

Let us promote popular education and make it obligatory, and particularly so among women, that we may emancipate them from the thralldom of priestcraft.

Let us protect the orphans: let us defend the interest of the weak and of the widow.

Let us shake off pride. Let us exclaim with a generous cry against prostitution, debauchery, ill-conduct—the consequences of materialism and superstition.

Let us fight against the death penalty and let us detest the infamy of war, and more so the right of the strongest. Let us join in defending those who protect us, controlling nevertheless the immoderate exigencies of the demagogues and the revolutionists who behave in the way in which they do with bad motives.

Let us acknowledge the expansive and universal love, not only for humanity, but also for all creation, because all either by silent or expressed love (be what it may) tends to the unity of the Supreme Love. Let us place the brotherhood of nations as the first of our wishes (desires) and let us hasten that holy (blessed) moment when the whole of mankind will be gathered in one fold and will have but one shepherd.

Let us part with and forsake vanity, crime, and passions; may our views be serious, wise, humble, modest and dignified. Acting in this way we may hope to live with a free conscience, confident (as we shall be) of having neglected nothing in our power to render ourselves useful.

Courage, brothers, let us push on. Let us begin by trying to purify our souls by restraining our passions. Let us subject brute to man, sense to reason, and interest to duty. Let us lay aside all hatred or rancours if there be any among us, or against any one of our other brothers in humanity, and if we have done wrong voluntarily or involuntarily, let us compensate. Let us become the men of duty, and let us keep ourselves always on the right side of our rights. Let the sacred fire of Love be always burning in our hearts. Let us be worthy of it, and the Supreme Architect will recompense us according to the efforts we have made in trying to progress.

I conclude, my dear Brothers, by begging your kind forgiveness for the trouble I may have caused you with these few and poor expressions; supply my deficiencies with your intellect. Correct me freely on those points on which I may have gone astray, and I shall feel thankful to you.

Brothers, I shall not fail to be your interpreter before the Mother Society to express to her our gratitude, and in your name also I shall thank her for the high favour bestowed upon us and make the sincere vows for the prosperity of Humanity and for all the Branches of our Society.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The inaugural addresses of the respective presiding officers of the Ionian and Bombay Branches of the Theosophical Society, which appear side by side in the present number, so well illustrate its policy of mutual tolerance and confraternity, that we bespeak for each a careful reading. Here we see the Italian thinker moved by the same lofty aspirations for individual perfection and the happiness and enlightenment of mankind, as the Parsi thinker of Bombay. And though the one conceives of the First Cause, or Deity, quite differently from the other, whose ancestors from time immemorial have worshipped the Sun as a visible type of Hormazd, yet a common religious feeling moves the heart of each, and a common instinct makes him see the way upward towards the truth brighter and clearer by the light of Theosophy. Ours is not an atheistical society, though it does contain atheists; nor is it a Christian one, even though our brother Dr. Wyld, President of the British Theosophical Society, would have us accept Jesus as the most divine personage that ever appeared among men. Our Fellows are of the most varied opinions and each has a right to claim respect for his ideas as he is bound to respect those of his brothers. We have presidents who are severally Christian, Deist, Bud-

dhist, Hindu and Atheist; none dogmatizers, none claiming to be wiser or more infallible than the other, yet each taking the other by the hand, calling him brother, and helping him and being helped in the divine quest after knowledge. Nor are all, or even a large minority, students of occult sciences, for rarely is the true mystic born. Few, alas! have they ever been who so yearned after the discovery of Nature's secrets as to be willing to pursue that hard and unselfish course of study; and our own century can show fewer than any of its predecessors. As to the secrets of the Theosophical Society, when we mention the masonic-like signs of recognition, and the privacy secured for the handful who do make their experiments in psychological science, all has been said. The Parent Society is, in one word, a Republic of Conscience, a brotherhood of men in search of the Absolute Truth. As was sufficiently explained in our opening October number, every one of us professes to be ready to help the other, whatever the branch of science or religion to which his personal predilections may lead him.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BEFORE THE BOMBAY THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

BY KHARSEDJI N. SEERVAI, VICE-PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT, *pro tem.*

At the first meeting under our new Charter when we enter upon our duties as members of the Bombay Theosophical Society, it seems necessary that we should begin with forming a clear idea, as far as possible, of what we are as Theosophists. All the members must have at some time or other set this question to themselves, and answered it more or less satisfactorily to themselves. In the first number of the THEOSOPHIST two elaborate and highly learned articles we devoted to the two questions, "What is Theosophy," and "What are the Theosophists." But the vastness of the questions and the great learning that is necessarily employed in answering them and above all their paramount importance to us, make it very desirable that we should have, at the outset of our course of studies, a free and patient discussion and criticism on the subject. I now lay before you what I understand. My views are of course not authoritative. I put them forward as I have them, to be discussed and criticized, so that in the end, each one of us may have a sufficiently clear and definite understanding as to what is Theosophy and what are the Theosophists.

From the subjects that Theosophy deals with and criticizes, as far as we have had the opportunity of observing, we see that it covers the whole ground occupied by Religion, Philosophy and Science. It has something to say by way of confirmation or correction to each of these. If it said nothing more than what Religion, Philosophy and Science teach us, Theosophy would be useless. But as we will see in the sequel, it says a good deal more than each one of these embodiments of truths, or all of them combined, tell us. Covering them all under its wings, it corrects the faults and errors of each one and leads them on far beyond their present position. We will, therefore, understand very clearly Theosophy as a whole, if we consider it separately in its relation with Religion, with Philosophy and with Science.

The question, therefore, that we have to begin with is—What is Religion? No word seems to be more familiarly used than the word religion, and I should think no word is more indefinitely understood than this. If we look at the different systems which are known under the name of religion, and see what functions they are intended to perform we find that at the base of all the huge accumulation of rituals, ceremonials and observances, there is one avowed object common to all religions—whether they are claimed to be revealed or natural religions—they have all one object, viz., to convey the will of God to man. They tell what man should believe and do; and the only reason advanced for what he is required to believe and do is

that God so wills. The religions, therefore, contain a code of morality which has the authority of the command of God, and give an authoritative declaration as to what God is and what is his relation to man and to the universe. In the infant state of the human mind such authoritative declarations are not questioned. Rather they are needed, are reverentially accepted and devoutly followed. Religion, therefore, at this stage of the human mind, serves an important purpose. But as the human mind grows to maturity, what was sufficient for its childlike capacity ceases to be so. It is disinclined to receive things at second hand, if it can look at them directly and get at a rational conviction of their truth or otherwise. Instead of being content with receiving things on authority as it did in its feeble infant state, it begins to speculate and employ its reason for discerning whether things are as they are said to be and why they are so. Here is the beginning of philosophy. Herein is the first germ of scepticism. If religiousness means duty to hold beliefs on authoritative declaration, to hold them irrespective of facts whether reason supports them or not, in short to disallow to reason the right to judge of beliefs which religion inculcates, then we may say that with the beginning of philosophy irreligiousness begins. The idea of religion in the orthodox sense coincides with the era of ignorance. For the thinking man religion must be philosophised or for him philosophy is religion. This necessity is recognised by the heads and representatives of religious systems, as it has been felt by the free-thinking laymen. Some philosophers like St. Augustine, construct a system of philosophy to confirm and establish the teachings of the religion they profess. Others more independent, see insuperable difficulties philosophically to arrive at any knowledge about God, the soul, its existence and survival after death, the universe as a whole and its relation to God. As long as man believed what was taught to him, on what he considered the divine authority, these questions presented to him no difficulty. Not because his reason solved those difficulties, but because he cared not to employ his reason. He was satisfied to take for granted what was told to him and there the matter ended. In such a passive state we might happily remain if our mind never emerged from this childlike state of contentment. But every day that goes, carries us forward in the course of advancement. It is the characteristic of man to be inquisitive of all the subjects that come within the range of his thoughts. The successes that he has achieved in some departments of knowledge make him bold and confident of attaining success by following the same rational method of investigation in all directions. The man of science joins with the free-thinking philosopher to wage war against the claims of religion. Accept on faith, says religion, the truths which philosophy cannot reach and science cannot penetrate. Nay, say philosophy and science, to accept truths upon faith is an unintelligible phrase. We are votaries of truth, but truth is not truth unless our understanding can accept it. While religion stands at one extreme, science in the heat of the controversy rushes to the other extreme. In its investigations in the material universe, science day after day makes wonderful discoveries and traces the uniform agency of constant laws in the midst of endless diversity. It views nothing as providential. All the phenomena in the universe it will trace to their physical causes. It forms mental science and moral science on the physical basis. It views religion as mere dogmatism, philosophy in its transcendental speculations, as vague and dreamy; science alone can furnish man with positive knowledge and more important still, useful knowledge. The physical universe admits of being brought under direct observation, experiment and verification, and the great triumph of all this is that it enables man to bring about certain events in the future and predict them under given conditions with perfect precision. The subjects of religion and philosophy inasmuch as they deal with the non-material universe, and as they, therefore, do not admit of these tests, are not worth the while of man to waste time and trouble upon. They are mere superstitions,

bequeathed to us by the old ignorant Past. There is nothing for man to know beyond matter and what material data will lead him to. Thus, science drags us forcibly into materialism. Thus arbitrary and dogmatic religion, incomplete and incompetent philosophy, and audacious science all combine to destroy the most cherished and the most ancient of our beliefs, destroy all our spiritual intuitions. What can rescue us from this sad state? I answer, Theosophy.

The world has been prepared for Theosophy in our times by what are known in the Western world as spiritual phenomena. These phenomena staggered the confidence and positiveness of science. Books and journals are full of well-authenticated events which occurred in violation of all the physical laws known to and accepted by science. Heavy things would be seen swimming about in the air in violation of the law of gravitation, carried by some unseen or unknown being or force. Beings of more or less intelligence would manifest themselves at spiritual seances and declare themselves the spirits or ghosts of those who had lived and died in this world. They would represent themselves sometimes as dead friends, at others as dead relatives or as quite strangers, and converse with the persons assembled, on diverse matters. All those who cling to the belief in the existence and immortality of the soul, but whose scientific education showed them that there was a want of data on which the belief could be logically founded, all these naturally rushed to these events as the most welcome evidences they so much wanted. All ghost stories were raked up and fondly read and re-read to see how far they were authenticated. But there was one weak point. These spiritual intelligences, as we may call them, that held converse with men in this fashion may be either the spirits or ghosts of the departed or may be beings of a different order from ourselves. Below man we see myriads of animated existences. Innumerable as these are, they do not exhaust all possible existences nor fill the whole universe. Beings of an order and nature different from ours may people the vast universe about us and the spiritual phenomena we witness may be due to the agency of these beings. This view came to be supported by the fact that in many cases the guests from the unseen universe exhibited intelligence and capacity far below those of men they personated. In many cases they were below even the average intelligence of mankind. Often they talked most silly and ridiculous and even false and contradictory things. Often they betrayed a mischievous delight in deluding their human interrogators. Nay, further, the sensitive persons called the mediums, through whom they manifested themselves, in a number of cases deteriorated in constitution, character, and morals. The intercourse with these denizens of the unseen world seemed in great many cases to be anything but instructive and elevating. All these considerations lead to the conclusion that it is very improbable that these visitors of ours are the spirits of departed men, but that they are some independent beings. Even in cases where the communications are sensible and true it is as much possible that our interlocutors are the independent beings who are well disposed and better informed, as that they are the spirits of the departed. At any rate it is not certain that the beings who communicate with us at the seances are the spirits of the dead. And thus these spiritual phenomena as they are called do not furnish us with data that can prove to us with certainty the existence of soul and its immortality. Yet these spiritual phenomena have gained one great point against the materialism of science. They establish beyond doubt the existence of forces or beings which do not obey the laws of matter, and have nothing in common with the material world. To distinguish these, therefore, from the material we may designate them as the spiritual beings or agencies. This is, indeed, an immense gain and deals a death-blow to materialism.

These spiritual phenomena, however, are but scattered unconnected facts, and so long as they are such, our knowledge of the spiritual universe does not amount to much.

just as our knowledge of the physical universe did not amount to much till we raised the knowledge of mere facts to scientific knowledge. We are said to possess scientific knowledge in any particular department of Nature when we have succeeded in uniting the scattered facts under the highest possible generalizations or common laws, and have acquired the power to predict future events under given conditions, and to bring about the events when we can arrange the necessary conditions and control the laws. Can we raise to a science the phenomena of modern spiritualism? Can we carry our knowledge beyond the phenomena to the laws which these phenomena obey? And, knowing the laws, do we know how to control them and so produce the phenomena at will? If we can, then we have raised modern spiritualism to the dignity of science. And Theosophy does that. The advanced Theosophist can produce at will all the phenomena that occur at spiritual seances. While modern spiritualism is a mere collection of phenomena, Theosophy is the science of these phenomena, or, in short, the science of spiritualism. Going beyond these phenomena, it has a close and intimate view of the spiritual universe that lies behind them, and of its laws, its influences, and its beings. Those who are familiar with the phenomena of clairvoyance are aware that by the will of the mesmerizer the patient is thrown into such a deep sleep, or trance as it is called, that the body is in every respect a corpse, the soul of the patient is released from the body, its vision is immensely enlarged, and as if time and distance are no impediments to it, in an instant it ranges over the most distant places, till by the will of the operator the soul returns to the body which thus becomes reanimated. We thus see the duality of matter and spirit in man. The more our spiritual self is freed from the control and weight of the material self, the greater is our freedom from physical impediments and the greater becomes our capacity for knowledge and for work in the universe. The true theosophical mystic acts upon these facts. His aim is to subdue his physical nature and its wants and desires to the utmost limit possible, and develop the spiritual nature to the highest extent possible. In proportion to his success in doing this, the mightier man he becomes. And you can easily imagine the immensity of knowledge and power the highest Theosophist possesses, who has succeeded in gaining a complete mastery over his material, or as it is more significantly expressed animal, nature, who has developed his spiritual self to such an extent that he is thoroughly spiritualized, who is wholly a spirit or spirit-man. He has by internal development gained all the powers that the freed soul manifests in cases of clairvoyance, and, starting from what we know of the powers of a mesmerizer, we may say he is to the mesmerizer in his command over the outside world what a full-grown, perfectly-developed, and healthy man is to an infant just born.

Many details of argument and fact can be supplied, details which the *Isis Unveiled* so copiously furnishes and which Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky have often brought to our notice, to throw more light on the conclusions we have arrived at. The existence of soul in man, its independence of our physical organization, hence its survival when death altogether separates it from the body; the existence of the spiritual universe, that as by our physical powers and knowledge we can operate upon the physical universe, so by our soul powers and knowledge we can operate upon the spiritual and also upon the physical universe, that the department of spiritual knowledge is as much capable of scientific treatment and study as the department of physical knowledge—these are for us well established and proven facts.

Our position then in respect of science is this. We accept all that it has discovered and knows about the material world, but when it says that there is nothing besides matter, nothing besides what it already knows, we join issue with it. We enlarge and extend the jurisdiction of science and bring within its scope the spiritual universe. From the data which the spiritual science fur-

nishes, philosophy is better able to speculate on the constitution of the universe, its relation with God, upon soul and its future destiny. Before, philosophy stood agnath in the presence of the mysteries it cannot fathom; helped by Theosophy it soars beyond the mysteries.

Before, philosophy stopped before the veil of Isis unable to lift it up: Theosophy rends this veil asunder and ushers philosophy forward. Subjects which being so long mysterious to philosophy, religion claimed as its own and dogmatized upon, now come legitimately within the province of philosophy. Of what use is it for religion to be dogmatic when the truths it asserts come within the capacity of philosophy to criticize, accept or reject. Religion then is the name for the highest conclusions of philosophy. So much of its old dogmatism as coincides with these conclusions is accepted, the rest of course rejected. For the ignorant these conclusions may stand as dogmas; the thoughtful know where to look for the basis of them and can know how they are arrived at. Such truth as lies in them being better understood, the various religions again in their turn command the respect and adherence of all honest thinkers. We perceive, therefore, how religion, philosophy and science, have all and each of them been advanced and elevated by Theosophy. So far as we have proceeded, we are in a position to conclude that Theosophy is the spiritual science; Theosophy is the perfected and completed philosophy; Theosophy is the religion for the thoughtful; Theosophy furnishes the only reliable and true dogmas that may constitute the religion for the ignorant or the masses.

Formerly religion, philosophy and science, although each claimed to be the possessor of truth, yet presented the anomalous spectacle of being vehemently hostile to one another. Now Theosophy has introduced harmony and concord among them all. Theosophy brings peace in the realm of thought.

Nay more—in proportion as we rise from particulars to higher and fewer generalizations from which to deduce all the facts that fill the world, our knowledge is perfected and complete. In science we see this process carried out to a certain extent. The highest generalizations of science denote the great advance that has been made from particular facts. But these generalizations which are accepted as the ultimate truths by the sciences to which they belong, are again but particulars in relation to one another, and with reference to the higher truths which may be discovered to cover them all. To ascend to these higher truths which combine under their sweep the truths which the various sciences finally stop at, and to make one great science of all these sciences, is the province of philosophy. But so long as philosophy was not strengthened by the spiritual data and science narrowed itself into materialism, philosophy was incapable of performing this grand function and its pretensions to do this were not tolerated. Philosophy transformed into Theosophy does all this. Theosophy thus is the science of sciences, it is the highest science.

When we have mastered this highest science and philosophy, we will have become Theosophists of a high, if not the highest, order. At present, logically satisfied that there lies the most important field of knowledge before us, we are waiting at the threshold, till in good time we may be permitted to cross it. How we are to qualify ourselves for this high honour, and what the aims are for which we wish to attain the highest theosophical knowledge and powers, are themes of superlative importance and interest. I have already taken much space and occupied much of your time. These topics, therefore, we may reserve for some future time. I have, therefore, to conclude, thanking you for the patience and good-will with which you have borne with me so long.

IT IS EASY TO ADVISE A PERSON, BUT HOW DIFFICULT to receive, under similar circumstances, that same advice from another! We are so prone to believe that what we accept is truth, and that those who cannot see with our eyes are all wrong.