supplied with certified copies of the documents alleged to contain the "evidence" against him; that he would need time to produce witnesses and documents in rebuttal; finally, that the majority of the names submitted were those of men known to be already prejudiced against him, and that a jury, if chosen, should be composed of members qualified to weigh and pass upon principles, processes, and evidences necessarily connected with "precipitations" and other "occult" phenomena. There was further discussion of the "Jury of Honor" idea, but the course finally adopted was the presentation of two statements, one by Mrs. Besant, the other by Mr. Judge, before the European Convention.

229 ————— MRS. BESANT'S CHARGES AGAINST JUDGE

The former, speaking at length, began with a summary of the "history" of the "Judge Case." The first definite expression of the sentiment against Judge, she said, came with publication in the *Theosophist* (July, 1893) of "Theosophic Free-thought," by Walter R. Old and Sidney V. Edge (see Chapter xiv). From that time on, she continued, malevolent rumors were spread concerning Mr. Judge, causing her to "intervene" privately in the hope that these exaggerated accusations might be ended and "what might remain of valid complaint might be put an end to without public controversy." The accusations, however, she explained, became well known, when persons "who knew some of the things complained of" broke the "promise of silence," and Mrs. Besant, as she put it, offered to take upon herself "the onus of formulating the charges."

She then described the events of the few days preceding, expressing personal agreement with the conclusion of the Judicial Committee that it could not "try" Mr. Judge, either as Officer of the Society or as private individual. The remainder of her statement is devoted to repetition and analysis of the charges, in which Mrs. Besant states categorically her own version of the "offenses" committed by Mr. Judge:

And now I must reduce these charges to their proper proportions, as they have been enormously exaggerated, . . . the vital charge is that Mr. Judge has issued letters and messages in the script recognizable as that adopted by a Master with whom H.P.B. was closely connected, and that these letters and messages were neither written nor precipitated directly by the Master in whose writing they appear; . . . leading up to this there are subsidiary charges of deception, but these would certainly never have been made the basis of any action save for their connection with the main point.

Further, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not charge and have not charged Mr. Judge with forgery in the ordinary sense of the term, but with giving a misleading material form to messages received psychically from the Master in various ways, without acquainting the recipients with this fact. I regard Mr. Judge as an Occultist, possessed of considerable knowledge, and animated by a deep and unswerving devotion to the Theosophical Society. I believe that he has often received direct messages from the Masters and from Their chelas, guiding and helping him in his work. I believe that he has sometimes received messages for other people in one or other of the ways

that I will mention in a moment, but not by direct writing by the Master nor by His direct precipitation; and that Mr. Judge has then believed himself to be justified in writing down in the script adopted by H.P.B. for communications from the Master, the message psychically received, and in giving it to the person for whom it was intended, leaving that person to wrongly assume that it was a direct precipitation or writing by the Master Himself—that is, that it was done *through* Mr. Judge, but done *by* the Master.

Now personally I hold that this method is illegitimate and that no one should simulate a recognized writing which is regarded as authoritative when it is authentic. And by authentic I mean directly written or precipitated by the Master Himself. If a message is consciously written it should be so stated: if automatically written, it should be so stated. At least so it seems to me. It is important that the very small part generally played by the Masters in these phenomena should be understood, so that people may not receive messages as authoritative merely on the ground of their being in a particular script. Except in the very rarest instances, the Masters do not personally write letters or; directly precipitate communications. Messages may be sent by Them to those with whom They can communicate by external voice, or astral vision, or psychic word, or mental impression, or in other ways. If a person gets a message which he believes to be from the Master, for communication to anyone else, he is bound in honour not to add to that message any extraneous circumstances which will add weight to it in the recipient's eyes. I believe that Mr. Judge wrote with his own hand, consciously or automatically I do not know, in the script adopted as that of the Master, messages which he received from the Master or from chelas; and I know that, in my own case, I believed that the messages he gave me in the well-known script were messages directly precipitated or directly written by the Master. When I publicly said that I had received after H.P.B.'s death, letters in the writing H.P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and as they were in the well-known script I never dreamt of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge, but I also believe that the gist of these messages was psychically received, and that Mr. Judge's error lay in giving them to me in a script written by himself and not saying that he had done so. I feel bound to refer to these letters thus explicitly, because having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public.

If you, representatives of the T.S., consider that the publication of this statement followed by that witch Mr. Judge will make, would put an end to this distressing business, and by making a

clear understanding, get rid at least of the mass of seething suspicions in which we have been

living, and if you can accept it, I propose that this should take the place of the Committee of Honour, putting you, our brothers, in the place of the Committee. I have made the frankest explanation I can; I know how enwrapped in difficulty are these phenomena which are connected with forces obscure in their workings to most; therefore, how few are able to judge of them accurately, while those through whom they play are not always able to control them. And I trust that these explanations may put an end to some at least of the troubles of the last two years, and leave us to go on with our work for the world, each in his own way. For any pain that I have given my brother, in trying to do a most repellent task, I ask his pardon. as also for any mistakes that I may have made.

ANNIE BESANT

From reading Mrs. Besant's statement by itself, one might believe that, at the time of the European Convention of **1894**, she was still Mr. Judge's devoted friend, even his admirer in some respects, and that she had acted solely from motives of Theosophical duty. There is, however, serious evidence of bad faith to be considered in connection with her statement. In reviewing the circumstances leading up to the inquiry, she says that she agreed to "intervene privately" in an attempt to stop the whispering campaign against Mr. Judge. Actually this "intervention" consisted of a letter written to Judge on January **11, 1894**, in which she told him she had proof of his "guilt," and demanded, as the price of her silence, that he should resign from both the T. S. and the E.S., giving up his offices in both. "or the evidence which goes to prove the wrong done must be laid before a committee of the T. S."

The question naturally arises: Why did Mrs. Besant turn against Judge with such determination, after having enthusiastically sponsored him as Olcott's successor to the Presidency of the Society less than two years earlier? The answer is clearly implied by a disclosure in this statement to the European Convention. All the members of the Society were familiar with Mrs. Besant's momentous public declaration, on August **30, 1891**, "that since Madame Blavatsky left, I have had letters in the same handwriting as the letters which she received"—meaning additional "Mahatma Letters." This meant, to many members of the Society, that the death of H.P.B. had constituted no interruption in the communication

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of the leaders of the Movement with the Theosophical Adepts; it meant, also, from outward appearance, that Mrs. Besant now enjoyed much the same relation with the Adepts as had H.P.B. during her life. What the members of the Society could not know, until told by Mrs. Besant herself, was that the communications referred to had come to her through Mr. Judge.

It seems apparent that her well-concealed bitterness against Judge was occasioned by suspicions, growing into confirmed belief, that these "messages" were not authentic. Without attempting too much reconstruction of Mrs. Besant's emotional reactions, it may be supposed that her loss of certainty concerning those communications was directly responsible for her turning against Judge, as the apparent author of her occult insecurity, and that she sided with Olcott quite naturally because of his similar distrust of Judge. Olcott, it will be remembered, had strenuously objected to the publication in the *Path* (August, **1891**) of Jasper Niemand's article begin-ning with a quotation attributed to a recent letter from an Adept, and the running fire of criticism against Judge, printed in the *Theosophist* from that time on, was largely inspired by Olcott and his loyal supporters. In his discussion of the Judge Case in the Report of the December, **1894** Convention in India, Olcott

found occasion to remark, "My objective intercourse with the great Teachers ceased almost entirely on the death of H.P.B.," the implication being that if he, the President-Founder, was no longer in communication with the Adepts, how could it be supposed that Mr. Judge, a younger and far less prominent man, enjoyed this great privilege? Mr. Judge's statement, more succinct than that of Mrs. Besant, was as follows: -----

STATEMENT BY MR. JUDGE

Since March last, charges have been going round the world against me, to which the name of Annie Besant has been attached, without her consent as she now says, that I have been guilty of forging the names and handwritings of the Mahatmas and of misusing the said names and handwritings. The charge has also arisen that I suppressed the name of Annie Besant as mover in the matter from fear of the same. All this has been causing great trouble and working injury to all concerned, that is, to all our

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members. It is now time that this should be put an end to once for all if possible.

I now state as follows:

1. I left the name of Annie Besant out of my published circular by request of my friends in the T.S. then near me so as to save her and leave it to others to put her name to the charge. It now appears that if I had so put her name it would have run counter to her present statement.
2. I repeat my denial of the said rumoured charges of forging the said names and handwritings of the Mahatmas or of misusing the same.
3. I admit that I have received and delivered messages from the Mahatmas and assert their genuineness.
4. I say that I have heard and do hear from the Mahatmas, and that I am an agent of the Mahatmas; but I deny that I have ever sought to induce that belief in others and this is the first time to my knowledge that I have ever made the claim now made. I am pressed into the place where I must make it. My desire and effort have been to distract attention from such an idea as related to me. But I have no desire to make the claim, which I repudiate, that I am the only channel for communication with Masters; and it is my opinion that such communication is open to any human being who, by endeavoring to serve mankind, affords the necessary conditions.
5. Whatever messages from the Mahatmas have been delivered by me as such—and they are extremely few—I now declare were and are genuine messages from the Mahatmas so far as my knowledge extends; they were obtained through me, but as to how they were obtained or produced I cannot state. But I can now again say, as I have said publicly before, and as was said by H.P.Blavatsky so often that I have always thought it common knowledge among studious Theosophists, that precipitation of words or messages is of no consequence and constitutes no proof of connection with Mahatmas; it is only phenomenal and not of the slightest value.
6. So far as methods are concerned for the reception and delivery of messages from the Masters,

they are many. My **own** methods may disagree from the views of others and I acknowledge their right to criticise them if they choose; but I deny the right to anyone to say that they know or can prove the non-genuineness of such messages to or through me unless they are able to see on that plane. I can only say that I have done my best to report—in the few instances when I have done it at all—correctly and truthfully such messages as I think I have received for transmission, and never to my knowledge have I tried therewith to deceive any person or persons whatever.

7. And I say that in **1893** the Master sent me a message in which he thanked me for all my work and exertions in the Theosophical field, and expressed satisfaction therewith, ending with sage advice to guard me against the failings and follies of my lower nature; that message Mrs. Besant unreservedly admits.

8. Lastly, and only because of absurd statements made and circulated, I willingly say that which I never denied, that I am a human being, full of error, liable to mistake, not infallible, but just the same as any other human being like to myself, or of the class of human beings to which I belong. And I freely, fully and sincerely forgive anyone who may be thought to have injured or tried to injure me. **WILLIAM Q. JUDGE**

Comparison of Mrs. Besant's statement with that of Mr. Judge discloses the points of agreement and of contrast, both in matters of fact and in tone. On the real issue involved— whether or not Mr. Judge was in communication with the Theosophical Adepts and received messages from them—Mrs. Besant makes two significant admissions:

I believe that he [Judge] has often received direct messages from the Masters and from Their chelas.

I believe that he has sometimes received messages for other people. What, then, was the assumed offense that had led her to bring the charges against Mr. Judge? Mrs. Besant states it several times:

I believe that Mr. Judge wrote with his own hand, consciously or automatically I do not know, in the script adopted as that of the Master, messages which he received from the Master or from chelas.

I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge, but I also believe that the gist of these messages was psychically received. Mrs. Besant adds:

Now personally I hold that this method is illegitimate and that no one should simulate a recognized writing which is regarded as authoritative when it is authentic. And by authentic I mean directly written or precipitated by the Master Himself. if a message is consciously written it should be so stated; if automatically written, it should be so stated. At least so it seems to me.

The foregoing passage is italicized for the reason that it contains the substance of Mrs. Besant's complaint. It shows, further, that despite all her subsequent claims and affirmations,

Mrs. Besant had no real knowledge of the occult teachings, that she labored under gross ignorance even of what had been given out years before both by H.P.B. and Masters. For, in the Appendix to

the fourth and later editions of *The Occult World*, Mr. Sinnett had given a long letter direct from the Master “K.H.” on the very subject of “precipitations” in connection with the Kiddie incident, which showed the *Master himself* “guilty” on his own confession of the very “method” which Mrs. Besant holds to be “illegitimate.” In the extremely important article, “Lodges of Magic,” H.P.B. in *Lucifer* for October, 1888—at the time of the public formation of the E.S.—goes at length into this very question. And with good reason: Mr. Sinnett and others had been whispering about the identical “charges” against her of “forgery” and “false messages.” Like Mrs. Besant, these students had received “messages” through H.P.B. which comported with their ideas, and other “messages” which upset their preconceptions. The one they had pronounced “genuine”; the other “false.” H.P.B. set out to show the absurdity of this position, writing:

We have been asked by a correspondent why he should not ‘be free to suspect some of the so-called ‘precipitated’ letters as being forgeries,’ giving as his reason for it that while some of them bear the stamp of (to him) undeniable genuineness, others seem from their contents and style, to be imitations. This is equivalent to saying that he has such an unerring spiritual insight as to be able to detect the false from the true, though he has never met a Master, nor been given any key by which to test his alleged communications. The inevitable consequence of applying his untrained judgment in such cases would be to make him as likely as not to declare false what was genuine, and genuine what was false. Thus what *criterion* has anyone to decide between one “precipitated” letter, or another such letter? Who except their authors, or those whom they employ as their *amanuenses* (the *chelas* and disciples), can tell? For it is hardly one out of a hundred “occult” letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master, in whose name and on whose behalf they are sent, as the Masters have neither need nor leisure to write them; and that when a Master says, “I wrote that letter,” it means only that every word in it was dictated by him and impressed under his direct supervision. Generally they make their chela, whether near or far away, write (or precipitate) them, by impressing upon his mind the ideas they wish expressed and if necessary aiding him in the picture-printing process of precipitation.

It depends entirely upon the *chela's* state of development, how accurately the ideas may be transmitted and the writing-model imitated. Thus the *non-adept* recipient is left in the dilemma of uncertainty, whether, if one letter is false, all may not be; for, as far as intrinsic evidence goes, all come from the same source, and all are brought by the same mysterious means. But there is another, and a far worse condition implied. For all that the recipient of “occult” letters can possibly know, and on the simple grounds of probability and common honesty, the unseen correspondent who would tolerate one *single fraudulent line in his name*, would wink at an unlimited repetition of the deception. Mrs. Besant proceeds to argue as if it were something hitherto unknown, that “it should be generally understood.....that letters and messages may be written or may be precipitated in any script, without thereby gaining any valid authority.” In thus arguing she was but repeating what H.P.B. and Mr. Judge had been teaching for years; but if she knew this to be the fact, why should she have attached such importance to “Mahatmas’ handwritings” precipitated “in a material form” through Mr. Judge or anyone else? If “the source of messages can be decided only by direct spiritual knowledge,” *and if she had that knowledge* so that she knew, as she claimed, that Mr. Judge’s messages themselves were genuine, why did she not *affirm their genuineness* to the doubters instead of charging Mr. Judge with “forgery”? Or if the source can be decided only “intellectually by the nature of their contents,” why did she not discuss the *contents* instead of

the *form* of the disputed messages? And if “each person must use his own powers and act on his own responsibility in accepting or rejecting them,” what occasion or right at any time on the part of any one to charge any other with “fraud” in connection with any “messages” so ever?

These considerations, however, were far from being apparent to the great majority of the theosophists in attendance at the London Convention. Each “side” had its “say,” and now harmony and mutual forbearance were expected to reign once again. The Report of the Convention recites:

Having heard the above statements, the following resolution was moved by Mr. Bertram Keightley, seconded by Dr. Buck, and carried *nem. con.*

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Resolved: that this meeting accepts with pleasure the adjustment arrived at by Annie Besant and William Q. Judge as a final settlement of matters pending hitherto between them as prosecutor and defendant, with the hope that it may be thus buried and forgotten, and

Resolved: that we will join hands with them to further the cause of genuine Brotherhood in which we all believe. At the conclusion of the official proceedings of the third session of the European Sectional Convention, which terminated with the adoption of the foregoing *Resolutions*, a spontaneous outburst of fraternal feeling animated all the delegates and visiting members of the Theosophical Society. On all sides those who had been rent by partisan emotions, those who had endeavored to remain neutral and impartial, leaders and followers alike, joined in mutual congratulations and felicitations over what seemed to be a complete restoration of unity. The official notices of the Convention in the various Theosophical publications represented the Judge case as being “settled,” but it is plain from the treatment of the subject in both *Lucifer* and the *Theosophist* that Mr. Judge’s enemies were far from satisfied to let matters rest. Both magazines contained thinly veiled preachments intended to suggest that there was opportunity to profit by Mr. Judge’s “mistakes.” The flames of controversy may have been smothered and hidden from view for a time, but subsequent events proved that the fire continued with smouldering intensity.

Mr. Judge left London July 18, **1894**, to return to New York; Col. Olcott, after a brief tour of England, Scotland and Ireland, departed for India. Mr. Bertram Keightley also returned to India to resume his duties as general Secretary of the Indian Section, and to be near Chakravarti, whose pupil he had become. Mrs. Besant at once set sail for Australia to form Branches and establish an Australasian Section of the T. S. under a *carte blanche* authority given her by the President-Founder. She also bore with her an authority from the European Convention to represent that Section as its delegate to the “Adyar Parliament” to be held in December.

Mr. Walter R. Old, co-author with Sidney Edge of the attack in *The Theosophist* on Mr. Judge (“Theosophic Freethought”), who had arrived from India in April, remained in

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England after the Convention. Old had been under suspension from the E.S. (of which he was a Council member) since August, **1893**, because of a statement in the “Freethought” article violating the rule of occult secrecy to which he was pledged. His suspension had been by joint order of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge. There is good evidence, however, that Mrs. Besant, upon reaching Adyar in December, 1893, consulted with Mr. Old and listened to his tale of wrongs and innuendoes against Judge. Old’s journey to England early in **1894**, ostensibly ordered by his physician, as

announced in the *Theosophist*, made it possible for him to prepare the English Theosophists for reception of the charges against Mr. Judge. After the inquiry was over, Old was apparently piqued by Mrs. Besant's reference, in her Convention address, to "persons inspired largely by hatred for Mr. Judge," for Old was obviously one whom this description might fit, and he certainly was one who, to use Mrs. Besant's words, had "circulated a mass of accusations against him (Judge)." As both Old and Edge were named in the next succeeding paragraph of Mrs. Besant's statement, Old felt that they had been identified with those who "hated" Mr. Judge. Accordingly, he wrote to Olcott objecting to this characterization of himself, remarking that both the President-Founder and Mrs. Besant were well acquainted with the "attitude" of Old and Edge regarding Judge. This letter, which was printed in *Lucifer* at Col. Olcott's request, does *not* however, elaborate on what that "attitude" was, the implied suggestion being that it was shared by Olcott and Mrs. Besant. Mr. Old's subsequent course remained unknown until a few months later, when a new attack, this time from without, expended its fury on the Theosophical Movement.

In October, **1894**, the London *Westminster Gazette* began the publication of a series of articles by Edmund Garrett, entitled "Isis Very Much Unveiled; the Story of the Great Mahatma Hoax." This series, together with editorial articles and correspondence concerning it, ran for two months without cessation. All former Theosophical storms rolled into one were as but an April shower in comparison with the havoc wrought in the Theosophical Society's ranks by Garrett's "exposé." It was immediately issued in book form by the

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Westminster Gazette and gained a tremendous circulation. Someone paid for sending copies to all Lodges of the Theosophical Society!

Mr. Garrett was an exceedingly clever writer. No "trial by newspaper" ever had an abler advocate for the plaintiff. Moreover, Mr. Garrett was plainly honest. He concealed neither the sources of his information, his own detestation of Theosophy and its Society, nor that his object was to discredit what he detested. Mr. Garrett was a personal friend of Mr. Old, and it was Mr. Old who inspired him to write his series of articles and who supplied him with most of the documentary matter used against the Society. Mr. Old was the only one of the numerous characters whom Mr. Garrett's serio-comedy treated with respect. All the others were targets for his keen wit, Mrs. Besant most of all. Colonel Olcott was mercilessly lampooned, H.P.B. and Mr. Judge held forth as astute charlatans who had made dupes and fools of Mrs. Besant, Col. Olcott, and the rest with bogus phenomena and bogus messages from equally bogus Mahatmas.

It was clearly evident from the documents used by Mr. Garrett that Mr. Old had been aided by both Col. Olcott and Mrs. Besant, for some of the papers cited could not have been otherwise obtained. This is practically admitted by Mr. Old in a letter to *Lucifer*, despite his denial of the fact in the same letter. He wrote:

The published facts are just those which came into the evidence of Col. Olcott and Bertram Keightley, and upon which the charges were based and action taken; *and they are, moreover, part of a body of evidence, which, from the outset, it was decided to publish.* I take the whole Karma of my own action, and I affirm that **it** is wholly independent of connivance or instigation on the part of anyone. (Italics added.)

At the same time, Mr. Old addressed a letter to the *Westminster Gazette*, which was published, and which was also included in the matter of Mr. Garrett's book. Enough is quoted to establish or confirm the links already given:

The writer of those articles has named me, quite correctly, as having taken the first step in forcing an inquiry into the case against Mr. Judge. For this act of mine, I was suspended from my membership in the Esoteric Section, under the authority

of the joint signatures of William Q. Judge and Annie Besant, Outer Heads of the E.S.T., and my name was dishonourably mentioned before the members of the E.S. among whom I numbered many an old colleague and friend After her official action in suspending me from membership Mrs. Besant was, of course, bound to hear my justification. This happened at Adyar in the winter of **1893**. Mrs. Besant's first remark to me after reading the case and examining the documents was, "*You were perfectly justified by the facts before you.*"

In the presence of the president-founder Col. Olcott, Mrs. Besant, Countess Wachmeister, Mr. E. T. Sturdy, together with Mr. Edge and myself, it was decided that the task of officially bringing the charges should devolve upon Mrs. Besant, and that the whole of the evidence should be published. [Italics added.]

Mr. Old goes on to tell of Mrs. Besant's formal demand to Col. Olcott for the investigation, Col. Olcott's official letters to Mr. Judge, and the Judicial Committee meeting, "*with the abortive and disingenuous result already known.*" He then continues:

But what of the 'full publication of all the details?' "What of us Theosophists who had brought these charges against Mr. Judge? Were we not left in the position of persons who had brought charges without proving them? The position was one which I felt to be intolerable.

So Mr. Old gave his "proofs" to the commercial press. It seems never to have occurred to him, any more than to Mrs. Besant and the others, that there was anything "intolerable" in spreading privately and publicly calumnies dignified as "charges" and "evidences." But when lurid publicity played the spotlight upon the authors of the "mass of accusations," then their position became "intolerable" indeed—first to Mr. Old, and then to Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott.

After arguing that it was his "duty" to supply ammunition to Mr. Garrett, whom he calls a "Philistine," in order that "a system of truth" should not be "raised from a fabric of fraud," Mr. Old says:

It will, therefore, be clear to all members of the T. S. and the public generally that I am responsible for the facts occurring in Mr. Garrett's articles *only so far as they apply to the charges against Mr. Judge.* . . . I do not lose sight of the fact that, however mistaken or misled many of the Theosophical Society may be, as regards the traditional "Mahatmas" and their supposed "communications," they are nevertheless as sincere in

their beliefs as many of their more orthodox fellows, and have as much right to respectful consideration. *I regret particularly that Mrs. Besant should have been placed in this awkward public position by the present exposure.*

Of Madame Blavatsky I speak as I knew her. At the time I made her acquaintance she had forsworn all "phenomenalism," so that I never saw any occult phenomena at any time. I believe that *for her* these italics are [Mr. Old's] the Mahatmas existed, and I believe she *thought them* to be embodied personalities. *Colonel Olcott has another theory*, and others have their own. . .

Now that the sordid affair of the "Case against Judge" had been exploited in the press, to the

shame and discredit of the entire Theosophical Movement, Mr. Judge took decisive action. On November 3, **1894**, he issued an E.S. circular letter, headed “By Master’s Order,” in which he deposed Annie Besant from her Co-Headship in the Esoteric School.

In this circular, which was sent to all members of the E.S., Mr. Judge says that he has “put off writing it since March, **1894**,” although “in March this letter seemed to me to be as necessary as it is now,” but that he was “directed to wait for the conclusion of the matter of the charges made against” him. He says he has since seen the wisdom of the direction to “wait,” because had he written it while the “charges” were still pending, the Theosophical Society would have been “mixed up” with the troubles in the Esoteric Section—which had no official relation to the Society. “We have now,” he proceeds, “to deal with the E.S.T. and with our duty to it and to each other; and among those others, to Mrs. Besant.”

He then briefly rehearses the story of the foundation of the E.S., its history, the Inner Group, the reorganization of the School following the death of H.P.B. He discloses the fact that the actual formation of the School originated with himself, in a letter to H.P.B. in May, 1887, a year and a half before the public announcement, and that the foundation followed the lines suggested by him. He also advised the members that he himself had never taken the School or Inner Group pledges, having made his own vows in **1875** direct to the Masters—all of which is borne out by recorded public and private statements by H.P.B. He then speaks of Mrs. Besant as follows:

Mrs. Annie Besant has been but five years in this work, and not all of that time engaged in occult study and practice. Her

abilities as a writer and speaker are rare and high for either man or woman, her devotion and sincerity of purpose cannot be doubted. She gave many years of her life to the cause of the oppressed as she understood it: against the dread blight of materialistic belief in herself, she worked thus without hope in a future life and in every way proved her altruistic purpose and aim. Since **1889** she has done great service to the T. S. and devoted herself to it. But all this does not prevent a sincere person from making errors in Occultism, especially when he, as Mrs. Besant did, tries to force himself along the path of practical work in that field. Sincerity does not of itself confer knowledge, much less wisdom. H.P.B. . . and all the history of occultism says that seven years of training and trial at the very least are needed. Mrs. Besant has had but five. Mistakes made by such a disciple will ultimately be turned to the advantage of the movement, and their immediate results will be mitigated to the person making them, provided they are not inspired by an evil intention on the person’s part. And I wish it to be clearly understood that Mrs. Besant has had herself no conscious evil intention; she has simply gone for awhile outside the line of her Guru H.P.B. . . ., begun work with others, and fallen under their influence. We should not push her farther down, but neither will the true sympathy we have blind our eyes so as to let her go on, to the detriment of the whole movement.

Mr. Judge discusses the recent charges and troubles in the Society and the School, from the standpoint of the Second Section, treating their real origin, their strategy and tactics, as having their source in the everlasting struggle of human evolution—the contending forces of the light and dark sides of nature and being. He concludes this part of his narrative by saying that the troubles of the Movement began anew “when in January or February [**1894**] Annie Besant finally lent herself unconsciously to the plot which I detail herein; but prior to that (from August, **1893**), those managing that plot had begun to work upon her.” He places the root of the plot in India and says

that forces opposing the Theosophical Movement have succeeded in influencing certain Brahmans in India through race-pride and ambition, so that these, for their own advantage, desire to control and manage the T. S. through some agent and also through the E.S.T. They of course have sought, if possible, to use one of our body, and have picked out Mrs. Besant as a possible vehicle. One object of the plot is to stop the current of information and influence started by H.P.B. . . . by deflecting thought back to modern India. To accomplish this

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it is absolutely necessary to tear down the tradition clustering around the work of H.P.B. . . . ; her powers and knowledge have to be derogated from; her right to speak for the Masters has to be impugned; those Masters have to be made a cold abstraction; her staunch friends who wish to see the real work and objects carried on have to be put in such a position as to be tied hand and foot so as not to be able to interfere with the plans of the plotters; it has to be shown that H.P.B. . . . was a fraud and a forger also. These men are not the Chelas of our Masters.

The name of the person who was worked upon so as to, if possible, use him as a minor agent . . . for the influencing of Mrs. Besant is Gyanendra N. Chakravarti, a Brahman of Allahabad, India, who came to America on our invitation to the Religious Parliament in **1893**. At the first sincerely desirous of helping the race by bringing to the American people the old truths of his forefathers, he nevertheless, like so many before him, permitted ambition to take subtle root in his heart. Fired with the ambition of taking position in the world as a Guru, though doubtless believing himself still a follower of the 'White Brotherhood, he is no longer in our lines; on the contrary his mediumship and weakness leave him a vehicle for other influences also.

Mr. Judge tells of a message in regard to himself, received by Chakravarti, in which the Master commended Mr. Judge and his work, and says: "I informed Mrs. Besant in September, **1893**, of the message." This message was the one referred to by Mr. Judge in his statement before the European Convention in July, **1894**, as being undisputed by Mrs. Besant. The circular continues:

But afterwards, when Mr. Chakravarti's work under me was finished, and when ambition aroused through that visit, had grown strong, he tried to destroy the effect of that message on Mrs. Besant's mind by cunningly construing **it** to mean that, although I was thus in all things commended, the last part of it contradicted the first and supported the charge of forgery and lying. This is madness when not deliberate. . . . She accepted the cunning construction, permitted herself to think that the Master could commend me for all the work I had done, of which the pretended acts of forgery would be a part, and at the same time send me a delusive message, part of which was to be immediately used as condemnation if brought forward by me. If I was guilty of what **I** was accused, then Master would be shown as conniving at forgery and lying—a most impossible thing. The only other possibility is that Mr. Chakravarti and I "got up" the message. But he and Mrs. Besant have admitted its genuineness, although she is perfectly unable herself to decide

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on its genuineness or falsity. But further, Mrs. Besant admitted to several that she had seen the Master himself come and speak through my body while I was perfectly conscious. And still further, H.P.B. . . . gave me in **1889** the Master's picture, on which he put this message: "To my dear and loyal colleague, W. Q. Judge."

Now, then, either I am bringing you a true message from the Master, or the whole T. S. and E.S.T. is a lie, in the ruins of which must be buried the names of H.P.B. . . . and the Masters. All these stand together or they fall together. Let it be proved that H.P.B. . . . is a liar and a fraud, and I will abandon the T. S. and all its belongings; but until so proved I will remain where I was put. Lastly, as final proof of the delusions worked through this man and his friends I will mention this: Many years ago (in 1881) the Masters sent to the Allahabad Brahmans (the Prayag T. S.) a letter which was delivered by H.P.B. . . . to Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who handed a copy over to them, keeping the original. It dealt very plainly with the Brahmans. This letter the Brahmans do not like, and Mr. Chakravarti tried to make me think it was a pious fraud by H.P.B. . . . He succeeded with 'Mrs. Besant in this, so that since she met him she has on various occasions said she thought it was a fraud by H.P.B. . . . , made up entirely, and not from the Master. . . . Only delusion would make Mrs. Besant take this position; deliberate intention makes the others do it. It is an issue that may not be evaded, for if that letter be a fraud then all the rest sent through our old teacher, are the same. I shall rest on that issue; we all rest on it.

Mrs. Besant was then made to agree with these people under the delusion that it was approved by the Masters. She regarded herself as their servant. It was against the E.S.T. rules. When the rule is broken it is one's duty to leave the E.S.T. . . . Mrs. Besant was put in such a frightful position that while she was writing me most kindly and working with me she was all the time thinking that I was a forger and that I had blasphemed the Master. She was made to conceal from me, when here, her thoughts about the intended charges. . . . Not until the time was ripe did she tell me, in her letter in January [1894], from India, asking me to resign from the E.S.T. and the T. S. offices, saying that if I did and would confess guilt all would be forgiven and everyone would work with me as usual. But I was directed differently and fully informed. She was induced to believe that the Master was endorsing the persecution, that he was ordering her to do what she did.

In all this Chakravarti was her guide, with others *

* During this same period—1893-5—Mrs. Besant had joined Mr. Sinnetts *coterie* and was also receiving "messages through Mr. Leadbeater, at the time Mr. Sinnett's "psychic."

Mr. Judge closed his circular of November 3, 1894, with the following: E. S. T. ORDER
I now proceed a step further than the E.S.T. decisions of 1894,* and, solely for the good of the E.S.T., I resume in the E.S.T. in full all the functions and powers given to me by H.P.B. . . . and that came to me by orderly succession after her passing from this life, and declare myself the sole head of the E.S.T. . . . Hence, under the authority given me by the Master and H.P.B. . . . , and under the Master's direction, I declare Mrs. Annie Besant's headship in the E.S.T. at an end.

A notice of this Order was at once cabled to Mrs. Besant in Australia, where she then was; and a copy of the entire circular was forwarded to her at Colombo, Ceylon, where she arrived on December 18, 1894, *en route* to attend the Adyar Convention. Immediately Mrs. Besant drew up a counter-circular which, dated Colombo, December 19, was as quickly as possible sent out under a London imprint, to all members of the E.S.T. After a preliminary paragraph devoted to **explanations** of her delay in sending out her statement, she makes the following comments:

I do not know if the statements as to Mr. Judge's part in the foundation of the E.S.T. are or are not true. H.P.B. never mentioned to me the alleged facts, except the one that Mr. Judge had not taken the ordinary pledge, he being already pledged.

This assertion can scarcely be taken as other than a convenient hiatus of memory on Mrs.

Besant's part, seeing that it was herself who read at the Council Meeting of May 27, **1891**, the bundle of documents establishing the veracity of Mr. Judge's statements. She continues:

The "plot," so far as I know, is the purest delusion. What is said of Mr. Chakravarti *I know* to be false, and I can but feel the profoundest pity and sorrow for him who uses the holy name of the Master to cover such a charge.

In passing, it may be remarked that although Mrs. Besant then claimed to *know* that what Judge said of Chakravarti was "false," later on, after 1906, she said the same thing of Chakravarti herself.

* This was a typographical error in the original circular. The date should be **1891**, as the reference is to the Avenue Road meeting on May 27 of that year, following the death of H.P.B.

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Mrs. Besant states, with reference to Mr. Judge's E.S. Order:

The "E.S.T. Order" . . . I reject. I shall pursue my work quietly, with such of the Council left by H.P.B. as think it right to work with me. Mr. Judge thinks it right to rend the School in twain, and I can only go on steadily as I have learned. We have come to the parting of the ways. I recognize no authority in Mr. *Judge*. Not from his hands did I receive my work; not into his hands may I surrender **it**.

And now, brothers and sisters, you must choose your road, grievous as the choice must be to you. Mr. Judge casts me aside, breaks the last tie between us that remained.

Mrs. Besant ended her rejection of Mr. Judge's E.S. Order with an appeal to her supporters to "Follow peace and charity; attack none; blame none; impute no evil motives; cast not back reproaches." On her way to India to attend the December convention, she prepared a long article on the *Westminster Gazette* attack, which she gave to the *Madras Mail* upon arriving at Adyar. This article contained a defense of herself and accusations of Judge. The Convention was largely devoted to the Judge case. Col. Olcott began, in his Presidential Address, by saying that "the unavoidable failure to dispose of the charges against Mr. Judge" had created "a crisis that is the most serious within our history since 1884"—the time of the Coulomb conspiracy against H.P.B. The Society, he said, was torn by differences of opinion on what should be done. The American Section, he conceded, would support Mr. Judge almost unanimously—would even secede if Mr. Judge were forced to resign, and form an independent American Society. Olcott referred to the support of Judge by certain Irish and English Lodges, and others on the Continent, although other European members and branches were against him. The President spoke of the recognition by many Indian members of Judge's "immense services and tireless activities in official work," but reported that India "had sent no protest in his [Judge's] favor."

Olcott then urged that Judge resign as Vice-President and stand for re-election. He indirectly "warned" the members, before they decided that Mr. Judge had been deliberately dishonest, to consider the possibility that he had acted as a misled medium or psychic under some evil influence!

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In conclusion, then [he said], I beg you to realize that, after proving that a certain writing is forged and calculated to deceive, you must then prove that the writer was a free agent before you

can fasten on him the stigma of moral obliquity. To come back to the case in point, it being impossible for any third party to know what Mr. Judge may have believed with respect to the Mahatmic writings emanating from him, and what subjective facts he had to go on, the proof cannot be said to be conclusive of his bad faith, however suspicious the available evidence may seem.

This portion of Col. Olcott's address seems to have been intended as a generous gesture which would allow Mr. Judge to confess to being a medium instead of a fraud! In the printed version of his speech, however, this "generosity" is vitiated by a note at the end, reporting that the President wished it known that he had withheld his "private views with respect to the Case of Mr. Judge," so as not to violate the "obligation of strict impartiality" in the drafting of an *official* document. But even with this Parthian fling, Olcott's address was more temperate than most of the other expressions. Nearly thirteen pages of small type in the *Theosophist* were needed to report a succession of attacks on Judge by various persons." The first speaker was Mrs. Besant, who concluded by proposing a Resolution that the President-Founder "at once call upon Mr. W. Q. Judge to resign" the office of Vice-President of the Society. Most of the other speakers concurring, after a few mild objections and some debate, the Resolution was passed.

The next move against Mr. Judge came with publication in *Lucifer* for February, **1895**, of a 27-page discussion by Mrs. Besant, entitled, "The Theosophical Society and Present Troubles." She now asserted that she had been "gulled" by Mr. Judge. Referring to his Order deposing her from the Co-headship of the E.S., she spoke of his statements as "morally evil," following this introduction with republication of (1) her article printed in the *Madras Mail*, and (2) her address before the December, **1894** Convention in Adyar, ending with the resolution on Judge's resignation. Finally, she accused Mr. Judge of using the secrecy of the E.S. to slander her in his Order of November 3, and declared that order a "public document."

In April Mrs. Besant, now returned to England, issued a booklet of 88 pages entitled *The Case against W. Q. Judge*. It contained a long letter by Mrs. Besant 'to members of the T. S.," a detailed statement of six charges against Mr. Judge, and testimony said to have been prepared for presentation at the Judicial Committee hearing of July, **1894**, still other "evidence," and a memorandum by Mrs. Besant concerning the "messages" she had received through Mr. Judge.

The important revelation in this booklet is Mrs. Besant's statement, in her opening "Letter to members," that she first learned of Mr. Judge's "deception" about September, 1893. Some words and acts of Mr. Judge, she said, caused her to be uneasy. She continued:

The result was that I made a direct appeal to the Master, when alone, stating that I did feel some doubt as to Mr. Judge's use of His name, and praying Him to endorse or disavow the messages I had received through him. He appeared to me as I had so often before seen Him, clearly, unmistakably, and I then learned from Him directly that the messages were not done by Him, and that they were done by Mr. Judge.

This meant, of course, that as early as September, **1893**, Mrs. Besant believed on "high spiritual authority" that Judge had tricked her with regard to messages from the Master. In explanation of her long silence concerning this "discovery," she claimed that the Master had told her to take no public action she could not "prove," and that the needed "evidence" would be provided when she reached Adyar. There, after her meeting with Olcott, Walter Old, and others, she said, she was ordered "to put an end to the deception practised." Mrs. Besant's account of the instruction which,

she claimed, was given her by the Master, concludes:

I was bidden to wash away the stains on the T. S. "Take up the heavy Karma of the Society. Your strength was given you for this." How could I, who believed in Him, disobey?

In this letter to the members of the T. S., Mrs. Besant claims two visitations from H.P.B.'s Master: the first, apparently, in America, about the time of the World's Fair Parliament of Religions, which she attended with Chakravarti; the second at Adyar, in either November or December. She also states that the first messages she received through Mr. Judge were those she referred to in her Hall of Science address, in

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August, **1891**, and that "no thought of challenging their authenticity" entered her head at that time. Thus, for more than two years, according to her own words, Mrs. Besant was allowed by this "Master" to be systematically deceived by Mr. Judge!

Apt at quoting Madame Blavatsky when it served her purpose, Mrs. Besant here seemed to forget entirely H.P.B.'s statement regarding precisely this kind of deception. In "Lodges of Magic," H.P.B. had written: "For all that the recipient of 'occult' letters can possibly know, and on the simple grounds of probability and common honesty, the unseen correspondent who would tolerate one *single fraudulent line in his name*, would wink at an unlimited repetition of the deception." Yet Mrs. Besant now asserted that for the crucial two years following H.P.B.'s death, H.P.B.'s Master had "tolerated" many such "fraudulent" lines in his name, penned by Mr. Judge, who had been H.P.B.'s closest associate!

Mrs. Besant, on her own behalf, cited a letter written by H.P.B. to Mr. Judge, on March **27, 1891**, quoting from it a statement about herself. H.P.B. had said: "She [Mrs. Besant] hears the Master's voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognises His Voice from that of What Mrs. Besant did *not* quote from the same letter to Judge by H.P.B. was the further statement, also about herself, that she was "not psychic or spiritual in the least—all intellect." If she was on intimate terms with the Master after H.P.B.'s death, how could she fail to have been warned almost at once of Judge's supposed "trickery"? The record shows, instead, that her suspicions against Judge dated from her meeting with Chakravarti, in the summer of **1893**; that it was *he*, as described by Dr. Archibald Keightley in the *Path* (June **1895**), who was responsible for Mrs. Besant's new-found intimacy with the "Master," and that, finally, the charges against Judge were outlined, and the first accusing letter of Olcott, dated Feb. , **1894**, to Judge, was written, in Allahabad—Chakravarti's home.

CHAPTER XVII THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA

THE CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN SECTION was held at Boston, April **28-29, 1895**, with the 89 active Lodges all represented by delegates in person or by proxy. In addition there were numerous visiting Fellows from all over the United States and some from abroad. Dr. J. D. Buck was elected permanent chairman. Dr. Archibald Keightley was present from London as the delegate of several English branches. A letter from a number of Fellows in Australia was read, also an official letter from G. R. S. Mead, General Secretary of the European Section. No word was received from the Indian Section nor from the President-Founder.

Mr. Judge's report as General Secretary contained the usual information on the work of the preceding year. It briefly rehearsed the charges against him, the meeting of the Judicial Committee in July, 1894, the *Westminster Gazette* articles, the subsequent proceedings at Adyar involving the resolutions demanding his "resignation" and an "explanation." On all this his report says:

I have replied, refusing to resign the Vice Presidency.* And to the newspaper attack I have made a provisional and partial reply, as much as such a lying and sensational paper deserved. . . . But I have an explanation, and I renew my declaration of innocence of the offenses charged. As I have said in London and since, the messages I delivered, privately, are genuine messages from the Master, procured through me as the channel, and that the basis of the attack on me is unbelief in my being a channel.

When all routine business of the Convention was concluded, Mr. C. A. Griscom, Jr., read a series of resolutions, with a preamble reciting the difficulties of continuing the work of the Movement under the then prevailing circumstances. The essential resolutions were:

First, that the American Section, consisting of Branches of the Theosophical Society in America, in convention assembled,

* He elsewhere explained that he regarded resignation as a confession of guilt.

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hereby assumes and declares its entire autonomy and that **it** shall be called from and after this date "The Theosophical Society in America."

Second, that the administration of its affairs shall be provided for, defined, and be under a Constitution and By-Laws, which shall in any case provide for the following;

- (a) A Federation of Branches.
- (b) That William Q. Judge shall be President for life. -

RESOLVED, that the Theosophical Society in America hereby recognizes the long and efficient services rendered to the Theosophical Movement by Col. H. S. Olcott and that to him belongs the unique and honorary title of President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, and that, as in the case of H.P.B. as Corresponding Secretary, he can have no successor in that office.

The First Session of the Convention then adjourned. The Second Session debated this resolution. A historical sketch of the Society, prepared by L. F. Wade and Robert Crosbie, was submitted, tracing the major events since 1879. Speeches were made by Mr. Fullerton, and by Dr. J. W. B. LaPierre, President of the Minneapolis Lodge—both strongly opposing the adoption of the resolutions. The speeches in opposition were listened to with close attention and entire respect for the speakers. Dr. LaPierre's speech included a written protest. In fact, the bulk of the time was occupied by the few speakers in opposition to the resolutions, and their remarks are given in full in the official Convention Report. At the conclusion the list of Branches and Councillors was called and a formal vote taken. The totals showed 191 votes in favor of the resolutions and 10 against.

Thus did the "American Section of the T.S." cease to exist, reorganizing as "The Theosophical Society in America."

After the close of this Second Session of April 28, Dr. Keightley read a detailed Reply by Mr. Judge to the charges of misusing the names and handwritings of the Mahatmas. This Reply was afterward printed in pamphlet form.

Two sessions were held on April 29 as the T. S. in A. A Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and officers and an Executive Committee elected. The following letter from the Executive

Committee of the newly organized Theosophical Society in America, signed by Mr. Judge as its President, was sent to the Convention of the European Section:

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From the Theosophical Society in America to the European Theosophists, in Convention assembled as, "The European Section of the Theosophical Society."

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:—We send you our fraternal greeting, and fullest sympathy in all works sincerely sought to be performed for the good of Humanity. Separated though we are from you by very great distance we are none the less certain that you and we, as well as all other congregations of people who love Brotherhood, are parts of that great whole denominated The Theosophical Movement, which began far back in the night of Time and has since been moving through many and various peoples, places and environments. That grand work does not depend upon forms, ceremonies, particular persons or set organizations,—“Its unity throughout the world does not consist in the existence and action of any single organization, but depends upon the similarity of work and aspiration of those in the world who are working for it.” Hence organizations of theosophists must vary and change in accordance with place, time, exigency and people. To hold that in and by a sole organization for the whole world is the only way to work would be boyish in conception and not in accord with experience or nature’s laws. Recognizing the foregoing, we, who were once the body called The American Section of the T. S., resolved to make our organization, or merely outer form for government and administration, entirely free and independent of all others; but retained our theosophical ideals, aspirations, aims and objects, continuing to be a part of the theosophical movement. This change was an inevitable one, and perhaps will ere long be made also by you as well as by others. It has been and will be forced, as it were, by nature itself under the sway of the irresistible law of human development and progress. But while the change would have been made before many years by us as an inevitable and logical development, we have to admit that it was hastened by reason of what we considered to be strife, bitterness and anger existing in other Sections of the theosophical world which were preventing us from doing our best work in the field assigned to us by Karma. In order to more quickly free ourselves from these obstructions we made the change in this, instead of in some later, year. It is, then, a mere matter of government and has nothing to do with theosophical propaganda or ethics, except that it will enable us to do more and better work. Therefore we come to you as fellow-students and workers in the field of theosophical effort, and holding out the hand of fellowship we again declare the complete unity of all theosophical workers in every part of the world. This you surely cannot and will not reject from heated, rashly-conceived counsels, or from personalities indulged in by anyone, or from any cause

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whatever. To reject the proffer would mean that you reject and nullify the principle of Universal Brotherhood upon which alone all true theosophical work is based. And we could not indulge in those reflections nor put forward that reason but for the knowledge that certain persons of weight and prominence in your ranks have given utterance hastily to expressions of pleasure that our change of government above referred to has creed them from nearly every one of the thousands of earnest, studious and enthusiastic workers in our American group of Theosophical Societies. This

injudicious and untheosophical attitude we cannot attribute to the whole or to any majority of your workers.

Let us then press forward together in the great work of the real Theosophical Movement which is aided by working organizations, but is above them all. Together we can devise more and better ways for spreading the light of truth through all the earth. Mutually assisting and encouraging one another we may learn how to put Theosophy into practice so as to be able to teach and enforce it by example before others. We will then each and all be members of that Universal Lodge of Free and Independent Theosophists which embraces every friend of the human race. And to all this we beg your corporate official answer for our more definite and certain information, and to the end that this and your favorable reply may remain as evidence and monuments between us.

Fraternally yours,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

President

The reception accorded this letter by the European Convention showed that the rift in the Society was to be permanent. Col. Olcott was already in London, having attended a General Council meeting on June 27, so that he was able to preside at the Convention sessions, which began on July 4. Olcott informed the delegates of Mr. Judge's letter, but declined to present it on the ground that its "discourteous form of address" constituted an "insult" to the Society. Precisely why he regarded this as "insulting" is not disclosed in the report of the Convention. Sympathizers of Mr. Judge contested his ruling, and at the suggestion of Mrs. Besant the letter was read and "laid on the table," without further comment. After this procedure the delegates of the eight European Lodges supporting Mr. Judge left the convention floor, and, as the report states, the "business thereafter went smoothly on." Mr. Sinnett's appointment to the Vice Presidency, replacing Mr. Judge, was approved. At the General Council Meeting a few days

before, Col. Olcott had made this appointment of Mr. Sinnett, and had also designated Alexander Fullerton, one of the few American Theosophists who now opposed Judge, to assist in the formation of a new American Section. On July 5 Olcott officially recognized the re-formed "loyal" American Section, with Fullerton as General Secretary. Olcott declared that the former American Section had seceded from the Theosophical Society, thereby abrogating its charter, and asserted that the Theosophical Society in America, formed at Boston, was "an adventitious body, the growth of circumstances, and having no real corporate authority over its Sections and Branches." Thereafter Col. Olcott, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Sinnett, and all those under their influence, continually spoke and wrote of the "secession" of the American Section, and of their former associates as "seceders." Mr. Judge was referred to as a once devoted Theosophist who had "gone wrong," and as a "forger." Those who had confidence in him were "deluded." The first half of 1895 was a time when all hitherto concealed issues of the Judge case became public. Most important of these was the matter of the "Prayag Letter," published by Mr. Judge in the *Path* for March. This letter was presented by Mr. Judge as a communication sent in 1881 by a Mahatma, *through Madame Blavatsky*, to A. P. Sinnett, who was to convey it to the Indian members of the Prayag Branch of the Theosophical Society. Olcott, Sinnett, and Mrs. Besant, however, were of the opinion that the Prayag Letter was a fraud, thereby imputing the good faith of H.P.B., the teacher of all three. By publishing the letter in the *Path*, Mr. Judge forced this issue out into the open.

The "Prayag Psychic T. S.," of Allahabad, was among the first branches formed after H.P.B.

and Olcott arrived in India in **1879**. Gyanendra N. Chakravarti was an early member and both Sinnett and Hume were prominent in its affairs. Its membership consisted largely of high caste Brahmins and it was one of the most influential of the Indian branches for years. It was among the few—if not the only one—of the Society’s branches which did not formally adopt the “First Object” of the Parent body. Its avowed object was “psychical research.” During the early days in India, complaints were made by the Brahmin members of the Prayag T. S. that while

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“low caste” persons, and “*mlechchhas*” (foreigners) such as Sinnett and Hume, and other “beef-eating, wine-drinking Englishmen” received messages from the Theosophical Adepts, *they—the flower of India’s scholarship and learning—had been neglected*. The reply to this complaint, written down by H.P.B., as she said, at her Master’s dictation, was copied into H.P.B.’s letter to Sinnett and was finally read to the Prayag Brahmins. The message was blunt and to the point:

Message which Mr. Sinnett is directed by one of the Brothers, writing through Madame Blavatsky], to convey to the native members of the Prayag Branch of the Theosophical Society.

The Brothers desire me to inform one and all of you *natives* that unless a man is prepared to become a thorough Theosophist, *i.e.*, to do what Damodar Mavalankar did—give up entirely caste, his old superstitions, and show himself a true reformer (especially in the case of child-marriage), he will remain simply a member of the Society, with no hope whatever of ever hearing from us. The Society, acting in this directly in accord with our orders, *forces no one to become a Theosophist of the Second Section*. It is left with himself at his choice. It is useless for a member to argue “I am one of a pure life, I am a teetotaller and an abstainer from meat and vice, all my aspirations are for good, etc.,” and he at the same time building by his acts and deeds an impassable barrier on the road between himself and us. What have we, the disciples of the Arhats of Esoteric Buddhism and of Sang-gyas, to do with the *Shasters* and orthodox Brahmanism? There are 100 of thousands of Fakirs, Sannyasis, or Sadhus leading the most pure lives and yet being, as they are, on the path of *error*, never having had an opportunity to meet, see, or even hear of us. Their forefathers have driven the followers of the only true philosophy upon earth away from India, and now **it** is not for the latter to come to them, but for them to come to us, if they want us. Which of them is ready to become a Buddhist, a *Nastika*, as they call us? None. Those who have believed and followed us have had their reward. Mr. Sinnett and Hume are exceptions. Their beliefs are no barriers to us, for they have none. They may have bad influences around them, bad magnetic emanations, the result of drink, society, and promiscuous physical associations (resulting even from shaking hands with impure men), but all this is physical and material impediments which with a little effort we could counteract, and even clear away, without much detriment to ourselves. Not so with the magnetic and invisible results proceeding from erroneous and sincere beliefs. Faith in the gods or god and other superstitions attracts millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful Agents round them, with which we would have to

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use more than ordinary exercise of power to drive them away. We do not choose to do so. We do not find it either necessary or profitable to lose our time waging war on the unprogressed *planetaries* who delight in personating gods and sometimes well-known characters who have lived on earth. There are Dhyān Chohans and Chohans of darkness. Not what they

term *devils*, but imperfect intelligences who have never been born on this or any other earth or sphere no more than the Dhyan Chohans have, and who will never belong to the “Children of the Universe,” the pure planetary intelligences who preside at every Manvantara, while the Dark Chohans preside at the Pralaya.

To the text of the Prayag Letter, Mr. Judge added the following comment in the *Path*: Now this is a genuine message from the Master, allowing, of course, for any minor errors in copying. Its philosophical and occult references are furthermore confirmed by the manuscript of part of the third volume of the *Secret Doctrine*, not yet printed. We know also that Master K.H. informed Mr. Sinnett and others that he was an *esoteric Buddhist*; H.P.B. declared herself a Buddhist; on my asking her in 1875 what could the Masters’ belief be called she told me they might be designated “pre-Vedic Budhists”; but that no one would now admit there was any Buddhism before the Vedas, so I had best think of them as Esoteric Buddhists.

But I am informed that Mrs. Besant has several times privately stated that in her opinion the letter first above printed was a “forgery or humbug” gotten up by H.P.B. I know that Mr. Chakravarti has said the same thing, because he said it to me in New York. It is for Mrs. Besant to deny the correctness of my information as to what she said: she can affirm her belief in the genuineness of the letter. If she does so, we shall all be glad to know. If she merely denies that she ever impugned it, then it will be necessary for her to say affirmatively what is her belief, for silence will be assent to its genuineness. I affirm that it is from one of the Masters, and that, if it be shown to be a fraud, then all of H.P.B.’s claims of connection with and teaching from the Master must fall to the ground. It is now time that this important point be cleared up.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Mr. Judge sent advance proofs of his article, including the Prayag Letter, to *Lucifer* and the *Theosophist*. Mrs. Besant replied: “I do not regard the letter as genuine, *but I have never attributed it to H.P.B.*” * She printed this statement in

* The letter of H.P.B. to Sinnett, containing the Prayag Letter,” appears in full in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, first published in 1923 (see Appendix, . 461). In it H.P.B. states that she took down the message at — her Master’s dictation. Another of her letters, dated Nov. 25, 1881, discusses the stir created among the Allahabad Brahmins by the Prayag communication and corrects misconceptions about it. In this second letter, printed in the *Theosophist* for January, 1909 (xxx, 368), H.P.B. says that the Prayag message was “a few words to be read by at the meeting, if I remember right She ends her comment on the resentful Prayag Brahmins by saying: “it is only bigots or *atheists* who could object to what was said by the Mahatma.”

Lucifer for July, 1895, together with some correspondence by Mr. Judge, the latter being intended to show that he had previously failed to urge that the letter was “genuine.” The burden of this correspondence, written to India, was that the content of the Prayag Letter was entirely consistent with the teachings of the Theosophical Adepts. Olcott, in the *Theosophist*, asserted:

The [Prayag] message is one of the most transparently unconvincing in the history of Mahatmic literature. It bears on its face the seal of its condemnation. It is an ill-tempered attack. . . . the undersigned . . . pronounces the message a false one, and if this is likely to shatter H.P.B.’s oft-declared infallibility, as the transmitter of only genuine messages from the Masters, so let it be: the sooner the monstrous pretense is upset the better for her memory and for a noble cause. . . . it does not follow that H.P.B. consciously falsified; the simple theory of mediumship has explained

many equally deceptive and even more exasperating messages from the invisible world. . . Mr. Sinnett maintained a public silence until 1896, when, a month after Mr. Judge's death, the April issue of *Theosophy* (Mr. Judge changed the name of the *Path* to *Theosophy*, beginning with the eleventh volume) printed W.Q.J.'s last article, "H.P.B. Was Not Deserted by Masters," in which he charged Mr. Sinnett with claiming that "before the writing of the *Secret Doctrine*, . . . she (H.P.B.) was deserted by the Masters and was the prey of elementals and . . . was a fraud in other directions." After this article by Mr. Judge appeared, Mr. Sinnett sent a categorical denial to *Theosophy*, which was printed in July. "I never," he wrote, "said anything of the kind, and I never in my life called Mme. Blavatsky a 'fraud'." This statement was published by the editor of *Theosophy* with a note stating that to the editor's personal knowledge, "Mr. Judge's authority for his original position was Mme. H. P. Blavatsky herself."

The reply of Mr. Sinnett to Mr. Judge's article was a *public* denial of the charge. Privately, in **1895**, shortly after publication in the *Path* of the Prayag Letter, he wrote to Alexander Fullerton a full account of his "suspicions" of H.P.B. This letter, which was obtained by the Boston *Herald* and printed on April **27, 1895**, was as follows:

I have known for a great many years that many letters in the Mahatmas' handwriting, coming through Madame Blavatsky herself were anything but what they seemed.

The trouble in this respect began about the year **1887**, when Madame Blavatsky was in this country [England] and desirous of carrying out many arrangements with the society in London of which I personally disapproved. To my surprise I received through her letters in the familiar handwriting of the Mahatma K.H. which endorsed her views and desired my compliance. These gave me great distress at the time, though I did not at first suspect the *bona fides* of their origin.

The flavour of their style was unlike that to which I had been used during the long course of my previous correspondence with the Mahatma, and gradually my mind was forced to the conviction that they could not be really authentic. A year or so later, when the Coulomb scandal had for the moment almost overwhelmed Madame Blavatsky's influence here, I visited her in her retirement at Wurzburg, and in the intimate conversation that ensued she frankly avowed to me that the letters to which I have above referred had not proceeded from the Mahatma at all.

She had in fact procured their production in order to subserve what she conceived to be the right policy of the society at the time—falling into the fatal error of doing evil that good might come. There is no room for supposing that I am mistaken in my recollections of what passed. These are clear and definite, and were the subject of much conversation between myself and theosophical friends at the time.

Moreover, at a somewhat later date, when Madame Blavatsky was staying at Ostende, I again referred to the matter, and said that I considered myself to have been hardly used, in so far as my deepest sentiments of loyalty to the Mahatma had been practiced upon for purposes with which he had nothing to do. Madame Blavatsky, I remember, replied: "Well, you were not much hurt, because, after all, you never believed the letters were genuine."

With publication of these views, it was evident that of the four theosophists prominent before the world after H.P.B.'s death—H. S. Olcott, A. P. Sinnett, William Q. Judge, and

Annie Besant—only one, Judge, was faithful to her and to her ideals. Both Olcott and Mrs. Besant repudiated a letter which H.P.B. had herself transmitted to Sinnett as from her Master. Sinnett charged her with forgery and fraud before she died. Only Judge continued H.P.B.'s work in the spirit with which it had been begun and maintained by her. The other three, for reasons of vanity or ambition, and because of other personal factors difficult to define, all minimized H.P.B.'s historic part in the Theosophical Movement and rose to pedestals of their own in the Theosophical world.

If the attack on Judge needs further explanation, that explanation must be that Judge's continued championship of H.P.B. was offensive to his opponents in two ways. First, his loyalty to the one who had been their common instructor was a direct reproach to them for no longer holding her in respect. If they had moments of uneasy conscience at the way in which they were displacing H.P.B. as the teacher, and subverting her position as the Agent of the Adepts, Judge's stand could only prolong the inner pain of those moments and reinforce what self-criticisms they secretly felt. Judge's support of H.P.B. was also unpleasant to Olcott, Sinnett and Mrs. Besant for the reason that so long as H.P.B. remained pre-eminently the Teacher, they could themselves enjoy but a reflected glory. Olcott's Presidency was his claim to fame; but it is obvious from *Old Diary Leaves* and other of Olcott's pronouncements that he felt overshadowed by any recollection of H.P.B.'s occult status and struggled against it for many years. Both Sinnett and Mrs. Besant, on the other hand, made claims to an "occult status" of their own, and the support of these claims involved them in depreciations of H.P.B. The source of Mrs. Besant's "occult" inspiration has been shown to be the Brahmin, Chakravarti, who, playing Svengali to Mrs. Besant's Trilby, saw in Judge a rival that must be downed. The measures taken in this direction constitute Mrs. Besant's "Case against W. Q. Judge."

Sinnett's self-revelations in his book, *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*, show the nature of his special attainments in "occultism," both before and after the death of H.P.B. Briefly, he became a kind of Theosophical Spiritualist, obtaining "messages" which he supposed to be from the adept

with whom he had previously corresponded in India, but now through C. W. Leadbeater—his "medium."

Charles W. Leadbeater was originally a curate in a rural parish of the Church of England. He had been interested in Spiritualism for many years when he read Mr. Sinnett's two earliest books. Thereafter he held *seances* with Mr. W. Eglinton, a famous medium of the time who had been at Adyar while H.P.B. was there. Eglinton, like Mr. W. Stainton Moses (M. A. Oxon), had been helped by H.P.B. and had received various evidences through her of the existence of Masters, and joined the London Lodge in 1884. In a *séance* with Mr. Eglinton early in 1884, Mr. Leadbeater endeavored, through the latter's "control," "Ernest," to get in "communication with the Masters." This is referred to in Letter VII of *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, a Letter received by Leadbeater through H.P.B. many months later, after he had avowed his desire to return with her to India.

Accordingly, Mr. Leadbeater went to India with H.P.B. late in 1884 and was at Adyar during the time of Mr. Hodgson's investigations there. From Adyar Mr. Leadbeater was sent to Ceylon

by Col. Olcott and while there he began to manifest a tendency to become infatuated with young boys. C. Jinarajadasa, now president of the Theosophical Society, was one who attracted Leadbeater's special interest. Mr. Leadbeater returned to England in **1889**, taking the boy, C. Jinarajadasa, with him. In London, he grew to know well Mr. Sinnett, for whose son he served as tutor, along with Jinarajadasa and George Arundale. He also became the "psychic" through whom Mr. Sinnett kept up his supposed communications with the "Masters of H.P.B." Mr. Leadbeater was never at any time a member of the E.S., nor in any way connected with H.P.B., after his return to England. Mr. Sinnett made him Secretary of the London Lodge when he reached England in **1889**. The course and practices, public and private, of the London Lodge were wholly at variance with the occult discipline taught by H.P.B.—were, in fact, identical with mediumship, psychical research, and Hatha Yoga. No public rupture occurred during the life of H.P.B., but the relations between the London Lodge and

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those of the Blavatsky Lodge were of the slightest, and purely formal.

The first breach in the accord between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge was due, not only to the influence of Chakravarti but, as well, to that of Mr. Sinnett. While a member of the E.S. and one of its Co-Heads, Mrs. Besant joined the London Lodge and took part in the experiments of Messrs. Sinnett, Leadbeater, and the rest of their *coterie*, thus violating her pledges and pursuing two absolutely antithetical systems of "occult development." When Chakravarti came to London, the ground for Mrs. Besant's subornation had, therefore, already been well prepared. It is one of the ironies of the situation that ultimately, in **1907**, Mr. Sinnett rejected the "Adyar manifestations" * for which Mrs. Besant stood sponsor, and was forced to join in the "white-wash" of Mr. Leadbeater, whose practices with boys were exposed in the fall of 1906—and that Mrs. Besant was forced by the exigencies of her own situation to turn against Messrs. Sinnett, Chakravarti, and Leadbeater in order to defend herself against the taint of the latter, to allay the doubts thrown on the "Adyar manifestations," and to secure the coveted position of President of the society after the death of Col. Olcott. -----

Later on, her further necessities caused Mrs. Besant to adjust the breach with Mr. Sinnett by making him Vice-President, and with Mr. Leadbeater by procuring his return to the Society, from which he had resigned during the investigation in 1906. Forced to choose between two competing augurs, she chose Mr. Leadbeater, rather than Chakravarti, whose usefulness to her was outlived, and from that time on Mr. Leadbeater was the "power behind the throne" of Mrs. Besant's exoteric and esoteric sovereignty. Returning to the antipathy against Mr. Judge, it should be observed that there was a third factor which worked to antagonize Olcott and Mrs. Besant, and probably Sinnett as

* The "Adyar Manifestations" were the alleged "clairvoyant visions" in **1907** of Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Marie Russak (Mrs. Hotchener) and Miss Renda, asserting, in effect, that Mrs. Besant had been appointed by the "Masters" to succeed Olcott in the Presidency (Olcott died early in **1907**). These claims raised a furor in the Society, being opposed by Sinnett, G. R. S. Mead, and even Alexander Fullerton, but the issue was settled by vote overwhelmingly in Mrs. Besant's favor.

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well. This was Mr. Judge's calm assurance, when forced to a public declaration, in stating that he

was in communication with the Masters and that he was in fact Their Agent. Obviously, when such a statement is made, the one who makes it is either a conscienceless liar, or he is what he claims to be. There is no middle ground except insanity. Having forced Mr. Judge to this open declaration by their charges against him, his enemies had either to admit the claim or condemn him utterly. They chose the latter course. After the Boston Convention in **1895**, the affairs of the T. S. in A. were distinguished by the absence of maledictions against the other Societies with which it had been linked. Actually, throughout the storm which lasted from the beginning of **1894** to the middle of 1895, the work of the Theosophical Movement proceeded as usual in the United States, with branches being added and Theosophical speakers carrying the message of the teachings to all parts of the country. Mr. Judge himself, despite the enormous drain on his energies occasioned by the attack, continued to write many articles for the *Path*, showing his extraordinary grasp of the philosophy and his serene spirit in the face of betrayal by his former colleagues. It was during this general period, or a little earlier, that *The Ocean of Theosophy* was written—a book used as a textbook by many study classes and found especially valuable as an epitome of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The record of his service to the Movement, before, during, and after the “Judge Case,” was sufficient refutation of the charges against him, if “refutation” were needed. The American theosophists were well aware of this, which accounts for the almost unanimous support he received at the Boston Convention. An appreciation of Mr. Judge, written shortly after his death by one of his closest friends and co-workers, J. D. Buck, helps to throw light on the attitude of the American theosophists. Dr. Buck wrote:

People on the other side of the ocean never understood Mr. Judge’s position in America, where he was well known in connection with his work, nor how impossible it would be to shake confidence in him. It is true the issues raised were seemingly altogether personal, and it took some time to make clear to the whole Society their real nature. When, however, these issues

became clear and people had time to consider them, the verdict was overwhelming, and those who were present at Boston last April [1895] will never forget the scene there enacted [when the T. S. in A. was formed]. It has been my lot to preside over many conventions, both medical and Theosophical, but I never witnessed such a scene before and never expect to again. There was no noisy demonstration, but the very air throbbed with sympathy and appreciation.

He was never narrow, never selfish, never conceited. He would drop his own plan in a moment if a better were suggested, and was delighted if some one would carry on the work he had devised, and immediately inaugurate other lines of work. To get on with the work and forward the movement seemed to be his only aim in life. . . . For myself, knowing Mr. Judge as I did, and associating with him day after day—at home, in the rush of work, in long days of travel over desert-wastes or over the trackless ocean, having travelled with him a distance equal to twice around the globe—there is not the slightest doubt of his connection with and service of the Great Lodge.

In this chapter of the Theosophical Movement has been witnessed the high peak of personal devotion and loyalty to Mr. Judge. But this was not enough. The failure to work out, as Mr. Judge himself did, the problems of the Society on the well-established principles of the philosophy could only lead to divergent courses rather than to concerted and calm action, when his impersonal faithfulness to the Movement and to his colleagues was no longer present to guide.

CHAPTER XVIII THE DEATH OF WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

NEVER, SINCE HIS TRIP to South America, a strong man, Mr. Judge began to fail in the autumn of 1893, when the attacks upon his character became virulent. By the Boston Convention of April, 1895, his condition was such that he could take little active part in the proceedings. Later in the year he had grown so weak that at the insistence of friends and physicians he went south in a vain endeavor to recuperate. This measure proving fruitless, and it becoming increasingly evident that his life could not be prolonged, he returned north by easy stages, spending a fortnight in Cincinnati with Dr. J. D. Buck and other theosophists. He reached New York in February and from then on rapidly declined. Mr. Judge died on Saturday, March 21, 1896. His last words, according to F. T. Hargrove, who was present, were: "There should be calmness. Hold fast. Go slow."

We come now to an interlude of extreme confusion in the history of the Theosophical Movement. As in previous crises in the life of the Society, the external events following upon the death of Mr. Judge but reflected perturbations which had their origin in secret vacillations and even betrayals. All this was bound to dissipate the high achievements of the Movement in the United States. First evidence of what was to occur came in the form of an E.S. notice, issued Friday, March 27, announcing a "General Meeting of the E.S.T." at the Headquarters, 144 Madison Avenue, New York, to be held on Sunday, March 29. All near-by members who could, attended this meeting and were passive participants in what took place. The principal event of the meeting was the reading, by E. T. Hargrove, of a prepared one-page announcement signed by eight of Mr. Judge's closest associates—individuals who were active in the work of the Aryan Lodge in New York, in the American Society as a whole, in the conduct of *Path* Magazine, and in the crucially important work of the

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E.S. The announcement told of the concern of the signers for the future of the E.S. and reported that an examination of Mr. Judge's "private papers" showed—that the future of the School was not left to chance, nor to our mere judgment. They [the papers] contain astonishing revelations concerning our late Outer Head and definitely prove that he was far greater than superficially appeared. "We think it right to inform you at once of this fact, and that his position in the Lodge was higher and his connection with Masters far more intimate and constant than was generally supposed by most members of the School. His papers further show that he did not stand alone in the work, but that, unseen and unknown to all but the very few, he had assistance right at hand, and that he left this assistance behind him, not withdrawn by his death. In regard to this matter we must ask you for the present to remember that even as he trusted us, so you must trust us. But we shall issue a further communication as soon as possible, proving from his own papers the correctness of all that is written above.

The signers were E. T. Hargrove, James M. Pryse, Joseph H. Fussell, H. T. Patterson, Claude Falls Wright, Genevieve Ludlow Griscom, C. A. Griscom, Jr., and E. August Neresheimer. What "documents" could add to the stature of William Q. Judge is difficult to imagine, but the purpose of this announcement needs little interpretation: it was to establish the "authority" of those who

signed it as competent to indicate Mr. Judge's occult "successor." The foregoing statement was mailed to all members of the E.S., in the United States and elsewhere. This was followed, within a week, by a nineteen-page pamphlet dated April 3, 1896, containing a communication signed by the same eight individuals and what is described as a "verbatim report" of the meeting on March 29. This pamphlet declared that Mr. Judge had left "directions" for the future management of the E.S., including the designation of a new "Outer Head." However, the announcement says. "the name and identity of W. Q. Judge's occult heir and successor is to remain unknown to the members for one year." Other matters provided for in the alleged "directions" from Mr. Judge included the formation of a Council and an Advisory Council. It reiterated that the new "Outer Head" was "practically unknown in the Theosophical Society, having

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been confided by Mr. Judge to but very few chosen and trusted friends."

With this development, the Theosophical Movement entered a phase which threatened to defeat the careful plans laid by H. P. Blavatsky and to obliterate the example set by William Q. Judge. "Let the Society," one of the Theosophical Adepts had said, "flourish on its moral worth alone." But this was precisely what those who were left after the passing of Mr. Judge feared to do. They did not hold fast. They did not go slow. Hardly a week had gone by, after his death, when his closest associates in the work combined to impose a "successor" upon the membership of the Theosophical Society. The position occupied by Judge in the Movement had been due to what he was and what he did. If Judge enjoyed a special place in the minds of many students, it was not because of any assertions made about him, whether by himself or his supporters, but because of his immeasurable services to the Theosophic cause. What might be said about him, concerning possible occult relationships with H.P.B. and the Masters, was *in explanation* of his manifest greatness, and consistent with it, rather than the basis for acknowledging him as a "Theosophical Authority" or a "Spiritual Leader." These relationships were now reversed in the representations made in behalf of Mr. Judge's supposed "successors." Here was a person "practically unknown to the Theosophical Society" who was now to be accepted as having high occult "status" simply because a small group of theosophists said so. Not "moral worth," but "claims," were now to be recognized as settling all questions of Theosophical leadership. It was indeed an insult to the memory of Judge that, so soon after his death, a procedure of "successorship" was established which violated everything he had stood for in life. Inevitably, and in less than two years, the Society was thrown into confusion and another split occurred.

The E.S.T. meeting held in New York on March 29 was presided over by E. T. Hargrove. Mr. Hargrove read to those present some extracts which he declared to be from Mr. Judge's diary, offering "proof" of the latter's "constant intercourse with Masters." He read further from a "message" alleged to be from **H.P.B.** to Mr. Judge (dated January 3,

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1895), in which "Promise," the "chela" now offered as Mr. Judge's successor, was referred to. There are several such messages in the report of the March 29 meeting, none of them suggesting the strength and moral depth that is characteristic of H.P.B.'s writings. "Whatever the origin of these messages, the use made of them by Mr. Hargrove and his associates can hardly be justified. After reading these "messages," Hargrove concluded by saying:

Trust is our only salvation, but reason alone should show us that he [judge] *could not* have left that body if he had not had an occult heir and successor to take his place, for that is the law in the Lodge. This occult heir is the link between ourselves and him, and so on from the Rajah [an "occult" designation of Judge] to H.P.B., to Masters and to the great Lodge. There must be that link; his papers showed us where to find it; we have found it, have tested it and verified it beyond all question, individually and unitedly.

Other members of the Council, on the platform with Mr. Hargrove, now confirmed what he had said. James M. Pryse offered a written statement endorsing Hargrove's revelations. J. H. Fussell said: "I know of my own knowledge that what our Brother Ernest T. Hargrove has stated is true; that our Chief. . . has not left us by the death of his worn-out body..... he is still working along the same lines that he has worked hitherto; and will continue to so work and to lead us." H. T. Patterson gave similar testimony, and Claude Falls Wright declared that he had been sent by Judge to see "Promise," and that "this chela went into a trance and told me much of the future." Mr. Wright spoke of the continuing "direct protection of the Masters and the Lodge" and added: "We on this platform have in the last few days had marvelous proofs of this." Mr. and Mrs. Griscom added their support to Hargrove's assertions, and finally, Mr. F. A. Neresheimer read "a communication from the Masters" which he said he had received through "Promise" in March, **1895**. The last sentence of this message, "*Under no circumstances must Mr. Judge know of this,*" does not speak very well for its authenticity. Mr. Neresheimer also informed the gathering that the Council would receive further instructions, "whatever there may be, from the Outer Head, with whom, as I previously stated, **I am acquainted, and so are the others.**"

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As the eight persons who joined in asserting that a "successor" had been made known to them, both by written instruction from Mr. Judge and through "occult" enlightenment and "messages," were all well-known theosophists, it was natural that their word was accepted by nearly everyone in the Society. Actually, it was a matter of either wholly rejecting or wholly accepting what Mr. Hargrove and his supporters said; and to reject what they said would amount to declaring the entire movement in America a sham and a failure. Moreover, the death of Mr. Judge had doubtless stirred the feelings of members everywhere to particular anxiety and uncertain wonderings about the future, so that the declarations of the pamphlet of April 3 could easily be taken as representing a new security for the work.

The second annual Convention of the T. S. in A. was held at the end of April, 1896. By this time, although Mr. Judge's "occult heir and successor" was to have remained unknown for the period of a year, it was an open secret that it was Mrs. Katherine Tingley, a person who, some two weeks later, Hargrove was to claim had undergone "a training and preparation even more rigid and comprehensive than that experienced by either H.P.B. or WQJ." This latter statement appeared in a seven-page circular issued by Hargrove on May **17** to the E.S.T. membership, in which, under the title, "An Occultist's Life," he set forth what purported to be an account of significant events in the life of the new "Outer Head." Mrs. Tingley, still called "Promise" in this circular, was described as under the direction of "the Master," and Hargrove alleges that Mr. Judge had recognized her "true occult position" several years before his death and approved of her activities as a "psychometer." The day after the appearance of this circular, the New York *Tribune* printed an article of more than two full columns, disclosing Mrs. Tingley's identity as the "Successor," and containing a long authorized "interview" with her. This public announcement was amplified

to the E.S.T. membership by another confidential circular issued on May **21**, in which “Promise” was identified as Mrs. Tingley. Hargrove, whom the Convention had elected president of the T. S. in A., took charge of the editing of the *Path*, which

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was now called *Theosophy*, and appointed J. H. Fussell as his private secretary. Claude Falls Wright was “called to more important work” as the private secretary of Mr. Judge’s “successor.” During the Convention, Mr. Wright had addressed the members concerning the plan of “the Masters” to found “a School for the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity,” and Mrs. Tingley spoke glowingly on the same subject. The members responded with enthusiasm and a large sum of money was raised to support this project. Shortly after the Convention, another appeal was made to the E.S.T. membership to obtain funds for a Theosophical “Crusade” around the world that “had been directed by the Masters.” Thousands of dollars were contributed, and after large meetings in New York and Boston, Mrs. Tingley set out for Europe with her entourage, which included Hargrove and Wright. Mrs. Alice L. Cleather joined the party in Europe. From the departure in June, **1896**, until the return to San Francisco in February, **1897**, Mr. Hargrove kept *Theosophy* supplied with ecstatic monthly reports of the progress of the “Crusade.” As these and other accounts make clear, the “Crusade” was marked by numerous signs and wonders. On June **15**, in mid-ocean, the Council revealed, the Crusaders were favored with a “message” from H.P.B. Another highlight of the trip was Mrs. Tingley’s claim of a meeting with “H. P. Blavatsky’s Teacher, on the mountainside near Darjiling.” This personage, Mrs. Tingley relates, when she met him, was whittling a plug of wood with which to improve the yoke of a brace of oxen that a chela was plowing with in a field not far away. On the return to America, the cornerstone of the “School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity” was laid by Mrs. Tingley and her aides at Point Loma, near San Diego, California—which site had been disclosed to Mrs. Tingley while abroad, through a slightly “occult” coincidence. During the summer of **1897**, the laudation of Mrs. Tingley as “successor” to Mr. Judge and as “Leader of the Theosophical Movement throughout the world” reached such a pitch of enthusiasm that all lesser lights were eclipsed or shone as mere satellites.

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As the year wore on, however, signs of discontent began to manifest. F. T. Hargrove resigned from the Presidency and retired from his editorial duties on *Theosophy*. August Neresheimer and Mrs. Archibald Keightley (previously Mrs. Julia Campbell VerPlanck, who, as “Jasper Niemand,” had written for the *Path* during Judge’s lifetime), to whose joint care Mr. Judge had willed the *Path*, fell out over matters of editorial policy, Mrs. Keightley supporting Hargrove, and Mr. Neresheimer siding with Mrs. Tingley. In an E.S.T. circular dated September 3, **1897**, Mrs. Tingley let it be known that she had “suggested” Mr. Hargrove for the Presidency because, as she explained, “I knew at that crisis he was the only available man to fill the place.” A few months later, Mr. Hargrove was to make a similar admission of a much graver nature, at the time of the **1898** Convention.

The atmosphere of rivalry between Mr. Hargrove and Mrs. Tingley was now so tense as to affect the entire E.S.T. and the membership of the T. S. in A. The date for the Convention was moved up to February, instead of April, its customary time in all previous years. A new organization, to be called the “Universal Brotherhood,” was planned out for presentation at the Convention. The T. S.

in A. was to be merged with the “Universal Brotherhood.” Other plans were being laid by Mr. Hargrove and his followers. A circular sought signatures to support Hargrove as President of the Society, naming Mr. Neresheimer as Treasurer and reviving H.P.B.’s old office, that of Corresponding Secretary, for Mrs. Tingley. Neresheimer promptly repudiated this ticket. Hargrove countered with a circular declaring that “serious and obvious defects exist in the management of the society,” and, without naming Mrs. Tingley, argued against her overwhelming authority. Mrs. Tingley, in turn, issued an E.S.T. circular warning against “absolute disloyalty” and plans that would be “detrimental to the interests of the Theosophical Society.”

The **1898** Convention met in Chicago on February 18. The delegates were given printed copies of the program for creating the “Universal Brotherhood.” Almost unanimously, they adopted the plan for the new organization, under which the T. S. in A. became a department of the “Universal Brotherhood.” Mrs. Tingley became Leader and “Official Head” of

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both organizations with the right to veto even amendments to the constitution which provided her with every conceivable power. Under the new constitution she could appoint or remove any Officers of the “Universal Brotherhood” and enjoyed supreme control over all branches and lodges governed by the new organization.

Hargrove and his followers now withdrew from the Convention and repaired to another hall to hold a convention of their own. They passed resolutions calling the Chicago Convention illegal, re-affirmed the **1895** Constitution of the T. S. in A., and elected A. H. Spencer as Acting President. So far as numbers were concerned, Mr. Hargrove captained a forlorn hope. More than 95 per cent of the membership ratified the action of the Chicago Convention, only **200** out of a total of some 6,000 members joining with Hargrove and his associates. But Mr. Hargrove had not done with his protests against the course of events within the Society under the leadership of Mrs. Tingley. On **March 19, 1898**, he published a documentary record of a meeting he had called and presided over in Chicago on February **19**, at which time he read copies of a series of letters addressed by him to Mrs. Tingley. The burden of this correspondence is to the effect that he, Hargrove, had made Mrs. Tingley the Outer Head, and that now he realized he had made a serious mistake. He thereupon removed her from that office, saying that he did so “by Master’s order.” He added that “The Outer Head to follow you has already been appointed by the Master.” Specifically, regarding Mrs. Tingley’s elevation to the status of Judge’s “successor,” Hargrove wrote on **January 30, 1898**:

Now, my dear friend, you have made an awful mess of it—that is the simple truth. *You were run in as* Outer [Head] as the only person in sight who was ready to hand at the time. We were all of us heartily glad to welcome you, for you solved the problem which confronted us—who was to be O.H.; you were a sort of neutral centre around which we could congregate. And most of us fairly yelled with delight, for you solved our difficulty and we had ample proofs that some members of the Lodge were working through you and that you had high and rare mediumistic and psychic gifts and that you were a disciple of the Lodge. So things went swimmingly for a time. Our enthusiasm and anxiety to see all go well carried some of us too far—carried me too far to the extent of . . . leading

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me to use my personal influence with people to get them to accept you as O. H. I thought **it** was

for the good of the work, but since then I have learned better. [Italics added.]

The correspondence published by Mr. Hargrove and his comments about private meetings of the Council held after Mr. Judge's death make it reasonably apparent that Hargrove's influence, rather than any written instructions from Mr. Judge, led the Council to declare that "Promise" or Mrs. Tingley was Judge's "occult successor." Further evidence of some sort of fantastic juggling of the facts, whether by psychic glamor or by deliberate, if pious, falsification—which, or how, will probably never be finally determined—lies in a letter of Joseph H. Fussell to a New Zealand member, the Rev. S. J. Neill. This letter is in Mr. Fussell's own handwriting and is dated March **28**, 1896—the day before that on which Mr. Fussell, with six others, solemnly approved all that E. T. Hargrove asserted concerning the "instructions" from Mr. Judge. The letter is as follows:

March **28**, '96

144 Madison Ave. New York

Rev. S. J. Neill, Auckland, N. Z.

Dear Bro. Neill,

I know you will wish to hear concerning E.S.T. matters and the status of affairs since the passing away of the Outer Head of the E.S.T. So far as is at present known W.Q.J. has left no directions in regard to carrying on the work of the School. Of course if he has done this, such directions will be followed. An informal meeting was held last Sunday afternoon (Mar. **22**) at the house of C. A. Griscom, Jr. to talk over matters relating to the work. There were present C. A. Griscom, Jr., E. A. Neresheimer, Jas. M. Pryse, E. T. Hargrove, C. F. Wright, H T. Patterson, A. H. Spencer, E. B. Page and J. H. Fussell.

In regard to the E.S.T. the following plan was proposed. That in the event of there being no directions left by Mr. Judge, a circular letter be sent out, signed by the above named and other New York members of the School to all E.S.T. members in America, suggesting that a Council be formed to carry on the routine work of the School, such Council to be concerned solely with this and having no authority as teachers or in strictly *esoteric* matters. Members will be asked to sign and return a printed slip to the effect that they approve of the plan for organization, etc.

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The above is only a rough statement of the idea, but its purpose is to get the members to hold together and to coordinate the efforts of all so that we may be kept in touch with one another.

As soon as such Council is formed we will have a basis from which to work and be able to cooperate with the Council in the Eastern Division appointed by Mr. Judge.

Ofcourse nothing will be done in this matter until we are assured that no directions have been found among the Chief's papers.

I will keep you informed of anything that may be done or that *may* turn up in regard to the work.

With good wishes to you all,

Fraternally yours,

(Signed) Joseph H. Fussell

It was this same Fussell who, on March **29**, **1896**, solemnly assured the E.S.T. meeting in New York: "I wish to say first that I know of my own knowledge that what our Brother Ernest T.

Hargrove has stated is true Hargrove had unequivocally claimed the discovery of “papers” of Mr. Judge directing the formation of the Council and indicating the identity of the new “Outer Head.” But Mr. Fussell, on March 28, says that the Council was proposed as a “suggestion” to be submitted to members of the E.S.T. for their approval!

Who is telling the truth, and when is he telling the truth? Was Fussell telling the truth to Neill? Then why did he sign the pamphlet dated April 3, asserting that Mr. Judge had ordered the formation of the Council? If Hargrove is telling the truth in his letter of January 30, 1898, to Mrs. Tingley, then *he*, supported by seven other members of the Council, was merely using his “influence” to ensconce Mrs. Tingley as “occult” successor to Judge, although there were no clear directions from Mr. Judge at all.

As to Mr. Judge’s effects, this much is known: Almost at once after the funeral services, E. A. Neresheimer and C. A. Griscom went to Mrs. Judge and asked and obtained from her the keys to Mr. Judge’s desk and to the safe-deposit box in which Mr. Judge kept his personal papers. Later on, when Mrs. Judge visited the headquarters she found no private papers of Mr. Judge in his desk, and on going to the safe deposit box, found it empty. Whatever papers were taken from these places have never been produced or identified as

such. In any event, Mr. Fussell knew nothing of any “directions” several days later, on March 28, when he wrote to the Rev. S. J. Neill. The later history of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society founded by Mrs. Tingley* is marked by little except the similar claims of *her* “successor” to similar occult distinction. Mrs. Tingley died at Visigo, Sweden on July 29, 1929 following an automobile accident in Germany. In a printed letter, dated July 29, 1929, addressed to both the “exoteric” members of the Point Loma society and to the “members of its E.S.,” Dr. Gottfried de Purucker, who had long been associated with Mrs. Tingley, made claim to occult successorship on his own behalf. This letter said in part:

All the Comrades here feel a supreme confidence in the future, for they know that the Work is fully safeguarded, and thanks be to the immortal gods! they trust the one who now assumes the reins of government in the line of succession from H.P.B., W.Q.J., and K.T. In assuming the heavy burden of responsibility that has devolved upon me by K.T.’s appointment of me to succeed her.

I realize that, due to the work of our blessed K.T., more even than to the work of my two previous great Predecessors, our members have been trained, taught to reflect and to have an intuitive realization of what the Theosophical Movement means, not only to ourselves, but to Humanity. Dr. de Purucker reaches an unprecedented climax for “successors” in informing the membership of his own occult status and relationships:

Thrice recently, before and since the passing of K.T., has one of the Great Teachers been with me here in Lomaland. I will open my heart to you and tell you something. The two Masters who originally founded the Theosophical Society, and who are the Chiefs of the E.S., are still working with the Society both inner and outer, and for it. . . . Each of these two has progressed far along the Path of Initiation since H.P.B.’s days, I have seen and conversed with Master M. within this last month, and twice has Master K.H. been in my office, once alone, and once with a chela, .

Later in the year, on September 1, Dr. de Purucker addressed another letter to the membership, asking for a new constitution,

* The “Universal Brotherhood” part of the name of the society was dropped after Mrs. Tingley’s death.

to enable him, as he explained, to make better use of the “forces” now focussing upon his humble person. Describing them, he said: “The spiritual and intellectual forces pouring through me from the Great Lodge at times seem almost to tear into pieces the fabric of my being, so strong are they. .“ The members responded by according the new “Leader” unqualified power to make the Society’s policy, “to take such steps or measures as in his judgment shall be necessary for the safeguarding of the best interests of the Theosophical Society,” and “to remove from office any officer of The Theosophical Society when the Leader shall deem such action to be for the best interests of the Society.” The second letter also contained the following assurances: as **I** am the intermediary or mediator between the Great Lodge of the Masters of Compassion and Wisdom and the general membership of the T. S., and more particularly of the ES.: being the channel through which the Lodge-forces pour: so also am I therefore the Teacher, and will hand on what I may and can to those who prove themselves fit and ready to receive.

Consequently, it will be my duty as soon as time and strength permit me to do so, to issue new E.S. teachings of a far deeper and more esoteric kind than those which were issued even by **H.P.B.** or by W.Q.J., or by our beloved, Katherine Tingley. This I can do for the simple reason that these, my three great Predecessors, never had the opportunity to do what Karma now impels and compels me to do: to besiege the Portals of Destiny and to open a way into the Mysteries, because the members through the life-work of our beloved K.T., are now ready to hear and therefore to receive what I can give them—an opportunity of incalculably splendid promise which neither H.P.B. nor W.Q.J. nor even K.T. had.

This claim of occult successorship was to be Dr. de Purucker’s theme throughout his tenure of office as “Leader” of the Point Loma Theosophical Society. Except for his effort, in **1931**, on the anniversary of the birth of H. P. Blavatsky, to gather the members of the other Theosophical Societies into the “true” Society at Point Loma—a gesture of “fraternization” and “reunion” which could hardly succeed so long as Mrs. Besant at Adyar, and Dr. de Purucker at Point Loma, both claimed to represent the “true” Theosophical succession—the régime of Dr. de Purucker was uneventful. Lacking in Mrs. Tingley’s capacities for showmanship, the

Point Loma Leader was driven to various methods of raising money to hold the organization together. In his third letter, the dues of the Society were announced as **\$12.00** annually, and later an attempt was made to float a loan of **\$400,000** through Trust Certificates sold the devoted members. Finally, early in **1942**, the Society sold its holdings of land on Point Loma and removed in June to Covina, California. The Point Loma property acquired in Mrs. Tingley’s time had originally amounted to **330** acres, on which a number of buildings had been erected to house the activities of the Society—which included a ‘Theosophical University’—and to provide living quarters for officials and resident members. At the time of the sale, these holdings had diminished to 78 acres. The next location was a 41-acre property near Covina, but the Society has recently announced the transfer of its headquarters to another location.

On September **27, 1942**, shortly after the removal of the headquarters to Covina, Dr. de Purucker

died of a heart attack at the age of 68 years. After a few days, it was announced that the affairs of the Society were being governed by a five-member “cabinet,” and on October 8, Iverson L. Harris, chairman of the cabinet, issued the following statement:

The Theosophical Society, ever since its foundation, has been under direction of an uninterrupted succession of leaders and the present situation of its being in charge of members of the late leader’s cabinet is merely temporary, the normal procedure during the interval between the passing of one leader and the succession of the next.

Dr. de Purucker left full and detailed instructions to his cabinet as to the carrying out of his wishes in the event of his decease. These are being carried out with full approval and confidence of members of the society here and elsewhere.

Three years later, *The Theosophical Forum*, the official organ of the Society, announced that Colonel Arthur L. Conger had been elected to succeed Dr. de Purucker as Leader. The claims made for Col. Conger, while more subdued, perhaps, were in no significant way different from those made either by or for Mrs. Tingley and de Purucker. A sample of the sort of thing said about Col. Conger is provided by a review in the *Theosophical Forum* for February, 1948, in which the writer, G. F. Knoche, explains why neither Mrs.

Tingley, nor G. de P. nor Col. Conger were either long or regular members of the Point Loma E.S. prior to their “appointments” as “Outer Heads.” The explanation is this:

What does all this reveal? First, that close as is the hidden bond between a teacher and his successor, the teacher himself may or may not be fully aware who is to succeed him. Second, that significantly enough, no one of our teachers has ever formally appointed his successor. If we believe, as we verbally proclaim, that the T. S. is under the protective care of Masters, isn’t it obvious then that They alone exercise the right of appointment? Isn’t it equally plain that each one of the successors-to-be must *de facto* have been under the direct training of a Master?

A further point of interest in this article by Miss Knoche relates to the book under review, which has the title, *The Dialogues of G. de Purucker*, and for contents reproduces “the private record of the Katherine Tingley Memorial Group, an esoteric body formed by G. de Purucker shortly after he assumed the headship of the Theosophical Society in 1929.” According to the reviewer, Col. Conger, the succeeding leader, was “authorized to publish broadcast” this record of “esoteric teachings.” These revelations, the reviewer maintains, were made public in accordance with what is alleged to be the custom of the initiates of history. “The T.S.,” she declares, “has faithfully followed the archaic rule.” The review then quotes from E.S. papers of Mr. Judge as to what is to be held exoteric and what is not to be revealed and proceeds to recall that Dr. de Purucker taught “openly” what Judge had directed was to be kept secret. This is offered in evidence, one supposes, that Dr. de Purucker had the same authority or rather more authority than Judge in determining what might be made into “public” teachings. And Col. Conger, the next in line, was privileged to make still further disclosures in the publication of de Purucker’s secret teachings.

There is a natural question that arises concerning all this, and Miss Knoche quite properly asks it:

if all that was esoteric is published, what then will the E.S. consist of? What is there left for those students whose hearts yearn for more than the exoteric works provide? The answer given is that the “higher degrees” hold still greater secrets, and while the K. T. Memorial Group was de Purucker’s E.S., “there may have been a still more secret

group of individuals offered an opportunity to strengthen and inspirit the K.T.M.G.” But these groups “die,” it is argued, with the death of each “successor.” Thus the *real* teacher is a person, and not the “message” which that teacher imparts. After the death of a leader, students may hope to be led by a “strong karmic guide into the new esoteric channel opened by the succeeding Teacher.”

Even a mere “exoteric” student of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge will be able to recognize the wide abyss which separates these novel doctrines from the original teachings concerning occult discipleship and esoteric instructions.

There is little further to relate concerning the activities of the Covina society, except, perhaps, to say that they are much diminished since the flamboyant days of Mrs. Tingley’s rule, and that, a year or so after the war, some of the oldest and most faithful of the resident members were obliged to leave the Covina headquarters, apparently to give wider scope to the younger members. Among those leaving were Iverson L. Harris, quoted above as chairman of Dr. de Purucker’s Cabinet; Mr. W. Emmett Small, long connected with the work of issuing the *Theosophical Forum*; and several others.

Col. Arthur L. Conger, the third of the leaders in the Covina Society “succession,” died of a heart attack on February **22, 1951**, in his seventy—ninth year. Seven days later, on March **1**, it was announced that James A. Long, a former adviser and consultant of the United States Department of State, is the “new Head” of the Society, succeeding Col. Conger. Mr. Long told the press that the Society’s headquarters are being moved to Altadena, where property is being acquired.

CHAPTER XIX AFTERMATH IN AMERICA

BEFORE PASSING to other phases of twentieth-century Theosophical history, some attention should be given to the general aftermath of the Tingley succession. The claims for Mrs. Tingley’s high status rested, as we have seen, upon alleged “written instructions” from Mr. Judge and upon “psychic” impressions or communications received by the eight prominent members, headed by E. T. Hargrove, who arranged and participated in the E.S.T. meeting in New York of March **29, 1896**. Of these eight, Hargrove was the first to reverse himself and to repudiate Mrs. Tingley as Judge’s successor. In his E.S. pamphlet of May **17, 1896**, “An Occultist’s Life,” he had by implication elevated Mrs. Tingley above even H.P.B. and Judge in respect to her “training and preparation.” He was, he explains, “directed” to make these statements concerning Mrs. Tingley. But two years later he is again “directed,” this time to reject Mrs. Tingley and to “expose” her. His authority in both cases was “the Master.” Together with his few associates, Mr. Hargrove reformed the “original” Theosophical Society and continued to hold small and “conservative” meetings in New York City. The publication issued by Mr. Hargrove’s group, the *Theosophical Quarterly*, was never much concerned with the dissemination of straight Theosophical teachings, but, as the years went by, assumed increasingly an Anglican ministerial tone. Finally, in July, **1935**, the *Quarterly* announced the suspension of publication, the reason given being that a period of “indrawal” was then at hand. Mr. Hargrove died on April 8, **1939**. It should be said,

finally, that among those who regarded Mr. Hargrove as “Masters’ Agent” were some of the most cultured minds in the Movement, and some of its best known writers. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Griscom, Jr., Mr. Charles Johnston (to whom are owed exquisite translations of the *Upanishads* and of Shankaracharya’s *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*), Dr. Archibald Keightley and his wife (“Jasper Niemand”),

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Dr. J. D. Buck, and Professor H. B. Mitchell. With the exception of Dr. Buck, who eventually joined with the notorious “K.T.” and his “Great Work,” all these individuals remained faithful to Hargrove and the Society which he established in Chicago in **1898**.

Of the eight “witnesses” to the Tingley succession, Hargrove and the Griscoms have been accounted for. James M. Pryse, who died in Los Angeles several years ago, did not remain loyal to Mrs. Tingley, but allied himself for a time with the “Blue Star” group, established by Mrs. Francia A. La Due (“Blue Star”) as the “Temple of the People” at Halcyon, California. Like all the other “successors,” Mrs. La Due claimed to represent the true line of occult influence and teachings, which, in turn, she is supposed to have handed on to her successor, Dr. W. H. Dower. The latter was replaced, after his death in **1937**, by Mrs. Pearl F. Dower. The Temple of the People still carries on at Halcyon, holding meetings and publishing a small magazine, *The Temple Artisan*. Mr. Pryse, however, deserted “Blue Star” after a while and became an independent “occultist,” publishing books which since his death are distributed by his aged brother, John Pryse, still living in Los Angeles.

Claude Falls Wright drifted out of any species of Theosophical activity and is now dead, as is H. T. Patterson, whose influence was minor compared with the others’.

E. August Neresheimer, who died in **1937**, was of all those who survived Mr. Judge the best loved and the most respected as a disinterested man. It seems apparent that he was somehow attracted by Mrs. Tingley’s occult pretensions and impressed by her “psychic” capacities, and that these influences, together with Hargrove’s representations, led him to support the Tingley succession. Fortunately, before he died Mr. Neresheimer put into writing a sworn statement of his recollections of the events following Judge’s death. This statement, dated February **25, 1932**, contains the following affirmation:

Among all the papers and other documents left by Mr. Judge, we found nothing whatever in his handwriting bearing upon the future conduct of the society after his death. Nor did we find anything in his writing naming Mrs. Tingley or anyone

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else, either directly or indirectly, as his successor in the affairs of the Theosophical Society in America, or in its Esoteric Section, or any directions of any kind to be followed in the event of his death.

Mr. Judge cannot, in my opinion, be held responsible for the mistakes—made by others after his decease, since he never either by spoken or written word nominated, or even suggested a successor, or gave any instructions whatsoever as to the direction of the Society, or the “Esoteric Section” after his death.’ When it is recalled that Mr. Neresheimer was made by Mr. Judge his Executor and that as such he took possession of all Judge’s papers, including the so-called “Diary,” supposed to have contained the written appointment of “Promise,” this statement, issued under

oath, ought to cause those who still claim the appointment of Mrs. Tingley by Mr. Judge to produce unequivocal evidence to controvert what Mr. Neresheimer says. It has since been alleged that Mr. Neresheimer was later shown other “diary” notes and that he admitted them to be in Judge’s writing; and that, further, he agreed to revise his statement accordingly, but this he did not do, so that his statement must stand, until, at least, those “other” notes are produced for impartial examination.

Alone among the eight witnesses, Mr. Joseph H. Fussell remained faithful to his testimony of March **29, 1896**, becoming the indefatigable apologist of the “successorship” claim, whether in behalf of Mrs. Tingley or of Dr. de Purucker. On the occasion of Dr. de Purucker’s bid for reunion of all theosophists under the aegis of the Point Loma headquarters, Mr. Fussell asserted that “successorship” is the veritable essence of all Theosophical achievement, exclaiming,

Think a moment look at the logic of it. Here is the T. S. today, a living body under the guidance and direction of a living Teacher, continuing and expanding the work of his great Predecessor, H.P.B. Whence comes the life of the T.S. today? .

H.P.B. years ago said that her work would be vindicated in the twentieth century. It is already vindicated, and increasingly so, by the work and methods of work of her Successor, the present Leader of the T. S. . . . And the logic of it is: Successorship!

Until his death in **1942**, Mr. Fussell continued to argue, almost obsessively, for the validity of Theosophical “successors.”

He conducted a voluminous personal correspondence on the subject, continuously affirming that Mr. Judge appointed Katherine Tingley to succeed him and as continuously failing to produce more than loose descriptions of the “evidence” of this action by Mr. Judge. Mr. Fussell’s correspondence is also marked by gross attacks and slanders against the character of other Theosophists, while, in his public writings, he was calling for “unity” and greeting the members of other societies and associations as “Brothers.” Further, in one letter he referred to the *treachery* of Mrs. Besant, while publicly he was soliciting fraternal relations with her society, despite the fact that the “treachery” spoken of had been unacknowledged, un-atoned for, and repeated again and again. What value has a “unity” that is sought on such contradictory grounds?

The “successorship” controversy was again openly revived in 1946 by a Covina member, Mr. Charles J. Ryan (since deceased), in a letter to the *Canadian Theosophist*. This publication is issued in Hamilton, Ontario, and was at that time edited by the late A. F. S. Smythe, an old-time Theosophist who had for nearly half a century maintained a running fire of criticism of the conduct of the various schismatic societies calling themselves “Theosophical.” Mr. Ryan’s letter objected to an article which Mr. Smythe had reprinted from *Theosophy* for April, 1946. This article had taken exception to a statement by a non-Theosophical writer in *Harper’s* to the effect that Mr. Judge appointed Mrs. Tingley as his successor.

In his letter to the *Canadian Theosophist* (for September, **1946**), Mr. Ryan undertakes to defend two contentions: (1) That successorship of the sort claimed for Mrs. Tingley is in accord with occult law, and with the precedent and teaching of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge; and (2) that Mr. Judge did in fact intend Mrs. Tingley to be his “occult successor.”

Mr. Ryan endeavors to dispose of Mr. Judge’s statement concerning the Foulke case by claiming that Mr. Judge didn’t really mean what he said—that he, Judge, wrote “in the heat of battle” when he declared, in his letter to the Wilkesbarre *Times*:

Madame Blavatsky has no "successor," could have none, never contemplated, selected, or notified one. . . . all who enjoyed her confidence will unite with me in the assertion that she never even hinted at "succession," Mr. Judge, argues Mr. Ryan, either chose these words carelessly, "or momentarily had forgotten certain facts." This was hardly characteristic of Judge. Calm deliberation was his outstanding attribute in all situations. The letter in question contains a categorical repudiation of successorship and provides, also, the Theosophical principles upon which Mr. Judge bases what he says. The repudiation stands, regardless of any attempt to explain it away. Mr. Ryan also collects a number of fleeting references to "successorship" from various places in the Theosophical literature. One such, from *Old Diary Leaves* (I, 462), makes Col. Olcott say that H.P.B. often spoke to him about possible "successors." Torn from its context, this sounds impressive. Actually, the passage cited is one of Olcott's typically slighting references to H.P.B., in which he says: "I think I could name a number of women who hold her {H.P.B.'s letters saying that they are to be her successors in the T. S." And Olcott adds, a little later: "I saw that all her eulogies were valueless." They are certainly valueless to Mr. Ryan's argument.

That H.P.B. made occasional use of the word "successor" there can be no doubt, but nowhere does she endow it with the special significance Mr. Ryan claims for it. This must have been Judge's view, else how could he say, in 1892, in the letter to the Wilkesbarre *Times*, that "she never even hinted at 'succession' "? Furthermore, all the references to successors to H.P.B. which Mr. Ryan digs out of the pages of the *Theosophist* are from issues appearing in 1884 and 1885—years before the establishment of the Esoteric Section.

Mr. Ryan quotes from the Countess Wachtmeister a statement by H.P.B. naming Annie Besant as her "successor" and her "sole hope in England." Can we suppose that Judge, ever loyal to H.P.B.'s decisions, would have deposed Mrs. Besant as Co-Outer Head of the E.S., if such a use of the term "successor" should be taken in the sense of spiritual or "occult" successorship?

H.P.B.'s own teaching on succession in spiritual authority appears in *Isis Unveiled*, where she condemns the apostolic succession as "a gross and palpable fraud." This statement, Mr. Ryan contends, bears no application "outside the Roman Church." The Roman succession from Saint Peter, he proposes, is false, but other successions may be true. If this is the sole meaning of H.P.B.'s condemnation of "apostolic succession," then by what unhappy choice did Dr. Gottfried de Purucker, in 1929, single out the analogy of the succession in "the Christian Church" to illustrate his right to the status and authority of "Leader" in the Point Loma Society after Mrs. Tingley had died? In the ecclesiastical society of the early Church, Dr. de Purucker related, developing the parallel, "Teacher succeeded Teacher, or Leader succeeded Leader." He added that while "the *spiritual* aspect of this true system died out very quickly in the Christian Church. . . . it has not died out among us."

But H.P.B. has nothing to say about the "Divine Light" which de Purucker alleges illuminated the early years of the Christian Church. She says simply that "the apostolic succession is a gross and palpable fraud." It would have been easy for her to say, in any event, that there is a true apostolic succession as well as a false one, but she did not. Such statements were left unsaid until Dr. de Purucker and Mr. Fussell came along to make them. H.P.B. did not, as Judge remarked, even "hint" at Theosophical successorship.

H.P.B. did speak of the factors which would determine the future of the Theosophical Movement. In the closing section of *The Key to Theosophy*, she referred to the “Un-biassed and clear judgment” which would be needed by the “successors in the guidance of the Society.” She continued:

Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, **it** has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart.

The original Society *has* largely degenerated into not one, but several sects, and the dogma which has been chiefly responsible for sectarianism among theosophists is the dogma of succession in spiritual authority. No other claim ever rent

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the Society so much as this one; no other presumption has so betrayed the great impersonality of the Movement. Mr. Ryan’s assertion that Judge “fully accepted the principle and the fact of successorship” in his E.S.T. *Circular* of November 3, 1894, needs examination. Mr. Judge, as there stated, after deposing Mrs. Besant, resumed “functions and powers” given to him *before H.P.B.’s passing*, and which were his, potentially, from 1888. He “resumed” these “functions and powers” under “orderly succession” after H.P.B.’s death, exercising them as the accredited “representative of H.P.B.” This is not apostolic succession. Mr. Judge lays no claim to any “Divine Light” that became his source of spiritual authority in virtue of the fact that H.P.B. had left the scene. What light he had was his own, gained, to borrow the words of his Wilkesbarre *Times* letter, “by individual attainment through long discipline and conquest.” If he had been H.P.B.’s successor in the sense claimed by Mr. Ryan, or in the sense that Mrs. Tingley was presented as Judge’s successor, would not Mr. Judge have made some mention of it himself? Neither Mrs. Tingley nor Dr. de Piirucker failed to do so. We come now to the “evidence” that Judge intended Mrs. Tingley to be his occult successor. “Mr. Judge,” says Mr. Ryan, “left notes on this subject which are so plain and showed such confidence in Katherine Tingley that even had there been no other reasons for their action the Council could not reasonably have done anything but accept her as the rightful successor in the E.S.T.” The “notes” referred to are nothing more than transcripts of “psychic” messages, obtained through Mrs. Tingley as medium, and alleged to be to Judge from the discarnate H.P.B. The tone of these “notes” is explanation enough of the reluctance of their present possessors to make them easily accessible. Although dressed up in feeble imitation of H.P.B.’s colloquial style, they are strongly reminiscent of the drivel of the séance.

Mr. Judge’s view of “documentary proof” of this sort is revealed by his answer to Foulke’s claim that H.P.B. communicated to him from beyond the grave. “He [Foulke] may assert,” wrote Mr. Judge, “that he has baskets full of letters from Mme. Blavatsky written before her death, and we are not interested either to deny the assertion or to desire to see

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the documents.” If Theosophists who believe in “successors” and “leaders” would be as assiduous in studying the *Path Magazine*, edited by Mr. Judge, as they have been in searching out cryptic meanings in an alleged “occult diary,” they might find in the *Path* a statement by Mr. Judge on the matter of official “Leaders” of the Society. He there comments on an Executive Notice by Col. Olcott by saying that one of its purposes, which he (Judge) approves, was “to prevent any fixing

of the T. S. to H. P. Blavatsky by means of the use of the word 'leader.'" Yet Mrs. Tingley's supporters, neglecting Judge's obvious meaning, or ignorant of this statement, proceeded on an opposite course, chanting the word "leader" until it became a Theosophical fetish.

In 1932, several years after the death of Mrs. Tingley, some of the "notes" or pages from the "occult diary" came to light in the pages of the *O. E. Library Critic*. Dr. H. N. Stokes, editor of the *Critic*, then expressed his own opinion that the "notes" were in Judge's handwriting, but left the reader to conclude that this identification proves, not that Mrs. Tingley was properly chosen as Judge's occult successor in the "true line" of the Movement, but rather that Judge was deluded into thinking that he had received spiritualistic communications from H.P.B.! Now if Dr. Stokes suspected that Judge was a broken reed, the victim of such psychic follies, how could Mr. Ryan cite Stokes in support of the Tingley succession? Mr. Ryan, apparently, welcomed Stokes' judgment that the psychically received notes were in Judge's handwriting, but the price he paid for this vindication was the reduction of Judge to a dabbler in Spiritualism, a mere psychic dupe. Judge, whom H.P.B. called "*part of myself for eons past*," needed a medium, a "helper," to get in touch with H.P.B.! What can succession to such a "leader" be worth?

Mr. Ryan cites as "one of the most important pieces of evidence" a letter by Mrs. Archibald Keightley, published in the *Searchlight* of May, 1898, in which she had affirmed that Mrs. Tingley's appointment "came from and was directed by the Master." But Mrs. Keightley rapidly "changed" either her mind or her Master, as the scathing terms in which she referred to Mrs. Tingley at the Chicago Convention of February 18, 1898, make abundantly clear. Mr. Ryan also mentions

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a letter by Mr. Neresheimer, said to be in the Covina archives, in which the writer informs Mrs. Alice Cleather that "occult instruction" has come through from Judge, appointing Mrs. Tingley as Outer Head and directing that Mrs. Cleather be added to the "Council." Mrs. Cleather, who accompanied Mrs. Tingley on the "Crusade," began as an enthusiastic supporter of the new Leader, but gave a much revised estimate of Mr. Judge's "successor" a few years later. Questions from Eleanor H. Dunlop in January, 1900, brought the following replies from Mrs. Cleather: "Did you hear the 'Leader' [Mrs. Tingley] depreciate H.P.B.?" "Yes, repeatedly."

"Have you any evidence that Mr. Judge appointed a successor?"

"No. I never saw any of the documents said to exist."

"You accepted the 'Leader,' then, simply on faith?"

Entirely, and was utterly disappointed in the result. So far as I have been able to observe from pretty close association she showed no real knowledge of the esoteric philosophy, and constantly violated the occult teaching."

This is part of an interview with Mrs. Cleather, published in the *Lamp* for February, 1900, a Theosophical journal then conducted by Mr. A. F. S. Smythe, later editor of the *Canadian Theosophist*. Much matter pertinent to all these questions appeared in the *Lamp* in 1899 and 1900.

Mr. Neresheimer, Mr. Ryan's last witness, is so quoted as to make it plain that even before Mr. Judge's death, he, along with others, obtained "messages" through Mrs. Tingley. It is not remarkable that these "occult" messages were to be kept secret from Mr. Judge. Mr. Neresheimer and the others were pledged to avoid all such intercourse. A sifting of the evidence for the claim that Mrs. Tingley was the occult successor to William Q. Judge produces a few simple statements of fact:

Upon Mr. Judge's death, March **21**, 1896, a small group of persons who had been closely associated with him met privately and came to the conclusion that a "leader" or "successor" was needed or desirable. These persons agreed upon Katherine Tingley as the leader and at a meeting of the E.S.T. on March **29** they informed those present that they "knew" who the new leader and successor was. Papers said to have been written by Mr. Judge and the oral testimony of the

members of this group were offered in evidence of the true "occult" character of the succession.

Respecting these facts, it is apparent that most if not all of the "documentary proofs" were of "psychic" inspiration. It is of record that the leading figure in the "revelation" of March **29**, E. T. Hargrove, repudiated the succession of Mrs. Tingley in less than two years after he had solemnly proposed it, saying that she had been "run in" as Outer Head of the E.S. "as the only person in sight who was ready to hand at the time." E. August Neresheimer stated under oath in **1932** that no evidence of this appointment was found among Judge's effects. James M. Pryse is on record as having characterized Mrs. Tingley as Mr. Judge's "favorite spirit-medium," and as saying that the famous "occult diary" was for him too "sentimental, mushy and spiritualistic . . . to wade through." Mr. Joseph H. Fussell is on record as having written, on March 28, 1896, to the Rev. S. J. Neill in New Zealand: "So far as is at present known W. Q. Judge has left no instructions in regard to carrying on the work of the School."

The Theosophical "succession" of Mrs. Tingley thus becomes lost in a morass of psychic delusion, of claims and counter-claims. If the "evidence" for it be accepted, Judge becomes a guileless psychic and a virtual "disciple" of Mrs. Tingley. If the evidence is rejected, Mrs. Tingley becomes at best a self-deluded woman, at worst a charlatan, and so, also, her close supporters.

In later years, spokesmen on behalf of the Tingley succession have admitted that no documentary proof of it exists. In September, **1929**, Dr. de Purucker, who earlier that year had "succeeded" Mrs. Tingley as Leader of the Point Loma Society, wrote:

Judge never appointed K.T. by any legal document. The proofs that K.T. gave of her mission and the reality of her being the Messenger of the Lodge, were the same that Blavatsky and Judge gave."

Apparently, Dr. de Purucker had come to realize the fruitlessness of pressing documentary proofs. *But pretensions to this sort of proof were used in 1896*, in order to prepare both the E.S. and the general body of the T.S.A. for Mrs. Tingley's successorship. This lady was at that time virtually unknown

to the Society, and her contributions to the Movement were so "occult" as to have been hidden from all but a few psychic confidantes. The procedure followed by Mrs. Tingley and her sponsors to gain for her the trust and support of thousands of American theosophists was the precise opposite of the example set by H.P.B. and Judge. The confidence enjoyed by these two Teachers had grown out of recognition of their life-long labors for Theosophy; the credentials of their occult knowledge and responsibility were self-evident, depending upon no claims or "appointments" secured through psychic communiqués and private revelations.

If Mrs. Tingley's admirers now prefer to let the issue rest on her record, well and good. To this no theosophist can have objection. Had this been the policy of the leaders of the Theosophical

Society in America at the time of Judge's passing, Theosophy would have a much fairer name in the modern world and inquirers might be less confused by the splits in the Movement, the personal controversies and claims to special authority.

CHAPTER XX THE ADYAR SOCIETY

THE DEATH OF MR. JUDGE, in less than a year after the separation of the American Section from the parent Society and the formation of the T.S. in A., left Col. Olcott in the unique position of sole survivor of the original Three Founders of the Theosophical Society. Col. Olcott was now the "grand old man" of the Movement, still at the head of the Society, and many who might have remained indifferent to Mrs. Besant's claims as "successor" to H.P.B. were undoubtedly influenced by the name, "The Theosophical Society," and the venerable President-Founder's connection with it. The entirety of the Indian and Australasian membership were faithful to this society. In Great Britain, on the Continent, and, to some extent in the United States, the ability and reputation of Mrs. Besant, the secondary but considerable influence of Mr. Sinnett and other writers and leaders, coupled with the fact that the Besant-Olcott faction was the accuser, and not the accused, in the controversy with Mr. Judge, gave the original Society a special advantage in gaining and holding public attention. The course followed by the T.S., however, was hardly one to attract serious-minded people to the support of the Theosophic Cause. The ageing Olcott became increasingly a mere figure-head, while Mrs. Besant's flair for dramatic pronouncements and claims came gradually to dominate the activities of the Adyar Society. In the summer of **1899**, Mrs. Besant withdrew the pledge, memorandum, and instructions of H.P.B. and substituted a new "pledge" for her "esoteric" students. This was followed by "studies" and "instructions" of her own, and by the circulation in her "School" of the literary results of "occult investigations" pursued by Mr. Leadbeater and herself. The latter were eventually published as *Occult Chemistry* and *Thought Forms*.

In **1906**, charges of sexual misconduct with and infamous teachings to boys entrusted to his care were brought against Mr. Leadbeater. An inquiry into the matter was held by Col. Olcott in London. After admitting enough of the charges to

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shock severely and disgust the members of Olcott's committee of inquiry, Leadbeater resigned from the Society. Col. Olcott, who had come to regard Mr. Leadbeater as an "agent of the Masters," was much disturbed by this development, which probably hastened his death. Meanwhile, there was the question of who was to "succeed" him as President of the Society. Mr. Chakravarti and others endeavored to procure the endorsement by Col. Olcott of Bertram Keightley as the next President of the Society, while followers of Mrs. Besant sought the same on her behalf. After Olcott died, early in **1907**, Mrs. Besant declared that the "Masters" had come to the T.S. Headquarters at Adyar and "impressed" her that she was to be Olcott's "Successor," just as she had already "succeeded" H.P.B. Supported in this by the "clairvoyant" testimony of two women, Mrs. Hotchener (Mrs. Marie Russak) and Miss Renda, Mrs. Besant rode to victory and became the

new President of the Society. At the outset, Mr. Sinnett rejected these “Adyar Manifestations,” declaring them to be anything but what they were claimed to be, and G.R.S. Mead also revolted against them. During the war of claims, pro and con, which ensued, Mrs. Besant issued a booklet, *H.P.B. and the Masters of Wisdom*, purporting to be a defense of H.P.B. against the Coulomb-S.P.R. charges of more than twenty years earlier. Actually, however, it presented its author in the frame of H.P.B.'s martyrdom and persecution. Was not Mrs. Besant now accused of fabricating the evidence of “occult” relationships, even as had been H.P.B.? Mrs. Besant was overwhelmingly elected to the Presidency by members who believed her to have been “appointed by the Master.”

Mrs. Besant at once began a campaign for the restoration of the repute of her colleague, Mr. Leadbeater. He was soon invited to return to the Society and as the years went by became increasingly “the power behind the throne” in Mrs. Besant’s wing of the movement. In due course (in **1911**), Mrs. Besant promoted “The Order of the Star in the East” to herald the “coming Christ.” This was followed by a number of adjunct and affiliated orders and organizations, best known of which was Co-Masonry, followed by the “Liberal Catholic Church.”

What happened to the Theosophical Society, through the years, under the guidance of Mrs. Besant, became abundantly

clear during a “Star” Congress held at Ommen, Holland, in **1925**.

That this event should have taken place in the year that was the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Theosophical Movement, and on August **11**, the anniversary of H.P.B.’s birth, only throws into greater relief the almost immeasurable departure from the original spirit of the Movement, to which Mrs. Besant had led her faithful followers. The purpose of the Congress was to further the “Krishnamurti” cult, for this young Hindu had been burdened by Mrs. Besant with the task of “saving the world.” In her opening address, which teems with supernaturalism and breathless references to personages like “the Nameless One” and “Lords of the Fire,” she told her listeners:

And now I have to give you, by command of the King, His message, and some of the messages of the Lord Maitreya and His great Brothers. . . what I am saying, as to matter of announcement, is definitely at the command of the King whom I serve. His taking possession of His chosen vehicle . . . will be soon. Then He will choose, as before, His twelve apostles . . . and their chief, the Lord Himself. He has already chosen them, but **I** have only the command to mention seven who have reached the stage of Arhatship, Who were the “Arhats”? The first two [Mrs. Besant continued), my brother Charles Leadbeater and myself, . . . C. Jinarajadasa, . . . George Arundale, Oscar Kollerstrom, . . . Rukmini Arundale,

I left out one and must leave out another. Naturally, our Krishnaji was one, but he is to be the vehicle of the Lord. And the other is one who is very dear to all of us, as to the whole Brotherhood: Bishop James Wedgwood. He had borne his crucifixion before the seal of Arhatship was set upon him by his King. Those are the first seven of the twelve whom He has chosen, with Himself as the thirteenth. “Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye do well, for so I am.” . Now the wonder may come into your mind: H.P.B. was the only one who was really announced as the messenger of the Master. Since then the world has grown a good deal, and it is possible that while the few may be repelled, many thousands will be attracted to the Christ. . . . Whatever the effect, since He has said **it**, it is done. . .

A continuous stream of this sort of “revelation” pervades the annals of the Theosophical Society of this period. For example, while, in **1925**, Rukmini Arundale, George Arundale’s young wife, had reached the degree of “Arhat,” by **1928** she was ready for promotion to the almost ineffable position of “World-Mother,” embodying the power of “Durga and Lakshmi and Sarasvati”—aspects of the Hindu Trimurti “in Its feminine manifestation.” Mr. Jeddu Krishnamurti, however, who had been either potentially or actually “Lord of the World” since **1909**, and openly declared as such in **1911**, eventually became unable to participate in these pretensions, for in **1929** he dissolved the “Order of the Star in the East” and proceeded to ignore both the Liberal Catholic Church and the World-Mother. He abolished his own office of “Lord” or “World-Savior” entirely and withdrew to the relative obscurity of an ordinary human being. Since that time he has been occupied with lecture tours, and has gained a considerable following, both in the United States and Europe. His principal counsel to his listeners is for them to depend upon themselves, and no one else, for spiritual enlightenment. Mrs. Besant might be slowed down a bit by the defection of Krishnamurti, but she could hardly be stopped. A year and a half later, she published an article purporting to relate what went on in the councils of “the Hierarchy who are the real rulers of the world” on the occasion of deciding who the Messenger to the world would be. This account, which Mrs. Besant explained had been “sent” to her, runs in part:

The question seems to have been as to whether use should be made of **H.P.B.** or of Annie Besant. . . . The use of H.P.B. would involve the accentuation of the occult side, and a sharp conflict with Materialism. The use of Annie Besant would involve the accentuation of the Brotherhood side generally, with little conflict, at that time, with the materialistic attitude. H.P.B. was immediately available. Annie Besant would not be available so early. Hence the Society, if she were to be the principal medium, could only be founded many years later, instead of in **1875**. Some of the Elder Brethren were frankly anxious about the stressing of the occult side. .

H.P.B. was . . . no less heroic than the one who would be her great successor, . . . She was an admirable channel for the Masters, and entirely selfless—utterly Their servant, no less than Annie Besant.

In any case, the need of the world was urgent. Would it be safe to wait until **1891**, with the advent of a world-catastrophe (**1914-1918**) in prospect? On the other hand, would it be wise to wait in view of the urgent need for the preparation of the world to receive its Lord in the first half of the twentieth century?

. . . Herein lay a risk, a risk that would not have been taken . . . but for the guarantee offered by our great Masters. . . . These two Great Ones offered to make Themselves personally responsible for an experiment both dangerous and desirable. They would watch over it with the utmost care and guard by all means in Their power against the development of the occult side into those terrible exaggerations which in the past have led to such great disasters. Anyone who digs through the files of the *Theosophist* for almost any year since Olcott’s death will find sufficient material of this sort to convict Mrs. Besant of either unconscionable deception or a “spiritual” vanity which carried her far beyond the bounds of sanity, to the point where she was able to believe what she said about herself. “Materialism” is spoken of in the above “communications,” but surely, an honestly

doubting materialism of the “scientific” sort would have been much more desirable than the psychic maunderings which have passed under the name of “Theosophy” in Mrs. Besant’s society for nearly half a century. The “materialism” of the modern world has at least been a protection for the many against the sentimental nonsense to which the Theosophical Society descended under Mrs. Besant’s tutelage. Mrs. Besant died at Adyar, Madras, India, on September **20, 1933**. Her death was soon followed by that of C. W. Leadbeater, who, since **1895**, had been the determining influence in her career and in that of the Theosophical Society of which she was President, as in its “esoteric section” of which she was the head. Mr. George S. Arundale succeeded to the Presidency of the Society, with Mr. C. Jinarajadasa at the head of its esoteric section. Neither Mr. Arundale nor Mr. Jinarajadasa enjoyed anything like the fame of Mrs. Besant, a circumstance which can hardly be regarded as unfortunate, in view of the weird collection of presumptions and declarations which they had inherited from her. In any event, every possible claim had been made during Mrs. Besant’s lifetime, so that anything said on behalf of Mr. Arundale would be found anti-climactic. During the latter’s term, there were occasional evidences of a

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renewed interest in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. About forty years ago, in the heyday of the Besant-Leadbeater regime, “Bishop” Leadbeater had published a list of books said to be suitable for an education in “straight” Theosophy. Of some thirty volumes recommended, all but one were the productions of “Arhat” Leadbeater and “Arhat” Besant. These two kept on adding to their revelations until the end of their careers, so that the members of their society had hardly any real knowledge at all of the original presentation of the Theosophical philosophy. In **1934**, however, Mr. Arundale announced that he was renewing his acquaintance with *The Secret Doctrine*, an experience which he thereupon recommended to others.

The Secret Doctrine [he wrote] is a challenge to effort and never an imposition of authority. Every page is a call to a voyage of discovery, and only he who sets out upon his travels can hope to begin to understand the book. There were other indications that Mr. Arundale was thinking things over. In the editorial section of the *Theosophist*, he told of a conversation with a woman who had recently resigned from the Society. When he asked her why, she replied by saying that most of the lectures at the lodge she attended “were about everything except Theosophy.” Mr. Arundale described the experience of this woman:

What she expected was a serious study of Theosophy and then study-classes to gain a more or less comprehensive grasp of our science. She said she found the syllabus full of addresses on Astrology, Financial Schemes, India, Archaeology, and so forth—all interesting, but for the most part dealt with more ably by bodies specializing in such subjects. What she wanted was Theosophy, and a progressive course in it. For what other reason, she asked, would she join the *Theosophical Society*? . . . I must admit I was inclined to agree with her; and I wonder how far she represents the average enquirer and our failure to offer him that for which he comes.

Mr. Arundale died at Adyar on August **12, 1945**, at the age of sixty-six years. He was succeeded in office by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, who is the present President of the Theosophical Society. So far, Mr. Jinarajadasa’s rule has been marked by a peculiarly “esthetic” emphasis in his published writings, and numerous references to “God.” A recent T.S. publication, for example, contains a brief treatise on the “Theosophical

Heaven,” and how to get into it. “Being artistic,” according to Mr. Jinarajadasa, is one of the prerequisites. As he put it: why should I exact an artistic nature as one of the qualifications to enter into the Theosophical Heaven? Because the Theosophical Heaven is not merely a place of goodness and devotion. It is also a place where the Divine Mind manifests itself in fullness; it is such a Heaven as Plato dreamed of, when he postulated the Ultimate Reality as a triple embodiment of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. . . . If, therefore, as you enter Heaven, you were merely pious and tenderhearted, but not intellectual or artistic, your understanding of life will be limited, and your evolution will be one-sided. For there is evolution in Heaven also; otherwise Heaven would be a dull place and its splendours will cease to affect you after a while.

Elsewhere, Mr. Jinarajadasa has announced that “the hot, flowing streams of life” which surge through the heart and brain of the artist “reveal the quality of beauty which has been planned for all by God.” Not only the “moulds of beauty,” but also, Mr. Jinarajadasa relates, “all the ideas of Theosophy are God’s ideas The President of the Theosophical Society ought to heed the advice of his predecessor in office, Mr. Arundale, and gain “a definite acquaintance at least with the spirit of *The Secret Doctrine*,” for he would find in that book the categorical statement by Madame Blavatsky that “Initiates never use the epithet ‘God’ to designate the One and Secondless Principle in the Universe; As one who, in **1925**, was not merely an “initiate,” but, according to Mrs. Besant’s Ommen revelation, a first-string “Arhat,” Mr. Jinarajadasa betrays an amazing ignorance of the customs of his “degree.”

Looking back over the career of Annie Besant and her Society—for the Adyar Theosophical Society became veritably “hers,” to do with what she would—two incidents not yet mentioned seem worthy of report. The first was the receipt by Mrs. Besant of an “adept” letter warning her of the direction in which the Society was moving. Despite all the claptrap circulated by Mrs. Besant in the name of the “Masters,” this communication seems to have the ring of authenticity. The following passage is taken from a printed version of the letter appearing in the T.S. publication, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, First Series*, and described in this volume as “The

last letter, written in **1900**, received nine years after the death of H. P. Blavatsky”:

The T.S. and its members are slowly manufacturing a creed. Says a Thibetan proverb, “Credulity breeds credulity and ends in hypocrisy.” How few are they who can know anything about us. Are we to be propitiated and made idols of no one has a right to claim authority over a pupil or his conscience. Ask him not what he believes. . . . The crest wave of intellectual advancement must be taken hold of and guided into Spirituality. It cannot be forced into beliefs and emotional worship. The essence of the higher thoughts of the members in their collectivity must guide all action in the T.S. “We never try to subject to ourselves the will of another The cant about Masters” must be silently but firmly put down. Let the devotion and service be to that Supreme Spirit alone of which each one is a part. Namelessly and silently we work and the continual references to ourselves ...raises up a confused aura that hinders our work. . . . The T.S. was meant to be the corner stone of the future religions of humanity. To accomplish this object those will lead must leave aside their weak predilections for the forms and ceremonies of any particular creed and show themselves to be true Theosophists both in inner thought and outward observance. . . .

Even with the deletions **made** by Mr. Jinarajadasa of parts of the letter which he says “refer to the occult life of Dr. Besant,” its implication of the erroneous course of the T.S. is quite plain. Whatever the source of this letter, if Mrs. Besant had been able to take to heart the counsel it **offered, she might** have saved herself and her many followers from some of the more ridiculous extremes which she reached in later years, and avoided, also, the contempt which she earned for the term Theosophy among those who would look no further into the Theosophical Movement than newspaper reports of the doings of the Theosophical Society.

The second incident relates to the accusations brought by Mrs. Besant against William Q. Judge. In the **1920’s, a respected** member of the Adyar Society, a man who had carefully studied the claims and evidence presented by both sides in the Judge case, went to see Mrs. Besant to interview her on this subject. In the course of a serious conversation, Mrs. Besant admitted that what was presented to her—namely, that Judge was innocent of the charges made against him—was on the

whole accurate, and she said that some time previously she had come to the conclusion that Judge had committed no forgery, and that the messages received by him were genuine. On being requested to say that much, only, if not more, to the Theosophical public the world over, Mrs. Besant demurred and remarked that it was an old and forgotten matter—“Why revive it?” When the inquirer, who was also a long-time friend of Mrs. Besant, sought permission to make her view public himself, she flatly refused it. This came as a shock to the inquirer, for he fully expected that, in the interests of historical veracity, Mrs. Besant would agree to say in public what she so readily admitted to him in private conversation, completely exonerating Mr. Judge from the charge of manufacturing bogus Mahatma messages. About all that can be said in extenuation of Mrs. Besant’s attitude in this connection is that she quite possibly really believed that Mr. Judge’s innocence was no longer a matter of importance, so far had she departed from the essential work and meaning of the Theosophical Movement. In justice to Mrs. Besant as a world-figure, it should be said that she labored for many years on behalf of the liberation of India, gaining through this work the respect and admiration of Indian patriots. She took an active part in the Indian National Congress and started the Home Rule League which campaigned for the position of “equal partner” for India in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Because of her political activity she was interned by the British Government early in **1917**, during World War I, but was soon released. In the same year, she was elected the first woman President of the Indian National Congress. After the Amritsar Massacre of **1919**, however, she opposed the civil disobedience program led by Gandhi, which caused her to lose much of her popularity with the Indian masses. She is nevertheless remembered with respect by the leaders of the Indian Independence Movement, as one who gave unstintingly of her time and energy to the cause closest to their hearts.

Col. Olcott, like Mrs. Besant, also revised his opinion of Mr. Judge, but, again like Mrs. Besant, expressed himself only in a private interview. The occasion was a conversation with

Laura Holloway (one of the “chela” authors of *Man: Fragments of Forgotten History*) in New York City in **1906**, during Olcott’s last visit to the United States, a year before he died. Mrs. Holloway (then Mrs. Langford) had known Olcott in the early days and had also been acquainted with his sister, Belle, who had since died. Olcott wrote to Mrs. Holloway from Boston, asking her

to visit him when he arrived in New York to give a lecture at Carnegie Hall. She did so, and the conversation turned to the work of the Theosophical Movement. Olcott, Mrs. Holloway soon realized, was lonely, homesick, and missed very greatly his old association with H.P.B. He spoke of his “dear old colleague” and recognized the magnitude of her loss in “the trend of events in the Theosophical Society since her death.” Moreover, although Olcott was still the “President-Founder,” other and younger workers, he said, were in control of the affairs of the Society. Mrs. Holloway reminded him that there was a third co-worker who had been with him and H.P.B. at the beginning, to whom Olcott later became hostile. Olcott knew that she spoke of Judge, and, encouraged by his visitor, he took her hand and said, “in a manner subdued and most impressive”:

“We learn much and outgrow much, and I have outlived much and learned more, particularly as regards Judge. . . I know now, and it will comfort you to hear it, that I wronged Judge, not wilfully or in malice; nevertheless, I have done this and I regret it.”

When Mrs. Holloway expressed happiness at this admission, Olcott replied: “To no one else have I ever said as much, and since you are so pleased, I am glad that I could say it to you.”

The report of this interview was published by Harold W. Percival in *The Word* for October, 1915, as part of a series of reminiscences concerning the major figures of the Theosophical Movement. In a Supplementary Letter to the editor, Mrs. Holloway explained that she “did not seek a confession from Col. Olcott,” nor want “any confidences from him not voluntarily extended.” Her own deep friendship with Judge, she thought, which was known to Olcott, had led him to reveal his heart’s feelings at the end of his life. Her account of Olcott’s mien during this conversation is of interest:

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after this long lapse of time, and with a sense of justice due to the memory of both himself and Mr. Judge, I feel I am doing right in consenting to its publication. I cannot reproduce his earnest, contrite manner, nor can I impart to you the atmosphere of peace and harmony that characterized the occasion . . . when I reminded him, as I did, of how long and how unalterably she {H.P.B.} had loved Mr. Judge, he sat like one listening to an unseen speaker. But these things cannot be portrayed in this telling of the few words he spoke in vindication of Mr. Judge.

CHAPTER XXI CONTINUING CURRENTS

THE COURSE OF EVENTS in the Theosophical world after the death of Mr. Judge—or after 1898, which seems to have been a year of crucial decision, at least in the United States—presses one great question upon the inquirer into Theosophical history. What, actually, *is* the Theosophical Movement, and can it be said to have any real existence during the twentieth century? If the Movement is a continuing force in the modern world, where should its manifestations be sought? How may they be recognized? Even before the betrayal of William Q. Judge, first in life, by Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott, then after his death, by the claims of various “successors,” it had become evident that the history of the Theosophical Movement is by no means the history of the one or several societies going by that name. When H.P.B. left India

in **1885**, the Adyar society quite evidently lapsed to the status of a religious organization, subject to all the weaknesses and defects of organizational sectarianism. Thereafter, the chief function of Adyar seems to have been to harass H.P.B. and to impede her work, and, after her passing, to do the same to William Q. Judge. To continue the history of the Adyar society in detail after **1900** would be to perform a melancholy ritual in the name of historical “completeness,” while neglecting the vital currents of Theosophical influence, if any, arising from other sources. The same general analysis applies to other organizational “branches” of the movement. If anything is to be learned from the Theosophical history of the last ten years of the nineteenth century, it is that organizations and organizational claims, whether “exoteric” or “esoteric,” have no necessary connection with the original inspiration and meaning of the Theosophical Movement.

The year **1898** in particular began a period prolific in the production of new Theosophical sects and cults. Shortly after the split of the American Society into the Hargrove group and the majority wing of the Society headed by Mrs. Tingley, another

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society was formed in New York, by Dr. J. H. Salisbury, who had known Mr. Judge well, and Donald Nicholson, managing editor of the New York *Tribune*, another early friend of H.P.B. and Judge. This group called itself the Theosophical Society of New York and was mildly active in that city for many years. It was represented among Theosophical magazines by the *Word*, edited by Harold C. Percival. Also connected with this group were Dr. Alexander Wilder, the Platonic scholar who had helped H.P.B. obtain a publisher for *Isis Unveiled*, and Mrs. Laura Langford (previously the Mrs. Laura Holloway mentioned in Chapter xx).

Another offshoot of the break-up of the American Society was the “Temple of the People,” which began in **1899** with a circular letter issued from Syracuse, New York, signed by Dr. W. H. Dower and Frances J. Meyers. According to “Temple” literature, a “Master” visited “two students of occultism” in an eastern city (Syracuse) and instructed them that their “astral” development was such that they could be used to establish a “true center of occultism.”

Since that time [a Temple leaflet continues] there has been almost constant intercommunication between some of those Masters and the two above mentioned, as well as with the group which has been formed according to direction, as the years have passed. No great scientific discovery has been made since the year **1898** without some previous knowledge of the same being given to the aforesaid group. . . Mrs. Francia A. La Due was the “chela” of the “Temple,” who, early in this century, was “ordered” to establish a colony at Halcyon, California. Mrs. La Due’s “messages from the Masters,” given out under the pseudonym, “Blue Star,” were the inspiration of the Temple until her death in **1923**. For a time, the “Temple” achieved a considerable following, branches being established in various cities by ex-members of the T.S. in A., and of the “Universal Brotherhood,” but as competing “initiates” elsewhere offered new “messages” from the Masters, the Temple lost what unique distinction it might have possessed, and is now but one of the various remaining fragments of the “successorship” delusion. Among the more notable of the Temple’s claims to “occult” distinction was a pamphlet issued in **1928** by Dr. W. H. Dower, Mrs. La Due’s

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successor, containing, according to its sub-title, “More Stanzas Unsealed from The Book of Dzyan.” (The Stanzas of Dzyan are the ancient verses upon which Madame Blavatsky based *The*

Secret Doctrine.) This somewhat lurid offering speaks of a day when birds and beasts will feed upon “purple grain, the gift direct of the Gods,” and entails a curious zoological fantasy in the account of how a wild white Bull sired a White She Calf (out of Great Red Cow) with three horns, one diamond-tipped, which grew many cubits a day.

Mrs. Alice L. Cleather, who supported Mrs. Tingley for a time, quietly withdrew from the Universal Brotherhood in **1899**. In later years Mrs. Cleather gathered a group of pupils to whom she imparted her own version of Theosophical history and teachings. After traveling on the Continent for a time, she removed to India. When, in the early **20’S**, dissensions regarding Mr. Leadbeater were renewed in the Adyar Society, Mrs. Cleather published some booklets in defense of H.P.B. They include *H. P. Blavatsky: A Great Betrayal*, *H. P. Blavatsky: Her Life and Work for Humanity*, and *H. P. Blavatsky as I Knew Her*, all issued in Calcutta in **1922-23**. These works, unfortunately, are marred by the assumption that Mr. Judge had been deluded and dominated by Mrs. Tingley—a view apparently shared by H. N. Stokes, publisher of the *O. E. Library Critic*, of Washington, D. C., and William Kingsland, author of *The Real H. P. Blavatsky*, published in London in **1928**. Associated with Mrs. Cleather for many years was Mr. Basil Crump, who shared in her activities, one of which was to issue a reprint of the original edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, published, according to a superscription, “by request of the Tashi Lama” of Tibet. Mrs. Cleather and her associates also formed a Blavatsky Association to “perpetuate the memory and work” of H.P.B., to which members of Mrs. Besant’s society were denied entrance.

The modern movement known as Anthroposophy also stems from the Theosophic trunk, as a result of differences between Mrs. Besant and Rudolph Steiner, who was General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society. While Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society in **1912**, the actual break with Adyar did not come until **1913**, when Mrs. Besant, disapproving Steiner’s failure to support the

“Order of the Star of the East,” dischartered and expelled the entire German Section with all of its branches, cancelling the diplomas of more than two thousand members. Within a few months, the loss of these members grew by a thousand more, due to the resignations of members in various European countries in protest against Mrs. Besant’s high-handed procedure. Steiner, it should be noted, offered his own distinctive “teachings,” his present followers claiming that he always followed “his own line,” even while in association with the Adyar Society. In any event, the Anthroposophical Society gained considerable influence in Germany and grew to a large membership throughout Europe. The inspiration of this society has depended largely upon the “occult” communications and instructions of Dr. Steiner, who died in **1925**. A phase of Steiner’s influence deserving notice has been through the reforms he accomplished in agriculture. In the United States, this work is known as Bio-Dynamic gardening, having much in common with the organic gardening movement founded by Sir Albert Howard. A large and influential center of the Steiner-inspired movement exists in New York City. George R. S. Mead, after siding with Mrs. Besant in the “case against William Q. Judge,” remained her devoted assistant until the death of Colonel Olcott. However, the subsequent “Adyar manifestations,” declaring Mrs. Besant the President-Founder’s successor, were more than he could stand and he parted from her, later on establishing the Quest Society, devoted to comparative religions and psychical research. His magazine, the *Quest*, published from **1909** to **1930**, was widely circulated, earning respect for the activities and objectives of the Society. Mr. Mead died in **1934**. Max Heindel, originally a member

of Mrs. Besant's Society and a lecturer in its American Section, came under the influence of Steiner's works, and after a time blossomed forth on his own account with a new "Rosicrucian" society, and a book entitled *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. Like Dr. Steiner, Mr. Heindel placed a special emphasis on the mission of Jesus, adding the glamorous idea of Rosicrucian "mysteries." He established headquarters at Oceanside, California, building up a flourishing association with members in all parts of the world. After Mr. Heindel's death, his wife continued to direct

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the efforts of this group, but since her passing, this branch of modern Rosicrucianism has shown little activity. Fortunately, as the years went by, the new apostles and revealers of "occultism" made less and less reference to Theosophy, although it was to the books of the founders of the Theosophical Movement that they turned for material from which to construct their "teachings." Theosophy no longer had the appeal of a "novelty," and Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Tingley had already used the methods of sensationalism almost to exhaustion. A roster of the activities of those who split off from the existing Theosophical societies of the early decades of the twentieth century would have to include scores of individuals and groups, ranging from honest efforts to carry on the work of the movement to almost brazen attempts to exploit the religious weaknesses and susceptibilities of human beings. Two members of the Besant Society in the United States, Alice A. Evans and Foster Bailey, joined forces in marriage, formed the "Arcane School," and for many years held classes and correspondence courses under the ostensible guidance of a "Tibetan" teacher. Subscribers to Mrs. Bailey's communications, fruit of automatic writing, were favored with a series of "prophecies" covering various terms of years, and an increasing emphasis on "Prayer" and God's "Plan of Love and Light." Mrs. Bailey died in at the age of seventy. The following extract from a bulletin from Mrs. Bailey to her students of the Arcane School indicates the financial aspect of her activities:

Please continue to keep up the meditation for Right Direction of Money for the work of the Hierarchy, as you have been doing.

. . I notice that students who for years have given **\$10** a month are now giving **\$15** . . we all have to do our utmost by meditation, by interesting others, and by self-sacrifice in preparation for the Coming of the Christ. One of the better known figures on what may be called the "fringe" of the Theosophical Movement is Manly P. Hall, who has been lecturing on "occult" subjects in Los Angeles since the early **1920'S**. Mr. Hall has written a number of books dealing with mystical lore, and some of his volumes show a strange lack of reticence concerning matters that the Founders of the Movement never spoke or wrote about publicly. Perhaps

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the best evidence of Mr. Hall's indifference to the lines of work established by H. P. Blavatsky is his activity as a hypnotist, which brought him considerable publicity some ten years ago, when an actor hypnotized by Mr. Hall tore apart a movie set in the delusion that he was dying for lack of air. Of late, Mr. Hall has been associated with other Theosophists in publishing the complete works of H. P. Blavatsky.

The most lurid of all pseudo-occult movements of recent years was the "I Am" movement of the Ballards. From about **1936** to **1940**, the Ballards—Mr. and Mrs. George Washington Ballard

and son, Donald—with headquarters in Los Angeles, gained a large following on the West Coast, and elsewhere, by making blatant claims as to the powers possessed by Mr. Ballard (who said he was a reincarnation of George Washington), and by asserting that they were in communication with “The Ascended Master, Saint Germain,” “The Master, Jesus,” and various other Personages. The Ballards asserted that the psychological forces exerted by themselves and their followers prevented the entire California Coast from sliding into the Pacific ocean. For a time, the Ballards were able to fill the Shrine auditorium in Los Angeles with bewildered, wonder-seeking enthusiasts. Their books contain garbled and distorted fragments of Theosophical doctrines and numerous “messages” from the “Ascended Masters.” The Ballards toured the country as “The Messengers,” issuing invocations, and “decrees” against their enemies, and promising extraordinary benefits that were to result from their work. Mr. Ballard died in December, 1939, and while Mrs. Ballard and son Donald continued “his work,” two trials in the federal courts on the charge of using the mails to defraud brought considerable discouragement to both the Ballards and their followers. Although convictions were not obtained, the “I Am” movement has since subsided into relative obscurity. There seems to be no end to the ramifications of the appeal of the “occult” and the “mystical” for those whom the traditional religious organizations have ceased to attract. The Rosicrucian Brotherhood (AMORC) at San Jose, California, offers an imposing literature and course of instruction in “The Secret Heritage.” The advertising program of this organization

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is so extensive as to include even scientific periodicals. The invitation is very largely to the desire of the individual for power. “The Rosicrucians,” says a prospectus of this organization, “know how to accomplish wondrous things with this natural power, but the subject cannot be broached to everyone. One must be ready for this knowledge, be ready to go beyond what he already knows.” For a price, the Rosicrucians offer courses in personal development, leading finally, from degree to degree, to the Rosicrucian sort of “adeptship.”

The Lemurian Fellowship, devoted to “the Lemurian Theo-Christic Philosophy,” had its origin in Wisconsin in 1936, and located in California in **1942**. This group, which erected a “Temple of the Jewelled Cross” in Los Angeles, calls itself “the direct representative and channel for the release of all information, advice, and plans for the integration of the New Civilization and Order.” The Lemurian Fellowship, we are told, is responsible for the “transmission of the plans and suggestions of the Elder Brothers.” The slogan for membership drives is: “Be Lemurian and Rank Yourself with the Race which Aspires to be Royal.”

One added feature of the psychic scene in the United States, due, indirectly, to the Theosophical Movement, has been the success of visiting “swamis” and “yogis” from the East. The best known, perhaps, of these enterprising orientals is “Paramahansa Yogananda,” whose autobiography was recently published in this country. In **1940**, Yogananda was sued for **\$500,000** by a former associate, Nirad Ranjan Chowdhury, who claimed that the two had originally been partners in the Self-Realization Fellowship Church, Inc., with an agreement to share equally in the profits. Swami Yogananda previously had been sued by another of his partners, Dhirananda, who in **1935** won a judgment of **\$7,900** against Yogananda, on a note for \$8,000 which the latter had failed to pay. Such financial squabbles among the swamis, however, have had little effect upon their faithful followers. Yogananda’s “Yogoda” cult gives every evidence of continued prosperity, having an elaborate “ashram” overlooking the ocean at Encinitas, California, and offering for sale numerous

books and a magazine. The mysterious East has also served Western expositors of supposed “occult” secrets. From Paul Brunton, with his romantic

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version of Oriental secrets and powers, to Edwin J. Dingle and his Los Angeles Institute of Mentalphysics, there is apparently no limit to the diversity of fascinations which anything labelled “Eastern” holds for the naïve and wonder-seeking Westerner. A trip to India, or to Tibet, as was the case with Theos Bernard, is sufficient to clothe the traveler in an atmosphere of occult enchantments. He may cater to the bored intellectuals and sophisticates of Europe, in the manner of the strange Russian, Gurdjieff, or dress himself up in a turban and satin jacket and appear, flanked by burning incense, before a more proletarian audience—in either case, a following is assured.

One effect of this gradual “assimilation” of Theosophical and pseudo-Theosophical ideas into the popular culture of the twentieth century has been the secularization, or even the “paganization,” of Theosophy. The Theosophical Movement under the leadership of H. P. Blavatsky and Mr. Judge was militant, if not revolutionary, in relation to the religious, intellectual, and social status quo. It challenged the dogmas of religion, the materialism of science, and the hypocritical morality of everyday life in the West. But as the atmosphere of sectarianism seeped back into the organizations calling themselves “Theosophical,” priestly claims and “occult” posturing took the place of moral courage, while the authority of new Theosophical “Revelations” discounted vigor in individual reflection and the application of Theosophical principles. When the members of Theosophical Societies began to speak reverently of “God” and “God’s Plan,” or to resort to similar forms of religious anthropomorphism, the Movement was no longer a threat to the security of the churches—it had become a mere *imitator* of the churches—and the criticisms which both science and Theosophy had once directed at organized religion now became logically applicable to the Theosophical societies themselves. No scientist, therefore, need take Theosophy seriously, so long as it was represented to him by such societies. Eighteenth-century skepticism and nineteenth-century agnosticism had dealt effectively and sufficiently with this brand of supernaturalism. In contrast to such “Theosophy,” it was the scientists—or many of them—who stood for moral courage in the search for truth, while the Theosophists

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had become a sect of mild conformists, having, perhaps, a new theological vocabulary, but offering no real challenge to the mind of the age. The spread and penetration of the influence of the Movement, however, had other and more constructive phases. In Ireland, for example, the poet George Russell, better known as “Æ,” withdrew from any open connection with Theosophical organizations, after the split between Annie Besant and Mr. Judge, but continued to infuse his writings with a mystical quality that was plainly of Theosophical inspiration, although he seldom if ever spoke of Theosophy directly. Æ was one of the group of Irish Theosophists who remained faithful to Judge, as the pages of the *Irish Theosophist* make clear, and this loyalty may have contributed to the beneficent effect of the poet’s work on behalf of the Irish peasant movement, and for a general renaissance of Irish culture, in later years. Another Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, was also a Theosophist in his youth, but Yeats lapsed into Spiritualism as he grew older, thus fostering, through his fame in literary circles, some unfortunate misconceptions of the nature of Theosophy.

James Stephens, too, was affected by Theosophical ideas, as his stories, particularly *The Demi-Gods*, reveal, but in Stephens the elements of fancy, Irish folklore and legends of magic and sorcery predominate, so that the influence of Theosophy in his works is verbal or mechanical rather than philosophical. Another effect of the Movement was the opening up of modern scholarship and literature to the influence of occult ideas. George R. S. Mead, for one, devoted himself to researches in Oriental literature after he became disillusioned with Annie Besant, and William Kingsland wrote a book endeavoring to present Theosophical ideas in the guise of a speculative synthesis of science and modern philosophy. The pages of the English literary and critical journals show that Theosophy—or, at any rate, some of the Theosophical ideas—gradually became part of the background of cultivated individuals in England. By a filtering process of thought, even Theosophical terms or doctrines began to emerge in the literature of the twentieth century—as, for example, in the tales of Algernon Blackwood, and the books and plays of J. B. Priestley. In the field of learned research, Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz

published an English translation of *Bardo Thödol*, or the Tibetan Book of the Dead, a work which has exercised an extensive influence on modern thought. While Dr. Evans Wentz may not admit to having been affected by Theosophical teachings, his work has been part of the general current of occult inquiry begun by the Theosophical Movement. Perhaps because of the many Englishmen who served as civil servants in India, there have been several books on the subject of “Yoga” published in England, some giving evidence of a Theosophical background, some derived from the instruction of Indian *swamis*. Yeats-Brown’s popular volume on this subject is an example of the more lighthearted and somewhat impudent attempts in this direction.

In the United States, William James anticipated the modern academic interest in Eastern yoga powers, and was also concerned with the phenomena of the Spiritualists. He wrote essays on both subjects: in one, called “The Energies of Men,” he recounted the experience of a European follower of Vivekananda, who undertook a course of yoga exercises; in the other, he vouched, after twenty-five years of sporadic investigation of mediums and seances, for “*the presence*, in the midst of all the humbug, of *really supernormal knowledge*.” Vivekananda was a disciple of the Indian religious reformer, Ramakrishna, and since the days of Vivekananda’s visit to the United States, in **1893**, to attend the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, the Vedanta Society and Ramakrishna Mission have attempted to instruct the West in the Hindu religion, as found in the commentaries of Sankaracharya and in the later works of Ramakrishna.

It is more than coincidence, perhaps, that these “missions” of Eastern religion to the West have coincided with Western progress in psychic research and with the reviving interest in Western mysticism, or quietism. With the break-down of the Roman Empire, Stoicism and Neoplatonism became the “religions” of the cultured members of the Hellenistic Society of the time. But in the anxiety-ridden twentieth century, all that modern Europe and America possessed as part of their cultural inheritance to correspond to the inward philosophical religion of the ancient world was the mysticism of medieval Christianity. After the first world war, there was a definite revival

of Christian mysticism, marked by interest in researches such as the books of Evelyn Underhill. How the modern investigations of psychical powers, the influence of Christian mysticism, and the

new knowledge of Eastern psychology and yoga have been combined by the Western mind is well illustrated in the books of Aldous Huxley, in his *Ends and Means*, and *The Perennial Philosophy*. While Huxley has been more of a writer than a practitioner in the field of this new mysticism of the West, another Englishman, Gerald Heard, has developed into a sort of religious leader on the Pacific Coast of the United States. Mr. Heard was at one time a commentator on science for the British Broadcasting Company; his experience includes a background of interest and, apparently, experiment in Spiritualistic phenomena; and he is author of a number of books dealing with the problems of Western civilization. In one of these volumes, *The Third Morality*, Mr. Heard informed his readers that breathing exercises are “the most instant and powerful of all the physical methods of affecting, altering and enlarging consciousness.” While admitting the dangers of “Hatha” or “Body” Yoga—in which breathing exercises play a major part—and warning that “no one can say what the casualty rate may be,” Mr. Heard asserted that “it is a risk we have to take.” Mr. Heard may have since revised his opinion of the desirability of undertaking Hatha Yoga disciplines, in view of the high incidence of obsession and other types of aberration which may overtake the curious and over-eager Westerners who dabble in Hatha Yoga practices.

Heard’s counsels on how to “meditate” have been widely circulated among the Christian groups in the United States where dissatisfaction is felt with traditional modes of “worship,” and have been advertised, even, in the *American Theosophist*, the monthly journal of the American branch of the Adyar Society. He also maintains a close relationship with the Ramakrishna Mission, and on the occasion of the induction of a group of young Americans into the order as monks, Mr. Heard made an address as part of the ceremony. Christopher Isherwood, an English poet, has also allied himself with the Ramakrishna or Vedanta movement. He is one of the editors of *Vedanta and the West*, and collaborated with Swami Prabhavananda

of the Hollywood Ramakrishna Mission in producing a new English translation of *The Bhagavad Gita*, which was published during the war. It is of more than passing interest that, in an article published in **1895**, Mr. Judge warned the American Theosophists that—The Hindu of to-day is a talker, a hair-splitter, and when he has not been altered by contact with ‘Western culture he is superstitious. Such we do not want as teachers. We will hail them as brothers and co-workers but not as our Magisters. But those Hindus who come here are not teachers. They have come here for some personal purpose and they teach no more nor better than is found in our own theosophical literature: their yoga is but half or quarter yoga, because if they knew **it** they would not teach a barbarian Westerner. What little yoga they do teach is to be read at large in our books and translations.

At issue was the fact that, although the religions and religious sects of India are far more “metaphysical,” in many respects, than the traditional Christianity of America and Europe, they are nevertheless *religions*, and not the self-reliant philosophical inquiry into the nature of things that the Theosophical Movement has endeavored to inaugurate. Madame Blavatsky, Judge maintained in many places in his writings, understood the needs of the Western World and sought to present the materials for moral self-education in the West, while the Swamis, although having in some measure a common vocabulary with Theosophy, represent Eastern traditionalism, and even Eastern sacerdotalism—not the dynamic principles of occultism and practical brotherhood that are to be found in *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy*.

At this point, then, there is need for a reconsideration of the basic ideas and purposes proclaimed by Madame Blavatsky at the outset of her mission—and repeated by her throughout the years of her work as a public figure—for without her impact upon the world, there would have been no Theosophical Movement, no history of it to relate. According to the terms she used to describe her work, the Theosophical Movement is the conscious impulse of moral and intellectual evolution; its origin is with the vanguard of human evolution on this planet—the fraternity of perfected men, the adept-brothers, who were her teachers, and whom she represented as their agent in the world. The Theosophical Movement is, more-

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over, a tidal phenomenon in human history. It has been the underlying cause behind every great moral and religious reform in the past, the inspiration of every great attempt at liberation of the mind of man from the shackles of ignorance, whether that ignorance be the result of blind religious belief or of spirit-denying materialism. Finally, the working capital of the Theosophical movement is the body of philosophical principles and ideas known as the Wisdom-Religion. Common property of the Initiates of all ages, this “teaching” or “gnosis” finds its way into the world through the representatives of the occult fraternity, who come as religious teachers, reformers, physicians, patriots, educators—who adopt whatever channel may be a propitious one at the time that their work is undertaken. The Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century, therefore, may be regarded as one of the cyclic efforts of this Brotherhood to stimulate the human race to a further reach of evolutionary achievement, and it may be distinguished from previous such efforts by its endeavor to meet with clear metaphysical teachings the awakening self-consciousness of the epoch.

That H. P. Blavatsky intended the Movement of her time to be so understood is clear from numerous passages throughout her writings, and from several hints and occasionally forthright statements concerning the coming of another Messenger, one like herself, when the hundred-year cycle of her mission has run its course—that is, in **1975**. Her final vindication as a public interpreter of the larger currents of human evolution, lies, therefore, in the future, and may safely be left with the future. In the present, however, for those who admit the reality of occultism, the question that is naturally of greatest importance deals with the real continuity of the cycle begun by H.P.B. If the life of the Movement is not to be found among the various “successors” and their claims and assertions, where is it to be sought?

The analogy of nature suggests that with the departure of the Teacher from the field, a redistribution of responsibility takes place. This is the true successorship—a succession to responsibility, not to “authority.” With both H.P.B. and Judge gone from the physical scene, the responsibility for the future of the Movement lay with those who were left. Then, when

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the individuals most prominent in the work gave unmistakable evidence of having lost their balance, the major responsibility again shifted, this time to the rank and file of theosophists throughout the world. It was now no longer a matter of “membership” or of affiliation with the “true” society. There were no “true” societies, in the organizational sense, but only more or less true individuals, men and women who realized that the spread of Theosophy meant the spread of Theosophical *ideas*, and not

the numerical growth of some Theosophical organization. Just as, in other periods of history, once a great movement has fallen into sectarianism and dead-letter creeds, its vigor is transferred to the heretics and dissenters, so the vigor of the Theosophical Movement passed into the hands of individuals who broke away, some completely, some only partially, from their organizational ties. One of the most encouraging aspects of the Theosophical Movement in the twentieth century has been the frequency with which individuals have declared themselves independent of the conflicts, claims and personality worship of organizational Theosophy and have endeavored to return to the original inspiration and lines of work. Another consideration that may easily be lost sight of is the fact that in every society, regardless of leadership and organizational pretensions, are members who were attracted by the teachings themselves, and who do what they can to give the basic doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation a wider currency. These are the liberating ideas of the Theosophical philosophy, and as they are spread about the world, the leaven of the Movement works its subtle effects, gradually extending the radius of Theosophical influence, opening men's minds to receive conceptions of moral self-reliance and individual responsibility.

In 1875, the Theosophical Movement was a thing apart from the world; it was a focus of energy finding expression through a small handful of determined individuals. Today, the Theosophical Movement is a part of the world's experience; hundreds of thousands, if not millions, have been directly or indirectly affected by the power of the ideas set free by H. P. Blavatsky. A new faith in man, in the powers of the human soul, has been born into the world. Theosophical attitudes, tenets, concepts and terms have filtered into the

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mind of the race, enriching the vocabulary, adding to the resources of the novelist, deepening the perspectives of the essayist and the poet. It is even restoring, in many cases, a philosophic approach to the once laughed-at subjects of magic and occult powers. Nor is Madame Blavatsky herself a forgotten figure. She is too much alive, today, in the minds of human beings for her to be forgotten. Hardly a decade goes by without some new article or book appearing about her—usually in the form of a slandering revival of the old calumnies aimed at her in the nineteenth century. But these, far from doing her memory any real harm, only go to prove the continuing vitality of the Movement she founded, through the spirited defense that such attacks evoke from those who are endeavoring to carry on her work. As the years go by, Madame Blavatsky finds more instead of fewer champions, and her books and articles have many more readers, today, than they enjoyed during her lifetime. With respect to the Theosophical Movement itself, there are still those working in the world who have the original objectives of the Society at heart, and are loyal to the purposes of H. P. Blavatsky, and, in some cases, to the work and memory of William Q. Judge as well. In Australia, the Independent Theosophical Society of Sydney carries on educational work in the spread of Theosophical ideas, with little if any attention to the preoccupations of "organization" or "successorship." *The Canadian Theosophist*, currently in its thirty-second volume, has for many years stood for the integrity of Theosophical ideas, as distinguished from organizational claims and pretensions. This organ of the Theosophical Society in Canada, despite its organizational

connection with the Adyar Society, maintains a sharply critical view toward all forms of sectarianism in Theosophy. This policy was established by A. E. S. Smythe, who was for many years, until his death in October, the editor of *The Canadian Theosophist*, and the journal still continues its constructive work. A similar effort at impartiality is being made by the Peace Lodge of the (Adyar) Theosophical Society, of Hyde, in Cheshire, England. During the war, the Peace Lodge began to publish a bimonthly periodical, *Eirenicon*, in order, as was explained, “to keep and extend our links when Lodge meetings

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were suspended during the war.” The friendly candor of *Eirenicon* soon won for this paper the respect of all who maintain an interest in the spread of the original message of Theosophy and authentic Theosophical history. A statement of the Peace Lodge Policy affirms that while the Peace Lodge belongs to and is chartered by the Adyar Society, it “does not regard a Lodge of the Adyar Society as superior or inferior to any other Lodge or Society belonging to the Theosophical Movement. . . . The merit of a Theosophical Lodge derives from the quality of the lives of its members and the extent to which it embodies a Theosophical integrity of spirit and intelligence.”

There is also the association of Theosophical students known as the United Lodge of Theosophists, formed in **1909** in Los Angeles, California, under the inspiration and guidance of Robert Crosbie. Mr. Crosbie was a Boston Theosophist during the time of William Q. Judge. He worked very closely with Judge, enjoying his confidence. When, after Judge’s death, the members most active at the New York headquarters raised Mrs. Tingley to the position of Judge’s successor, Mr. Crosbie gave her his loyalty and support. About **1900** he went to Point Loma to be of what assistance he could in the work, there. However, in the course of a few years, he came to feel that nothing constructive was to be accomplished by remaining at Point Loma—that, in fact, the teachings and philosophy of Theosophy had suffered an almost complete eclipse by the methods and sensational program instituted by Mrs. Tingley—and he quietly left the Point Loma Society in **1904** and came to Los Angeles. He was without property or funds, having given all his worldly possessions to the work of the Movement. He secured work in Los Angeles and gradually began to gather around him a few students—most of them entirely new to Theosophy—to undertake once more the task of promulgating Theosophy in the same form as originally presented by the Founders of the Movement. When, in **1909**, he had been joined by a small nucleus of persons who shared this ideal, The United Lodge of Theosophists was formed to carry out the purposes in view. Following is the platform then formulated by Mr. Crosbie—very largely from the words of Mr. Judge—and adopted by the associates of U.L.T.:

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The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion. The work **it** has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the **SELF**; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *basis for union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is “*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching,*” and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and
It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all.”

The following is the form signed by associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists: *Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its “Declaration” I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.*

As a discussion of the work and progress of the United Lodge of Theosophists forms no part of the purposes of this volume, little more need be said concerning this association, save to note that, during the forty-one years since its formation, it has grown into a world-wide movement with lodges or study groups in the metropolitan centers of many countries. U.L.T. has no “leaders,” in the sense that any personal authority attaches to leadership, and no “teachers” save the literature of the Movement and the principles of the philosophy itself. As in all human endeavors, the influence of individuals is felt in the work of the United Lodge of Theosophists, but this

occurs in the natural course of the working together of a number of people, more or less experienced, more or less devoted and schooled in the philosophy, toward a common end. It was the distinctive contribution of Robert Crosbie, in setting going the work of the United Lodge of Theosophists—and he lived until **1919**, ten years after the formation of the Parent Lodge in Los Angeles—that the emphasis should always be upon ideas, principles and objectives, and never upon claims or living personalities, though recognition of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge, through their teachings, was basic to understanding. The magazine started in **1912**, *Theosophy*, contained no signed articles except those reprinted from the original periodical literature of the Movement—from the *Theosophist*, *Lucifer*, and the *Path*—and it continues to be guided by this editorial policy at the present time. U.L.T.’s strong program of education for children is unique in the Theosophical Movement.

While the students who were associated with Mr. Crosbie from the beginning made outstanding contributions to the Movement, they never sought personal recognition, and those coming later also follow the example of Mr. Crosbie in directing attention only to the original teachings and teachers and Theosophical principles. The collected letters and “talks” of Robert Crosbie in the volume entitled *The Friendly Philosopher* represent the genesis of this movement, and lines of direction then given and since sustained. As Mr. Crosbie never made any claims in his own behalf, there is no need to defend his “status” in the Movement. What “status” belongs to him is that which might be naturally accorded the man who resuscitated the teachings, the methods and program of work of the Founders of the original Society, and who was able to inspire others to go and do likewise. Finally, it may be said that each Lodge of the United Lodge of Theosophists has local autonomy. The expression, the “Parent Lodge,” is an honorific term bearing no organizational

significance. All the Lodges are free and independent, although all share in the common declaration of principles, taking mutual counsel regarding the needs and progress of the work.

CHAPTER XXII PRESENT AND FUTURE

IF THE STORY of the seventy-five years of history of the Theosophical Movement thus far completed is bewilderingly complex and filled with contradiction, the larger world-history of the same period is not less confusing. In **1875**, the people of Europe and America looked out upon a world which, so far as they could see, promised the steady progress of the human race. In the United States, the Civil War had accomplished the end of slavery, and the cycle of industrial exploitation of the Western hemisphere had begun. After the settlement of the Franco-Prussian War at Sedan, no shadow of expected conflict darkened the horizon of continental Europe, while England was enjoying the full splendor of the Victorian Age. That vigorous child of the Renaissance, modern science, was rapidly growing up to manhood and had already proved its practical possibilities in the field of invention, with promise as great for new knowledge and understanding of the natural world. A vigorous ethical spirit, also, was in the air. The ideals of humanitarian socialism were gaining world-wide attention. Filled with the consciousness that they were “civilized,” the intelligent people of the West could see no reason why great and lasting reforms could not soon transform the earth into a model “liberal” society.

Today, in **1950**, we may look back upon that optimistic epoch with an envy that is mingled with war-weary chagrin. We are wiser, perhaps, in being able to see how poorly founded were the nineteenth-century hopes of illimitable progress, but our dearly-bought wisdom of experience has little positive value. We know only that the beckoning ideals of the recent past have played us false, that foundations we thought were as stable as the ground beneath our feet have cracked into ominous fissures, replacing former hopes with fears and questioning. Despite the many advances in medicine, physical health is the attainment of only a few, and the ravages

of degenerative diseases have stolen away the triumphs of medical science in other directions. The psychic and mental disorders of our time are the subject of many books and articles, and while the doctors of the mind are voluble in diagnosis, there is little that they can claim in the way of actual cures. Politically, the modern world faces what seems to be an insoluble dilemma in the uncompromising struggle between rival ideologies, while the actual processes of self-government, in the lands where self-government is a principle still believed in, have suffered the acute limitations imposed by modern war. As though to weaken further the self-confidence of the West, the “inferior” races of the Orient seem to have roused themselves to meet the challenge of a new period in their history. After centuries of virtual peonage to European conquerors, the yellow and brown peoples of the world have declared themselves free and equal to other men, just as did common peoples of Europe and America more than a century and a half ago. What if these Asiatic millions were to use their growing power as irresponsibly as the Western nations have used theirs? Truly, the world is filled with unknown quantities and incommensurables, of which the new-found

destructive power of “atomic” weapons is but a single example. Nor are particular causes that may be mentioned so responsible for the pervading insecurity of the modern world as the basic loss of faith which has overtaken us. Ours is a world without religion, with a science more potent to terrify than to liberate, and with only tag-ends of yesterday’s intellectuality for a philosophy of life.

It is not too much to say that the elements of an explanation for this forbidding and apparently irremediable destiny are clearly present in the body of teaching and illustrative literature of the Theosophical Movement. Even the course of that Movement itself, despite its numerous human failures and betrayals, gives evidence of comprehending principles that throw light on the disasters which have overtaken mankind. And no disaster which can be understood is really a disaster. By understanding the meaning of what has happened, it is always possible to launch a new course of action which will not lead to disaster.

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If H. P. Blavatsky really possessed the vision and foresight which her great works, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, suggest were hers, she must have realized that the twentieth century would bring crisis after crisis to the affairs of mankind. There is ample evidence, both implicit and explicit, in her writings that she foresaw not only the external forms of present-day disturbances, but also their subtler origin on the planes of psychic and moral causation. “In a few years,” she wrote in an article published in *Lucifer*, “the psychic idiosyncrasies of humanity will enter on a great change.” During this period of change, she added, psychologists will have “some extra work to do.” Perhaps the most obvious fact relating to the accelerated psychic development of the present time is the progressive self-consciousness of Western man. In no previous epoch of Western history will there be found the preoccupation with mental and emotional experience that has been typical of the past half-century in both Europe and America. If H. P. Blavatsky’s analysis of the psychic principles of man’s nature be taken into consideration, this development is no coincidence, but represents the natural evolutionary response in consciousness to the awakening psychic capacities of the race. Mesmer, an occult teacher and healer of the eighteenth century, tried to anticipate this awakening and to direct the inquiring minds of his time to principles of practical psychology that were at once philosophically elevating and therapeutically valuable. The materialism of the West, however, made short work of Mesmer’s effort, which survived, along orthodox lines, only in the debasing practices of the modern hypnotists.

In the nineteenth century, the lines of Mesmer’s influence which continued through heterodox channels became entangled with Spiritualism, with various aspects of “New Thought,” and with Christian Science. Then, in **1875**, **H.P.B.** made strenuous efforts to deepen the world’s understanding of the psychological mysteries of human life, approaching this task by working, at first, with the Spiritualists. How they greeted her attempt to place their phenomena within a framework of rational explanation is now history—the early history of the Theosophical Movement. And, just as charlatans and exploiters followed behind Mesmer, transforming his doctrines into half-understood slogans and formulas—the stock-in-trade

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of the quacks alike of medicine, psychology, and religion—so, the aftermath of the Theosophical Movement has produced much the same sort of camp-followers and traders upon things “occult.” The dark shadow which follows every innovation overtook the great moral reform attempted by

the Founders of the Theosophical Society, and while the Movement's leavening influence is everywhere felt, so, also, are the corruptions of its high ethics and psychological insight having their effect. But where, precisely, are evidences of increasing psychic vulnerability to be sought and recognized? We have only to look about. First of all, and perhaps the most dangerous, is the new popularity of hypnotism. No large metropolitan center is without several "teachers" of hypnotism who, beneath the camouflage of high-sounding objectives, promise the acquisition of psychological power over other people to prospective learners. The counterpart of this modern resort to the techniques of sorcery lies in the growing susceptibility of the population to suggestion. This has been called the Age of Power, but might better have been named the Age of Propaganda. "Psychological warfare" is now a hackneyed expression among the essayists and commentators of the day, and it is no exaggeration to say that vast masses of the population of the world are more dependent for their sense of well-being upon an artificially prepared psychological and emotional diet than upon the satisfaction of their normal physical needs. The individual's loss of his political independence has been accompanied by the loss of his economic and psychological independence. The economic developments of the early years of this century made it plain that marketing constituted the essential problem of business—not production, but distribution, ever-increasing distribution. As soon as techniques of control of human behavior were discovered and elaborated by scientists working in psychological laboratories, these methods were studied and adapted to the service of modern marketing. Advertising became the cult of business, with thousands of devotees eager to learn the secrets of manipulating human thought and emotion for profit.

New and more penetrating channels of suggestion became available through the facilities of mass-circulation newspapers, magazines, then the radio, and now, television. An entire caste

of merchandisers, working through these media, have become professionally skilled in the exploitation of human weakness and foible. Meanwhile, the growth of publishing enterprise to the status of "big business" led to standardization of reading material, and the virtual disappearance of originality and editorial independence from the field of newspapers and popular magazines. In time, the techniques of suggestion employed by advertisers were taken over by political propagandists and pressure groups of every description—by even the churches, in some instances. It has become a settled practice to deal with the public in terms of the psycho-emotional effects of statements or claims made, with little regard for the actual truth-content of what is asserted.

Some notice has been taken in a previous chapter of the numerous new religious cults which have grown up in response to the frustrations of the epoch and because of the inadequacies of traditional religion. An ominous phase of these movements is their occasionally political overtones. While such movements have been forming, dissolving, and re-forming, the aggressive political movements of the time reveal a corresponding tendency to exploit the religious emotions of the masses. Every serious student of modern politics has noticed in the "revolutionary" movements of both fascism and communism typical elements of religious fanaticism; the analogies between modern nationalism and the power drive of politically active religious organizations are too numerous to mention. There can be little doubt but that dark, subterranean forces, potentialities which almost no one thought any longer existed among "civilized" human beings, are finding their way to expression, horrifying and blighting the sensitive among men; coarsening, hardening, and brutalizing others; and frightening still others into cowed submissiveness. And that these forces are psychological, there can be even less doubt. Men live in their minds and in their feelings, and

what they fear and hope for are determined by what they think of themselves, what they think it may be possible for them to do and be—or to become. What is “totalitarianism,” but the monolithic political exterior of millions of human beings who have been molded into psychic conformity—almost psychic identity—by

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their psychological masters? What is modern war—that quintessence of the totalitarian spirit and form of “social order”—but the annihilation of all human individuality; and a form, moreover, devised and perfected for the destruction of physical humanity?

But if these things be recognized as at root psychological in nature—if the disasters of the recent past, as well as those impending, be admitted as having their beginning in the thoughts and feelings of human beings—what then? The answer afforded in the Theosophical philosophy is plain enough. It is that just as the elements of disorder have poured from the Pandora’s box of human nature, so there is in man a principle of control, of understanding and mastery over all the menacing events, dooms and disasters that the mind can conceive. What man has unleashed, he can also recapture, control, and redirect. It was H. P. Blavatsky’s purpose to arouse the good—one might say, quite literally, the “divine”—in man, as well as to explain the hidden capacities and powers which, misunderstood and allowed to run riot, have so disturbed and confused and even tortured the common life of mankind. She taught the equality of human beings to all of their problems and sufferings, not as a formula for cultist flag-waving or sentimentality, but in terms of psychological laws and ethical principles. Her object was to open up, for all who would listen—and for those who might listen later on—a vista into the realm of human possibilities, and to give such demonstrations as were within her power of the promise that moral and intellectual evolution holds in store for man. What kind of hopes, then, it may be asked, remain for the future? What sort of “prophecy” is afforded by the Theosophical perspective, and what reason have we to believe that the century of effort which H.P.B. began will not find its influence lost entirely, and forgotten by men? So many “movements” have appeared throughout the past, only to blend indistinguishably with other human activities, their moral inspiration dying, their aims becoming empty echoes.

It is true that the energies of the Theosophical Movement have been spread abroad, that they have entered into other phases of endeavor and, often enough, have lost touch with their original impetus and source. But the essential impact of

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Theosophic principles has not been lost; rather, it may be recognized in countless places as exerting an unostentatious but very real influence upon the mind of the time. To measure with any accuracy the effect of the Theosophical Movement upon the world would be, of course, an impossible task, for the less particularized the form of Theosophical ideas, the more far-reaching their power. How estimate, for example, the degree in which the fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* have weakened the hold of anthropomorphic religion in the Western World? Yet there can be no doubt that the personal, outside God of traditional Christianity is today only a relic of primitive belief. In the field of human relations, the ideal of human brotherhood without distinction of race, color or creed is now almost a commonplace objective. Present-day humanitarians and social thinkers simply assume that no lesser ideal can be contemplated. Who is to say to what extent the First Object of the original Theosophical Society—proposing the formation of the

nucleus of Universal Brotherhood—sounded the keynote of this now universally accepted aspiration? These are ethical and philosophical influences. So far as particular doctrines are concerned, the teachings of Karma and Reincarnation have gradually penetrated to every class and stratum of society, so that beliefs affected by these ideas appear with ever-increasing frequency.

But if, as theosophists maintain, the spread of Theosophy will come about far more as an awakening process than through the imposition of ideas through propaganda, no possible way can be found to distinguish between the direct and indirect influence of the Theosophical Movement and the deeper stirrings of minds and hearts that might be expected in this period of turmoil and anxiety. In a wider sense, every tendency toward self-reliance and moral independence is an expression of the strength of the Theosophical current in history. In the region of practical economics, there are already numerous small beginnings in the direction of a more natural life. The back-to-the land movement is an agrarian reform, but it is also something of greater importance—an endeavor to restore harmonious relationships between man and nature. The new interest in unprocessed, natural foods, in natural immunity from disease, in spontaneous pleasures and self-

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devised recreation—all these are part of the general and intuitive attempt by members of the human family to regain the basic integrity that they feel is lacking from the practical side of existence. In politics and social relationships, a similar determination to find the root-principles which apply in the organization of the human community have led to the birth of new conceptions of social order. Men who, years ago, would have been drawn into the ranks of the “radical movement” are now devoting their lives to the ideal of “community” as the basic environmental unit of the good society. Others, who have seen the revolutionary political movements of the nineteenth century end in the grim totalitarian fiascos of the twentieth century, are re-thinking their way through social issues along anarchist lines, with the conception of the moral individual as the starting point for their reflections. The popular revolt against war has also developed to the proportion of a significant movement within the past fifty years. The influence of Gandhi in this direction has, of course, been immeasurable. In Asia a kind of international camaraderie exists among admirers of Gandhi, and these are numbered in millions, not only in Asia, but throughout the world. In Europe, the extraordinary popularity of Garry Davis, the young American who for a time renounced his United States citizenship in order to dramatize the idea of a world community, revealed the readiness of hundreds of thousands of people, and even entire cities, to support a grassroots movement for world peace—a movement rising from the hopes and yearnings of the common man, rather than in response to diplomatic concern for the “national interest.” The remarkable progress of the war-resistance movement in England and America, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, also gives evidence of the growing belief that modern war is a collective insanity of the nations, and that if the nations do not know how to stop cutting one another’s throats, the people themselves must call a halt.

Similar stirrings may be noted in the psychic and emotional life of the peoples of the West. The prestige of evolutionary materialism has lost much of its force—discounted, perhaps, along with the general disillusionment with “science” as providing the means to a happy, peaceful world. When orthodoxies

show their inadequacy, there is opportunity for men to learn from their own primary intuitions and to regain the self-reliance in thought upon which all genuine growth depends. Even in the academic world, new inroads have been made into the complacent materialism of the age. Anthropologists such as Henry Fairfield Osborn, and Frederic Wood Jones in England, have shown that the human species ought to be regarded as a line of evolution independent of the anthropoid apes. The work in the field of extra sensory perception, begun by William McDougall and carried to dramatic and widely accepted conclusions by J. B. Rhine of Duke University, has opened up the prospect in scientific psychology of a new, non-animalistic theory of human nature. It is even conceivable that, within two or three decades, the term "soul" will begin to be restored to the scientific vocabulary, where it will represent a disciplined conception of the human ego as a unitary being of consciousness, having powers, faculties and duration independent of the outer physical organism. Meanwhile, as these developments proceed in modern research, progress in the clinical aspects of psychology has also resulted in new working conceptions of the human psyche. Despite the reticence and timidity of psychiatrists and analysts as a group, some of their number have spoken out candidly against the debilitating effects of religious dogma. The psychiatrists emphasize the need for the psychically disabled to learn to think for themselves, and while modern clinical psychology has long been under the shadow of Freudian excesses, the value of psychiatric criticism of both personal and cultural delusions, springing largely from traditional religion, can hardly be overestimated.

A century ago, the forward impetus of the Theosophical Movement was prepared for through the cycle of Spiritualistic inquiry. In this century, however, psychic development and interest is concerned with the problems of modern psychiatry, with new interest in telepathy and other forms of extra sensory perception, and with the quite noticeable attractions which the idea of "yogi" powers holds for innumerable people, especially the young, who maintain a not unwholesome, if uninstructed, attitude toward such possibilities of self-development and self-control. In general, it may be said that there is much less

"supernaturalism" in the psychism of the twentieth century, and while the spread of hypnotic practices is an ominous aspect of this development, many doctors are well aware of the dangers of hypnotism and are doing what they can to prevent its misuse. In education, too, the trend is away from materialism, and toward a new self-reliance and the disciplined use of reason. The great contribution of the Progressives, led by John Dewey, was the stimulus to independent thinking and self-expression, and the insistence that knowledge must always relate to the immediate experience of individuals. While the Progressives sought to end the reign of rigid educational authority and inherited formalism, Dr. Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, has labored to restore the search for first principles as the key to all genuine teaching and education. The Great Books seminars now being carried on by volunteer educators, using the Socratic method, in hundreds of cities of the United States, are contributing to a revival of philosophical thinking. This work helps to uncover anew the undying philosophical values in the great literature of the past.

Conceivably, these various developments, hardly noticeable to those who have only the daily press to acquaint them with what is going on in the world, represent the preliminary shaping of a vast matrix for future cycles of human evolution. Even the titanic struggles of the wars of this

century, the accompanying nihilistic revolutions, and the return by some nations to the barbarisms of a forgotten past, may be seen as symptoms of a much deeper revolt of the human spirit against the hypocrisies and deceits of Christendom. The aimlessness and hopelessness of countless millions of the peoples of the world of today represent at least a disillusionment that may be necessary to any sort of genuine awakening.

The world cries out for a philosophy of soul that is free from the blandishments of priests, from the oppressive authority of creeds and immovably dogmatic institutions. Human beings seek some source of faith in themselves—they long to be able to believe in themselves, to be capable of genuine love and self-respect. Perhaps, as the Theosophic philosophy suggests, a great psychic mutation is in the making for mankind—not, surely, some kind of miraculous “intervention” by an

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amiable deity, but a natural transition like the passage in adolescence from boyhood to manhood. If evolution be more than purely physical, then a change of this sort may easily be regarded as a possibility. But in any event, whatever the future holds, it will come as a blessing or a curse depending upon the degree of self-consciousness and understanding with which it is met by human beings themselves. The message of the Theosophical Movement is that knowledge is the key to human progress and happiness, and that such knowledge is possible. The story of the Theosophical Movement reaches back across the centuries, its beginning lost in the darkness which precedes the memory of man. Its representatives, teachers and spokesmen have all said the same thing—that its origin is the evolutionary impulse of great Nature; its purpose the uplift and emancipation from suffering and ignorance of every living thing upon the face of the earth. It teaches the immortality of the soul—of the enduring human ego—that eternal pilgrim who journeys from life to life, passing through civilization after civilization, sometimes gaining, sometimes failing, but ever moving onward according to its self-made destiny. For this soul, there is no darkness without the light which casts the shadow, no agony without a compensating joy or peace. The end of all this struggle is the growth into greater self-knowledge, which means that the hunger for love and companionship will at last be satisfied in the realization of the spiritual identity which joins every man with his fellow, which makes us all parts of one another, all brothers and children of one great parent, Life. This was the dream for which that lion-hearted soul, H. P. Blavatsky, labored. There were those in her lifetime who felt the touch of her spirit, the magic of her indomitable will, and lived forever after in the warmth of the fire kindled within them. There have been others, since, who have found the same tide of aspiration and have merged their lives with its ever-running current. The real Theosophical Movement is not a matter of ‘organizations.’ While it may use organizations, as souls use bodies, the life of an organization in no way defines or limits the life of the Theosophical Movement. H. P. Blavatsky cared little or nothing for the institutional forms of

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Theosophical organizations. She would, as she wrote to Col. Olcott, quickly drop the Theosophical Society if it ceased to be a useful tool for the spread of the living ideas with which she was solely concerned. But she cared everything for these ideas, and Judge, with her and after her, felt as she did and followed her example. The true history of the Theosophical Movement is of necessity a

history of the movement of ideas—the fertilized germs of thought which stir the human intelligence and spur it onward to further heights of comprehension and a wider fraternity of mind.