MRS. BESANT'S POLICY

"As a beautiful flower without fragrance are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly."—GEMS FROM THE EAST.

BY

JOSEPH H. FUSSELL
Point Loma, California, U. S. A.
"One story is good until another is told" is an old saying, and "before Truth can get his boots on a lie may get so far ahead as to be with difficulty overtaken." Where great claims are made, the wiser course is to refrain from hasty judgment and to note how the facts tally with the claims, and the practice with the profession. It is easy to make professions—and a common failing; it is a great temptation to talk or write for effect, as it were, and to pose as taking a high stand when such will call forth the plaudits of one's followers. Yet such things do not belong to the life of a disciple, nor will they ever be found in the life of a true spiritual teacher. A true spiritual teacher never boasts of powers possessed, there is for him (or her) no profession without performance, no inconsistency between word and deed, no saying without also doing.

Now Mrs. Besant claims to be a spiritual teacher; she claims to have the power to look back clairvoyantly through thousands, nay millions, of years to the time before conscious life was on this earth, and to read her own and other people's past incarnations through many thousands of years; she claims to have visited clairvoyantly Mars and other planets and to have investigated the conditions of life thereon; she claims to have stood face to face with the Supreme Director of the Universe, she claims to predict a "Coming Christ," and one of her devotees claims, nay more, he says, "We know she will become one of the greatest rulers the world has ever known . . . . ruler of Gods and men." And this self-proclaimed "spiritual teacher" claims as her "fellow-initiate," one whom she declares to be "on the threshold of Divinity," with whom she has publicly stated she will stand or fall, a man holding opinions which are declared by a Judge of the High Court of Madras to be "immoral" and whom he declared to be "highly unfit to associate with boys." Is there not an inconsistency here too apparent to even need pointing to?

Sincerity: the Touchstone of a True Life

It is unthinkable that a true spiritual teacher would lightly utter words, or say what she does not mean, or be among those who say and do not, who utter "fine but fruitless words but do not act accordingly."

The touchstone of a true life is sincerity, harmony between word and deed. It is the touchstone that every day we apply, often more or less unconsciously, to the lives of the men and women around us; it is the test of every true man and woman, according to their light and knowledge. How much more must it be the touchstone that inevitably we must apply to the life and words of one who claims to have light and knowledge, claims to be a spiritual teacher, and who has persistently assumed to place herself and her views before the public! Mrs. Besant cannot expect to be judged by some of her words, however fair they may seem, and not by others; nor by her utterance of lofty ideals; nor by her astounding claims, nor the claims of her followers; but only according to the touchstone of harmony between profession and performance. If her words cannot stand this test, then it is but right that the public should know and judge accordingly. It is said of Jesus that "He spoke with authority and not as the scribes." And all who know His words, and the same is true of all true spiritual teachers, know that they ring true and that the authority of Truth is inherent in them. It is not one thing today and another tomorrow; but their words
and teachings all spring from the fountain of truth and are consistent therewith.

Mrs. Besant claims to be a spiritual teacher. Do her words ring true? What authority have they?

Said the great Nazarene, Jesus:

And whose heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.

Now as to Mrs. Besant’s policy. My reason for using this word “policy” and giving the title that I have to this pamphlet, is that the subject, “our policy,” was given great prominence in Mrs. Besant’s opening speech at a convention of her society held at Stockholm, (June, 1913), and lengthy extracts therefrom published in the August issue of her magazine.

In order, however, to lead up to this latest expression by Mrs. Besant of her policy and to show the thread that runs through her public utterances on the subject and her apparently irresponsible disregard of them whenever (at least, so it appears) it is inconvenient to remember them, I ask the reader to go back with me several years to the time when Mrs. Besant so outrageously attacked William Q. Judge with baseless and false charges against him and against her own teacher, H. P. Blavatsky, moving heaven and earth to force him to resign when she knew that her own teacher, H. P. Blavatsky (whom she professed to revere and trust) had said: “The day that W. Q. J. resigns, that day will Theosophy be dead for the Americans.” He did not resign, as is well known, for he was too honorable to betray the trust that H. P. Blavatsky had reposed in him, and too true to be frightened at the false charges of an ambitious woman. And because of his faithfulness unto death, and because of the wise guidance of the Theosophical Movement afterwards by his successor, Katherine Tingley, true Theosophy lives in the hearts of thousands, not alone in America, but throughout the world.

“Occultism and Truth”

In July, 1894, a circular was issued signed by Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, and five others, entitled “Occultism and Truth”—being in reality a subtle and false insinuation against William Q. Judge—than whom no man in these latter days has so closely and faithfully followed Truth. I have not space to quote the whole circular, but a few sentences will suffice to show its trend. Note that even then, 19 years ago, Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater assumed to speak authoritatively on Occultism; but my limited understanding of Occultism has always been that it consists in what one is and what one does, not in what one claims or says. But then you see I am not an occultist, only a student of Theosophy, and Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater who are both forever writing books and Mrs. Besant forever lecturing and making addresses may perhaps think differently. To quote then:

There are many things that the occultist may not divulge; but equally binding is the law that he may never speak untruth. And this obligation to Truth is not confined to speech; he may never think untruth, nor act untruth. A spurious Occultism dallies with truth and falsehood, and argues that deception on the illusory physical plane is consistent with purity on the loftier planes. . . . . The doctrine that the end justifies the means has proved in the past fruitful of all evil; no means that are impure can bring about an end that is good [What a comment on the Leadbeater advice and Mrs. Besant’s assertion that it was the only advice practicable!] else were the Good Law a dream and Karma a mere delusion. From these errors flows an influence mis-
chievous to the whole Theosophical Society [quite prophetic, unconscious of course, on Mrs. Besant’s part, if we consider what has happened in and to her society], undermining the stern and rigid morality [what! and “the Theosophical Society has no moral code?”] necessary as a foundation for Occultism of the Right Hand Path. . . .

Out of the soil of pure morality alone can grow the sacred flower which blossoms at length into Adeptship, and those who aspire to be the blooming of the flower must begin by preparing the soil.

Now this, as said, was signed by Mrs. Besant, and yet she places her “Coming Christ” under the tutelage of a man holding opinions which are declared by the Judge of the Madras High Court to be “frankly immoral,” and although Mrs. Besant knows he still holds those opinions. Thus it is that Mrs. Besant would begin to prepare her “Coming Christ,” “Do men gather grapes of thorns”; do immoral opinions grow out of a pure and noble life? If the opinions (and Leadbeater says he still holds them) are immoral, what must be the life? The two cannot be dissociated. “Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh”—and the opinions are formed.

Mrs. Besant First Denies; but Afterwards Admits

However, my purpose in quoting the above extract is to show the urgent stress that Mrs. Besant professes to lay upon a strict adherence to truth. “And this obligation to Truth is not confined to speech, he (she) may never think untruth, nor act untruth.” I commend this again to Mrs. Besant’s attention. It is certainly worth recalling in view of what the Senior Presidency Magistrate said in rendering his judgment in the “alleged defamation suits” brought by Mrs. Besant against Dr. Nair and Dr. U. Rama Rao. Commenting on Mrs. Besant’s statement that the Leadbeater advice was “the only practicable advice in those cases,” quoted in “Notes of a Meeting,” published in The Link and signed “O. H.,” which Mrs. Besant declared was her signature, showing “the article has my sanction and its accuracy,” the Magistrate said:

The complainant (Mrs. Besant) in her cross-examination first denied having said so, but afterwards admitted that the idea of those lines is in page 8 of Exhibit B [her letter to members of her Society] which is one of the pamphlets referred to by the accused.

Mrs. Besant “first denied,” but “afterwards admitted that the idea, etc.”; and this in spite of her solemn declaration that “equally binding is the law that he (the occultist—and this is another of Mrs. Besant’s claims—viz: that she is an “occultist”) may never speak untruth. “And this obligation to Truth is not confined to speech, he (she) may never think untruth, nor act untruth.” But Mrs. Besant “first denied,” then “afterwards admitted.”

Mrs. Besant’s Statements Regarding Katherine Tingley Declared False

Let us now go forward several years to the year 1909, which doubtless still lives in Mrs. Besant’s memory. Writing editorially in her official magazine, The Theosophist, for October, 1909, Mrs. Besant says:

Poor Mrs. Tingley has wasted much money that might have been more usefully employed, in an endeavor to stir up the American press against me; but mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return [please note this] as a boomerang, to the utterer thereof, I can only feel pity for her for the unhappiness she is creating for herself.

I must pause here to interpolate a comment, the whole thing is so ridiculous. In the first place Mrs. Besant does not know what she is talk-
ing about. It is not only an absurdly presumptuous, but an absolutely false statement that Katherine Tingley either wasted money or endeavored to stir up the American press against her. Where was Mrs. Besant's boasted clairvoyance? She claims she can see what goes on in Mars (!) and yet in such a simple matter so near at hand, she is utterly at sea. Her statement about Katherine Tingley is absolutely false, as I, Katherine Tingley's private secretary, familiar with her world-wide work, can testify. She has never spent one penny for such a purpose, nor in any way thrown her efforts in the direction of stirring up the press against Mrs. Besant.

And as for "the unhappiness" which Mrs. Besant declares Katherine Tingley "is creating for herself," well, Mrs. Besant does not know Katherine Tingley, and Mrs. Besant's remark will only call forth a smile of pity from all who do know Katherine Tingley. I need say no more on that point. Mrs. Besant then continues:

The world has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of the accusations hurled against him, and answered nought.

Mrs. Besant's Boomerang

Does Mrs. Besant wish us to assume that she has realized the meaning of the great Teacher? Then of course we shall expect Mrs. Besant to remain dumb and answer nought. But is not that the last thing in the world that Mrs. Besant could do? Has it not been talk, talk, talk, all her life? Hence the reader will not be surprised to find her very soon breaking silence in regard to what she supposes are accusations "hurled" (not just made, but "hurled" with titanic force) against her. Proceeding, she says:

Apart from the duty incumbent upon all who seek to lead the spiritual life, not to do anything to increase the painful reaction [Is Mrs. Besant referring to the "boomerang"—I have heard it is a very dangerous weapon in the hands of an unskilled thrower—I wonder if she is speaking, metaphorically of course, from actual experience of the painful reaction. Some people, however, will learn in no other way] to increase the painful reaction upon those who do them wrong, there is worldly wisdom in refraining from reply and so avoiding a quarrel, etc., etc.

And one other utterance of Mrs. Besant, also made in 1909 and extensively published in that year. Speaking of her "Coming Christ," and in reply to the question: "How shall we know him when he comes?" Mrs. Besant replies:

How shall we know him, you ask. Some of us who feel him now will know him intuitively. Others who have not reached that level must cultivate themselves. Never try to justify yourself when accused of anything. Make no defense. Bow your head and let the accusations be made. Be patient, be tolerant and do not argue. And in time you will be able to feel his presence intuitively, may be, next time when he comes again.

These are Mrs. Besant's words, and it is quite possible that she desired them to be considered very Christlike, with just the faintest suggestion of herself as a martyr bowing her head, making no defense, never trying to justify herself—so generous, so magnanimous, so forgiving! "One story is good until another is told," and we do not have to look far for the sequel, and another story, to form a conclusion as to the value to be placed on Mrs. Besant's words. In the same year, November, 1909, only one month after making the former of her statements just above quoted, Mrs. Besant writes editorially in *The Theosophist* as follows: (And bear in mind what she said one month earlier about remaining dumb, answering nought, and the duty incumbent on all who seek to lead the spiritual life not to do anything to increase the painful reaction, and that there is world-
ly wisdom in refraining from reply, etc., etc.) But she now says, one month later:

"Considering Mrs. Tingley's tireless malignity against the Theosophical Society [which is a baseless, false accusation], her endeavors to prevent Col. Olcott and Mr. Leadbeater from lecturing in San Diego [false] and her ceaseless vituperation of myself through her lieutenant [false again] I speculate sometimes on her use in the movement. Such abnormal hatred [another baseless, false assertion] so long continued implies considerable force of character.

Katherine Tingley Needs No Defence

Now I ask my readers not to misunderstand me, for I am making no defense of Katherine Tingley. Katherine Tingley needs no defense; hel life and her work, aye, and her words, speak for themselves and are consistent throughout. It is with Mrs. Besant's words that I am concerned. She has accused me several times of quoting her without giving the context, and so now I propose to give a little more context than perhaps she bargained for, or ever expected. And so I ask the reader to put this last quoted statement by the side of her pseudo-Christlike utterances of only one month earlier. Nay, nay, Mrs. Besant "has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of accusations and answered nought," for the Christ knew when to speak and when to be silent; he made no parade; he did not pose as a great spiritual Teacher—he was one; and too, he was a warrior. "I am not come to bring peace on the earth but a sword"; he made a whip of small cords and drove the money changers out of the Temple; he was stern in denunciation: "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!" Aye, and very tender and compassionate to little children.

"Whoso Shall Offend One of These Little Ones"

Did he not say: "And whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea?" Mrs. Besant says: "The Theosophical Society has no moral code"; and at another time: "I do not believe in a moral code enforced by a penalty." But Jesus said: "And whoso shall offend one of these little ones (and I leave it to my readers to say if he would not equally have applied his words to boys 13 or 14 years old) "Whoso shall offend one of these, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." But Mrs. Besant welcomes back such an offender into her Society "with honor" and without his having publicly declared his teaching was wrong, which public declaration she had said she would demand before readmitting him. That is one difference, a minor one of course, a mere trifle, between a real spiritual teacher and a self-proclaimed one.

What Value Is to Be Placed on Mrs. Besant's Words?

Let me ask again what value is to be placed upon Mrs. Besant's words? Do they ring true? Read again, first these: "Mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return as a boomerang to the utterer thereof;" and then these, uttered by her one month later: "Considering Mrs. Tingley's tireless malignity against the Theosophical Society" (i.e. against Mrs. Besant's pseudo-theosophical society) and "such abnormal hatred" (likewise referring to Katherine Tingley)—both utterly false accusations—what are these but "evil speech"? And what was her motive? Was it to elicit from the public pity and sympathy and by accusing Katherine Tingley to divert attention from her own true attitude towards her, and also to turn
people away from the original Theosophical Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky (now the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, at the head of which is Katherine Tingley) which she feared they might ultimately join? What was her motive?

In the midst of her many contradictory statements, does Mrs. Besant really expect the public to take her seriously? Is it not evident that she, I do not say always, but very frequently, makes serious allegations without having any basis of fact? Of what value are her claims as to past incarnations of herself and others; her "clairvoyant" visits to Mars, her interviews with "Christ," for she has asserted she has both seen and talked with him (!) when in matters of ordinary mundane affairs she makes such egregious blunders?

But Mrs. Besant claims to act under direction of her "Master," or is it that she merely reflects her fellow-initiate, Leadbeater? Where then was her "Master" when she made the false accusations quoted above? At the time of their publication she was in America, while Leadbeater, I believe, was at Adyar; but why did not his "Master," who later showed himself so interested in the boy's bathing, warn him to prevent the publication of the falsehoods and thus save from an unenviable position one to whom in his letters he subscribes himself "with very much love, I am ever yours most affectionately"?

Leadbeater's "Master" Takes an Interest in Bathing

Now Mrs. Besant has a great liking for context, and while the following is not literally the context of what I have just said, yet it is, as it were corroborative evidence of the very great, not to say intense, interest manifested by Mrs. Besant's and Mr. Leadbeater's "Master" even in such little trifling matters as bathing "in English fashion," and eating and sleeping. In a letter written by Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant, April, 1910, he quotes his "Master's" words. "Every word of His is precious," he declares, and then he quotes those words, oh, so precious, in the midst of which occurs the following:

I approve of the careful arrangements which you have made with regard to bathing, eating and sleeping, continue them, and when any change is needed I will myself tell you.

referring to the boy Krishnamurthi (Alcyone).

And yet only a few months earlier this "Master" did not have sufficient interest in Mrs. Besant to keep her from making false and slanderous accusations; and this in spite of a statement which Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater had both signed some years previously in which they declared:

Equally binding is the law that he [the "occultist"] may never speak untruth. And this obligation is not confined to speech; he may never think untruth, nor act untruth. A spurious Occultism dallies with truth and falsehood, etc.

Are we to conclude then either that Mrs. Besant is not, on her showing, an occultist, or else that her "occultism" is spurious? I do but go by her own words. Without doubt it was a clever move on Leadbeater's part to claim what was practically the approval of his "Master" for the bathroom episode, which Mr. Narayaniah, the father of the boy, characterized as "nasty." Did Leadbeater think to forestall the complaint of the father of the boys, which he must have known would sooner or later get to Mrs. Besant's knowledge, by claiming his "Master's" approval in regard to "bathing," etc.? And if we accept Leadbeater's explanation, which I for one do not, what a comment on the intelligence of the poor boy Krishna-
murti, a lad of about 15 as he was then, that Leadbeater, a man of 60, had personally to be present in the bathroom and to show him how to bathe (as Leadbeater himself claims). Not much "worldly wisdom," to say the least, let alone "divine wisdom," to put himself in such a compromising position, and especially in view of Leadbeater's former record, and the advice which he acknowledges he gave to certain boys; and even more suspicious still in view of the affidavit of the boy D. P. introduced into the alleged defamation suits. But Mr. Leadbeater leaves Mrs. Besant to defend him, he shelters himself, as I said in my previous pamphlet of November 1st, behind a woman's skirts—he, an "English gentleman," as Mrs. Besant calls him. Shame!

"Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness"

But let us return to Mrs. Besant's words: "Considering Mrs. Tingley's tireless malignity," "such abnormal hatred," etc. Is Mrs. Besant "mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return as a boomerang to the utterer thereof?" Has she ever thought that if this is applicable at all, if it be a law, it must be applicable universally and therefore to herself as well as to others? Elsewhere Mrs. Besant says, asserting again that "The Theosophical Society (hers) has no moral code," "it (and of course she includes herself, she being president of her so-called "Theosophical" Society) leaves aside the law of Moses to follow in the spirit of the Buddha, the Christ." Included in the law of Moses is this statement, one of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Is there not here prima facie evidence that Mrs. Besant has indeed left on one side the law of Moses; but has she followed in the spirit of the Buddha, the Christ? Is further comment necessary?

Does Mrs. Besant actually understand what she is talking about when she says being "mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return as a boomerang to the utterer thereof?" Does she actually mean what she says? Is it that she forgets her own words almost immediately, or that she has not the will and strength of character to carry them into effect? Can it be said that her baseless accusations are consistent with her former words uttered only one month earlier? Does she realize that a spiritual teacher never makes a profession which she will not herself carry out in practice?

There is a wise and significant saying that comes to us from the East.

Like a beautiful flower without fragrance are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly.

It is quite interesting, is it not? and very neatly put. In Eastern symbology, the fragrance, you know, symbolizes the soul of the flower.

Mrs. Besant Ventures a Prophecy

In the same paragraph from which I have quoted above, published in The Theosophist, November, 1909, is another statement, this time a "prophecy," which will call forth a smile of pity for the poor woman's self-delusion, or does she make her prophecy on the authority of her fellow-initiate and seer, Leadbeater? Here follows the prophecy:

She (Katherine Tingley) owns a splendid property at Point Loma, and has broken into pieces the great organization which Mr. Judge built up by years of patient toil, and has driven away the strong band which supported him, so that there is nothing left to succeed her. I will venture a prophecy: she is being used to make a center which will pass into the hands of the Society she hates, and will form an important South California focus for its world-work.
Was this also a communication from Mr. Leadbeater’s accommodating “Master”? If so, he must be a joker, for Mrs. Besant’s prophecy which she “ventures” is truly amusing to one who knows anything about the facts. Here on the one hand, with its international headquarters at Point Loma, is the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, the continuation of the original parent Society founded by Mme. Blavatsky, and expansion after her death by her colleague and faithful co-worker and successor, William Q. Judge, and by him handed on to his successor, Katherine Tingley, who has further expanded and preserved the work and organization in which Universal Brotherhood and Theosophy are accentuated and made potent factors in the life of its members. On the other hand is the pseudo-Theosophical society presided over by Mrs. Besant, with her “Coming Christ” (another prophecy of hers), her endorsement of her “fellow-initiate” Leadbeater, the man of “immoral opinions” and “highly unfit to associate with boys;” her preposterous claims to have clairvoyantly visited Mars (!) and to have stood face to face with the Supreme Director of the Universe (!) It is pitiable indeed; and more pitiable is her state of mind which permits her to attempt to vilify Katherine Tingley—she, calling herself a Theosophist, “mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return to the utterer thereof!” Pitiable indeed!

Mrs. Besant Leaves Aside the Law of Moses

Let me again call to the reader’s attention Mrs. Besant’s statement that “It (her pseudo-theosophical society) leaves aside the law of Moses to walk in the spirit of the Buddha, the Christ.” Is there any need for Mrs. Besant to publish the fact that she (the president of her society) leaves aside the law of Moses? Is it not all too plain? Does not the law of Moses declare, “Thou shalt not bear false witness?” And what is it but false witness for Mrs. Besant to declare, as she does, that Katherine Tingley “has broken to pieces the great organization which Mr. Judge built up” and to attribute “hatred” to Katherine Tingley? Is this attempted vilification of Katherine Tingley an index of Mrs. Besant’s interpretation of what it means “to walk in the spirit of the Buddha, the Christ?” Mrs. Besant is a self-proclaimed “spiritual teacher,” is this an example of her “spiritual” teaching? Does not Mrs. Besant need a moral code? Does she not need Katherine Tingley’s help?

Mrs. Besant, speaking of Katherine Tingley, says, “There is nothing to succeed her.” Is this said on the authority of Mr. Leadbeater’s clairvoyance, or is it one of his accommodating “Master’s” messages? Doubtless Mrs. Besant remembers waiting in a small hall in New York in 1897, the year following the death of William Q. Judge, at the same time that in another large hall was being held a convention of the original Theosophical Society attended by delegates from all parts of the world. It was said by some of Mrs. Besant’s own followers, who thought they knew the “Master’s” wish, that she and those with her were waiting by his direction to be called to that convention and that thus the two societies would be joined again. But she was not called and was not noticed. Doubtless she left New York a sadder and a wiser woman.

William Q. Judge Elected President for Life

“The great organization which Mr. Judge built up by years of patient toil,” says Mrs. Besant, (and I would not for the world deprive Mrs. Besant of the credit of having said those words) but which, by the way, it is felt by true students of Theosophy, Mrs. Besant attempted (though vain-
ly) to wreck, by seeking to cast discredit on the man whom, above all others, Mme. Blavatsky had trusted. Because of that attempt on her part the faithful members of the Society took action at the Boston convention in 1895 and by an almost unanimous vote elected William Q. Judge president for life, similar action being taken immediately afterwards by the other faithful members throughout the world—leaving Mrs. Besant outside with a handful of people (some of whom are still blindly following her) and thus preventing her from creating further disturbance in the original Theosophical Society.

And now she says, “There is nothing to succeed Katherine Tingley.” Why does Mrs. Besant so flaunt her ignorance before the world? What does she know of the real growth and life of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society? The work begun by Mme. Blavatsky, the original Theosophical Society founded by her, continued by William Q. Judge—this work, this original Theosophical Society, safeguarded and protected by their successor, Katherine Tingley, stands for the highest morality, for practical Theosophy, and is so acknowledged not alone by its members throughout the world, but by thousands of others. “There is nothing to succeed her,” says Mrs. Besant. We smile and pass on.

Then Mrs. Besant attributes hatred to Katherine Tingley, twice in the same paragraph. Does not her use of the word, occurring as it does in the midst of statements wholly unsupported by fact, does it not arouse the question: “Whose is the hatred?” If there be hatred at all, is it not in her own heart? Taking this with her other attempted vilifications of Katherine Tingley, does she not stand self-convicted?

What Will Be the Record of History?

And what will future history record of those early years of the Theosophical Movement and of the part that Mrs. Besant played therein? Was it jealousy of William Q. Judge? If so, where was her spiritual light? Will it record her ambition; her false charges brought against Mr. Judge (leaving, as she says she does, on one side the law of Moses); her self-glorification as a “spiritual (!) teacher”; her claiming as a “fellow-initiate” a man holding “immoral opinions,” “unfit to associate with boys”—will this be the record of history? And she accuses Katherine Tingley of hatred! Would it not be well to see to it that her own house is in order? It is one thing to claim “to walk in the spirit of the Buddha, the Christ;” it is another to actually walk therein.

As a beautiful flower without fragrance are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly.

Appeals Made to Katherine Tingley

It is interesting to note that at the very time that Mrs. Besant was putting herself on record by venturing the above mentioned absurd prophecy and attempting to vilify Katherine Tingley, the latter was in Europe responding to appeals that had come to her for help and advice from former members of Mrs. Besant’s society who could not accept the latter’s methods and teachings but did not wish to desert Theosophy. Now it should be clearly understood that Mrs. Besant is our sister, and that the statements made in this pamphlet and in my previous pamphlet, “Mrs. Annie Besant and the Leadbeater Advice,” are not made against her personally, nor against her character in any sense as a private individual. It is with her utterances made by her in her public capacity as a self-proclaimed “spiritual teacher,” president of her society, that I am dealing; with her methods
and her words, which are causing confusion in the minds of many seeking Theosophy and turning many other earnest hungry souls away from it.

These attacks against Katherine Tingiey go back to the first year that Katherine Tingiey was Leader of the Theosophical Movement—a position which she did not seek but to which she was called. Indeed, it appeared that on the death of William Q. Judge, Mrs. Besant merely transferred her attacks from him to Katherine Tingiey, or was it that it was the same attack, viz: against the Leader of the Theosophical Movement, irrespective of whether that Leader were William Q. Judge or Katherine Tingiey? Mrs. Besant did not wait long before showing publicly what was her real attitude towards Katherine Tingiey, whatever might be her avowed “policy,” which she might affect or make pretence to follow. In that year, 1896-7, Katherine Tingiey with a party of seven members made a tour of the world, visiting the different centers of the Society and spreading a knowledge of its teachings. No sooner had Katherine Tingiey reached India, where Mrs. Besant was at the time, than notices were published throughout India over the signature of Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott, characterizing Katherine Tingiey and her party as “masquerading Theosophists,” in an endeavor to discredit her and turn the people of India against her. As a result, many disinterested people, lovers of fair-dealing, as well as members and other friends in India, urged Katherine Tingiey to make a public announcement and tell the people about the true Theosophical Society, and the difference between it and the society with which Mrs. Besant was connected.

An Important Announcement

Then it was that Katherine Tingiey first published the following and I quote from the announcement of a public meeting held in the Town Hall, Delhi, November 12, 1896, that she, Katherine Tingiey, and the members with her wish it to be understood that they have no connection with that organization to which Mrs. Annie Besant is attached and of which Colonel Olcott is president.

And Katherine Tingiey on her return to America then said that she would leave the field in India to Mrs. Besant and not take up public work there until the people in India should in the course of time come to know what it was that Mrs. Besant’s so-called “Theosophy” stood for and what it led to, and that time would make clear what Katherine Tingiey considered her (Mrs. Besant’s) misleading teachings and untheosophical methods. Then would Katherine Tingiey begin. This refers only to public work, for Katherine Tingiey has kept in close communication with many earnest true Theosophists in India; and many have been the requests that she would go and re-establish the true Theosophical work which Mme. H. P. Blavatsky began years ago.

And from that day to this a similar announcement has been made at public meetings and in our Theosophical literature and to inquirers, that we are not associated with Mrs. Annie Besant nor can we endorse many of her so-called Theosophical teachings. The latest form of this announcement is as follows:

IMPORTANT—Your courteous attention is asked to the following, viz., that the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society which is the continuation and expansion of the original Theosophical Society founded by Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, continued under William Q. Judge, and of which Katherine Tingiey is the present Leader and Official Head, with International Headquarters at Point Loma, California, is not in any way connected with the so-called
"Theosophical" Society of which Mrs. Annie Besant is President; and further
that many of the teachings put forward and advocated by Mrs. Besant and the
members of her society are not considered by the members of the Universal
Brotherhood and Theosophical Society as being along the lines of the pure
Theosophical teachings promulgated by Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress
of the Theosophical movement.

Is there any hatred in this announcement? It answers the ques-
tions of many inquirers to the effect that if we did not endorse Mrs. Besant
and her teachings, why did we not define our position? It is made in
simple justice to the pure teachings of Theosophy, and moreover it gives
to those seeking the truth an opportunity to inquire what is and what is
not true Theosophy. Katherine Tingley gave no other answer than this to
Mrs. Besant, neither of hatred nor abuse. She treated her with dignified
silence and refused to drop to her level. Moreover Katherine Tingley has
maintained all along that her Theosophical magazines should not be used
to answer personal attacks. Let readers who wish to pass judgment read
the Theosophical magazines which are under Katherine Tingley’s direction,
viz: The Theosophical Path and El Sendero Teosofico, both of which are
edited by her and published at Point Loma, California; The International
Theosophical Chronicle, (England); Den Teosofiska Vagen, (Sweden); Der
Theosophische Pfad, (Germany); and Het Theosophisch Pad, (Holland);
which are published under her direction—all these kept free from person-
ality; and then read Mrs. Besant’s magazines for the past seven years.

The announcement given just above is a plain statement of the posi-
tion taken by members of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical
Society. It is a protest against what those members hold to be contrary
to the pure teachings of Theosophy; a protest such as Christ made against
error and misrepresentation. But Mrs. Besant accuses Katherine Tingley
of “hatred” and “tireless malignity.” What a difference!

The Announcement Justified

In those early days many sincere and earnest Theosophists could not
see the reason for this protest against any supposed identification with or
endorsement of Mrs. Besant’s society on the part of the original society
under Katherine Tingley’s leadership; but now, since the Leadbeater ex-
posure, and since the strangely contradictory statements made by Mrs.
Besant and her preposterous claims, they express their gratitude to Kath-
erine Tingley for having the prevision and wisdom to draw the line and
make clear the fact that such things are not endorsed and cannot be con-
sidered as in any way a part of Theosophy. These members realize now
from how much confusion and embarrassment they have been saved, they
know their sons have been protected and thank their stars that Katherine
Tingley had the wisdom and the courage to put the matter clearly before
the public. Subsequent events have more than justified Katherine Ting-
ley’s position which has been consistently held from first to last—no com-
promise, and no truce with those who hold “immoral opinions” or promul-
gate teachings which are not truly theosophical. Mrs. Besant’s elastic
conscience, her “policy” and her “no moral code,” (see my next pamphlet
which will deal more particularly with this) however appear to offer no
bar to proclaiming a man as her fellow-initiate, whose advice given to boys
she yet holds as “most mischievous and dangerous” and “dishonorable and
unmanly.” Again, what a difference!

Mrs. Besant Attacks Katherine Tingley in Her Original Answer in The
Suit G. Narayaniah vs. Mrs. Besant

But there are still other statements made by Mrs. Besant that I wish
to call to the reader’s attention. And next I would refer to one made by Mrs. Besant in her original answer to the complaint in the recent case, Mr. G. Narayaniah vs. Mrs. Annie Besant. In that original answer, Mrs. Besant says:

The persistent and malignant campaign against both herself and the Theosophical Society . . . that has been carried on in the columns of The Hindu newspaper, instigated and supported by Mrs. Katherine Tingley from America, and led by Dr. Nanjunda Row since January, 1911, shows deliberate malice and utter disregard of truth.

Herein, I am informed, Katherine Tingley has good grounds for a libel suit against Mrs. Besant; and in my opinion, if Mrs. Besant ever comes to San Diego, she may have an opportunity to gain a little further knowledge as to what constitutes libel and what not, as well as to become better informed as to the strength of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society in its defense of Truth. Mrs. Besant elsewhere makes the statement that Katherine Tingley had an emissary in India, taking part, I suppose, in the above mentioned campaign (!)—another absurd, wholly false statement without one iota of fact for foundation. Was it also made on her “Master’s” authority, whose occult “information bureau” seems strangely at variance with the actual facts?

Can this Mrs. Besant who now frantically tries to make out that she is terribly maligned be the same who in 1909 wrote, “but, mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return, as a boomerang, to the utterer thereof,” and “the world has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of the accusations hurled against him, and answered nought,” etc.? Now it is plain to see that Mrs. Besant believes or professes to believe, or wishes to make out that she has been terribly maligned; or is it that she has received a message to that effect from her “Master” through her fellow-initiate Leadbeater, or . . . ? But if so it is equally clear that SHE (there is no need to generalize and say as she does, “the World”) SHE has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of accusations hurled against him, and answered nought. And not content with making an answer on the facts of the case, she must go out of her way and make rash and outrageously false statements, attempting to defame another who is not, nor has been in any way connected with the case in question.

Mrs. Besant’s Attack Thrice Refuted

However let us see what says the editor of The Hindu; what says the counsel for the plaintiff Mr. G. Narayaniah, the father of the two boys; and also what says Mr. Justice Bakewell, before whom the case was tried. The Editor of The Hindu in an application to the Court* to have certain statements (among them the one just quoted) expunged from Mrs. Besant’s written answer, declared in his affidavit:

The allegations, insinuations, and imputations made by Mrs. Besant against The Hindu newspaper in paragraph 29 (the one quoted from above) of her written statement are false, malevolent and irrelevant. The said paragraph contains the most dangerous allegations and reflections and serious imputations upon The Hindu, which is an organ of acknowledged influence and popularity. The said allegations, imputations, and reflections are absolutely unfounded and untrue. They have no bearing whatever upon the issue involved in the suit, and have, been inserted by the defendant in her written statement from unworthy motives.”

It is untrue that a persistent and malignant campaign against Mrs. Besant and the Theosophical Society has been carried on in the columns of The Hindu newspaper instigated and supported by Mrs. Katherine Tingley of America.
And Mr. Ramaswamy Aiyar, counsel for the plaintiff, the father who had instituted the suit to regain possession of his two sons from Mrs. Besant, in his argument, pointed out that

the suit was a simple one, brought by a parent for the restoration of the custody of his children, based on his inherent rights, and on the ground of the unfitness of the defendant (Mrs. Besant) to be in charge of the minor boys. What was the defense? It was that the suit was the result of a conspiracy to destroy the defendant's life or reputation, and that it was due to a plot that had its origin in the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon and the partition of Bengal, and was connected with plots of Extremists to subvert the British Empire. [In fact enough plots for a dozen comic operas.] It was also connected with a certain Mrs. Tingley in America, and with Mr. Nanjunda Row, and The Hindu newspaper. A MORE MEANINGLESS DEFENSE COULD NOT BE SET UP.

The Court declared:

The defendant (Mrs. Besant) has imputed various motives to the plaintiff (the father of the two boys) for the institution of this suit, which I think are altogether irrelevant, since they do not go to the character of the plaintiff in his capacity as parent of the children. Her written statement cannot by any stretch of language be described as pleadings, it is verbose, prolix, argumentative, and irrelevant, and in one of the paragraphs, at least, namely paragraph 29 (the one quoted from above in which she refers to Katherine Tingley) IT IS HIGHLY SCANDALOUS. The written statement is ordered to be struck out, since it is impossible to separate the objectionable portions from the necessary assertions.

So from entirely independent sources Mrs. Besant's unwarranted and baseless attack on Katherine Tingley is refuted and answered. The Editor of The Hindu declares that Mrs. Besant's statement referred to above is UNTRUE; the attorney for plaintiff (the father of the boys) said referring to that and other points, "A more meaningless defense could not be set up" and declared that the plaintiff denied totally that he had been instigated to bring the suit. He said further that "Pleadings did not exist for the purpose of making attacks against persons unconnected with suits." And the Court declared that Mrs. Besant's written statement "cannot by any stretch of language be described as pleadings, it is verbose, prolix, argumentative, and irrelevant, and in one of the paragraphs, at least, namely paragraph 29, it is highly scandalous."

Where Was Mrs. Besant's "Master"?

What? verbose, prolix, argumentative and irrelevant? Where was Leadbeater when Mrs. Besant wrote her original answer; was he or was he not directing her defense? And where was Mrs. Besant's "Master"? Was he away on a visit to Mars, or assuming to be engaged in unveiling another of the 31 or more lives of Alcyone, or devising new methods of bathing, or away somewhere on a vacation? Certain it is he could not be taking a very deep interest in the suit not to have spared Mrs. Besant such criticism from the Court for her answer. And "scandalous"? Surely the Court "has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of the accusations hurled against him, and answered nought." Was not this the policy marked out by Mrs. Besant for herself? There must be some grievous mistake. One who could utter such saintlike words, who meekly recognized (or appears to wish that it shall be considered so) that "apart from the duty incumbent upon all who seek to lead the spiritual life (as "I" do, we may imagine Mrs. Besant interpolating) not to do anything to increase the painful reaction upon those who do them wrong, there is worldly wisdom in refraining from reply and so avoiding a quarrel,"—surely, I was about to say, one who could utter such saintlike words, and
who professes to lead the spiritual life, and to be directed by a “Master,” or
to have even “worldly wisdom,” could never so far forget herself as to 
break silence; and should she in her illimitable wisdom, so transcendently 
above mere “worldly wisdom,” see fit to make an answer, she would speak 
mildly and to the point, keeping well within the facts, remembering that 
“hatred never ceases by hatred at any time, hatred ceases only by love,” 
ever “mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return, as a boomer-
ang, to the utterer thereof.” And what a boomerang!

Read again these words: “The persistent and malignant campaign 
instigated and supported by Mrs. Katherine Tingley from 
America, and led by Dr. Nanjunda Row since January, 1911, shows de-
liberate malice and utter disregard of truth.” These are the words of the 
woman who said: “Never try to justify yourself when accused of any-
thing. Make no defence. Bow your head and let accusations be made. Be 
tolerant and do not argue.”

Well, Mrs. Besant is accused by the father of the two boys and she 
not only seeks to justify and defend herself but she herself makes un-
grounded and unwarranted accusations against a third party who is not 
in any way whatever connected with the case. Whose then is the “delib-
erate malice and utter disregard of truth,” to quote Mrs. Besant’s own 
words? Mrs. Besant spoke of herself as being “mindful of the law which 
causes evil speech to return, as a boomerang, to the utterer thereof.” But 
whether she herself is mindful of it or not, and it is open to serious ques-
tion, did she not utter a truth when she spoke of the law causing evil speech 
to return to the utterer thereof, who one day must reap what she has 
sown?

I have just received from a friend a copy of a little magazine (Novem-
ber issue) published in Chicago, called “The Divine Life,” in which occurs 
the following, appended to a criticism of paragraph 29 of Mrs. Besant’s 
original answer to the complaint. I fully agree with the writer.

We regret having to reprint the allegations about Mrs. Tingley, and state 
that we know nothing about the matter, but the paragraph had to be quoted in 
full so as to avoid the usual accusation of distortions, that are launched against 
those who quote in portion. Abuse from Mrs. Besant has almost become a com-
pliment of late, and we are sure that Mrs. Tingley regards it in some such way, 
and will be indifferent to the additional publicity given to the attacks upon 
herself.

Why Mrs. Besant Brought Suit Against Dr. Nair

I have already touched upon the “alleged defamation” suits brought 
by Mrs. Besant against Dr. Nair and Dr. U. Rama Rao, which were decided 
against her both on the original hearing and on appeal (see my pamphlet, 
“Mrs. Annie Besant and the Leadbeater Advice”) but there is one point 
that seems to fit in here to illustrate further Mrs. Besant’s policy.

In The Theosophist for December, 1912, Mrs. Besant wrote:

Our readers will be aware that a suit has been filed against me to deprive 
me of the guardianship of the boys. . . . The immediate result of this at-
tack on me is the preparation of a number of libel actions, civil and criminal 
directed against the Hindu newspaper, Dr. Nanjunda Row and others.

This is really a most important statement, and reveals an interesting 
state of things, and the Senior Presidency Magistrate, before whom the 
cases were tried, in delivering his judgment in the first case, viz., that 
brought by Mrs. Besant against Dr. Nair, said:

The article (i.e. the one complained of by Mrs. Besant written by Dr.
Nair) was published as far back as March, 1911. The long delay of a year and 
nine months in lodging this complaint and the reason assigned by the com-
plaintant (Mrs. Besant) for lodging it, viz., that it was lodged on account of the civil suit brought against her by Narayaniah, go to show that grievance was not the real cause for filing the complaint. Further she admits that her attention was drawn to the first sentence of the article in question, viz., “we have nothing to do with Theosophy,” in this court for the first time during her cross-examination and not before. This admission speaks for itself and needs no comment.

Commenting on these cases and making special reference to Mrs. Besant’s statement just above quoted from The Theosophist of December, 1912, The Hindu editorially says:

It is clear therefore that the prosecution was open at its inception to the taint of vindictiveness and vexatiousness.

A Caustic Comment

It certainly is interesting, to say the least, but doubly so affording as it does a somewhat caustic comment upon Mrs. Besant’s statement that “the world (nor Mrs. Besant herself apparently) has not realized the meaning of the great Teacher who remained dumb in the face of accusations hurled against him and answered nought,” and that “apart from the duty incumbent upon all who seek to lead the spiritual life,” etc., and that “there is worldly wisdom in refraining from reply,” etc. And yet even with the judgment against her, as if it were a warning to remember her former would-be Christ-like words, she is not satisfied but must persist in going in a direction contrary to her “policy” which she had marked out not only as being in the line of duty but even worldly wisdom. Can it be that Mrs. Besant can so readily turn aside from what she has declared to be the path of duty “incumbent on all who seek to lead the spiritual life” and deliberately take a course which is contrary even to “worldly wisdom” as defined by her? I have previously quoted Mrs. Besant’s letter of May 10, 1913, and refer to it now merely to call attention to the closing words.

Meanwhile, dear friends, have patience and endure,

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small . . .

To His justice and His mercy I leave my persecutors and myself, repeating the words said to have been spoken by the Christ: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

What was her motive when she wrote these words? Was it to obscure the issues, was it that she sought to prevent her members from getting hold of the evidence in the alleged defamation cases and forming their own opinions for themselves, did she fear they might inquire a little too closely into Leadbeater’s moral code, did she wish to lull them to sleep lest they might presume to question her would-be Christlike words and ask why did she not herself set the example of following them? What was her motive?

“To His justice and His mercy I leave my persecutors,” etc., but with this difference that the Teacher who is said to have uttered those words really meant what he said and did bow his head and leave his persecutors to Divine Justice and Mercy. But does Mrs. Besant leave her “persecutors” to “His justice and mercy,” as she declares she does? Does it not seem that with her these are mere words, a flight of rhetoric? Does she so leave them? Oh, no, indeed; in the same letter, almost in the same breath, she declares, “I appeal, of course, against it,” (i. e. the judgment). Evidently, the justice of God is not swift enough or sure enough; she must have the justice of man and of earthly courts. But, alas, even the appeal is decided against her.
Different Opinions

Of course it is very sad that “His Justice and His Mercy” to which Mrs. Besant left her “persecutors” and herself did not act quite in accordance with Mrs. Besant’s own ideas of justice and mercy. And then it is regrettable that other people hold different ideas from her own, but of course they are wrong! By what right does the Senior Presidency Magistrate hold a different opinion in regard to the evidence presented during the course of the trial from that held by Mrs. Besant? And it is even more inexplicable that the Senior Presidency Magistrate should be upheld in his judgment by a High Court Judge. Does not Mrs. Besant say:

The statement [viz., “that I approve of the advice given by Mr. Leadbeater”] is against the whole of the documentary and oral evidence given at the trial, and is not supported by one solitary fact.

By what right then does the Senior Presidency Magistrate rule otherwise? By what right indeed? Is not Mrs. Besant an “initiate,” fellow-initiate with Leadbeater; has she not stood face to face with the Supreme Director of the Universe; has she not declared her fellow-initiate to be on the threshold of divinity (and by inference, that she herself is also) and how dare a Magistrate, even a Senior Presidency Magistrate, or a dozen Magistrates or High Court Judges presume to say that what Mrs. Besant says is not so?

Well, why should not Mrs. Besant go to Court if she wishes to, or sees fit to do so, even if she has left herself and her persecutors to “His justice and His mercy?” Why certainly, let her do so by all means, and why does not Mr. Leadbeater go to Court also and vindicate his “noble character and pure life,” vindicate Mrs. Besant’s oft expressed opinion of him and clear himself before the world? But if Mrs. Besant appeals to the Courts as she has done, then in heaven’s name let her stop this twaddle in regard to “duty incumbent upon all who seek to lead the spiritual life, not doing anything to increase the painful reaction,” bowing her head and letting accusations be made, making no defence, and worldly wisdom in refraining from a reply. In plain English, if it is not hypocrisy, it seems to verge very closely on it. Either that or she has proved herself incapable of following what she has declared to be her duty, and if so what claim has she as a spiritual teacher? That is the issue and no juggling of words will evade it.

As a beautiful flower without fragrance are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly.

Mrs. Besant’s Latest Policy

We come now to what I believe is Mrs. Besant’s latest published announcement of her policy, which, it will be seen, is very similar to some of her previous utterances which I have quoted above. In The Theosophist for August, 1913, under the heading “Our Policy,” is given an extract from Mrs. Besant’s opening speech at a convention of her society at Stockholm, Sweden, in June, 1913, from which I quote:

Now with regard to our policy. . . . Our policy in regard to these dissident parts of the Theosophical movement is an important thing, and I would venture to suggest what seems to me the wisest policy.

Mrs. Besant appears to be a little timorous, and well may she be after her own incongruous exemplification of her previous utterances of policy. She appears to feel by no means assured that it is the “wisest policy,” she merely “ventures to suggest” what seems to be so. In fact, her use of the
word “policy” seems very apt, for we do not use the word policy where there is certain knowledge, where action is based on principle. It is somewhat of a novelty, too, to find a “spiritual teacher” outlining a policy. However, here it is:

With regard to that part of the movement which left the Theosophical Society under Mr. Judge and is now headed by Mrs. Tingley I would earnestly ask you to let all the attack come from that side and not from ours.

Clearly Mrs. Besant does not like to acknowledge the fact that the original Theosophical Society at the Convention held in Boston in 1895 left her out of its ranks by an almost unanimous vote and elected William Q. Judge President for life, and that this action was followed in other parts of the world. She does not like to have it pointed out to the public that it was she who attacked William Q. Judge most unjustly, most insidiously and most bitterly, and thereby attacked her own Teacher, H. P. Blavatsky, and that beginning shortly after Mr. Judge’s death, which was hastened by the persecution he endured at her hands, she still continued her attacks on Mr. Judge’s successor, Katherine Tingley. But no her “policy” is not to attack, “let all the attack come from that side and not from ours.” After the examples already given above, is it necessary to ask, by whom has the attack been made in the past? Mrs. Besant after her long continued attack upon William Q. Judge, which it was felt by those closest to him greatly hastened his death, begins almost immediately thereafter to attack his successor, Katherine Tingley, characterizing her and those with her as “masquerading Theosophists”; a few years later in her magazine which circulates throughout her Society, she makes the outrageously false accusation against Katherine Tingley of “tireless malignity” and “hatred”; she renews her baseless accusations in her original answer in the Madras High Court—and then she has the effrontery to say to her members “let all the attack come from that side and not from ours.” Continuing, she says:

It is far better that you should not quarrel with them even if they desire to quarrel with you.

Has She Gone Too Far?

Is it possible that Mrs. Besant now fears she has gone too far in her attempted vilification of Katherine Tingley in statements published during several years past in her magazine, The Theosophist? Does she fear the influence which her accusations against Katherine Tingley of “tireless malignity,” “hatred,” “deliberate malice,” etc., may have upon her members? Or was she reminded of her unbrotherly words and actions by some of the members of her Society? Or was it the fear of a libel suit? What was it that caused Mrs. Besant to venture to outline this “policy”?

If a country is attacked can it be said that the inhabitants who defend their homes seek a quarrel with the attackers? If immorality and vice threaten a city, can it be said that those who protect their sons desire to quarrel with the offenders? Certain it is that members of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society will never cease to protest against the vagaries put forward by Mrs. Besant under the name of “Theosophy”; they will never cease to warn the people against such things as the Leadbeater advice; they will never proclaim as a man “of noble character and pure life” one who holds “immoral opinions”; and this not as a “policy” on their part, but on principle, in defence of the pure teachings of Theosophy and to keep unsullied the names and memory of our Teachers, H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. They desire no quarrel, but they will not depart from a defence of Truth.
Mrs. Besant then says:

If you leave to them the whole of the attack and receive it with generosity, with magnanimity and kindly feelings, then, and then alone, can you hope that peace will ultimately be secured.

Mrs. Besant Calls Victims of Leadbeater Advice “Vicious”

There is a certain saying accredited to Jesus about the mote and the beam:

“First cast the beam out of thine own eye and then thou shalt see clearly to pluck out the mote from thy brother’s eye.”

Mrs. Besant’s reference to generosity, magnanimity and kindly feeling calls to my mind what she said of those poor boys who were the victims of the Leadbeater advice, and how, by calling them “vicious,” she has apparently tried to lay the blame upon them and as it were to make them responsible for the position in which Leadbeater now finds himself through the advice which he acknowledges he gave. She seems to have absolutely overlooked the wrong done to them, the irreparable injury which they have suffered, and in her frantic attempt (about which I have spoken at some length in my pamphlet, Mrs. Annie Besant and the Leadbeater Advice) to minimize the character of the advice given by Leadbeater, which according to his own statements was very different from what she would have the public believe. And now she calls these poor boys “vicious!” So much for the “generosity, magnanimity, and kindly feeling” of this self-proclaimed “spiritual teacher.” A cowardly, shameful attack on the boys I call it. Remember, too, that these boys were diverted from any natural instinct of self-protection, through having their impressionable young minds psychologized with the idea which was impressed upon them that Leadbeater was a “spiritual teacher,” and that he was endorsed by another “spiritual teacher,” Mrs. Besant, to-wit, who was at the head of a “spiritual” movement. And Mrs. Besant still calls Leadbeater her “fellow-initiate” and asserts he is “on the threshold of Divinity!”

Katherine Tingley and Mrs. Besant in Sweden at Same Time

But it should be remembered that this latest announcement of her “policy” (and her use of the word seems to gain fuller significance) was made by Mrs. Besant in Sweden and had special reference to the worldwide powerful organization of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. And still further interest attaches to it from the fact that Katherine Tingley was in Sweden at the time, only a few miles distant from Stockholm, and of course it would never do, it certainly would not be “the wisest policy,” Katherine Tingley being so near, for Mrs. Besant to repeat the slander so recently uttered by her in India, in her original answer to the complaint in the case, Narayanish vs. Besant, which the judge himself characterized as “scandalous.” Mrs. Besant doubtless thought it much wiser, shall I say safer, to say, as she does, continuing to outline her policy:

“It is yours to remember the great words of the Lord Buddha: “Hatred never ceases by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love.”

As though she would beseech Katherine Tingley not to remember the slanderous words which she (Mrs. Besant) had uttered against her, not to sue her for libel in Sweden, where the laws are so stringent—but repay her by love. Aye, truly, but true love will not shut its eyes to truth and justice; it will not forget the injury done to those poor boys by the Leadbeater advice; it will not be a party to the statement that “the Theosophical Society has no moral code”; it will not by accepting bizarre pseudo-Theosophy in place of the Wisdom-Religion thus offer poor humanity a
stone in place of the bread of life. However, Mrs. Besant continues out-lining her policy in the same strain, still venturing to suggest:

So if for the moment our brethren of the Universal Brotherhood find in hatred their weapon against us, let us use rather the shield of love and not the sword of hatred, and answer with kindness, with generosity and good feeling any of the attacks they may think right to make upon us.

And just one month after the date of publication of this “policy,” Mrs. Besant goes out of her way, as though to justify herself in the face of the adverse decision of the Senior Presidency Magistrate and the loss of her appeal, seeking to vilify Point Loma, characterizing certain “tracts,” “circulated from Point Loma,” as “obscene” and further speaking of The Theosophic Voice (published in Chicago as a protest against Leadbeater’s advice—see my pamphlet, Mrs. Annie Besant and the Leadbeater Advice) as a “filthy publication.” Even thus does she set an example to her members of the value and sincerity of what she ventures to suggest is the wisest “policy,” viz., “let all the attack come from that side and not from ours.” Just one month after the publication of this she, Mrs. Besant, attacks Point Loma, which in the eyes of the world is identical with The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, and is the Headquarters of Katherine Tingley’s world-wide work. Even thus, just one month later, does she exemplify her meaning of “the shield of love,” “kindness, generosity and good-feeling.”

“The Same Policy of Respect”

A little further on in her address before the Stockholm Convention, Mrs. Besant says:

With regard to our brethren of the German Section who have left the Theosophical Society and enrolled themselves under a new name, surely we can show to them also the same policy of respect. . . . So I would say with regard to them also, if they attack me do not respond by attack against their leaders. . . . Such then is the policy that I would venture to lay before you as one that appears to me to be the wisest for the Theosophical Society (hers, mark you). Let us do our own work; . . . let our note, so far as may be, be the note that harmonizes the discords rather than a note which adds to the discords of the world.

Note “the same policy of respect.” This is truly enlightening. Just prior to speaking of “our brethren of the German Section,” in the article as published in The Theosophist, Mrs. Besant had referred to “our brethren of the Universal Brotherhood”—clearly the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society at the head of which is Katherine Tingley, and in view of Mrs. Besant’s utterances regarding Katherine Tingley it is pertinent to ask since when did this “policy of respect” begin to be operative, if indeed it is now or ever has been operative? After speaking of Katherine Tingley as she has done, viz: “Considering Mrs. Tingley’s tireless malignity”; “such abnormal hatred”; “the persistent and malignant campaign . . . instigated and supported by Mrs. Katherine Tingley . . . shows deliberate malevolence and utter disregard of truth”; Mrs. Besant now outlines a “policy of respect”; “surely,” she says, “we can show them (the members of the “German Section” the same policy of respect (which grammatically and logically can refer only to Katherine Tingley and the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society). One may well ask, what is the meaning of this? Is it that Mrs. Besant herself is making a bid to be treated with respect? She may well be congratulated, even at this late day, on entering upon a “policy” of treating the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society with respect, if indeed there is any intention of
making such a policy effective and operative. But of this there are grounds for serious doubt seeing that one month after the publication of her “policy of respect” she attempts to vilify Point Loma speaking of “obscene tracts” circulated from Point Loma, which in the eyes of the general public means the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. Nevertheless, Mrs. Besant and her devotees cannot expect to be accorded respect unless they prove themselves worthy of it.

Some Final Questions

Such then is the outline of Mrs. Besant’s “policy,” as given by her in 1894, 1909 and 1913. Has it been more than a policy, more than a profession, has it been carried into effect in respect to those to whom in particular she referred in outlining it? In one sense it matters little what Mrs. Besant says of Katherine Tingley and the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society or of the Point Loma “tracts”; but has she shown generosity, magnanimity, kindliness to those poor boys who have been the ones to suffer most from the Leadbeater advice; has she not acted most ungenerously, untheosophically and unjustly in characterizing them (and without one particle of evidence) as “vicious?” Has she shown herself “mindful of the law which causes evil speech to return, as a boomerang, to the utterer thereof?” Has she realized the meaning of the great Teacher and answered nought? Has she followed the path of “duty incumbent upon all who seek to lead the spiritual life not to increase the painful reaction?” Has she shown even “worldly wisdom” in refraining from a reply? Has she bowed her head, making no defence, never seeking to justify herself—even by refraining from so ungenerously calling those poor boys, victims of Leadbeater’s advice—“vicious?” Would she have dared to so call them had the boys themselves been present to give their evidence in Court, or had their mothers or fathers been there? Has she sounded a note that harmonizes the discords or added to them?

Is this quotation apt or not?

“As a beautiful flower without fragrance are the fine but fruitless words of him (her) who does not act accordingly.”

JOSEPH H. FUSSELL.

Point Loma, California, January 22, 1914.