

"That Art Thou."

Chhandogya-Upanishad

"This so solid-seeming world, after all, is but an air-image over Me, the only reality; and nature with its thousand-fold productions and destruction, but the reflex of our inward force, the phantasy of our dream."—*Carlyle*.

THE LIGHT OF THE EAST.

Vol. II.]

FEBRUARY, 1894.

[No. 6.

KEYNOTES.

THE most sensational event of the last month which agitated Calcutta for a week was the visit of Mrs. Annie Besant during her lecturing tour throughout India. The speeches of a lady orator excited no little curiosity and though admission was by tickets the fair orator had on every occasion, a crowded hall before her. These extremely mundane people who fill the metropolis were very eager to hear the Irish lady who came from the other side of the ocean to preach to them the wisdom and philosophy of the East.

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Annie Besant spoke, not like a theosophist, not like a Buddhist, but like a Hindu. This is the secret of the success of her Calcutta speeches. She is the recognized apostle of Theosophy but her speeches savoured so much of Hinduism that they drove mad the arch-theosophist of this city, Dr Salzer. The latter

gentleman proposed to struck the name of Mrs. Besant off the rolls of the Theosophical Society. Colonel Olcott in introducing Mrs. Besant to the public said, "Mrs. Besant has declared herself to be a Hindu. It had been proposed to him—he was sorry to say by a member—that she should be struck off the rolls of the Theosophical Society. He would like it to be distinctly understood, that the Society made no distinction of creeds, and that men of any religion whatever had the right to become members of it." Writing to the *Englishman* of the 13th January Dr. Salzer says, "The Theosophical Society as a body should do what Colonel Olcott as the President of the Theosophical Society has failed to do. They should repudiate Mrs. Besant's Indian lecturing as an expression of Theosophy."

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We fail to understand Dr. Salzer's position. The members of the Indian

Theosophical Society are for the most part Hindus. How can, then, Dr. Salzer expect the Indian Theosophical Society as a body to repudiate the Hindu lecturing of Mrs. Besant. Will the Hindu Theosophists be traitors to their religion and to their country? Decidedly not.

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But Dr. Salzer's statement is not without some truth. Though it is true that the Theosophical Society is non-sectarian, yet it can not be denied that most of the leaders of the Society including Col. Olcott and Mr. Sinnett have a creed of their own, which may be called what Dr. Salzer aptly terms it the "expression of theosophy." And this creed is nothing else but Buddhism in its pronounced form; not the theistic Buddhism which is current in China but the Buddhism which places "Perfect Unconsciousness" in the place of the Uncaused Cause. The above Theosophical creed is against all "Forms" of religion and is determined to deal with the Essence only, an Essence whose nature it fails to understand.

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We have no contention whatever with Dr. Salzer. The *Gnân Kānda* of Hinduism discards all forms and a Gnāni is enjoined to make no distinction between a *Brahman* and a *Sudra*. But he also does not make any distinction between his own son (if any) and a perfect stranger. If Dr. Salzer has attained the stage of a *Paramhansa* and can treat his own son and a stranger alike he is of course at liberty to place himself above all "Forms." If not it is sheer presumption for him to say that he is above all religion. Intellectual comprehension of the doctrines of the *Gnân Kānda* and realization of the same are quite different things.

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What attracts us most in Mrs. Besant's Indian speeches is not the eulogy which she has showered on the ancient civilization of the Hindus, nor her appeal to her degraded sons to raise her to the pedestal of glory from which she has fallen, but those points only in which she tried to grapple with scientific materialism and to give it a death-blow. This is her *forte*. For years she had been an ardent advote of materialism and her knowledge of modern science is deep and accurate unlike that of her predecessor, Madame Blavatsky, whose knowledge of science was shallow in the extreme in spite of her wonderful oriental learning. The Tinnevely speech of Mrs. Besant delivered on the 18th of January on "The Inadequacy of Materialism" is what we like to hear from her often. For there we detect the hand of the master.

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The influence of sensational speeches is not lasting. They create only "nine day's wonder," and leave their hearers in the same state as before. More than once we have been asked by foreigners to raise the condition of our country. In these matters which affect national destiny it is not the free-will but the cyclic law which is supreme. When the hour will come, Nature herself will create her own "ironsides" who will raise India to the highest point of the ascending arc. Mere sensation will avail very little and so we do not think much of dramatic display and sensational outpourings. The quasi-scientific speeches of Mrs. Besant like the one noted above will have a lasting effect with the advanced thinkers while her sensational outpourings will superficially affect men of shallow mind, and still more shallow education.

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Draper in his "History of the In-

Intellectual Development of Europe" has a very brilliant passage regarding the question of national destiny. He says, "There runs an irresistible destiny in the midst of all these vicissitudes. There are analogies between the life of a nation and that of an individual who, though he *may be* in one respect the maker of his fortunes, for happiness or for misery, good or for evil, though he remains here or goes there as his inclinations prompt, though he does this, or abstains from that as he chooses, is nevertheless held fast by an inexorable fate—a fate which brought him in the world involuntarily as far as he is concerned, which presses him forward through a definite career the stages of which are absolutely invariable—infancy, childhood, youth, maturity, old age, with all their characteristic actions and passions—and which removes him from the scene at the appointed time, in most cases against his will. So also it is with nations; the voluntary is only the outward semblance covering but hardly hiding the pre-determined. Over the (trifling) events of life we may have control but none whatever over the law of its progress. There is a geometry that applies to nations, an equation of their curve of advance. That no mortal man can touch."

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According to Kepler, the star which appeared at the birth of Jesus Christ and which was seen by the wise men of the East was not a new temporary star but a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn near the first point of Aries. The conjunction of these two stars takes place every twenty years. As the conjunction took place in the year of Rome 748, Kepler placed the birth of Jesus in B. C. 6, i. e., 6 years before the generally accepted date of the birth of the founder of Christianity.

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Since man first spoke no thought has died; but through the centuries augmented in a ratio grand; it lives to-day and wanders through the world.—*Birckhead.*

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I envy no qualities of the mind and intellect in others—nor gems, nor power, nor wit, nor fancy; but I could choose what would be most delightful and most useful to me; I should prefer a *firm religious belief* to every other blessing. For it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when old ones vanish, and throws over the decay of existence, the most gorgeous of all light; awakens life in death, and calls out from corruption and decay, beauty and everlasting glory. *Sir Humphry Davy.*

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It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—*Emerson.*

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The delights of love are ushered in by sighs, and they terminate in languishment and dejection; the object thou burnest for nauseates with satiety, and no sooner hadst thou possessed it but thou wert weary of its presence.

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To give heartfelt praise to noble actions is in some measure to make them your own.

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Says the "Notes and Queries:" It is an extraordinary tribute to American Masonry that fifty-two signers of the declaration of independence out of fifty-five, could have

formed a lodge, and all the Major Generals in the Army of the Revolution (1775—1783) were bound by the mystic tie. One was expelled from the fraternity; but his infamy and its punishment have given more brilliant and permanent fame to the virtues of the rest. The unknown grave and the execrated memory of Benedict Arnold serve by contrast to exalt to nobler and grander heights the pure Masonic patriotism of George Washington.

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It is the habitual thought that frames itself into our life. It affects us even more than our intimate social relations do. Our confidential

friends have not so much to do in shaping our lives as thoughts have which we harbour.—*N. Q.*

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I shall be under great obligation to any of the Indian subscribers of this magazine if he will give me the name and address of any Automatic Writer, Astrologer, Clairvoyant, Crystal Gazer, Mesmeriser, Psychometer, Spirit-medium, or an adept in Telepathy, with whose name and address he is aware. I want the above for carrying out certain experiments in a large scale, the result of which will be published in the *Light of the East*.

THE VEDANTA SYSTEM.

(Continued from page 9).

MAYA.

THE whole of the universe including the world of mind and matter, says Shankara, is *Maya*. How are we to interpret this term which has given rise to so much controversy among the different schools of philosophy. The doctrine of *Maya* is the central principle of the Advaita system. Strictly speaking this doctrine is absent in the two other systems, viz., *Visishtadvaita* and *Dvaita*. We will try to show that *Mayaváda* is the only theory of the universe which is consistent with the existence of the Eternal and Infinite Essence known as *Parambrahm* and that in the *Mayaváda* of Shankara metaphysics has reached its highest point beyond which no further development is possible.

But to grasp clearly the idea of

Maya, one should understand what is meant by that which is *not Maya*, or which is the Essence or substance behind the veil of phenomena. Our finite mind may not have a *positive* knowledge of the Substance, but it may have a *negative* knowledge of the same. We may not comprehend what it *is*, but we may know what it *is not*. In fact, the followers of *Gnán Marga* are directed in the *Shástras* to reach the Eternal Substance by this negative method. The substance being our own inmost self, when we know what it *is not* by distinguishing it from the phenomenal world, we gain a *positive* knowledge of it not by mind or by intellect but by *becoming one with it*. This is the emancipation of the *Gnáni*.

But to return to our subject.

What are we to understand by the term Substance or *Parambrahm*? The word Substance is derived from two roots, viz., *sub*, under and *stare*, to stand; it means that which *stands under* the world of phenomena. On the other hand, the word *Parambrahm* is derived from the root, *bruh*, to grow or expand; in other words, that which grows and expands in the shape of the universe. Another term by which the Causeless Cause is designated is *Satchidánanda* which is composed of the words, *Sat* (substance), *Chit* (consciousness), and *ánanda* (non-dual bliss). The first epithet of the term *Satchidánanda*, viz., *Sat* (substance) clearly indicates that it is employed not to designate *Ishwara* but to be applied to *Parambrahm*. If the term be applied to *Ishwara*, as it is done by some of the leading theosophists, then *Parambrahm* is not the Substance, which is absurd. There can not be two *substances*, after all.

What should we, then, understand by the term Substance? We will illustrate the idea of Substance by an example from the phenomenal world. In the world before our eyes we see two things, viz., space and matter. Let us assume for a moment in order to understand the idea of substance that space is the substance of matter. If we remove matter from space we can conceive that space will exist, but we can never conceive the existence of matter *without space*. Matter, therefore, entirely depends for its existence *as such* upon space; but space does not depend upon matter for its existence. Space being, therefore, the constant quantity is the substance while matter is phenomenon. From this illustration let us pass to the ultimate principles. *As space is to matter so Parambrahm is to the universe taken as a whole*. From the standpoint of space matter has no existence whatever, for space is not affected by the existence of matter;

from the standpoint of *Satchidánanda* the universe has no existence, the latter being its own manifestation as it were. Properly speaking, both space and matter are the manifestations of *Satchidánanda*.

But the above explanation will not remove the whole difficulty. What do we understand by saying that the universe is the *manifestation of Parambrahm*? Manifestation is of two kinds. In the first place, there is the manifestation of Substance, and in the second place there is the manifestation of phenomena. This should also be made clear by an illustration. In the example of Space and Matter cited above, we see two kinds of manifestations. Firstly, we see the various manifestations of space in the shape of long and short *distances* as the distance between two material objects as well as in the manifestation of space in the shape of a sphere as, for instance, the case of the vault of the sky. The manifestations of space mentioned above are not the transformation of space into something else like the transformation of milk into curd, but they are the mere appearance of space *without losing its character as space*. Such manifestations are called *Vivarta* by Shankara. Secondly, there is another class of manifestation in which the thing transforms itself into a different thing. For example, the transformation of milk into curd, of ice into water &c. Such manifestation may be called the manifestation of phenomena. Only finite objects can suffer such transformation.

From the above we may conclude that Substance can undergo only the *Vivarta* manifestation as mentioned above. The following reasons may be adduced in support of the above conclusion. From the derivation of the word Substance we have seen that it is equivalent to that which *stands under* all other

manifestations of the universe ; in other words, that there is nothing anterior to Substance. Substance is the *place* in which the occurrence of phenomena is possible. Substance can never undergo the transformation which the milk undergoes in becoming curd ; for, Substance, being the *place* in which transformation is made possible the transformation of *place* (space) and the transformation of Substance amount to one and the same thing. Now the transformation of place or space is inconceivable and, therefore, absurd. So is the transformation of the Substance known as *Satchidánanda* of which relative space is an aspect. It is, therefore, clear that Substance or Parambramh can never undergo the second kind of transformation, *i. e.*, the transformation resembling that of the milk into curd. It is stated in the Shastras that the universe has come out of the Infinite Substance. If there had been no transformation, how are we to account for the evolution of the universe from *Satchidánanda* ? The answer is that the universe is the *Vivarta* manifestation of Parambramh ; and the latter manifestation does not affect the Substance at all.

Two kinds of manifestation are possible, *viz.*, *Vivarta* (in which the transformation does not affect the substance) and *Parinám* (in which the thing is transformed into something else). It has been shown before that the latter transformation is not possible in the case of *Satchidánanda*. But there must have been some kind of transformation, otherwise the universe would not have come into existence ; and that transformation or manifestation is the manifestation of the first class, *viz.*, *Vivarta*. As the rope manifests itself as the serpent so *Satchidánanda* manifests itself as the universe. This is known as *Mayávac* of Shankara ; and strict reasoning can not lead us to any other conclusion.

If it be asked what is the object of such manifestation ? Why does Parambramh appear eternally as the universe ? The answer is that the process is *natural* to *Satchidánanda*. As liquidity is natural to water so manifestation is natural to the Infinite Substance. The Perfect Being can have no object at all in such *Mayávic* evolution. Had there been any object, the object must have attained its fruition in endless time, for the process itself is eternal. Those who say that the object is to gain experience, advance simply an absurd proposition ; for no question of experience can arise in the case of a Being who is infinite and whose manifestations are eternal ? Is not an eternity sufficient to gather experience ?

Space may be regarded from two different points of view. There is the *relative* space which intervenes between material objects ; again, there is the absolute space which has neither beginning nor end, neither centre nor circumference. If the whole of the mighty universe be blown up some day like the phantom of dream, still the infinite space will remain unaffected. When the hour of *Mahápralya* with strike the universe will vanish like the mighty fabric of a dream but space will continue to exist eternity after eternity unaffected by the changes of matter. Now what appears as space or vacancy to us is in reality absolute consciousness, *Satchidánanda*. At the dawn of *Mahápralya* the universe vanishes like the phantom of a dream leaving not a wreck behind it ; only the self-luminous, and infinite ocean of consciousness shines by its own light. To speak metaphorically, each ripple of the endless ocean is a universe. Who can count the numberless systems of worlds which lie like tiny atoms in this fathomless ocean ? Shall I tell thee reader, that this infinite, shining light of *Gnán* is thy deepest self ?

It is said by some that Hinduism is an aspect of Theosophy. May we ask what grander truths have Theosophy revealed which are not found in it? Hinduism is called *Sanátan*, that which is without beginning, in other words, that which is born of Nature. The centre of Hinduism being *Satchidánanda* and Nature herself being an aspect of the same we may at once conclude that Nature herself is an aspect of Hinduism. What other religion has given us a grander idea of the Eternal One than the *Satchidánanda* of Hinduism? The *Sunya* (zero) of popular Buddhism, the *Perfect Unconsciousness* of the Theosophists, the revengeful Christian God thundering like Jove, the Moslem *Allah* sitting amidst the sights and sounds of an earthly paradise—all sink into insignificance before the grandeur of this fathomless ocean of self-luminous bliss which like space permeates every atom, over which the universe is a *Mayavic* bubble, and which is the deepest self of man. Does not this great idea appeal to the head and heart alike? Can anything be more grand and awe-inspiring? What is absolute Idealism if not this? In the opening lines of the Secret Doctrine we read, "The Eternal Parent wrapped in Her *ever invisible robes* had slumbered once again for seven eternities." The idea is grand but even in it lurks traces of dualism indicated by the phrase—"ever invisible robes." Matter has been given some reality at least. But according to Shankara even the "ever invisible robes" do vanish in *Mahápralya*, for when a dream vanishes it leaves no wreck behind it. The founder of modern Theosophy says in a passage as grand as that quoted above,—"Where was silence? Where the ears to sense it? No, there was neither silence nor sound; naught save ceaseless eternal breath; which knows itself not." To this

Shankara will answer that the Eternal One *knows itself*, for it is *self-luminous*. In the absence of duality the mind (which is not self-luminous) lapses into unconsciousness. But not so the *self-luminous* consciousness which is conscious of itself by its own light.

Does the sun require illumination from any external light? Does not the sun shine by its own light and illumine myriads of other systems by its rays. Similarly, the *Satchidánanda* shines by its own light of *Grán* and does not require any external object to light it up. The difference between the Absolute of the German thinkers and that of the Aryan Rishis lies in this: The philosophers of Germany have postulated the existence of the Absolute by the processes of *pure* reason; but they are ignorant of the nature of the Absolute because they have never reduced their mind to the passive state by the processes of *Samádhi*. On the other hand, the Aryan Rishis approached the problem with a mind purified by *Astánga Yoga*. During the state of *Samádhi* they have caught a glimpse of the infinite Essence and became aware that the Essence itself is their own deepest self. By spiritual intuition they became aware of the nature of the Infinite All and characterised it by the term *Satchidánanda* (substance, consciousness and bliss). *Parambrahm* is not dreamless sleep, for in dreamless sleep the *átma* becomes the witness of *agnána* (ignorance). What then, is the *Param átma*? It is the eternal, self-luminous, non-dual Bliss whose manifestation is the universe of name and form. For as in dream a dream-world springs up in our little mind and vanishes the next moment leaving not a trace behind, so the universe springs up like the original dream of the infinite consciousness and vanishes in the night of *Mahápralya*. (To be continued.)

THE LIFE OF SRI SANKARACHARYA.

THERE are about half-a-dozen books in original Sanskrit treating of the life and works of Sankaracharya among which two are the most known and reliable. Of these again, the one alleged to have been written by Ananda-Giri—one of the four famous disciples of Sankara and the commentator of his Bhasyas is mostly a record of controversial matters having little or no biographical sketches; and the other by the well-known Vedic commentator Sayanacharya also known as Madhavacharya deals in a systematic way with the life, gradual progress, and development of the character of the great sage as well as his celebrated intellectual battles and conquests in various parts of India. It shall be well, not to speak of the high wisdom of the step, to place before the reader, before proceeding any further, the opinion of others as to the relative merits of these two books and thus show reasons for my gathering material for the present paper from the authority of the latter book. "We cannot," says an orientalist in his paper headed 'Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism' in reply to an English F. T. S., "however, place any reliance whatever upon Anandagiri's Sankara Vijaya published at Calcutta."

The Calcutta edition not only differs in some very material points from the manuscript copies of the same work found in Southern India, but is opposed to every other Sankara Vijayam hitherto examined. It is quite clear from its style and some of the statements contained therein, that it was not the production of Anandagiri, one of the four chief disciples of Sankara and the

commentator of his Upanishad Bhasyam. For instance, it represents Sankara as the author of a certain verse which is to be found in Vidyaranya's Adhikaranaratnamala written in the fourteenth century. It represents Sankara as giving orders to two of his disciples to preach the Visishtadwaittee and the Dwaittee doctrines, which are directly opposed to his own doctrine. The book under consideration says that Sankara went to conquer Mandanamisra in debate, followed by Sureswaracharya, though Mandanamisra assumed the latter name at the time of initiation. It is unnecessary for us here to point out all the blunders and absurdities of this book. It will be sufficient to say that in our opinion it was not written by Anandagiri, and that it was the production of an unknown author who does not appear to have been even tolerably well acquainted with the history of the Adwaittee doctrine. Vidyaranya's (otherwise Sayanacharya, the great commentator of the Vedas) Sankara Vijaya is decidedly the most reliable source of information as regards the main features of Sankara's biography. Its authorship has been universally accepted, and the information contained therein was derived by its author, as may be seen from his own statements, from certain old biographies of Sankara existing at the time of its composition. Taking into consideration the author's vast knowledge and information, and the opportunities he had for collecting materials for his work when he was the head of the Sringeri Matham, there is every reason to believe that he had embodied in his work the most reliable information he could obtain."

It is from the Sankara-Vijayam of Sāyanacharya as has been already stated, that the materials of this paper are taken and on its authority are told the various anecdotes and events which find their place in the following pages. The book is divided into sixteen chapters, and I intend to write taking these chapters one by one as they occur in the book exactly following the order of the original. In the first chapter of this invaluable book is described what happened between Mahādeva and the Devas: in the second, the incarnation of Mahādeva, in the third the incarnations of the various Devas, in the fourth, how the genius of Sankara established its high superiority over all men before his eighth year was complete; in the fifth how the fourth *āśram* or *Vān-prastha*, the way to *Jivumukti*, was secured by Sankara; in the sixth how the neglected and forgotten *Atma-Vidya* of yore was revived and taught by Sankara; in the seventh, the meeting with Vyasdeva and the description of the many wonderful events that happened after the meeting; in the eighth, Sankara's first meeting with Mandana, their debate, with Saraswati (Ubhay-Bharati, the wife of Mandana) as their umpire and Mandana's defeat; in the ninth, the taking of the evidence of Jaimini, the debate with Saraswati and Sankara's entry into the dead body of king Amarakā; in the tenth Sankara's return to his own body, the death of Ubhay-Bharati and the initiation of Mandana; in the eleventh, the defeat of a Kapalika named Ugra-Bhairaba; in the twelfth, how Hastamalaka and Aryatokaka became disciples of Sankara; in the thirteenth, the publicity of Brahma-Vidya or Vedanta with Sankarabhāsyam; in the fourteenth, the pilgrimage of Padmapada; in the fifteenth Sankara's debate and conquest in all parts of India, and in the sixteenth the ascension

of Sankara on Saradāpeeth in Kashmerē (the throne in the temple of Saraswati, where only the all-knowing sage, was honored with a seat). The Sankara Vijayam of Sayanācharya is written in verse while that of Anandagiri is written mostly in prose interspersed with a few verses here and there. The book of Anandagiri is divided into 74 Prakaranas and its principal feature is the criticism of the beliefs of all religious sects existing at that time.

Now to ascertain the date of Sankara, I think, I must take a plunge into the dark waters of history; for no other purpose than to follow suit the universal practice of all writers of 'lives' and biographies. I know full well that the ordinary means of knowledge of a man is woefully lame to penetrate through the hopeless chaos born of the speculations and theories of orientalist and other learned men and get at the truth whether of a historical date or place of ancient India. So I should say beforehand as well that I do not pretend here for a moment to give the date of the birth of Sankara or the time he flourished but introduce the subject, simply, as I have said before to keep the fashion and tread the beaten path of the writers on similar subjects. In his book, "The Religions of India," Mr. Barth writes— "Sankaracharya is generally placed in the eighth century; perhaps we must accept the ninth rather. The best accredited tradition represents him as born on the 10th of the month "Madhava" in 788 A.D. Other traditions, it is true, place him in the second and fifth centuries. The author of the Dabistan, on the other hand, brings him as far down as the commencement of the fourteenth." Among others, Max Muller, Monier Williams, and Weber are said to hold the same belief as has been quoted from the book of Mr. Barth. The only other orientalist who seems to

have made independent enquiries into this subject is Mr. Wilson. The following is a quotation from the preface to the first edition of his Sauskrit Dictionary: "The birth of Sankara presents the same discordance as every other remarkable incident amongst the Hindus. The Kadali Brahmins, who form an establishment following and teaching his system, assert his appearance about 2,000 years since; some accounts place him about the beginning of the Christian era, others in the third or fourth century after; a manuscript history of the kings of Konga in Colonel Mackenzie's collection, makes him contemporary with Vikrama Deva Chakravarti, sovereign of Skandapura in the Deccan A. D. 178; at Sringeri, on the edge of the Western Ghats, the present Mysore Territory, at which place he is said to have founded a College that still exists and assumed the supreme control of the Smarta Brahmins of the Peninsula, an antiquity of 1,600 years is attributed to him, and common tradition makes him about 1,200 years old.

The Bhoja Prabandha enumerates Sankara among its worthies, and as contemporary with that prince; his antiquity will then be between eight and nine centuries. The followers of Madhwacharya in Tuluva seem to have attempted to reconcile these contradictory accounts by supposing him to have been born three times; first at Sivule in Tuluva about 1,500 years ago, again in Malabar some centuries later, and finally at Padukachaytra in Tuluva no more than 600 years since; the latter assertion being intended evidently to do honour to their own founder, whose date that was, by enabling him to triumph over Sankara in a suppositious controversy. The Vaishnava Brahmins of Madura say that Sankara appeared in the ninth century of Salivahana, or tenth of our era. Dr. Taylor thinks that, if we

allow him about 900 years, we shall not be far from the truth, and Mr. Colebrooke is inclined to give him an antiquity of about 1,000 years. This last is the age which Ram Mohun Roy, a diligent student of Sankara's works and philosophical teacher of his doctrines, is disposed to concur in, and he infers that "from a calculation of the spiritual generations of the followers of Sankara Swami from his time up to this date, he seems to have lived between the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era," a distance of time agreeing with the statements made to Dr. Buchanon in his journey through Sankara's native country, Malabar, and in union with the assertion of the Kerala Utpathi, a work giving the historical and statistical accounts of the same province, and which according to Mr. Duncan's citation of it, mentions the regulations of the castes of Malabar by this philosopher said to have been effected about 1,000 years before 1798. At the same time, it must be observed, that a manuscript translation of the same work in Colonel Mackenzie's possession, supposes Sankaracharya to have been born about the middle of the fifth century or between thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago, differing in this respect from Mr. Duncan's statement—a difference of the less importance, as the manuscript in question, either from defects in the original or translation, presents many palpable errors and cannot consequently be depended upon. The weight of authority therefore is altogether in favour of an antiquity of about ten centuries, and I am disposed to adopt this estimate of Sankara's date, and to place him in the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century of the Christian era." Mr. Sinnett in his Esoteric Buddhism says that Sankaracharya appeared in India—no attention being paid to his birth place

which appears to have taken place on the Malabar coast—about sixty years after Gautama Buddha's death. Esoteric teaching is to the effect that* Sankaracharya simply *was* Buddha in all respects, in a new body. So according to Mr. Sinnett Sankaracharya was Buddha's second incarnation and "his third appearance was in the person of Tsong-ka-pa the great Tibetan adept reformer of the fourteenth century." Mr. Sinnett, I may remark, received this information, as he says,—“from a Brahmin Adwaitee of Southern India—not directly from my Tibethn instructor.” I will quote in this connexion one authority more and be done. The excellent paper in reply to “An English F. T. S.” headed “Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism” from which I have quoted before after an able and instructive criticism of the theories and speculations of the orientalist and others, regarding the date of Sankara concludes, “we may, perhaps, now venture to place before the public the exact date assigned to Sankaracharya by Tibetan and Indian initiates. According to the historical information in their possession he was born in the year B. C. 510 (fifty-one years and two months after the date of Buddha's Nirvana), and we believe that satisfactory evidence in support of this date can be obtained in India if the inscriptions at Conjeveram, Sringeri, Jaggurnath, Benares, Cashmere, and various other places visited by Sankara, are properly deciphered. Sankara built Conjeveram, which is considered as one of the most ancient towns in Southern India; and it may be possible to ascertain the time of its construction if proper inquiries are made. But even the evidence now brought before the public supports the opinion of the initiates above indicated. As Gauḍapatha was Sankaracharya's Guru's Guru, his date entirely depends on

Sankara's date; and there is every reason to suppose that he lived before Buddha.” Thus far about the date of Sankara and now I think our task may be begun in right earnest.

Once upon a time, Sāyanācharya tells us, the Devas headed by Brahmá were engaged in worshipping Siva in the mount of Kailas. When the great God was pleased with their worship they laid down the following facts for his kind consideration;—

“That, as is known very well to you, Bhagabán Vishnu who incarnated as Buddha, has left the Sogatás (Baudhdhas).

That the Agamas (books) compiled from His teachings, these ignorant Bonddhas think to be antagonistic to the existing Shastras and Srutis, and accordingly they have begun to falsify and prosecute them, and to break the bonds of caste and its respective Varnásramdharna.

That nobody now *practises* the Sandhyá Vandaná of old, nor accepts the Sannyás-dharma. They close their ears if the word “Yagna” reaches their hearing, and wicked hypocrites having read the *Saiva* and *Vaishnava* ágamas paint their bodies with the Symbols mentioned therein but have given up all rites and ceremonies; that the Bouddhas always attempt to misinterpret and falsify the Srutis; that the Kapalikas have grown in strength and decapitate Brahmans and bring corruption everywhere and that the path of religion has become full of briars and impassable obstacles, to clear up which for the benefit of mankind you are prayed to incarnate on earth.”

This petition the Lord of Girija replied to in the following words;—

“I shall as you wish incarnate as a man and compose a Bhásya of the Sutras that prove the existence of the one Adwaita Bramh.

"There will be four principal disciples of mine to help me in my work of clearing the hearts of mankind of all false beliefs, and you also should accompany me in your human incarnations. Kartikeya shall incarnate as Bhattapáda and pave the way before me by clearing the land of the Songatas (Bouddhas). Indra shall incarnate as the king Sudhanwá to help this cause and Bramhá as the Bráhma named Mandana."

Such were the directions of Lord Siva, and Indra and Kartikeya descended among men as Sudhanwá and Bhattapáda.

Thus far does Sáyanácharya inform us of the movements of the Guardians of mankind and acquaint us with their plans for our redemption and anon begins to describe how those plans took shape and obtained fruition in our plane of existence.

When king Sudhanwá was reigning, Sáyana tells us, Bhattapáda came into his court—then a nest of Bouddhas—in the course of his travel undertaken for the purpose of the reinstatement of the Vedic religion and banishment of the Sunya-vad that was then prevailing in the land. There was a grand debate in which Bhattapáda discomfited all the principal *Pundits* of the Court, but the king would not be satisfied with their defeat. "I want some other proof of the *truth* of your Religion—a proof that a greater intellect will not be able to find fault with by his sharper reason," said he to Bhattapáda and "then I will accept your statement and drive the present belief away from my land. I lay down this test—he that shall fall unharmed from the top of a mountain is the exponent of Truth."

Bhattapáda ascended the peak of a high mountain while the Bouddhas looked at each other with disconcerted eyes at this sudden command of the King; and when the King seeing Bhattapáda fall uninjured

from the rock approached him with honors, the Songatas objected saying that this was not a sufficient test, for, by the virtue of *mantram*, herbs, and jewels such feats could be accomplished. The King was enraged to hear their excuse and said,—“If, Sir, you cannot give the true answer to the question I will set you, be sure that I will grind you all between two stones,” and he caused to bring secretly an earthen pot containing a snake and asked them to tell him what it contained. The Bouddhas promised a reply the next morning and went, for their lives, to practise devotion as of old, by concentrating on the Sun-god, remaining up to their necks in water. The god took pity on them and gave them the information that Vishnu whose bed is on the infinite *nág* (Snake) is in the pot. Well, the Songatas came and told the king their secret, that a Snake was in the pot and Bhagaban Vishnu was adorning its crest. This was too much for the King and *proving* the falsehood of the doctrines that prevailed in his court with a vengeance. The gods whose very existence was loudly denied—nay, the greatest of them,—was, according to the testimony of the very people who were the greatest sceptics and persecutors of the belief in them, before him. Could he believe it? A voice from the air spoke at that very moment startling all the by-standers:—“O King, do not doubt what the Songatas say but hasten to fulfil your promise.” The King opened the cover and saw the most Beautiful with his own eyes, standing on the crest of the erect serpent, as He once stood in the waters of the Kálindi on the head of the humbled Kália.

The King's orders after this event, as may be imagined, swayed to the other extreme. It was—“Let all persons irrespective of sex or age be put to death by my servants.

who question the truth of the religion of the Vedas or believe any more in the Buddhistic doctrines, throughout the length and breadth of the land from the *Setu* of Ram (Cape Comorin) in the South and Himalayas in the North."

Now we come to the second chapter, in which is described how the great Mahádeva incarnated as a human being for the good of mankind.

When the Vedic *Karmapuddhati* was fairly re-established in the land by the exertions of Bhattapáda and King Sudhanwá, Lord Siva appeared in a dream to King Rájsekhará and expressed his intention of gracing the land of Kerala with his divine presence in the form of a *Yotirlingam* in a house which he ordered the king to build near a temple on the charming mountain, Brisa, by the side of the holy stream Purná, and make other management for His daily worship. Near that temple, in course of time, came to live a Brahman of the name of Vidyáhiraj. He was a pious and holy man, and was blessed with a son of the name of Sivaguru as the effect of his good works of a previous life. Sivaguru was a *Gyáni* like Siva and had the power of expression like Brihaspati, the Guru of the Devas. Hence his name. He was a Brahmachari and lived with his Guru. But when he learnt all that his Guru could teach him and when he was of proper age his father and his Guru pressed him to marry and settle in life as a *Grihasta*. Sivaguru was bent for Sannyás. But at the earnest entreaties of his Guru and father, he married, much against his will, a wife who was equal to him in every respect and made him happy in all other matters but in bearing a child to him. Years rolled on, and half of his days was placed on the debit side of his account in the book of Chitra-gupta, the unerring accountant—

but still Sivaguru was not blessed with a son. So, depressed in spirit, he told his wife one day—"Oh daughter of a noble family; half of our lives have ebbed away—but we are not fortunate yet in seeing the face of a son. Who will preserve our generation?" To him replied his wife—"Oh Priyatama, let us, to appease our sorrow, go and worship the God Siva. By his grace we shall certainly receive a son worthy of our family." And so the noble pair went to the temple of Yotirlingam near their house and worshipped Siva with fasts and other ascetic observances. Thus, after a long and unwearied devotion, scarcely equalled in the annals of worshippers, the pious pair gained their object. Lord Siva, assuming the form of an old hoary-headed Brahman appeared in a dream to Sivaguru and said, "What do you want Sivaguru? When you are engaged in hard asceticism, you must have an object to gain—however *Niskama*, you may naturally be; tell me, what do you want." Sivaguru said he wanted a son. The Brahman replied—"Do not disbelieve in my words, Sivaguru, whatever I say is sure to come to pass. Now what sort of son do you want? Do you want one all-knowing son adorned with all the noble qualities or many of the opposite kind?" Sivaguru wanted one of the first kind and the Brahman disappeared saying, "You shall have your wish. Now go home."

The next morning Sivaguru related to his wife the vision he saw the preceding night and well-satisfied with their success the happy pair went home after due worship of the Yotirlingam. That very day, after eating the remains of the Brahmans' foods, who were invited in the house, Sivaguru's wife became conscious of spiritual influence—that of *Saivatejah*, and conceived.

At night, while sleeping she called

alone "joy, joy, raksha" (glory to Thee, Oh save me!) and started awake and explained to her husband that she was seeing the great Mahadeva on His snowwhite Brisha (bull) surrounded by a heavenly chorus passing and she asked for benedictions in those words. She had many such experiences during her pregnancy and did not want consolation in the inevitable hour of grief. When the stars and planets were all in auspicious conjunction, the great Sankara came on earth, his body bedecked with all the Signs and Symbols of divinity, filling the hearts of his parents with gladness and surprise.

In the third chapter, to which we now come, is related how the various Devas, by the order of Lord Mahadeva, assumed human shapes for the furtherance of the cause for which He incarnated as Sankaracharya in Aryavarta, and adorned the families of sages learned in the six philosophies.

Sreevishnu was born as the son of Bimalacharya and assumed the name of Padmapada. Pavanadeva incarnated as the son of Pravakara and was known as Hastamalaka. The above god, also by a partial incarnation, assumed the name of Totaka. The four-faced Brahma assumed the name of Mandana; Brihaspati that of Anandagiri; Surja that of Chitsukha. Some say that Brihaspati and not Brahma was known on earth as Mandana and Nandi the servant of Siva incarnated as Anandagiri. The goddess of Vidya, Saraswati, incarnated, by the curse of the Rishi Durbasa, as Ubhay-Bharati, the renowned wife of Mandana Misra, who sat to judge

the abilities of Sankara and her husband on the occasion of their memorable debate.

In the fourth chapter are described the death of Sivaguru when Sankara was only three years old, his investment with the holy thread, and the residence of Sankara at the age of five years in the house of his Guru who taught him the Vedas with their six *angas* (members or branches) and the surprising genius of Sankara who within the period of two years did learn not only what his Guru could teach him and beat all his fellow students in every branch of learning but excelled the Guru himself and had hardly a rival in the literary and intellectual world of his time who could confront him for a moment. It is also described in this chapter, how Sankara while living in his Guru's house went one day on *biksha* to a poor Brahman's house whose wife could only give him an *amlaki* (a nut) with tears in her eyes for their extreme poverty. Sankara's noble heart melted and he prayed to *Lakshmi*, the goddess of fortune to take pity on the poor family. *Lakshmi* appeared on the scene but declined to help them on the ground that their previous *Karma* was unfavourable. Sankara entreated her again and asked *Lakshmi* just to give them some *golden amlakies* as they have given him one notwithstanding their great want. By the repeated prayers of Sankara, *Lakshmi* was moved and filled the house of the Brahman with *golden amlakies* even as desired by Sankara.

(To be continued.)

A. H. B.

THEOSOPHICAL ITEMS.

W. G. COLEMAN, editor of the Carrier Dove, is responsible for the following:—

As an addendum to my paper read at the Psychic Science Congress, I would state that I have just received from the Astralo-Mahatmic Telephone and Express Line, ever plying between my office and the Theosophic Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, the most recent secret instruction and information sent out to the faithful. A circular sent by Col. Olcott to the trusted ones contains the startling news that the late business-manager at Headquarters, S. E. Gopalacharlu, had stolen over 8,649 Rupees of the funds of the Society before his death, that he poisoned himself when about to be discovered, leaving behind a written statement that he cheated and robbed to procure the means of enjoying himself as much as possible before his death; that he also pawned his wife's jewels for a large sum, which he expended; that he embezzled the hard-earned savings (several hundred rupees) of a relative, and tried to rob him of all his other money. Among the sums embezzled were the entire amount of the Olcott Testimonial Fund (Rs. 2,600), and the whole of the Blavatsky Memorial Fund (Rs. 3,700); also a private gift to Col. Olcott, from London friends, of Rs. 341. Col. Olcott claims to be in communication with the Mahatmas, and to hear their voices often, but not a word of warning did they give him, but let the poor old man lose all the funds devoted for his support in his old age. And then the adepts allowed all the funds raised for a memorial to their devoted servant, Blavatsky, to be lost, spent in riotous living! Strange!

To my knowledge Gopalcharlu had long been cognizant of the mass of fraud and diabolism which has been going on at the Adyar Headquarters in past years. He had lived in an atmosphere of deceit and chicanery. Little wonder that he went astray. There is another trusted assistant at the Headquarters who was the *fidus Achates* of the defaulting manager. He still lives, but as he is so fully aware of the esoteric dark deeds in the past history of Adyar, Colonel dares not send him away, so he still retains him on his staff.

SCHISM IN THE SOCIETY.

I have also received by the same Astral Express the latest secret documents issued to the Esoteric Section by its head, the fair Annie Besant. I have already in my possession the whole of the other secret documents of this section that have been issued since its foundation. One of the later documents gives a cock-and-bull story of a Yogi having seen a true Mahatma in the Himalayas. The Mahatma was perfectly naked; his eyes could not be looked at; his touch was like an electric shock; and his body, though it looked like butter, was as hard as steel. He told the Yogi that Blavatsky was sent by the Mahatmas, and she was now very high up, but Olcott was far inferior to her, and that a change must be made in the work in India, but not in Europe and America. There is a great feud between Olcott and the other workers in India on the one hand and Annie Besant and W. Q. Judge on the other. The latter work against Olcott all they can; so in this secret document, (signed) and sent out by Besant and

Judge, the Mahatmic instructions are that change must be made in India where Olcott is chief, but none in the West where Annie and Judge are rulers.

Another recent esoteric document claims that the Mahatmas still communicate with the select, notably Judge; that they have certified that the whole of "The Secret Doctrine" was written by them, save connecting paragraphs by Blavatsky, and that since the letters sent by them to Mr. Sinnett, upon which he based "Esoteric Buddhism" in 1883, they have not sent any such letters to any one except Blavatsky. This is directed against Mr. Sinnett's claims that he has been in connection with Koot Hoomi all the time up to the present and may publish additional teaching from him; also that his Koot Hoomi says that Blavatsky misrepresented him in "The Secret Doctrine," publishing in it garbled and forged letters of the adepts to support her later doctrines, which contradict those given in Mr. Sinnett's book.

The latest esoteric fulmination of Annie and Judge is one suspending from the Esoteric Section Mr. S. V. Edge and Mr. W. R. Old, Col. Olcott's coadjutors at the Adyar Headquarters, until they apologise for certain remarks made by them in the *theosophist*, reflecting upon Mr. Judge.

It is thus seen that, of the three latest esoteric documents, one is directed against Olcott, one against Sinnett, and one against Olcott's co-workers, Edge and Old. "How pleasant it is for bretheren to dwell together in unity." It should not be overlooked that the central principle of Theosophy, that which every member of the Society is compelled to assent to, whether he accepts aught else or not of its philosophy is the Brotherhood of man, and that the Society is organised as a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood!

At the 60th General Meeting of the Society for Psychical Research held at the Westminster Town Hall on Friday, July 14th at 4 P. M., Professor Sidgwick in the chair Mr. W. Leaf read part of a translation by himself from the Russian of an account, by Mr. V. S. Solovioff, of Madame Blavatsky. The portion read included a description of certain pretended occult phenomena produced by trickery, of an attempt by Madame Blavatsky to induce Mr. Solovioff to assist in writing Koot Hoomi letters, and further, of a letter written by Madame Blavatsky to Mr. Solovioff and headed 'my confession,' in which she described her life, and said in effect that being driven to bay, she would make everything public, and destroy her dupes and the Theosophical Society.

Mrs. Besant, in an eloquent speech said that Mr. Solovioff statements were unsupported, that a reply to him had been made by Madame Blavatsky's sister, Madame Zhelikhovsky, in which she accused Mr. Solovioff of mistranslating Madame Blavatsky's letter and also attacked Mr. Solovioff's private character. Mrs. Besant threatened that if the Society for Psychical Research published Mr. Solovioff's account, Madame Zhelikhovsky's attack on him would be published also.

Mr. Leaf, in reply remarked that he was probably the only person in the room who had read the whole controversy through from beginning to end, Mr. Solovioff's narrative, Madame Zhelikhovsky's attacks, and Mr. Solovioff's replies. Madame Z. had admitted the genuineness of Madame Blavatsky's letter, and withdrawn the attack in question on the correctness of the translation. He added that it was intended, with Mr. Solovioff's account, to publish at least an abstract of Madame Zhelikhovsky's attack and Mr. Solovioff's answer. The members of the Society who wished to form an

independent judgment on the matter in dispute would wait, till they had the whole case before them, but in the meanwhile he might say that, after carefully considering the whole

of it, he had himself no doubt of the trustworthiness of Mr. Solovioff's account. (*From the Journal of the Society for Psychological Research, for July 1893.*)

THE WONDERS OF HINDU MAGIC.

DR. HENRICH HENSOLDT writing in December *Arena*, is responsible for several marvellous stories of Hindu Magic. He prefaces his narrative with a suggested explanation. The Hindus have, as a race, a speciality for speculative philosophy of the intuitive order. One of their earliest triumphs was, he maintains, the discovery of the psychic force we call hypnotism. As an Oriental traveller and student, he concludes that Hindu adepts have "brought hypnotism to such a degree of perfection that, while under its influence, our senses are no longer a criterion of the reality around us, but can be made to deceive us in a manner which is perfectly amazing."

This esoteric knowledge is kept a profound secret; for though exactly the same marvels have been wrought for thousands of years, they still excite the same surprise. They are wrought in the open, in the light of day, with bared arms and limbs, without any visible hiding-place for apparatus.

THE MIRACULOUS MANGO-TREE.

The Yogis and Rishis are the highest orders of Oriental magician. They absolutely refuse payment. They "are religious enthusiasts in the first instance, and adepts of a higher science in the second." They perform miracles merely to gain the popular ear for their religious message. Except raising the dead,

not one of the miracles recorded in the New Testament is "half so wonderful as the feats performed by the average Yogi." Dr. Hensoldt goes on to describe how he saw, "in the centre of one of the largest squares in Agra," a Yogi plant a mango—"an edible tropical fruit about the size of large pear, growing on a tree which reaches a height of from forty to one hundred and twenty feet":—

The Yogi dug a hole in the ground, about six inches deep, placed the mango in it, and covered it with earth...I was startled to see, in the air above the spot where the mango had been buried, the form of a large tree, at first rather indistinctly presenting, as it were, mere hazy outlines, but becoming visibly more distinct, until at length there stood out as natural a tree as ever I had seen in my life—a mango tree about fifty feet high, and in full foliage, with mangoes on it. All this happened within five minutes of the burying of the fruit...And yet there was something strange about this tree...a weird rigidity, not one leaf moving in the breeze...Another curious feature I noticed—the leaves seemed to obscure the sun's rays, and yet...it was a tree without a shadow.

SCALING A SHADOW TREE.

As he approached it, it faded, but grew clear again as he receded to his original position; but on his

retreating beyond that point it again faded. "Each individual saw the tree only from the place where he stood." Two English officers not present from the commencement saw nothing at all. Then the Yogi preached—so absorbingly that Dr. Hensoldt "seemed to forget time and space." He consequently did not notice the disappearance of the tree. When the Yogi ceased speaking, the tree had gone. Then he dug up the mango he had buried.

This mango feat he saw five times. Once in a Kashmir valley he saw it done by a certain Ram Surash, a Rishi from Thibet.

The mango tree which this Rishi produced did not vanish in proportion as I approached it, but retained its full realism, and I not only touched it, but actually climbed several feet up its stem.

CLIMBING UP AN UNSUPPORTED ROPE.

Before the palace of the Guicowar of Baroda, "in the open air and in the broad daylight," Dr. Hensoldt declares he saw for the first time—he saw it thrice subsequently—the celebrated rope trick. A Yogi, after

preaching a "most impressive" sermon, took a rope about fifteen feet long and perhaps an inch thick.

One end of this rope he held in his left hand, while with the right he threw the other end up in the air. The rope instead of coming down again remained suspended, even after the Yogi had removed his other hand, and it seemed to have become as rigid as a pillar. Then the Yogi seized it with both hands, and to my utter amazement, *climbed up* this rope suspended all the time, in defiance of gravity with the lower end at least five feet from the ground. And in proportion as he climbed up it seemed as if the rope was lengthening out indefinitely above him and disappearing beneath him, for he kept on climbing till he was fairly out of sight, and the last I could distinguish was his white turban and a piece of this never-ending rope. Then my eyes could endure the glare of the sky no longer and when I looked again he was gone.

"The Sphinx on the Sacred Ganges" is, in the writer's opinion, far more mysterious than the Sphinx on Nile.

ANNIE BESANT.

FEW in the East and none in the West have as yet understood what Annie Besant is or whither her spiritual attitude is tending. I very much doubt whether the revered Col. Olcott has understood her exactly, not to speak of all the other members of the Theosophical Society who are so loud and eloquent in proclaiming her worth. The mantle of Madame Blavatsky has fallen upon very worthy should-

ers. I find in the arrangement the distinct fingers and special direction of the Lord of the Universe. The Theosophical Society has done much good to India, particularly to the Hindus. The movement reached India just at the nick of time. Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky came to India when, after a reign of materialism extending over about a quarter of a century brought about by English education and

civilization, the reaction in Anglised Hindu minds in favor of their own faiths and institutions had just commenced to set in. Young India had been dazzled by the false glare of a hollow education and hollow civilization. He had drunk the poison of English philosophy to his fill, and the intoxication made him a perfect brute. If made him a Kalapahar ready to demolish by one stroke all the temples of his grand religion and transcendent science and philosophy.

Not that he had received anything in English philosophy superior to what his own sacred books inculcated—books which, poor devil, he had not read one or even a part of one. If he had found anything in the study of English philosophy, he had found a vagueness which, under other circumstances, would have dried up both his mind and heart. As it was, his mind was attracted more by the false glitter of English civilization than English philosophy. It was English food, English style of eating, English free love, and, above all, English wines and spirits that had charmed his mind and enthralled his heart. Mutton chops, fowl curry and even beefsteaks served up by Mahomedan hands in China plates on a table covered with spotless white cloth to be washed down by heroic "pegs" of brandy and soda formed a temptation which he had neither the will nor the moral force to resist. On the contrary, he gave himself up entirely to the enjoyment of the English table and was ready to sell his soul for it. The mild Hindu accustomed to derive his nourishment from his "simple food" of vegetables or a little fish and to quench his thirst by pure cool water soon developed into a human brute after the adoption of the demonish diet. Even the English are now finding out the evil of meat-eating and are expressing their national mistake

as openly as possible. The London *Echo* lately said that one deplorable result of excessive meat-eating in England is the ill-temper which is a chronic complaint among the natives of that country. "In no country," declares Mr. Ernest Hart in the *Hospital*, "is home rendered more unhappy and life made so miserable by the ill-temper of those who are obliged to live together as in England. If we compare domestic life and manners in England with those of other countries where meat does not form such an integral article of diet, a notable improvement will be remarked. In less meat-eating France urbanity is the rule of the home; in fish-and-rice-eating Japan, harsh words are unknown and an exquisite politeness to one another prevails even among the children who play together in the street. In Japan I never heard rude, angry words spoken by any but Englishmen. I am strongly of opinion that the ill-temper of the English it caused in a great measure by a too abundant meat-dietary combined with a sedentary life. The half-oxidised products of albumen circulating in the blood produce both mental and moral disturbances. Brain workers should live sparingly if they would work well and live long. Their force is required for mental exertion, and should not be expended on the task of digestion, for 'they should remember that the digestion of heavy meals involves a great expenditure of nerve force.' The healthful thing to do is to lead an active, unselfish life, on a moderate diet sufficient to maintain strength, and not increase weight."

If meat-eating produces such mental and moral disturbances in the inhabitants of such cold countries as England, I do not know what Mr. Ernest Hart would have said of Englishmen eating beef—the most heating food in the world—

in India the hot climate of which they characterise as "grilling." But Mr. Hart has only to come out here to mark the result which is the most deplorable in the world. Here the ill-temper in Englishmen living upon meat is not only confined to home but has spread out all around them, and the men he has come out to rule or to deal with are the unfortunate victims of their ill-temper which develops into the most fearful form upon this soil. A few months of residence in India under such meat diet makes the Englishman almost insane as his treatment of the natives of the country will convince any right-minded man. The result of meat-eating, especially beef-eating, in India by Englishmen is indeed most disastrous. It divests them of the least shred of common humanity towards the people of India whom they treat like cats and dogs because the latter are weak to retaliate such treatment—a cowardice which is only worthy of the brute—and perfect brutes they become almost all.

Fancy then what became of the Anglicised Hindu who, under the hallucination of a foreign civilization, gave up his simple habit and simpler meals for the "delicacies" of the English table—food that does not suit even a hardy race of people inhabiting such a cold country as England! The consequences were indeed almost terrible to contemplate.

This first batch of Young India or Young Bengal it would be better to say—for I can only speak of the latter from personal experience—committed social vagaries which even their teachers were ashamed to behold. The fact is that if Anglo-Indians themselves had their minds unhinged under a most baneful system of life and civilization, their Hindu disciples simply ran stark mad. Their imitators went to lengths which made than gape in

wonder. But they were glad all the same to view the process of disruption set in motion by their disciples of the sacred and the most scientific Hindu Society.

The first lesson which a victim of of English education and civilization learns is Self. The more he advances in English education this self looms larger and larger in his view until it covers the whole horizon and shuts out all other objects from his mental ken. The education is complete when self reigns supreme in the pupil. He then sees only self and anything or anybody which or who is the immediate instrument of pleasing the divinity of his self. And, alas, what a narrow self it is which his education teaches him to worship! His self is his Flesh—the Flesh that covers his bones, and anything which affords immediate pleasure to this Fleshly Self he calls his own. And young Bengal, under the hallucination of English education and civilization worshipped this Fleshly Self and hated his own ancient institution which involved the conception a very broad Self. The Hindu joint-family system, for instance, meant that one or two or even five should earn so that all blood relations who have no independent means of livelihood, must be provided for. Not that these many who depended upon these few bread winners were all idle hands. They also served and toiled for the family in the home administration. It is a system which Henry George and other great Western thinkers of the day are now recommending—and yet Anglicised Young Bengal looked upon this with the greatest disfavor and were ready to lay an axe at its root. He only believed in his Self which can only include his wife and children—these being immediately connected with the needs of his Fleshly Self—the wife for his lust and the children being the flesh of his flesh.

Mother and father, brother and sister might go to the Devil with his benediction if they would not work for themselves and live independently of *his own* income—the wretched dependents upon his hard-earned money, confound them!

This selfish attitude of young Bengal was all the more confirmed by the study of English Law—the glorious English law which taught him mathematically the supreme importance of worshipping Self, the glorious English law which told him that no pecuniary transaction was valid without document—the glorious English law which taught him to distrust every body, even a father or a mother, in matters of money or property. Thus damned body and soul, he girded up his loins to wage war armed to the teeth—beef between his teeth, the Bible and the bottle under his arms, knife and fork in his hands, the English law and philosophy his armour, his wife behind his back as commander and his concubine through whom he satisfied his hankering of enjoying English free love, as his comrade—against the gods of the Hindu Paradise whom they nicknamed “Old Fools.” These “Old Fools” had long pointed out to them the evils of English education to no purpose. The Pundits had cried themselves hoarse to make them turn back from the path of evil, but they had only cried in the wilderness. Young Bengal called them “the selfish deceitful Brahmans” and vigorously went on in his onward march to the Devil’s Den. They believed in nothing but self, the glorious education and civilization which taught them that self and the great nation who brought that education and civilization out here in India. The “Old Fools” and “deceitful Brahmans” could hardly hold out long against such attacks. The gods were made to give way and the

Devils began splitting the sacred fabric of the Hindu system into pieces in every place where they could find an opportunity. It was indeed a terrible period of Hindu history!

The result was that some of these Young Bengal who had gone to the extreme embraced Christianity and became outcastes. This extreme step convulsed society to the bottom and led Ram Mohun Roy to establish the Adi Brahmaj Somaj which inculcated the worship of one God—a creed woven out of the Upanishads and for a time checked the woful tendency in the extreme Young Bengal to give up his own religion to embrace Christianity. Then rose Keshub Chunder Sen who being first a member of the Adi Somaj, severed his connection with it and established another Brahmaj Somaj more suited to the Anglicised tastes and aspirations of Young Bengal. This was indeed a more alluring movement and the go-ahead portion of Young Bengal hailed it with delight and flocked to its standard in large numbers. They did so because it ensured two conveniences, *viz.*, it discountenanced castes and gave full liberty to its members to eat anything they liked and out of any body’s hands, though it put some restrictions upon drinking of wines and spirits. It also recognised and encouraged intermarriage. The movement, however, did not suit Brahmans on all fours, for a Brahman joining Keshub’s Church involved the giving up of his holy thread. This then was a drawback for Anglicised Brahmans who had not wholly sold themselves to the Devil. But other Brahmans there were whose infatuation made them simply tread such scruples under foot. They tore their *paitas* and rushed to Keshub’s arms and were ready to do anything at his bidding. This was another cause for alarm for the elders of Hindu Society who were

of opinion that Keshub's Brahmoism was worse than Christianity. A Christian convert is always an out-caste for good. He does not, after baptism, come and mix with the Hindu Society at all, nor is he allowed to do so. He was looked upon with contempt by the whole Hindu community and even by its Anglicised portion. But here was a movement which gave full premium to Mlechhaism to anybody who joined it and yet he was to be considered a Hindu and mixed with the Hindus as one of them. The only hope was that the majority of the Anglicised men did not favor the new movement for they liked their agnosticism better with the freedom of drinking wines of which Young Bengal had become much too fond though many of these had secret sympathy with Keshub's new church.

There were many again who were more intelligent than the rest and found Keshub's religion to be nothing more than Christianity without Christ. They contented themselves with believing in a God of their own individual conception, and in the calm which intervened between the successive storms, they had time to take thought and to come to the conclusion that their old institutions were not wholly useless. This sobriety can be said to be the outcome of the maturity of their mind brought about by the cooling of raw youthful blood and advancing years. They, therefore, observed the Hindu ceremonies of *Shradh* and the annual poojahs even though they had not much faith in it. This party became stronger and stronger

every day and they held the Brahmo name in contempt. They recognised Keshub as only an orator and nothing more. Western Bengal contributed very few men to Keshub's following which was composed of recruits from East Bengal who have the fatal tendency of going to the extreme in any matter they take a fancy for. The liberty of women advocated by Keshub and their mixing with men promiscuously in public increased the hatred with which the Hindus looked upon the Brahmos. This led to the speedy decline of Keshub's movement. Scandals soon cropped up, of course, and were in every body's lips and every body hissed the Brahmo name whenever mentioned. The Hindu Society placed the Brahmo in the same class as *domes* and *chandals* when a few intermarriages between Brahman women and Sudra men were celebrated. The downfall of Keshub and his religion was made sure by the marriage of his daughter with the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to which many of the leading followers of Keshub had strongly protested but in vain. It caused a rupture and the majority of the Brahmos left Keshub and established the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj which is now an institution not worth any body's notice, and the something can be said of New Dispensation Somaj by which name Keshub tried hard to raise his Church once again, but, alas, it was not to be. It was fast dying before he died and now scarcely survives his death.

(To be continued.)

ZERO.

TRANCE PHENOMENA.

THE EVIDENCE OF ANÆSTHETICS.* BY GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

IN the year 1800, Humphrey Davy, then twenty-two years of age, suggested that the inhalation of nitrous oxide gas might be used in surgical operations as a means of preventing pain; but it was not until 1844 that Mr. Horace Wells, a dentist residing at Hartford, Connecticut, used it in extracting teeth, and thus demonstrated the truth of Humphrey Davy's conjecture.

In the year 1846, Dr. Morton, of Boston, U.S., demonstrated for the first time that the severest surgical operation could be performed without pain under the inhalation of the vapour of sulphuric ether. Lastly, Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, in the same year introduced the beneficent use of chloroform in the labours of childbed.

Anæsthetics having thus conferred on poor suffering humanity the inestimable blessings of painless surgery, I ask with reverence and hope: Are anæsthetics not yet destined to confer on the human race the infinitely greater boon of scientifically demonstrating the existence, free from the body, of the human soul?

It is true that the vast majority of human beings do instinctively believe in the existence of the human soul; and this is of all arguments the strongest, because any spiritual belief, which is all but universal in the human mind, must be regarded as an instinctive revelation in harmony with the nature of man, and therefore true; and when, further, this instinct is found to increase the happiness and welfare of the human race, the proof to me seems

absolute, because no falsehood can produce ultimate good.

DOES THE SOUL EXIST APART FROM THE BODY?

There are, however, among the scientific minds of the present day, an ever-increasing number of thoughtful, truthful, and benevolent men, who yet doubt or deny that there exists any entity or ego apart from the body, and these men assert that when the bodily organisation dies, the man himself, so far as evidence goes, becomes extinct.

Let us then inquire whether or not this materialistic assertion is true, or whether the use of anæsthetics cannot demonstrate that this assertion of unbelief is contrary to fact.

It has been long known that persons who have been all but drowned, so as to appear actually dead, but who—it may be after hours of manipulation—have been restored to consciousness, have sometimes declared that the process of drowning, after the first struggle, was not agonising, but actually pleasurable.

These individuals have sometimes said that the entire history of their lives has flashed before them as if photographed instantaneously, and that then they have seemed to ascend to heavenly regions and celestial felicity.

Again, many of those who in the dentist's hands have inhaled nitrous oxide, which produces asphyxia exactly analogous to that of drowning, have expressed their enjoyment of

* Taken from Dr. Wyld's "Theosophy." (Elliot & Co., Falcon Court.)

great spiritual happiness, even as their teeth were being extracted.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

The same results have often followed the use of chloroform, and I myself, one day, in the year 1874, while inhaling chloroform as a relief to the agony of passing a small renal calculus, suddenly, to my great wonder, found my ego, or soul, or reasoning faculty, clothed, and in the form of my body, standing about two yards outside my body, and contemplating that body as it lay motionless on the bed.

This startling discovery was to me most significant, and becoming suddenly awakened to its importance, I called on three medical men who had very large experience in the giving of anæsthetics.

In reply to my question, one gentleman said: "I can quite believe your assertion, as I have often heard patients express a similar idea, although in a confused way." Another gentleman says: "He had himself on three occasions taken chloroform, and on each occasion he found himself, as it were, pleasantly whirling and soaring in the air;" and the third gentleman said: "My patients have often said that under my operations they felt no pain, but *saw* all I was doing like spectators looking on and watching the operations."

In connection with these facts concerning drowning or anæsthetics, I will here draw attention to what are called mesmeric experiments.

THE PHENOMENA OF TRANCE.

I have, since the year 1839, witnessed many mesmeric experiments, and I have found that certain individuals, while their minds have been concentrated on a physical point, and their breathing has thus become slower and slower, have passed into trance more or less profound, and while in this state it is well known from the evidence of Dr. Esdaile of

Calcutta, and others, that the severest surgical operations have been performed not only without pain, but while the patient has at the same time passed into ecstatic joys.

The history of ecstatic martyrs has furnished additional evidence in this direction,

Thus we find in mesmeric trance a condition of things exactly analogous to what we sometimes find during the administration of anæsthetics.

Lastly, those who have studied Oriental occultism know that there is an order of Hindu ascetics who, living lives of fastings, contemplation, and prayer, can so discipline their bodies as by practice to retain the breath until they become asphyxiated, and these Ascetics assert that thus they can project their souls from the body, and becoming entranced, ascend to God.

The Christian saints, without exactly practising the same method, so far as the breath is concerned, also at periods became entranced, and, "ascending to heaven, united their souls with the Lord."

Now all this is *one*.

Whether by drowning, asphyxiating gases, mesmeric trance, or "internal breathing," or the self-imposed asphyxia of the Hindu ascetics, or the entrancements of the ecstatic saints, the *modus operandi* is analogous and the result identical, namely, temporary death through the absence of breath in the lungs, and thus the temporary freeing of the soul. As St. Peter says, "Dead in the body, but alive in the spirit."

This trance is dangerous if pushed too far by the operation of medicinal substances; but in the entrancement produced by mesmerism or ecstasy the condition may exist for hours, days, or even weeks, while the ecstatic declares on his return to earth-consciousness that he has in spirit, outside his body, been in Paradise, and beheld things

impossible to utter. Although St. Paul says that when caught up into Paradise he beheld things not lawful to utter, he knew not whether he was in or out of the body.

TRANCE, NOT DREAM.

The sceptic will say all this proves nothing but hallucination and dreams.

In reply to this objection, I would say that trance is a condition entirely beyond mere sleep, and that visions of the spirit are entirely distinct from the dreams of imperfect sleep and those who have been in trance know its intense reality.

No one in mere sleep can submit to painful operations, not only without flinching but with the smile of joy on his face; and no one dreams that he is *outside* his body; he dreams that he is with his body. Moreover, those who awake from dreams at once admit the dream; but those who return from the revelations of entrancement assert that these were not dreams; and, therefore, sceptics who merely suggest explanations cannot have the weight of those who assert their beliefs from experience.

I therefore submit that sceptics have, in the use of anaesthetics, a physical and scientific means of testing the beliefs and assertions of pneumatologists as to the existence outside the body of the soul or ego as a scientific fact capable of demonstration.

The sceptic will deny that the all-but universal belief of human beings in the existence of the soul has any scientific weight. He will further deny the authority of spiritual revelations. He will discredit the experiments of mesmerists, and deny the assertions of Hindu or Christian ecstasies; but if he experiments with medicinal anaesthetics on his own person, he may find out, as I and others have done, that the soul may be projected outside the body, and

externally exist as the true ego. And as probably one thousand cases are put under anaesthetics daily, there exists an immense field for observation and experiment in this direction.

If thus the soul can be demonstrated as an objective *fact*, the next step is to postulate that the ego, or soul, or mind is a *unity*.

All visible substances are compounds and, as compounds, are liable to disintegration, decay, and death. Even the royal gold can thus be, from its liability to slow decay, shown to be not an elementary but a compound substance. But the soul as a *unity* is incapable of division, therefore incapable of decay, and is therefore immortal.

Finally, those who have demonstrated the existence of their spiritual nature know that in so doing they have demonstrated to themselves the existence of the Father of all Spirits—God.

SOME EXPERIENCES.

THE publication of these views called forth the following interesting corroborations:—

Many visions have been vouchsafed me, but I know of none that gave me so exquisite a delight as that produced by an anaesthetic and never did I so regret the awakening as on that occasion; and I feel now that I was then really temporarily, to all intents and purposes, dead in the body but alive in the spirit.

M.A. (Cantab.)

Since the publication of your article, a remarkable statement has been made to me by a gentleman to whom I had just administered an anaesthetic. Knowing my patient (an eminent literary reviewer and critic) to be of great intelligence, I asked him immediately on recovery to describe any sensations or impressions he may have experienced.

With considerable earnestness and excitement he said (in nearly his own words), "I thought I had in some way, you know, got to the bottom and behind everything, saw the cause and reason of things, and understood mystery of life and the great secret that all have sought. And I called to others to put in writing what it was, and how I found it out, but I now remember nothing more than this.

WALTER H. COFFIN.
Junior Athenæum Club,
Piccadilly, W.,
December 28th, 1872.

Mr. Stodart, dentist, told me he had met with many analogous cases, and at the Dental Hospital they told me that the patients under gas often saw visions and spoke of being out of their bodies.

The above observations may be compared with those of Sir Humphrey Davy, who made a long series of experiments upon himself, to ascertain the effect of breathing nitrous oxide.

On the assumption that anæsthetics occasionally separate the soul from the body, Sir Humphrey's testimony is an example how entrance into the spiritual state through the inhalation of nitrous oxide suddenly transformed one of the greatest physicists of modern times into an idealist, as he exclaimed on awaking, "Nothing exists but thoughts; the Universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains."

When nitrous oxide is used before dental operations it is breathed through a large orifice, and the patient quickly passes, as a general rule, into a state of insensibility. To experience its exhilarating effects it must be breathed gradually through a small orifice. Sir Humphrey Davy found that the more he practised breathing it, the more did his susceptibility to its influence increase, in which respect its action upon a sensitive resembles repeated

applications of the power of mesmerism.

A VERY STRIKING CASE.

Mr. A. Duguid, Kirkcaldy, reports:—

My wife's mother, Mrs. Arnot, left us for the higher existence on Feb. 5th, 1880. There is a married daughter living at Banchory, three miles from this town; Mrs. Arnot died at eleven o'clock in the forenoon. The married daughter was very ill in labour, and the doctors in attendance thought it wise to administer chloroform. She passed under the influence thereof at twelve o'clock, noon, and while doing so told all those present that her mother was dead, for she saw her, and that the baby was with her mother. No tidings of the mother's death reached the daughter's house till four o'clock in the afternoon, and on no account was she told after coming from under the influence of the chloroform. It is noteworthy that she spoke of having seen her babe in the spirit world as well as her mother, which was quite consistent with fact, as the infant died in the doctor's hands, and was in the spirit world while the mother was still under the influence of chloroform.

Another correspondent writes:—

I took nitrous oxide and chloroform for two operations, and seemed to get behind the veil that covers Creation, and I seemed to see unceasing energy working out the will of God.

An intimate friend also said to me:—

I experimented with chloroform according to your suggestion, and I seemed to receive an absolute demonstration of the spirit world. I further saw that spirit was the substance of matter, and that what we called matter was a mere shadow. So strong was this conviction, that for days after my experience I could not restrain my daughter at

the delusion that the things visible to the physical eyes were the real things.

Dr. Wyld's paper opens a wide field which promises to yield very valuable results if it were subjected to careful, systematic observation. I refer to the experiences of the human consciousness when the body is placed under the influence of anæsthetics. There is reason to believe that many patients who undergo painful operations are conscious under chloroform, if not of what goes on in the operating-room, of other things, sometimes at a great distance from the place where their body is lying. At present, unfortunately, when a patient who recovers from anæsthetics attempts to recollect anything that he has seen during the time when his body was unconscious, he is told that he was delirious, and must not excite himself by talking nonsense. The result is that many valuable observations are lost to the world. Judging from the experiences of persons who have recovered consciousness after having been very near death, the phenomena of anæsthesia are very much akin to the phenomena of death, so far as the severing of consciousness from the body; hence a very curious resemblance between the observations of those who have been under chloroform and those who have been almost drowned.

Here, for instance, is a story from a recent number of *The Path*:—

A curious circumstance was told me recently, the actors in which shall tell their story here precisely as it was reported to me.

These actors were a doctor and his patient, the latter having suddenly fallen into an apparent faint. But as their tales vary so much, each must be separately told.

THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

I was standing near my patient, who all at once said in a quick,

suppressed kind of voice: "I am going to faint." I felt the pulse; it was as strong as I had ever felt it, the patient having usually a strong, steady pulse. While I so held it, all at once there was a drop, a flicker; the pulse waved indescribably, and to my horror the patient seemed to be dying. The pulse disappeared, the body straightened and stiffened itself; the jaw dropped; the breath was forcibly expelled; the features became set; the pulse was now extinct, the body continued as cold as death; all signs of life had disappeared. Strangest of all perhaps, my patient, who was outwardly a woman of the most feminine type, now in death seemed to wear the guise of a man, and one much younger than she actually was. I tried in vain means of resuscitation; life had quitted the form. So I said to myself on the evidence before me. Yet a sense above and beyond such proof made me still stand there watching, waiting for I knew not what. Great was my surprise soon to see an imperceptible tremor, a shadow, flit over the face. Quickly I placed my hand again upon the heart. At first it gave no response; what lay there was a dead thing. Then I had a genuine shock; the heart quivered, stirred, leaped under my hand. All the torrents of life came pouring back. My feelings of relief are not to be described; at the same time I must confess to a decided feeling of curiosity. The patient opened her eyes and tried to speak, but her effort was in vain. I found the reason for this later on; her tongue was swollen and black, filling her mouth. In about an hour's time large black circles surrounded her eyes. These were black with the blackness of a bruise, and so remained for some days fading gradually out through all the various shades of violet known to be distinctive of bruise. Altogether a most peculiar incident. What

had happened to my patient, and how?

THE PATIENT'S TALE.

Like the doctor, I do not know what happened to my body. I know what happened to ME.

I ought to premise by saying that, all my life, the fact of life itself has been represented to me by a small purplish flame burning at the very centre of my heart. By this I mean that I always saw this flame there, as if with internal eyes. I have thus watched it burning more or less brightly; now lower, as in ill-health, now brighter as my form regained and retained more life. On this occasion, therefore, as I said I felt faint, and not only all at once, but also my inner sense shared the faintness of my body, and the heart-throes were exquisitely painful. I therefore at once reverted to my usual custom of regarding my heart, and quickly saw that something was wrong there. The purple flame burned low. It then set up a process of paling and flickering at the same time. And now a strange thing took place. Call it a change in consciousness. For the sense of personality, which is usually in the brain, I had received, as it were in exchange, a similar sense, but one situate in the breath within. That is to say, I seemed to identify myself with an inner breath. This breath gathered itself round about the heart and watched that heart's central flame. The breath saw the flame wax dim, saw it disappear (do not ask me with what eyes). From this point of my tale I must speak of the breath as "I," my consciousness was wholly situate in this breath. "I," then, began to vibrate rapidly, to surge about, and soon felt myself floating upwards (as conscious breath remember) through a passage up the middle of my spine. I went up in a spiral. Just as I arrived at a point opposite the mouth I felt

another breath pass me on its outward way, and it rushed out of a cavity which I now know for the mouth, with a loud rushing sound, as of a breath wholly expelled. I—that other and conscious breath—went up into a circular space (the head?), and issued forth from thence—after one tremendous throeb of separation, of rending—with a joy, an elevation not to be conceived by those who have never experienced the same. For I was free, and with a freedom not before known. As the conscious breath leaped from the head it took form, a form of radiant light, and in this guise I shot forth into the open air. Above the buildings I soared, and soon no longer observed them; how could I? I was met up thereby one I knew and know well, one who began to give certain messages to me. About us were many sleeping spheres, and he bade me observe these. There were other forms and messengers coming and going; the atmosphere was all luminous; orbs of electricity sped about in all directions. There was, too, an ordered movement as of departing and returning rays. The sense of freedom, knowledge, and power was magnificent. Then I felt a slight pull upon me, and saw that a shadowy thread (one of less radiant matter) extended from me down through the air and into an open aperture. It was as if this pull had altered all my vibrations and changed my state of consciousness, for I now ceased to see the wonders about me, and saw instead the buildings and sunshine on the snow far beneath me. Yes, I had returned to a lower order of matter—as I now reason on what then occurred—for I felt myself drawn rapidly downward and backward, always by the ethereal thread, until I was drawn through a window and into a room. All I noticed there was a young man lying, stiff, cold, and half naked on a couch. He

seemed to be dead. A vortex of air (?) sucked me in towards him. Again that deep reuding throb, and I was drawn into the head of this horrible object. Oh, how thin and fine I was drawn, my radiant form spun out into a smoky thread, a breath! Yes, I was again a conscious breath, travelling rapidly down a long narrow spiral descent on the right of the body. Again I gathered myself about a centre, a dark but pulsing ocean, in whose depths I looked for a light, a glow. There was nothing. The breath that was I concentrate itself and waited. A something scintillated below those moving waves. So soon as it appeared another sudden change of consciousness occurred. For now the feeling of identity with that inner heart disappeared. The brain consciousness was again mine. It was plain that the dark ocean was my heart, and the brain

thought came at once, "I am dead, for I see no light. I must send a message to X. of my death." I tried to speak, but the brain-consciousness had no tongue. I was not yet coordinated with the body. Calming myself, I watched the heart closely, and saw the scintillant point rising out of the dark centre, slowly, gradually to burn at last, a violet flame. When this lamp burned clear at last, I felt myself all at once to be co-ordinate with the body, identical with my every-day self. I opened my eyes, to see my doctor bending over me with a most singular expression, half-wonder, half-pain on his face. I tried to speak, but could not. He has told you why. It only remains for me to say that what I was told when out of the body has since been all fulfilled. Also it seems that I was removed (I myself) from a crisis of the physical heart.



A FEW FORGOTTEN TRUTHS.

A calm and dispassionate examination of the historical facts in connection with the four great Religions of the world viz., Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism, will naturally lead to the conclusion that in point of (a) time, (b) teachers, and (c) tenets Hinduism stands first. The Sanskrit name of this religion is "Sanátan Dharma" (eternal religion) i.e., a religion without a beginning and without an end. The Vedás are called "*Apourusheya*" (impersonal) because the revelations in the Vedás were made by no particular person, but evolved out of *akás* itself—the eternal repository of all knowledge of all times. They are also called *Srutis* for they were first taught orally for ages and ages and were afterwards compiled by Vyása at

the beginning of the Káli-yuga on the banks of lake Mánasarovar beyond the Himalayas in Thibet. To quote an European author: "As compiled in their final form by Veda-Vyása, however, the Brahmans themselves unanimously assign 3,200 years before the Christian Era, the date when Vyasa flourished; therefore the Vedás must be as old as this date. But their antiquity is sufficiently proven by the fact that they are written in such an ancient form of Sanskrit, so different from the Sanskrit now used, that there is no other work like them in the literature of this, the eldest sister of all the known languages, as Professor Max Muller calls it." From this Vedic or Sanátan Dharma, Buddhism sprang in India as an offshoot in this Kaliyuga, and spread through-

out the length and breadth of Eastern Asia from Ceylon to Siberia and from Khirkiz to Japan—a religion to which more than one-third of mankind owe their spiritual allegiance at present. Its age is 2,500 years from its founder Gotama Buddha who incarnated himself, 600 years after the compilation of the Vedás by Veda Vyása. In Western India just 600 years after the birth of Bhagaban Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth was born and thus the age of his religion (Christianity) is 1,900 years. Again in accordance with the Cyclic Law of Nature just 600 years after the birth of Christ, Mahomed was born in Arabia and the age of his religion (Mahomedanism) is 1,300 years. That Buddhism is an offshoot of Hindu Religion, is an acknowledged fact and so is Mahomedanism of Christianity, and who knows that Christianity is not an offshoot of the Religion of Bhagaban Buddha, the ninth incarnation of Logos (the God of the Hindus). It has already been proved to be such by many master minds of the 19th century, but it is needless to discuss it here. It will suffice for the present to say that according to the incontrovertible logic of facts enumerated above, we may safely conclude that Hinduism is the oldest and consequently the first Religion in this planet in point of time; that Buddhism is the second; Christianity is the third, and Mahomedanism the fourth.

II. Now let us see what the Scriptures of these four principal religions say about their respective spiritual teachers and religious leaders. In the Hindu Shastras we find mention of ten incarnations of God (Logos) himself on ten different occasions. This we find in the Gita when Krishna (the Logos) said to Arjuna :—

“Yadá yadá hi dharmasya glánirbhabati
Bhárata

Abhyuthana madharmasya tadátmánam
Srijámyaham
Paritránáya Sádhunám bináshháya cha
dukrítám
Dharma sansthanapanártháya, Sambhavami
yuge yuge.”

“As often as there is the decline of virtue and insurrection of vice and injustice in the world. I incarnate myself, and thus I appear from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of virtue.”

According to the Buddhistic Scriptures, Bhagaban Buddha, who, as we have already said, is one of the ten incarnations of God, incarnated as their spiritual teacher. In like manner, we also find in the Bible, that Christ, the son of God, incarnated as the Religious Teacher of Christianity, and we find in Alkoran, too, that Mahomed the messenger of God, was born as the leader and the religious teacher of the Mahomedan world. From the above it may easily be concluded that as regards their teachers, Hinduism and Buddhism stand first, because the revelations in these religions were directly made by God himself. Christianity stands second as it was (on the showing of Christian Books and authorities) revealed by the son of God and not God himself. In like manner the religion of Mahomed stands third, because it was revealed neither by God nor by the son but by the prophet of God. It therefore stands to reason, when catholic Hindus say that all religions have been more or less revealed by different grades of spiritual and religious teachers at different times according to the requirements and grasping capacities of the people to whom they have been imparted, and such being the case they never interfere with the doctrines and principles of the religions of their younger brethren, who, however, make a bad return for this indulgence and tolerance and are ever

waging open war, sometimes at the point of the sword, against Hinduism.

III. Regarding religious tenets, those of Hindu religion are pre-eminently superior to the tenets of the other existing faiths. Before we enter into the details of various tenets, we should first mention here the three principal paths prescribed by the Shastras for three different stages of spiritual development of individual souls to attain Moksha. They are called Guána, Bhakti, and Karma márgas. Guána is the highest product of a man's spiritual brain, the shortest path to attain Bramhood, the state of Bramh, the Eternal Truth, so it is called Bramh-Guanam. Bhakti is the highest development of the unselfish and divine part of one's own Mánas to attain Vishnuhood the state of Vishnu, the preservative energy of the universe and thus it is called Vishnu Bhakti. Karma is the performance of certain religious Rites according to the injunctions prescribed by the Vedas and Shástras with Shradha for the gratification of the selfish and lower part of one's Manas, appertaining either to the earthly or terrestrial enjoyments for the time being : or for the attainment of certain powers (Siddhis) evolved from the Tezas of Rudra, the destructive energy of the world. We should distinguish here between this Karma-marga and the Karma-yoga of the Gita, which is Raj-yoga in the true sense of the word. In short the principal aim of Gnánamarga is the union of the individual soul (Jiva átma) with the shapeless Paramátma, and that of Bhaktimarga is to raise an individual soul to the same plane of existence with the universal soul Vishnu in duality and not in the state of unity. Karma is the stepping stone to Bhakti and Gnánamargas. But it may be asked why three and not one path for Moksha are prescribed by the

Shástras, contrary to all other religions? The reply is simple. What is a statement of mere truth and is incontestably brought home to the mind of man by every-day experience, but what our western teachers themselves brought up in a school of euphemistic training which aims at disguising the unpleasant, the offensive, and the hideous under the garb of elegant phraseology, have not had the moral courage or mental vigour to proclaim to the world—the naked but grand truth that inequality is the Law of Nature and not equality, as the Shástras so boldly assert. It holds good on the physical as well as on the intellectual planes and analogy demands that it should none the less apply to the spiritual side of man.

Let us first examine the idea of catholicism in the strict sense of the word, we mean the law of universal love of Humanity. In this law of universal Love of Humanity, the Hindus and the Buddhists stand pre-eminently on the highest pinnacle. No destruction, no deliberate slaughter, no wholesale massacre of human lives like the crusades of Christianity or the Jehads of Islamism was ever preached by their Rishis. They know how to wait and watch the progress of *Jivátmas* and the evolution of this cosmos. They know the physical world to be "Chinmáya Jágát." According to the philosophical teachings of *Gnánamarga* (Path of Wisdom) there is no such thing as dead matter or blind force in Nature. The minutest atom in this universe has the potentiality of self-conscious force. Every atom is a conscious entity. So they can not destroy a living being without destroying the harmony and equilibrium of nature and thereby hindering and obstructing the evolutionary progress of each individual consciousness. This individual consciousness is no other than a part and parcel of that All-pervading

consciousness of this universe—a huge incomprehensible bundle of conscious entities. They know that this all-pervading conscious force, "Satchidánanda Brahma" rests in the Turya state of existence in the mineral, sleeps in the vegetable, dreams in the animal and awakes in the human kingdom. So the Guána-marga follower can never take the lives of others, because he fully realises himself that he is in others and others are in him.

Again according to their religious teachings,—the teachings of Bhakti Marga (Path of love)—compassion is the highest virtue of human nature. It awakens the truly unselfish love and charity in the mind of man. Kabir says, "On whom is compassion and on whom is not? For every sentient being from the elephant to the insect is evolved from the Lord." In other

words compassion begets love and universal Love is the fundamental basis of spiritual progress. But how can we expect compassion and consequently universal love from a man, who on the purely selfish motive of developing his physique alone, devours the bodies of other living beings? Can we expect the feelings of compassion, love, and mercy in the hearts of tigers and crocodiles, the carnivora of land and water? Yes! there are very many tigers and crocodiles in the human kingdom, men who are quite unfit for spiritual development and for whom the Guána and Bhakti Margá will be a sealed book for millions and millions of Kalpas to come.

(To be continued.)

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