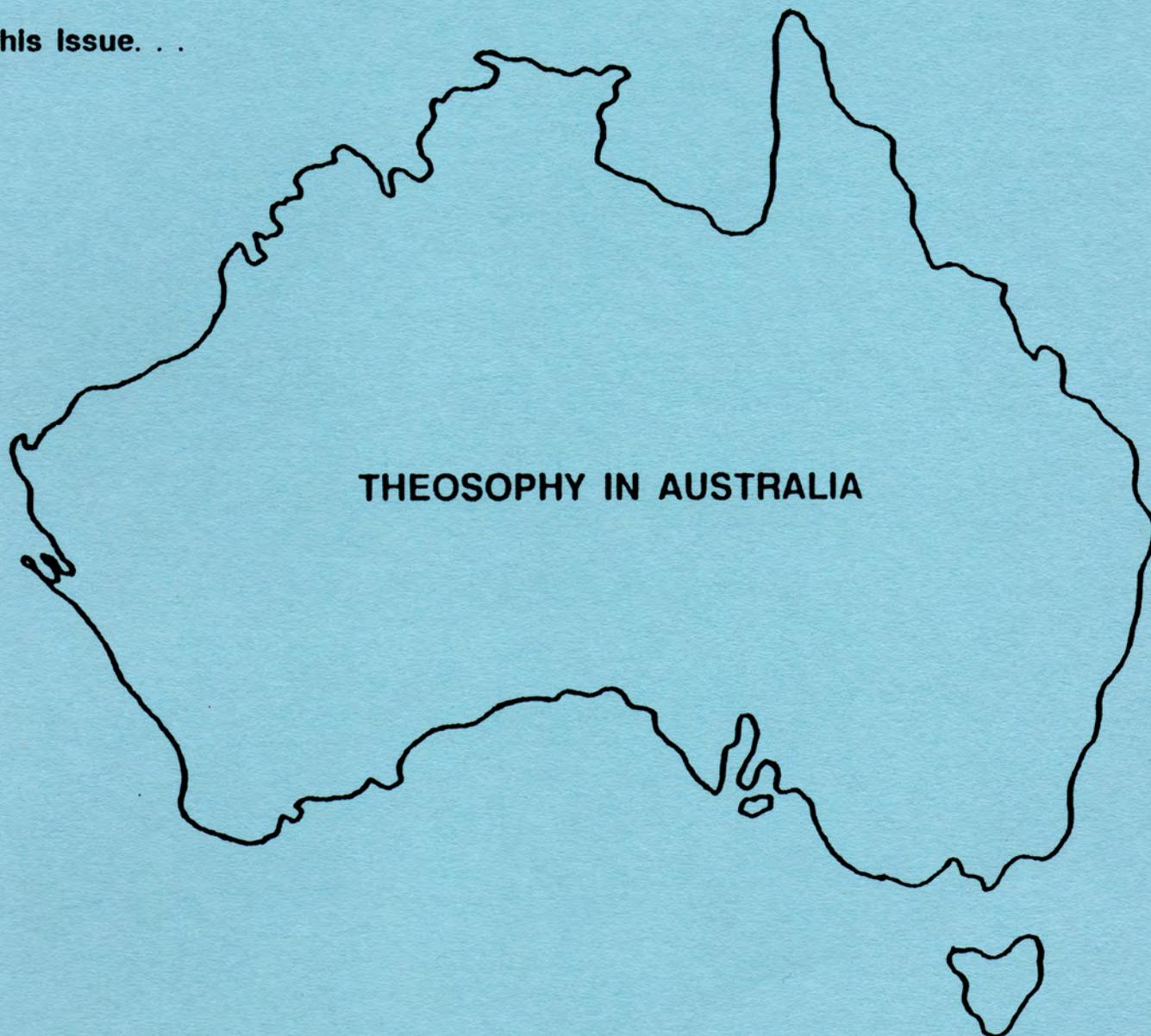


THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

In this Issue. . .



THEODOR REUSS AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY by Ellic Howe

ANNIE BESANT WORKS IN INDIA by Catherine Lowman Wessinger

January 1990
Volume III, Part I

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Editorial: A New Beginning

As many of you may know by now, Mr. Leslie Price, the founder-editor of *Theosophical History*, no longer is involved in the publication of the journal due to circumstances not entirely of his making. Needless to say, those who were involved with *Theosophical History* were surprised, concerned, and saddened at this turn of events. It was not Leslie's wish, however, to suspend publication permanently but rather to transfer the ownership and duties to others willing to undertake such an enterprise. After some consideration and at the urging of friends and acquaintances, I decided to undertake the primary responsibility of continuing publication of the journal. Others also thought highly enough of *Theosophical History* to offer their assistance and resources to bring this to pass. John Cooper, Robert Ellwood, Joscelyn Godwin, Jerry and April Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton, Gregory Tillett therefore deserve recognition for their efforts and our gratitude.

Although a new chapter has commenced for the journal, we should be mindful of the significant and singular contribution of Leslie Price. Prior to *Theosophical History*, there was no journal that was exclusively devoted to the history of the theosophical movement. As a result, articles and monographs on the subject appeared in disparate publications, thereby causing considerable difficulty for the scholar to stay abreast in such an abstruse field. This deficiency was removed with the first appearance of *Theosophical History* in January 1985. Leslie's unique contribution, therefore, was to establish an informal community of researchers extending over three continents, united through the journal, whose foremost purpose was to conduct an on-going exchange of information on a movement that deserved greater attention than it was ordinarily accorded. On behalf of your colleagues and friends, Leslie, please accept our gratitude and appreciation for your tireless effort and numerous contributions to the advancement of the study of the theosophical movement.

Although *Theosophical History* will follow the format and scope established by Leslie Price, there will be a few changes, partially out of necessity. For one, the journal will be published by a recently established corporation, The Theosophical History Foundation. The Foundation, according to its Articles of Incorporation, is defined "as a nonprofit public benefit corporation" whose purpose is "to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement." Those who now sit on the Board of Directors of the Foundation are Jerry and April Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton (University of California, Santa Barbara), and James A. Santucci. Besides publishing the journal, the Foundation will also be responsible for conducting conferences on the subject. In fact, I am now looking into the possibility of holding an international conference on theosophical history and related topics sometime in June, 1991. Anyone interested in participating in the conference is therefore requested to write to me for further information.

Theosophical History will also have an editorial board to ensure the quality of the articles that appear herein. Members of the board include Mr. John Cooper of the University of Sydney, Professor Robert Ellwood of the University of Southern California, Professor J. Gordon Melton, Professor Joscelyn Godwin of Colgate University, and Dr. Gregory Tillett of Macquarie University. All of us wish to affirm the original statement on the scope of the journal (vol. 1/1:2):

Our position is one of sympathetic neutrality to the different definitions of Theosophical truth, and our columns are open also to the growing body of professional historians and social scientists to whom Theosophy is a fascinating phenomenon worthy of research.

Theosophical History, therefore, will continue its role as an independent, impartial and scholarly journal conforming to the standards and expectations of the academic community. We wish to extend our invitation to researchers to submit articles and reviews for publication. Submissions should be sent to

Dr. James A. Santucci
Department of Religious Studies
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634 (U.S.A.)

One final note. Since the journal has no financial backing or external support other than the subscriptions of its readers, it is crucial that those who wish to initiate or renew their subscriptions to the journal should do so as soon as possible. We need your support. Of course, we will honor subscriptions still in effect. The cost of subscriptions will be \$12 a year.

James A. Santucci
Editor, *Theosophical History*

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Response from Hugh Shearman

The Editor [former editor Leslie Price] has suggested that I might comment on some points in Gregory Tillett's paper published in the April, 1989 issue of *Theosophical History*, more particularly on his several references to myself.

When Sten von Krusenstierna, then Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, was compiling in the 1970's a collection of C. W. Leadbeater's "theological" writings, subsequently published in 1983 under the title *The Christian Gnosis*, he asked me to contribute a short introductory account of Bishop Leadbeater's career. I accordingly wrote a paper on lines which seemed suitable to the publication in which it was to appear, referring particularly to the bishop's writings and his contribution to several organisations or movements.

Rather to my surprise and without my being informed, this was first published as a separate booklet, appearing in 1980 with the title *Charles Webster Leadbeater: a Biography*, a title which seemed to claim rather more for it than the material had originally been intended to fulfill. Gregory Tillett's own book, *The Elder Brother*, was published in 1982.

At the time of writing I was almost wholly dependent on other people's secondary accounts of the past. My own guess was that the young Leadbeater, probably in order to keep his end up among those of his own age, circumstances and antecedents and subsequently stayed with that account and perhaps even came himself to believe in it. But I had no means of researching this, which ran counter to the then "received" version of things. I therefore simply recorded the discrepancy in birth dates and my belief that Bishop Leadbeater had no brother. To have incautiously elaborated these material points any further, in the way Tillett suggests, would have been rash and improper.

Tillett objects to the statement that Bishop Leadbeater's family were "people of professional class," perhaps a matter of taste rather than fact. I had had in mind the Capes connection and the claim that Leadbeater's maternal grandfather was an accountant. The fact that his short-lived father was a railway clerk seemed irrelevant. I myself had a relative who, as a young teenager, became a clerk in the local railway station. He subsequently became President of the London Midland and Scottish Railway and a major figure in British transport, his early employment as a mere clerk never being held as evidence against his professional status.

I do not think it is true that, in announcements about the Coming," Mrs. Besant was "little more than a mouthpiece of Leadbeater." It was she who decided to "go public" on the subject, elaborating it in a distinctive way. Mrs. Ransom once told me that she herself was with Bishop Leadbeater when news came to him of Mrs. Besant's announcement in 1925, naming certain persons as arhats and apostles, and Leadbeater was quite startled by it.

Tillett refers to my “claims to be a historian.” I cannot recollect making such claims, least of all with reference to the booklet with which he was concerned. His real objection to that booklet seems to be that I was insufficiently clairvoyant in 1979, when I wrote it, to have read the book that Tillett himself was going to publish three years later. To this I plead guilty.

It is probable that nearly all account of the Theosophical Society’s past have been written by busy people who had neither time nor training to do research. Even personal testimony about events that the writers have lived through has sometimes been strangely unreliable. An example that comes to mind is the total omission of Oscar Köllerström, from accounts of events in which he played a major part, published by Lady Emily Lutyens. But this sort of thing occurs in the legends of many movements.

I am in complete agreement with Dr. Tillett’s condemnation of the publishing of deliberately corrupt texts in which deletions are made to accord with the opinions of persons of a generation later than that of the original authors.

Behind all these problems of the Theosophical Society’s history there is a view which I briefly referred to in that booklet. As I understand it, theosophy in itself is supra-rational. It cannot be contained within a system of thought or expounded as part of such a system, not even by a “Mahatma.”

Those who have tried to expound it have attempted the impossible. They have tried to express a higher order of experience in the language of a more limited order of experience.

When an individual gets an insight into the supra-rational, his attempt to express it results in its being clothed in the idiom of his own temperament, in the contents of his mind and memory, his expectations and illusions. I therefore do not look for a Cartesian consistency between the various theosophical structures expounded in different ways by Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Arundale, Hodson and others, nor between any of these and the structures offered by contemporary science.

I found Madam Blavatsky taking a similar attitude in those Bowen notes which I persuaded the late Laurence Bedit to have published about a quarter of a century ago by the TS in England, with the title *Madam Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*. This has now circulated widely and become increasingly understood.

There are still, however, many people who cannot respond to the fact that no theosophy can ever be definitive but only indicative; and they feel a need to battle in support of some particular theosophy on which they have come to depend.

The structure which Bishop Leadbeater expounded was a particularly remarkable one and serviceable to many people, to whose experience it responded in various ways. It seems to me to deserve, of some honour in the long history of attempted expositions of inner life.

Hugh Shearman

* * * * *

The First Member of The T.S. In Sydney: Professor John Smith - M.D., hon LLD., M.LC., C.M.G.

By Hugh S. Murdoch

The first resident of Sydney to join the Theosophical Society was Professor John Smith. He joined during a visit to the founders H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in Bombay on Jan. 14, 1882. He was the sixteenth Australian member to join the Society, of which eleven were in Brisbane and Toowoomba, three in Melbourne and one in northern New South Wales who belonged to the Queensland group. The first branch had just been formed in Brisbane, with its president, Carl Hartmann, residing in Toowoomba. The first branch in Sydney was formed in 1891,¹ six years after John Smith's death, during a visit by Olcott.

Since he joined late in life, it is pertinent to ask what kind of man is drawn in his sixties to the fledgling Theosophical Society?

John Smith was born at Peterculter near Aberdeen in 1821. He studied Arts and Medicine simultaneously and graduated M.A. in 1842 and M.D. in 1843. He visited Australia as a ship's surgeon in 1847 on a voyage undertaken partly for his health. On returning to Scotland he lectured in chemistry for five years and gained a high reputation in that field.

University Professor

Australia's first university, the University of Sydney, was inaugurated in 1852 with three professors. These were in order of seniority (and salary), Woolley in classics (from Oxford), Pell in mathematics (from Cambridge) and John Smith with the strange title of Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy. The latter term really meant and was recognized as Physics. In many places until quite recently, and particularly in Scotland, Physics was known as Natural Philosophy. The term is by no means inappropriate. It seems that in Cambridge upon which the Sydney course was to modelled, certain topics which we now regard as Physics were taught as part of the Mathematics course. The remainder was referred to as Experimental Physics even though the instruction was in Smith's time at Sydney entirely theoretical. (Today Experimental Physics means that the students carry out experiments). Smith's chief interest and the subject considered most important was Chemistry. He was chosen for the position from among 13 applicants.

¹ The Lodge was formed on May 8 with twenty-three members, the same day that Madame Blavatsky died. Olcott had a presentiment of her death the following morning (Sydney time).

Emancipation of Women

At the time, only men were allowed to take university degrees, but Smith showed early emancipist views when, shortly after his appointment, he advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald a series of extra-curricular lectures in chemistry which were open to ladies as well as gentlemen. Later, a course entitled "Electricity for Young Ladies" became a popular offering. Note also that the first twenty-four members of the T.S. in Australia were all men. There is no evidence of Mrs. Smith, who was a spiritualist, becoming a member although she was obviously interested as we shall see. The first woman member was Margaret Woolley, widow of the first professor of classics. Jill Roe, Associate Professor of Modern History at Macquarie University, Sydney, comments that at the time the T.S. appeared to attract the liberal intelligentsia.

Smith was later instrumental in the admission of women to the university. In the 1870s he and Badham (who had replaced Woolley as professor classics) pressed for admission of women but were unanimously opposed by the remainder of the Senate who feared the disturbing effect on our young men." In 1879 the chancellor, Sir William Manning, expressed his doubts about mixed classes but noted that the relevant professors, this time Smith and Liversidge (Geology), were willing for a trial "if the demand on the part of the young women were sufficient to compensate for the introduction of what we may venture to call a disturbing element." The professors agreed to eliminate from their courses material that might be shocking to female delicacy. There were also practical problems to be overcome as the only space for "a suitable retiring room and other conveniences for female students" appeared to be in space allocated to the Professor of Classics as a residence. Nevertheless, two women were admitted in 1882; in 1884 an amending act was passed to allow the conferring of degrees to women. Thanks to Smith's enlightened attitude the University of Sydney was well ahead of most British universities.

Community Service

Smith took an active role in the affairs of the community; as a result, in 1871 he became the Hon. John Smith when appointed to the Legislative Council (the upper house of the N.S.W. parliament). His speeches were acknowledged as "sensible and practical, and evinced great knowledge of the subjects discussed." In 1876 he was made an honorary LL.D. at his old university, Aberdeen. In 1877 he was given the honour C.M.G.

Smith was for many years a director and chairman of the A.M.P. [Australian Mutual Providence] Society. This is now Australia's largest life insurance company but at the time mutual provident societies were regarded as a form of social service. The golden trowel which he used to lay the foundation stone of a new building for the A.M.P. Society in 1877 is preserved in the A.M.P. archives. Upon his death, the directors recorded that "the Society was deprived of a conscientious and painstaking director, the board of a courteous and able chairman, and the community of a valuable self-denying citizen." The A.M.P. records also describe him as "a man preeminently characterized by great honesty of purpose, impartiality, and even disposition, tolerance and uniform courtesy."

As an M.D. Smith opposed both in parliament and in the public arena a vigorous campaign by the medical profession for legislation banning any form of treatment by other than qualified medical practitioners. He argued that medicine was as much an art based on observation and experience as a science and quoted eminent authorities in support. He had wide public support and his views prevailed.

Throughout his time in Sydney, he was repeatedly involved as a scientific expert in investigation of Sydney's inadequate water supply and sanitation. He argued vigorously over many years for the upper Nepean River as an adequate and reliable source of water. This was finally realized after his death although he played a part in drafting the legislation which set up the Sydney Metropolitan Water Board in 1880.

Smith was largely responsible for the establishment of state education in N.S.W. In this role he became principal advisor to Sir Henry Parkes. He was for many years chairman of the Council of Education and in effect, minister for education until the appointment of a minister in 1876.

Other Interests

Smith was an expert amateur photographer. In 1955, a collection of over 400 photographic negative plates was discovered by accident in a basement storeroom of the old Chemistry building at the University. These glass plates were mostly stereoscopic pairs and were in excellent condition. The university archivist David Macmillan considers this remarkable considering the fragility of the plates. The discovery aroused great interest since Smith himself appeared in some of the photographs after timing the exposure. The subjects cover the whole range of colonial life including many expeditions to the bush and a series of photographs taken during the construction of the first buildings of Sydney University. Most were taken between 1854 and 1862, so the collection is considered one of the best in the world of that period. Macmillan comments that "from them an amazingly realistic and detailed picture of colonial life in the 1850s can be pieced together."

He was a keen traveller both within Australia and overseas on three extended tours which he took at about ten year intervals, publishing two volumes of wayfaring notes. These had originally appeared as articles in the Sydney Morning Herald. A further small clue to his character comes from his castigation of so-called "sportsmen" for slaughtering birdlife along the banks of the Nile.

Finally, he was a foundation member of the Philosophical Society of N.S.W. in 1855, which later became the Royal Society of N.S.W. He served on its Councils for eighteen years and was many times President or Vice-President.

Professor Smith and Theosophy

Professor Smith appears to have first come into contact with the Theosophical Society through a visit by the English spiritualist Emma Hardinge Britten, one of the seventeen founding members of the T.S. in New York in 1875, during a visit by her to Australia in 1878–879. Smith's wife (whom he married in England in 1872) was a spiritualist, and it was not uncommon for scientists of the day to take an interest in the movement.

He was probably also aware of the spiritualist magazine *Harbinger of Light* published by William H. Terry of Melbourne. Terry joined the T.S. in 1880 (the second person in Australia to do so) and so publicized it in his magazine.²

Smith evidently corresponded with Mme. Blavatsky because she enclosed a letter for him to Terry dated November 5, 1881, saying that she had lost his address. Enclosed in this letter was a private and confidential note to Terry from the Master M. urging him to find the whereabouts of the professor as he had business with him.

Late in 1881, Smith, having obtained extended leave of absence, set out on a tour of Europe. Liversidge had become Professor of Chemistry, but Smith remained Professor of Experimental Physics. During his absence his lectures were to be given by Revd. Joseph Campbell, a graduate of the university. Smith may not have received Blavatsky's letter before he left, but he carried with him a letter of introduction to her from Emma Britten and was evidently expected. He arrived in Bombay on January 13, 1882; Colonel Olcott visited him in his hotel that evening. On the following day Olcott took him to the "Crow's Nest," where he and Blavatsky were staying. That evening at a meeting of the Society, Smith was admitted to membership.

Letters from the Masters

After a tour of northern India, he returned to spend a few days with the founders. He learned there of the letters being received from the Masters. One evening, Olcott invited him to open several letters which had arrived in the mail from all over India. He did so and found several which contained the typical red handwriting of the Master M. The following day (February 1, 1882), Mme. Blavatsky intimated to him that she felt one of the Masters present and asked Smith if he would like to receive a communication. He replied that he would be most gratified. She led him to his room, asked him to examine it carefully to check that everything was in its normal place and then close all the entrances to the room. Then, holding his hands, she sat him down alongside Olcott. Shortly a letter appeared from above his head; inside he found a note in the familiar handwriting which said,

no chance of writing to you in your letters but I can write direct. Work for us in Australia and we will not prove ungrateful, but will prove to you our actual existence, and thank you... M.

The following day Smith wrote out his experience in detail in the form of a letter to Olcott. This was published in April, 1882 in "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy," published anonymously by A.O. Hume in Calcutta under authority of the Theosophical Society. Smith's letter was headed "Statement of the Hon'ble J. Smith, member of the Legislative Council, N.S.W., Professor in Sydney University, President of the Royal Society of N.S.W. etc. etc."; and was noted as signed by "J. Smith, Bombay, 2nd February, 1882."

² *The Harbinger of Light* was published continuously until 1953.

From Naples in March, Smith sent a similar letter to Terry in Melbourne for publication in the *Harbinger of Light*. He did not, however, repeat the phrase “work for us in Australia” but indicated instead that there was a personal message at this point. This letter carried the pseudonym “Viator” because Smith wanted Terry to preserve his identity. Terry published the letter with the requested pseudonym but added a note attesting to the scientific acumen of the author. However, far from protecting Smith’s identity, Terry obliquely gave the game away for those with eyes to see, although this did not appear to have been picked up by Smith’s circle of friends. In the same issue of the *Harbinger of Light* (June, 1882) in which Smith’s letter appeared, Terry reviewed “Hints on Esoteric Theosophy” and stated that amongst the occult phenomena

we find one from the Hon. J.S. _____ whose name and titles are given in full. He is the writer of the letter on ‘occult phenomena’ which appears in the present issue of this paper.

Smith also wrote to Blavatsky from Naples and enclosed a letter for delivery to the Brother who had written to him. He got his wife to stitch this note with a double thread of coloured silks, of which he preserved a specimen. He wanted the note returned unopened since both he and his wife were convinced that it was not possible to open the note without cutting the paper or undoing the stitching. “If the stitching had been undone it was impossible by any known means to restore it to its original condition.”

Blavatsky’s reply dated July 23rd was sent to Smith care of Terry in Melbourne. Terry sent it on to London and it finally caught up with Smith in Cannes on January 18, 1883. Perhaps Blavatsky did not realize how long he would be away from Australia when she sent the reply to Melbourne. (Had she lost his address again?) Of more importance is the content of the letter. She reported that his experiment was a failure because the Masters dislike anything in the nature of a test. She asked him not to be angry with them. A sarcastic sentence in red ink in the handwriting he recognised as that of the Master M. who had written to him previously, added that this was kind and considerate advice.

Inside Blavatsky’s letter was another addressed to him in red ink. He could find no opening but opened it carefully with a knife. Inside he found the stitched up note which he had enclosed for the Master M. in his letter to Mme. Blavatsky. He examined it carefully with a magnifying glass and also asked his wife and several ladies to examine it. They all vouched that the stitching had not been disturbed. He then cut it open and inside found a note in red ink saying: “your ladies, I see, are unbelievers, and they are better needle-women than our Hindu and Tibetan lasses.” Smith recognised the handwriting as the same as he had received before.

An account appears in the *Harbinger of Light* for August, 1883, again under the pseudonym “Viator.” Smith wrote in detail to Mme. Blavatsky from Nice on January 31, 1883, describing what had happened. He said that the result was gratifying and astonishing to both him and his wife. He had hardly hoped for anything so good and was very grateful to Morya. He would like to receive more proof but hardly dared ask. He would

like to know details of how his letter was taken by M., how H.P.B. communicated with him and whether K.H. took away Mr. Hume's letters directly from his house. He said that "the whole thing seems to me so astonishing and perplexing that I wish to understand exactly what happens."

The only reply appears to be in the form of an article in *The Theosophist* of October, 1883 entitled "Some Scientific Questions Answered," which is included in an article by J. L. Davidge in the December, 1959 issue *Theosophy in Australia*. The reply, with an introduction by Blavatsky, was attributed to a chela who was familiar with Western science. The attraction or cohesion between atoms was said to be a manifestation of the Universal Divine Force, which can be interrupted and set up again as regards any group of atoms using the same Divine power as that localized in the human monad. An alternate explanation for "passing matter through matter" was to restore differentiated matter to its undifferentiated state so that it can pass through the interstices of a substance in similar fashion to electricity passing through a conductor.

Mme. Coulomb, Blavatsky's dismissed housekeeper, claimed to Hodgson, who was investigating the phenomena for the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), that she had unpicked the stitching in Smith's letter and sewn it up again with a hair. Smith cooperated with Hodgson and sent him the letter for inspection, not believing Mme. Coulomb. Hodgson accepted all of Mme. Coulomb's evidence uncritically and dealt with the Smith letter in an appendix to his report. It is not clear whether Smith actually saw Hodgson's report which was presented to the SPR in June, 1885 at a time when Smith was very ill and only a few months before his death. The report was published in 1886 after Smith's death. One hundred years later, in 1986, the SPR journal carried an article by a handwriting expert and member of the SPR, Vernon Harrison, which tore apart the evidence based on handwriting analysis and scathingly criticised Hodgson's methodology and his bias in uncritically accepting evidence which suited his conclusion and rejecting any which did not.

Return to Sydney

There is no evidence of Smith working for Theosophy on his return to Sydney. His colleagues were probably unaware of his membership and there is no mention in an extensive obituary. It may not be coincidence, however, that Margaret Woolley joined the T.S. shortly after Smith's return in mid-1883. As already mentioned, she was the widow of the first professor of classics at Sydney University³ and would certainly have been well-known to Smith. She was, in fact, the second member to join in Sydney.

Smith's health had not improved as a result of his overseas trip; in fact, it gradually deteriorated. He was, therefore, not particularly active on his return although he did resume his chairmanship of the A.M.P. Society, which he held until his death on October 12, 1885. A long eulogistic obituary was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the following day. His grave in Waverley cemetery is marked by a large Celtic cross with a

³ Her husband died at sea in 1866.

decorative motif featuring swastikas and coiled serpents. The inscription on his grave records him as C.M.G., LL.D., M.D., M.L.C. and for thirty-three years Professor of Experimental Physics at the University of Sydney. Strangely, there is no mention of the fact that for twenty-nine of those years he was also Professor of Chemistry.

Today his interest and exploits in Theosophy are widely recognised in academic circles. *The Proceedings of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute* for August, 1959 carried an article by J.L. Davidge, former General Secretary of the T.S. in Australia, entitled "Professor John Smith and Theosophy." In the centenary volume of the Royal Society of N.S.W., Professor LeFevre has an article on "The Establishment of Chemistry in Australia." In the section on John Smith, he mentions his visit to Blavatsky and Olcott and his "experience in occultism." The University of Sydney published a book in 1988 on Smith, which contains a comprehensive article by Jill Roe on "John Smith and Theosophy."

In all of his fields of activity, John Smith was recognised as a responsible and very reliable citizen. If his career was not spectacular, it was certainly rich and varied. Such was the man who became the first member of the T.S. in Sydney. We can surely be proud of him.

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Book Review

Review of The Beginnings of Theosophy In France. By Joscelyn Godwin. London: Theosophical History Center, 1989. \$6.00 (£3.00).

By Daniel Caracostea

[Translated from the French by Joscelyn Godwin]

Here at last is an objective study of the beginnings of Theosophy in France. The author, an Englishman resident in the United States, wrote this essay while working on a larger project, "Musical Esotericism in France, 1750-1950." The French can only be grateful to him for filling a gap.

The introduction gives a survey of the esoteric and spiritualist context of the second half of the nineteenth century, in which the Theosophical Society was born and grew up. Next there are several pages on Madame Blavatsky's first visits to France. In last April's number of the *Lotus Bleu* (89), there was a review of a book *L'Illuminatrice, Helena Blavatsky*, in which was mentioned H.P.B.'s visit to Paris around 1850-51, during which a certain Alcide Rebaud hypnotized her and made use of her as a medium. The author gave no source to support his allegation.

Joscelyn Godwin, on the other hand, does not hesitate to give his sources and the exact name of the magnetizer: Victor Michal (1824-1889). Michal does not seem to have been very honest, and the author classes him among the dubious witnesses; but it is still interesting to read what he had to say, years later, about Mme. Blavatsky.

Next we find a detailed study of the first French members, including Commander Courmes, the Duchess of Pomar, Gaboriau, the Countess of Adhémar, Amaravella, Arthur Arnould, and Papus. The latter receives eight pages, covering the chapters "The Machinations of Papus" and "Papus Unveiled."

In his conclusion, Joscelyn Godwin speaks of the two obstacles that the Theosophical Society met with in France. The first was simple human egotism — not peculiar to France, of course.

In the person of Gaboriau we have the model of the well-meaning egotist who believes with iron sincerity that his own way is the right way, and cannot make the accommodations necessary to the functioning of any group, esoteric or exoteric. Once this type of enthusiast is installed in a position of power, quarrels and schisms are bound to follow...

The second problem was the more specific one of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and its claim to uniqueness and universality. Christian Hermetists such as Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, Papus, and Paul Sédir initially welcomed what Mm. Blavatsky's masters had to offer, but retrenched when they saw the dangers it posed to their native faith. Since the events described by Godwin, French esotericism has remained divided on this issue.

The value of this booklet is enhanced by the abundant notes on its last pages, and by a bibliography.

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Theodor Reuss and the Theosophical Society

By Ellic Howe

[Originally presented at the first International Conference
on Theosophical History on July 19, 1986]

Theodor Reuss, in 1905 the founder of the Order of the Templars of the Orient (known to many as the O. T. O.) had a previous connection with the Theosophical Society. I presume that this was no more than incidental in the course of his strangely momentous career. It is evident that he considered himself to be an occultist. In that context I can only define the word "occultist" in a very general sense. But then all who subscribed to Theosophical beliefs and interests during the brief period when Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was active in London during the late 1880s and early 1890s thought of themselves as "occultists." The majority of these people was completely obscure and were the rank and file members of a sort of cultural underworld. That it existed at all simply reflected their lack of satisfaction with conventional religious beliefs. It is probable, therefore, that the T.S. served only as an ersatz religion for them.

Reuss has interested me for a number of reasons. Firstly he was a promoter of fringe- or pseudo-masonic Orders; secondly, until quite recently very little was known about him; and finally, the O.T.O. achieved a certain notoriety because of its imagined connection with "sexual magic." Today the O.T.O. enjoys a modest popularity in the U.S.A., where Reuss's erstwhile colleague Aleister Crowley is taken far more seriously than he probably deserves. Reuss's connection with the T.S. was never more than peripheral but probably inevitable. However, during the next few minutes I can do no more than offer footnote material.

He was born in Augsburg in 1855. He was in London soon after his 21st birthday in 1876 and was initiated as a Freemason in the Pilgrim Lodge. This happened at a time when Freemasonry was very fashionable. His interest in the Craft was evidently brief because he was back in Germany during the early 1880s and does not appear to have joined a lodge there.

He was now earning his living as a singer in minor opera houses but nevertheless sang in the chorus at the first performance of Parsifal at Bayreuth in 1882. His voice failed and for a period he was a concert promoter and journalist. He was back in London, now mainly as a journalist, in 1885 and was active in William Morris's Socialist League. This was a cover for his role as an informer for the Prussian political police, and he was involved in the denunciation of a well-known German anarchist who had taken refuge in London.

In 1903, under the pseudonym Hans Merlin, he published in German a pot-boiler with the title "What is Occultism: How to Develop Occult Powers." In this he claimed to have been acquainted with H.P.B. or even to have been on friendly terms with her, also to have been present at Avenue Road when her ashes were placed in a casket there

after her death in May 1891. I feel tolerably sure that his presence on this occasion was a by-product of his work as a journalist rather than any really close connection with H.P.B.

He claimed to have joined the T.S. in London in 1885. In view of the current popularity of the Theosophical movement this was entirely possible. He turns up in a specifically German T.S. contest in August 1896 when he was present at the First National Convention in Germany.⁴ E.T. Hargrove and Katherine Tingley were both there, also Dr. Franz Hartmann, who was elected President. Reuss then became Vice-President. Reuss's friend, Leopold Engel—soon to become his enemy—then joined its executive committee. Engel and Reuss had recently revived the Order of the Illuminati.

Two years previously, in 1894, Reuss published a short article on "Prana Therapy" in Dr. Wilhelm Hubbe-Schleiden's periodical *Sphinx*. The title of Reuss's contribution suggests a Theosophical inspiration. Hubbe-Schleiden was a central figure in the new German theosophical movement. Hartmann was to play a prominent role in Reuss's somewhat later masonic promotions.

A search in the old German theosophical periodicals—all of them obscure and rare publications—might reveal further information about Reuse's Theosophical Society activities. However, I do not believe that they can have been extensive, largely because Reuse had other fish to fry. I have the impression that Reuss was always a more or less commercial occultist and no Freemason, and since there was no evident financial advantage to be derived from any connection with the T.S., he seems to have lost interest in it. Reuse was above all an "operator," a manipulator of his fellow human beings. He cannot be regarded as a representative Theosophist but he belongs, however obscurely, to the T.S.'s strangely complicated historiography. And that is my only excuse for this brief contribution to this evening's proceedings.⁵

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⁴ The Convention was organized by a group which had broken away from the Theosophical Society (Adyar).

⁵ For more information, see Helmut Möller and Ellic Howe, *Merlin Peregrinus: Vom Untergrund des Abendlandes* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1986).

Service to India As Service to the World: Annie Besant's Work in India for Human Rights

By Catherine Lowman Wessinger

Annie Besant (1847–1933) came to India as a Theosophist in 1893 after a very turbulent and notorious career in England as an atheist and Fabian socialist. As an atheist and socialist, she had worked energetically for freethought, women's rights, the right to promulgate information about contraception, land reform to benefit English peasantry, proper pay, working and living conditions for industrial workers, and reforms in the London school system, so it was natural for her to turn her prodigious talents toward the improvement of the quality of life for Indians. Although Besant never used the term "human rights," she was working to make sure that all Indians possessed the universal rights that all humans should have since, as a Theosophist, she believed that each person was a spark of the universal divine consciousness. For Besant, service to India meant service to the world, since she felt India would become the religious teacher of the world and would lead the world into a millennial condition that she termed the "New Civilization."

Conversion to Theosophy

Although Besant was an atheist for fifteen years, she was never totally satisfied with her materialism (which was a monistic materialism), and she increasingly began to notice that despite intense efforts for social reform, human nature remained the same and continued to be motivated by the baser emotions.

In 1889, Besant reviewed *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society. In this two-volume work Besant found the answers to her concerns and questions. Besant found in Theosophy a monistic philosophy that asserted that God as the one substance was conscious and intelligent, and that through meditation human faculties could be developed by which God may be perceived or at least the subtler levels of the universe may be perceived. *The Secret Doctrine* taught that human evolution takes place in succeeding series of human races known as Root Races. According to Blavatsky, the most recently evolved human race is the Fifth Root Race or the Aryan race, in which the mental faculty predominates. The Fifth Root Race is characterized by the development of the sense of individuality and an increasing concern with the rights of individuals. Blavatsky predicted that a new sixth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race would shortly develop and contain within it the seeds of the new Sixth Root Race. The Sixth Root Race would have a new faculty developed, known by the Sanskrit term "buddhi,"¹ which would enable these individuals to perceive that all are part of a great whole that can be termed God. Thus the Sixth Root Race would build a New Civilization that would be characterized by brotherhood, love and peace. Besant was attracted to these Theosophical teachings since they demonstrated the means by which

the human transformation for which she had worked so energetically would be effected both collectively and individually.

Besant, as an atheist, had worked so long for a human transformation or a “Heaven on Earth” with little concrete results, that she increasingly was drawn to the idea of a superhuman agent or agents effecting the needed change. This was prefigured in her socialist phase when she wrote that the “mighty, silent forces of evolution make for Socialism, for the establishment of the Brotherhood of Men”² regardless of human effort. Besant found in Theosophy various superhuman agents known collectively as the Masters of the Wisdom. These Masters were described as being men who had reached the pinnacle of human evolution and who were perfect channels of the divine will and who guided evolution on earth. Besant felt that she was in contact with the Masters, who for the most part were described as being remote and inaccessible to most humans. After becoming a Theosophist, Besant’s attention turned more and more to India as the home of the Divine Wisdom or Theosophy. After becoming President of the Theosophical Society in 1907, Besant made India her home base for her worldwide work. She felt that her religious, educational, social, and political work in India, as well as her grooming of a young Indian boy, J. Krishnamurti, to be the physical vehicle for another superhuman agent known as the World-Teacher, was sanctioned and guided by the Masters of the Wisdom. Both Krishnamurti and India were to present religious teachings to the world that would lead it into the New Civilization.

Progressive Messianism

In studying the thought of Annie Besant, I found a particular millenarian pattern that combines elements of both pre-millenarianism and post-millennialism that I choose to call progressive messianism.³ Following the widely accepted definitions of Norman Cohn and Yonina Talmon, I define pre-millenarianism as belief in a collective, terrestrial, and imminent salvation that will be total and accomplished by superhuman agents in a catastrophic manner.⁴ Messianism is often but not necessarily a part of the pre-millenarian pattern. Scholars have normally associated messianism with the pre-millenarian doctrine of decline. Also following common scholarly usage, I define post-millennialism as a view of history that sees the collective and terrestrial salvation as being accomplished gradually by the effort of humans who are subject to the impelling force of some superhuman agency.⁵

Progressive messianism, like post-millennialism, entails a progressive and evolutionary view of history. It sees human beings as being guided by superhuman agents to accomplish the goal of creating a Heaven on Earth. However, unlike post-millennialism, and like pre-millenarianism, progressive messianism involves the view that the terrestrial salvation will be accomplished imminently by a messiah who will enter the historical process to effect a radical but non-catastrophic change. This salvation is collective but not exclusivistic as in pre-millenarian movements. Thus progressive messianism combines an optimistic and evolutionary view of history with messianism. Progressive messianism has continued in our culture to the present and is found particularly in some

modern “New Age” movements, which have been influenced either directly or indirectly by the progressive messianic movement organized by Annie Besant.⁶

Annie Besant’s careers as atheist, socialist, Theosophist, Indian patriot, and announcer of the World-Teacher were motivated by a typically Victorian belief in progress and desire to ameliorate current social conditions. The typically Victorian belief in progress was strained in the face of widespread suffering in the Industrial Age, hence the typically Victorian desire to ameliorate current social conditions.⁷ These two factors would lead Besant to develop the religious pattern of progressive messianism when she began to despair that human effort could effect the needed reform.⁸

Besant contributed to Theosophical thought the millenarian expectation of the imminent appearance of a messiah, the World-Teacher, who would present a teaching that would become the New Religion of the new race and establish in the world a New Civilization. Under Besant’s leadership, a progressive messianic movement was organized known as the Order of the Star in the East.⁹ Besant saw her work in India as leading directly to the accomplishment of the New Civilization.

Uplift of Hindu Pride

When Besant first arrived in India in 1893, British officials were concerned that she would put her oratorical and organizational skills to seditious purposes, so she promised that she would stay out of politics. This was a promise that she kept for nearly twenty years.¹⁰ In the meantime, she focused her efforts on the uplift of Hindu self-esteem and education. From the beginning of Besant’s Indian career, the concept of India as a holy land played a key role in her Theosophical post-millennialism. When Besant turned her efforts to social reform and Indian Home Rule in 1913, Besant had been lecturing on the coming of the World-Teacher for five years, so Besant’s thought on how India would fit into her progressive messianic scheme appeared full-blown with no evidence of discontinuity with her previous millennial thought. The main change was the addition of the expectation of a messiah.¹¹

Upon her arrival in India, Besant found that Hindu pride had been seriously battered by British imperialism and Christian missionaries. English-educated Indians, particularly, suffered from a “feeling of inferiority coupled with a loss of respect for their own cultural heritage and traditions. . . .”¹² Hindus had already been impressed by the appreciation of Helena P. Blavatsky and Col. Henry S. Olcott for Hindu culture and religion when they arrived in 1879 to establish the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India. On their visit to Ceylon, Blavatsky and Olcott had demonstrated a similar appreciation for Buddhism and had even formally converted to Buddhism. Olcott had worked for the removal of many of the disabilities under which the Sinhalese suffered under British rule so that he became seen as a national savior.¹³

Besant found herself more drawn toward Hinduism. She felt that the teachings of Hinduism most perfectly matched the eternal “divine wisdom” found in Theosophy. Whereas Olcott’s special work had been to revive Buddhism in Ceylon, Besant saw her particular mission as the revival of Hinduism in India. Once Hindu spirituality was revived, a renewed Hindu intellectual life and material prosperity would automatically fol-

low.¹⁴ So Besant lectured widely to Hindu audiences about the greatness of their religious heritage. Besant undertook to master Sanskrit and produced a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that was widely disseminated. Later Besant published her commentary on the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*.¹⁵

When Besant became active in the effort for Indian Home Rule, she saw her work to elevate Hindu pride as the necessary prerequisite for Indian patriotism.

There was no progress possible for any form of human activity if the roots of that activity were not struck deep in the ocean of spiritual life. There was no possibility of National spirit in the country without self-respect being the very basis of the Nation, and therefore it was necessary to hold up the great ideal of the past India, mighty in intellect, mighty in religion, and in physical prosperity.¹⁶

The success of Annie Besant's efforts to raise Hindu pride in the face of the Christian critique has been attested by Valentine Chirol: "Is it surprising that Hindus should turn their backs upon our civilization 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?"¹⁷

The primary attraction of Hinduism for Besant was that its scriptures, especially the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, taught a monism, which was the metaphysical basis of her Theosophical millenarianism. If all persons could perceive themselves as part of the Whole and that all possess the same spiritual nature, then a perfect condition of peace and harmony would exist in the world. The coming sixth sub-race and ultimately the Sixth Root Race would have this perception which was the mark of the awakened buddhi. India was destined to become the Holy Land of the world¹⁸ and present to the world the monistic philosophy that would lead it into the New Civilization.

That is the teaching which, spoken by the mouth of India, is spreading over the whole world, and behold! that is the very key-note of the race that is to be born. That race will recognize the spiritual unity of all humanity. Therefore is that unity the one obligatory object of the Theosophical Society, the recognition of the Brotherhood of man, which can only be defended on the ground of a spiritual unity. All men are brothers, no matter what their color may be, no matter what their race, no matter what their traditions, customs, and origin may be; they all are within the spiritual unity which underlies all mankind. That is the key-note of the next sub-race, the mark of the coming civilization. Is it without significance that the key-note of the coming sub-race is the supreme teaching of India?¹⁹

Educational Work

Besant's educational work in India cannot be separated from her work to uplift Hindu pride or from her goal of India becoming the spiritual teacher of the world. A modern education well-grounded in the Hindu religion would equip young Indians to raise India into this lofty position. Besant noted that Government colleges omitted religious education and that missionary colleges required the study of Christianity, both situations resulting in the alienation of educated boys from their native religion. Besant also noted that English-run schools neglected to instruct the Indian boys in Indian geography and history and used books that were derogatory of Hindu beliefs and gods.²⁰

To counter this situation, Besant, in 1896 and 1897, proposed to wealthy and influential Hindus that a Hindu high school and college for boys should be founded in Benares. Besant focused first on the education of Hindu boys, but planned that "As soon as the Hindu College is secure, I am going to open one for girls and try to raise the women." Besant travelled around India asking for donations and even appealed to the British public for donations. The Central Hindu College opened in July 1898 and later was the recipient of a donation in land and buildings from the Maharaja of Benares.²¹

Besant defined "Religion" as "the expression of the seeking of God by man, of the One Self by the apparently separated self."²² Since Theosophy revealed all religions as having one origin and as striving for this goal, all young people should be educated in their native faith. While education was needed to train the person's faculties on all levels, physical, emotional, and intellectual, education must first of all be religious and moral. Religious education promoted the perception of unity with all persons and things, and thus was the source of all service, public spirit, and patriotism.²³ Once a sense of unity with others and a spirit of patriotism prevailed, material prosperity would automatically follow for India.

Besant saw India's problem as lying in the lack of public spirit and patriotism. She saw individuals as being concerned solely with their personal goals and welfare. Besant argued that in order to promote public spirit and patriotism, the education of India's youth had to be based on their native religions. Besant founded the Central Hindu College for boys, which later became the Benares Hindu University. She also founded many other schools administered by the Theosophical Educational Trust.²⁴ She applauded the work being done for Muslim education at Aligarh, and she felt that the Parsees should organize their own schools.²⁵ All this work was necessary to promote the love of country that would eventually lead to India's self-government as well as the building up of the prosperity of India.

No liberty is possible until character is builded, and man's sense of duty to the country rules supreme. That sense grows out of religion; without religion no patriotism and no public spirit are possible; and without patriotism and public spirit there is no prosperity. The civic virtues grow out of religion.²⁶

At the Central Hindu College, each day started with the boys listening to the chant of the *Bhagavad Gita* as well as hearing a pundit "expounding some doctrine with some

moral illustration from the stories from the *Ramayana*, from the *Mahabharata*, and from the *Puranas*.”²⁷ Later, as students from other faiths came to attend the Central Hindu College, the day would begin with a Hindu, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim reciting a prayer of his faith.²⁸

In order to provide religious instruction for Hindu students, Besant wrote a catechism entitled *Sanatana Dharma* in three versions, one for primary grades, one for high school students, and one for college students. “By 1906, in less than four years of first publication, about 130,000 copies altogether of the three textbooks in the original English, the several translations and reprints had gone into circulation throughout the country.”²⁹ Olcott had written a *Buddhist Catechism*, and Besant felt that Muslims and Parsees should compose their own catechisms.³⁰ Additionally, she composed a *Universal Textbook of Religion and Morals* in three volumes³¹ for the use of students of all religions. Besant edited *The Central Hindu College Magazine, A Journal for Hindu Boys*, which had a circulation of almost 15,000. She accepted articles from boys all over India as well as the Central Hindu College boys. The *Magazine* reported on Besant’s speeches on “Ancient Ideals in Modern Life” and “In Defense of Hinduism” as well as her stories drawn from the *Ramayana*. Besant also lectured to the Central Hindu College students on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.³²

Besant felt that Indian schools should impart a modern scientific education coupled with a good grounding in Indian history, geography, and literature, along with the appropriate religion. She felt that every student should be educated in the vernacular, as well as study English, since this was becoming the world language. She felt that Hindi should be studied by all students and should become the official language of India. She recognized that this would create a hardship for Tamil- and Telegu-speaking people, but she felt that this was a sacrifice they should make for the unity of India. In addition, each student should study the classical language related to his own religious tradition, whether it was Sanskrit, Arabic, or Persian.³³ Since Besant was primarily concerned with Hindu education, she tended to emphasize the importance of a Sanskrit education.

The great stress on Sanskrit in Indian higher education today is a direct result of Mrs Besant’s pioneering efforts at the end of the nineteenth century, combined with Olcott’s more permanent building up at the Adyar Theosophical Library of one of the most remarkable of all Sanskrit collections today. . . .³⁴

Besant spoke out strongly for the education of girls and members of the depressed castes, and her opinions and efforts concerning these will be examined in the next section concerning Besant’s efforts for social reform in India.

Social Reform

Sixteen years after the fact, Besant reported that in 1913 she came into contact with the Rishi Agastya, “the Regent of India in the Inner Government” who requested that she begin to work for social reform in India. Upon his request, she formed the Brothers of Service, consisting of persons willing to “defy wrong social customs such as

premature betrothal and marriage”; she also gave a series of lectures entitled “Wake Up, India.” Besant saw her primary work in social reform as dealing with “the raising of the age of marriage, the drawing together of castes, and the uplift of the submerged classes. . . .”³⁶ This section on Annie Besant’s work for social reform will divide her work into two categories: caste and women. The issue of education of the members of the lowest castes and of women will be addressed in their respective sections.

Caste

When Besant first arrived in India, she was so enamored of all things Hindu that she found herself uncritically defending the caste system. Having accepted the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, she believed that each individual’s thoughts, desires, and actions determine the circumstances of life. She saw caste as a “great education system,” or a “path of Evolution along which a human soul develops.”³⁷ Besant saw the main lesson of caste as consisting of dharma, interpreted as duty to others, or service. Once an individual learned to serve as a Sudra, he would become a Vaisya to practice giving and charity. When an individual “had learned to sacrifice life itself as a Kshatriya; then, when he had become a lover of asceticism and learning, then was he permitted to pass into the order of Brahmanas, to give himself to the people as their teacher, counsellor, and guide.”³⁸ So Besant saw caste in its pure form not as “a system of rights claimed by a caste, but [as] a system of duties imposed on a caste; the higher the caste, the heavier the duties.”³⁹ Besant saw in the caste system the ideal of brotherhood which she hoped would be a living reality in the New Civilization since in caste one’s dharma or duty to all others is clearly spelled out.⁴⁰

Besant reported that by 1905 she had concluded that the caste system was not defensible since it was no longer working as it had originally been intended and that it was an obstacle to brotherhood. People were not performing the duties of their caste, and were nevertheless claiming the privileges of their caste. Brahmanas, in particular, were neglecting their duty as the teachers of India in order to follow other professions. Besant called on brahmanas to sacrifice their privileges to devote themselves to the service of the nation in order that India’s freedom might be gained.⁴¹

Besant deplored the number of sub-castes or jatis that had grown out of the original four varnas as promoting exclusiveness and vanity. She felt that each varna should try to maintain its racial purity, but she encouraged interdining and intermarriage with sub-caste members of the same varna as promoting greater brotherhood. She also urged that foreign travel be allowed without loss of caste as a means of increasing brotherhood with the outside world.⁴²

Besant felt that before India could teach the world about human unity, Indians must extend the hand of brotherhood to those who were beyond caste whom she variously referred to as outcastes, untouchables, pariahs, or the depressed or submerged castes. Moreover, India could not be a free country until she had lifted these people out of bondage. Besant saw education as “the lever by which we may hope to raise them. . . .”⁴³ While wanting to cultivate the ideal of brotherhood within a divine unity, Besant did not assert that all persons were equal. Rather, she saw the untouchables as “younger broth-

ers” who were deserving of social uplift due to their inherent divinity. But since they were not as highly evolved spiritually and physically as persons belonging to higher castes, Besant argued against “an artificial equality”⁴⁴ and advised that untouchable children should be educated in institutions separate from other Indian children. Besant felt that the first lesson in an untouchable school should be that of a bath and the putting on of a clean cloth. Secondly, these children needed a wholesome meal. Then the academic education of these children could proceed. However, it was Besant’s opinion that it would take “some generations of purer food and living to make their bodies fit to sit in the close neighborhood of a schoolroom with children who have received bodies from an ancestry trained in the habits of exquisite personal cleanliness, and fed on pure food-stuffs. We have to raise the depressed classes to a similar level of physical purity, not to drag down the clean to the level of the dirty. . . .”⁴⁵

Besant’s Theosophical beliefs provided her with the explanation for the condition and suffering of the untouchables. Her belief in karma and reincarnation, and also in the power of one’s habitual thoughts to have an effect on one’s body and physical surroundings, led her to affirm that it is not the conditions that make the people, but it is the people who cause the conditions.

. . . none the less, the environment reacts on the organism though it does not create it, and prolongs the existence of the worse qualities and retards the growth of the good. We, who have outgrown these conditions, can help our youngsters to grow out of them more quickly than they can do if we leave them to their own unassisted efforts.⁴⁶

Besant urged that untouchables be treated with respect and acknowledged as human beings who contained a spark of “the One Self in all equally dwelling.”⁴⁷ She felt that all educated Indians should either work personally to educate the untouchables and provide them with a trade, or, at the least, they should donate money for their education and uplift.⁴⁸

Women

As with caste, Besant initially defended the traditional role of women in Hindu society, including the keeping of women at home. Nancy Anderson has found 1896 and 1897 newspaper interviews where Besant argued that Indian women do not want emancipation. She stated that Indian women do not suffer disability by being restricted to the domestic sphere since they enjoy the company of other women in the large extended family where the mother is treated with great reverence. This a complete reversal of Besant’s feminist stance taken as a young atheist and freethinker who had recently broken away from a very authoritarian husband. In “The Political Status of Women,” a speech given at the beginning of her freethinking career, she seriously questioned gender roles and argued that professions should be opened to women.⁴⁹

When Besant began speaking on social reforms, many of her concerns related to women. She deplored the marriage of children, girls and boys, as leading to the deple-

tion of the vigor of the Indian race.⁵⁰ She deplored the number of girl-widows and the forcing of girls to bear children before they were mature physiologically. In the following statement, Besant very vigorously denounced the early marriage of girls and their early motherhood as being crimes.

Why down in Madras we have girl widows under one year of age! A baby married in the cradle, and then doomed to widowhood for life. Take the Census report. See that we have there widows under five years of age counted by the thousand. Realise that the death age of your wives between fifteen and twenty-five leaps up suddenly because of premature motherhood. These are crimes! Preventible death is murder, and every one of you who gives a child of twelve or thirteen into the arms of a husband, so that, when she is thirteen or fourteen years of age, she becomes the mother of a child, every one of you is committing this crime against nature, in the person of your girl-child. It is a cruelty, and it is only custom that blinds you to the horror of it. You know how many first children are born dead of child-mothers; you know how many child-mothers go through an agony to which no girl should be subjected in the bearing of the first child. You are so accustomed to it; you have a festival of marriage, and you give the little girl away—you the father, who ought to guard her, who ought to protect her from the wickedness of premature motherhood! And the curse comes down on the Nation because of it, the premature old age, the rapid death of girls becoming early mothers.⁵¹

Besant saw Hindu girls and women as “helpless victims” married into chattel slavery by their fathers. Indian women had to be freed before India could claim her freedom as a nation.⁵² Besant pointed out the double standard of not allowing girl-widows to remarry, while the husbands whose wives had died due to early child-bearing were free to remarry over and over. “And then you have the horror of old men marrying children, a man of fifty marrying a child of ten. It is these things which dishonour Hindu marriage in the eyes of the world.” Besant urged that “[t]hese are the things that Hindu men should take in hand and crush.” Besant argued that if marriage for girls were postponed, they would then have the opportunity to go to school.⁵³

Besant did not propose that women should be allowed to move outside the domestic sphere, but she urged that women be educated so that they would become the mothers of “a race of patriots and of heroes” so that India could return to her past glory.⁵⁴

As with men’s education, Besant felt that religion should be at the core of women’s education. The ethics inculcated by religion would promote patriotism in women, “the realisation of duty to the Motherland, of readiness to sacrifice for her weal.” The primary and secondary education of the girl should include literature, art, physical education, and science, “chiefly as bearing on the hygiene and the food supply of the home, domestic medicine, first aid. . . .”⁵⁵ Besant advised that, like the boys, Indian girls should be allowed to learn their subjects in the vernacular, but that they should learn the classical language of their religion, as well as English. Additionally, Indian girls should learn about Indian history and geography. The scientific training mentioned above should in-

clude an acquaintance with arithmetic for keeping household accounts, and the artistic training education of girls should include sewing and darning. All this was necessary to make Indian women “lights of the home.” The uplift of women was necessary to obtain future greatness for India Besant clearly subscribed to the Victorian notion that woman is the keeper and promoter of the family’s morality.

Of this we may be sure, that Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, a freer, and a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India. The wife makes or mars the child. The power of woman to uplift or debase man is practically unlimited and man and woman must walk forward hand-in-hand to the raising of India, else will she never be raised at all.⁵⁶

It is quite clear from Besant’s remarks as cited above, that while she felt that Indian women needed to be educated and should not be kept in seclusion, she still saw the primary role of the Hindu woman as being that of wife and mother. Besant stressed the inherent differences of women and men, but saw both sexes as having complementary roles to perform for the good of all.

Woman and man are the two eyes of humanity, and the axes of vision are different though correlated, and make for fuller vision than one eye can compass by itself. But neither man nor woman should be artificially restricted; each should unfold their respective capacities to the full, nor be shut out of any field by law or custom.⁵⁷

Besant saw women as being more practical than men. Women were more likely to apply what they had learned to the problems of daily life, while men tended to deal more with theory. Like Gandhi, Besant emphasized the capacity of Hindu women for self-sacrifice. She wrote that, for the Hindu woman, “sacrifice is so essentially a part of her daily life as a wife, a mother, a mistress of her household, . . . she does not calculate it as does a man.”⁵⁸ Thus, like Gandhi, Besant saw women as natural participants in the self-sacrificing struggle against the British to attain Indian self-government. But while Besant cited great Hindu heroines such as Damayanti being consulted by ministers of state, Sita and her indomitable courage and dignity, Gargi arguing successfully with learned men, Gandhari entering a council of warriors and chiefs to rebuke her son, as well as women of Rajputana and Maharashtra who sat in council with their husbands and sometimes fought beside them in battle, Besant warned that Indian women should not emulate western women and compete with men in the workplace. Probably drawing on her observations of abysmal working conditions in British industry, she felt that this would cause “great injury of the children born of them, whose vitality is lessened by ante-natal hardships”⁵⁹ Besant emphasized that Indian girls and women should receive an education which would make them “true helpmates of their husbands, rather than that which fits them to be teachers and writers, physicians and nurses.”⁶⁰

Besant was the first president of the Women’s Indian Association founded in 1917, but it remained for another Theosophist, Margaret E. Cousins, who became the general

secretary of the Association, to take a fully feminist stance. Cousins, while speaking out strongly against child marriage, dowry, immature motherhood, and purdah, as did Besant, argued that humanity was comprised equally of women and men, and so women should receive an education equal to that of men so that Indian women could become “valuable co-operators in every sphere of the life of the Nation, and more efficient and healthier household women at the same time.”⁶¹ She urged that where financial resources were scarce, they should be expended equally for the education of girls and boys, rather than giving it all to the boys, saying that the 2 per cent literacy rate for Indian women was deplorable. Cousins recommended raising the age of consent to 16 (at that time it was 13 in British India). Cousins spoke out frankly against the double standard of chastity, pointing out that when men were unchaste, a portion of the female population had to be unchaste for their sexual gratification and suffered the consequences of their profession. She also pointed out that the wives and children of unchaste men were made to suffer with venereal diseases contracted by the men.⁶²

Cousins’ main work for women in India consisted of . . . the organization of women on a local, regional, and national level; the editorship of *Stri Dharma*, the journal of the Women’s Indian Association; lobbying for the franchise for women, then seats for women in the legislature, and places on committees and commissions; and public relations work in India and abroad.⁶³

In 1932, Cousins was imprisoned for a year by the British government for publicly urging Indians to exercise their right of free speech. Cousins saw her imprisonment as a protest against not only the general curtailment of civil rights, but also specific discrimination against women.”⁶⁴

The Women’s Indian Association, founded by Besant, Cousins, and another Theosophist, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, has the distinction of being the first organization to raise the issue of Indian women’s suffrage, when Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, came to India to ascertain Indian demands in 1917. In 1927, Cousins was highly instrumental in forming the All India Women’s Conference, of which she was elected president in 1936. The AIWC became the most influential of the early Indian women’s organizations. It was an important stimulus to Indian feminism, and was an important agency for obtaining reform in marriage and inheritance laws as well as promoting education for women. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 was passed primarily as a result of the lobbying of AIWC women.⁶⁵

While Besant’s work for the human rights of Indian women was significant, it must be noted that this was not the primary thrust of her work in India. Besant became occupied primarily with her work for Indian Home Rule and the gaining of rights for Indians in relation to self-government. Besant’s placing priority of Home Rule over women’s rights can be seen in her refusal “to make votes for Indian women a plank in the platform of her Home Rule League.”⁶⁶

Although Besant’s primary energies were directed toward gaining self-rule for India, the Theosophical Society contributed notably to the issue of women’s rights through

the work of Dorothy Jinarajadasa and Margaret Cousins. While Besant was not able to rid herself of the Victorian notion that woman's proper place is in the home as the nurturer of the family's finer sentiments, Cousins saw significance in Besant's life and activities as an example for future women. "She is the Forerunner of the New Age of which already the prominent feature is the emergence of Woman to power in all aspects of public service."⁶⁷ In the context of a Theosophical worldview, Cousins felt that it was no accident that Besant had chosen incarnation in a female body.

In her own person and life has been demonstrated the power of woman to surmount all the limitations set by out-of-date conventions, masculine monopoly and self-estimation, and feminine ideas of self-deprecation. She has shown the capacity of the sexless Soul to function as freely, as powerfully, as influentially and as ably in a woman's body as in a man's.⁶⁸

Notes

¹ Sanskrit words such as buddhi and karma which have become anglicized, at least in Theosophical terminology, will not be italicized. Nor will words be underlined that have had wide and common usage in scholarly writings, such as dharma and Satyagraha. Otherwise, Sanskrit terms will be italicized.

² Annie Besant, "The Socialist Movement," in *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*, ed. John Saville (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Published, 1970), 24.

³ See my chapter "Millenarianism" in *Annie Besant and Progressive Messianism* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) for a more extended treatment of the various types of millenarianism as well as a history of millenarianism and the doctrine of progress.

⁴ Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarianism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements" in *Millennial Dreams in Action*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1962), 31; Yonina Talmon, "Millenarian Movements," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 7 (1966): 159.

Following evidence provided by Margrit Eichlar, I prefer to stipulate superhuman forces rather than supernatural forces as Cohn's definition stipulates. See chapter entitled "Millenarianism" in Wessinger, and Margrit Eichler, "Charismatic and Ideological Leadership in Secular and Religious Millenarian Movements: A Sociological Study" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1971).

⁵ W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (N.p.: Auckland University Press, 1978), 20-23; J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1979), 7.

⁶ See my "Epilogue" in Wessinger 1988.

⁷ For discussions of the typically Victorian belief in progress see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921); E.L. Woodward, "1851 and the Visibility of Progress," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*, ed. British Broadcasting Corporation (London: Sylvan Press, 1949); Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957); Frederick Copleston, "Herbert Spencer—Progress and Freedom," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*.

For discussions of the typically Victorian desire to ameliorate current social conditions, see Humphrey House, "The Mood of Doubt," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*; and Warren Sylvester Smith, *The London Heretics 1870-1914* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1967).

⁸ Annie Besant, "Why You Should Be a Theosophist," in *Theosophical Essays* (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1895), 4–5.

⁹ Prior to its dissolution in 1929 by Krishnamurti, the Order of the Star had 30,000 members. Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), 128.

¹⁰ Arthur H. Nethercot. *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), 16, 23.

¹¹ The few instances where there is evidence of chronological progression in Besant's thought in relation to India, as for example in her thoughts concerning caste and women, are specifically mentioned in the text of this chapter.

¹² K.P.S. Choudhary. *Modern Indian Mysticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1981), 55.

¹³ At that time, modern education in Ceylon could only be obtained in missionary schools where the study of Christianity was compulsory. Christian baptism was a requirement for government employment, and Buddhist marriages were not recognized as legal. Olcott spoke to large crowds of Sinhalese to raise their pride in their Buddhist heritage. Olcott, through the agency of the Theosophical Society, founded schools in Ceylon where a Buddhist education would be available in addition to modern subjects. Sixty schools were organized during the first decade of work of Ceylon and in the 1960s there were as many as 400 schools. Olcott wrote a *Buddhist Catechism* for the use of students and it went through forty editions in his lifetime. Campbell, 83–84; L. A. Wickremeratne, "An American Bodhisattva and an Irish Karmayogin: Reflections on Two European Encounters with Non-Christian Religious Cultures in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 50 (June 1982): 237–54.

¹⁴ Annie Besant, *The Religious Problem in India: Four Lectures delivered during the Twenty-sixth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, 1901*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The "Theosophist" Office, 1909), 116-17.

¹⁵ Annie Besant, *The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song*, 9th Adyar Printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1978); Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad Gita. Four Lectures delivered at the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras*, 6th reprint (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973).

Dr. Nancy Fix Anderson of Loyola University in New Orleans tells of meeting an Indian woman in London who credited her rediscovery of Hindu culture and religion to the writings of Annie Besant. This woman was raised in British Guiana by her parents who had converted to Methodism. She was raised to feel ashamed of Hinduism with its backward superstitions. After moving to London, one day she happened to pass a Theosophical bookstore and saw a copy of Annie Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the window. She went in and bought the *Bhagavad Gita*. After reading it as well as many other books by Annie Besant, she gained a sense of pride in her Hindu heritage while remaining a Methodist. She credited Annie Besant with returning her Indian heritage to her.

While it was not Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that had such an impact on the young Mohandas Gandhi, he was introduced to Sir Edwin Arnold's translation by two Theosophist friends in London shortly after having attended Besant's 1889 public lecture, "Why I Became a Theosophist." Elizabeth Lorelei Thacker, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Theosophical Movement," Part I, *The Canadian Theosophist* 64 (Nov.–Dec. 1983): 99–100.

¹⁶ Annie Besant, "Hinduism and Nationality," *New India* (Madras) (9 January 1915): 7. Besant was not blind to the existence of other religions in India and she lectured on their greatness as well. She felt that the peaceful coexistence in brotherhood and nationhood of so many different religions would be India's triumph. Besant, *The Religious Problem in India*, 1–2. But she placed a special importance on Hinduism as India's primary indigenous religion, seeing Hinduism as playing a significant role in promoting a sense of unity and nationalism of Indians from different regions who saw India as a sacred land and took pilgrimages to sacred spots all over the subcontinent. Annie Besant, *Lectures on Political Science*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The Commonwealth Office, 1920), 65–66; Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1922), 7. In Besant's defense for not paying more attention to the political ramifications of the other religions in India, especially Islam, it may be said that in her day, Muslim communalism was not as acute as in the final days before independence, and Jinnah, the future father of Pakistan, was still a member of the Indian National Congress and a close coworker of Besant.

¹⁷ Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1910), 29.

¹⁸ Annie Besant, "India and the World." *The Star* 2 (March 1929): 14.

¹⁹ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 10.

²⁰ Annie Besant, "Education as a National Duty," in *The Birth of New India: A Collection of Writings and Speeches on Indian Affairs* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 100–101; Annie Besant, "The Education of Hindu Youth," in *Birth of New India*, 108–109.

²¹ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63, 73.

²² Annie Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” in *The Birth of New India*, 392.

²³ Annie Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” in *The Birth of New India*, 374–75.

²⁴ The Theosophical Society currently does not have statistics on the schools founded by Annie Besant. The Theosophical Educational Trust was merged with the Besant Cultural Trust founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale probably in the 1950s. By then there were very few schools left under the Theosophical Educational Trust, the principal one being the school founded by Besant at Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh. The current president of the Theosophical Society, Radha Burnier, recalls that there were several dozen schools founded by Besant in India, which were called National Schools. Many of these schools continue to exist, but under new names and probably non-Theosophical administration. Felix Layton, who taught in some of these schools, reports that it was Besant’s policy to found a school and then hand it over to Indians as soon as possible. Burnier herself was a student at the National Girls’ High School in Mylapore, Madras (now called the Lady Sivaswamy Ayar Girls’ School) with Miss Helen Veale as Headmistress.

Since 1912, the Central Hindu Girls’ School (founded by Besant and Francesca Arundale) and the Central Hindu College have been administered by the Benares Hindu University. They continue to operate on their original grounds adjacent to the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society in Benares. After handing over the Central Hindu College and the Central Hindu Girls’ School to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National School on the compound of the Indian Section. In 1938 this school was shifted to a new location on the banks of the Ganges and was put under the control of the Rishi Valley Trust, which was connected with the work of J. Krishnamurti. In 1939, the Indian Section founded a new school on its compound in memory of Besant known as the Besant Theosophical School. This school is still functioning and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. When the Central Hindu Girls’ School was given to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National College for Women, which was later known as Vasanta College. This college operated on the Indian Section campus until 1954 when it was shifted to the Krishnamurti Foundation on the banks of the Ganges, where it is still in operation. In 1954, the Vasanta Kenya Mahavidyalaya, a college for girls, was founded by the Indian Section on its campus to replace the Vasanta College. It is still operating and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. (Letter from Radha Burnier dated July 8, 1988; Letter from Dr. C. V. Agarwal dated July 11, 1988; Letter from Seethe Neelakantan dated July 14, 1988; personal communication with Felix Layton.)

²⁵ Besant, “Education as a National Duty,” p. 101.

²⁶ Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” 375.

²⁷ Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” 102.

- ²⁸ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 68.
- ²⁹ Annie Besant, *Sanatana Dharma: An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, 3d printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974). p. viii.
- ³⁰ Besant, "Education as a National Duty," 102–103.
- ³¹ Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*. Part I (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1962); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part II, *Ethics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part III, Vol. I, *Hinduism* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1915).
- ³² Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 69; Annie Besant, *Shri Ramachandra: The Ideal King. Some Lessons from the Rama vane for the Use of Hindu Students in the Schools of India* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969).
- ³³ Annie Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist, Being three Convention Lectures delivered in Lucknow at the Forty-First Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, December, 1916* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 60–61; Annie Besant, *India: Bond or Free? A World Problem* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1926), 128–29; Annie Besant, "The Indian Nation," in *The Birth of New India*, 31; Annie Besant, "India's Awakening," in *The Birth of New India*, 18–19.
- ³⁴ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63.
- ³⁵ Annie Besant, "From Peace to Power," *The Theosophist* 51 (November 1929): 150.
- ³⁶ Annie Besant, "Britain and India," *The Theosophist* 43 (January 1922): 327.
- ³⁷ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 70, 72.
- ³⁸ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 73. The Hindu caste system consists of four main divisions, known as varnas, and innumerable subcastes. Members of the different castes are supposed to follow the traditional occupations of their ancestors, and they should avoid interdining and intermarriage with members of other castes. The lowest varna consists of the Sudras, the laborers; the next caste consists of the Vaisyas, who are supposed to be the merchants and farmers; next the Ksatriyas, the kingly and warrior varna; and the highest, the Brahmanas, the priests and scholars.
- ³⁹ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 72–73.
- ⁴⁰ Annie Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1913), 266–67, 270–72, 274–75.

⁴¹ Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform*, 267–68, 272–73, 275–77, 282–94; Annie Besant, “United India,” *New India* (Madras) (14 August 1915): 11.

⁴² Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, pp. 78-79, 86-90; Besant, “United India,” p. 11.

⁴³ Annie Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” in *The Birth of New India*, 144.

⁴⁴ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 144.

⁴⁵ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 145.

⁴⁶ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 147-48.

⁴⁷ Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 93–106; Besant, “United India,” p. 11; Annie Besant, “Mrs. Annie Besant: Her Address at Allahabad on Training Indian Youth for Citizenship,” *New India* [Madras] (13 December 1915): 18.

The Theosophical Society still operates a free school for over one thousand poor children at Adyar, Madras, known as the Olcott School, since it is the continuation of a “Panchama School” founded by Olcott in 1894. It has classes from the primary level to high school, and many of its students receive free textbooks and school clothes. The nutritious midday meal has been continued, but is now administered by the State Government. See “Good News for Olcott School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Nov.–Dec. 1987 and Jan. 1988): 2; “The Olcott Memorial School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Feb.–March-April 1987): 5. In Annie Besant’s day, as many as five Panchama Schools were operated around the city of Madras. Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 95.

⁴⁹ Nancy Fix Anderson. “Annie Besant in India: The Conflict between Anti-Imperialism and Human Rights,” unpublished paper, 1988; John Seville. ed. *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*.

⁵⁰ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 50, 65–66, 71–73.

⁵¹ Annie Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (25 September 1914): 248.

⁵² Annie Besant, “Girls’ Education,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (16 April 1915): 286.

⁵³ Besant, “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248. In regard to the education of girls, the Theosophical Society operated girls’ schools in Benares, Delhi, Kumbhakonam, and Madura. Annie Besant, “Education and the T.S.,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (12 March 1915): 191.

⁵⁴ Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248.

- ⁵⁵ Besant, "Girls' Education," *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 285–86.
- ⁵⁶ Annie Besant, "The Education of Indian Girls," in *The Birth of New India*, 155–56.
- ⁵⁷ Annie Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India," *New India* [Madras] (16 July 1915): 9.
- ⁵⁸ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁵⁹ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁶⁰ Annie Besant, "An Appeal: Higher Education for Indian Girls," *New India* [Madras] (1 May 1916): 11. Despite Besant's moderate position on the social role of Hindu women, in 1915, a Madrasi, M. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, published a pamphlet entitled "An Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant; Being a Reply to Her Attacks on Hinduism" stating that Besant's goal of individual liberty and education for Indian women "would mean ... the status of whoredom and brothel, not the sanctuary of hearth and home." Charles H. Heimsath, *India Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), 330n.
- ⁶¹ Margaret Cousins. "The Women's Movement in India Today," *New India* [Madras] (28 August 1926): 9.
- ⁶² Margaret Cousins, "Mrs. Cousins on Women's Problems at the Y.M.C.A., Bangalore City," *New India* [Madras] (25 September 1926): 8.
- ⁶³ Barbara N. Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," in *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, ed. Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1981): 126.
- ⁶⁴ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130.
- ⁶⁵ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130. Joanna Liddle and Rams Joshi, *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 21, 35; Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (New Delhi: Department of Social Welfare, 1974), 299–300; Geraldine H. Forbes, "Caged Tigers: 'First Wave' Feminists in India," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5, no. 6: 529–32.
- ⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.
- ⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.

⁶⁷ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity. Tributes to Dr. Annie Besant, D.L., P.T.S., Servant of Humanity from Representative Indians and Europeans, Special Jubilee Number* (Madras: New India, 1924), 35.

⁶⁸ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity*, 34.

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