

The Authenticity of the Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*

by David Reigle

[Note: This article was written in 2014, but never published due to my great respect for the lifelong work of Boris de Zirkoff for Theosophy, and in particular for his careful editing of all the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. This article, in countering his view that the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is not authentic, pertains only to this one view that he held. It should in no way be construed as implying anything more than this.]

After *The Secret Doctrine* was published in two volumes in 1888, a third volume was published in 1897. Author H. P. Blavatsky had died in 1891, so this third volume was edited by Annie Besant. A split in the Theosophical Society occurred in 1895, with the “Besant faction” on one side and the “Judge faction” (William Q. Judge) on the other side. During this time emotions ran high, which produced lasting prejudice on both sides. For this reason, the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was not as warmly received in one side of the Theosophical movement as would have been expected if this split had not occurred. Yet the authenticity of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* does not seem to have been doubted until twenty-five years after its publication. Since 1922 the idea that the third volume we have is not the one intended by Blavatsky has gained wide acceptance in the side of the Theosophical movement that traces its descent through Judge. In 1978 this crossed over to the side that traces its descent through Besant, by way of the publication of the two-volume edition of *The Secret Doctrine* in the H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings* series. This series is published by the Theosophical Publishing House, the publishing arm of the Besant side of the movement. At that time the third volume (which had become the fifth volume in the 1938 Adyar six-volume edition) ceased to be published as part of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings* were very capably compiled and edited by Boris de Zirkoff (1902-1981). All students of her writings are greatly indebted to him for his lifelong work in gathering them and carefully checking all their references. His edition of *The Secret Doctrine* (1978) was the third revision of the original 1888 edition to be published, being preceded by that of Annie Besant and G. R. S. Mead (1893 “third and revised edition,” primarily the work of Mead), and that directed by Josephine Ransom (1938 Adyar edition in six volumes). Like his predecessors, Boris laboriously checked and corrected the references and quotations. Unlike their editions, however, his retained the unedited wording of the 1888 edition, and it retained the pagination of the 1888 edition. This literally put the whole Theosophical movement on the same page, since verbatim or facsimile reprints of the 1888 edition had been published by Theosophy Company and by Theosophical University Press, both representing the Judge side of the movement. Boris came from the Judge side of the movement, so he naturally favored the two-volume edition. When his edition was published in the H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings* series, he relegated the material from the 1897 third volume to the appropriate other volumes of the *Collected Writings*, primarily

volume 14. This is how the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was discontinued in the Besant side of the movement. From then on, no edition of *The Secret Doctrine* that includes the third volume has been available. This has been seen as a tacit acceptance that the third volume is not authentic.

How the Question Arose

How, we must wonder, did the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* come to be seen as not authentic. This was not the case during the first twenty-five years of its life. The view that it is not the real third volume can be traced to a particular source, just like the still widely prevalent view that H. P. Blavatsky is an “impostor” can be traced to the 1885 Hodgson Report. This source is a group of articles by H. N. Stokes published in his magazine, *The O. E. Library Critic*, starting in 1921 with the section titled, “Annie Besant’s Corruption of the Secret Doctrine,”¹ and directly stated in his 1922 article, “The Lost (?) Volumes of ‘The Secret Doctrine’.”² This view was furthered in a book by Alice Leighton Cleather published in 1922, titled *H. P. Blavatsky: A Great Betrayal*, in which she quotes Stokes, in her chapter, “Tampering with H. P. Blavatsky’s Writings.”³ This view was also furthered in an anonymous serial article in 1922, “The Theosophical Movement,” published as a book in 1925, saying, for example, in reference to Besant, “Why did she concoct this spurious ‘Third Volume’ in the first instance?”⁴ The idea that the third volume is spurious was then widely circulated by its being so described in the “Publisher’s Preface” to the edition of *The Secret Doctrine* published by Theosophy Company, from 1925 up to the present. The hostile attitude shown toward Besant in these writings, in which her motives and her character are regularly impugned, is such that facts are made subservient to this preconceived attitude. Vernon Harrison’s evaluation of the Hodgson Report as “a highly partisan document forfeiting all claim to scientific impartiality”⁵ is equally applicable here. Yet it is this material that formed the basis of the widely prevalent view that the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is not authentic.

We learn about Henry Newlin Stokes (1859-1942) in the article, “H. N. Stokes and the O. E. Library Critic,” by James A. Santucci, published in 1986 in *Theosophical History*, that: “From October, 1917 to the end of his life, Dr. Stokes became the most outspoken opponent of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Leadbeater, their followers, and the Liberal Catholic Church, the organization that was to be associated with the T.S. [Theosophical Society] primarily through the influence of its bishop, Mr. Leadbeater. In nearly every issue, the CRITIC would contain an article dealing with the Liberal Catholic Church’s ‘raid’ on the Theosophical Society, express horror and outrage over the sexual proclivities of James Ingall Wedgwood (the founder of the Liberal Catholic Church) or of C. W. Leadbeater, and rail against the ‘idiocies’ and ‘lunacies’ of the new, pseudo-theosophical teachings of Leadbeater and his followers.”⁶ His *O. E. Library Critic* was published from Washington, D.C., U.S.A., where Stokes lived.

That these writings are how this view started is stated by both Stokes and Besant. Stokes lists his pamphlet, “Corruption of Original Blavatsky Texts by Mrs. Besant,” as “containing the first public exposure of Mrs. Besant’s tampering with *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*.”⁷ Besant commented

in her March 1922 editorial, "On the Watch-Tower": "A wild theory has just been started in the U.S.A. that the second edition [i.e., the 1893 "third and revised edition"] of *The Secret Doctrine*, brought out by the London T.P.H. after H.P.B.'s death, was not as H.P.B. wanted it. The insinuation is made that H.P.B. was 'edited' by those in charge of the second edition. The trustees to whom she left the safeguarding of her printed books and unpublished manuscripts were all her own pupils, who had lived with her for years, and they made only such changes as she had herself directed, which consist mainly in the correction of verbal and grammatical errors, and the arrangement of the material of Vol. III. Of the making of rumours there seems to be no end, seeing that for every rumour there are some ready to believe. The theological credulity of 'I believe because it is impossible,' undergoes many reincarnations and transformations."⁸

The initial charge made by Stokes and furthered by Cleather and the anonymous author of "The Theosophical Movement," based on the comparison of the first and "third" editions of *The Secret Doctrine* made by a group of students apparently associated with the latter author, is that Besant and Mead as editors made tens of thousands of changes in the "third" edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. A friend of Stokes formally stated this in *The O. E. Library Critic* the following year as: "We accuse Annie Besant, P.T.S. [President of the Theosophical Society], of being responsible for numerous deliberate, intentional and fundamental mutilations of the various books written by H.P.B., and entrusted to and republished by Mrs. Annie Besant through the publishing house controlled by her."⁹ However, to regard the many changes made in the third edition of *The Secret Doctrine* as something inexcusable, as Stokes and Cleather and anonymous obviously did, is based on a tacit assumption: the tacit assumption that Blavatsky published *The Secret Doctrine* exactly as she wanted it in 1888. Following upon this tacit assumption is the interpretation of editing as tampering, and the overt accusation that Besant intentionally corrupted it. But this tacit assumption cannot stand in view of the clear evidence we have.

The fact that Besant and Mead as editors made tens of thousands of changes in the "third" edition of *The Secret Doctrine* is undoubtedly true, and is not in dispute. Blavatsky was not a native English speaker, and was never confident of her ability to use the language correctly. She tells us that, "When I came to America in 1873, I had not spoken English—which I had learned in my childhood colloquially—for over thirty years. I could understand when I read it, but could hardly speak the language"; that, "Until 1874 I had never written one word in English, . . ."; and, writing shortly before her death in 1891, that, ". . . to the present hour I never write an article, an editorial or even a simple paragraph, without submitting its English to close scrutiny and correction."¹⁰ From Mead's arrival to help in 1889 until her death in 1891 it was Mead to whom she submitted her English for close scrutiny and correction. Before then she had tried, with limited success, to get help with her English in the first edition of *The Secret Doctrine* that was published in 1888.

Blavatsky's writing of *The Secret Doctrine* was well underway in late 1885 when she wrote to A. P. Sinnett: "I talk so unintelligibly, so confusedly, I make generally *such* a mess of what I say, that no wonder I thought you had entirely misunderstood me, . . ."¹¹ In early 1886 she wrote again to him about *The Secret Doctrine* that she was then writing: "Mr. Sinnett, dear, I have *facts* for 20 Vol. like *Isis*

[*Unveiled*]; it is the language, the cleverness for compiling them, that I lack.”¹² Shortly after her move to England in the spring of 1887, she asked Bertram and Archibald Keightley to correct the English in her *Secret Doctrine* manuscript. She gave them free rein in doing so. Other than making minimal corrections, however, they were not willing to do this.

Bertram Keightley wrote: “A day or two after our arrival at Maycot, H.P.B. placed the whole of the so-far completed MSS. in the hands of Dr. Keightley and myself, instructing us to read, punctuate, correct the English, alter, and generally treat it as if it were our own—which we naturally did *not* do, having far too high an opinion of her knowledge to take any liberties with so important a work. But we both read the whole mass of MSS.—a pile over three feet high—most carefully through, correcting the English and punctuation where absolutely indispensable, . . .”¹³

Archibald Keightley wrote: “Very soon after arriving I was handed a part of the MSS. with a request to emendate, excise, alter the English, punctuate, in fact treat it as my own, a privilege I naturally did not avail myself of.”¹⁴ “All through that summer Bertram Keightley and I were engaged in reading, re-reading, copying and correcting. The last amounted to casting some of the sentences in English mould, for many of them were ‘literal translations from the French.’”¹⁵

Archibald later gave more details, showing her complete lack of concern about how they corrected her wording, but her strong wish that it be corrected and made into “right English”: “For me, life was one long wrestle in the mazes of the *Secret Doctrine*, with the effort to suggest a grouping and arrangement and the correction of the foreign turns of language, at the same time retaining Mme. Blavatsky’s very distinctive style. The task was rendered all the more difficult by the absolute indifference of the author. ‘Make it as you see best, my dear,’ was the almost invariable reply, and the matter was not made any better by the others called in to help. They insisted that the original language was to be left unaltered, so that readers of the book might have the chance of taking their choice of the writer’s meaning. Meanwhile the said writer threatened me with the direst pains and penalties if it was not put into ‘right English.’”¹⁶ As may be seen, Blavatsky very seriously wanted the English in her *Secret Doctrine* to be corrected, something the Keightleys were not willing to do.

The Secret Doctrine was published in the fall of 1888. G. R. S. Mead arrived in 1889 to help Blavatsky with her work. In Mead, she found an editor who was willing to correct her English, what she wanted all along. During the last couple years of her life, after Mead’s arrival, she passed all of her writings to him for editing before she published them. She not only approved of his countless changes to her writings during this time, she specifically asked for them. It was Mead who did most of the editing of the 1893 “third and revised edition,” even though the “Preface” is signed by both Besant and Mead. Mead wrote: “I am responsible for by far the major part of this revision of the original edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, . . .”¹⁷ James Morgan Pryse, the printer of this edition, explained: “As Mrs. Besant could spare but little time from her other Theosophical activities, the work of revision was done mostly by Mr. Mead, who was assisted by other members of the staff in verifying quotations and references.”¹⁸ How much confidence Blavatsky had in the editing by Besant and Mead can be seen from the fact that she did not

even check their editing of her Esoteric Instructions, as reported by Pryse: “Mrs. Besant and Mr. Mead revised the Esoteric Instructions precisely as they did later the *Secret Doctrine*, and I did the printing. H.P.B. gave them a free hand and did not even look at the proofs. The only thing she was particular about was the cover design.”¹⁹

Mead writes about his editing in his article, “Facts about ‘The Secret Doctrine’”: “I come now to the editing of the revised edition. My competence, such as it was, and authority for this task depended from the fact that for the last three years of her life, I had Englished, corrected or edited everything H.P.B. wrote for publication, including the MS. of *The Voice of the Silence*, and that, too, with her entire assent and approval. She was quite humble in this respect in regard to the form of the better things she wrote, or had written through her.”²⁰ Pryse, the printer of her writings, also writes: “Up to the time of her death H.P.B. regularly passed on to Mr. Mead the articles she wrote for her magazine, for him to correct and revise the manuscripts before sending them to the printer, and therefore he was certainly better qualified than any one else to do the same with her writings that had been published before she had benefitted by his painstaking assistance. In revising the first edition of the S.D. he did precisely the work which he had formerly done on those manuscripts—only that, and nothing more. For it was obvious to any one familiar with the literary and mechanical details of book-publishing that the manuscript of the S.D. had not been properly prepared for the printer, and that the proof-reading had been so carelessly done that even glaring grammatical errors, inadvertently made by the author, had been allowed to stand. No changes were made by Mr. Mead or by Mrs. Besant except such as should have been made in the original manuscript before printing.”²¹

On the initial charge that regards legitimate editing as tampering is based the overt accusation that Besant intentionally corrupted *The Secret Doctrine*. The corollary of intentionally corrupting Blavatsky’s writings is that Besant was less than honest, allowing Stokes and the writers following him to regularly impugn her motives and her character. The door was now open for charges of full duplicity on the part of Besant, not merely in corrupting the third volume, but in suppressing the real third volume and substituting for it a spurious third volume. Yet all this is based on the tacit but untenable assumption that Blavatsky published *The Secret Doctrine* exactly as she wanted it in 1888.

Far from being less than honest, Besant had established a reputation for being fearlessly honest. She was not only willing to admit it when she was wrong, she positively saw it as a duty to do so. She was one of those rare individuals who is ready to speak the truth, without concern for any personal suffering this may cause her. Blavatsky saw this characteristic in her, and in a letter to Judge written hardly six weeks before Blavatsky’s death spoke of her as “*the soul of honour and uncompromisingly truthful*” (the italics are Blavatsky’s).²² We do not see this quoted by her detractors, but a few lines later we find the words Blavatsky wrote about Besant that are often quoted by her detractors: “She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least—all intellect,” omitting to quote the rest of the sentence: “and yet she hears Master’s voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognises his voice from that of D——.” The letter

continues: “Judge, *she is a most wonderful woman*, my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America.”²³

Besant was the sole editor of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, Mead being then occupied with other work. She begins her “Preface” by explaining what she did: “The task of preparing this volume for the press has been a difficult and anxious one, and it is necessary to state clearly what has been done. The papers given to me by H.P.B. were quite unarranged, and had no obvious order: I have therefore taken each paper as a separate Section, and have arranged them as sequentially as possible. With the exception of the correction of grammatical errors and the elimination of obviously un-English idioms, the papers are as H.P.B. left them, save as otherwise marked. In a few cases I have filled in a gap, but any such addition is enclosed within square brackets, so as to be distinguished from the text.” According to her preface, Besant’s editing of the third volume was rather minimal, more like the Keightleys’ editing of the 1888 two volumes rather than Mead’s editing of the 1893 two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*. These opening lines provide Besant’s own statement of what she did. More of this preface will be quoted below, at the appropriate place.

The Now Standard Account

Today, the most authoritative and influential source on the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is the “Introduction” by Boris de Zirkoff to volume 14 of the H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings* (1985), wherein are published most of the articles that once comprised the third volume. It is titled, “‘The Secret Doctrine—Volume III,’ As Published in 1897: A Survey of its Contents and Authenticity” (pp. xxv-xliv). After the third volume ceased to be published as part of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1978, this now amounts to the official statement on the subject. Boris also wrote about this in his “Historical Introduction” to the 1978 edition, titled “How ‘The Secret Doctrine’ Was Written,” in the section titled “Concerning Volumes Three and Four of ‘The Secret Doctrine’” (pp. [59]-[71]). As mentioned above, Boris came from the Judge side of the Theosophical movement, so we would hardly be surprised to see that perspective reflected in his account of the third volume. Nonetheless, in determining the authenticity of the third volume, it is vitally important to identify any possible bias that might affect the outcome of the inquiry.

Regarding Besant, editor of the third volume, we find the following stated as a fact in the bibliography of Judge that Boris gives in volume 1 of the *Collected Writings* (1966): “It so happened that Annie Besant was especially strongly impressed by the personality of Chakravarti, and from that time on her opinions became colored by his point of view. Playing on her desire for occult powers, Chakravarti ‘captured’ Mrs. Besant in less than two months.”²⁴ A statement like this can no more be proven than can a contrasting one about Judge, written in 1922 by a former follower of Judge and Tingley, Alice Leighton Cleather: “. . . Mr. Judge came under the influence of this woman [Mrs. Katherine Tingley], who is possessed of considerable hypnotic and other dangerous powers. He had consulted her, in her capacity as a medium, which led eventually to her obtaining a complete hold over him, . . .”²⁵ Such statements,

regarding subjective matters, can only be treated as unproven assumptions. Moreover, they involve further assumptions about Chakravarti on the one hand, or about Tingley on the other hand, that are even more unfavorable, and likewise unprovable. The tenability of these assumptions about Besant and Chakravarti is a crucial point for this inquiry.

If we do not follow Stokes and writers like him who attribute deliberate dishonesty to Besant, preferring instead to proceed on the basis of her reputation for fearless honesty and Blavatsky's characterization of her as uncompromisingly truthful, there is still a way that duplicity could have affected her work with the third volume. This would be through the unconscious influence of another. According to Judge, this is in fact what happened to Besant, and Judge identified that person as Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti. He was a university professor and Theosophical lecturer in India who was selected as a delegate to the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.²⁶ At the height of the crisis that led to the split of the Theosophical Society, Judge issued an Esoteric Section circular letter on November 3, 1894, that soon became public. In this circular, titled "By Master's Direction," he wrote that a "plot exists among the Black Magicians, who ever war against the White," that "These Black Magicians have succeeded in influencing certain Brahmans in India through race-pride and ambition," that "The name of the person who was worked upon so as to, if possible, use him as a minor agent of the Black Magicians and for the influencing of Mrs. Besant is Gyanendra N. Chakravarti, a Brahman of Allahabad, India, who came to America on our invitation to the Religious Parliament in 1893," and that "Annie Besant finally lent herself unconsciously to the plot which I detail herein."²⁷

Judge then wrote: "Now, then, either I am bringing you a true message from the Master, or the whole T.S. and E.S.T. is a lie, . . ." He concluded this official letter with an "E.S.T. Order" saying, "under the Master's direction, I declare Mrs. Annie Besant's headship in the E.S.T. at an end," and I "declare myself the sole head of the E.S.T."²⁸ As would be expected, Besant did not accept this as being an authentic order from the Master.

We can now see that when Boris wrote that "Chakravarti 'captured' Mrs. Besant," this is based on accepting Judge's statements about the situation as being factual, which is in turn based on accepting the message from the Master as being authentic. Those on the other side of the Theosophical movement did not accept Judge's statements about the situation as being factual or this message as being an authentic message from the Master. This is the crux of the whole issue that led to the split in the Theosophical Society: the authenticity of messages from the Master(s) received by Judge. To accept that the Judge side is right means to accept that Besant was under evil influence, and therefore that unconscious duplicity could and probably did affect her work regarding the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. This, of course, unduly pre-biases the inquiry. We cannot assume ahead of time that Besant acted under the influence of Chakravarti, and that Chakravarti acted under the influence of Black Magicians. The statement made earlier by Boris that "Chakravarti 'captured' Mrs. Besant" alerts us to use his account of the authenticity of the third volume, widely regarded as authoritative, with caution.

That caution is warranted can be seen as we proceed through the account of the authenticity of the third volume written by Boris. The following phrases are used by him in regard to Besant: “blatantly violated” (p. xxvi), “blunt contradiction” (p. xxx fn.), “flat contradiction” (p. xxxii), “temerity” (p. xlili), “ridiculous and unfair” (p. xlili). The next question is whether these phrases pertain to mere statements of fact or whether they bias the facts. The first of these, “blatantly violated,” pertains to the often-repeated charge that, in including the Esoteric Instructions in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, Besant broke her pledge, and the implications regarding her character that this would lead to. Boris writes (pp. xxvi-xxvii): “These *Instructions* and *Notes* were given under a solemn pledge of secrecy which was blatantly violated by their publication.” However, Besant specifically informed us in her “Note” preceding the Esoteric Papers in the third volume: “Papers I. II. III. of the following were written by H.P.B and were circulated privately during her lifetime, but they were written with the idea that they would be published after a time. . . . The ‘Notes of some Oral Teaching’ were written down by some of her pupils and were partially corrected by her, . . . they are published with her consent, the time for restricting them to a limited circle having expired.”²⁹

The charge that Besant broke her Esoteric School pledge in publishing the Esoteric Papers in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* has been repeated for a long time. It is hardly possible that those who made it could have missed this “Note” by Besant, since it immediately precedes the very papers that the charge pertains to. To repeat this charge as a statement of fact, one must assume lack of honesty on the part of Besant in saying that this material was published with Blavatsky’s consent, as well as lack of integrity on the part of Besant in breaking the pledge. James M. Pryse, who had followed the Judge side after the split, was the first to make this charge, in a reply to an editorial by G. R. S. Mead in 1897: “True, they were given her under a solemn pledge of secrecy, which she has violated; . . .”³⁰ As we will see below, Boris in his account of the authenticity of the third volume adopted some phrases directly from this piece by Pryse. However, Pryse retracted “unequivocally” what he erroneously said in this piece in an article published in 1927, explaining that “I made a reply, fully as injudicious [as Mead’s editorial], in which my indignant pen, dipped in partisan rancor, put down as facts certain assertions that had been whispered about as coming from an ‘occult’ authority.”³¹ Like Cleather (quoted above), Pryse had then come to believe that: “Broken in health, his mental faculties greatly impaired, Mr. Judge fell completely under the sway of this spirit-medium, even accepting as genuine communications from the Masters which he received from her; and upon his death she promptly became his successor.”³²

Pryse in 1926 and in 1939 recounted asking Besant about the publishing of the Esoteric Papers in the third volume and her reply that she did so with Blavatsky’s consent. Pryse established and ran the H.P.B. Press in association with the London headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe, where he lived from 1890 to 1894. After the publication of the third and revised edition of *The Secret Doctrine* in two volumes in 1893, work had begun on the third volume. About this volume Pryse wrote in 1926: “As it contained far less matter than either of the other volumes, Mrs. Besant told me that she would pad it out by adding the E.S.T. Instructions, since H.P.B. had told her she might do so.”³³ Similarly, Pryse wrote in

1939: “. . . which Mrs. Besant subsequently brought out as Vol. III., in which she included the Instructions. When I asked her why she added them she replied that H. P. B. had authorized her to do so, and that the other material was too scanty to make up a volume.”³⁴

Just as the statement made by Boris about Besant’s pledge being “blatantly violated” assumed her guilt from the outset, so did his statements about her “blunt contradiction” and “flat contradiction.” They could hardly have been made if he was writing about a friend, or even a mere acquaintance. Boris quotes (p. xxx) Besant’s 1897 Preface to the third volume: “the papers given to me [Annie Besant] by H.P.B. were quite unarranged, and had no obvious order: I have therefore taken each paper as a separate Section, and have arranged them as sequentially as possible;”. Here Boris adds this footnote: “In blunt contradiction of this statement, we are told by Mrs. Besant in 1922 (*The Theosophist* for March) that in revising *The Secret Doctrine* for the 1893 edition, ‘the trustees . . . made only such changes as she [H.P.B.] had herself directed, which consist mainly in the correction of verbal and grammatical errors, and the arrangement of the material of Vol. III.’ If H.P.B. herself left directions how Volume III, as published in 1897, should be arranged, what becomes of their allegedly ‘chaotic’ condition?” A more charitable reading of Besant’s statement, and one that is fully consistent with English grammar, would be to construe only the clause “which consist mainly in the correction of verbal and grammatical errors” with the immediately preceding “changes as she [H.P.B.] had herself directed,” and to construe the subsequent clause “and the arrangement of the material of Vol. III” as what the trustees did in addition to correcting the verbal and grammatical errors as H.P.B. had directed. There is no contradiction here, blunt or otherwise.

Likewise with the “flat contradiction” (p. xxxii). Here Boris quotes a newspaper interview with Besant by William Mullis of Oct. 6, 1926. Boris did not attempt to give full references, but as comparison will show, this quotation and the accompanying charge of contradiction was copied from a 1938 article by Stokes.³⁵ The quotation from the newspaper interview begins: “Mr. Mulliss: Your critics have insisted that somebody or other has deliberately suppressed the Third and Fourth Volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* to which H.P.B. makes reference in the First Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.” It ends: “Mr. Mulliss: Well what about the material for the Third and Fourth Volumes?” “Mrs. A. Besant: I never saw them and do not know what has become of them.” Boris comments: “Not only do we run here into a flat contradiction of the statement made in the Preface of the published Volume concerning the nature of ‘The Mystery of Buddha’ Sections, but we are also told that the mass of miscellaneous writings under discussion was found in H.P.B.’s desk after her death, and that Mrs. Besant took these under her own charge, although we had just been made to believe that H.P.B. herself had given these papers to Mrs. Besant.” The statement by Besant that Boris refers to was quoted earlier by him (pp. xxx-xxxii) with the words: “She then goes on to say, in regard to ‘The Mystery of Buddha’ Sections, that these ‘were given into my [Annie Besant’s] hands to publish, as part of the Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine* . . .” The “flat contradiction,” then, apparently refers to Besant stating in this Preface that she was given material to publish as part of the third volume, while in the newspaper interview she is reported as saying she never saw the third and fourth volumes. What Boris takes the third and fourth volumes as referring to here is spelled out by

Stokes: “. . . she knows nothing of the Third Volume mentioned by H.P.B. in the original *Secret Doctrine*.”³⁶ While this alleged contradiction might fit well into a preconceived theory that the real third volume was deliberately suppressed, there is a much simpler interpretation of Besant’s words, assuming that they were reported correctly: She never saw the third and fourth volumes, referring to those that were alleged to have been suppressed.

Here Boris writes, using the words of Stokes, that William Mullis, Managing Editor of the *Hamilton Spectator* (Ontario, Canada), was “a competent reporter and for ten years an earnest student of *The Secret Doctrine*,” and that he quotes from the “complete *verbatim* report of the interview.”³⁷ Boris, copying Stokes, has the word *verbatim* in italics, although in those days before the use of tape recorders this would have been hard to achieve. Indeed, Boris in his “Historical Introduction” to his 1978 edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, after quoting from a newspaper interview with Archibald Keightley about the third and fourth volumes, writes (p. [63]): “We cannot lay too much trust in the record of a newspaper interview which usually distorts more than it reports; . . .” This would give us all the more reason to understand what Besant meant here as that she never saw the third and fourth volumes that were alleged to have been suppressed, the ones that Mullis was asking her about. This is for the simple reason that, in accordance with all her statements made elsewhere, they never existed. The only third volume that existed is the one she published. Again, there is no contradiction here, flat or otherwise.

As for Besant’s statement that these papers were given to her by H.P.B., and her statement that they were found in H.P.B.’s desk after her death, there is likewise no contradiction. Besant was asked by Blavatsky in the spring of 1891 to go to the United States and to bring a message from H.P.B. to the American Convention of the Theosophical Society.³⁸ Besant had been living with Blavatsky at the London headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe along with nine others: Archibald Keightley, Bertram Keightley, Countess Wachtmeister, George Mead, Claude Wright, Walter Old, Emily Kislingbury, Isabel Cooper Oakley, and James Pryse.³⁹ Besant left London for the United States in early April.⁴⁰ At that time, H.P.B. was in her then usual state of health, not good health, but with no sign of dying soon. In the preceding months she had resumed working on the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, as reported by her students Claude Wright and Alice Cleather.⁴¹ She would, of course, need these papers to continue her revisions of them, so would not have physically given them to Besant before Besant’s departure to America. Blavatsky’s desk drawers and cupboards were sealed up after her death on May 8 until Besant’s arrival back, for the very reason that everyone then involved acknowledged that Besant was to receive Blavatsky’s papers and belongings.

Constance Wachtmeister, who was present shortly after Blavatsky’s death, wrote that: “. . . I had searched diligently and minutely for various articles belonging to H.P.B. after her death, thus obeying certain instructions given by her to me, . . . H.P.B.’s property, which I had thus collected, I handed over to Annie Besant on her arrival in England from America.”⁴² Wachtmeister’s statement was endorsed by Isabel Cooper-Oakley and Laura Mary Cooper: “We, with Mr. Mead, were present when Countess Wachtmeister made the search referred to, and after everything had been carefully examined, all

cupboards, drawers and boxes were sealed up in our presence until Mrs. Besant's return."⁴³ Among the papers then handed over to Besant, apparently according to Blavatsky's wishes, would have been the papers that Blavatsky had been revising for the third volume.

Besant in the 1926 newspaper interview is reported to have said: ". . . the matter from which I compiled the Third Volume of 'Occultism' in *The Secret Doctrine*, published under my direction was compiled from a mass of miscellaneous writings found in her desk after her death." This was not a *mere* "mass of miscellaneous writings," if her words were here reported accurately, since it avowedly included the third volume matter. Besant was fully aware of the fact that Blavatsky had been working on the third volume in the preceding months, and had then seen the manuscript. We see this from her testimony given on May 4, 1891, while still in the United States, in Blavatsky's law suit against Elliott Coues and the *New York Sun* newspaper: "There is one other work of hers, which I have seen in manuscript, still unpublished; a third volume of 'The Secret Doctrine' which is now being got ready for the press under my own eyes."⁴⁴

Further in relation to Besant's statement about these papers being given into her hands to publish as part of the third volume, Boris brings in another point that has often been made by critics since 1922. It is the fact that in the 1893 third and revised edition of *The Secret Doctrine* the several references to the third and fourth volumes were all silently deleted by the editors, Annie Besant and G. R. S. Mead. This fact has often been cited as clear evidence that the real third volume was suppressed. Boris writes (p. xxxi): "If these references were eliminated because, in the view of the editor, no such Volumes ever existed, how is it that anything could have been handed over to Mrs. Besant by H. P. B. specifically as part of a Third Volume?" But these references were not eliminated because alleged real volumes different from the published third volume were suppressed. The reason for deleting these references is far more innocent. The printer of this edition, James Pryse, wrote in 1927 after this charge had become widely circulated: "There never were any plates, never was a fourth volume, and the third volume was to have been the first volume. Hence in the revised edition the references to volumes three and four were stricken out as superfluous and misleading, since the third volume was to be published immediately and the fourth volume was never written."⁴⁵ The primary editor of this edition, G. R. S. Mead, also in 1927 replied similarly to this charge.⁴⁶

Near the end of his account of the third volume, Boris speaks of Besant's "temerity" and that this is "both ridiculous and unfair" (p. xlili). Besant, the sole editor of the third volume, had written in her "Preface" to this volume (pp. xix-xx), immediately after the opening lines quoted above:

"In 'The Mystery of Buddha' a further difficulty arose; some of the Sections had been written four or five times over, each version containing some sentences that were not in the others; I have pieced these versions together, taking the fullest as basis, and inserting therein everything added in any other versions. It is, however, with some hesitation that I have included these Sections in the *Secret Doctrine*. Together with some most suggestive thought, they contain very numerous errors of fact, and many statements based on exoteric writings, not on esoteric knowledge. They were given into my hands to

publish, as part of the Third Volume of the *Secret Doctrine*, and I therefore do not feel justified in coming between the author and the public, either by altering the statements, to make them consistent with fact, or by suppressing the Sections. She says she is acting entirely on her own authority, and it will be obvious to any instructed reader that she makes—possibly deliberately—many statements so confused that they are mere bluffs, and other statements—probably inadvertently—that are nothing more than the exoteric misunderstandings of esoteric truths. The reader must here, as everywhere, use his own judgment, but feeling bound to publish these Sections, I cannot let them go to the public without a warning that much in them is certainly erroneous. Doubtless, had the author herself issued this book, she would have entirely re-written the whole of this division; as it was, it seemed best to give all she had said in the different copies, and to leave it in its rather unfinished state, for students will best like to have what she said as she said it, even though they may have to study it more closely than would have been the case had she remained to finish her work.”

It is this that Boris responded to with his statements about Besant’s “temerity” that is “ridiculous and unfair” in his account of the third volume (p. xlili):

“She says in regard to the Sections under the general title of ‘The Mystery of the Buddha’ that she included them with ‘some hesitation,’ because ‘together with some most suggestive thought, they contain very numerous errors of fact, and many statements based on exoteric⁴⁷ writings, not on esoteric knowledge.’ This general trend of ideas is repeated several times and enlarged upon. It is curious, to say the least, that anybody from among the then recently acquired followers of H.P.B. would have had the temerity of pointing out the alleged errors of H.P.B.’s statements and of comparing them with an implied, even if not actually expressed, correct knowledge on his or her part of what the true esoteric doctrine was on any subject under consideration.”

“Considering that the Sections entitled ‘The Mystery of the Buddha’ contain some of the most recondite teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy, including certain tenets merely hinted at and which do not occur anywhere else in the entire literary output of H.P.B., not even in *The Secret Doctrine*, any statement implying greater knowledge concerning these mystical tenets is both ridiculous and unfair.”

However, it is quite possible to say that an esoteric writing contains “many statements based on exoteric writings,” and thus “very numerous errors of fact,” without implying any claim to esoteric knowledge. Anyone who will read the relevant exoteric writings is in a position to say this. When in exoteric writings published before *The Secret Doctrine* we find statements that are also found in *The Secret Doctrine*, statements that are often demonstrably erroneous due to the imperfect knowledge of those early writers, we can call them “errors of fact” with no implication of esoteric knowledge on our part. So Besant’s statements do not necessarily imply “greater knowledge concerning these mystical tenets” or a “correct knowledge on her part of what the true esoteric doctrine was,” and I do not read them as implying this. I have myself found copied in Blavatsky’s writings numerous errors of fact based on exoteric writings; this being quite verifiable without any esoteric knowledge, but solely on the basis of other and more reliable exoteric sources. The predisposition that leads to seeing a blatant violation where there was

no violation at all, and to seeing a blunt contradiction and a flat contradiction where there was no contradiction at all, would also lead to seeing “temerity” where there was none, and to regard this supposed temerity as “ridiculous and unfair.” The danger here is that once a claim of greater esoteric knowledge is attributed to Besant, it then becomes possible to extrapolate that, since she thinks she knows more than Blavatsky, she therefore altered Blavatsky’s writings. As we know, this charge has in fact often been made.

The 1897 piece by James Pryse that he later retracted is, in effect, a review of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. He quotes from Besant’s “Preface” the same statement about the Sections on “The Mystery of Buddha” that Boris responded to: “Together with some most suggestive thought, they contain very numerous errors of fact, and many statements based on exoteric writings, not on esoteric knowledge.” Pryse at that time apparently also thought that Besant was here claiming greater esoteric knowledge, commenting: “She has published these erroneous statements of H.P.B. when she might with her own pen have given us the inside facts about the mystery of Buddha.”⁴⁸ About this third volume, Pryse continues: “If it had been printed as H.P.B. wrote it, then Theosophists generally would have prized it; but Mrs. Besant and others having edited it, they will regard it with a just suspicion.” We notice here, like in the rest of the review, that Pryse does not doubt the authenticity of the third volume. As far as I could find, no one called it “spurious” until 1922. What Pryse was here suspicious of is Besant’s editing of Blavatsky’s volume. He then regarded Besant as one who has “not scrupled to mutilate her literary work,” who has “sought to decry her in insulting prefaces and notes,” and has made many “unwarrantable changes.” He concluded: “. . . it is to be feared that Vol. III. is practically lost to the world, hopelessly mutilated as it now is.”⁴⁹ This is how Pryse wrote when predisposed to see Besant as at fault. Later, when no longer predisposed to see Besant as at fault, the following is how Pryse wrote:

“In justice to Mr. Mead and Mrs. Besant, . . . I wish to state, from my personal knowledge, that the oft-repeated charges that they, or either of them, made unwarranted changes in the revised (third) edition of the S.D., tampered with the manuscript of the third volume, and suppressed the fourth volume, are wholly false, with no foundation whatever in fact.” “. . . Living as I did for four years in the family group at the London headquarters over which Mrs. Besant presided, and knowing that both she and Mr. Mead, during all those years, were devoted followers of H.P.B., sincere, honorable, truthful and conscientious, I cannot leave uncontradicted the mendacious statements and insinuations that they, my old comrades, mutilated, corrupted, suppressed or made any dishonest use of the writings left by their teacher, H.P.B.”⁵⁰

About what he wrote in 1897, Pryse explained that: “In the stormily disputatious days of the Theosophical quarrel over the ‘Judge affair’ there appeared in *Lucifer*, July, 1897, an editorial by Mr. Mead in which he referred slightly and hypercritically to H.P.B.’s work and writings, and characterized a large body of Theosophists as ‘tanhic elements’ whose secession from the Society was ‘its recent purification.’ In these days of more philosophic calm Mr. Mead would, no doubt, agree with me that the editorial was uncalled-for and injudicious. In *Theosophy*, Sept., 1897, I made a reply, fully as injudicious, in which my indignant pen, dipped in partisan rancor, put down as facts certain assertions that had been

whispered about as coming from an 'occult' authority. Now that this article has been recalled by your English correspondent and resurrected bodily by Dr. Stokes, for doing which he has my thanks, I am glad of the opportunity to retract unequivocally not only the erroneous statements it contains but also all other articles penned by me which may reflect on any of the old-time Theosophists or uphold the *regime* of the so-called successor of Mr. Judge.”⁵¹

Not only did Stokes utilize this 1897 piece that Pryse then retracted as being “injudicious,” so did Boris in writing his account of the authenticity of the third volume. Pryse there refers to Mead’s 1897 editorial as an “apology,” and does so twice: “‘On the Watch-tower’ in LUCIFER . . . Mr. Mead in the July number, in his apology for Vol. III. of *The Secret Doctrine*.” (p. 314); “. . . Mr. Mead . . . the concluding passage of his apology for Vol. III.” (p. 316). Boris, too, refers to Mead’s 1897 editorial as an “apology,” and does so twice: “Writing in ‘On the Watch-Tower,’ in *Lucifer*, Vol. XX, July, 1897, pp. 353-54, after the appearance of Volume III, G. R. S. Mead gives the following apology concerning the matter contained in it.” (pp. xxxvii:); “The unsigned reviewer of Volume III in the pages of *The Theosophist* seems to agree with Mead’s apology . . .” (xxxix:). Pryse adds: “With admirable adroitness Mr. Mead shifts all responsibility for it . . . upon the shoulders of Mrs. Besant.” (p. 314); Boris adds: “In view of his [Mead’s] positive statement, which very adroitly shifts the responsibility upon the shoulders of Mrs. Besant, . . .” (p. xxxviii). The fact that Boris adopted words directly from this 1897 piece that Pryse retracted as being “injudicious” is just one more flag alerting us to use his account of the authenticity of the third volume with caution.

Regarding his account, I raised the question as to whether five particular phrases used by Boris in regard to Besant pertain to mere statements of fact or whether they bias the facts. I believe that what is given above makes it clear that they bias the facts. This is something that readers of his account would not expect, because it is presented as providing the facts needed to dispose of misconceptions and to remove confusion. Boris writes near the beginning of his account of the authenticity of the third volume: “There exist in the minds of many students, both within and outside of the Theosophical Organizations, a variety of misconceptions concerning the nature and contents of the Volume, which, as so many other misunderstandings, are very likely due to lack of adequate information, as well as lack of real interest to determine for themselves the known facts concerning this subject. Yet such facts are very numerous and, when carefully considered, should dispose of most of the existing misconceptions.” (pp. xxv-xxvi). Boris writes near the end of his account: “It should, however, be noted that Mead indulges in the passage above quoted in a totally unwarranted generalization which is apt to produce a wrong impression, unless facts are known. . . . Unless these various angles are borne in mind, confusion will result, and the picture of events will be blurred.” (p. xxxix). In fact, the picture will also be blurred if the facts are biased in accordance with a prepossessed view.

We are led to believe that we are getting a fully objective account of the authenticity of the third volume, but this is hardly possible when clear bias is shown toward the editor of that volume, Annie Besant. We have seen the source of this bias when Boris stated as a fact that “Chakravarti ‘captured’

Mrs. Besant.” This showed that Boris had long ago accepted as factual the perspective of the Judge side of the Theosophical movement, and therefore as less than factual the perspective of the Besant side of the movement. The account by Boris assumes Besant’s guilt ahead of time, that Besant had fallen under evil influence and therefore was no longer trustworthy. This prepossessed view regarding Besant goes hand in hand with a prepossessed view regarding the authenticity of the third volume. Once we know that his account reflects a prepossessed view, we can no longer regard it as fully objective, and therefore as authoritative. What has come to be seen as the most authoritative source on the authenticity of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, one that now, after the third volume ceased to be published as part of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1978, amounts to the official statement on the subject, in fact gives us not a fully objective account, but rather one that assumes beforehand the lack of authenticity of the third volume. We need a re-examination of the facts, a new analysis of the evidence.

A Re-examination of the Evidence

A new study appeared in 1995 titled, “The Myth of the ‘Missing’ Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*,” by Daniel H. Caldwell.⁵² Daniel started out holding what had become the received opinion, the status quo since 1978, that the third volume is not authentic. In attempting to verify this premise, he found just the opposite. This led to the writing of his article. Daniel begins by giving examples of the received opinion, including these three statements by Boris: “The *real* Volume III . . . vanished without a trace. [Boris de Zirkoff in H.P.B.’s *Collected Writings*, 7: 226 fn]”; “The prospective Volume III . . . never saw the light. [de Zirkoff in SD 1: 679 (*Collected Writings* edition)]”; “It is possible that H.P.B. had in mind an additional [third] volume of *The Secret Doctrine* which was never actually found among her papers. [de Zirkoff in CW 14: 1].” As these statements show, Boris did not believe that we have the real third volume. We can also see this in the conclusion to his account of the authenticity of the third volume that we have been discussing, the “Introduction” to volume 14, *Miscellaneous*, of the *Collected Writings* by Blavatsky:

“In view of the evidence brought forth in the foregoing pages, and on the basis of the actual nature of the material contained in the volume under discussion, it seems unjust and contrary to common sense to have entitled it Volume III of H.P.B.’s monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*.” (p. xli); “To make of this material an integral portion of *The Secret Doctrine* and without any explanation whatsoever as to its nature, origin or source, is unfair to the memory of H.P.B., misleading to the student, and therefore unwarranted.” (p. xlii).

The explanation as to its nature, origin or source provided by Boris is that it is miscellaneous material, not the real third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* intended by Blavatsky. In Mead’s 1897 editorial, or “apology,” we read for the first time the characterization of the material comprising the third volume as *disjecta membra*, or “scattered fragments.” This led to the view that, although this material was no doubt written by Blavatsky, it is not what she intended as the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. This is the view that is widely accepted in the Judge side of the Theosophical movement. Its acceptance by Boris,

editor of the Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, is why the third volume is no longer published as part of *The Secret Doctrine*, but its material is instead published in the Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, mostly in volume 14 titled *Miscellaneous* (as to the date it was written).

Daniel's methodology was to gather the available information, to limit this to accounts written in the years close to the events (as opposed to memories written decades later), to arrange it in strict chronological order, and to see where this leads. He writes: "The *focus* of this paper has been on *primary source* documents (various letters, articles, and the Wurzburg Manuscript) written during the years 1885-1897."⁵³ What emerged as the Rosetta Stone, the key to the whole question, was the statement made by Bertram Keightley in 1890 and again in 1893, that the first volume became the third volume. Bertram and Archibald Keightley, after reading through the manuscript of *The Secret Doctrine* given to them by Blavatsky in May, 1887, advised her to make what she had intended as the first volume into the third volume. Bertram's first statement is from the report of a convention lecture he gave in December, 1890, and his second statement is from his account of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* that he wrote for a book of reminiscences published in 1893:

" . . . H.P.B. handed over to him the manuscript of the 'Secret Doctrine,' with a request that he should read it through. He read through the substance of the two volumes published, and the third still unpublished, . . . what would now be the 3rd volume of the history of Occultism was to have been the first volume, while the treatises on Cosmogony and the Genesis of Man were to form a later series, . . . He then drafted a scheme with the natural and obvious order, namely, the Evolution of the Universe and the Evolution of man, &c., &c. The next thing they did was to re-arrange, with his brother's [actually his nephew's] help, the manuscript according to the scheme, . . ."⁵⁴

"But we both read the whole mass of MSS.—a pile over three feet high—most carefully through, . . . and then, after prolonged consultation, faced the author in her den . . . with the solemn opinion that the whole of the matter must be re-arranged on some definite plan, . . ." ". . . Finally we laid before her a plan, suggested by the character of the matter itself, *viz.*, to make the work consist of four volumes, each divided into three parts: (1) the Stanzas and Commentaries thereon; (2) Symbolism; (3) Science. Further, instead of making the first volume to consist, as she had intended, of the history of some great Occultists, we advised her to follow the natural order of exposition, and begin with the Evolution of Cosmos, to pass from that to the Evolution of Man, then to deal with the historical part in a third volume treating of the lives of some great Occultists; and finally, to speak of Practical Occultism in a fourth volume should she ever be able to write it." "This plan we laid before H.P.B., and it was duly sanctioned by her." "The next step was to read the MSS. through again and make a general re-arrangement of the matter pertaining to the subjects coming under the heads of Cosmogony and Anthropology, which were to form the first two volumes of the work."⁵⁵

This they did. After getting her approval, they rearranged her manuscript accordingly. In this way *The Secret Doctrine* came to be published in 1888 in two volumes, on "Cosmogogenesis" and "Anthropogenesis," respectively, while the material that Blavatsky had originally intended as the first

volume was held over for a third volume. It is important to note how Bertram described this material, as “the history of Occultism,” and as “the history of some great Occultists,” or “the lives of some great Occultists.” After the rearrangement was made, Blavatsky described her third volume in similar terms. Her descriptions have been taken by some as proof that we do not have the real third volume intended by her. But this is how Bertram described the material that was moved from the first volume to become the third volume.

That the facts are as Bertram reported them was dramatically confirmed by the discovery of the “Würzburg manuscript,” announced in 1922, in which we find this very arrangement. The Würzburg manuscript is an incomplete copy of *The Secret Doctrine*, made by two or more scribes, and sent to India in the fall of 1886 for possible revision by T. Subba Row. In this manuscript, the second half consists of the stanzas and commentaries on cosmogenesis and a few on anthropogenesis, while the first half consists of chapters showing the existence of the mysteries in western history and accounts of the lives of some adepts. This first half provides us with a large sample of the material that Bertram described as “the history of Occultism,” and as “the history of some great Occultists,” or “the lives of some great Occultists,” and Blavatsky’s descriptions of the third volume match Bertram’s descriptions of this material. It is this material that was moved from the first volume to become the third volume. Blavatsky had originally intended this material as a necessary introduction to the stanzas on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis from the “Book of Dzyan” that form the basis of the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* published in 1888. That is why it appears in the first part of the Würzburg manuscript.

Most of the material found in the first half of the Würzburg manuscript, what was originally intended by Blavatsky to form the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, is now found in the third volume published in 1897. Much of its first section was incorporated into the “Introductory” to *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, 1888. The rest of its sections largely comprise sections 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 23, 29, 30, 35, and 37 of *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 3, 1897. From Blavatsky’s letters describing what she then wrote and what she sent to India, Daniel has estimated that the Würzburg manuscript we have represents about a third or a fourth of the whole. Based on this fact, the remainder of the Würzburg manuscript that is now lost would very likely have consisted of the remaining material now found in the third volume (of course, leaving aside the Esoteric Papers). As stated by Bertram Keightley, the first volume became the third volume. What the Würzburg manuscript shows beyond any doubt is that a substantial amount of the material that was published in 1897 as part of the third volume was in fact written by Blavatsky as part of *The Secret Doctrine*.

After the charges were made in 1922 that the 1897 third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was spurious, the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in France, Charles Blech, wrote to Bertram Keightley about this. Bertram’s reply provides our most definitive evidence on the authenticity of the published third volume. If anyone besides Blavatsky knew what was in the original *Secret Doctrine* manuscript, it was Bertram and Archibald Keightley, and we have no statement from Archibald. Bertram’s statement forms the one exception to Daniel’s policy of not including in his article material published after

1897. The reason for this exception is clear: The authenticity of the third volume was not called into question until 1922, so there was no reason for anyone to make a statement confirming its authenticity until then. Daniel quoted its key sentence: “As regards the matter intended by H.P.B. for future volumes—besides the two first published under her own supervision—all this material has been published in the *third* volume which contains absolutely *all* that H.P.B. has left in manuscript.”⁵⁶ This was quoted from the English translation given in an article by Stokes, who of course had quoted this letter only to counter it with his corruption charges. Because of its importance, I here quote the whole letter. Blech published Bertram’s reply in French in the *Bulletin Théosophique*, April 1923, pp. 66-67, introducing it with these words (in English translation): “Mr. Bertram Keightley, to whom we had sent Mr. Stokes’ accusatory leaflet, replied to us from Lucknow, India, Dec. 6, 1922, as follows:”

“As for the printed matter which accompanies your letter, it is simply stupid. First of all, our friend (Mr. Chakravarti by name) has had nothing *at all* to say about or do with the second edition (the so-called Besant edition) of *The Secret Doctrine* and it is rather Mr. Mead much more than Mrs. Besant who was responsible for it.”

“As regards the matter intended by H.P.B. for future volumes—besides the two first published under her own supervision—all this material has been published in the *third* volume which contains absolutely *all* that H.P.B. has left in manuscript. Mrs. Besant even believed it her duty to publish a certain number of manuscripts which to my mind were not left by H.P.B. in a sufficiently advanced state to really justify the publication of them.”

“These are the facts, but such rumours, such fables and romances are circulated regarding the past history of the T.S., that no one can keep in touch with them. As for attempting to correct them it is simply an impossible task and for my part I gave it up long ago.”⁵⁷

The key fact that the *Secret Doctrine* manuscript was rearranged so that the first volume became the third volume, and the key statement by Bertram Keightley that all of this material was published in the third volume of 1897, both fully supported by the clear evidence that the Würzburg manuscript provides, caused Daniel to conclude that the idea of a missing third volume is a myth. This is what a re-examination of all the evidence led to. The 1897 third volume we have is the same material that was moved from the first volume, and that Blavatsky then described as forthcoming in the third volume; it is not miscellaneous material or *disjecta membra*.

A Suggested Restoration

Until Daniel Caldwell re-discovered the fact that the first volume became the third volume and published this information in 1995, what seems to have been the sole voice stating it was James Morgan Pryse. Pryse did this in three articles published in 1927 in the comparatively obscure pages of *The Canadian Theosophist*. Pryse there quoted both Bertram’s 1890 statement and his 1893 statement on the rearranging of the volumes, and also suggested that *The Secret Doctrine* be restored to its original

arrangement. After quoting Bertram's 1893 statement, Pryse wrote in the first of these articles: "Thus, it will be seen, what is now the third volume was intended by H.P.B. to be the first, while the fourth volume was only a possibility. In one of her letters to Mr. Sinnett (*Letters*, p. 195) H.P.B. states that she had written the introductory portion, giving an historical sketch of magic, a description of the Mysteries and some rites, etc. All the material she here describes, terming it the 'Prologue,' is in the third volume, to which it was transferred by the Keightleys."⁵⁸

Pryse in his next article, after pointing out evidence of this rearrangement that can be seen in Blavatsky's "Introductory" to the published first volume, suggested that the material be restored to an arrangement more in conformity with how Blavatsky had originally written it: "In the published statements of Dr. A. Keightley and Mr. B. Keightley the fact is brought out clearly that in re-arranging the manuscript of H.P.B.'s 'Secret Doctrine' they divided it into three volumes, as now published, and transferred to the third volume the material which in H.P.B.'s original arrangement constituted the first volume." . . .

"Now, the arrangement of the material of the S.D. as made by the Messrs Keightley, and now found in the published work, was no doubt the best they could contrive when confronted with the problem of H.P.B.'s rather chaotic manuscript; but that arrangement results in serious disadvantages. For, after a sketchy 'Introductory,' followed by a digressive and polemic 'Proem,' the reader is plunged at once into the abstruse Stanzas from the 'Book of Dzyan.' He is not even told the meaning of the word *Dzyan*, save obscurely in a footnote on p. xx., and for information concerning the book itself he must turn to volume iii., p. 405."

"At the end of the Commentaries in this first volume he comes upon a 'Summing Up.' (p. 269) consisting largely of new matter, and then finds 370 pages, containing 33 'magazine articles,' to be read before taking up the Stanzas and Commentaries in vol. ii., at the point where they left off in vol. i."

"Further, H.P.B. seems to take it for granted that her readers are familiar with 'Esoteric Buddhism,' to which she refers in her Preface; and certainly any one who has not read that book will find many things obscure in the S.D. Therefore I would recommend that the student should take up 'Esoteric Buddhism' first, and then read vol. iii. (H.P.B.'s 'enormous' Prologue), skipping the 'Papers' added to it, before undertaking the study of the Stanzas and Commentaries in vol. i., passing from these directly to their continuation in vol. ii., and leaving to the last all the 'magazine articles' in the two volumes."

"The S.D. would be much improved, and its usefulness greatly increased, if in subsequent editions its material should be re-arranged as indicated above, thus making it conform approximately to H.P.B.'s original plan."⁵⁹

After quoting Bertram's 1890 statement in the third of these articles, Pryse reiterated his suggestion that the material be restored to an arrangement more in conformity with how Blavatsky had originally written it: "According to Mr. B. Keightley the present third volume was originally the first, but was left unpublished after the publication of the other two volumes, which [in] H.P.B.'s arrangement of her manuscript were the second and third." . . . "Fortunately, the damage they innocently did, by arranging its material to accord with a modern 'scientific' theory which is exactly contrary to the occult tenet, is by no

means irreparable. Any accurate scholar, versed in ancient philosophy, and trained in literary work, could easily rearrange the contents of the three volumes in proper sequence, and make all necessary corrections, thus shaping it into a comprehensible and serviceable text-book for students, which it really is not in its present form.”⁶⁰

Supplement:

The Miscellaneous Material or *Disjecta Membra* Theory

The conclusion arrived at by Daniel Caldwell and earlier by James Morgan Pryse, that the third volume we have is the material that was moved there from the first volume rather than miscellaneous material or *disjecta membra*, will be convincing to many readers. For them there is no need to read any farther in this article. For others, however, there may remain the question of why many serious students of *The Secret Doctrine* have thought that the third volume described by Blavatsky is missing, and that what we have in the 1897 third volume is miscellaneous material or *disjecta membra*.

The *disjecta membra* theory is that the third volume published in 1897 consists of miscellaneous material that was either rejected from the first two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* or was never intended as part of *The Secret Doctrine*. As already noted, Mead’s review of the third volume in his 1897 editorial in effect started this theory, although it does not appear to have been associated with the idea that the third volume is spurious until that idea arose in 1922. Mead apparently did not take cognizance of the fact that the first volume became the third volume as stated by Bertram Keightley in 1890 and in 1893. Mead wrote in his 1897 review:

“In fact, until we come to p. 359 and ‘The Mystery of Buddha,’ the sections on which fill pp. 359-432, we find but *disjecta membra*—sections, the majority of which were evidently excluded from Volumes I. and II. because of their inferiority to the rest of the work.”⁶¹

But these sections were not excluded from volumes 1 and 2 because of their inferiority to the rest of the work. They were moved when the first volume became the third volume. Mead apparently was unaware of this fact.

Mead continues: “The editor was bound to publish these, but we entirely share her private opinion, that it would have been better to have printed them as separate articles in LUCIFER, than to have included them as part of *The Secret Doctrine*.”

If this was in fact Besant’s private opinion, it only shows that she, too, like Mead, did not take cognizance of the fact that the first volume became the third volume as stated by Bertram in 1890 and in 1893. Besant did use the phrase “discarded by her from Volumes I and II” in her 1922 announcement of the discovery of the Würzburg manuscript, saying: “Five of these sections, which were discarded by her from Volumes I and II, appear in Volume III.”⁶² However, Mead in 1927 gave a somewhat different assessment of her opinion of this material: “Next, I come to Vol. III. With this I refused to have anything to

do whatever. I judged the *disjecta* or *rejecta membra* from the manuscript or typescript of Vols. I and II not up to standard, and that it would in no way improve the work. They could, I thought, be printed preferably as fugitive articles in *Lucifer*, but could not possibly be made into a consistent whole. Mrs. Besant, who put a far higher valuation on everything H.P.B. had written than I did, persisted in her view, and by herself edited the matter for publication.”⁶³

Mead’s 1897 review continues: “One thing is almost certain, that had Mme. Blavatsky lived these sections in their present form would not have formed part of her great work.”

But again, Mead apparently was unaware of the fact known to the Keightleys that these sections did in fact form the first part of Blavatsky’s great work until they were moved, a fact confirmed by the Würzburg manuscript. They were not excluded or discarded from volumes 1 and 2. We recall that both Mead and Besant did not arrive on the scene until 1889, after the editing of *The Secret Doctrine* by the Keightleys in 1887 and its publication in 1888. Nor was Mead aware of Blavatsky’s enthusiastic descriptions of some of these very sections made in letters written at the time she was writing *The Secret Doctrine*. In a letter to A. P. Sinnett dated March 3, 1886, Blavatsky tells us that she was ordered to write this material, presumably by her teacher, Master Morya, and describes it as extraordinary:

“I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or *Preamble*, Prologue, call it what you will; . . . I was ordered to do so, to make a rapid sketch of what *was* known historically and in literature, in classics and in profane and sacred histories—during the 500 years that preceded the Christian period and the 500 y. that followed it: *of magic*, the existence of a Universal Secret Doctrine known to the philosophers and Initiates of every country and even to several of the Church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others, who had been initiated themselves. Also to describe the Mysteries and some rites; and I can assure you that most extraordinary things are given out now, the whole story of the Crucifixion, etc. being shown to be based on a rite as old as the world—the Crucifixion on the *Lathe* of the Candidate—trials, going down to Hell etc. all Aryan. . . . Well you will soon [see] this Prologue, the *short* survey of the forthcoming Mysteries in the text—which covers 300 pages of foolscap.”⁶⁴

This material about the crucifixion on the lathe is in the Würzburg manuscript as “The Trial of the Sun-Initiates,” and it is in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* as section 29, “The Trial of the Sun-Initiate,” pp. 270-276. The material about the church father Clement of Alexandria is also in the Würzburg manuscript, as “The Two Masters of Clemens Alexandrinus,” and is in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* in Section 3, “The Origin of Magic,” pp. 36-43. Since the time of Mead’s 1897 review, all this material found in the third volume has been regarded by many as *disjecta membra*. We see that Blavatsky took a different view of it.

Blavatsky’s letters confirm that she had clearly intended this material to form an introduction to the stanzas from the Book of Dzyan on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, the *Secret Doctrine* proper, until she accepted the Keightleys’ suggestion to give the stanzas first. In a letter to Olcott dated July 14, 1886, she indicates that this introductory material was to provide proofs of the existence of the esoteric teachings:

“Now I will send to *your care* and on *your* responsibility the ‘Preface to the Reader’ and the 1st chapter of the *Secret Doctrine* proper. There are 600 pages and more of foolscap as an Introductory Preliminary Book, showing the undeniable historically proven facts of the existence of Adepts before and after the Christian period; of the admission of a double esoteric meaning in the two Testaments, by Church Fathers, and *proofs* that the real source of every Christian dogma rests in the Aryan oldest MYSTERIES during the Vedic and Brahmanic period; proofs and evidence for it being shown in the Exoteric as well as Esoteric Sanskrit works.”⁶⁵

Blavatsky then believed that this extensive introductory section was absolutely necessary before reading the stanzas, not only as providing proofs of the existence of the esoteric teachings, but also because the stanzas were too metaphysical and would make the public crazy without preparation. In a letter to Olcott dated Sep. 23, 1886, she writes, incidentally describing the arrangement of sections and appendices that can now be seen in the extant Würzburg manuscript:

“Now I send only 1st Vol. of *Introduct.* Section and in a fortnight will send the real pukka S.D. *Archaic* Period, the 7 Stanzas, from Book of *Dzyan* commented upon. There are in the first *Introductory* Vol. *Seven Sections* (or Chapt. §.) and 27 Appendices, several App. attached to every *Section* from 3 to 6—etc. Now all this will make either more or at any rate one volume and *it is not* the S.D. but a Preface to it. It is an absolutely necessary one, otherwise if they began reading the *Archaic* Vol., the public would get crazy before reading five pages, *too metaphysical.*”⁶⁶

As she here writes, this extensive introductory section is not the real pukka *Secret Doctrine*, the stanzas from the Book of *Dzyan*, but a preface to it. This is only to be expected. But once again, Mead apparently was unaware of this. In his 1897 review of the third volume, immediately before his *disjecta membra* comment, he wrote:

“What, then, is the first impression of one who has minutely studied every turn and twist of H.P.B.’s phraseology and literary methods, and read everything she has written on theosophical subjects? We cannot disguise the fact that the first feeling is one of disappointment. The spirit of the stanzas and commentaries, which for the theosophist make the two first volumes stand out a head and shoulders beyond all other theosophical literature, is entirely absent. The pages are eagerly scanned for the discovery of a new gold-mine of the nature of stanza or commentary, but with the exception of one or two paragraphs none is to be found.”⁶⁷

The stanzas and their commentaries comprise the first third of each of the first two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*. They do indeed stand out head and shoulders beyond all other theosophical literature, including the latter two thirds of each of the first two volumes. The third volume is no different in this respect. The expectation of finding something like the stanzas in what was written as introductory material is unrealistic. It seems that neither Mead nor Besant knew that this material had originally been written by Blavatsky as preparatory to the stanzas, that it once was intended by her as the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. Not knowing this, Mead characterized it as *disjecta membra*. The consequences of this characterization have been far-reaching, in conjunction with the charges starting in 1922 that the third

volume is spurious. Boris accepted that it is miscellaneous material, and moved it to the Blavatsky *Collected Writings* volumes (primarily volume 14). The third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* thus went out of existence, being discontinued in 1978. This all occurred because Blavatsky accepted the Keightleys' suggestion to make what she had intended as the first volume into the third volume.

The 1922 statement by Bertram Keightley confirming that "*all* this material has been published in the *third* volume which contains absolutely *all* that H.P.B. has left in manuscript," is nowhere quoted by Boris, but Boris quotes a 1931 statement by Bertram that seems to support the *dissecta membra* theory.⁶⁸ It is from his *Reminiscences of H.P.B., Written for H.P.B. Centenary Celebration at Adyar, August 11 and 12, 1931*.⁶⁹ Bertram writes: ". . . thus completing the matter which went to the printers as Volumes I and II of the first edition of the *S.D.* After this was done, there still remained a certain amount of matter over: mostly unfinished fragments or 'Appendices' or bits about symbolism, which could find no suitable place in the selected matter, or—more frequently—were not in a condition or state for publication. Of course we asked H.P.B. about this matter, as it was she herself—not Arch nor myself—who had set it aside for the time being. She put this left-over matter in one of the drawers of her desk and said that 'some day' she would make a third Volume out of it. But this she never did, and after H.P.B.'s death, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Mead published *all* that could possibly be printed—without complete and extensive revision and re-writing—as part of Volume III in the revised edition."⁷⁰

This appears to describe something different than what Bertram had said in 1890 and in 1893, these much earlier statements being confirmed by the Würzburg manuscript. According to these earlier statements, Bertram and Archibald rearranged the manuscript, moving what had been the first volume material to the end to make a third volume. It is this material that the Keightleys, not Blavatsky, set aside at the outset, with her permission. Since the whole manuscript was "a pile over three feet high," the roughly one third that they set aside would have been a pile about one foot high. Indeed, Blavatsky described this "enormous Introductory" material in a letter to Sinnett on March 3, 1886, as "300 pages of foolscap," while as described in a letter to Olcott on July 14, 1886, it had grown to "600 pages and more of foolscap." So she could not have "put this left-over matter in one of the drawers of her desk." What Bertram describes in 1931, then, may have been *dissecta membra* left-over or excluded from the first two volumes as Mead assumed; but not the extensive introductory material that the Keightleys had set aside at the outset to become the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Notes

1. The section titled "Annie Besant's Corruption of the Secret Doctrine" is part of the article, "Back to Blavatsky!," *The O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 11, no. 5, Oct. 12, 1921, pages unnumbered. See also: "In Answer to Inquiries about 'The Secret Doctrine'," vol. 11, no. 10, Dec. 21, 1921.

2. "The Lost (?) Volumes of 'The Secret Doctrine,'" 2 parts, *The O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 12, no. 4, Sep. 27, 1922; vol. 12, no. 6, Oct. 25, 1922. Volume 12 is available at: http://blavatskyarchives.com/stokesoelc/stokes_list.htm. Further articles on this by Stokes are: "On the Missing Volumes of 'The Secret Doctrine.'" *The O.E. Library Critic*, January 1930, pp. 7-8. "Is 'Secret Doctrine, Vol. III' Genuine?" *The O.E. Library Critic*, June 1938, pp. 7-11. "The Mystery of Vols. III and IV, 'Secret Doctrine': A Defense of Madame Blavatsky." *The O.E. Library Critic*, June 1939, pp. 3-8.
3. *H. P. Blavatsky: A Great Betrayal*, by Alice Leighton Cleather, 1922, pp. 71-82. Available at: <http://archive.org/details/hpblavatskygreat00clearich>.
4. *Theosophy*, vol. 10, no. 11, Sep. 1922, p. 340. This journal volume is available at: books.google.com/books?id=5WZGAAAAYAAJ. The relevant pages are 339-341. This serial article was published as a book in 1925, titled *The Theosophical Movement 1875-1925* (available at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/garrtc.htm>), where the relevant pages are 569-572, this quote on p. 570. This material was not included in the shortened and updated version, *The Theosophical Movement 1875-1950*. A similar statement about the third volume being spurious is given in the "Publisher's Preface" to the 1925 Theosophy Company reprint of *The Secret Doctrine*, and in all their subsequent reprints.
5. Vernon Harrison, "J'Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885," *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, London, vol. 53, no. 803, April 1986, pp. 286-310; quotation cited from p. 287. This article has been reprinted along with new material in his book, *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885*, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1997.
6. *Theosophical History*, vol. 1, no. 6, April 1986, pp. 132-133. The text of this issue is available at: <http://www.theohistory.org/thcovers/thscan106.html#Anchor-13458>. A scan of this issue is available at: http://www.theohistory.org/issues-pdf/TH_I-6Apr1986.pdf.
7. *The O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 12, no. 24, July 4, 1923.
8. *The Theosophist*, vol. 43, March 1922, p. 534.
9. *The O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 12, no. 24, July 4, 1923.
10. "My Books," first published in *Lucifer*, vol. 8, No. 45, May 1891, reprinted in H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, vol. 13, pp. 197, 202.
11. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, 1925, Letter No. CXIX, p. 248.
12. *Ibid.*, Letter No. LXXX, p. 195.
13. "Mr. Bertram Keightley's Account of the Writing of "The Secret Doctrine," in Countess Constance Wachtmeister and others, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and "The Secret Doctrine"*, London: 1893, pp. 90-91.
14. "Dr. Archibald Keightley's Account of the Writing of "The Secret Doctrine," *ibid.*, p. 97.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
16. Archibald Keightley, "Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky," *The Theosophical Quarterly*, New York, vol. 7, October 1910, pp. 109-122; reprinted in *Theosophia*, vol. 15, no. 4 (78), vol. 16, no. 1 (79), Double

Issue, Spring 1959, pp. 13-25, the quote is from pp. 16-17; also available online at:

<http://blavatskyarchives.com/keightle.htm>

17. "Facts about 'The Secret Doctrine'," by G. R. S. Mead, *The Occult Review*, May, 1927, pp. 319-324.

18. "An Important Statement by Mr. J. M. Pryse," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 7, Sep. 15, 1926, p. 140.

19. "Mr. Pryse's Statement," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 11, Jan. 1927, p. 248.

20. G. R. S. Mead, "Facts about 'The Secret Doctrine'," *The Occult Review*, May, 1927, pp. 319-324.

Available online at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/mead1.htm>

21. "An Important Statement by Mr. J. M. Pryse," 1926, p. 140. This is the same as what Mead himself said, at the beginning of his review of vol. 3 of *The Secret Doctrine* (*Lucifer*, vol. 20, no. 119, July 15, 1897, p. 353): "The revised edition was a work of much labour, and every effort was made by the editors to verify every quotation they could and correct the many errors of form of the earlier issues. The errors of substance the editors had no right to amend."

22. Letter from Blavatsky to Judge dated March 27, 1891, quoted in Constance Wachtmeister, *H.P.B. and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society*, 1895, p. 4. This 12-page booklet was reprinted in *Theosophical History*, volume 3, no. 2, April 1989, pp. 51-60. A scan of the original booklet is available at:

http://blavatskyarchives.com/theosophypdfs/wachtmeister_hpb_and_the_present_crisis_1895.pdf

23. Ibid.

24. H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, vol. 1, 1966, p. 484.

25. *H. P. Blavatsky: Her Life and Work for Humanity*, by Alice Leighton Cleather, 1922, p. 121.

26. "Faces of Friends," on Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti, *The Path*, vol. 8, no. 7, Oct. 1893, pp. 204-206.

27. *The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1950*, anonymous, p. 243 (Los Angeles: The Cunningham Press, 1951); earlier edition, p. 581. I purposely cite this from a book that is known to strongly favor the Judge side. "By Master's Direction," is available online at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/judgebmd1894.htm>; Besant's reply at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/besantes1894.htm>. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, vol. 5, quotes much of this circular.

28. Ibid., p. 245. Also Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, 1938, p. 306.

29. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 3, 1897, p. 434.

30. James M. Pryse, untitled review within "The Literary World," *Theosophy* (a magazine edited by E. T. Hargrove, continuing *The Path*, edited by William Q. Judge), vol. 12, no. 6, September, 1897, p. 315. This charge was also made in *The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1925*, anonymous, 1925, pp. 571-572, and by Stokes in "Is 'Secret Doctrine, Vol. III,' Genuine?" *O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 25, no. 9, June, 1938.

31. "Mr. Pryse's Statement," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 11, Jan. 15, 1927, p. 246.

32. Ibid., p. 246.

33. "An Important Statement by Mr. J. M. Pryse," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 7, Sep. 15, 1926, p. 141.

34. James Morgan Pryse, "No Missing Volumes of The Secret Doctrine," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 20, no. 3, May 15, 1939, p. 75.

35. H. N. Stokes, "Is 'Secret Doctrine, Vol. III', Genuine?" *The O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 25, no. 9, June, 1938, pages unnumbered. See "Historical Introduction" by Boris de Zirkoff, p. [65]: "Curiously enough, the subject of Volumes III and IV seems to disappear at approximately that time [1897] from Theosophical Journals, to reappear some thirty years later and be discussed again." This refers to the 1926 interview of Besant by William Mullis, which is then quoted.

36. Ibid.

37. The words of Boris here on pp. xxxi-xxxii may be compared with those of Stokes, *ibid.*: "Here is the first contradiction. In the revised edition of 1893 Mrs. Besant omits all reference to a Volume III, while in 1897 she claims to have part of it given to her by H.P.B. herself. But that is not all of the story. On October 6, 1926, Mr. William Mulliss, Managing Editor of the *Hamilton (Ont.) Spectator*, a competent reporter and for ten years an earnest student of *The Secret Doctrine*, interviewed Mrs. Besant in Los Angeles in behalf of several newspapers. His inquiries related in part to this question of the third volume. Mr. Mulliss supplied me with a complete *verbatim* report of the interview which is before me. I quote only the part relating to this third volume, placing it in parallel with what Mrs. Besant stated in her preface: . . ."

38. Constance Wachtmeister, *H.P.B. and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society*, 1895, p. 4. See note 22 for links.

39. *Annie Besant: An Autobiography*, third edition or Adyar edition, 1939 (first published 1893), pp. 462-463.

40. Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, 1938, pp. 279-280. Note that Ransom's statement on p. 280, that Besant and Judge both left New York for England on May 6 is incorrect. On that date Besant did embark for home after her tour, but Judge left his home in New York for England on May 13, after learning of Blavatsky's death there on May 8.

41. Claude Falls Wright wrote on January 7, 1891, published in *The Path*, February 1891, p. 354: "H.P.B. has within the last week or so begun to get together the MSS. (long ago written) for the Third Volume of The Secret Doctrine; it will however, take a good twelve months to prepare for publication."

Alice Leighton Cleather wrote in February 1891, published in *The Theosophist*, April 1891, p. 438: "H.P.B. has already started on Vol. III."

In February 1890 Blavatsky had written in a letter to her sister Vera, published in *The Path*, December 1895, p. 268: "I must put the third volume of the [Secret] Doctrine in order, and the fourth—hardly begun yet, too."

See Daniel Caldwell's chronology in two appendices published in *The Secret Doctrine Würzburg Manuscript*, pp. 366-367, 369.

42. Letter from Constance Wachtmeister to the editor, G. R. S. Mead, published in "The Clash of Opinion," *Lucifer*, vol. 16, no. 92, April 15, 1895, p. 164. Also quoted in Daniel Caldwell's chronology, p. 343.

43. Ibid., p. 165.

44. *Witness for the Prosecution: Annie Besant's Testimony on Behalf of H. P. Blavatsky in the N. Y. Sun/Coues Law Case*, ed. Michael Gomes, 1993, p. 23, quoted in Daniel Caldwell's chronology, pp. 367-368.

45. James Morgan Pryse, "Mr. Pryse's Statement," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 11, January 15, 1927, p. 248.

46. G. R. S. Mead, "Facts about 'The Secret Doctrine'," 1927: "The repeated statement made by H.P.B. in the first edition, that material for an additional volume, or two volumes, was already largely in existence and in process of completion, is not in accordance with fact. . . . I am therefore glad that your correspondent the Hon. Mrs. Davey has had printed in parallel columns the series of mis-statements as to the additional material in hand, made in the original text, which I corrected, by omission, in the revised edition. It provides the reader with an instructive instance of one class of errors of fact which perforce had to be corrected by any honest editor."

47. The word "exoteric" was here misprinted as "esoteric."

48. James M. Pryse, untitled review within "The Literary World," *Theosophy*, vol. 12, no. 6, September, 1897, pp. 314-315.

49. Ibid., p. 315: "Those who have compared the first edition of Vols. I. and II. with the 'third and revised edition' know the deadly results of Mr. Mead's and Mrs. Besant's 'editing.' It is deeply to be regretted that H.P.B. left no directions concerning her posthumous works, and that, dying intestate, her heirs should have permitted valuable MSS. to fall into the hands of individuals who have not scrupled to mutilate her literary work under the bald pretense of correcting 'errors of form,' and have sought to decry her in insulting prefaces and notes. Errors she undoubtedly committed, but for every needed correction her editors have made a score of unwarrantable changes, often perverting the sense and obscuring the text, while many of the 'improvements' they have made in her English are more than questionable. Fortunately, Vols. I. and II. may hereafter be reprinted from the first and unrevised edition; but it is to be feared that Vol. III. is practically lost to the world, hopelessly mutilated as it now is."

50. "An Important Statement by Mr. J. M. Pryse," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 7, Sep. 15, 1926, pp. 140-141. Years later he began his article, "No Missing Volumes of The Secret Doctrine," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 20, no. 3, May 15th, 1939, p. 73: "The old canard, invented for the villification of Mrs. Besant, that Vols. III. and IV. of the S.D. were suppressed, is renewed with additional extravagant details in the April issue of the Canadian Theosophist." He goes on to say, p. 75: "As a former member of the London Headquarters staff and manager of the H.P.B. Press I assert emphatically that the three volumes of the Secret Doctrine, as published, are the whole of that work. No portion of it was suppressed or destroyed."

51. James Morgan Pryse, "Mr. Pryse's Statement," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 11, January 15, 1927, pp. 245-246.

52. Daniel H. Caldwell, "The Myth of the 'Missing' Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*," *The American Theosophist*, Late Spring/Early Summer 1995, pp. 18-25; revised edition available online: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/sdiiipt1.htm>
53. Ibid., part 6: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/sdiiipt7.htm>
54. "The Adyar Convention Lectures": "Theosophy in the West," report of a lecture by Bertram Keightley given December, 1890, *The Theosophist*, vol. 12, no. 10, July 1891, pp. 586-587.
55. "Mr. Bertram Keightley's Account of the Writing of 'The Secret Doctrine'," *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and "The Secret Doctrine"*, 1893, pp. 91-92.
56. Daniel H. Caldwell, "The Myth of the 'Missing' Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*," part 6: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/sdiiipt7.htm>
57. English translation quoted from *O. E. Library Critic*, vol. 12, no. 24, July 4, 1923, available at Daniel Caldwell's website: http://blavatskyarchives.com/stokesoelc/stokes_list.htm. The italics are in the French. Those in the first paragraph were mistakenly omitted in the English translation printed in the *Critic*.
58. James Morgan Pryse, "Mr. Pryse's Statement," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 7, no. 11, Jan. 15, 1927, p. 247.
59. James Morgan Pryse, "The Study of 'The Secret Doctrine'," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 8, no. 3, May 15, 1927, pp. 53, 54.
60. James Morgan Pryse, "The Third Volume of The Secret Doctrine," *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 8, no. 6, Aug. 15, 1927, pp. 114, 115.
61. G. R. S. M. [Mead], "On the Watch-Tower": "'The Secret Doctrine.' Volume III," *Lucifer*, vol. 20, no. 119, July 15, 1897, p. 354.
62. "On the Watch-tower," by Annie Besant, opening the March 1922 issue of *The Theosophist*, Vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 533-534.
63. G. R. S. Mead, "Facts about 'The Secret Doctrine'," *The Occult Review*, May, 1927, pp. 319-324. Available online at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/mead1.htm>
64. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, 1925, Letter No. LXXX, p. 195.
65. Blavatsky, letter to Olcott dated July 14, 1886, sent from Ostend, published in "Echoes from the Past," *The Theosophist*, vol. 29, May 1908, pp. 752-758, quoted from p. 756; also partially quoted by Boris in his "Historical Introduction" to *The Secret Doctrine*, pp. [28]-[29].
66. Blavatsky letter to Olcott dated September 23, 1886, *The Theosophist*, March 1925, p. 789. This letter was partially published twice in *The Theosophist*, in 1909 and more accurately in 1925; also by Boris in his "Historical Introduction" to *The Secret Doctrine*, pp. [30]-[31].
67. See reference in note 61 above.
68. Boris de Zirkoff, "Introduction" to H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, vol. 14, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.
69. This was first published as an article in *The Theosophist*, vol. 52, September 1931, pp. 704-725, and then issued separately as a 37-page book by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1931.
70. Ibid., article, p. 712; book, p. 15.