

MRS BESANT AND THE PRESENT
CRISIS IN THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY

BY
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WITH A PREFATORY LETTER BY
M. EDOUARD SCHURÉ

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FOREWORD

MY first words are of thanks to my illustrious countryman, M. Edouard Schuré, for having permitted me to print his letter as Preface to this book. M. Schuré has contributed some of the brightest jewels to the cluster that adorn the fabric of contemporary spiritual literature in France. Nor does his influence end with our frontiers; far beyond our national boundaries are unnumbered souls nourishing their inner life at the living fountain of his inspired writings.

M. Schuré's letter came into my hands at a time when a stern sense of duty had imposed on me the task of endeavouring to call public attention and alarm public feeling regarding the serious crisis through which the Theosophical Society was passing. His letter showed me that our great writer was moved by the same sense of indignation and apprehension as I was myself conscious of. M. Schuré is highly intuitional; he carries us along with him to a perception of truth by means of noble and eloquent words, by means of lofty views

clothed in beautiful language; and through his letter there runs that greatness of motive which we have learnt to look for in him. His intuitive genius leads our sense of truth to a conclusion identical with that arrived at by a logical and rigorously impartial study of co-ordinated documents, such as is undertaken in this brochure.

This perfect agreement of our conclusions has been a source of great satisfaction to me. To understand the sense of support it has given me it would be necessary to realise the intense pain the writing of these pages, so damaging to Mrs Besant, has caused me.

I know better than anyone, and from personal experience, all the good that the earlier books of Mrs Besant have effected. Her present mistakes, her infinitely regrettable actions, cannot make me forget her great merit. On the contrary, this remembrance itself has supported me through the carrying out of my painful task. For I believe that in endeavouring to undo the evil she is spreading I show for her a real appreciation, that which would diminish the weight of her karmic responsibility. Theosophists will understand me. They will also understand that those do but injure her who give her the support of a blind loyalty.

One other thought has helped and encouraged me. To all who would distinguish between the real and the unreal this question of the "return of

the Christ" is, of all those with which present and future humanity is concerned, by far the most important. For the time being it interests but a few minds; but those who have studied it know that it is destined to move and stir the depths of the human soul more profoundly than they have ever yet been stirred in modern times. It is this that has made it seem to me a pressing duty to clear up the pernicious equivocations now current on this subject, the more so that the erroneous statements of Mrs Besant encourage the mistaken belief of incompatibility between Christianity and Theosophy. In Paris, three lectures given at the Catholic Institute have maintained this view. One lecture had for title, "To Fight against Theosophy is a Religious Duty." Further, an important article appeared recently in the *Church Times*, one of the best-known religious papers, ending with these words: "The day on which we accept Theosophy we renounce Christ." I must confess that a careful study of Mrs Besant's assertions forces every logical mind to this conclusion, but her errors should not be imputed to Theosophy. The pages following, which deal with Mrs Besant's "return of the Christ" message, will show that this has no connection with Theosophical teachings.

My space has, unfortunately, been too limited for me to attempt to give in detailed order Dr Steiner's

comprehensive views concerning the Christ, and the unique rôle he sees Him as playing in the scheme of human evolution. For the writer it is beyond question that it is the teachings of Dr Steiner that have made him bow in reverence of mind and heart before Christ, though at the time he was an alien from Christianity both by birth and by his philosophic and theosophic past.

This is the very Christ of the Gospels, and no other. It cannot therefore be a question for a single moment of antagonism between Christianity and Theosophy properly so called—very much the reverse. And to this every sincere inquirer will agree.

All who desire to protect Theosophy from whatever would compromise it will approve the step I have taken, and will forgive me for not having shrunk from any revelation, however painful it might be; for having respected no error, whoever might be its author; for having yielded to nothing but to the truth of documents and facts; and for having held to the interpretations of common sense alone. I have sought the support of those minds alone who hope nothing save from Truth.

EUGÈNE LÉVY.

PREFACE

A Letter from M. Edouard Schuré, Honorary Member of the French Section of the Theosophical Society, to the General Secretary of the French Section.

To M. Charles Blech, General Secretary of the French Theosophical Society.

DEAR SIR,—In the year 1907 you graciously offered me the title of Honorary Member of the T.S., on account of the part I had taken in your movement through my writings. I fully understood how friendly and flattering your intention was. I accordingly accepted, with as much joy as gratitude, the honour you wished to confer upon me. If I now feel compelled to retire officially from the T.S., it is my duty to give you my reasons straightforwardly.

At the date of which I speak (1907) it was possible to hope that harmony would be maintained in the T.S. in spite of the various tendencies then

manifesting within it. For in its very principles it recognised the necessary variety of religions and philosophies, under the ægis of human brotherhood and a divine principle of the universe. Since the Christian era there have been two different streams in esotericism, the Eastern and the Western. I will remark in passing that these two currents can be clearly distinguished in the life and work of the founder of the T.S., Mme. H. P. Blavatsky. For her first work, *Isis Unveiled*, was written under a visibly Western and Rosicrucian influence, whereas her later works bear an Eastern and Hindu stamp. In the serene heights of thought and initiation these two traditions have always understood and helped each other. They have only disagreed and contended when personal passions and ambitions have invaded the teaching. We could hope, and ought to have hoped, that the T.S. would remain true to the motto inscribed on its banner. I, for my part, wished this all the more because amongst the national branches of the T.S. a specially lofty and fruitful task was assigned by nature to the French Section, that of keeping the balance between the most varied tendencies, and seeking to synthesise them. Is not the sense of liberty and universality the highest mark of the French genius? The remarkable personality of the President, Mrs Annie Besant, and the nobility of

her past career, seemed to promise that the T.S. would continue in the broad way of tolerance, impartiality, and veracity which forms an essential part of its programme.

Unfortunately, things turned out otherwise. The primary cause of this deviation lies in the close alliance of Mrs Besant with Mr Leadbeater, a learned occultist, but of an unsettled disposition and doubtful morality. After Mr Leadbeater had been found guilty by an advisory Committee of the T.S., Mrs Besant publicly announced her reprobation of the educational methods with which he was charged. Her verdict of exclusion against this theosophist who had been found to be unworthy was exceedingly severe. By an inconceivable change of front she soon afterwards declared her intention of bringing Mr Leadbeater into the T.S. again, and she succeeded, not without some difficulty, in gaining the vote of the majority of her colleagues for this purpose. The excuses she gave for this recantation were charity and pardon. The real reason was that the President needed Mr Leadbeater for her occult investigations, and that this collaboration appeared to her necessary to her prestige. To those who have followed her words and acts from that time onwards, it is clearly manifest that Mrs Besant has fallen under the formidable suggestive power of her dangerous collaborator, and can only see, think, and act under his absolute

control. The personality henceforward speaking through her is no more the author of *The Ancient Wisdom*, but the questionable visionary, the skilful master of suggestion who no longer dares to show himself in London, Paris, or America, but in the obscurity of a summer-house at Adyar governs the T.S. through its President. The ill-omened consequences of this influence were soon to appear before the world through the affair of Alcyone and the founding of the Order of the Star in the East.

By a singular chance, I had the opportunity of surprising the secret cause and, so to say, the psychological fount of this deplorable enterprise. I will begin by saying that at this time there was no talk as yet of a new Teacher to come from India, nor of an approaching reincarnation of Christ, and that probably no one thought of such a thing. Alcyone had not yet been discovered. This was in 1908. I had just published a translation of a book of Dr Rudolf Steiner under the title, *Le mystère Chrétien et les mystères antiques*. This book had attracted the attention of the European public to the revival of Western esotericism, made known in this magnificent piece of work and through the activity of the German theosophist. Passing through Stuttgart, I fell in with some ten English, Dutch, Swiss, and French theosophists. The following question was raised: "Will the two

schools, that of Adyar and Dr Steiner's, be able to go on hand in hand?" We were almost all of opinion that agreement would be possible in spite of different points of view, and that this was highly desirable in the best interests of theosophy, which does not represent a particular or national movement, but a universal movement of contemporary humanity.

Only one member of the group protested. This was a very intelligent Dutch theosophist, of sceptical and scoffing disposition, an intimate friend of Mr Leadbeater, and an habitual guest at Adyar. He plainly said that the two schools would not be able to agree, and gave as his reason that *only India possesses the tradition, and that there had never been any scientific esotericism in the West.*

This dogmatic assertion astonished me. I only understood its meaning and scope when shortly afterwards, like a bomb, or rather like a firework, the affair of Alcyone burst upon us. For this affair is really nothing but the answer from Adyar to the revival of Christian esotericism in the West, and I am convinced that had it not been for the latter we should never have heard of the future prophet Krishnamurti.

If a real Indian initiate, a Brahmin or otherwise, of ripe age, had come to Europe on his own responsibility or in the name of his Masters to teach

his doctrines, nothing would have been more natural or interesting. We should only have had to listen to him, to judge him by his words and acts, and to add to our knowledge from his. But it was not in this form that we beheld the new apostle from Adyar. A young Indian, aged thirteen, initiated by Mr Leadbeater—that is to say, trained by him, mentally impressed to a high degree—is proclaimed and presented to the European public as the future teacher of the new era. Krishnamurti, now called Aleyone, has no other credentials than his master's injunctions and Mrs Besant's patronage. His thirty-two previous incarnations are related at length, the early ones going back to the Atlantean period. These narratives, given as the result of Mr Leadbeater's and Mrs Besant's visions, are for the most part grotesquely puerile, and could convince no serious occultist. They are ostensibly designed to prove that for twenty or thirty thousand years the principal personages in the T.S. have been preparing for the Great Work which is soon to be accomplished. In the course of their incarnations, which remind one of a newspaper novel, these personages are decorated with the great names of Greek mythology, and with those of the most brilliant stars in the firmament. During a meeting at Benares, Krishnamurti, presenting certificates to his followers, received honours like

a divine being, many persons present falling at his feet. He does not, however, utter a word, but only makes a gesture of benediction, prompted by Mrs Besant. In reporting this scene Mr Leadbeater likens it to the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

For this dumb prophet is founded the Order of the Star in the East, which the whole world is invited to join, and of which he is proclaimed the head. In Europe Mrs Besant gives lectures on the future Christ, whose advent she predicts to be very near. She does not say positively that Krishna-murti will be he, but she allows it to be understood, suggesting the thought by transparent allusions. They are thus left free to make him either the herald or the incarnation of this Christ. Be that as it may, the passive young prodigy, who has not yet given the world the least proof of having any mission at all, becomes henceforth the centre and cynosure of the T.S., the symbol and sacred ark of the orthodox faith of Adyar. As to the doctrine preached by Mrs Besant, it rests on a perpetual equivocation. She allows the English public at large, to whom she speaks of the coming Christ, to believe that he is identical with the Christ of the Gospels, whereas to her intimates she states what Mr Leadbeater teaches, and what he openly proclaims in one of his books, *The Inner Life*—namely, that the Christ of the Gospels never existed,

and was an invention of the monks of the second century.

Such facts are difficult to characterise. I will simply say that they are saddening for all those who, like myself, believed in the future of the T.S., for they can only repel clear-sighted and sincere minds. I will only draw here one historical conclusion. From the succession of facts which I have just reported, it comes out with striking clearness that the Order of the Star in the East, and the kind of religion which they are trying to start round the name of Alcyone, is first and foremost an engine of war invented for making a breach in the independent Theosophy of the West an attempt (what a clumsy one!) to nullify Christian esotericism for the benefit, I will not say of Eastern wisdom, for the latter would take exception to this, but of the Adyar sect; an attempt of which Mr Leadbeater is the instigator, Mrs Annie Besant the accomplice, and the whole Society the victim.

One word more about the latest events. After what has been related, a conflict between the President and Dr Steiner was inevitable. The smothered attacks which had been going on for some years he at first only answered with long-suffering and complete silence. The extreme tension of a situation which could not be indefinitely prolonged determined him to act with unexpected

energy. The published documents of the controversy prove that Mrs Annie Besant has failed in straightforwardness and sincerity by trying to misrepresent the teaching and personality of the German theosophist by false assertions and underhand methods. It was expected that she would meet the charges brought against her—supported as they were by indisputable facts and by her own writings—with a regular refutation. Her only answer is the cancelling, pure and simple, of the German and Swiss Lodge charters. Finally, anxious to conclude the debate without discussion, she seeks, in a recent article in the *Theosophist*, summarily to discredit the thought and character of Dr Steiner by affirming “that he was educated by the Jesuits.” This assertion, which is destitute of any foundation, and which it would considerably embarrass Mrs Besant to prove, conclusively shows the disloyal character of her insinuations.

These facts taken together have determined the resolution I now take. In my eyes, one can no longer be an actual member of the T.S. without implicitly approving the deeds and words of the President, which flagrantly contradict the essential principle of the Society—I mean scrupulous and absolute respect for truth. For these reasons I regret that I must send you my resignation as a member of the Theosophical Society.

In fulfilling this painful duty, I am conscious

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of remaining true to the spirit of eternal and universal theosophy, with the certainty that it will one day emerge triumphantly from its temporary eclipse.

Accept, dear sir, the assurance of my affection and respect.

EDOUARD SCHURÉ.

PARIS, *March* 1, 1913.

MRS BESANT AND THE PRESENT CRISIS IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

MRS BESANT'S PROCEEDINGS

THE CONVENTION OF 1912

IN her Convention speech, printed in the *Theosophist* for February of 1913, Mrs Besant states: "The General Secretary of the German Section, educated by the Jesuits, has not been able to shake himself sufficiently clear of that fatal influence to allow liberty of opinion within his Section."

¶ This fact stated by Mrs Besant is entirely false. ¶

Dr Steiner has *not* been educated by the Jesuits. His Autobiography, given as an answer to this imputation, will shortly appear, with definite light on this question. We give it in brief.

Dr Steiner was born on 27th February 1861, in the village of Kraljevic in Hungary, the son of a railway official. The removals of his father from place to place led them, when Dr Steiner was two years old, to Pottschach, on the frontiers of Styria

and of Lower Austria; and seven years after to Neudörfel (in Hungarian, Lajtha Szt. Miklós), a small station on the frontiers of Cislethania, on the Hungarian side. Up to the age of ten Dr Steiner attended the peasant schools of the villages in which his father was stationed. There are not in these villages or in their neighbourhood any Jesuit establishments. On the contrary, Dr Steiner exhibits the religious indifference characteristic of the environment in which he was brought up; to such an extent is this so that his father decided to send him at the age of ten to a technical school, the Realschule of Wiener-Neustadt, to prepare him for the career of engineer, or any other calling in accordance with the modern scientific tendency. Dr Steiner followed the course of religious studies in this school only the first four years, when it was obligatory. He has not been confirmed. In order that he might continue his studies at a better school, his father moved later to the suburbs of Vienna, where Dr Steiner studied at the Polytechnical Institute. These studies over, he became tutor in the family of a Jewish merchant. It was during the course of these years of teaching that his career tended towards classical studies, originally undertaken with the object of helping one of his pupils. It was thus that he was induced to work for and take the university degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

These facts will prove sufficiently the absolute falsity of the allegations of Mrs Besant. They even prove them grotesque, for who is going to believe that a Jewish merchant in Austria would confide the education of his children to a pupil of the Jesuits ?

Mrs Besant will probably tell us one of these days that she was misinformed.

However, this does not quite dispose of the matter ; we cannot let it pass thus lightly, nor without saying that it seems to argue a great lack of the sense of responsibility in Mrs Besant to have thus carelessly made such an assertion, and immediately drawn from it such a damning conclusion.

In a Society which has the proud motto, "There is no religion higher than Truth," every member, even the latest recruit, should be moved by a sense of duty not to repeat anything which may be inaccurate. And before any member launched an accusation so serious as the one above quoted, he should possess unquestionable proof. But when it comes to the President of the Society being guilty of such ill-speaking, the sin acquires a gravity in proportion to the greatness of her responsibilities and to the importance of the occasion on which it was uttered ; for the real seriousness of her action becomes apparent when we remember that she was addressing an audience drawn from the four corners of the civilised world.

In committing this indiscretion Mrs Besant has lowered the banner entrusted to her hands, the banner that bears that noble motto exalting the worship of Truth even above the worship of the Divine. Such is the tragedy we are facing to-day in the Society.

Dr Steiner is a teacher for whom I have a profound veneration, but it is not the personal insult flung at him that most deeply wounds me: it is the fact that Mrs Besant has not only failed in her Presidential duty, but that she has deliberately betrayed the vital principle of Theosophy, that principle which is the quintessence of the three objects of the Society and of its motto: fidelity to Truth, devotion to Truth.

I would not arrogate to myself the right to judge my neighbour, but it is not a question here of either Mrs Besant or myself: it is a question of the Theosophical Society, of an instrument destined to aid in the evolution of humanity. The more keenly we have its mission at heart, the more earnestly shall we watch that it be worthy and capable of its great task.

Mrs Besant held these same views when in 1906 she said, in speaking of the Leadbeater affair, that "the Theosophical Society must be protected from all teachings that would sully or degrade it," and she adds: "If the day of my fall should come, I ask those who love me not to shrink from con-

demning my fault, not to extenuate it nor to say that black is white, but rather let them lighten my heavy karma, as I am trying to lighten the karma of my friend and brother, by proclaiming the unshaken purity of the ideal. . . . Leadbeater has fallen, Judge has fallen, perhaps I too shall fall. . . ." (*Theosophic Voice*, vol. i. No. 3).

The critical moment so pathetically foreseen seems to have arrived, and the task set forth her true friends will perform though the pain be beyond expression, because they claim, as she claimed, to hold the worship of the ideal above all.

Mrs Besant makes use of a false imputation in representing all Dr Steiner's acts as inspired by a narrow and sectarian spirit. The allegation being false, her conclusions based on it disappear with it. But Mrs Besant's attitude, as revealed by this slander, does not offer us a sufficient guarantee of impartiality for us to accept without investigation any of her conclusions concerning her differences with Dr Steiner. Thus a careful examination of the facts themselves becomes our duty.

To explain the spirit in which I undertake this inquiry, I would ask leave here to repeat my words to Mrs Besant, to be found in the *Theosophist* of June 1912, p. 441: "Before Dr Steiner began his public work your writings, inspired by the great power of your devotion to the most noble human

ideal, had moved me to devote my inner and outer life to the service of Truth. And so I would here offer you the tribute of deep gratitude and admiration that nothing can ever alter."

I have loyally endeavoured to be true to these feelings throughout these pages; but Mrs Besant's own past exhortations call upon me to subordinate such sentiments to a sole concern for truth. So that I shall in this book call upon facts alone, on documents that can be consulted by all; and the interpretation of these facts shall be in accordance with principles universally admitted by all theosophists.

[The following paragraphs were added while this book was going through the press, and so appear as an addition.]

In repeating Mrs Besant's erroneous statements as regards Dr Steiner's education I admitted her good faith, and I was convinced that she would correct her mistake as soon as she was rightly informed. This expectation has not been realised. In the *Theosophist* for April of 1913, just published, she prints Dr Steiner's strong protest against this slander, as contrary to the known facts of his life. She pays no attention to this protest, but on the contrary she repeats her assertion, quoting the sources of her information: Dr Franz Hartmann, Herr Paul Zillmann, and Dr Fred. Maack.

Now, at the same time that the *Theosophist* was being printed at Adyar, the April *Mitteilungen* was being printed in Germany, and this latter contains a very curious anecdote about Dr Franz Hartmann. On p. 1 of the German paper Dr Steiner writes: "During the Congress of 1909, held that year at Budapest, Mrs Besant spoke to me about a certain person, whom she conceived to be in a position of disagreement with me on some points. I asked for particulars of his grievances, and she replied that this person thought I was a Jesuit; and to show how much this accusation amused her she added that this same person had already considered her one. So that as far back as 1909 Mrs Besant knew perfectly well that the accusation was an absurd one." So much for Dr Franz Hartmann.

The second "witness" of Mrs Besant's is Herr Paul Zillmann, of whom she herself says that he had never been able to work with Dr Steiner. For the second time Mrs Besant has sought information as to Dr Steiner from an opponent.

She quotes finally a Dr Ferd. Maack, but she does not say that not for a moment could anyone take the pamphlet from which the false statement is taken as a true biography. This same brochure is throughout a bitter criticism against Dr Steiner, and all that he says and does. The words "pupils of the Jesuits" are there used in the same sense as that in which they are used in the following

lines, to be read in a German brochure by Heinrich Hensoldt, Ph.D., and which appeared five or six years ago under the title, *Annie Besant: Eine wunderliche Heilige*—a queer saint. This author writes of her: "For a long time now she seems to have comforted herself with the old motto of the Jesuits, that the end justifies the means, and to have discovered a *modus vivendi*. She now firmly believes, in the depths of her heart, that without some charlatanry, in spite of the desire to remain honest, it is not possible to play a great rôle in the world."

The one conclusion we arrive at from all this wretched gossip is that the insinuation of any connection whatever with the Jesuits would seem to be in Germany a favourite and effective means of besmirching a reputation. Could Mrs Besant really have believed in the *impartiality* of an author who opposed alike the personality and the occultism of Dr Steiner, would she seriously take as a biography a declaration of war that by its whole framework protests against such an interpretation? Any biography must give dates and places, as does the very slight sketch we have given earlier; while on the other hand insinuations without the slightest foundation must perforce remain silent on all such points.

We are forced to admit that Mrs Besant has made use of manifestly unfriendly gossip. It is

true it had been repeated three times, but has she believed that by being repeated a fourth time this scandal would become true? If this were so, Mme. Blavatsky would be unquestionably the greatest impostor of the nineteenth century, since she was its best-slandered personage; not three but thirty or three hundred times was she accused of worse frauds.

All this is terribly sad. Anyone who valued his dignity or was true to his reason would resolutely and sternly repudiate Mrs Besant, for she robs us of our last illusions.

THE CONVENTION OF 1911

Everyone knows that Mrs Besant fills two distinct positions in the Theosophical Society. She is first the President, but she is also a teacher.

The Theosophical Society itself is "without distinction of creed"; it supports no dogma, but permits the widest liberty of opinion. It thus follows that Mrs Besant, in her capacity of President, should feel bound in principle to observe the strictest neutrality in all questions of doctrine or teaching. Her double function especially should impose on her the duty of the strictest possible care, so as scrupulously to avoid any abuse of her Presidential authority in favour of the teaching she represents. It is from this standpoint that

we must consider anyone holding office as President and teacher.

In a letter published in the *Theosophist* of June 1912, I have shown how much Mrs Besant, from 1911, has deviated from this line of conduct. In her address to the Convention at Adyar in that year she said: "Even in Germany a growing number of Theosophists prefer the old and *wider* teachings to the new" (those of Dr Steiner).

Thus did Mrs Besant seek to belittle the teachings of Dr Steiner. She asserted the equality of all teachings within the Theosophical Society in order to assert that those of Dr Steiner were narrower than hers—which is absolutely false. But had it even been true, she thus sought to discredit by her speech teachings other than her own, violating the principle she had proclaimed; and is it very dignified in a teacher to miss no opportunity of vaunting her superiority? So that already in 1911 we see the desire to disparage, in the same direction, though not yet having reached to the extent of slandering, as she did in the 1912 Convention.

Speaking at this same Convention of 1911, Mrs Besant stated that Dr Steiner's teaching gave "to Christianity a primacy which non-Christian nations could not accept, but which suits German ideas. . . ." How many times have I not heard it said that he had violated the principle of equality of religions within the Theosophical Society!

This question seems none the less easy of solution: if there is to be rigid equality of all faiths, equal valuation of their scriptures, equal respect for their ceremonial practices, we shall not only have to place Buddhism on a level with Christianity, but we shall also have to accept the superstitions and customs of African and Australian blacks—whether these have crystallised into an actual faith as yet or not—and place them on a level with the great religions above mentioned. If for a moment we repudiate the idea of such equality, then we have at once admitted “distinction” in creeds.

In denying such equality we shall have introduced another factor into the question, the undeniable truth that a correspondence exists between a religion and the general level of civilisation of the race whose faith it is. We cannot for a moment suppose that those who supervise the religions of humanity have ignored this obvious correspondence as part of the evolutionary law; for it is they who guide evolution, and who surely see that the faith of a nation shall be such as will mould its civilisation. If throughout the ages all religions had been really equal, it would mean that those who guide our evolution had acted somewhat like a state that instituted in its schools a course of study precisely the same for children and adults of all ages. Such an idea

cannot be seriously considered for a moment, and the acceptance of Christianity as part of an organic whole of religions does not preclude appreciation of its special value. On the contrary, the acceptance of a succession of stages in divine revelation supports Dr Steiner's teaching on the point under discussion.

Further, does not the second object of the Society demand the comparative study of religions? . . . Would this be worth while if all the religions were equal?

The very fact of this being an object of the Society shows us to what extent we may assert the equality of religions in the Theosophical Society.

Theosophy proclaims those great laws that guide the spiritual evolution of mankind. Each religion is their temporary expression adapted to the capacities of a certain race, shaped by the conditions of a given epoch; and it is certain that a soul drawing its inspiration from this central religion—which is Theosophy—will have realised the true equality, the real brotherhood of religions. The idea of looking on one as superior or inferior will not arise, since all appear as the forms of supreme Truth, marvellously adapted to the ends they serve at any given moment. Indeed, we might even risk the paradox of saying that a religion would only be inferior were it different from what it was, for in its primitive purity it

suiting, precisely by being what it was, the requirements of the race to whom it was given, and was therefore perfect. Since incarnation in any race is open in principle to all egos, not one could consider itself superior by virtue of being born in one religion or another in a particular incarnation.

From all this we see that, whatever their religious beliefs, the religious equality of the members of the Theosophical Society is an admitted fact, for the one superior religion—Divine Wisdom—unites all the creeds that exist, blending them into a religious fatherland in which they are each but different countries or provinces.

It is thus because Theosophy breaks down the narrow boundaries that limit each religion that it rises above them, and exists at a level at which they can see *their common origin* and *their common goal*. From these two points of view all religions are indeed equal. We can even go further than that, and say that anyone manifesting a preference for any particular form of faith shows thereby that he has not yet got his spiritual home in that Divine Wisdom which has been the builder of all.

If this attitude as described ought to mark every theosophist as regards his outlook on religions, it should be found still more marked in a theosophical teacher, whose words and acts should be inspired by theosophical principles only.

In objecting to the supremacy of one religion, has Mrs Besant desired to intimate that no one who speaks in the name of Theosophy should allow any personal affinity in religious matters to colour their teachings? If so, it must be done without reservations, for the teacher quits theosophic ground if he shows an individual preference for any religion whatsoever. Instead of raising the soul of the student above individual religions, into the sphere of their harmonious unity, he will anchor it more firmly in its narrow beliefs. He will at the same time hurt the feelings of the different races and nations represented within the Theosophical Society, he will intensify the very feelings that the theosophic education tends to transmute and ennoble. He will have strengthened the conceptions that he seeks to reform.

Mrs Besant's concern regarding the supremacy of a single religion within the Theosophical Society is well grounded. Every teacher should guard against expressing a personal bias in matters religious, since this betrays a spirit opposed to that of Theosophy.

Has Dr Steiner then failed in regard to this obligation? His opponents have never pretended to find one single word or one single act proving him to have a personal preference for any one religion.

But it is interesting to examine from this standpoint the attitude of the very ones who accuse him of violating the equality of religions.

We know that Mr Leadbeater, born a Christian and having been a Christian clergyman, has been converted to Buddhism, has taken "pansil," the Buddhist baptism, in great pomp in Ceylon, from the hands of the high priest Sumangala. In recording this conversion in his *Old Diary Leaves*, vol. iii. p. 196, Colonel Olcott says: "The crowd was immense. This was the first instance of a Christian clergyman having publicly declared himself a follower of the Lord Buddha, and the sensation caused by it may be easily imagined." And there were very good grounds for this sensation, for on that day Christianity had been gravely discredited before the eyes of the world in the name of the Theosophical Society. In truth, to change one's religion is not only to express a personal preference, but is to express a recognition of the superiority of the religion that one is converted to over that from which one withdraws. And when a man who has been the priest of one religion leaves it to become the adherent of another, have we not a case of deepest conviction and preference? No one would for a moment dream that such steps proved the conviction of equality of religions. Here we see the total abandonment of the theosophic point of view in

favour of a particular religion. Such an act is completely foreign to theosophic thought or aspiration.

As for Mrs Besant, she hides her preferences no more than Mr Leadbeater. In the *Theosophist* for May 1912, p. 287, she thus writes: "To myself, personally, Hinduism, the oldest religion of our fifth race, is the most satisfactory exposition of the *Wisdom*, the mother of all religions, probably largely because I have been born thereinto so many times, and feel most 'at home' therein." But what gives her words their true significance is that they preface a quotation from an article which had appeared in one of the London journals, accusing Mrs Besant, "in spite of her often very eloquent expressions of Christian truths," of being in reality "the most subtle and dangerous opponent of the Gospel of Christ as understood by the Evangelical Churches," and saying further: "Is it surprising that Hindus should turn their backs upon our civilisation, when a European of highly trained intellectual power, and with an extraordinary gift of eloquence, comes and tells them that it is they who possess and have from all times possessed the key to supreme wisdom; that their gods, their philosophy, their morality are on a higher plane of thought than the West has ever reached?" This author is represented to us by Mrs Besant as "a doubtless

earnest missionary." We must therefore suppose that he informs us correctly as regards Mrs Besant's way of expressing herself about Hinduism, since she does not contradict him, but on the contrary shows precisely these same preferences in the quotation we have given above.

When we see this missionary conclude from her attitude that she is an enemy to Christianity, we realise what a very grave fault it is in a teacher to abandon the theosophic ground of the Mother-Wisdom, in which each religion is perfect. For such a lapse spreads its effects far beyond the limits of our Society, and damages the theosophic ideal in the eyes of the world.

Mrs Besant has done harm to the Society, and has narrowed in the eyes of its members the religious point of view characteristic of Theosophy, in siding with a special religion. She breaks a fundamental requirement in a theosophical teacher, and we have the right to reproach her, slightly modifying her own words: "She gives to Hinduism a supremacy that would not be acceptable . . . either to Christian Theosophists, Hindus, Buddhists, or those of any religion, if they are really Theosophists."

Mrs Besant, unmindful of the evolutionary impress marking the form of every religion, forgetting the official pronouncement of her preference for Hinduism, reproaches Dr Steiner unjustly

with what she is doubly guilty of, both by reason of the sense in which she offers her complaint and by reason of her own personal preferences, irreconcilable with the theosophic point of view in matters of religion.

[What follows has been added while the book was going through the press.]

I have endeavoured to keep strictly to the determination of making no assertion in the course of this examination which cannot be supported by irrefutable proofs. I have therefore refrained from stating, for want of proof, what I have always heard said around me in the Theosophical Society, that Mrs Besant had become a Hindu. But in the *Theosophist* for March 1913, appearing after these pages were written, Mrs Besant writes: "Many of you, *like myself*, are not Christians." Mrs Besant was born a Christian; she could not cease to be one save by denying Christianity in favour of another religion. All our remarks apropos of Mr Leadbeater apply equally to Mrs Besant. She reproaches Dr Steiner for having favoured one religion above the others, without even attempting to prove her assertion; while it is she herself, on the contrary, who is guilty of religious partiality, in the fullest sense of the word, both in her acts and words, as quoted above. We see how clearly our conclusions were justified.

CONCERNING THE SWISS LODGES

Dr Steiner had founded a certain number of extremely flourishing lodges in Switzerland, whose members were more numerous than those of the Swiss lodges whose members were attached to the teachings of Mrs Besant. By a genuine *coup d'état* four of the Geneva lodges, almost the only ones at the time in Switzerland attached to the teachings of Mrs Besant, suddenly split up into seven lodges (the number required by the constitution for the formation of a national section), and applied to Adyar for a charter, under the ægis of rules elaborated so as to place in the hands of the members of the lodges thus applying the future direction of the Swiss Section. The other Swiss lodges had not even been notified of the step taken.

This charter was granted to these sixty-one Genevese members, and a majority of one hundred and thirty-two members, attached to Dr Steiner, were thus gagged in the name of the Constitution; and Mrs Besant failed to see that to stifle justice and liberty in the name of constitutional rules was to violate the most sacred theosophic principles. In view of the obstinacy with which she has refused justice to the repeated appeals of the Swiss lodges attached to Dr Steiner, and of the ceaseless opposition shown by her to the legitimate aspirations of the majority, we are forced to recognise that

she at least protects by her support the arbitrary action of the Geneva lodges, even if she has not encouraged it. And this action, by reason of the aims as revealed in the rules, appears to be a disloyal device towards those within the body of the Theosophical Society who follow the teaching of Dr Steiner. For those rules decreed that the Swiss Section should be governed by the ruling of the Executive Committee, consisting of seven members "*who shall be the presidents of the seven foundation lodges.*" This number might be increased to twelve, thus ensuring a majority in the future to Geneva; and still further assured by the five additional members being *chosen by the Genevese Executive Committee* from among the presidents of lodges! The intentions that must have inspired the authors of such rules are clearly manifest and render comment superfluous.

There is no just cause for reproaching the lodges founded by Dr Steiner with having repudiated Mrs Besant's compromise proposing the formation in Switzerland of two sections, the one German- and the other French-speaking, and the inclusion of Lugano in the Italian Section. If Mrs Besant abandoned the principle of national frontiers (the constitutional pretext of the authors of the *coup d'état*), it was inadmissible in her to substitute the arbitrary principle of linguistic frontiers, entirely absent from the Society's Constitution.

On the one side this artificial barrier would have broken the bond between friends attached to one another and to the same teacher, and on the other it created an illusory division, since in Switzerland it is impossible to trace an absolute line of linguistic demarcation.

The Lugano Lodge, for example, founded by Germans, does not count a single Italian among its membership, and carries on its studies entirely in German. Further, the lodges attached to Dr Steiner, while refusing to be separated from their sister lodges of Neuchâtel and Lugano, undertook on their side in no way to oppose the expansion of the Genevese lodges or the spread of Mrs Besant's teaching throughout Switzerland, German, French, or Italian.

It would have been difficult on the ground of common sense or equity to refuse to listen to such appeal; nevertheless Mrs Besant did virtually refuse in declaring that the Italian General Secretary demanded that Lugano should be included in the Italian Section. Her declaration called forth the following reply, which I quote verbatim: "Your letter contains a misstatement of fact. As soon as it was received, the original president of the Lugano Lodge placed himself in communication with the Italian General Secretary. From the correspondence which ensued it is very evident that the Italian General Secretary not only had never formulated

such a demand, but that he did not even consider it desirable. None the less, on your visit to Geneva *three weeks later*, he yielded to your wish" (*Mitteilungen*, January 1913, p. 16).

Mrs Besant's letter drew down upon her further remonstrances from the Swiss lodges. She had written that the formation of the Lugano Lodge had been an act of aggression against Italy. It was necessary to remind her that the charter which she had herself issued to Dr Steiner when he accepted the office of General Secretary assigned to him "Germany and Switzerland" as his domain. Further, in the same letter in which she denounces this act of "aggression" against Italy she confesses that "Lugano had been one of the foundation lodges of the German Section," thus showing that the founding of the lodge had preceded the entry of Dr Steiner into the Theosophical Society.

Here is an almost incredible collection of inexact and contradictory statements of a most deplorable character.

Yet this tone and attitude of Mrs Besant reveal the real object of the Genevese tactics. Since the attempted seizure of the Steiner lodges situated in German Switzerland must be abandoned, at least let there be an effort to "save" the country still only partially "invaded." The use of the word "invasion" by Mrs Besant on the subject of the foundation of the Neuchâtel Lodge by Dr Steiner

(see *Mitteilungen*, xv. p. 4) shows clearly that all later appearances of Dr Steiner upon Swiss territory would have been characterised as an "invasion."

If the Genevese dictatorship had triumphed, it is evident that it was expected to strangle the Steiner teaching in Switzerland, and to drive it back into Germany.

I must not be blamed, as a member of the French Section, for bearing arms in the dissensions of the Swiss Section. Such reproach would be justified only if the bond between members of the Theosophical Society were other than a purely moral one, and did not rest exclusively upon a common ideal. On this ground, which gives the only real meaning to the letters "M.T.S.," none should remain indifferent, seeing our President obstinately fixed in her unjust view, in spite of the persistent resistance of the Swiss lodges, tirelessly defending their moral and material rights throughout a correspondence covering two whole years. And I will define here, as an instructive comparison, the attitude, true to our motto, that we had the right to expect from Mrs Besant in such a case. Even before the intervention of the wronged Swiss lodges she should, from the very start, have spontaneously condemned the procedure of the founders of the Swiss Section, and should have insisted on their considering and providing for the rights of all classes of lodges. On the contrary—and it is a profoundly regret-

table fact—Mrs Besant, even when urged to do so, took no trouble to support the solution that good feeling and justice alike dictated. It is true that this solution would have involved freedom for the spreading of Dr Steiner's teaching in Switzerland.

THE CASE OF HERR CORDES

Who could have imagined that even in Germany attempts would be made to undermine, to impair, and to destroy the teaching of Dr Steiner? Yet just this is one of the saddest facts to have to relate, for it reveals an increasing cruelty of fanatical intolerance.

Mrs Besant attached to the German Section a certain Herr Cordes, with what object will be seen later.

By reason of the work that had been entrusted to him, Herr Cordes wrote to a member of the German Section, Herr Hubo, asking him for "short and concise news intended for publication, and as much private and confidential information as possible," concerning which, in another part of his letter, he promised the greatest discretion. Herr Hubo interpreted the request for private and confidential information, to be circulated privately, as a suggestion dishonouring to himself. He stigmatised it as an attempt at espionage, and refused to have further dealings with Herr Cordes.

Mrs Besant, in the *Theosophist* of October 1912, without publishing Herr Cordes' letter, wrote that a request for information, warmly welcomed in every other country in the spirit of international theosophic solidarity, had elicited from a member of the German Section the reply which she quoted. She saw in it a malicious obstruction of her desire for a closer union between the sections, and very severely criticised Herr Hubo's letter. *But she passed over in silence the letter that had called forth this reply.* Not only did she leave it to be supposed that in the German Section, unlike all the other sections, friendly overtures were repulsed, and upon the most flimsy pretexts, but she in reality *deliberately* spread this false impression by publishing a single, selected passage from Herr Hubo's letter, while omitting that of Herr Cordes which had occasioned it. There can be here no question of involuntary omission, for in Herr Hubo's letter the reference to Herr Cordes' implied insinuation in asking for "private and confidential" information occurs in the line directly above that quoted by Mrs Besant in her article in the *Theosophist*! The German Section has since published both letters in full (*Mitteilungen*, xiv., December 1912). Mrs Besant, informed of these facts by Herr Hubo on 14th November, has not yet seen fit to rectify her statements.

It is impossible to hide from oneself the import

of such facts. These are actions of a character wholly and completely contrary to truth, impossible of any other interpretation, though one spent hours, as I have done, seeking in the mind some means of escape from pronouncing upon Mrs Besant a judgment whose words would echo almost as a profanation in a heart still devoted to yesterday's ideal. But, alas! facts are facts, and our inquiry must be resumed.

THE CASE OF DR VOLLRATH

In 1908 the Executive Committee of the German Section felt itself compelled to expel Dr Vollrath from the Section.

The latter appealed to Mrs Besant, and included in his exaggerated account of the matter accusations against Dr Steiner analogous to those which he published later in a virulent pamphlet in Germany.

Mrs Besant sent this report to Dr Steiner, who replied to her with a detailed refutation of the charges made against him by Dr Vollrath. On 18th March 1909 Mrs Besant replied to Dr Steiner: "I, as President of the T.S., having been appealed to by Dr Vollrath, of Leipzig, against his expulsion by the German Section T.S., and having heard all particulars thereof, decide that his expulsion from the German T.S. is valid" (*Mitteilungen*, xiv., December 1912).

In the summer of 1911 Mrs Besant nominated Dr Vollrath to a post of honour in the Order of the Star in the East, in Germany.

The German Section considered this action as an adverse criticism on its decisions and as a vote of censure on its General Secretary, unjustly attacked in the charges made by Dr Vollrath. To this attitude assumed by the German Section Mrs Besant replied on 8th May 1912, writing to its sectional organ, *Mitteilungen* (xiv., December 1912), as follows: "Expulsion from a Section does not carry with it expulsion from the T.S.; I was not asked to ratify it, thus making it an expulsion from the T.S.; *Dr Vollrath made no appeal to me*; hence I had no duty to look into the rights or wrongs of the matter, and to this day I do not know them. The whole attack on Adyar is not fair, for *the Adyar Executive has had no knowledge of, and has done nothing about, either Dr Vollrath or the Order.*"

It is quite clear how the trouble arose: Mrs Besant's letters of 18th March 1909 and of 8th May 1912 contradict each other. If she really wrote both, it only remains for her to admit that the remembrance of a moral judgment, which was at the same time an administrative act, had completely passed out of her mind. For in 1909 she stated: "On receipt of an appeal from Dr Vollrath, and having heard all particulars thereof"; and in

1912 she wrote: "Dr Vollrath made no appeal to me; hence I had no duty to look into the rights and wrongs of the matter. . . . The *Adyar Executive* has had no knowledge of, and has done nothing about, either Dr Vollrath or the Order."

Mrs Besant, without for a moment denying that she is the author of these two contradictory letters, yet cannot bring herself to confess her "forgetfulness," established so clearly as to be beyond question. If she had merely refused to admit this, things would not have been so serious as they now are; of this one can judge by Mrs Besant's reply. In a circular letter of 12th January 1913 (*Bulletin Théosophique français*, March 1913), after the statement that she "desired to call attention to the clever way in which Dr Steiner distorted the facts," she printed *the same letters* from which we have quoted, but she changed the whole question. She completely "forgot" the point at issue, and directed the whole of her efforts to re-establish a point that *had never been in question, and was not of the smallest interest in the controversy, since all had been in agreement upon it from the first*: to wit, that she had never sanctioned the expulsion of Dr Vollrath from the Theosophical Society at large, but only from the German Section. She wrote: "It is evident that in the phrase, 'I was not asked to confirm it,' the 'it' refers to the

expulsion from the T.S." And later: "Dr Vollrath had never appealed to me *against his expulsion from the German Section*, and his letters refer only to that." The italics are Mrs Besant's. There can be no question that she shows with complete success that her letter is sufficiently precise, and that the expulsion from the German Section alone is declared valid. But in choosing this method of defence, surely feeble enough, she *forgets* once more, unfortunately for her cause, that she had written, in the second of these contradictory letters, the following words, which entirely give her case away: "*The Adyar Executive has had no knowledge of, and has done nothing about, either Dr Vollrath or the Order.*"

Lastly, *what* then would be the meaning of such words if they were not to indicate as *complete* a forgetfulness of the expulsion from the German Section as from the Theosophical Society as a whole? Once reading is enough to make up one's mind irrevocably. And how dare Mrs Besant at the present time lend herself to this unworthy raising of a false issue? Fortunately this latter has but served the more clearly to show her undeniable wrong-doing, while unfortunately adding to it.

Such forgetfulness is strikingly apparent, yet Mrs Besant would have us ignore it, and expects to escape its consequences by stating simply, after

this shirking of the real issue, that "nothing further has happened."

It is impossible to share her opinion, for what has happened is that Mrs Besant has been guilty of an inconceivable forgetfulness, placing her in an insulting attitude towards the German Section and its General Secretary. This forgetfulness and the inevitable friction resulting from it are proved beyond question. Here was a case of being caught *flagrante delicto*, if ever there was one. Yet Mrs Besant refuses to acknowledge these self-evident facts. Instead of an honest acknowledgment, which would seem the sole resource in such a case, she insults Dr Steiner by reproaching *him* with "his clever way of distorting facts." There may have been "forgetfulness" when, in 1912, she gave the lie to her letter of 1909—serious certainly, but not an infamous forgetfulness. To-day this forgetfulness, denied in face of the strongest evidence, must inevitably appear as studied ill-will. And the "clever way" in which Mrs Besant substitutes an imaginary question for the one painfully at issue becomes in our eyes "a distortion of the facts" the more deplorable since it serves as pretext for the unmerited insult cast upon Dr Steiner. The accusation implied in it would be the one most naturally used in characterising Mrs Besant's own procedure — and, in this case, not because an opponent, annoyed at being found in the wrong,

bestows it gratuitously, but because the indestructible evidence of facts proclaims it, whether we are willing to look them in the face or not.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE CONGRESS AT GENOA

In connection with the incident referred to in the above title, Mrs Besant again accuses Dr Steiner of distorting facts.

The suppression of the Congress to be held at Genoa had necessitated the sending of a telegram by Professor Penzig, the Italian General Secretary, to Dr Steiner notifying him of the fact and alleging the reason. This telegram ran as follows: "*Have acted under strict orders from the President and from Wallace, Secretary of the Federation; apply to them officially.*"

In the *Bolletino*, official organ of the Italian Section, October 1911, Dr Penzig gives an account of the situation unexpectedly caused on the eve of the Congress by two telegrams from Mrs Besant. One stated that she was not attending, "without a word of explanation," according to Dr Penzig; the second, received the day following, said: "President confirms her telegram abandoning Congress."

It is not necessary to repeat here the full text of Dr Penzig's article, since he thus summed it up in his concluding words: "There was then nothing to

be done but to accept the joint decision of the President and the Secretary of the Federation, and to carry it out with all speed; I, therefore, telegraphed at once to all the General Secretaries of the European Sections, etc., etc. . . ." Dr Steiner's speech to the Convention of the German Section, which took place on 10th December 1911, contained no allusion to the Congress at Genoa, nor to its abandonment. This speech is published in full in *Mitteilungen*, xiii., March 1912. But Dr Steiner was only acting in accordance with his duty in replying to the request of a member, apropos of the sum of 789 mks. allotted to the Genoa Congress, as to "why that Congress had been countermanded at the last moment, and when the majority of the members attending were already *en route* for Italy" (*Mitteilungen*, xiii., March 1912, p. 7). Manifestly Dr Steiner could but quote Professor Penzig's telegram: "Have acted upon strict orders, etc." What other information could he have given? He was in possession of no other, and the article in the *Bolletino* of October 1911 contained nothing to invalidate this telegram. He recalled at the same time the origin of the international Congresses and their complete autonomy as regards the President of the Theosophical Society. He added that the countermanding of the Congress was valid, as being notified by the Italian Section, but remained inexplicable.

Such are the actual and precise facts, as borne out by documentary evidence.

In consequence of this communication to the German Section, Mrs Besant accused Dr Steiner of wrongly attributing to her the suppression of the Congress at Genoa. But it was not till the 23rd November 1912 that Professor Penzig corrected his telegram and his article in the *Bolletino*, in a letter addressed to Dr Steiner and published in *Mitteilungen*, xv., January 1913. I extract the important passages: "Your criticisms of Mrs Besant rest entirely upon the telegram sent by me to you at Munich, on 11th September, in reply to your telegraphed query, and which said, 'Have acted on the strict orders of the President, etc.'; but Mrs Besant has *lately*¹ written on several occasions (*Theosophist*, August 1912, and on p. 12 of her last circular) that she had not given such orders. She says on this subject (*Theosophist*): 'I did not even suggest the cancellation, nor should I have dreamed of taking such a liberty. All I did was to say that I was sorry to be unable to attend.'" Dr Penzig continues, explaining that the telegram from Mrs Besant, "President confirms telegram abandoning Congress," was not clear, and might all the more easily suggest the idea of suppressing the Congress, as he had given precisely this meaning to the word "abandon" in

¹ This word is not in italics in the original.

a telegram preceding that of Mrs Besant, and addressed to her by himself as an interrogation: "I, therefore, consider it preferable to abandon the Congress. Please confirm." Professor Penzig then goes on to say: "It was this which induced me on the day following to telegraph you, employing the phrase 'strict orders,' based on a false interpretation of Mrs Besant's telegram. The major portion of the responsibility for suppressing the Genoa Congress is therefore mine and not Mrs Besant's."

All this is quite clear and shows that Professor Penzig himself, till *recently*, when Mrs Besant wrote to the contrary, believed in all good faith that it was she who had suppressed the Congress. His article in the *Bolletino* plainly shows this.

How was it possible not to believe it?

If Mrs Besant had really desired the Congress to take place, would she not have especially protested against Professor Penzig's suggestion to suppress it solely because of her absence?

Since Dr Penzig had carried deference to the extreme limits revealed in such a proposal, was it not Mrs Besant's obvious duty to warmly encourage him in proceeding with the Congress? Otherwise we are compelled, in strict impartiality, to attribute its suppression to Mrs Besant's attitude. But instead of formally advising its continuance, or at least clearing herself of the responsibility should

it be suppressed in spite of her, what does she do? She sends a telegram so ambiguously worded that Professor Penzig cannot even see in it any other interpretation than the suppression of the Congress. He believed in all good faith that she had intended to suppress it, until the date on which she wrote to the contrary. So true is this that we seek in vain in his articles in the *Bolletino* for even the slightest trace of hesitation in Dr Penzig's mind as to the meaning of the presidential telegram. In effect, Dr Penzig had asked for confirmation of his proposal to *abandon* the Congress, using this word in the sense of suppression, and the reply was: "President confirms her telegram abandoning Congress." Certainly in his place we should all have understood and acted as he did.

Besides, to be quite fair, it must be admitted that the first suggestion to suppress the Congress, emanating from Dr Penzig and submitted to Mrs Besant in his telegram quoted above, cannot be wholly attributed to his initiative, although he first formulated it. What are we to think of the intentions of the President, who informs him of her proposed absence "without a word of explanation"? Why did she not convey at the same time to the members and organisers of the Congress those good wishes that her interest in the theosophic cause and mere ordinary civility would alike demand, if she expected the Congress to take place?

Those who are aware of the care which Mrs Besant habitually bestows on matters of this kind, and who at the same time appreciate the faultless precision of our President's verbal style, will feel that Dr Penzig's loyalty of heart and directness of thought could not hesitate for a moment in the interpretation of these telegrams, whether it was a question of their literal or their implied meaning.

If Mrs Besant had really desired that the Congress should take place, the brevity of her two telegrams and the ambiguity of the second were and remain inexplicable. The text of the first has never been published.

On the other hand, all becomes clear if to the above we add a single fact: in case Mrs Besant had wished that the Congress should not take place, she was prevented saying so openly and definitely, the decision in such a matter being entirely outside her province.

Supposing for the moment that she did desire this suppression; her brevity favoured the ambiguity, and the latter was a necessity, since open proposal! would have really constituted abuse of power.

Be it remembered that at this Genoa Congress, which Mrs Besant could not attend, Dr Steiner was to hold several meetings—amongst a large gathering of members coming from many lands—and we shall understand that Mrs Besant, hostile,

as we have seen, to the spreading of Dr Steiner's teaching, would prefer the Congress not to take place. She had, indeed, special reasons for so wishing. One of the subjects chosen by Dr Steiner was "The Christ of the Twentieth Century," and the teaching promulgated by Dr Steiner holds the "coming of the Christ," announced by Mrs Besant, to be in the highest degree improbable. Perhaps Dr Steiner might succeed in spreading his views in other sections, since he had so entirely convinced the German Section; and in this case Mrs Besant's message and her prestige would necessarily suffer. So we see that she had very excellent reasons for expecting Dr Steiner would gain new ground, the more especially since she could not, in her absence, oppose to this her personal influence. So step by step we come to see how she could, in the wording of her telegrams, suggest and encourage the suppressing of a Congress that she was prevented openly suppressing. And she acted, moreover, in this way under the most aggravating circumstances; for from all parts numbers of members were already *en route* for Genoa, having already left America, Russia, Holland, England, Scandinavia, Germany, and France.

Mrs Besant, moreover, perfectly understood what she had done. She so clearly realised the awkwardness of the position that she has *never* dared to mention the suppression of the Congress in the

Theosophist, where ordinarily she passes in review each month even the most insignificant happenings of the movement. Never has she given one word of explanation or shown the least curiosity regarding the suppression of the Congress.

And yet—as she seems sure that she was not the author of this suppression—was it not one of the most interesting and important questions to elucidate? I still recall my disappointment in looking through the *Theosophist* of November 1911, the first number that could contain information, and not finding a *single word* on the subject; and what a painful impression was added to this by the string of trivial details retailed by Mrs Besant in the same number: “The dairy and bakery are in full swing, but, to my great disappointment, the grinding and kneading machines purchased by me last July have not yet arrived—a not very creditable fact as regards the firm supplying—or not supplying them. I feel inclined to name them. . . .”

Other numbers followed, futilities of the same untheosophical kind, alas! flowing from the pen of Mrs Besant; and yet up to the present she has not expressed one iota of concern as to the Genoa Congress, or one word of regret either for the members who made long journeys at great expense, or for the Genoa theosophists, who had all the profitless labour of organisation. Against all these

rightful interests, against the real interests of Theosophy under its many aspects, the fear of seeing the influence of Dr Steiner increase seems to have completely prevailed.

Such, we find, is the real situation if we look at the facts. Up to the present, while assuming the "major portion" of responsibility in the suppression of the Congress at Genoa, Dr Penzig, in spite of his great deference for Mrs Besant, has still left to her "a certain portion" of responsibility; the laws of mathematics speak through his words.

Such in reality is the state of affairs. Under the circumstances, is it fair to spread it abroad that Dr Steiner distorts the facts concerning the Genoa Congress? is it fair to say that he wrongfully pretends that Mrs Besant suppressed the Congress? Since Dr Penzig, with perhaps an excessive generosity, accepts the responsibility incumbent on him, he should not allow Mrs Besant to spread these reports; he ought to say, "Dr Steiner, informed as he was by my telegraphic message of 'strict orders,' could not speak otherwise than he has done; and if his mistake was prolonged, it was because *I delayed till 23rd November 1912 to send him a letter of correction.*"

But if Dr Penzig did not say this, and did not earlier correct his first message, it is because he never for a moment doubted that Mrs Besant had really suppressed the Congress, until the moment

when she wrote it in the *Theosophist*; and even now, in spite of his devotion to Mrs Besant, he refuses to accept the entire responsibility.

It is regrettable thus to see the blame once more given to Dr Steiner, while the facts place it on those who accuse him. And in this case our inquiry reveals facts against Mrs Besant far more serious than those with which she charges Dr Steiner in connection with this Congress. We see that his statements were in accordance with strict truth, while, in spite of her denials, facts convict Mrs Besant of having desired and effected the suppression of this Congress in spite of the interests of Theosophy, and of having used all her skill to bring about and at the same time to conceal this abuse of power.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE GERMAN SECTION

Let us set aside all the minor annoyances, whether of greater or less importance, and examine the final episode in this war against Dr Steiner, since that also has taken place before our eyes. It is summarised in a document drawn up by Adyar, charge and verdict in one. The following are the four counts upon which the Charter was withdrawn from the German Section, notified in a letter of Mrs Besant to Dr Steiner, dated 14th January

1913, and published in the March number of the French Sectional organ:

I. Refusal to grant a Charter to a lodge in Göttingen.

II. Refusal to grant a Charter to a lodge in Leipzig.

III. Proposal excluding members of the Order of the Star in the East from meetings of the Section.

IV. Failure of the General Secretary to reply to letters from the President informing him of the requests received in conformity with article 31 of the rules, and demanding the rules of his Section.

On account of these complaints, touching the General Secretary alone—it is easy to discover this,—2400 members have been expelled from our Society.

This is an act of the most flagrant injustice towards them that nothing can ever justify. For such expulsion rests on four pretended transgressions on the part of the *General Secretary*. He alone should have been held responsible, and demand made to the German Section to replace him, before any proceedings were taken against it. Why were such steps not taken? Because once again the simple truth of the matter is not stated. The four grievances alleged are not the actual reasons for this expulsion. The real cause at the back of this measure was a telegram, signed by the twenty-eight members of the Executive

Committee of the German Section, accusing Mrs Besant of certain statements contrary to truth. This same telegram contained the notification of the intended publication of documents justifying this serious charge. It became obvious that explanations would have to be made, and it was foreseen that they would not be easy. On the other hand, all would be settled by expelling the German Section, *as was done before* the arrival of the announced documents.

Such was the action of the Executive of a Society whose motto places Truth above *all*. It punished 2400 members *en bloc before hearing them*. Yet they had against Mrs Besant complaints in support of which they held still more proofs than those enumerated in this inquiry.

The four official grievances cannot for a moment be regarded seriously. For instance, is it necessary to recall the fact that some years ago Mrs Besant instituted an unattached Section, in direct relationship with Adyar, and especially formed to provide for members whose diversity of view alienated them from their own national Section?

This being so, was not Dr Steiner exercising a wise foresight in refraining from incorporating within his Section the two isolated lodges whose Charter he had refused to sign, since it was notorious that these lodges were in opposition to himself, his teaching, and to the Section? It is

sufficient for anyone to read the brochure published by the president of one of them, and the scurrilous pamphlet launched against Dr Steiner by Dr Vollrath, to be convinced that co-operation was outside the bounds of possibility. Yet did Dr Steiner object when Mrs Besant granted a Charter to one of these lodges, attaching it directly to Adyar and welcoming it within the body of the Theosophical Society?

Certainly not: he recognised that the banner of the Theosophical Society could not only cover the two teachings, but even those who sought to injure him, who criticised his teachings, attributed to him assertions that he had never made, and while quoting his statements distorted them (see the account of these matters in *Mitteilungen*, March 1913).

He has never raised the least objection to their presence in the Theosophical Society or to the existence of their lodges in Germany. And we are forced to admit that, in view of the unspeakable conduct of certain of these members, this tolerance marks an act of very real generosity and forbearance. Why, it may be asked, has not Dr Steiner carried such generosity to the point of admitting these members and those of the Order of the Star in the East into the German Section?

In view of the manner in which they have publicly opposed him in all he says and does, there can be no doubt that these detractors and publishers

of falsified statements would have systematically disturbed the work of the lodges. And since they were at the same time *the officials* of the Order of the Star in the East in Germany . . .!!

Mrs Besant did not even trouble to state that the resolution excluding members of the Star in the East from meetings of the German Section expressly affirmed that it was *not* on account of divergent views or teachings, but was due to the attitude of their Committee, which was incompatible with the first object of the Theosophical Society. As if this were not the *very cause* of their exclusion, Mrs Besant declared in her Convention speech that "this expulsion is, of course, invalid, as no member can be expelled from a Section for his opinions, but the action shows that liberty of thought is not permitted in the German Section."

Here as always is to be seen the same deliberate prejudice, the same reckless travesty of facts. Could Mrs Besant for one moment have freed herself from her hostility to teachings opposed to her own and pictured in her mind an actual lodge meeting, she would assuredly have recognised that the members of the Star in the East, whose whole lives are set in the expectation of the immediate return of the Christ in a physical body, could not have associated with real profit in studies based upon the teachings of Dr Steiner, centred as these

are in the conviction that such a return is impossible. Here, it seems to me, we have a fact which supplies a convincing proof of the impossibility of such co-operation.

Herr Hübbe-Schleiden, head of the Star in the East, requested that Dr Steiner should avoid the use of the word "Christ" to denote the Christ, since Mrs Besant used it to indicate the Bodhisattva (*Mitteilungen*, March 1913, p. 6). Incredible as it seems, it was nevertheless suggested to Dr Steiner to dissociate from the name of Jesus of Nazareth its age-long meaning, and so make him a party to the disastrous fiction evolved by Mrs Besant, of which more anon. And in face of this we are asked to believe that they *seriously* desired to share in the work of lodges inspired by Dr Steiner's teaching.

In spite of this attitude and of these absurd claims, Dr Steiner has never attempted to withhold from either the one or the other their right to be members of the Theosophical Society. If he has endeavoured to assure the peaceful working of the lodges of which he is teacher, such was primarily his duty. It was also his right, since the unattached Section was intended for such members as were not in agreement with their national Section. This Section was founded by Mrs Besant herself at a time when her own procedure had failed to win the support of all the members, with

the object of preventing the resignation *en masse* of those who disapproved of the invitation tendered to Mr Leadbeater to return to the Society. By this course she then lessened her responsibility. But how much more has she not aggravated it to-day, when the unattached Section exists, by throwing out 2400 members whose position corresponds exactly to the conditions of such a Section, even if all the grievances formulated against them were justified!

There exist in each country individuals or groups of members thus directly attached to Adyar. In Germany itself (see *Mitteilungen*, March 1913) two lodges, founded by an old member of the Dutch Section with the object of working solely according to the Besant-Leadbeater occultism, ended by attaching themselves directly to Adyar, their convictions, entirely at variance with those of the German Section, suggesting the need of an independent position. Not only, then, has Dr Steiner willingly permitted such independent activity, but he raised no protest when one of these lodges, that had excluded Dr Steiner's books from its programme of study, wrote to the presidents of certain German lodges with the object of uniting those theosophists who might be in sympathy with this policy. Under what plausible pretext were hostile colleagues to be imposed on the German lodges, thus denying to them the independence that was

permitted to their opponents when they chose to claim it?

The problem would be obscure, insoluble even, had not Mrs Besant's speeches at the Conventions of 1911 and 1912, her attitude towards the Swiss lodges, her whole policy in reference to the Genoa Congress, revealed her real intentions. It was the suppression of Dr Steiner's teaching within the Theosophical Society, *even within the German Section itself*, which has in fact been aimed at.

Thus, under cover of an unsupported accusation, collapsing before our eyes, the Charter of the German Section is withdrawn, its members being irksome on account of their heterodoxy: the Besant-Leadbeater orthodoxy alone being henceforth tolerated.

Is further proof needed? In the *Theosophist* of January 1913 (consequently printed in the December preceding), *before* the General Council had demanded the expulsion of the German theosophists, *before* the receipt of their emphatic telegram, Mrs Besant wrote: "How much better it would be for us all if they frankly and honestly withdrew!"

But the climax was reached when she dared announce the withdrawal of the German Charter in her Convention speech at Adyar, *actually before* the General Council had decided. She proclaims it herself in a note to page 7 of the Supplement to

the *Theosophist*, February 1913, referring to the announcement of withdrawal in her address: "The General Council has asked me to adopt this measure *since* these lines were written.—A.B." A true autocrat, Mrs Besant proclaims the decisions of the Executive Committee *before they have been made*.

Mrs Besant appears as if driven on this most disastrous course by the impulsion of an irresistible force, overthrowing everything in her passage. Had she reflected, she would have recalled to her memory the wise advice of her friend, Mr Bhagavan Das, General Secretary of the Indian Section, before sacrificing for a few turbulent spirits of the Star in the East 2400 inoffensive theosophists. A compact, signed by Mrs Besant and Mr Bhagavan Das, had just ended a campaign, carried on for over eight months, in the pages of the principal theosophical organ in India (*Theosophy in India*). The following lines, taken from this document, which appeared in the September-October number, p. 203, suffice to indicate the nature of the questions raised: "We agree that any activity which tends to . . . turn questions of the broad policy of the T.S. into questions of personal loyalty or disloyalty to one or other worker of the T.S. is a violation of the fundamental principles of the T.S. The difference is that, while the President of the T.S. looks on the Order of the Star in the East move-

ment with strong approval, the General Secretary of the Indian Section thinks that the active propagation of and proselytisation to any person-cult or new religion, or embryo of a new religion (such as the O.S.E. has been declared to be by the P.T.S.)—if carried on within the T.S.—is also a violation of the fundamental principles of the T.S. . . .”¹

Yet this opposition on the part of the Indian General Secretary is neither systematic nor personally unfriendly. This is made clear in the article quoted earlier. Mrs Besant and Mr Bhagavan Das write: “We are cordially at one in our wish and determination that difference of opinion shall not interfere with our affectionate friendship for each other.”

The old and close tie existing between them is known to all who have followed the history of the Theosophical Society. Moreover, Mr Bhagavan Das was not only General Secretary of the Indian Section, of which he has been a member for over twenty-seven years: he is a man widely appreciated in the Society, and especially so by Mrs Besant herself. On many occasions she has expressed her profound admiration for his works, *The Science of Peace* and *The Science of the Emotions*.

¹ The articles of Mr Bhagavan Das in the July, August, and October numbers of *Theosophy in India* contain a clear and profoundly attractive exposition, leading inevitably to this conclusion.

The Indian Section contains a far larger membership than any of the other Sections. From it there have been 700 resignations in consequence of the position taken up by Mrs Besant.¹ If to this number we add the 2400 German theosophists, and if we consider the hearty agreement felt by large numbers of theosophists in almost all the Sections with Mr Bhagavan Das's criticisms, or with the attitude of the German Section, we may claim that a very considerable proportion are in opposition to Mrs Besant, protesting for various reasons against the *Star in the East*. Yet Mrs Besant sets at nought all these warnings.

A yet further fact will show to what extent Mrs Besant, in acting as she has done, has disregarded the most elementary laws of justice. It is Mrs Besant's duty to guard against the rules of any Section being contrary to the Constitution of the Theosophical Society. We should, therefore, not expect to find rules approved by her, and formulated by a Section entirely devoted to her, arrogating to that Section rights contrary to the Constitution. Yet the following is to be found in the Rules of the French Section (article 8): "If the conduct of a member be of such a nature as to involve his expulsion from the Society, such action should be submitted to the consideration of the Council,

¹ This information is supplied by Mr Collison in *Mitteilungen*, April 1913, p. 23.

whose decision shall be *decisive and without appeal* should there be unanimity among the members present or absent, these being duly consulted. In case a unanimous decision be not arrived at, the accused shall have the right of appeal to the decision of an extraordinary general meeting, which should be called with the least possible delay, and before which he may present himself or may be represented." When, after a long and successful career, the French Section, in 1908, revised its rules in order to secure legal standing as a society, it showed by such provision its desire to safeguard its past and future work against all those who might prove a source of difficulty or danger. It would hardly be possible to secure such protection more effectually than by deciding that any expulsion carried unanimously by the Council should be *decisive and without appeal*. The German Section would then have had the right, basing its decision on article 8 of the rules of the French Section of the Theosophical Society, to refuse *even to Mrs Besant*—which it did not do—any explanations concerning the exclusions *unanimously* decided by its Committee.

Whichever way we turn, *the facts* bear witness against Mrs Besant, bringing against her crushing accusations, pronouncing upon her severest judgment. We see, alas! what has been the true source of all these occurrences, the *real* cause of the

General Council's decision—Mrs Besant's overbearing personal desire to be free of the Steinerite theosophists.

Have they, on their side, shown an equally strong desire to leave the Theosophical Society?

On the contrary. Their views on the subject can be read in a report of three meetings of the German Section called for the purpose of considering the question of the formation of a "League," and published in the *Theosophist*, December 1912. This report is anonymous, and is characterised, in the opinion of those present at the meetings, by a manifest partiality. Whatever would tell against Mrs Besant is simply omitted. The following is an instance of this method of procedure.

Frl. v. Sivers' speech is summarised in a single line, and simply states that she spoke of the difficulties experienced by Dr Steiner in the first meetings held by him abroad. What she had actually told the meeting was that on one of these occasions chance had placed in her hands a second circular, different from that sent to the members of the German Section. This circular, distributed to the general public during the meetings, contained a biographical sketch, not included in the other circular, representing Dr Steiner as a penitent materialist, converted to Theosophy . . . by reading Mrs Besant's books! All quite inaccurate, but calculated to assign to Mrs Besant, in the

mind of the reader, the position of occult investigator and actual teacher, and to Dr Steiner that of a mere propagandist of her ideas. The good faith of the organisers of these meetings could in no wise be doubted; they simply might have been misinformed. Dr Steiner had never taken exception to this, and Fr. v. Sivers mentioned the fact only to compare the conciliatory attitude of the German Section, *that had never raised any difficulty on the subject*, to the combative attitude of Mrs Besant, who in her Convention speech at Adyar in 1911 dared to complain of the "aggressive partisans" of Dr Steiner, *without citing a single fact in evidence of this accusation*. Here again this matter is referred to merely to show the manifest one-sidedness of the information given in the *Theosophist*. It is indeed sad to think that it is by aid of such mutilated and distorted accounts that Mrs Besant instructs the members of our Society.

The report mentioned above acquaints us, nevertheless, with a very interesting fact. It proves that *not a single member of the German Section* who spoke at these meetings *proposed that they should separate from the T.S.*; on the contrary, *every* member who discussed the question declared his or her attachment to the T.S.

Herr Bauer, member of the Executive Committee of the Section: "The Society as such is

not opposed to liberty, and we ought not then to leave it."

Frl. v. Sivers: "The independent work of the German Section does not seem to be liked; extensive propaganda is made against us by means of pamphlets, etc.; new lodges to supersede us are artificially created, and these have almost reached the requisite number; nevertheless we will try to remain."

Dr Unger, president of the meeting and prospective president of the League in process of formation: "Our movement is in no way directed against the T.S.; it is in harmony with it. *There is therefore no reason why we should leave the Society. . . .*"

Dr Steiner: "*We shall not leave the T.S. unless we are forced to do so.*"

Dr Unger: "*We will resist with all our strength if attempts are made to expel us from the T.S.*"

The most authoritative voices in the German Section had thus expressed their devotion to the T.S., and Mrs Besant could not ignore it. It must also be admitted that they had also shown how keenly they felt Mrs Besant's underhand intrigues. Mrs Besant turned a deaf ear to all this; she had resolved to make a clean sweep of all who opposed her own exclusive domination within the T.S., and to this ambition she sacrificed the German Section.

What is supremely touching is the comparison of Dr Steiner's attitude after the expulsion with

this cruel persecution. The German Section had never been accused of anything save of sending out of its lodges certain members who had undertaken a campaign against its General Secretary and teacher, and who ridiculed the whole Section. Dr Hübbe-Schleiden, head of the Star in the East in Germany, for instance, wrote that one sought vainly within the German Section for a member who did not imitate Dr Steiner faithfully or who did not repeat word for word what he said; that the branches were ruled autocratically, like dioceses by their bishops, etc. (See *Die Botschaft des Friedens*, and *Mitteilungen*, March and April 1913.) But we know that at the same time the German Section explicitly and very willingly recognised the rights of these members to be in the T.S. and to cover with their lodges the whole of German territory, if attaching themselves directly to Adyar. Mrs Besant's reply to this attitude has been, as we see, expulsion—from *the Society itself*—of 2400 theosophists who had tried to maintain their position.

What words did this unheard-of action call forth from Dr Steiner?

Let us read the *Mitteilungen* for March 1913, p. 13: "My dear friends, never having wished to be sentimental, I especially desire to avoid it at this particular moment, yet I can but tell you that it is with a heavy heart that I leave the Theosophical

Society. . . . At this moment we are expelled, and we can but declare that at any time we will work anew with the T.S. when order has again been re-established in it; for very truly we esteem and honour the T.S., from which we are not separating ourselves of our own will. . . ."

No one could read without emotion such noble words, their nobility showing the clearer as we see Mrs Besant's attitude to the end. She has expelled the German Section, but she is not yet satisfied. She would take every precaution to ensure that there shall not be the slightest inclination on the part of the faithful orthodox to examine the banished teachings. To overcome her adversary and to force him out of the T.S. she has disparaged his teaching, and trammelled its spread abroad, has suppressed it within the German Section. To attain her end she has not hesitated at personal calumny. As a final effort in the supreme struggle, the teaching and the personality of its author were once more overwhelmed in a major excommunication. Mrs Besant wrote in the *Theosophist* of January 1913: "In Germany the Jesuits are working to secure the predominance of Christianity in the T.S., thus distorting it into a Christianising sect and making certain its rejection in the East. They use their old weapons—misrepresentation, slander, false charges, all levelled against the leaders of the movement they seek to

destroy. . . .”—an assertion as supremely false as it is impolitic, since Dr Steiner, *in his lectures at Karlsruhe on “From Jesus to the Christ,” given in September 1911, denounced especially, in a detailed exposition, the grave dangers involved in the methods of occult development practised by the Jesuits.*

It would appear that nothing could stop Mrs Besant in her fixed determination to alienate from Dr Steiner all honour and sympathy within the body of the T.S., to destroy his influence and extirpate his teachings. For if “the Jesuits work in Germany within the T.S.,” it is Steiner who is incontestably the one inspirer of the work in the German Section, and the tool, the straw man, of the Jesuits, and as such necessarily contemptible, as all are who hide their identity and their real aim.

In addition, the world-wide unpopularity of the Jesuits themselves would tell against him, anger and indignation would arise in upright souls against the author of all these infamies called up by Mrs Besant.

We see Dr Steiner beset on all sides, and if to-day he seems to succumb under the weight of such accumulated perfidies, it is because Mrs Besant, powerful within the T.S. because of the confidence won by her in the past, acts with an absolute discretionary power. She is blindly followed and obeyed on all sides by large numbers of noble souls

still dazzled in the present by what she was in the past. But this statement of the facts, incontestable, as is all true reality, positive and vital, is qualified to enlighten all minds, since it can so easily be checked, thanks to the documents published by the German Section and the Swiss lodges. Further, it is to be hoped that even those who are the most devoted friends of Mrs Besant will discharge a sacred debt and respond to her old exhortation. The time has come to say all this is very, very black. It would be a sacrilege to say all is white. As Mrs Besant said herself, in condemning Mr Leadbeater, it would increase her karma to follow her blindly, it would be an irreparable blow to our Theosophic Ideal.

MRS BESANT'S "RETURN OF THE CHRIST"

FIRST PHASE

THERE arises in connection with the above a question far more important and far more serious than any of the preceding ones—a question which will awaken a tragic echo in our hearts if we at all measure its import. Mrs Besant is not only the President of the Theosophical Society; she is also a teacher, listened to, obeyed, venerated. The careless inaccuracies, the false insinuations, the deliberate travesties of Truth—all these violations of our most sacred principles admittedly only concern physical plane contingencies. But we know, and Mrs Besant will willingly repeat it now as always, that the occultist must have a pure heart, a right will, a clear and strong intelligence, if the results of his investigations are to be worthy of our confidence. At the present time the mere enunciation of these moral and intellectual qualifications of the occultist but serves to raise a painful question. In acting as she has

done, has Mrs Besant disqualified the results of her investigations?

I will express no opinion. Once more it will be advisable to consult facts; and since no true teacher, no serious occultist, would any longer ask in this age to be believed on his word merely, but would himself ask those who hear him to bring their logical faculty to bear on the facts he advances, even the most fervent believers of Mrs Besant should not protest against an examination of this kind, especially as regards the central claim of her spiritual message—the return of the Christ. The immense importance of this announcement, the dominant part it plays in the activities of the President and of the Theosophical Society, the considerable reaction it has caused outside the limits of the Society—all these circumstances certainly justify the desire for verification.

Is this possible? Incontestably, if we confine our inquiry solely to the materials furnished by Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater; for they certainly do not think there is any self-contradiction in what they say, or any disagreement between their statements. It is a totally different matter from comparing their investigations with the statements of other occultists: such a work would exceed the limits of this inquiry, and so we leave it aside, in spite of the illumination it would bring. We shall

content ourselves with uniting into an organic whole the different statements of these two occultists, who to strict and entire conformity of views link a whole past of joint investigation, and who claim a perfect agreement on all points of their teachings. A comparison of this nature will speedily satisfy us; it is sufficient to know of *whom* Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater, on the one hand, are thinking when speaking of the Christ, and of *whom*, on the other hand, the faithful of the Christian religions throughout the West are thinking when pronouncing this name.

Concerning this, Mrs Besant instructs us on p. 129 of *Esoteric Christianity*: "The child whose Jewish name has been turned into that of Jesus was born in Palestine B.C. 105, during the consulate of Publius Rutilius Rufus and Gnæus Mallius Maximus."

Thus this child of whom Mrs Besant speaks is not, then, the Jesus of the Gospel history, since the life of this latter was lived a century later.

The historical Jesus named the Christ, the central figure of Christianity through all ages, was born one hundred and five years later than the Jesus of Mrs Besant. The facts associated alike with the life of Christ and of his Apostles, the witness of Tacitus, the agreement of all authors concerning the historical dates, are opposed to the

clear and straightforward identification of the Christ of the Gospels with the Jesus of Mrs Besant. We will return to this point later on.

What activities do Mrs Besant's investigations ascribe to this century-earlier Jesus? In *Esoteric Christianity* Mrs Besant is content to commentate on the text of the Gospels from the point of view of their esoteric teaching, without pronouncing on the more or less historic fidelity of the accounts of the life of Christ. But Mr Leadbeater has filled in this lacuna in his book, *The Inner Life*, for this is what we find on p. 183 of vol. i.: "When we examine clairvoyantly the life of the founder of Christianity, for example, we can find no trace of the alleged twelve apostles; it would seem that as men they never existed, but that they were introduced into the story for some reason—possibly to typify the twelve signs of the zodiac.

"The truth is that the four gospels at any rate were never intended to be taken as in any sense historical. They are all founded upon a much shorter document written in Hebrew by a monk named Matthæus, who lived in a monastery in a desert to the south of Palestine. He seems to have conceived the idea of casting some of the great facts of initiation into a narrative form and mingling with it some points out of the life of the real Jesus, who was born 105 B.C., and some from the life of another quite obscure fanatical preacher

who had been condemned to death and executed in Jerusalem about 30 A.D.

"He sent this document to a great friend of his who was the chief abbot of a huge monastery at Alexandria, and suggested to him that he, or some of his assistants, might perhaps recast it, and issue it in the Greek language. The Alexandrian abbot seems to have employed a number of his young monks upon this work, allowing each of them to try the task for himself, and to treat it in his own way. A number of documents of very varying merit were thus produced, each incorporating in his story more or less of the original manuscript of Matthæus, but each also adding to it such legends as he happened to know, or as his taste and fancy dictated. Four of these still survive to us, and to them are attached the names of the monks who wrote them, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."

Even the most careless observer will recognise that the personality referred to by Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater cannot be the one referred to in the Gospels.

In fact, the Jesus of Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater had lived one hundred and five years before the Christ of the Gospels. Examined by the aid of Mr Leadbeater's clairvoyance, no trace is to be found of the twelve apostles. Their real existence is denied; "they were introduced into the story for some reason."

The Gospels would mainly consist of a *theoretic* account of certain facts relative to the initiations, coloured by events relating to an earlier Jesus, that is to say, a Jesus non-existent for Christianity. Still further, those events which already concern another Jesus are mixed with the life of an obscure fanatic, with chance legends and the fantastic imaginings of young monks.

Mr Leadbeater tells us this is "the Truth" for him: and, we may add, for Mrs Besant also. They both speak of the same Christ, for on p. 30 of the same work Mr Leadbeater writes: "As to the approaching advent of the Christ and the work which he has to do, you cannot do better than read Mrs Besant's book on *The Changing World*. The time of his advent is not far distant, and the very body which he will take is even already born among us."

Which is this body?

In an account of an interview, that very Parisian review, *Je sais tout*, of 13th November 1912, informs its many readers in these words: "The Teacher, the Initiator to whom Commandant D. A. Courmes¹ alludes, will incarnate (but these things must be spoken of with extreme reserve) [*sic*], must incarnate, it is believed, in the person of the young Hindu Krishnamurti, who is at this sacred

¹ Editor of the *Revue Théosophique Française*, interviewed by *Je sais tout*.

moment being prepared by the Heads of Theosophy. All who have approached Krishnamurti look upon him as a being of superior gifts and altogether beyond ordinary humanity."

These are without doubt the sincere beliefs of M. D. A. Courmes, as well as those of the "Heads of Theosophy" themselves, Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater.

All know Krishnamurti and his mute and decorative presence on the platform during Mrs Besant's lectures. On many occasions, in impassioned language she has prepared the minds of her audiences for this incarnation:—

"And so one of the things from which you should clear your minds, if your vision you would have clear, will be every prejudice of race, every prejudice of colour, all that pride that makes you think the white man is the favourite of God, and none other. Until that is thrust out of the heart of every one of us, until we extend hands not of patronage and condescension but of equal brotherhood to men of every race and every colour, may it not be that when the Christ is amongst us we shall reject him because he is not of our blood and kind?" (*The Immediate Future*, p. 68).

Mrs Besant becomes more precise in her lecture on "The Development of the Theosophical Society," which was printed in the *Theosophist*, and of which I have before me the German translation published

in the German review *Theosophia* of December 1912, edited by Dr Hugo Vollrath, Leipzig. She there writes: ". . . Then comes the message of the coming of the World-Teacher, the Christ, and the training of his vehicles within the body of the T.S. . . ."

The young Krishnamurti is, moreover, Head of the Order of the Star in the East, an association composed of those who believe in the immediate coming of a divine Teacher, and he was worshipped by a crowd of kneeling theosophists at Benares during the Convention of 1911, as was announced by the theosophical magazines of that date.

Mrs Besant herself wrote on this subject: "All who were present felt the might of the Power manifested in their midst and knew that they were facing not a Brahmana youth merely, but one who, for the time, was the living temple of the Holiest" (*The Theosophist*, February 1912).

Mrs Besant, in bearing her message to the theosophists of the West in 1911 and 1912, through the medium of a whole series of lectures in London, having as their main subject the "Return of the Christ," spoke in the central lectures of these courses, entitled "The Coming Christ" or "The Coming of a World-Teacher," such words, for instance, as these: "The Supreme Teacher will again ere very long be incarnate upon earth, again made manifest as Teacher, again walking and

living amongst us, as last He walked in Palestine" (*The Changing World*, p. 153); or again: "Shall history here repeat itself, and the story of Judea, Jerusalem, and even Calvary, once more be played?" (*Immediate Future*, p. 66).

Descriptions of other scenes from the Gospels are scattered throughout these lectures.

Let us sum up all these pronouncements.

On the one side, the occult investigations of Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater establish the existence of an individual named Jesus, having lived one hundred and five years before the Christ of the Gospels, who was not surrounded by twelve apostles, none of whom have consequently written the Gospels. These would be a mere theory of Initiation mixed with various fantastic stories having no historical value. Thus we know nothing of the Jesus to whom these two occultists refer in their investigations—absolutely nothing. This is established beyond question; and we should not even have known that the Jesus to whom they refer ever existed had they not been at pains to inform us.¹ In any case, his life on earth, thus brought to our notice, passed without leaving behind the least trace.

Mrs Besant's Jesus has certainly not been a World-

¹ We will examine presently Mrs Besant's references to the Talmud, which were much later than her message of the return of the Christ.

Teacher, if the investigations of which we are informed are to be relied upon. He has been quite obscure; the memory of him has been preserved in no document, religious or historical; no myth or legend speaks of him. Truly the first Teacher who has left no memory of his activity.

Since the authenticity of the sacred scriptures of all times is admitted by these two occultists, and to our day attests the fruitful activity of these great Teachers of the past, we would point out the complete absence in this case of any documentary evidence, of any influence on the thought of the period. A great Teacher would thus have passed totally unrecognised.

Let us admit it, since such is the outcome of the researches of Mr Leadbeater and Mrs Besant.

None the less, these two occultists, continuing their investigations, have announced at a given moment "the return of the Christ." Of the Christ to whom they have always referred, of course?

Most certainly not!

However incredible this may seem, Mrs Besant, with the calm audacity of unconsciousness, accomplishes the amazing *volte-face* of establishing herself at a single bound, and without the slightest concern as to the transition, on the ground of *historical* Christianity, of announcing the return of the *other* Christ, of the historical Christ, of adopting as *real events* the drama of Judea, the

happenings at Jerusalem and the suffering of Calvary. And she succeeds by the use of an equivocation, incredibly flimsy but of tragic consequences, in inducing those Christians who hear her to believe that her investigations in the spiritual worlds make it possible for her to announce the return of the *historical* Christ, when in reality the investigations which form the ground of her occult message *deny the existence* of the historical Christ as well as that of the Apostles, and declare the Gospels to be apocryphal.

It is painful to find in Mrs Besant, in her rôle of occultist, as earlier we found in the discharge of her Presidential functions, the same carelessness as regards the accuracy of the facts she announces, the same callous indifference as to truth or falsehood. But in this matter the effects will be incalculable.

Mrs Besant lends herself to a mystification the exceptional gravity of which will utterly overwhelm those who invoke such terrible karma as she thus prepares for herself. She is leading a crowd of souls attached to the true Christ towards some unknown teacher to come, whose obscure past has been looked up by Mr Leadbeater and herself together. She has led them to believe that it is he who returns, their own Christ, the son of Mary who was baptized by John, who called Lazarus from the dead, who loved John and Peter and

Martha and Mary, who addressed to all his teachings and his exhortations, who performed miracles, who healed the sick; he whose life is told throughout the Gospels, with his thousand sublime and touching traits; he who truly *did* and *said* all these holy and loving things, like the Sermon on the Mount, the reading of which has filled with strength and joy millions of souls throughout the ages, because they felt within themselves as they read these words the breath of Truth, and themselves shared in the pulsing Life, preserved with such reverent care in the Gospels as in a sacred vase. She has made them believe that it is the Christ of the Sacraments who is to return, he who on earth performed the mystery of the Holy Communion with his disciples, the Christ condemned by Pontius Pilate, crucified between two thieves, and returning to life on the third day, who then appeared to Mary Magdalen, to the Apostles, to the unbelieving Thomas, and who walked with the disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus.

The Jesus that Mrs Besant knows, whom she has found by her occult investigations, has *done nothing*, has *said nothing*, of all this. Of what he has done, of what he has said while on earth, *no one knows anything at all*.

Is it not both strange and sad to see Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater thus deny the historical reality of the Christ, and of his life as recounted in the

Gospels, without attempting to penetrate the mystery which will then fatally obscure the past work, the most interesting incarnation of the great Teacher of whom they announce the return ?

SECOND PHASE

Many theosophists have been surprised by the above, and many questions have been put to Mrs Besant on this point. She has been forced to deal with them in a recent lecture, "Aspects of the Christ," given in London, 13th July 1912, and printed in pamphlet form. "First," says Mrs Besant, "the historical side. On that Occultism speaks clearly and distinctly, as we have learned from the Masters of the White Lodge, from the messenger whom They sent to us, H. P. B., confirmed by the study of later workers. And this view is supported by much in the story of the past and by one or two teachings that are worthy of consideration in the record of the New Testament itself. It is the story of a Hebrew youth, born about a century before the beginning of the Christian era, trained partly in Egypt, partly in the monasteries of the Essenes, coming forth at about the age of thirty to be a teacher among his people, recognised by them as known in the days of his youth. . . . Sometimes the enthusiastic love of the crowd, sometimes the passionate hatred, attempting life; finally, in the

city of Jerusalem, in the very court of the Temple itself, a riot breaking out, a terrible stoning, the passing back of the Christ to His own place, the murder of the body in which He had dwelt, the taking up of the body, the hanging of it in mockery on a tree by those who had slain Him. Such is the ancient story, the story of the records of the past, confirmed by traditions which have passed downward through the Hebrew people, who tell us of this young Teacher in the days of Queen Salome, who preached and taught, who was slain and hanged on a tree. And it is confirmed by those words spoken by St Peter, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when, speaking reproachfully to the Hebrews of his day, he spoke of 'Jesus whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree.'

It seems that to the sudden jump made by Mrs Besant, at first from the standpoint of occult research to the ground of historical Christianity, there succeeds at the present time an attempt to reconcile these two positions by calling to her aid historical and religious documents in favour of an identification of the historical Christ with the "Jesus" of her occult researches.

But this is not a very happy attempt. The facts that Mrs Besant seeks to *introduce* into the life of Christ, in order to establish this "identity," are as irreconcilable with the history as with the text of the Gospels. These facts are: the birth

one hundred and five years before Jesus Christ, the stoning, and finally the hanging on the cross *after* the death.

The birth of the historical Christ in the year 1 of the Christian era is demonstrated by the record of Tacitus, who himself lived three-quarters of a century only after the events which took place in Palestine.

The *Annals* of Tacitus, whose title in the manuscripts runs, "Ab excessu divi Augusti," do not begin Roman history till the death of Augustus, which took place fourteen years after Christ. They would not therefore attempt to record one hundred years further back the historical period of the life of Christ; and, further, Tacitus definitely refers the origin of Christianity to the personality he names the Christ, who was put to death by order of the Procurator Pontius Pilate between the twenty-sixth and thirty-sixth year of the Christian era (*Grande Encyclopédie*, vol. xxi. p. 136). There exists, then, on this point, a perfect agreement between history and the Gospels, without the need to call as further witnesses Suetonius and Pliny the younger, both of whom agree with the above.

Mrs Besant spoke of an historical aspect "supported by much in the story of the past." Roman history, as we know, invalidates her historical interpretation. But Mrs Besant, in addition, appeals to traditions preserved by the Jews, and referring

to this young Teacher who was stoned and hanged at Jerusalem during the reign of the Queen Salome.

It is regrettable that Mrs Besant cites no texts. We will do it for her, quoting at the same time the opinion of a most noted Orientalist of the nineteenth century based on these texts.

In his *Essai sur l'Histoire et la Géographie de la Palestine, d'après le Talmud, etc.*,¹ M. J. Derenbourg, membre de l'Institut, devotes a section entitled "Jesus and Ben Sotada" to the serious study of the hypothesis that sees in Jesus ben Sotada the Christ of the Gospels (p. 468 *et seq.*). The extent of this study forbids its being given in full; but certain extracts, especially those containing the texts from the Talmud, will suffice to justify the conclusions of this scholar, who is definitely opposed to this hypothesis:—

"In J. Sanhedrin, vii. 16, where we read (following the method described at the beginning of this study) the words: 'Thus did they to ben Sotada at Lydda, they set two learned men to watch him, then they led him before the tribunal, where he was stoned,' nothing so far suggests the thought that it could have been a question of Jesus, since, if so, not only had they disguised the name of the person, but had even changed *Jerusalem for Lydda, and substituted for the death by crucifixion that by*

¹ Printed in 1867 by the Imprimerie Nationale, and to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

stoning. The Babylonian Talmud, J. Sanhedrin, vii. 67*a*, replaces all that follows the name of ben Sotada by the words: 'and they hanged him on the eve of Passover.' Into this addition the confusion of him with Jesus has already crept. The confusion shows itself complete in the discussion which occurs immediately after the above. 'Why the name of Sotada, since he was the son of Pandera?' . . ."¹ Then M. Derenbourg continues: "Why should the name of Jesus, which is found twenty times in these Talmuds (in the non-expurgated editions, of course), have been replaced upon one occasion by the pseudonym of ben Sotada? This question is still without an answer. . . ."

Finally, M. Derenbourg concludes in these words: "I believe that after what we have just said all will recognise with us that some time before or after the destruction of the Temple there must have taken place at Lydda the execution of a false prophet, who was later confounded with Jesus. . . ." It is important to add that no one of the passages quoted by M. Derenbourg speaks of a stoning in the court of the Temple.

The texts of the two Talmuds, no less than the *Annals* of Tacitus, oppose the claim of Mrs Besant that Jesus ben Sotada or ben Pandera is identical with the Christ—an identification equally opposed

¹ Other writers give Pandira.

by the authoritative opinion of a great Orientalist. And we may here add that the occult researches of Dr Steiner regard Jesus ben Pandera as a totally different personality from that of the Christ.

Alone and unsupported in her views, in spite of the literal meaning of the Roman and Jewish texts, and cutting through their reasoned interpretation, Mrs Besant asserts *on the strength*, she declares, of *historical documents—which?*—that Jesus ben Pandera is the Christ. Up to now historical documents give a complete denial to this view.

If Mrs Besant has found little difficulty in maintaining her claim without the support of quotations from the Talmud, it is because her audience feels the greatest *confidence* in her. It never suspects that the quotations from the Talmud would contradict her statements or that she could be capable of passing in silence the testimony of Tacitus.

But Mrs Besant has called out a third kind of "*historical proof*": "one or *two* teachings that are worthy of being considered in the record of the New Testament itself." Before examining the *single* passage that she quotes, some few preliminary words are needed regarding the liberty Mrs Besant takes with the Gospels. We know that the latter claim to give a strictly accurate *historical* account of the life and death of Christ; Mr Leadbeater, supported by Mrs Besant, declares this account to

be inaccurate in its broad outlines and in all its details. Christ was born a century before the Christian era, the Apostles did not exist, Christ did not die on the Cross, etc.

This being really so, it is not possible to invoke the *historical value* of a *single* passage of the Gospels in support of a hypothesis *the correctness of which would at once invalidate the historical worth of the whole of the four Gospels*. Against the single passage brought forward as "a teaching that is worthy of being considered," the entire contents of the Gospels will represent "information that is *not* worthy of being considered."

Mrs Besant does not see that in the shipwreck of the four Gospels the single passage on which she hopes to rest her hypothesis is equally submerged.

No one will be deceived by the artifice of such procedure.

Nevertheless, let us examine the passage from which Mrs Besant draws her conclusions. She confines herself to quoting the following words of Peter, found in the Acts of the Apostles: "Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree."

This quotation is to be found in the Authorised Version of the Anglican Church. The French translation of Ostervald renders these words as, "Que vous avez fait mourir, le pendant au bois"; while Bourassé and Janvier give the translation

as, "Que vous avez fait mourir en le suspendant à un bois."

In another passage in the Acts Peter is made to say alike in all three editions: "Que vous avez crucifié." Again (x. 39) Peter said, according to the English Bible: "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree"; but this passage is given by Ostervald as, "Ils l'ont fait mourir, le pendant au bois," and by Bourassé and Janvier as, "Ils l'ont fait mourir, l'attachant à une Croix."

It is thus clear that there is a wide choice between the different versions of the original text, and it would be highly imprudent in such a case to draw from it an argument, as Mrs Besant attempts to do, in favour of a Christ first stoned and then hanged or crucified. But since she thinks that Peter intended to express this idea, nothing is easier than to show her her mistake, for the Acts of the Apostles (iii. 13) make Peter say: ". . . his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead."

Thus Peter here corroborates without the smallest equivocation all the steps of the drama as they are recorded in the four Gospels: the judgment before Pilate, his refusal to condemn Christ, the release of

Barabbas claimed by the crowd. These words do not allow it to be supposed for a moment that he believed in a Christ stoned in the court of the Temple during a riot, and crucified after his death.

There is no possibility of misunderstanding: we find in Peter the faithful echo of a story identical with that of the four Evangelists; as in each of the four Gospels, we again hear the crowd shout to Pilate: "Crucify him, crucify him!" For Peter also Christ has really died on the cross. There can be no question of the agreement of the four Evangelists and of Peter.

Mrs Besant's attempts to bring the Gospels to the support of her interpretation of the death of Christ are foredoomed to failure.

But the direction that her efforts take is of the highest significance; the interpretation, favourable to her hypothesis, of five or six words to be found in the Gospels that *she has in the same lecture declared to be mere fiction* has induced her to recognise the *historical value of this useful passage!* To be reduced to such methods means to have lost all faith in the cause that is being defended. What folly to claim that the Gospels are authentic just so far as they give support to a hypothesis denying their authenticity! They are so if they refer to a real Christ; they are not if the Christ to whom they refer is a myth, if the only real Christ lived a century earlier and was stoned to death.

And Mrs Besant affirms that the Christ of the Gospels is mythic; if not, what, then, is the meaning of these words taken from this same lecture (p. 16): "As this thought spread, the Sun-God and the Cross became identified. And the life of the Spirit outpoured upon the world had as its symbol this equal-armed Cross. Then, coming downwards, that is represented in the Mysteries. And inasmuch as it had to be represented *pictorially*, after the power to make living forms had passed because of ignorance, the Mysteries became a drama which was acted, and then the Sun-God no longer appeared triumphant on the sphere in space, but outstretched on the cross of matter, and you have no longer the equal-armed cross but the Latin cross, one arm lengthened that the body of the man crucified may be thereon represented. And so the *mystic teaching* grew up, and all still gathered round the splendid figure of the Christ."

Mrs Besant must surely give in, she must surely drop such self-contradiction as the denying and invoking in the same breath the *historical value* of the Gospels, according as it serves her hypothesis.

Mr Leadbeater shows himself as consistent with his hypothesis when he says in the *Christian Creed*, p. 81, second edition: "'Was crucified, dead, and buried.' Here again we are face to face with an almost universal misunderstanding whose pro-

portions have been colossal and its results most disastrous. *The astonishing evolution of a perfectly reasonable allegory into an absolutely impossible biography* has had a very sad influence upon the entire Christian Church and upon the faith which it has taught, and the enormous amount of devotional sympathy which has been poured forth through the centuries in connection with a story of physical suffering that is wholly imaginary is perhaps the most extraordinary and lamentable waste of psychic energy in the history of the world."

Again, on p. 94, second edition: "Of course the nails, the blood, the wounds, and all the ghastly horrors of the modern misrepresentation are simply the accretions due to the *diseased imagination of the material-minded monk*. . . ."

Surely for Mrs Besant to call the Gospels to bear witness to her Jesus (a man of unknown life, who met his death by stoning) in order that she may claim for him the prerogatives of the real Christ, as she undoubtedly does, is an unfortunate inconsistency for her cause. Even if such claim had not been completely invalidated by the texts of Tacitus, of the Talmud, and of the Gospels, Mr Leadbeater is there to remind her that she is placing herself in contradiction to him and to herself, and that any "adaptation" of their Jesus to the true Christ is simply impossible. The

“diseased imagination of a material-minded monk” most certainly could not become an historical fact simply because the substitution of Jesus ben Pandera for the real Christ, accepted at first in all good faith by her admirers, has begun to be suspected since Dr Steiner’s teachings have become more widely known.¹

Let us bring things to a point. During the first phase of her announcement of a false Christ Mrs Besant seems to have been, in all good faith, the victim of incompetent occult investigations that led her to believe sincerely in the return of the Christ.

Her lecture, “Aspects of the Christ,” reveals a totally different attitude. She has heard the genuineness of her message doubted, has been asked for clearer explanations, and she has had recourse to historical evidence.

Up to then there was nothing to be said. But from the moment she consulted these historical documents it is almost impossible that she should not have clearly recognised that she was deceived. Her wide learning forbids us to believe that she is ignorant of the *Annals* of Tacitus and of the texts of the Talmud, or of the passage in the Acts in

¹ In order to avoid creating a new source of misunderstanding, let me state expressly that Dr Steiner, in his teachings, while recording the existence of Jesus ben Pandera a century before the birth of Christ, by no means proclaims his coming as a World-Teacher.

which Peter confirms the story as found in the four Gospels. Her high intelligence prevents our seriously thinking that she really pretends to be producing *historical* documentary evidence when quoting a single line from the Gospels, *which for her are wholly myth and allegory*. It is no longer our good sense alone that is outraged by the inconsistency of such procedure; in spite of ourselves, ineradicable as is the logical instinct, the consciousness of a great ingenuity employed in the service of a recognised error will surge up in our minds. Mrs Besant would seem to know that a profound abyss separates her Jesus from the real Christ; she seems deliberately to undertake to plead the cause of the false Christ, rather than—confess.

I am aware that such a suspicion would be unworthy had not the unlikelihood of any less degrading hypothesis been clearly shown. But—*how* is one to explain *otherwise* than by this hypothesis that so keen an intelligence, sincerely desiring to examine historical documents, should have passed in silence the accounts of the greatest historian in Rome and of two other writers of his time, all in agreement; how could she have twisted the text of the Talmud (for according to the Talmud it was not at Jerusalem, but at Lydda, that Jesus ben Pandera was put to death); how without proof could she give the lie to the four consistent accounts of the Gospels; how could she try desperately to make

Peter say what he had neither implied nor intended to imply? Had any great writer brought forward such proofs as Mrs Besant has done, how should we have explained such a mass of sophistries—*any one of which would constitute a grave fault even in a mediocre mind*—except by saying that they were consciously and intentionally so arranged in order that a hypothesis might be supported at all costs? Yet, it will be asked, what motive could inspire in Mrs Besant such determination, such ardour in the service of error? For what purpose would she defend what she knows to be false?

I have tried to understand, my heart in revolt against the relentless conclusions of my mind, my soul striving after Truth. . . . Can I be blamed if a memory rises within me, deeply engraved on my mind, as are so many of the pages of Mrs Besant's *Autobiography*, that I once read and re-read, thrilling with admiration and enthusiasm, and that still remain so vividly in my mind? While I was facing this painful problem, I heard Mrs Besant telling us Mme. Blavatsky's judgment of her: "Child, your pride is terrible; you are as proud as Lucifer himself."

As proud as the King of pride, as rich in pride as the one source of all pride. . . . There passes through our souls a shiver of pity and dread. . . . At a suddenly awakened instinct we cling with all our strength to Truth, gathering loyally round her,

and our longing turns with all its strength towards the Humility that has power to save, praying for her to descend on Mrs Besant. . . . Yet how sad, how terribly sad, that this redoubtable cause, with its tragic effects, should seem to us so evident, so conclusive, so irrefutable! . . . It would seem that indomitable pride, that devastating pride, would stop at *nothing* rather than make the humiliating confession of mistakes. It must be admitted that only the *superhuman* pride referred to by Mme. Blavatsky would dare to persevere consciously in error while holding in its hands the welfare of thousands of souls, whom it was thus willing to throw into the most dire confusion. Truly all is thus made clear, but what a terrible clarity! How keen our wish that it might be less cruel, less pitiless! For it must inevitably paralyse the affection we still persist in feeling for Mrs Besant; it shows us the clear duty of turning out of our hearts the last vestige of that old feeling of solidarity if we would not be her accomplices.

Whatever the pain, we must face it bravely. In spite of the overwhelming evidence accumulating against Mrs Besant, I will not declare her guilty of the deliberate announcement of a false Christ. I acknowledge the profound mystery shrouding the inmost thoughts of every living being from the unreliable pronouncements of psychological investigation. But without the least hesitation I will

affirm this: Our reason forces us to confess that all goes to suggest that Mrs Besant, having herself ceased to believe in the identity of her Jesus with the Christ, would still continue to make others believe it. When, earlier, we tried to elude this painful conclusion Mme. Blavatsky herself barred our way; the Founder of the Theosophical Society, the friend of Mrs Besant, who guided her first steps in the occult life, comes forward to defend the verdict of our impartial reason, leading us to it with the authority we concede to her clairvoyant knowledge, and to her protective affection for Mrs Besant. She gives us, alas! the key that seems to reveal the secret of all our President's failings. Her pride, her dominating mind, have driven her on this crusade of extermination of Dr Steiner's teachings; it has induced her to collect, without the least regard for truth, justice, or theosophic principles, no matter what weapons if they do but serve against her opponent: calumny, abuse of power, misstatement of facts, all combined in a subtle strategy. And when she falls victim of some error in the course of her occult investigations—of which in theory she is always proclaiming the fallibility,—it is again her pride that bars the way to admission, and makes her the slave of the most pitiful machinations. In truth, Mrs Besant's attitude towards Dr Steiner himself and his teaching is utterly unworthy and moves us to

strong disapproval. But her fault does not reach such terrible proportions as in this announcement of a false Christ. In this case the words that express her responsibility may haunt our thought, but must ever be held back from the pen. Let us confine ourselves to the statement that it is a great misfortune to learn that Mrs Besant has perhaps closed her heart to the confession of her fault; that pride has suggested a policy of expedients, so insincere, so pitifully inadequate. A formal explicit declaration would retrieve, so far as was possible, the initial mistake. In attempting to defend it Mrs Besant has made of this mistake a disaster, which at all events will shatter to fragments in all directions the confidence she had formerly inspired. For if she is not consciously defending her mistake, then what kind of a break-up of all her faculties are we witnessing? An undefined fear seizes us when we contemplate the possibility of wilful confusion of men's minds, no less than when we consider the hypothesis of a mental failure as radical and as complete as this lecture on the "Aspects of the Christ" would show it to be. The one certainty in either case is that we are facing one of the worst of the catastrophes reserved in the spiritual world for present-day humanity, once we recognise its immediate and future consequences.

That the drama may be complete, that we may

experience to the full the keenest suffering, we see the passionate confidence of the victims facing this proclamation of a false Christ.

A pamphlet containing Mrs Besant's lecture on "The Masters" has been used in Germany for the purpose of propaganda of the Star in the East. (Dusseldorf, Ernst Pieper, Ring-Verlag.) In it occur the following lines written by her: "He, whom in the East men call the Wisdom-Truth, the World-Teacher, and whom in the West men call the Christ, will ere long incarnate upon earth and move once more among the busy crowds of men." The pamphlet closes with a strong appeal to the public to join the Star in the East. Alluding to the passage quoted, the appeal says: "Lips that we reverence have revealed to us that this is not only possible but certain. With an enthusiasm that melts and dissolves all doubts and all hesitations, Mrs Besant, the author of this lecture, announces the fact that the Great Teacher will once more bestow the blessing of his presence and will continue his work for the good of humanity. So shall we be greatly favoured in the eyes of many thousands of generations. The Kingdom of Heaven will again descend amongst us. If this be so—and it is difficult not to believe an Annie Besant . . ."

Our thought reels at seeing the greatest mystification thus met with the most determined confidence.

The more deeply we study this, the more terrible appear the responsibilities of Adyar in this deplorable scheme; for we would still seek the origin of such fearless confidence, refusing, as it does, to be shaken by the eloquent appeal of the facts here set forth, and of which some, if not all, have been within the reach and open to examination of those members who profess such an enthusiastic confidence in Mrs Besant. The result of our search is a yet further culpability, as overwhelming as it is unexpected.

For this confidence is not in the case of all the victims the result of the free use of their own inner faculties. It is, in the case of the greater number, due to the influence of a strong suggestion deliberately organised and cleverly carried out by the authors of this mystification themselves; by Mr Leadbeater who wrote, and by Mrs Besant who published, the following lines in the *Adyar Album*, p. 45: "What can I say to you of your President that you do not know already? Her colossal intellect, her unflinching wisdom, her unrivalled eloquence, her splendid forgetfulness of self, her untiring devotion to work for others—all these are familiar to you. Yet these qualities, these powers, are but a small part of her greatness; they are on the surface, they may be seen by all, they leap to the eyes. But there are other qualities, other powers, of which you cannot know, because they pertain to

the secrets of Initiation. She is a pupil of our Masters ; from the fount of Their archaic wisdom she derives her own ; the plans which she is carrying out are Their plans for the welfare of the world. Think, therefore, how great an honour it is for you that you should be permitted to work under her, for in doing so you are virtually working under Them. Think how watchful you should be to miss no hint which falls from her lips, to carry out exactly whatever instructions she may give you. Remember that because of her position as an Initiate she knows far more than you do ; and precisely because her knowledge is occult, given under the seal of Initiation, she cannot share it with you. Therefore her actions must certainly be governed by considerations of which you have no conception. There will be times when you cannot understand her motives, for she is taking into account many things which you cannot see and of which she must not tell you. But whether you understand or not, you will be wise to follow her implicitly, just because she knows. This is no mere supposition on my part, no mere flight of the imagination ; I have stood beside your President in the presence of the Supreme Director of evolution on this globe, and I know whereof I speak. Let the wise hear my words, and act accordingly."

It is easy to see how minds not gifted with a

highly developed critical faculty, or the instinctive sense that discriminates the true from the false, would yield hopelessly to such a formidable assault. They cannot see that he who thus guarantees the infallibility of Mrs Besant has himself need of guarantee—we will return to this question later—before we accept such strange advice as to follow Mrs Besant whether we understand her or not, and to follow her *implicitly*—that is to say, *solely because she asks it*.

I do not think that any religion or man-made cult, even in the earliest ages, has ever promulgated superstition in its grossest form so openly and boldly as this. For had men then irresponsibly followed some leader or other, there would have been in those epochs no development of thought, and the legacy of documents left us by these periods prove there was. Mr Leadbeater, on the contrary, demands the *deliberate* suppression of thought, grown now to full responsibility; he demands of it willing acceptance of blind *submission*, he proposes the voluntary stifling of the protests of our inner conviction. . . . And having extolled such a deliberately induced mental torpor for Mrs Besant's benefit, he immediately demands it for himself when he speaks of the "Supreme Director of Evolution on this globe." Who is this administrative person? With whom is he to be identified in the scheme of evolution as it has been

given to us by Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater themselves? Evidently Mr Leadbeater does not think it worth while to even try to enlighten us at the moment when he is striving to rouse all the forces of obscurantism still sleeping in the human soul.

What saving power will deliver us from this nightmare that is weighing us down? What avenging God will come to confound this impious prophet who seeks to reduce humanity to the level of a troop of obedient automata, denying their reason, treading down those inner instincts that may perhaps warn them that Mrs Besant is deceiving herself and them? A gentle and winning voice, infinitely reassuring, rises out of the depths of my being. At the sound I feel this thick fog that has threatened to wrap our souls in the mists of a servile ignorance melt as by enchantment, and a great light breaks forth, triumphant. Mr Leadbeater hears the words of a judgment immediate and without appeal, pronounced by the Buddha himself: "Believe not what you have heard said; believe not in traditions merely because they have been transmitted through many generations; believe not merely because a thing is repeated by many persons; believe not solely because someone has shown you the work of a very ancient sage; believe not conjectures; believe not in that to which you are attached merely by habit; *believe not solely*

upon the authority of your Masters and elders; WHEN UPON OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS A PRINCIPLE CONFORMS TO REASON AND LEADS TO THE BENEFIT AND WELFARE OF ALL, accept it and hold to it." (Buddha, *Anguttura Nikaya*.)

What a royal refuge, what a noble support are the words of those who are truly great! They are the perpetual safeguard of humanity.

We have seen that upon "observation and analysis" the "unfailing" wisdom of Mrs Besant is no more than a mass of inconsistencies, injustices, sectarian tactics in administration, error and mystification in esoteric announcements. Far from leading to "the benefit and welfare of all," this "unfailing" wisdom is leading to the dismemberment of the Theosophical Society, to the most miserable slavery of souls, the emasculation of minds, the creation of a terrible heresy. And at the present time we are all feeling that we shall not be living up to the wise exhortations of that great Being who was the Buddha, unless we clearly denounce the lamentable aberrations of these two occultists in the hope of drawing all the souls we possibly can away from their pernicious influence. With this end in view, and faithful to this duty, we shall calmly and firmly continue our investigation of facts.

Fortunately, the assertions of Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater have lately reached to such a pitch of extravagance and have so utterly defied common

sense that they will rouse even the least critical minds and the most compliant hearts.

THIRD PHASE

A book entitled *Man: Whence, How, and Whither*, and written by Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater in collaboration, has just been published.

Their substitution of a false Christ for the Christ of the Gospels is here supported by a new order of evidence.

In the course of their investigations these two occultists look up, on the one side, the past incarnations of him whom Mrs Besant calls the "Master Jesus," that is, of the "Jesus" born 105 B.C.; and, on the other side, the past lives of the being whom she calls the "Lord Maitreya, the present Bodhi-sattva, the Supreme Teacher of the World"; whose ego at a given moment replaced that of "Jesus," this being the last incarnation of the Christ whose immediate return she is announcing.

Let us first quote from their account of the incarnations of the "Supreme Teacher," he whom Mrs Besant believes to be the "Lord Maitreya."

In the chapter headed "Early Times on the Moon Chain," p. 34, we read:—

"There is a hut in which dwells a Moon-man, his wife and children; these we know in later times

under the names of Mars and Mercury, the Mahāguru and Sūrya. A number of these monkey-creatures live round the hut, and give to their owners the devotion of faithful dogs; among them we notice the future Sirius, Herakles, Alcyone, and Mizar, to whom we may give their future names for the purpose of recognition, though they are still non-human."¹

In the fourth Root Race we again find the personage supposed to be "Maitreya" as the husband of the ego claimed by these authors as that of "Master K. H." Mrs Besant is again incarnated in the family as daughter, the eldest sister of the "Master M."; "Maitreya," the future World-Teacher, being at this time the head of the tribe (p. 113).

We find him again on p. 252 as the daughter of Alcyone (Krishnamurti), and with "Jesus" himself as sister.

In the Iranian sub-race he is the chief priest, at the head of the State religion (p. 298).

¹ In these incarnations such names are used as: Mars for the "Master M.," Mercury for the "Master K. H.," Sūrya, the "Lord Maitreya, the present Bodhisattva, the Supreme Teacher of the World," Sirius for Mr Leadbeater, Herakles for Mrs Besant, Alcyone for Krishnamurti, Mizar for his young brother, etc. A list of these names and those to whom they apply is given in the Foreword of the book. We shall here substitute the names of the real persons as given in this list for the fancy names used to distinguish them in the body of the book, *Man: Whence, How, and Whither*.

He is high priest in Southern India in 18,875 B.C., on p. 328.

Three thousand years later, in Egypt, he is again high priest, the adviser of the reigning Pharaoh, we learn on p. 330.

We have thus reached to somewhere about the year 15,000 B.C., and then—incredible as it seems—they give no further incarnations of him whom they nevertheless claim to have been the World-Teacher at the beginning of our era.

They give us his incarnations as husband, as father, as counsellor and priest, and are silent as to the only incarnation of fundamental and vital importance to the whole world.

Let us see if the incarnations of their "Jesus" will fill this gap in our knowledge, if they will throw light on this essential point, thus left in obscurity.

We meet this "Jesus" for the first time at the beginning of the fifth Root Race, as daughter of Alcyone (Krishnamurti) and sister of "Maitreya" (p. 252).

Then, on p. 328, as the wife of Julius Cæsar, 18,875 B.C., he, or rather she, being at this time the widow of Vulcan (known in his last incarnation as Sir Thomas More).

He is next found, on p. 333, as one of a band of Aryan immigrants in India.

He is later identified as daughter of Alcyone-

Krishnamurti (his father) and Fabrizio Ruspoli (his mother),¹ parents at the same time of the future "World-Teacher, Maitreya," their young daughter. These incarnations took place 72,000 B.C., on the shores of the Lake of Gobi, we are told on p. 490.

In 15,910 B.C. we find "Jesus" as grandson of "Maitreya," and as father and grandfather of a large family composed, as in all the cases investigated by these two authors, of *present* members of the Theosophical Society *only*, and including the faithful friends of Adyar *to the exclusion of all others*.²

In this particular family, including sons- and daughters-in-law, its members number thirty-three (p. 496).

¹ M. Ruspoli is an Italian theosophist recently living at Adyar, with whom Mr Leadbeater stayed in Italy.

² It is a remarkable fact that outside this little circle not a single being in our great world has ever entered into these family communities to whom the honour is given of being the pioneers of every civilisation of the past. Even though we are invited to assist at marriages running into thousands, *ever* the same names appear and *all* the members of *all* the families are identified. This singular oligarchy of friends and devotees of Adyar perhaps merited to be signalised throughout the evolution of our earth, the more so that Mr Leadbeater, writing in his bird's-eye view of the twenty-eighth century and of the pioneers of the future sixth race, remarks maliciously: "We know who will *not* be there." He puts in italics the word *not*, desirous doubtless to indicate the unworthiness of other theosophists.

In 12,800 B.C. the "Jesus" of these investigations again forms part of a very extensive family, composed as usual of the selfsame elements, and including amongst the names known in the theosophic world that of Mme. Marie-Louise Kirby (an Italian theosophist recently at Adyar), who was his sister. "Jesus" was then father of Mrs S. Maud Sharpe (General Secretary of the English Section), of Julius Cæsar, and of T. Subba Rao; the Teshu Lama being at that time his daughter, etc., etc. (p. 499).

Finally, in 13,500 B.C. this "Jesus" is the wife of an emperor of Southern India.

Once more have our hopes been betrayed, for an absolute silence broods over the incarnations of "Jesus" later than this date of 13,500, as it reigned over those of the "World-Teacher." No single detail is given of the life of "Jesus" at the beginning of our era.

We cannot, however, conceive that this information gathered from occult investigation will be felt to be indispensable by anyone. Now that we know that Mrs Besant's "World-Teacher" is an ordinary man of the lunar chain (to whom Mrs Besant was first domestic animal¹ and then sister, and who, in

¹ Dr Steiner's teaching does not give to the monkey the position of human ancestor. For him animals are degraded human forms, those more or less nearly resembling present-day animals hardly going back further than the mid-Atlantean period.

the early period of our earth, was daughter of the young Krishnamurti or of M. Ruspoli), who could be found still to imagine that there could be here any question, save in a mad or impious joke, of the true Christ whose divine nature and world-function are thus proclaimed in the Gospel of St John: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth*"?

I beg to be forgiven for having ventured to quote here these sacred words, for having dared to mention them in the same breath with these wild extravagances. . . .

Let us bow our heads a moment in reverent recollection. Thereafter we shall feel only a quiet and abiding pity for those who would persist in comparing their "Jesus," this lunar man who was brother, sister, husband of somebody or other in his earlier incarnations, with the *Word made flesh*, with the *Word that was God*, and by whom *all things were made*, and who was *in the Beginning*.

If they still continue to say that their "Jesus" was the true Christ, it is because their reason is clouded, for such a conscious and deliberate pro-

fanation of the Divine could never be consummated by occultists who sincerely believe in the existence of a divine principle in the world. It is by a strange irony that their arrogant announcements are now turning against themselves, when they dare to say in their visions of the twenty-eighth century, on p. 456 of *Man: Whence, How, and Whither*: "There are a few people who represent the older form of Christianity—who in the name of Christ refused to receive him when he came in a new form. The majority regard these people as hopelessly out of date." Truly no one could be more cruel towards themselves. For at one stroke Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater thus succeed in discrediting the result of all their researches in the eyes of all who have, by aid of the quotations here given, seen into this grotesque farce of the return of a false Christ.

Such are the three aspects of Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater's false Christ. Let us hope that henceforward they will refrain from the error, the aberration, the sacrilege of clothing their "Jesus" with the glory that shines for Western souls round the historical Christ. It is mystification of the worst type which seeks to lead devout souls away from Christ. Because I see so clearly the karmic responsibility being incurred by Mrs Besant, I shall here pronounce, in the spirit of indissoluble human brotherhood, the words that should have been hers:

"In considering the return of the Christ I would have you distinguish clearly between the Christ of the Gospels and him to whom I refer. All that they have in common is the name of Jesus.

"The name Christ in my lectures does not refer to the *real* person who lived in the past and of whom the Gospels speak. This name to me stands simply for a type, a function—that of a World-Teacher. Have I not said in my lecture, *Aspects of the Christ*: 'The names do not matter. . . . Call Him Christ or Buddha, or whatever name you will, . . . the Christ answers to them all.' It has suited me to give this title to a personality entirely disconnected with the events of Judea. Since this name of which I have made use is susceptible of arousing misconception, it is necessary to emphasise the fact that the Jesus whose immediate return I look for should in no way be confused with your Christ. Your faith in his Divinity, in the supremely essential part you assign him in human redemption, arises out of your faith in the story of his life, and especially of his death, as recorded by his disciples, the Apostles of your religion. But, so far as I know, these disciples never existed, and the story of his life, as of theirs, is a creation of the imagination. If you believe in the return of the Christ to whom I refer, it suffices that you accept the existence of a man named Jesus, having lived on earth about a century before the time

when those events in Palestine were supposed to take place, but which did not do so. I know next to nothing of this Jesus whose return I foretell. The Talmud says but a few passing words, and I have not as yet undertaken the occult investigation which would enable me to reconstruct the last incarnation of this Teacher. On the other hand, I can give you information on his much earlier incarnations: he was my brother when he was a tribal chief; at other times he was the son of Alcyone (Krishnamurti) and of M. Ruspoli. You will find his lives constantly linked with those of the most devoted of the friends of Adyar. For the rest, if you remain a faithful believer in the authority of your Scriptures, the authenticity of which I repudiate, they will safeguard you against those who try to create confusion between the prophet whose immediate coming I proclaim and the Christ of the Gospels. Does not this latter state explicitly, when addressing his Father in heaven: 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do' (St John xvii. 4)? It does not, then, seem necessary for him to reincarnate in order to perfect the work on earth that he regarded as finished. On the contrary, your Scriptures announce his return 'in the clouds of heaven' (St Matthew xxiv. 30; also Acts i. 9 and 11, and Revelations i. 17).

"Clouds are composed of a substance permeable

by all other substances, and they take constantly changing forms, these being precisely the two attributes of the subtle worlds, as I have taught you. . . . You should then understand that your Christ has, according to your Scriptures, finished his work on earth, that he will at present be manifested on other planes of being, as claimed by Dr Steiner, whose occult researches, it would seem, confirm the literal as well as the deeper meaning of every word of these imaginary Gospels. . . ."

But if Mrs Besant wrote such words, it is to be feared the reply would be: "If we have rightly understood you, then the life of Christianity, Western civilisation to which it gave birth—with all its wealth of genius, in the domains of thought, of art, of literature, of science and invention,—all this is simply built upon shifting sand, upon a few hundred pages of haphazard writing, the work of obscure and mediocre editors. This seems the logical outcome of your claims. Since you find such an idea acceptable, we cannot be surprised that you look for a new age, a new civilisation, in connection with an obscure and unknown man, having had no influence on the past, having no connection with the true Christ save in the sharing of the name Jesus. Pardon us if we cannot agree with you. Our respect for the generations who have preceded us, no less than our own common sense, forbids belief in the redeeming and

inspiring quality of a compilation of imaginative writings.

“It requires a *real* power, a *living* spiritual energy to produce such flowers of spiritual life as have marked the history of the centuries behind us: to wit, the life and energy of this same Christ whose existence and reality you deny. Your Jesus, undiscoverable in the past as World-Teacher, appearing only as your brother, or as the son or brother of your friends, fails to inspire any confidence in us. We decline to follow you—the more so since we have been warned against the danger that you represent in these words of our own Christ: ‘For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the elect. Behold, I have told you before’ (St Matt. xxiv. 24). You, Madam, claim the descent of the Holy Ghost during a distribution of diplomas by the youthful Krishnamurti. But you may realise that we are quite clear about him; our common sense and our religious documents together protect us from your errors and your charms.”

If Mrs Besant had tried to avoid, instead of stirring up and encouraging, confusion of thought, it will be clear that there would be no longer any special interest in knowing whether the Jesus she foretells would or would not incarnate in the

body of the young Krishnamurti: it would then have been a matter of very different significance; she could not "parade with the young man before the eyes of the whole world as with the future Christ," as was once announced by Dr Hübbe-Schleiden, President of the Order of the Star in the East in Germany (*Mitteilungen*, March 1913, p. 6).

Capital has been made out of this disastrous source of confusion of personality which tends to encourage the belief that Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater prepare the youth to become an incarnation of the real Christ. It is with feelings of deepest pity that we think of all those who have fallen victims to Mrs Besant's irresistible eloquence; of all those too-trusting souls who, without hesitation, transfer their love of Christ to another; who are anchoring their powers of faith and hope in another than Christ. Whatever he may be, by the very fact that he is another, this substitute must be wholly and fundamentally unworthy of their homage, for between him and his worshippers rises this barrier of unconsciously fraudulent confusion, or deliberate imposture.

FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES

SOME OCCULT METHODS

WE come now to the pitiful climax of this parody. Krishnamurti, under the name of Alcyone, has written a little book—"of great value," Mrs Besant tells us in the *Theosophist* of January 1911—entitled *At the Feet of the Master*. We learn from Mrs Besant in her Preface that the "teachings contained in it were given to him by his Master in preparing him for Initiation." In a legal suit brought against Mrs Besant by the father of Alcyone, he asserts that he has reason to believe this book to have emanated from Mr Leadbeater. His son, he says, was not able to write a letter in English correctly, and was absolutely incapable of producing such a work. Further, he considered such proceedings tended to produce a moral deterioration in his son. (Suit brought by J. Narayaniah in the Madras High Court.)

In this little book are to be found the following words: "If you see anyone breaking

the law of the country you should inform the authorities."

No doubt in all countries in which members of the Star in the East are to be found the police will gladly avail themselves of the help of these volunteers. But it is to be feared that public opinion may be somewhat scornful of a prophet who would thus raise information and denunciation to the level of a religious duty. We can at any rate prophesy opposition for him in France.

Better still, Mrs Besant herself, in 1895, in an open letter, since reprinted in the *Theosophic Voice* of August 1908, recalled and enthusiastically endorsed these words of H. P. Blavatsky, written in *Lucifer*, vol. iii. p. 268, in an article entitled, "Is Denunciation a Duty?"—

"If a theosophist happens to be a public officer, a judge or a magistrate, a barrister, or even a preacher, it is then, of course, his duty to his country, his conscience, and those who put their trust in him to denounce severely every case of treachery, falsehood, and rascality, *even* in private life; but—*nota bene*—only if he is appealed to and called to exercise his legal authority, not otherwise."

What Mrs Besant then so emphatically repudiated, what H. P. Blavatsky reproved in terms that show the extreme repugnance that denunciation inspired in her, these disgraceful practices

to-day would be *prescribed* by the Masters to those who follow the Path of Holiness! Already we meet with new and alarming surprises.

It will be objected, perhaps, that this is the only lapse from the moral standpoint in this otherwise ordinary and harmless little book. It is none the less significant. We know that a single denunciation, even if accidental, would lower the character of the author in our eyes. What, then, of an organiser of systematic denunciations, who was so morally blind as to institute such a system *in the name of the loftiest morality!* In propounding it he has revealed his moral decadence. To those who do not understand, should I suggest that they should go to learn painting from one who is colour-blind? I think I should only cast discredit on the real Initiation by disputing this precept any further. Were it but to protest against the serious and constant abuse of the name of the Masters, we must say here that Mrs Besant, in her Preface to this little book, not only credits them with such teachings, but especially lays stress on the fact that "the greater part is a reproduction of the Master's own words; that which is not such a verbal reproduction is the Master's thought clothed in his pupil's words. Two omitted sentences were supplied by the Master. In two other cases an omitted word has been added."

What a contrast to the great traditions of the

theosophical movement, formulated by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*, third edition, p. 191: "As for our best theosophists, they would also in this case far rather that the names of the Masters had not been mixed up with our books in any way." And later, on p. 192: "I say again, every earnest theosophist regrets to-day, from the bottom of his heart, that these sacred names and things have ever been mentioned before the public." And this would be the moment to say with Mme. Blavatsky: "Great are the desecrations to which the names of two of the Masters have been subjected." What would her Masters think of "such" an Initiation? But, when all is said and done, what *is* this occultism which produces such disregard of truth, such calumny in daily life, such disastrous confusion in the domain of clairvoyance, and, finally, advice of such a kind as to arouse universal disgust?

This occultism has its methods, as all schools of occultism have; for occultism consists in a methodical training and the awakening of consciousness to superior worlds; and when a method produces such results, may we not regard it as legitimate to ask what is the source of such serious and such numerous aberrations? However, in a question of such capital importance we must be on our guard against any expression of opinion.

On this question, as on all those that we have

examined, we will cite as witnesses original documents, the appraisements of those who teach their own method. It is well known that Mr Leadbeater is the inventor and manipulator of the Adyar occultism. In the *Inner Life*, vol. i. p. 450, in speaking of the centres, the awakening of which, as we know, develops clairvoyance, he expresses himself in these terms: "I have heard it suggested that each of the different petals of these force-centres represents a moral quality, and that the development of that quality brings the centre into activity. I have not yet met with any facts which confirm this, nor am I able to see exactly how it can be, because the appearance is produced by certain quite definite and easily recognisable forces, and the petals in any particular centre are either active or not active according as these forces have or have not been aroused, and their development seems to me to have no more connection with morality than has the development of the biceps."

Further, it is of interest to find Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater, in the first lines of the Preface to *Man: Whence, How, and Whither*, expressing the same view as regards the connection between morality and clairvoyance: "It is not generally accepted, nor indeed is it accepted to any large extent. A constantly growing minority, however, of fairly intelligent people believe clairvoyance to be a fact, and regard it as a perfectly natural

power, which will become universal in the course of evolution. They do not regard it as a miraculous gift, nor as an outgrowth from high spirituality, lofty intelligence, or purity of character. . . . They know that it is a power latent in all men, and that it can be developed by anyone who is able and willing to pay the price demanded for its forcing, ahead of the general evolution."

Mrs Besant is no less positive. A price is demanded for the "forcing" of clairvoyance, but this price is neither "high spirituality," nor "lofty intelligence," nor even "purity of character." Thus we see that she fully shares the views of Mr Leadbeater on this point.

What is the method which differs from his own to which Mr Leadbeater refers above? It is that of Dr Steiner. M. van Manen, the friend and collaborator of Mr Leadbeater, explains this to us in the *Theosophist* for September 1910, p. 1634, where he writes: "We have as regards these centres two distinct teachings: the one (that of Dr Steiner) claims that they are related to certain moral and intellectual qualities; the other (that of Mr Leadbeater) asserts the contrary."

Thus the calumny, sectarianism, the disregard of truth in daily life, the increasingly serious aberrations in the spiritual life, have gradually revealed the main source of all these facts, *i.e.* the defect of the method.

All becomes clear. Mr Leadbeater is probably right, and it may be possible to develop, as he claims, a certain clairvoyance (an inferior clairvoyance, it must be said) without the concurrence of a moral and mental training. But who will be bold enough to claim that the results in the two cases will be the same? Who will maintain that without moral purification we shall possess that moral sense that inspires gracious and noble conduct, and teaches us to hate falsehood? Who will be found to assert that without an arduous intellectual training we shall be able to distinguish illusions from reality in our astral visions?

It is logical, it is inevitable that astral perceptions, arising in a soul trained to become clairvoyant by such a method, will not be clearly understood, for lack of intellectual discrimination; and so such a one will be the sport of these unknown forces, if pride or any other of the human passions still remain dominant as the result of incomplete moral purification.

And if we now examine from a different point of view the record of these deplorable facts, this time passing from centre to circumference, from cause to effect, we shall discover the secret of this "Initiation," of these moral precepts, of these "Masters," of this "return of the Christ," of the lamentable aberrations to be seen in all directions. We shall also understand this passionate persecution

of a divergent teaching, by means of calumny, to the detriment of truth: an occult training that declares itself independent of morality, on the same ground that the physical training of the muscles is independent, is adequate to the production of *that*, or worse.

Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater are most certainly not ignorant of the dangers of occult development without morality. But it is quite another matter to profess this theory, or even to lean towards morality in the course of occult development, *by means of good intentions and generous inspirations, perpetually evoked in eloquent language*, from setting to work on the development of these centres by means of exercises arranged with the express purpose of bringing in the practice of morality, of truth, and of logic as powerful factors in the reorganisation of the subtle bodies—which produces clairvoyance. It is this special point in the teaching of Dr Steiner that Mr Leadbeater and M. van Manen have raised in the passages quoted earlier. On this question there exists a fundamental divergence between the two systems, of which it is impossible to give here in detail the *absolutely opposite* and practically endless consequences.

It is easy to show the characteristics of the different attitudes which would be the outcome of these two methods.

That which dissociates moral and intellectual aspirations from occult development, and seeks to cultivate them separately, will not achieve moral progress, since the *inner* nature is not transmuted; but this method will produce a veritable debauch of phrases invoking these aspirations. For, instead of penetrating by means of the appropriate practice into the inner regions of the soul, these aspirations swirl, so to say, perpetually on the surface of the mind. Their presence there will produce a kind of psychic intoxication, sometimes rousing in the occultist thoughts so much above his own mental and moral standard, that he may come to regard himself as a saint, while at the same time performing the most despicable actions. Indeed, during such times the conduct shows a moral retrogression very noticeable when compared with the conduct before this occult development. For this latter *increases and intensifies* all the temptations, as every occultist will admit. An increase of *active* morality is, therefore, required if we would avoid this most dangerous lack of balance.

The other method produces an opposite effect. Restraint in the public utterance of moral principles and intellectual aphorisms will be accentuated in proportion as the results of occult training have revealed the only true meaning of mental and moral effort, *sterile while it remains the object of declamatory exhortation, fruitful only when put*

into practice. Such would appear to be the result of each of these two methods when we observe them at work.

Do the facts justify these deductions? Those recorded in this brochure do support them. We shall find constantly in Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater, under a great show of high moral aspirations, the reality of an *actual* moral and intellectual fall. Much emphasis is placed on "liberty of thought," and at the same time the intellectual desertion of this principle is preached in counselling members to give blind obedience to "the least hint which falls from the lips of Mrs Besant," and to follow her implicitly whether she is understood or not. And Mrs Besant, having lent herself, in her dealings with Dr Steiner and the German Section, to the worst kind of persecution, in the name of liberty of thought, after having trodden under foot exoteric and esoteric principles of morality, makes this touching appeal: "Do not, I pray you who love me, pollute your love with hatred. Do not return railing with railing, nor reviling for reviling. Show to these intolerant ones the tolerance which is one of the 'Six Jewels' of the 'Qualifications.' If they hate, do you send out more love. If they insult, do you pardon; if they revile, do you bless" (*Theosophist*, March 1913, p. 809).

We all know that nothing would be easier than

to multiply instances. Does not every lecture of Mrs Besant's, every article of hers in the *Theosophist*, contain passages in which she proclaims in the most moving fashion moral beauties and intellectual perfections?

We see clearly that the fruits are precisely those we should expect from the seed: the terrible danger of this method can neither be misunderstood nor denied. So let us be resolute never to lend ear to the words which in this school quite naturally take the place of the honest and right act, and so turn attention from the moral ugliness of the actions performed. It is a true proverb that says the way to hell is paved with good intentions. Without unduly stretching the meaning, we might add that this road re-echoes with the lost acclamations of high intellectual ideals and with the pitiful proclaiming of these same good intentions. If we would avoid these snares, we shall close our hearts to those sentimental accents which perpetually exalt good and noble moral intentions. We shall ask for moral acts. *Acts alone show forth morality, not attractive formulas flowing without effort from literary or oratorical talent.* The constant declaration of liberty of thought, of human brotherhood, cannot impress us when the actions of those who delight in them enslave thought, persecute merit, seek to poison souls by flimsy and deceptive spiritual pronouncements.

Resolutely and unwaveringly we will say to them: Enough of declamation, enough of pompous phrases. *Act* morally. You multiply a hundred-fold the evil of your actions by dazzling and blinding your victims by the brilliance of your fascinating oratory.

It is a painful duty to have to press this point with such insistence. But now that we are facing the consequences of the Leadbeater method on the mental character of the clairvoyant, our warnings in reference to still more serious harm will not appear exaggerated.

We know that the higher regions of the invisible worlds are those in which "consciousness" manifests itself principally in the most intense awareness of moral beauty.

Since this is so, the cultivation of the non-moral clairvoyance could only attain results in the lower regions of the astral world. The higher astral and the devachanic worlds would remain entirely closed to it. Just as a man who is colour-blind, though not completely blind, is shut out from the world of colours on this earth, because of some defect in the physical organ of sight, so the organ of clairvoyant sight, when developed according to certain methods, will be blind to the moral outlines of subtle worlds, *and will thus be cut off from all their truly spiritual content. The field of their experiences will be limited to the lower regions of the astral plane.*

And it is these lower visions, *more frequently experienced because of their affinity to elements in the vehicles of the investigator not yet purified*, that will be presented as the most sublime images of the higher worlds. For such a clairvoyant is deprived of the high morality which is the force leading our bodies by affinity towards truly spiritual Beings. Deprived of the standard of comparison that these provide, he will be the victim of all the illusions of a world that is the veritable motherland of illusion, for human errors are but the faint reflection of these. Since the sense of responsibility, which is essentially moral in origin, will equally fail him, he will have no scruple in sharing his illusions with all, in making known his misleading experiences—the less since the forces, whose sport he is, push him irresistibly to this. Are they not in truth the adversaries of the divine scheme of evolution, the servants and sowers of error and immorality the world over ?

We have thus sketched in their broad hypothetical outlines the incalculable reactions that the defect in the Leadbeater method brings into the inner life, into the words and actions of those who yield their souls to him and become zealous enthusiasts.

In demonstrating the fatal effects of this method we have shown the real meaning of the faults and failings of all kinds as exhibited by Mrs Besant, who is its most fervent adherent. The right

interpretation of the known facts seems to us so entirely in conformity with the consequences, as implied in our hypothesis, as to make it possible to some extent to foresee these facts with scientific certainty—which is precisely what has happened, as we shall see.

We recall the "Leadbeater case," which in 1906 called forth within the Theosophical Society, no less than outside, unanimous moral censure. Dr Steiner took that occasion to mark the same distinction between his own and the Leadbeater method as we have shown is made by Mr Leadbeater and M. van Manen. The following is an extract from the circular sent in May of 1906 to the members of the German Section: "I can speak the more freely of the Leadbeater affair since I have always deemed it necessary to repudiate the methods by which he arrives at his occult information, the spreading of which he so extols. The occultism that I represent compels me to this point of view. In saying this I pronounce neither for nor against the accuracy of what Mr Leadbeater gives out as occult truths. In occultism some little knowledge can be gained by means of dangerous methods, involving the constant risk of being misled in certain directions.¹

¹ I felt bound to ask Dr Steiner if his attitude to the writings of Mr Leadbeater had not changed since the publication of that circular. He replied that the subsequent works of Mr Leadbeater were of quite a different character from such information as was placed within reach by his own system of investigation.

I thus feel compelled to seek the underlying causes of the Leadbeater case, and I should like to say that no one can guarantee himself against the possibility of serious aberrations in adopting the methods used by Mr Leadbeater in his occult work. This being my point of view as to principles, the Leadbeater case has caused me no surprise. But I do not think that those who approve the methods of investigation of this occultist have the right to condemn him now. The circular sent to the members should have made it clear that the charges proved against Mr Leadbeater were not connected with occultism, or it will destroy his whole system of occultism. As for me, I am quite clear as to this method; and I have here explained my point of view with the object of supplying the lack of any official pronouncement in the executive notice."

Our hypothetical explanation has exactly fitted the facts. Does not this circular of Dr Steiner's, published in 1906, furnish us with a new and absolutely conclusive proof of the perfect correctness of our contentions? Yet here are still further facts providing more eloquent testimony.

Resigning from the Theosophical Society in consequence of this affair, Mr Leadbeater has since returned, at the invitation of Mrs Besant; and the moral "irresponsibility" that the Leadbeater occultism develops in those who give themselves up to it rises again to view in connection with the

incidents of his return. Dr Steiner had refused to vote in favour of his readmission ; he had refrained from voting. As the vote offered to "invite" the return to the Theosophical Society, abstention would be sufficient, if generally adopted, to prevent Mr Leadbeater's return.

In view of the form of the question asking for the vote, abstention conveyed a *more exact* reply than the vote against, *without being so offensive*. It was clear and effective ; passion was replaced by a delicate shade of human brotherhood, that all who appreciate true occultism would rejoice to meet.

But Mrs Besant did not read it thus. She replied to Dr Steiner that she interpreted his vote as *favourable* to the return of Mr Leadbeater, since it was not against ; and Dr Steiner had to cable to Adyar a long telegram, so that his vote might not appear in the deliberations of the General Council as *favourable* to the return of Mr Leadbeater. Mrs Besant once more insisted in telegraphing : " You are the only General Secretary acting thus." This assertion was false, for the General Secretary of the Scandinavian Section had equally refrained from voting. And in the end it did not prevent Mrs Besant from writing in her biographical sketch of Mr Leadbeater, to be found in the *Theosophist* of November 1911, p. 310 : " By a unanimous vote of the General Secretaries of the Sections of the

Society throughout the world, Mr Leadbeater has again entered the T.S."

Thus we see, on whatever side we look, the disastrous effects of the Adyar occultism; the very meaning of the word Truth seems to have disappeared.

Have the principles and methods of Mr Leadbeater changed since he has returned to his place amongst us? He himself informs us on this point in a letter written after the "affair," at the express desire of Mrs Besant that he should "define his position" at the time that she started the well-known campaign in favour of his readmission (*Theosophist*, February 1908).

"You ask me," says Mr Leadbeater, "to write you a clear letter that you may show at need, expressing my real views on the advice I gave some time ago to certain young boys. I need hardly say that I keep my promise not to repeat the advice, for I defer to your opinion that it is dangerous. I also recognise, as fully as yourself, that it would be if it were promiscuously given, but I have never thought of so giving it."

In this declaration Mr Leadbeater first recognises the danger of his advice, then immediately retracts this confession by reservations which imply its harmlessness in just those cases for which he is blamed. He has not, as we see from this letter, then changed his views; but the important fact is

that he only speaks of "danger," and never of "immorality." *His moral standpoint remains, then, unaltered—is precisely the same after as before the exposé.*

And what is this point of view? Mrs Besant thus gives it in a letter dated July 1906 (*Theosophic Voice*, May 1908):—

"Mr Leadbeater appeared before the Council of the British Section, representatives from the French and the American Sections being present and voting. Colonel Olcott in the chair. He denied none of the charges, but, in answer to questions, *very much strengthened them, for he alleged . . .¹ So that the advice . . .¹ became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses . . .¹ It was conceivable that the advice, as supposed to have been given, had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so in a teacher of theosophical morality; anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given in fact, such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could only be given with pure intent if the giver were, on this point, insane.*

"Let me here place on record my opinion that such teaching as this, given to men, let alone to innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex impulse, implanted

¹ The details here given cannot be put in print. Italics mine.

in man for the preservation of the race; it degrades the ideas of marriage, fatherhood, and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals; it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions, and undermines the health. Worst of all that it should be taught under the name of Divine Wisdom, being essentially 'earthly, sensual, devilish.'

Mrs Besant then deemed Mr Leadbeater's morality so defective as to be accounted for only by mental derangement. Nevertheless, the promise contained in the letter just quoted, and which expresses no shadow of moral repentance whatsoever, nor anything approaching it, was sufficient, in Mrs Besant's eyes, to justify her in bringing back into the Theosophical Society a teacher she had judged thus. Could one ask a clearer proof of the anarchy produced by such occultism?

A recent suit, instituted by the parent of the young Krishnamurti, reclaiming the custody of his child, brings forward again this question of morality, even if we eliminate all the old implications which spring to life again, reminding us of the old *exposé*. In fact, the present case clearly formulates the accusation of immoral conduct testified to by witnesses. We need not examine the value of those testimonies, since an entirely different moral question arises first: What objections, worthy of counting in a code of high morality, could be brought against a father re-

claiming his young sons, under such accusations, from a woman to whom they had been confided? No written agreement could prevail against such a demand, from the moment that a Brahmin father (deemed worthy to fill the position of Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section up to the time when these difficulties arose) expressed his distrust by making such a demand. The only right and worthy action was to give the children to their father at once and without discussion.

What does it matter in a case of this sort whether the English courts decide for or against Mrs Besant? Perhaps they will allow themselves to be influenced by Mrs Besant, who, to ensure that the children shall not be returned to their father, asks the court "to permit her to protect the children from the renewal of influences teaching them to hate the English, instead of loving them as they now do, and of being made into bad citizens" (p. 9 of Mrs Besant's defence in the court, and published by herself). In such a discussion, this attempt to play upon the political interests of the judges is unexpected, amazing—and, alas! significant. We see clearly that a mind that shows itself capable of throwing into the balance political appeals in a matter of conduct, is utterly blind to the question of human consideration that overshadows this whole case. But the Western sympathy must be

wholly on the side of the parent, and must share his pain and feeling in recognising the nature of his grievances, the old "Leadbeater case," and his fears for the future.

Clear and unmistakable through all these actions shows the consistent distortion of the moral outlook, more serious since the esoteric ethics should be an extension, a purification, an exaltation of exoteric morality, and in no circumstances its decline, its degradation, its negation. And if we would realise to what extent this moral outlook can be warped under certain influences, we need but to hear Mrs Besant say of Mr Leadbeater: "By hard, patient work he has won rewards . . . until he stands perhaps the most trusted of his Master's disciples on the threshold of Divinity" (*Theosophist*, November 1911, p. 308).

This conception of the "Divinity" that should be the final expression of morality has no need of comment other than that same "deification" by his colleague — who five years earlier regarded his teachings as so utterly immoral as to suggest mental derangement as the only explanation. The mere quotation is sufficient. Yet how can we refrain from recalling the injurious gossip of this "new" god denying the Life and Death of the true God, from remembering his advice, so utterly at variance with that of the Buddha? Perhaps we shall understand these things a little better if

we remember that this occultist, if he contradicts the Buddha, on the other hand almost deifies Mrs Besant. Possibly, taking into consideration this exchange of admiration, the meaning of these "deifications" will become sufficiently clear.

CONCLUSION

WE have been studying perhaps the most serious faults that have ever been connected with questions of such a high order, of such a kind as to demand of every true occultist the redoubling of the critical faculty, exceptional moral rectitude, the most scrupulous and rigid veracity. Mrs Besant, on the contrary, in restoring to Mr Leadbeater his influence over herself and over the destinies of the Theosophical Society, has proved her failure in moral vigilance and her lack of intellectual discrimination as regards methods to which she thus falls the first victim. And the sorry contradictions that this brings into her spiritual message, the utter disregard of truth resulting from this, impel her to words and actions that now involve an incalculable number of victims, misled by their devoted trust in her. Her responsibility is in truth a very terrible one. Yet must we think of her only with love, for she has not willed to do evil; she is herself the most blinded, the most unhappy victim of all, whose discrimination and

moral sense seem to have perished in this deplorable catastrophe. Let us try to retrieve for her, each within his own circle, all who can yet be retrieved—for the disaster is serious.

For all of us who are not ranged with our President, and who do not incur her overwhelming responsibility, there are serious lessons to be learnt from these facts, and a solemn duty laid upon us. Through all these trials we have learnt that there must be no compromise with truth; to disregard this in the affairs of daily life, to encourage inaccuracies that disfigure it, is to expose ourselves to the worst errors in the domain of esoteric investigation, whether it be a question of our own clairvoyance or of our acceptance of the results of the investigations of others. This for us is certain, that spiritual truths remain hidden from those whose hearts are not pure, whose purpose is not honest and upright. We now understand the fatal mistakes of Mrs Besant in consulting the records of the spiritual world in search of the true Christ; we understand the source of all her errors and all her faults; and our realisation transmutes itself into the conscious turning towards a passionate and single-minded devotion to truth. We would cast away all the wealth of these experiences, we would throw away *everything*, rather than truth; for if we betray that we shall betray not only the Theosophical Society and its ideal, but the whole

of humanity, since we firmly believe that our Society is the leaven of its spiritual progress.

Thus clearly enlightened as to the extent of the problem facing our conscience, we hear the clear strong voice of duty. If we join forces with Mrs Besant in a blind loyalty that bows before all her actions, applauds all her words, we intensify her karma, with the whole weight of our own moral ruin and with that of the Society, to which we shall thus have contributed. If, on the contrary, scrupulously faithful to our ideal of truth and moral beauty, we understand that it is a part of our duty to assert this fidelity while we clearly protest against the sad failings that we see taking place, we shall truly rally to Mrs Besant's assistance. Her eternal, her true self will realise this, and we shall have done our utmost to save a work which is dear to us above all else—the theosophical work in the world—and which is in grave danger, which hastens to shipwreck.

It is thus, after long years of enthusiastic support, that I have come to regard the actions of Mrs Besant—and of Mr Leadbeater equally, of course—as the leaven of destruction, of disintegration in the Theosophical Society. Not that its outward prosperity on the physical plane seems menaced; we know very surely that this in no way represents the motive power, the true strength of our Society. What are blighted are the living

forces, the spiritual sap, that make possible the fulfilment of its mission in the world. These powers spring but from one source: from truth—the motto of the Theosophical Society that we know so well.

When Mrs Besant's eyes turn towards the splendours of papal Rome, towards the wealth of its churches and the number of its adherents, she thinks that spiritual power is not a matter of outward splendour or of organisation. Equally, the glory of Adyar, or the number, however great, of the members of the Theosophical Society does not count, alas! when we consider the spiritual value of our Society. Only sacred devotion to Truth will justify the present and safeguard the future. In spite of the most reassuring external prosperity, the Theosophical Society, if its ideal is not respected by those who direct its destinies, may hasten to spiritual ruin. *It may perhaps even pass through this terrible experience while Adyar sees its printing presses of the very latest type, its buildings, and its gardens multiply, while its authority spreads over an increasing number of docile adherents.*

We cannot rid ourselves of a growing disquiet in seeing Mrs Besant, in her monthly articles in the *Theosophist*, entitled "On the Watchtower," so tirelessly expressing such great and manifest satisfaction in every smallest material increase,

improvement, and enrichment of the Adyar Headquarters.

Mr Leadbeater shares in this joy. Speaking of Mrs Besant in the *Adyar Album*, p. 7, he praises at great length the material improvements of the Headquarters: "In her reign have been added to the estate no less than six valuable pieces of property." Thus temporal power would clearly seem to be the main concern of Adyar. And we involuntarily turn to the words of Christ, who so well described the spiritual splendours: "My kingdom is not of this world." Not thus does Mrs Besant understand spirituality, since she "reigns" as a prince of this world, over a kingdom that grows by her conquests; and her herald seems equally devoted to this same ideal. For a like concern follows Mr Leadbeater even into his occult investigations into the twenty-eighth century, in which he sees "a kind of gorgeous palace with an enormous dome, the central part of which must be an imitation of the Taj Mahal at Agra, but on a much larger scale. In this great building they mark as memorials certain spots by pillars and inscriptions, such as . . . here such and such a book was written . . . they even have statues of some of us . . ." (*Man: Whence, How, and Whither*).

Is not this last revelation just a little too transparent to be modest? It seems very clearly

to indicate the state of mind of this explorer of future centuries. Yet still other details — vast estates covered with buildings, Adyar become a place of pilgrimage for people from all parts of the world, etc., etc. — justify these fears. They remind us once more of the great pitfall of pride, and that only the constant quest after and practice of truth, the closing of the mind to the least whispers of personal ambitions of any kind, will ensure spiritual progress and make for really sane material growth.

In resigning from the Theosophical Society I believe myself to have performed an imperative duty *to the world, to the members of the Theosophical Society, to Mrs Besant, and to myself*. I would desire to emphasise these separate points.

At this time when the President of the Theosophical Society has, so to say, driven Theosophy into exile, it is necessary to explain, for the benefit of those who look on from outside, that the moral shipwreck of the Theosophical Society does not carry with it the wreck of Theosophy itself, the immortal principles of which will always find souls to defend them. In the *Key to Theosophy*, p. 39, Mme. Blavatsky, that noble soul, wrote these words: "Theosophy is the fixed eternal sun, and its Society the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving within the attractions of the sun of Truth." When this Society

loses its rhythm, ceases to gravitate round the sun of Truth, when it becomes a wandering comet after having been a fixed planet during the time that the impulse given by its generous founders lasted, the souls dazzled by Truth, sick and weary, will abandon the wandering comet. They will emigrate, will create a new centre, ardently attached to the sun of Truth. "A true theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal," writes Mme. Blavatsky on p. 18 of this same book. We see that, *if we would not risk degrading Theosophy itself before the world*, we cannot remain longer members of the Theosophical Society.

As to the members of the Theosophical Society, most sincerely devoted to their ideals of truth, I have felt it to be an imperative duty to place before them an impartial statement of the clear and definite meaning of these unimpeachable and verifiable facts, for they are being given incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading accounts. I have attempted to raise a cry of alarm that *it may prepare them* in some measure to act in their turn, and to repudiate their President's actions, when they have recognised the accuracy of all that precedes.

I have already explained what service I feel I have rendered to Mrs Besant in acting as I have.

As for myself, the impelling need of inner rectitude and outward loyalty has forced me to break

all connection with the present direction given to the Theosophical Society by our President.

My attachment to Mrs Besant dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of my soul, and was bound up with my highest aspirations. I have been unable to disobey the demands of my conscience, in spite of the fierce struggles that have torn my heart while writing these pages. I have acted in accordance with my highest judgment, obeying my love of truth, in entire fidelity to our sacred cause, that I firmly hope I serve in acting as I have done. It is our ideal of a *lived* Theosophy that I would recall to those who would judge me, and the links which bind me to every true theosophist throughout the world will not suffer with them any break. It is in this spirit that I withdraw for the time from the Theosophical Society, till the day when there shall be at its head a President scrupulously devoted to Truth, and fully conscious of the responsibility of the words he pronounces and the acts he performs, whether in his capacity as teacher or President. Will this day ever come? This can only be decided by the extent of the intervention of the members. In the meantime the situation seems almost hopeless.

I openly deplore the fact that Mrs Besant is pledged to a method of occult development in which morality is at best only optional, and has thus let loose upon our Society scourges of all kinds.

I publicly express my regret that Mrs Besant, claiming the prerogatives of a teacher, which should impose upon her the duty of a strict and watchful restraint, has nevertheless made use of it to create a confusion between the true Christ and an obscure individual, and in order to secure for the benefit of the latter the deep aspirations of the human soul attached to its Redeemer.

I openly deplore the fact that Mrs Besant, supporting her action on a mendacious and untenable accusation, has dared to expel 2400 members, when recourse to the Free Section, a part of the administrative scheme, would have settled all difficulties, even if her grievances, instead of being untrue, had been well founded; and that Mrs Besant has thus torn our charter of brotherhood, and has monopolised for her own and Mr Leadbeater's benefit the principle of liberty of teaching secured in our Constitution.

Finally, I regret that it was because the voice of our President addressed to the General Convention of assembled Sections a calumny—that is to say, not merely some inaccuracy, some mistake or other, but the worst of all—that this has been believed by 25,000 souls ardently devoted to Truth. They have been thus deceived because of their confidence in Mrs Besant, and have been roused to indignation against a man who is nevertheless an eminent teacher, irreproachable, and worthy to be ranked

with the highest, even did one only know, as Mrs Besant, of such great and splendid works as have already appeared in English translations. But since it is a matter of injury and defamation, it is right that one who has known the author and his work should testify that his personal life appears to be, in the fullest meaning of the words, the realisation of the ideal of life given to us in his books. May it be further permitted me to offer, in answer to the belittling of his work, a tribute of admiration and of reverence to such a marvellously convincing system of occult science, so wonderful in the might of its strength and beauty, so supremely harmonious in spite of its immense proportions?

Mr Leadbeater and M. van Manen have already informed us as to the method of occult development of Dr Steiner. His books, *The Way of Initiation* and *Initiation and its Results*, give his principles and his system. Nowhere shall we find Dr Steiner giving advice calculated to develop clairvoyance without spirituality, without moral principles, without intellectual qualifications. His own work bears eloquent testimony to the results of such a method when carried out in practice.

In this work an unbroken logical sequence bears out every assertion and unites the parts into a harmonious whole. It is not at the price of a denial of the historical life of Christ, or of a disregard for the Gospels, but by means of a study

respecting the finest shades of meaning in both, that Dr Steiner proves the correctness of his communications, the fruit of preliminary researches and first-hand experiences in the spiritual worlds.

The clear statement of these careful observations covers the whole of the evolution of our Universe, thus giving us new facilities of control through the consulting of the most ancient Scriptures, extending from the Vedas, through the Indian philosophies, Bhagavad-Gîtâ, Buddhism, to the Mysteries, the mythologies and philosophies of all times, through the appearance of successive civilisations, to the discoveries of modern science. Every assertion of Dr Steiner's, concerning whatever fact of the spiritual worlds—whether it be of the absurdity of the physical reincarnation of the Christ or any other point in his teachings—is invariably in harmony with all his other statements, with all documents, historical or scientific, within reach of our study, with the demands of our reason and the noblest aspirations of the human heart.

To give an example: The incarnations of Krishna and the Buddha, the version of the Eastern Scriptures being scrupulously observed, form part, with the life of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, of a supreme synthesis, in which each being and each event, in the one frame, evolves in an unbreakable and sublime harmony, with the strict order and perfect co-ordination that

characterise, in a living organism, the performance of the functions and the interplay of the organs. All who know the teachings of Dr Steiner know that a real and deep understanding of the nature of Krishna and of the Buddha gives an illuminating corroboration of the events in Palestine, and the nature of the Christ, as of the contents of the Gospels themselves. The work of Dr Steiner is in reality unique in the annals of humanity, and will remain indelibly engraven therein.

There is great bitterness in the thought that the very ones, amongst souls now in incarnation, who should be the best prepared to receive such teaching, these 25,000 theosophists, should have been turned from it by the one whom they have chosen as their guide to the true knowledge of the spiritual worlds—by the efforts of their President.

MEMENTO

OUT of all these ordeals *Theosophy* will rise purified and strengthened.

For the storm arises to overwhelm its most redoubted *adversaries*—the *personal cult of its teachers, and the policy of expediency as regards moral principles.*

More deeply than any past crisis in the Theosophical Society should the present one engrave on our hearts the *Love of Truth*, the *practice* of which, for the student of the laws of the Universe, will lead ever and infallibly to *moral purity* and to *intellectual discrimination.* *Theosophy, the Eternal Divine Wisdom, is and will remain for ever inviolable.*

What will become of the Theosophical Society, the wandering comet turning towards the abyss?

All will depend on the *individual initiative* of *each* of its members. Thus the *responsibility* of *each single member* of the Theosophical Society is at the present time *immense.* At this moment the Past, Present, and Future sound solemn warning. To men and gods alike is it of equal and immeasurable importance that *each one should do his duty.*

ADDENDUM

SINCE the publication of the original edition of this brochure, judgment has been pronounced in the case mentioned on p. 106. The judge considered the evidence offered in support of the charges of immoral conduct brought by the father of the youth Krishnamurti against Mr Leadbeater to be insufficient and unreliable. In reply, however, to the question, "Had the defendant (Mrs Besant) permitted the children to associate with a person of immoral character," the judgment was given in the *affirmative* with regard to Mr Leadbeater. It also included the statement that Mrs Besant had broken the promise she had made to the father of separating the children from Mr Leadbeater. The judge ruled that the children should be removed from the care of Mrs Besant and given back to the father within a fixed time.

The *Times* of 8th May 1913 published extracts from this judgment which ascribed to the judge an opinion unfavourable to the morality of Mr Leadbeater. Mrs Besant and her friends at once

indignantly protested against an alleged distortion of the judgment. It was even said that the judgment had completely cleared Mr Leadbeater from all the suspicions raised by the case. However, as the judge's affirmative reply to the question stated above is a *fact*, it is plain that this asserted vindication is a mere play upon words and an attempt to mislead.

Further legal proceedings have confirmed, with yet more precision, the infamous immorality of which Mr Leadbeater stands accused. (See report in *The Hindu*, Madras, of 9th May 1913.) A Madras medical review called *The Antiseptic* had published an article in which apprehension of the establishment of a "Temple of Onanism" at Adyar was expressed. *The Hindu* newspaper reprinted this scandal. Mrs Besant took proceedings against the author of the article and the publisher of *The Antiseptic*; and the treasurer of the Theosophical Society was moved at the same time to action against *The Hindu*. All three cases were dismissed. The gravity of the position is evident. Mr Leadbeater's methods have been proved by his own admissions as well as by documents before the Court to be subversive of morality.

Amongst the documentary evidence before the Court was a letter, partly written in cipher, sent by Mr Leadbeater to a young boy without the knowledge of his parents. This letter cannot be

published here, for the publication of gross obscenity such as it includes is actionable by the criminal code of civilised countries. It would be difficult to imagine a more tragic fall on the moral barometer than that of the author of this letter. If, notwithstanding my extreme repugnance, I quote the final words, it is with the sole object of demonstrating how audacious is the travesty of truth which can impute a pure motive to the author of this letter, of which perusal must carry the conviction that any attempt at rehabilitation is as degrading to its author as is the letter to its writer, who ends it with the words, "Glad sensation is so pleasant. A thousand kisses, darling." Is it possible, in the face of such a passage, to allege, as Mrs Besant has done, mere advice of a preventive nature? So extravagant a claim can only be spurned with indignation.

We must also entirely reject Mr Leadbeater's very belated denial of having written cipher letters to boys. He forgets that Mrs Besant in November 1908 wrote the following lines in her circular letter to members of the Theosophical Society, p. 10: "Much has been made of a 'cipher letter.' The use of the cipher arose from an old story in the *Theosophist*, repeated by Mr Leadbeater to a few lads; they, as boys will, took up the cipher with enthusiasm, and it was subsequently sometimes used in correspondence with the boys who had been

present when the story was told. In a typewritten note on a fragment of paper, undated and unsigned, relating to an astral experience, a few words in cipher occur on the incriminated advice. Then follows a sentence, unconnected with the context, on which a foul construction has been placed."

One realises that, on account of the delicate nature of the charges formulated against him in the lawsuit, Mr Leadbeater, profiting by the fact that this letter had not been filed in the evidence, tried to deny it. These denials are cited, p. 198 of *Mrs Besant and the Alcyone Case*, a book published by Goodwin & Co., Mylapore, Madras, 1913, price 3s. This book contains a complete account of the lawsuit for the recovery of Krishnamurti and his brother, together with copies of a quantity of documents and papers filed in the case, which, in themselves, are remarkably conclusive. This denial is in direct contradiction to the formal statement by Mrs Besant just quoted, and it throws a fresh light on the morality of Mr Leadbeater. One does not know how he could even plead lapse of memory, as Mrs Besant in her above-quoted letter admits the use of the cipher. Confronted with such a gravely compromising letter, one realises that plain denial must have been his last resource. The prudent statement of Mrs Besant, who, when mentioning the letter in 1908, avoids characterising the "few words" "on the incriminated advice," clearly shows that at

that time the text of the letter appeared to her too explicit, too damaging to apply to it the extenuating term of "preventive advice"—tactics then already adopted, and to-day stretched so as to cover all his practices. She finally risked the declaration that the last words of this letter—those which I have quoted—had no connection with those which preceded them: a singularly audacious declaration if one states that these words are placed, *without interruption, space, or interval, immediately after* the obscene phrases which are incriminating. One is amazed thus to see even the evidence denied and such flagrant perversion.

Mrs Besant added in 1908 that Mr Leadbeater, to whom a friend had then communicated a copy of this cipher letter, "did not recognise it in its present form." In regard to this declaration we have only to remember the incontestable admission which it implies, without concerning ourselves with its restrictive character. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the *copy* first supplied by his friend, Mr Leadbeater has *since* received a legally attested photograph of the original, but he has never pointed out in what respect it had been altered so as to make it unrecognisable by him.

The fact that this document was neither dated nor signed leads us to ascribe an even more infamous character to the author: he himself fully gauged the ignominy of the act he was committing, and

therefore endeavoured to keep it secret from all except the boy he was perverting by his communications. These facts condemn Mr Leadbeater without possibility of appeal; they reveal to us, with regard to Mrs Besant, a truly degrading complaisance, by reason of her desire to hide a crime as patent as it is abominable.

I feel strongly the need of excusing myself for alluding to such a subject, and giving rise to the disgust inseparable from the matter; but the reflection that at this moment there are about 25,000 persons who revere Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater as their devoted followers, and, in a general way, even desire to tread in their footsteps, compels me to overcome the hesitation which must precede the publication of pages such as these. The question is really one of a duty which cannot be ignored, for the members of the Theosophical Society are not only kept in complete ignorance regarding these facts, but the administration of Adyar, through its extensive propaganda, has a great influence over new members in all countries, while concealing and perverting the truth. Public warning has therefore become indispensable.

The existence of persons like Mr Leadbeater, who admit and practise the worst perversities, is a sad reminder of the darker side of human nature; yet the attitude of simply ignoring that such things exist seems indefensible when these persons pretend

to the highest morality and represent themselves as guides towards spiritual development, and, while claiming to stand "on the threshold of divinity," dare to disguise facts and pass over in silence judgments officially pronounced by official tribunals. The danger that such persons may continue to extend their empire over the souls of others is an increasing one.

A sad fatality has placed the banner of Theosophy in the hands of persons who have fallen below the standard of ordinary morality. That which causes the deepest pain to Mrs Besant's old friends is the opinion expressed by the police court magistrate in the defamation cases above referred to, for he considered that the facts before him, and the documentary evidence, supported the view that Mrs Besant had known of and even countenanced the practices of Mr Leadbeater. Her attitude in defence of Mr Leadbeater, of which we have given an account, unhappily lends colour to the interpretation.

The feeling which here arrests my pen, and prevents me from saying more on the matter, will be understood by those who have followed me so far, and they may hear across my silence the voice of their own sorrow.