

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE T.S.

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY C. JINARĀJADĀSA

(Continued from p. 392)

XIV

THE ORGANISATION OF THE T.S. (Continued)

By H. P. B.

THE complaints—"submitted to those interested in the progress of true Theosophy"—which seems to mean "theosophy divorced from the Society"—may now be noticed in order and answered. They specify the following objections:—

I. To the language of the *Rules* with regard to the powers invested in the President-Founder by the General Council. This objection seems very right. The sentence . . . The duties of the Council "shall consist in *advising* the P. F. *in regard to all matters referred to them by him*" may be easily construed as implying that on all matters *not* referred to the Council by the Pres.-Founder . . . its members will hold their tongues. The Rules are changed, at any rate they are corrected and altered yearly. This sentence can be taken out. The harm, so far, is not so terrible.

II. It is shown that many members *ex-officio* whose names are found on the list of the General Council *are not known* to the Convention; that they are, very likely, not even interested in the Society "under their special care"; a body they had joined at one time, then probably *forgotten* its existence in the meanwhile to withdraw themselves from the Association. The argument implied is very valid. Why

not point it out *officially* to the Members residing at, or visiting the Head Quarters, the impropriety of such a parading of names? Yet, in what respect can this administrative blunder or carelessness, interfere with, or *impede* "the progress of true theosophy"?¹

III. "The members are appointed by the President-Founder . . . it is complained; the Gen. Council only *advises* on what is submitted to it" . . . and "in the meantime that P. F. is empowered to *issue* "special orders" and "provisional rules," on behalf of that ("dummy") Council. (Rule IV, p. 20.) Moreover, it is urged that out of a number of 150 members of the G. Council, a quorum of 5 and even 3 members present, may, should it be found necessary by *the President*, decide upon any question of vital importance, etc., etc., etc.

Such an "untheosophical" *display* of authority, is objected to by Messrs. . . . , on the ground that it leads the Society to *Cesarism*, to "tyranny" and "papal infallibility," etc., etc. However right the two complainants may be *in principle* it is impossible to fail seeing, the absurd exaggerations of the epithets used; for, having just been accused on one page of "tyrannical authority," of "centralization of power" and a "papal institution" (p. 9)—on page 11, the President-Founder is shown "issuing *special orders*" from that "centre of *Cæsarism*"—*which no one is bound to obey, unless he so wishes!* "It is well known" remarks the principal writer—"that not only individuals but even Branches have refused to pay this (annual) subscription . . . "of . . . two shillings" (p. 11); without any bad effect for themselves, resulting out of it, as appears. Thus, it would seem it is not to a *non-existent* authority that objections should be made, but simply to a vain and useless *display* of power that no one cares for.

¹ Furthermore the writer of the complaints in "A Few words, etc.," is himself a member on the General Council for over two years (see Rules 1885) why has he not spoken earlier?

The policy of issuing "special orders" with such sorry results is indeed objectionable; only, *not on the ground of a tendency to Cæsarism*, but simply because it becomes *highly ridiculous*. The undersigned for one, has many a time objected to it, moved however, more by a spirit of *worldly* pride and an *untheosophical* feeling of self-respect than anything like Yogi humility. It is admitted with regret that the world of scoffers and *non-theosophists* might, if they heard of it, find in it a capital matter for fun. But the real wonder is, how can certain *European* Theosophists, who have bravely defied the world to make them wince under any amount of ridicule, once they acted in accordance with the dictates of their conscience and duty—make a crime of what is at the worst a *harmless*, even if ridiculous, bit of vanity; a desire of giving importance—not to the Founder, but to his Society *for which he is ready to die any day*. One kind of ridicule is worth another. The Western theosophist, who for certain magnetic reasons wears his hair long and shows otherwise eccentricity in his dress, will be spared no more than his President, with his "special orders". Only the latter, remaining as kindly disposed and brotherly to the "individual Theosophist and even a Branch"—that snub *him* and his "order," by refusing to pay what others do—shows himself *ten-fold more Theosophical and true to the principle of Brotherhood*, than the former, who traduces and denounces him in such uncharitable terms, instead of kindly warning him of the bad effect produced. Unfortunately, it is not those who speak the loudest of virtue and theosophy, who are the best exemplars of both. Few of them, if any, have tried to cast out the beam from their own eye, before they raised their voices against the mote in the eye of a brother. Furthermore, it seems to have become quite the theosophical rage in these days, to denounce vehemently, yet never to offer to help pulling out *any* such *motes*.

The Society is bitterly criticized for asking every well to do theosophist (the poor are exempt from it, from the first to pay annually two shillings to help defraying the expenses at Head-Quarters. It is denounced as "untheosophical," "unbrotherly," and the "admission fee" of £1, is declared no better than "a sale of Brotherhood". In this our "Brotherhood" may be shown again on a far higher level than any other association past or present. The Theosophical Society has never shown the ambitious pretension to outshine in *theosophy* and *brotherliness*, the primitive Brotherhood of Jesus and his Apostles,¹ and that "Organisation," besides *asking* and being occasionally refused, helped itself *without asking*, and as a matter of fact in a *real* community of Brothers. Nevertheless, such actions, that would seem highly untheosophical and prejudicial in our day of culture when nations alone are privileged to pocket each other's property and expect to be honoured for it—does not seem to have been an obstacle in the way of deification and sanctification of the said early "Brotherly" group. Our Society had never certainly any idea of rising superior to the *brotherliness* and *ethics* preached by Christ, but only to those of the *sham* Christianity of the Churches,—as originally ordered to by our MASTERS. And if we do no worse than the Gospel Brotherhood did, and far better than any Church, which would expell any member refusing too long to pay his Church rates, it is really hard to see why our "Organisation" should be ostracized by its own members. At any rate, the pens of the latter ought to show themselves less *acerb*, in these days of trouble when every one seems bent on finding fault with the Society, and few to help it, and that the President-Founder is alone to work and toil with a few devoted theosophists at Adyar to assist him.

¹ Yet, the Theosophical Brotherhood does seem doomed to outrival the group of Apostles in the number of its *denying* Peters, its unbelieving Thomases, and even Iscariots occasionally, ready to sell their Brotherhood for less than thirty *shekels* of silver!

IV. "There is no such institution in existence as the Parent Society"—we are told (pp. 2 and 3). "It has disappeared from the Rules and . . . has no *legal* existence". . . The Society being unchartered, *it has not*—legally; but no more has any Theosophist a legal existence, for the matter of that. Is there one single member throughout the whole globe who would be recognised *by law* or before a Magistrate—as a *theosophist*? Why then do the gentlemen "complainants" call themselves "theosophists" if the latter qualification has no better legal standing than the said "Parent Society" or the Head Quarters itself? But the Parent-body *does* exist, and will, so long as the last man or woman of the primitive group of Theosophist *Founders* is alive. This—as a body; as for its moral characteristics, the Parent-Society means that small nucleus of theosophists who hold sacredly through storm and blows to the *original programme* of the T.S., as established under the direction and orders of those, whom they recognise—and will, to their last breath—as the real originators of the Movement, their *living*, Holy MASTERS AND TEACHERS.¹

V. The complaints then, that the T.S. "has Laws without sanction," a "legislative body without legality," a "Parent Society without existence," and, worse than all—"a President *above all rules*"—are thus shown only *partially* correct. But even were they all absolutely true, it would be easy to abolish such rules with one stroke of the pen, or to modify them. But now comes the curious part of that severe *philippic* against the T.S. by our eloquent Demosthenes.

¹The members of the T.S. know, and those who do not should be told, that the term "Mahatma," now so subtly analysed and contraverted, for some mysterious reasons had never been applied to our Masters before our arrival in India. For years they were known as the "Adept-Brothers," the "Masters" etc. It is the Hindus themselves who began applying the term to the two Teachers. This is no place for an etymological disquisition and the fitness or unfitness of the qualification, in the case of Mahatma. As a *state Mahatmaship* is one thing, as a double noun, *Maha-atma* (Great Soul) quite another one. Hindus ought to know the value of metaphysical Sanskrit terms used; and it is they the first, who have used it to designate the MASTERS.

After six pages (out of the twelve) had been filled with the said charges, the writer admits on the 7th,—that they have been so modified!—"The above" we learn (rather late) "was written under *misapprehension* that the "Rules" bearing date 1885—were the latest. It has since been found that there is a later version of the Rules dated 1886 which *have modified the older rules on a great many points*". So much the better.—Why recall, in such case mistakes in the past if these exist no longer? But the accusers do not see it in this light. They are determined to act as a theosophical Nemesis; and in no way daunted by the discovery, they add that nevertheless "it is *necessary to examine the earlier rules to ascertain the underlying principle*, which rules through the present ones as well". This reminds of the fable of "the Wolf and the Lamb". But—you see—"the chief point is, that the Convention *has no power to make any rules, as such a power is opposed to the spirit of Theosophy,*" . . . etc., etc.

Now this is the most extraordinary argument that could be made. At this rate no Brotherhood, no Association, no Society is possible. More than this; no theosophist, however holy his present life may be, would have the right to call himself one; for were it always found *necessary to examine his earlier life, "to ascertain the underlying principle"* which rules through the nature of the present man—ten to one, he would be found unfit to be called a theosophist! The experiment would hardly be found pleasant to the majority of those whom association with the T.S. has reformed; and of such there are a good many.

After such virulent and severe denunciations one might expect some good, friendly and theosophically *practical* advice. Not at all, and none is offered, since we have been already told (p. 9) that it would be "out of place to suggest any specific measures, as no one who has any faith in

Brotherhood—and in the power of Truth *will fail* to perceive what is necessary”. The President-Founder, has *no faith* in either “Brotherhood,” or “the power of Truth”—apparently. This is made evident by his having *failed* to perceive (a) that the Head Quarters—opened to *all* Theosophists of any race or social position, board and lodging free of charge the whole year round—was an *unbrotherly* Organisation; (b) that “the central office at Adyar for keeping records and concentrating information “with its European and Hindu inmates working *gratuitously* and some helping it with their own money whenever they have it—ought to be carried on, according to the method and principle of George Miller of Bristol, namely, the numerous households and staff of officers at Adyar headed by the Pres^t-Founder ought to kneel every morning in prayer for their bread and milk appealing for their meals to “miracle”; and that finally, and (c) all the good the Society is doing, is no good whatever but “a spiritual wrong,” because it presumes to call “a *limited* line of good work—(theosophy) Divine Wisdom”.

(To be continued)