

The Future of the Theosophical Society

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FRIENDS:

[Page 1] It is surely an axiom that the welfare of the Theosophical Society depends on the Theosophists who compose its members, and obviously that further depends on what is their understanding of Theosophy. As is Theosophy, and as are the Theosophists, so will be the nature of the Society. If we can define Theosophy, then we can say what a Theosophist ought to be, and from that what should be the ideal nature of the Society.

The Society has now been working for fifty-five years, and today [in 1930] it is composed of forty-six National Societies. We have a literature on Theosophy in many languages, and Theosophical lecturers try to expound what is Theosophy in many tongues. Now, the Society has a Constitution, that is to say, it works under certain definite rules. That Constitution gives us the Objects of the Society, and there are also in it rules which deal with the transaction of necessary business. [Page 2]

It is a striking fact that, in the only document which binds together all the members of the Society from every country, that is, the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, the word Theosophy is not mentioned. According to our Constitution, the Society does not exist to proclaim what the world calls Theosophy as the Society's philosophy; the Society does not exist to proclaim the truth of any religion whatsoever or of any philosophy. What then does the Society exist for? Its aims are stated in its three Objects, which may be summarized as follows: first, to promote Brotherhood; second, to encourage men to seek a Wisdom; and third, to discover the God in man.

Thence issue two problems. The first is the general problem of what is Theosophy, and the second the particular problem of what should be the nature of the Theosophical Society. I propose to deal first with the general problem — what do we mean by Theosophy, what is its definition?

The first use on record of the word Theosophy is by Proclus, in the fifth century A.D. As he speaks of a "Theosophy of the foreigners", evidently he contrasts it in his mind with a Theosophy of the Greeks. Ever since the days of the Neo-Platonists, the word has signified a kind of inner mystical knowledge held by philosophers and mystics, and particularly a kind of knowledge which was not revealed to people at large by the religion of the day. [Page 3]

This conception of Theosophy or a Divine Wisdom which we find among the Gnostics is exactly the same as what we find here in India among our philosophers. Brahma Vidyā, the knowledge as to Brahman,

could be proclaimed only by those who "know Brahman" . These teachers, in a mystical succession of *Guruparamparā*, or apostolic succession, pass their knowledge on from Guru to pupil. Each who carries on the traditional knowledge adds something of his own discovery as to the nature of Brahman.

When we come to modern Theosophy, we start with a body of ideas given by those who are called the Masters of Wisdom. It was in 1875 that under their inspiration Madame Blavatsky initiated the Theosophical Movement. The Society was started in order that the teachings which they had given to her concerning the larger vision of life might be given to the whole world. The Masters themselves, as they gave their teaching, proclaimed that what they said was not new. They said: "This is the Ancient Wisdom, we only tell it to you again today." But since they gave a teaching, we may say that modern Theosophy started with a revelation of a kind. But if we were to say that Theosophy today consists only of a revelation, only of the teaching given by the Masters, I hold we should certainly not be making an accurate statement.

In my own mind, since Theosophy is the Divine Wisdom which deals with the nature of God and the [Page 4] nature of man, that Wisdom must inevitably be added to, as the generations pass one by one. As the universe unfolds itself, whether it be according to a Divine Plan or not, Theosophy or the Wisdom about that universe must also grow.

It is perfectly true that we have certain great ideas which come from the mysticisms of the past as a nucleus of Theosophy. But it is only a nucleus. Theosophy is being added to by every generation. Every one of you, every human being who assimilates a single experience of life, adds to Theosophy thereby. For a man's experience is the statement by his consciousness of the relation between him and the Absolute; and because each man is different from all others, his experience is an element to be added to the sum total of experience which we call Theosophy. Therefore Theosophy is increasing, is growing from age to age; and all of us, even the youngest members of the Society, nay more, every one who lives in the world, even the coolies in the streets, are adding to what Theosophy is as the Perfect Wisdom.

Furthermore, if Theosophy is the Wisdom, then every form of knowledge is a part of that Wisdom. That is why to me every discovery of modern science is part inseparable of Theosophy. All that our scientists are discovering in the laboratories is Theosophy, and the more I know of those discoveries of the scientists and of their speculations, the more I understand the Theosophy which I find in [Page 5] Theosophical books. In addition still, every form of truth, not only in religion and science, but in every department of human activity, is to me Theosophy. Thus, in that great domain which we call Art, I find Theosophy, I cannot conceive of Theosophy except as interpenetrating all the activities of the artists of the world; all the subtle manifestations of the human Spirit which we call Art reveal Theosophy.

Therefore, Theosophy is growing, and it must always inevitably grow. And the result is, that no one person can define what Theosophy is. But you may say: "Are you not a Theosophical lecturer? Have you not traveled from country to country lecturing on Theosophy, telling people what Theosophy is ?" Yes, but as I try to do that work of telling people something of the Wisdom, there is always a reservation in my own mind. It is, that I am expounding only the little that I have discovered of Theosophy. It has never been in my mind that I stand forth as the proclaimer of all the Theosophy that exists. I can assure you that sometimes I have been in a quandary, because when lecturing I must to some extent be dogmatic in order to be clear and precise, and so cannot help offering a teaching as if all Theosophists were

committed to my aspect of that teaching.

There are, in fact, many kinds of Theosophy to be found in the so-called manuals and text books, and in the general literature of Theosophical authors. [Page 6] Certainly we recommend selected books for enquirers as those most helpful to them to understand what is Theosophy. But such a list is only issued as the most helpful in the judgment of some. Inevitably each such list is challenged, and rightly so. Every list of books issued by any organization or body of students as the "best for study" will always be challenged. And yet, as a practical body of Theosophists, working to make the world understand certain principles of Wisdom, we must offer something. On the other hand, as we offer, it is right that we should be met with the challenge: "Are you sure you are offering the best books ?" Who shall tell us what Theosophy is, since by the very nature of Brahma Vidyā, the Divine Wisdom, no one has a right to say: " Thus far is truth, and no further ?" How can we offer any book, any list of books, which shall always remain the best ?

Therefore, the only solution is this: that each inquirer must read, listen and discover, not what is Annie Besant's Theosophy or Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy, but his own Theosophy. You will remember what was said in India: " Arise, awake, seek out the Great Ones and get understanding". But whose understanding ? The understanding of the Teachers ? That surely could not have been the meaning underlying those words. Seek out the Teachers and listen, but get your own understanding; for it is only when you discover your own Theosophy [Page 7] that for the first time you become something of a true Theosophist.

The logical result of what, I am saying is this. There are as many Theosophies as there are members of the Society; and more still than that, there are as many Theosophies as there are human beings in this world. That is why, while I read certain books which are labelled Theosophical, I read also books on science. I read too books of poetry, and go from museum to museum of pictures and statues, and from concert to concert of music. And I move about in the cities, particularly where the poor are suffering. For in all those places, I find some sentence of the Divine Wisdom.

While then we have today a body of truths that now passes for Theosophy, we have to discover more truths still. To achieve that result, we have a fund of knowledge to start with — first of all the traditions of the past. These were summarized for the first time by Madame Blavatsky in *Isis-Unveiled*. I certainly hold that what is called "tradition" does contain a part of the Wisdom. Then, wherever there are living teachers who are ready to teach any aspect of the Wisdom, what they give to us is also a part of the Wisdom. Thus, such a work as Sinnett's *The Occult World*, which contains the teachings which the Masters gave, is also a part of Theosophy. By studying what the living teachers, the Great Ones, reveal, we discover more of Theosophy than exists in traditions. [Page 8]

Furthermore, wherever there is a member of the Society who, by faculties of his own, investigates any aspect of Nature, everything which he discovers is to me an additional way of understanding more of Theosophy. Take, for instance, those rather special investigations of Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater into the records of the past, investigations which they made by clairvoyance. Take also their other investigations concerning the nature of the atom. To me, who accept the facts recorded by them, those investigations of theirs also contribute to the body of knowledge which we ought to make our own as Theosophy.

I do not mean to say that every one is bound to believe what another proclaims as truth. But if a man is a sincere seeker of truth, he should seek not only in the past, study not only what the Great Ones are teaching, but also see whether what men and women on his own level have discovered, or think they have discovered, is not also truth. More still than this, if we are to receive more of Theosophy, each one of us must discover that more by meditation, by observation of life, and above all by observation of the workings of his own heart. For, there is not a child who does not reveal something of Theosophy, not a single being who aspires who does not understand something of the Perfect Wisdom.

So each one of us must be both an investigator of the Wisdom and also a contributor to its further [Page 9] discovery. The two aspects are related. The more we investigate, the more we discover what is in us to give. But the more we give, however humbly, since in what we consider as true there may be many a mistake, the more we shall find of the Wisdom. I consider it should be the attitude of the Theosophist to enquire fearlessly into every problem, so that there may be no corner of earth or hell or heaven in which he is not seeking, in order to discover the Perfect Wisdom.

Regarding such an ideal search for truth, let me mention one failure on our part as Theosophists. That happened twenty-four years ago, when our members discovered that C.W. Leadbeater held some rather startling ideas as to the sex problem as it affects men. Obviously the sex problem is one of the most acute of problems, if not the most acute, which confronts mankind. And on this problem, we as Theosophists have no more light to offer than those who have not found Theosophy. We explain how every problem in the universe can be set right in the light of Theosophy, but on this problem of sex we are dumb.

Now, there was no need whatsoever for anyone to accept C.W. Leadbeater's ideas as correct; but there was the need to recognize that a very great problem existed for Theosophists to solve, though it was presented to them in a startling way. This is just what our members did not do. They confused two issues — that of C.W. Leadbeater as an [Page 10] individual, and his ideas concerning a great problem. The Theosophical conscience underwent a shock, and the whole problem of sex was thrust into the background. C.W. Leadbeater resigned, and anyone who said, as I and others did, that a member of the Society had the right to remain in the Society whatever his ideas were, was promptly labelled and abused as upholding C.W. Leadbeater's ideas. It may be news to some of you that for making this stand — that the Society did wrong in forcing C.W. Leadbeater to resign — I was expelled from the Theosophical Society. Of course, I was reinstated later. But the fact that Theosophists, after expelling a man as unworthy to remain in the Society, should later elect him as its Vice-President, shows that the judgment of Theosophists is like the judgment of non-Theosophists when they lose their heads.

Now, I mention all this because we did have an opportunity to inquire into the sex problem, and we did not take it. Everybody, particularly those who later became denouncers of C.W. Leadbeater, had no doubts as to his clairvoyance, up to the time they found what were his startling ideas on the sex problem. They believed in his psychism, and they quoted his writings on the Astral and Devachanic Planes, on Thought Forms, on Life after Death, etc.. Presumably he could see the invisible, and so could help us to understand the sex problem, its causes and effects, as seen from the invisible. But did anyone, as a grave student into the most vital of [Page 11] problems, ask him, catechize him, as to what he had seen, beg him to investigate case after case, so that at least we might have some more facts to go upon, in order to find a solution? That is just, what the Theosophists did not do. They were afraid that they might be identified with C.W. Leadbeater's views, and so they thrust the problem into the background.

Today, though many of you may not know of it, there is a vast body of knowledge on the sex problem. But in this body of knowledge we Theosophists might have been among the pioneers. My great regret is that we, who proclaim ourselves as lovers of knowledge and servers of mankind, once lost a very great opportunity of both knowledge and service.

It will be obvious from what I have said that the knowledge which we have today of Theosophy is bound to be limited. Each of us who is a Theosophical lecturer or writer can know only a part of Theosophy. Yet even that part, however fragmentary it be, is needed today to help men. As we go from country to country, as we look into conditions everywhere, we see how needed Theosophy is, even the fragment of it which we know. When we look into human conditions and see how the spirit of man has been imprisoned by evil traditions of race, sex, creed, caste and colour, and particularly by priesthoods, then we see clearly how greatly Theosophy is needed wherever man lives in thralldom [Page 12] to tradition, confined by the limiting ideas of race and religion which are so prevalent today.

I come now to the particular problem of the Theosophical Society as an organization. Let me say at the outset that this particular problem will always remain, seeing that human nature is what it is. So long as men are men, we shall always have clashes of opinion as to the ways of application of the great truths in which we all believe, because each is bound to claim that he knows best how to apply a truth. J. J. van der Leeuw has said recently that there is in the Society too much "revelation", from the Masters, and from so-called "leaders". We certainly have had from time to time what can be called "revelations". But shall we profit in the Society by suppressing any type of experience which contributes to our knowledge? That seems to me is not the true way.

The way, on the other hand, is by safeguarding liberty of thought and expression, so that within the Society all may have the opportunity to assert and to deny. It is curious that when young people especially talk of liberty of thought, it means that "they" must be given full freedom to express their opinions, but not their elders. So often when people talk of liberty of thought, they mean liberty for them to deny, not the liberty for others to assert. But true liberty of thought means the freedom both to assert and to deny. The spirit of true liberty does not lie in assertion or denial, but [Page 18] in the way either is done. That is why, in the statement as to "Freedom of Thought" which is published every month in The Theosophist, it is there said that each member has a "right of liberty of thought and expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others". If only we could understand what courtesy means, I do not think we would have so many troubles in the Theosophical Society.

It is perfectly true that Theosophical "leaders" dominate. But how can you help it? Can you show any way in which such a dynamic personality as Annie Besant would *not* dominate, even if she were not the President of the Society? You cannot help some people towering head and shoulders above others. But what is needed is a corrective to their possible domination, and that is by the refusal to believe or to be led. If more and more members would be more outspoken, "within the limits of courtesy", in their non-acceptance of the views of outstanding Theosophical personalities, we should have a more healthy life in the Society.

I grant that when a member refuses to believe what a "leader" proclaims, a kind of social ostracism is sometimes apt to appear; but the reason for that is that Theosophists are human beings, and some are, if I may so put it, theosophists with a little *t*, and not Theosophists with a big *T*. Certainly there is the danger

of a Theosophical orthodoxy in every Lodge. But can this be prevented [Page 14] by compulsion ? It is of course the duty of the officers of a Lodge to see that perfect freedom of expression is never denied to anyone. But it is no use trying to curb Theosophical leaders by saying: "You should not assert". Even if he did not ask for followers, the right kind of a "leader" would always begin to dominate, whether he wished it or not, by his sheer personality. What we can do is to see that within the Society those who assert and those who deny, "within the limits of courtesy", have equal right to contribute their work to the cause of Theosophy.

Let me point out that, on this matter of denial, already the General Council of the Society has interfered twice; the first occasion was in 1895, when a very important principle was laid down. For several years the then Vice-President, William Q. Judge, had been giving messages from the Masters. Many accepted them thankfully, but others said: "But these are bogus messages; he has concocted them; he is deceiving people". So after long discussion, W.Q.Judge was asked to prove his messages genuine. After much bitter agitation, the General Council at last met to try Mr. Judge on charges of deception. Then Mr. Judge objected before the Council that the Society could not make any enquiry at all into his conduct, because to enquire whether his messages were genuine or not would be to lay down as a belief of the Society that the Masters of Wisdom exist. The Council upheld [Page 15] Mr. Judge, and laid down the principle that it is not the business of the Society to speak one way or the other as to the existence of the Masters. The Council therefore ruled that the question of the genuineness or otherwise of Mr. Judge's revelations was not a matter upon which the Society could give judgment.

Then later, in 1923, we had a similar situation. This was when a certain number of members, objecting to what they considered a departure from Theosophy, said: " Back to Blavatsky ! Let us not accept any revelations since the time of Madame Blavatsky as a part of Theosophy". A meeting of the General Council which met at Vienna discussed this problem, and it said: " Let us make a pronouncement upon freedom of thought". It was then that Annie Besant, who sees deep into problems, said that not only should no individual Theosophist since H. P. B. be given a superior position as an exponent of Theosophy, but that no exception should be made even in the ease of H. P. B. herself. Annie Besant said: "If we are to have freedom of thought, freedom must be given to deny the teachings which H. P. B. herself gave".

It was then, too, that a certain number of Theosophists said that a particular group of Theosophists, who had no official relation to the Society but still were prominent in the Society, those who belonged to the Esoteric School, should be disciplined in some way or other because they had too much influence in the Society. Others said [Page 16] that a body of Theosophists who were identified with the Liberal Catholics were also unduly influencing the Society. They said: "We must see that these people do not have so much influence in the T.S." But how can we prevent them ? How can we prevent *any* Theosophist from exercising an influence over others, if his character inspires others, or if they believe that his revelations are true ?

Then it was that Annie Besant laid down a general principle that "neither a candidate for any office, nor any voter, can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion he may hold, or because of membership in any school of thought to which he may belong". If today any member of the Esoteric School seems to have a preponderating influence in the affairs of the Society, we cannot prevent it. The only corrective is for others to organize other Esoteric Schools. Let others also come forth saying: "We too are the heart of the Society".

Human nature being what it is, it is useless to say to members: "You shall not make this or the other assertion". I hold that in the Theosophical Society we shall do better to let *everybody* make their assertions, "within the limits of courtesy". A perfectly free platform is safer for the future of the Society than one which lays down what ought not to be said, because it is not *Theosophical* .

It is likely that in the Society's organization there are many defects; no organization is perfect. But [Page 17] every member should help in removing defects: that is why a General Council of the Society exists. The members of this General Council, the governing body of the Society, are human beings, and so are not perfectly wise; but they are experimenting to make a perfect organization. They desire to know the considered opinion of members. Every Theosophist can help his National Society and the International Society by pointing out, "within the limits of courtesy", errors in method.

But the trouble is this, that members will criticize privately among themselves, but will not take sufficient courage to place their criticisms before the local officers, and if necessary *fight* for reforms. Much loose talk goes on, but very few will take the trouble to be informed accurately as to what needs amendment, with the result that often their criticism is well meant but is based on the wrong facts. We have a magnificent example of tolerance of criticism in Annie Besant, who always publishes in her magazine every criticism which is made against her. The more harsh the criticism, the more pages of her magazine are open to the critic. She is an example of that freedom of thought we talk about; she wants us to criticize. But also, she answers her critics; she does not meekly bow her head before every criticism. Then her critics complain that she is trying to dominate.

We shall certainly never have a perfect organization, but we want to work towards it. As a [Page 18] member of the General Council, let me mention how members can usefully help with suggestions. They should first of all understand the mechanism of the Society. There are many people who criticize the Society, who have never read its Constitution. It is no use sending criticisms referring to matters which are outside the powers granted by the Constitution. If changes are wanted in administration, members should first find out what can or cannot be done. Of course, the Constitution itself can be changed, but till it is, we are bound by it as it is now.

I must now refer to a great problem which has come before Theosophists. It has been pointed out that one element of unrest in the Society is due to some members wanting the Society to change, because Mr. Krishnamurti is teaching. The Theosophical Society ought *always* to change, whether Mr. Krishnamurti is teaching or not. That, to me, is an axiom. We should always adapt the work of the Society to the needs of men, irrespective of whether any Teacher is or is not teaching in the world. But some of our critics say: "Ought not the Theosophical Society to accept the teaching of Krishnamurti, should it not stand behind him, should it not become the vessel into which he can pour his message? "

I should like to point out that the Society has never proclaimed any one teaching of any one Teacher as the sole truth. Both Colonel Olcott [Page 19] and Madame Blavatsky declared themselves Buddhists in religion, but they nowhere said that the Buddha is the only Teacher. Annie Besant has stressed the wonderful teachings of Hinduism, but she has never said that Shri Krishna is the only Teacher for all.

On the other hand, we have proclaimed that it is wise for every Theosophist to investigate every religion

and every mystical tradition. If we were to say that the Society accepts and endorses the teaching of Krishnamurti, we should be doing what the Society was never intended to do. We stand neither for his teaching nor against it, just as, we do not stand for the teaching of Shri Krishna nor for that of the Prophet Muhammad. But we are for any and every teaching which fosters Brotherhood. That, I hold, should be the attitude of the Theosophical Society. Since our First Object is to promote Brotherhood, the attitude of the Society as an organization should be to give encouragement to every teaching which is likely to promote Brotherhood.

Then some say: "Did not you leaders of the Society proclaim Krishnamurti as a Teacher to come; and now that he is come, ought not you definitely to enrol yourself under him and do his particular work ? " *But the Theosophical Society has never proclaimed the coming of a World-Teacher.* But have not leading Theosophists ? Yes, Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater, Geo.S. Arundale, I [Page 20] myself, we have all done so. But do not forget that meetings of the Order of the Star were always distinct from meetings of the Theosophical Society. From the beginning, when certain of us proclaimed how the young boy Krishnamurti was going to be the vehicle of a Great Teacher, and there was much alarm among some lest the Society should be committed to this strange idea, every meeting of the Order of the Star in the East has been held separately, and not under the auspices of the Theosophical Society.

It is perfectly true that during the days of a Convention, a particular day was given to the Order of the Star in the East. But that was for the convenience of the Society's members who were members of the Order of the Star, just as special times were given during Conventions to other groups of Theosophists interested in other types of work, like education, social service, art, and even politics. But wherever I have spoken to prepare men's minds to accept the World-Teacher, it has always been under the auspices of the Order of the Star in the East, and not as a part of my work for the Theosophical Society.

Any member who believes profoundly that he has something to give must be given an opportunity in the Society to express it. I do not think we can have more striking instances of the way that this opportunity has been taken than in the lives of the two Founders of the Society and of the present [Page 21] President, Annie Besant. When Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott came to Ceylon, they joined Buddhism. Did not the Theosophists then have the right to say: "You must not join that particular religion; you will commit the whole Society to Buddhism" ? But I do not think that a single Hindu Theosophist misunderstood the acceptance of Buddhism by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, and said that they should not have become Buddhists.

But when Annie Besant began her work in India in 1893, some members in Europe soon said — I was living there at the time — "Mrs. Besant is committing the whole Society to Hinduism". Then later, when Annie Besant began a magnificent series of lectures in Queen's Hall on *Esoteric Christianity*, and for the first time gave an occult explanation of such a mystery as that of Transubstantiation, some Protestant members said: "Annie Besant is committing us to Roman Catholicism!" Later when in 1911 she said of Krishnamurti; "This boy is going to be the vehicle of a Great Teacher", a certain number of members said: "Annie Besant is committing the whole Society to this creed of the Star in the East! " When Annie Besant later still became interested in the Liberal Catholic movement and attended its services, some said: "Annie Besant is committing the Society to the Liberal Catholic Church!" And this year when Annie Besant went to the Star Camp [Page 22] at Ommen, but did not go to Huizen, the headquarters of the Liberal Catholic Church in Holland, some Liberal Catholics said: "How is it that Annie Besant goes only to the Star Camp, but does not come to us ? "

One thing is perfectly clear; it is that Annie Besant claims, her liberty of action and exercises it. Annie Besant has never said, "Follow me". Never has she once said in her life, "Come where I am going". She is not the person to look back to see how many behind her are ready to follow. She says, "I know what my duty is and I am going to do it". But some have said: "Is not that a kind of forcing us ? When Annie Besant joined the Home Rule movement, when she worked against some policy of Gandhiji, was she not forcing us to follow her ? " I reply, No ! For such is the nature of us human beings that, let but another shine out with greater power of spiritual life, he is bound to influence us all. The moment the sun shines, all the little plants which are growing in the shade of a tree will be in the shadow; but that is not the fault of the tree.

The solution is for each of us to dare to claim to be a leader, work towards such a position, and not be a failure in it. We gain nothing by limiting beforehand the liberty of any leader. But we can oppose him if necessary, and depose him from his leadership. If we succeed, it means that our policy is what the Society wants. [Page 23]

I would say that our work as Theosophists must be to enquire into every teaching which helps, Brotherhood. Just because that is our duty, I think we ought all to enquire into some of the most fascinating teachings which the world contains today, and they are the teachings of Krishnamurti. If his doctrine is rightly understood, it will profoundly help the cause of Brotherhood. But we cannot commit the Theosophical Society to his doctrine, any more than we can commit it to the doctrines of Hinduism or of Buddhism or of Christianity.

Speaking for myself, I mean to do as much as in me lies to explain to men the significance of Krishnamurti's teaching. But I mean equally to explain the significance of the teachings of Christ, Buddha, Shri Krishna, Muhammad, Zoroaster and other Teachers. Only the other day I wrote a few pages of foreword to a book on Muhammadanism, pointing out the beauties of Islam. In exactly the same way, so long as I am a member of the Theosophical Society and study the Ancient Wisdom, I shall do what I can to make people understand the significance of Krishnamurti's teaching.

About his teaching I can say this from my own experience: wherever I had to deliver two lectures during my Latin-American tour, to a public who knew nothing of Theosophy or of Krishnamurti, and I spoke first on Theosophy, explaining our general Theosophical attitude to life, and particularly the recognition which we have of the Divinity of all [Page 24] men and things, and then delivered later the lecture on Krishnamurti's ideals, the public understood Krishnamurti far better, " because of the preparation given to their minds by my preliminary lecture on Theosophy". That is my experience. Therefore I hold that the greatest service which I personally can render to Krishnamurti is to go on with my Theosophical work, expounding the great ideals of Theosophy, and so make the world realize that, since there is only one Divine Wisdom, the wisdom of Krishnamurti is also part of that Divine Wisdom.

There is one aspect of our work as Theosophists to which I must now refer. It is a work for the world which we have not yet begun, though it was mentioned to us as long ago as 1881 by that great Adept who is called the Mahāchohan. In certain remarks of his on the future of the Theosophical Society, which the Master K. H. passed on to A. P. Sinnett, the Mahāchohan explained first what the Society was not

intended to be, and second what was its true rôle. It was not intended to be a school of magic, a place where occult teaching concerning secret powers in man was to be given to every person who wanted that knowledge, irrespective of whether by moral worth he deserved that knowledge or not. But the Society was definitely intended by its true Founders, the Adepts, to work in all ways to promote Brotherhood.

As an organization for practical Brotherhood, it had before it, as one part of its labours, work to [Page 25] minimize the fearful struggle for existence which modern civilization was steadily intensifying. The lessening of the struggle for existence was to be brought about by the Theosophical Society, by showing the world, with the aid of Theosophy, the illusoriness of worldly ambitions. The great Adept desired us to teach the world "a practical contempt for the earthly life", since this was the only cure for the untold miseries of men. Let me quote his words :

In a word how — seeing that the main objects of the T.S. are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally — are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with that curse known as the "struggle for life", which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows and all crimes ? Why has that struggle become the almost universal scheme of the universe ? We answer, because no religion, with the exception of Buddhism, has hitherto taught a practical contempt for the earthly life, while each of them, always with that one solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that struggle for life raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in the Pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. (In China during famine and where the masses are most ignorant of their own or any religion, it was remarked that those mothers who devoured their children belonged localities where there were the most Christian missionaries to be found; where there were none, and the Bonzes alone had the field, the population died with the utmost indifference.) Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and delusion, that it is but our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge, our saviour in future lives, and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity.

I do not think we have done much as yet towards this part of our work of helping to minimize the [Page 26] struggle for existence. As Theosophists, we have not so hungered and thirsted after life in non-physical worlds as to show the world that "contempt for the earthly life" to which the Adept refers. We study much about "Devachan" — where we believe our aspirations will at last blossom in their beauty — but our realization of it all is so vague that we are little different from the rest of the world. Certainly we study the great scheme of the seven planes, but most Theosophists look at those planes *from below upwards*, and hence the vivid fact in their minds that this physical world is real, and all the invisible is not only invisible but also shadowy and unreal. It should be exactly the reverse with the true Theosophist.

The result is that though the Society has grown, we have not made individuals more spiritual. Our record in social service is great, but it would be greater still in effectiveness in helping men if we ourselves hungered and thirsted more for the life of the invisible worlds. It is indeed a noble ideal to plan to help the world, but "the world" which needs helping is not only the physical plane, but six other planes as well. And the "dead" are more than the living, when it comes to helping mankind ! If more Theosophists were to live this aspect of Theosophy, I think we should be able, wherever we go, to establish a new set of

values as to what constitutes happiness. When that is done, the struggle for existence will diminish, and men will not cling to [Page 27] this earthly realm as they do now, and suffer so bitterly by their clinging.

So long as any kind of work remains to be done for Brotherhood, the Society has its rôle in the world. So long as here in India, there is one "untouchable", so long as Hinduism and Islam stand separate, so long as one simple ignorant Hindu or ignorant Muslim does not know how to reverence the other, the work of the Society is not over. And in foreign lands, so long as the white races do not change their attitude of superiority towards the coloured races, the work of the Society is not over. And in the United States, so long as its Negroes are held under any social subjection, the work for Brotherhood is not over.

Theosophists are wanted in every land with their work, and the work of the youngest Theosophist sometimes is as precious as the work of the President of the Society. So long as men are held under the sway of priests and of racial prejudices, so long work for Brotherhood is needed. There are for us all many ways of working. We have worked in the past, and our record is splendid. Each has his work, his part in the Great Plan.

In all my work, there is one aim, which is not to proclaim any particular ideas of Theosophy, but to strive in all ways to rouse in men's hearts and minds the recognition of a Hidden Divinity in man, whose Divine Nature is to be released by an understanding of the Wisdom. If Theosophy has given [Page 28] me one message, it is that of the mystery of that exquisite overpowering sense of the Nature of God in all things, above all in all men. Therefore I have gone about, trying to teach people what are the truths of the past, what is Science and what its significance, and what is the beauty of Art and its message. And when speaking in Western lands, it has been to show what is the exquisite charm of the East and of its spirituality, that mysterious sense of spiritual presences everywhere which we find in India.

I have tried to do all this in the light of a Wisdom, not chaotically, but with the recognition that a Wisdom exists. I say that a Wisdom exists because, the more I study, the more I realize that the universe is not a chaotic group of forces and things, but that, on the other hand, there is behind all things and events a Divine Wisdom which "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things", a Divine Wisdom which shines in all — in Nature, in the movement of stars and planets, in every plant and animal. That same Wisdom is in the atom and in an exquisite way, I find it especially in the faces of little children.

To make our Society the common meeting-ground of all who seek to offer service to God or to man is to me the task which lies before us all. So long as we succeed in teaching each who joins the Society to discover his own Theosophy, the future of the Society is utterly sure. We must teach [Page 29] each to discover "his own Theosophy" by showing the way to his inmost Self; and we can show him that way by surrounding him with all that is noblest in the traditions of the past, and with all that is fascinating in the discoveries of the present.

The work of the Theosophical Society is, and must always be, to throw open all doors and gates which now shut us out from that Brotherland of the Spirit which is the heritage of all men.