



THE BUDDHIST RAY

"HAIL TO THEE, PEARL, HIDDEN IN THE LOTUS!"

VOL. III.]

SANTA CRUZ, CAL., U. S. A., APRIL, 1893.

[No. 4.]

OLD GABRIEL.

LAST month California lost its oldest inhabitant, in the person of Old Gabriel, an american indian, who died at the ripe age of 151. As he was present in Monterey, at the landing of the romish missionary Junipero Serra, 120 years ago (at which time he was a grandfather), and as he had, by his third or fourth wife, a son that died some eight years ago, at the age of 114, it is evident that he had seen several generations of men come and go.

He was a light eater, says the *Salinas Index*. He abstained from alcohol, tea, coffee and tobacco. "*He rarely ate meat*" (*flesh-food*). Bread-pudding, fruit, and sweets were his principal food; and hot water with a touch of sugar and milk, his drink. He went to bed early, arose early and slept well. In his youth and manhood he took indian steam-baths,—by pouring water on hot stones; but in his old age he scraped for hours, his whole body, with an old case knife,—an excellent way to remove dead tissue and stimulate surface circulation. He was very fond of the sunshine, and would, as in indian days, have gone about, dressed in *space* and a "plug" hat (for ornament), had the law of the white conquerors been more humane than it is. (Our readers are likely familiar with the fact that, as a rule, the more clothing a race wears the less modest and chaste it is.) He was seldom sick, and during his last days he refused "charity" or poor-

house medicine,—apparently desirous of dying a natural death.

Autopsy revealed degeneracy, atrophy and calcification of the internal organs; thus, a natural death.

The reading of the lengthy obituaries of Old Gabriel in the newspapers, has crowded a large number of questions upon us, all of which we are unable to answer, and some of which we herewith submit to our readers:

With their knowledge of the human body, physic, hygiene and sanitary science, why do not our doctors live as long as Old Gabriel?

With their comforts, cuisine, and resources, why do not our rich men outlive their poor neighbors?

With their water, milk, tea, coffee and other uninebriating drinks, why do not our teetotalers outlive wine-bibbers?

Why do not jews and christians, "God's elect," outlive buddhists and other free-thinkers?

Why do tipplers, gluttons and satyrs, sometimes outlive ascetics?

Why do the children born of sickly parents sometimes outlive those born of healthy?

Why do children that dishonor their parents live as long as those that honor them? (*Vide, Moses.*)

N. B.—As this is an age of reason and science, in answering these questions, the reader is requested not to bring in any irrelevant matter, any *deus ex machina*, or any alleged divine revelation, but only rational and scientific arguments.

 CHARLES FRANCIS POWELL.

EDITOR RAY:—Now that brother Powell has laid aside his personality, and has gone to his devachanic rest, a few words touching his character, aspirations, and late experiences may be of use and interest to your readers.

He was born a truth-seeker: with high instincts and a yearning for communion with noble and exalted souls. When he became a buddhist layman, his buddhism was not, what it is with many, a traditional apery and mummery, but a soul-affair. We had abundant evidence of this, before he went to Asia and while he was there: as in his passionate outbursts against lowmindedness and grossness, apathy and selfishness; and in his unselfish works.

In his lecture-tours in India he found high spiritual exaltation and low moral and physical debasement side by side, —as in America.

"The hindu," he wrote, "must have a guru; his apathy and helplessness are indescribable. Centuries of oppression, on the part of native despots and priests, and 'foreign devils', has obliterated all independence from his nature. I begin to understand why the Masters want workers here."

In another letter he wrote,—

"My work has given me some very sweet experiences. How greatly I feel my own limitations when these poor men turn to me for the light and help which I so much need myself."

A young brahman said once to him,—

"How grateful we are for your kindness. You let us ask all the questions we want to ask, and do n't get angry at us like —, who told us to read and find out for ourselves, and would n't let us visit him."

As a characteristic of the present mind of India he related that one of the theosophic societies there wrote 82 (*eighty-two*) letters to headquarters, begging for instructions, and *did not receive a single answer* from the blunderbusses [then] there; whereupon, instead of "raising the devil", as we here in America would have done, they became discouraged and sat down apathetically awaiting a guru.

From one place he wrote,—

"Here I find myself in a perfect cesspool of moral filth: lies, profanity and deceit."

From another place,—

"Here my little ministrations are received so thankfully that it humiliates me beyond measure, ... if I dared I would run away."

The following story illustrates our departed brother's unselfishness. An american woman, whose brain had, probably, been injured by love-stories, and who, therefore, was running about Asia, in search of an oriental Adonis, stranded, penniless, on "India's coral shore." He heard of her, and though she was a stranger to him, he wrote to T— T—, at B—, to give her the little money he had left in his care. And this money was his all.

Among the many afflictions of India, that of *caste*, is one of the greatest. In bygone days it drove the buddhists out of the land, and to-day it grins like an ugly satan at progress and enlightenment. Brother Powell furnished us with an illustration, too good to be withheld from your readers.

He went one day to a place called Ambasamudrum to deliver a lecture and to organize a theosophical society. The day after the lecture he set out, in the company of number of young brahmans, for a sacred[!] stream eighth miles away, where the organization was to take place. Here the company stripped themselves of their loin-clouts and laved themselves in the sacred sewage. Then they retired to a shady spot to await the meal which the servants were preparing. The meal ready, a "twice-born" (a favorite of madam Blavatsky, and former private secretary of colonel Olcott), a most holy "dude", turned to his american guru and guest, and said,—

"You will have to withdraw for a time, until we [brahmans] have had our meal; when we are done, you will be served."

Brother Powell withdrew politely, and the sacred asses, now in their own pure aura, swilled themselves most holily. Later, when they were through, had withdrawn, and were belching and regurgitating, and the *dog-feed* was served, brother Powell was *not* hungry! nor did he become so, until the following day, when he was twenty miles out of their holy mud-hole!

In characteristic spirit he wrote,—

"I bear no ill-feeling to these men. I only pity them."

On his arrival in Ceylon he formally joined the buddhistic communion by publicly taking the Five Vows (or *pansil*) of a layman. Colombo, the capital, he describes as a "moral cesspool," a very christian city, that needs the preaching of the pure and holy gospel of the BUDDHA as much as any other christian city. The moral decline of Ceylon began with the arrival of the portuguese in 1505, continued throughout the regime of the dutch, and has at this day, under the british, reached its culmination. As buddhism is a non-militant philosophic system, it was soon almost exterminated by the christians, especially by those of the romish sect; and the island was filled with baptized hypocrites and their offspring,—heathens! Brutal native rulers did much to hasten the destructive work of the europeans.

Brother Powell wrote that the relation of the sexes, in some parts of the island, is very much like that which prevails in the poultry-yard. He found also everywhere a large number of "poor" men: everyone of whom had from one to three servants (to carry his toothpick and fan, we suppose); and every one of whom had thumbs, fingers, arms and ankles covered with rings and jewels, in numbers so great, that could she see them, the ordinary american boarding-school miss, would turn green with envy. Of course, the mass of the people are wretchedly poor and ignorant, as are their like in Europe. Native despots, priestly parasites, "foreign devils" and *inborn apathy* have made them so.

But the most lamentable discovery made by him was the presence on that "pearl of the ocean", of a large number of impostors in yellow robes: a low, lazy, ignorant, filthy-mouthed, heathen pack, who infest the land and help to corrupt the people; who, were they to appear in America, would be hissed at and put to forced labor. They have not a spark of nobility or spirituality in them: truth, goodness, virtue, or honesty, *from a love of it*, is altogether unknown among them. The divine doctrine of the BUDDHA is interpreted by them to support their blatant vice

and ignorance. In dealing with that sublime doctrine of the TATHAGATA, the doctrine of merit, they are very jews and papists: low barterers: "5-cents worth of merit," "a pound of merit," "a yard of merit," express the sentiments of these obscurants.

To give you an idea of these fellows, take the following story told by our brother. An irish-american lawyer went a few years ago to Zululand to learn wisdom. While there he talked much of the Gods, and wished to get a communication from them. A rosi-crucian "dutchman", also there to learn wisdom, made up his mind to gratify his wishes. So he wrote a letter, forged the name of a certain God to it, and in collusion with a zulu, made it drop from the ceiling into the lap of the lawyer, as, one day, they were sitting together conversing about the Gods. The letter ordered him *instantly* to return to America, which, to the surprise and delight of the "dutchman," he did. Arrived in America, with this invaluable document, he discovered that many thoughtful americans had begun to investigate the ethical system of the BUDDHA GAUTAMA. Hereupon he sat down and wrote a letter to a learned buddhist abbot in Ceylon, to send over some buddhist "priests" to America. They would have to be the genuine article! A cultured american heathen would not for a moment listen to a cultured american buddhist,—according to our wellmeaning irishman! No, no! But he *would* listen to an imported buffoon!

Hear brother Powell:

"Well! picture to yourself a cunning, licentious, thick-lipped man, shaved head, ears sticking out from the side of his head, mouth stained, teeth entirely destroyed by betel; who knows absolutely NOTHING but the wild absurdities here alleged to be buddhist scriptures; a beast who from his youth has been taught that all the rest of mankind are but dirt beneath his feet. Put him before a critical, or even uncritical, audience in America, and what would they think of the BUDDHA-ethics, IF this were a specimen of its influence and teaching?"

Now mr Editor, where would you put this satyr, were he, on the invitation of this lawyer, to come to America?

[Continued on p. 32.]

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

DEVOTED TO BUDDHISM IN GENERAL, AND TO THE
BUDDHISM IN SWEDENBORG IN PARTICULAR.

TERMS: 50 cents a year, in advance; single copies, 5 cents. To foreign countries belonging to the Postal Union, 12 cents additional postage.

All communications should be addressed to PUBLISHER THE BUDDHIST RAY, Santa Cruz, Cal., U. S. A.

Entered at Santa Cruz P. O. as Second Class Matter.

"THIS ANCIENT ONE [THE BUDDHA] IS OUR ANGEL,
WHOM WE REVERE AND OBEY."—SWEDENBORG.

THREE SEVENS," is a well-written "story of ancient initiations" by the Phelons; published by the Hermetic Publishing Co., Chicago. The chapter describing the neophyte's initiation into the four elements is especially interesting.

—"It is humiliating," says *All Soul's Monthly*, "to read the remark of arch-deacon Farrar that, in the great London strike, christian churches wielded no sort of influence for the public welfare. 'No one referred to them; no one consulted them.'" Well, why should any one consult them? Have they ever done anything for humanity? After hearing a sermon in an english church, the distinguished historian Sismondi, vowed "never again to enter a church holding the same creed, and never to contribute to spread what the english call their reformation."

—A writer in the *Boston Transcript* says: "As illustrating his claim that the japanese are a more civilized people than the americans, a gentleman at a recent dinner in Boston cited professor Morse's statement that if, in a japanese city, one picks up a stone to throw at a dog, the dog does not run, because he has never had a stone thrown at him, and does not know what the action means. Manifestly, if such a state of universal gentleness and kindness prevails in Japan that not even a stone is thrown at a dog by a boy, there must be a very high and thorough civilization permeating all classes of the population. This argument may not

be accepted as complete by sciolists, who would doubtless maintain that it requires something else than gentleness and humanity to make civilization. But certainly the fact is to be taken as an excellent item of evidence in making out a case of high civilization for the japanese. And it is a significant fact that it was reserved for our own european-american civilization to introduce the completest refinement of cruelty to animals,—vivisection."

—"SAKYA BUDDHA," is a versified and annotated narrative of the life and teachings of our LORD, by E. R. Root, "an american buddhist," sent us by the Truth Seeker Co., New York. In the "preliminary observations," the author, an ex-christian of the orthodox type, tells his readers that he gave heed to professor Max Muller's saw: "He that knows only one religion knows none"; and began to study the sacred scriptures of the brahmans, buddhists, zoroastrians, confucians, and others, which, as in the case of many other students of these, ended in his becoming a buddhist. With the annotations and the extracts from the Dhammapada, this poem forms a useful introduction to the study of the Good Law.

—In a letter just received from a sinhalese brother are these words: "Many educated and intelligent persons here are now inquiring into buddhism. A few christians have already become buddhists. The future looks bright and hopeful. A most noble work is now issuing here, in monthly parts; and its publication is timely, for it shows the uninitiated what buddhism is. To understand it is to realize the intrinsic nature of the transcendental philosophy of the BUDDHA. Dhyana [self-absorption and mystic meditation], in all its aspects, in the most elaborate form is given therein. The work is called 'Visuddhi Marga,' and the author is Buddhaghosa. The governor of Ceylon intends to have it translated into english." It pleases us greatly to read this. The true followers of our LORD are beginning to see the necessity for action. Let the lazy, degraded pseudo-monks (the "priests") be suppressed, and the native and foreign heathens enlightened!

BUDDHIST ACTIVITY IN ENGLAND.

WE have received a number of circulars from London announcing lectures on the Good Law, by the learned captain C. Pfoundes, before various clubs, associations and institutes there; and we publish below a few extracts from english newspapers to show that the buddhistic propaganda is active in Europe as well as in America.

"South London Review."

"A most interesting and instructive lecture on 'Buddhism' was given at the Ferndale Liberal and Radical Club, Bedford-road, on Sunday evening, by captain C. Pfoundes, F. R. G. S., who has the advantage of being a great traveller, and of being acquainted with the dockyards, arsenals, and men-of-war of many nations. He is also the author of a very interesting paper on 'Our Ships and Sailors,' which was read at the British Association congress, held at Southampton. The lecturer said that 'buddhism' is the western term for the great religion of the Far East, and is a revival of pure ethics and humanitarian doctrines, evolved in the past ages and transmitted by the BUDDHAS, the ENLIGHTENED ONES. Buddhism is now brought forward because the asian buddhists are dissatisfied with the statements made by lecturers and others about it, and because they desire a more accurate and fair-minded idea to be made public with regard to their intellect, social life, and especially religious thought.

Self-reliance and self-salvation is the key-note to the gospel of buddhism. The contrasts, rather than parallels, are the vital points of importance to all truth seekers. The ancients taught that 'as all sleep in death together, is it not foolish to wrong one another?' A myriad of suffering is endured by the foolish in the pursuit of riches. The human body is but as the sea-foam, and life but as the flight of a bird.

The lecturer then came to the subject which was discussed at some length later in the evening. 'A personal

deity', he said, 'is not found in pure buddhist doctrines.' Immortality is worked out by each according to his own needs and intellectual aspirations. The position of woman in the old buddhist times was much higher than at present, and the responsibilities of the teacher were recognised.

The teaching of the MASTER, embodied in the sutras, are now translating into the western languages. The first sermon teaches 'the middle path'—the path of moderation, the fact of humanity, heritage being a life of suffering, and the doctrine of release therefrom by one's own exertions, by rectitude of thought and deed,—and shows that rules were laid down for the protection of life, property, mutual trustfulness, and moderation of our appetites. In short, it means peace and goodwill, self-conquest and self-deliverance. No 'inspiration' is claimed, nothing marvellous or mysterious, nothing supernatural, but right for right's sake, as a sound basis for reciprocal and advantageous conduct of life.

Buddhism never was an aggressive propaganda, and persecution had always been prohibited. 'To those adrift in the vast ocean of scepticism, this doctrine,' the lecturer said, 'is offered, rather than to those that have a belief that makes for righteousness; and in this materialistic, selfish age, the principles of buddhism would be a haven much needed and desired.'

A discussion took place at the close of the lecture, which was heartily joined by nearly all present.

A hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer for his able paper was passed at the close, with which was coupled the name of the chairman, for so kindly presiding.

London "Light."

"To the Editor :

Sir,—In a letter published in your last issue, there is a most wanton attack upon buddhism (quite irrelevant to the subject-matter discussed), which in the interests of all truth, and the cause of inquiry and progress, should not be permitted to pass unchallenged.

I take exception thereto, not as a buddhist, but as one who has resided amongst a highly cultivated, intellectual people, professing—and what is more, practicing—the doctrines of buddhism, as their forefathers had done for a score of centuries past, in common with vast numbers, commanding respectful consideration, and impartial investigation.

The paragraphs, which comprise a couple of dozen lines, are about as unfair, uncandid, and misleading statements concerning another, though perhaps antagonistic, creed as it is possible to conceive a bigoted sectarian capable of cramming into the space; for mere ignorance could scarcely so misstate facts which are so well known to all well-informed, unprejudiced inquirers.

The sublime truths inherent in buddhism, as in [primitive] christianism also [because derived from buddhism], and of which neither can have any monopoly, are not so overwhelmed with the superimposed garbage, the creation of sectarians, sacerdotalism, and the dupes of priestcraft, as to be altogether obliterated: quite otherwise. But the *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* line of argument no longer carries weight in these latter days, and will not prop up tottering dogma, or discredit the good, the beautiful, and the true.

Permit me to add a word or two, in simple justice, as a tribute to buddhism, of my sense of kindly feeling, of pleasing reminiscence, of my association with the buddhists of the Extreme Orient [Japan]; and I regret to add that daily experience causes me constantly to draw *mental* comparisons between *them* and the professors of the other faith not complimentary to the western christian."

—C. PFOUNDEN.

London "Medium and Daybreak"

"The further most courteous communication of your highly-esteemed correspondent, Mr Oxley, in which he has been so good as to allude to me in such very gratifying, complimentary and flattering terms, does not, to my

mind, advance the discussion of the hints raised by my first letter on the subject, on his alluding to buddhism as a 'stagnant and decaying system'; and further on to 'the position of nations that have been under buddhistic tutelage for near some thirty centuries.'

I crave your kind indulgence and permission to occupy valuable space so as to state my conviction, based on experience gained residing in the Extreme Orient, living amongst buddhists, occupying apartments in their temples, that so far from being 'stagnant and decaying,' is a most active and important factor, in all that is good in the lives of the vast bulk of the peoples of Eastern Asia—religion, ethics, sociology.

The superimposed mass of local superstition, and the materialistic philosophies existent, are most beneficially leavened by the good taught by the leading principles of this, the Doctrine of Enlightenment, later numerous sectarian parasite growths notwithstanding.

As to the countries under buddhist tutelage for thirty centuries, etc. :—

Amongst the few millions of Ceylon, Nepal, etc., it may be twenty centuries ago since gaining a footing to any extent; in China, say eighteen centuries; in Japan, about thirteen; in Burmah, Siam, etc., not earlier; and the progress was by no means rapid, or the influence widespread or great in the early centuries. It was too altruistic to be universally followed by the natives of southern and eastern Asia, in all its self-denial and purity, and had established, indigenous cults to reckon with, and vested interests to combat.

Residing in Japan, at the time of the disestablishment referred to, I am able to state that the revival of shintoism, the national cultus, officially and in popular estimation, was contemporaneous with the priesthood of the numerous sects of the buddhists, giving ample excuse to the enemies of their faith for a sweeping reform, when an opportunity arose.

There has been a reaction, since I left Japan, of a very energetic charac-

ter, and an active revivalist propaganda has been organized to combat the materialism of chinese philosophy, the pessimism of taoist doctrine, the efforts of european and american missionaries and their awful creed, of an angry and jealous Jehovah, only to be propitiated by sacrifice, culminating in that of his "only son."

All that may be found in modern sectarian buddhism, and which has been open to criticism, has been engrafted upon it in later times; and the most objectionable features in doctrines and rites are curiously parallel to much existing in the sectarian christianity of the Occident. —C. PFOUNDERS."

London "Light."

"With reference to a recent Note about 'Japan seeking a new religion,' a well-informed correspondent points out that Japan has had its own religion since 660 B. C., and imported buddhism 1,400 years ago, tolerated christianism for 100 years, and then suppressed it when papal influences attempted interference with politics and supremacy of native rule.

Besides the indigenous cultus we call shintoism, chinese (confucian) philosophy, and taoism, there are more than a dozen sects of buddhists, and many sub-sects—religion enough for any one nation, surely—and even young men's christian societies and missionaries from Europe and America, male and female, are competing for favor, all and every religious and non-religious phase of thought, in fact, being already well known to the japanese.

Buddhism is, at last, attracting public attention in the West. A new print comes to us from Ceylon, dated from the year of SAKYA GAUTAMA, 543 B. C. now the 2,432nd. No. 2 contains quotations from western writers of our own day—which we may reproduce later on—but we are informed by experts that the highest and most spiritual form of buddhism is not found in Ceylon. Yet even this appears to be far nearer the ideal of true, simple, pure religion than much that is forced upon us as such, nearer home.

Buddhism, as we call it, should be rendered 'Enlightenment', and that of GAUTAMA was but a revival of the Archaic Wisdom-Religion, and He the leader of a successful revolt against the domination of a theocracy, and the monopoly by a sacerdotal class, or caste, of hereditary performance of rites and ceremonies, and exclusive possession of great privileges, all of which become a burden insupportable on the people.

Buddhism is a beautiful system of morality, suitable to all capacities, combining the eternity of a universal hope, the immortality of a boundless love, an everlasting faith in ultimate good; and the grandest, noblest protest ever made against all that enthrals intellectual freedom—the propaganda has for thirty centuries been carried on without sacrifice of life, without persecution, but with kindly consideration and good will to all men."

TRUE HEROISM.

It calls for something more than brawn
On bloody, ghastly fields,
Where honor greets the man that wins,
And death the man that yields;
But I will write of him that fights
And vanquishes his sins,
That struggles on through years
Against himself, and wins.

Here is a hero, staunch and brave,
Who fights an unseen foe,
And puts at last beneath his feet
His passions, base and low,
And stands erect in manhood's might,
Undaunted—undismayed—
The bravest man that e'er drew sword,
In foray or in raid.

It calls for something more than brawn
Or muscle to o'ercome
An enemy that marches not
With banner, plume or drum—
A foe forever lurking nigh,
With silent, stealthy tread—
Forever near your board by day,
At night beside your bed.

All honor, then, to that brave heart,
Though rich or poor he be,
Who struggles with his baser part—
Who conquers and is free.
He may not wear a hero's crown,
Or fill a hero's grave;
But truth will place his name among
The bravest of the brave.

—SELECTED.

[Continued from p. 27.]

Among clean, cultured men? Among chaste, refined women?*

There are true monks in Ceylon; Rhys-Davids, Childers, and other European Pali scholars, have shown that; but they are cast into the shade by these caricatures and true *heathens*, who are sadly in need of sanitary and ethic training.

Brother Powell wrote,—

"Hopeless as is the task I have set before me, I shall do my best, for anything less would give me no rest nor peace. I have learned that each one must depend absolutely upon himself [for salvation]. Knowledge can be gained only by experience."

That a mercenary ("meritorious") spirit did not actuate him, is shown in these words,—

"The principle I have set before me, is to accept what my hands find to do, and to do it with all my might, with the sole motive of doing good."

A few months before his death, and while still in Ceylon, he wrote,—

"One must have a dogged, steady, ever persistent determination, to do because it is right. It is true that all consequences must be ignored." Later still,—*"I am groping along my way, the burden of life is a weary, weary one, but I know there is light ahead. I can only work. I must work, though it seems like trying to stem Niagara with a handful of chips. And I suppose it is. But, shall even the Infinite daunt me!"*

He left the island. His ignorance of the native dialects was naturally a great impediment in his way, as were also the religious impostors, the "priests," who hated him with perfect hatred, for his earnestness, outspoken honesty and zeal in the MASTER'S cause. It was his intention formally to enter the Brotherhood of the Select (the Sangha), but he concluded to postpone this important step until he should arrive in Thibet,—whither he had set his face. But our common enemy, or, if you prefer it, friend, overtook and slew him at Adyar, India, in February last, in the 46th year of his age.

May his soul dream the sweetest dreams, and may he awake and continue his upward journey in a blessed home.

—O. & V.

*Heavens! We would have him scrubbed and disinfected, and then put to work about some stable.—EDITOR.

ADEPT AND MEDIUM.

"The Adept is such by virtue of the *active* principle. The Medium is such by virtue of the *passive* principle. When the Adept is in a trance, his *spiritual* nature is the centre of activity. When the Medium is entranced, his *astral* nature is that centre. The Medium, when he goes into trance,—when not hypnotized by another, or in the catalepsy of disease,—does so because his bodily senses become controlled by an outside force while his soul [or mind] remains passive. His vitality and consciousness are then transferred to the astral body. In this condition he is a spectator. What he sees, and the height or depth of his insight, are regulated by the purity of his auric sphere. Truths or falsehoods may be impressed upon him. He may or may not remember them afterward; he may report them correctly or misinterpret them [both of which Swedenborg did]. If a powerful Force uses him as its agent, that Force can and does stamp its information upon him with a sharpness of outline which his waking brain cannot blur.

The Adept does not make his outer body passive. He paralyzes it and remains master of all his nature above the body. He retreats deeper within than the Medium, and does it consciously to himself. During his volitional and successive transfer of vitality and action from plane to plane [or principle to principle], or from seat to seat of force, no break in consciousness occur. In all places and states the Adept is self-identified. He moves from state to state at will. When he reaches the Spiritual centre, from it he controls all the rest. This Centre is universal, and is not his own."—*Ex.*

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