

LUCIFER.

ON THE WATCH-TOWER.

“THE SECRET DOCTRINE.”

VOLUME III.

IN 1888 the first edition of Volumes I. and II. of H. P. Blavatsky's greatest work, *The Secret Doctrine*, was placed in the hands of the public. In 1893 the third and revised edition of these volumes was issued, and completed in 1895 by an exhaustive Index. The revised edition was a work of much labour, and every effort was made by the editors to verify every quotation they could and correct the many errors of form of the earlier issues. The errors of substance the editors had no right to amend. One of the substantial misconceptions that H. P. B. laboured under was that she had in hand a sufficient mass of MS. to make two additional volumes. This was not actually the case. No doubt had she lived she would have carried out her promise, for her custom was to write at least half of the work she was engaged upon as it was going through the press—a costly and disorderly custom; nevertheless such was her way, and only too glad should we all have been had she thus carried out her usual programme.

As it is, sufficient matter for only one volume has been left behind, and the contents of this part are not exactly on the lines she promised her readers. Nevertheless, Volume III. is a bulky tome, and among other things contains a number of valuable hints, embodied in “Some Papers on the Bearing of Occult Philosophy on Life,” which fill the concluding pages (433-594) of the volume. These papers were originally circulated privately among a large body of students, from among whom it was hoped that some

would gradually be fitted for further instruction of a more intimate nature. The papers having now served their purpose are made public, and thus exhaust all the literary remains of H. P. B.

It is somewhat a novel experience for the present writer, who has edited, in one form or another, almost all that H. P. B. has written in English, with the exception of *Isis Unveiled*, to find himself turning over the leaves of Volume III. of *The Secret Doctrine* as one of the general public, for with the exception of pp. 433-594 he has seen no word of it before. But other work has prevented his sharing in the labour of editing the MS., and the burden has fallen on the shoulders of Mrs. Besant.

What, then, is the first impression of one who has minutely studied every turn and twist of H. P. B.'s phraseology and literary methods, and read everything she has written on theosophical subjects?

We cannot disguise the fact that the first feeling is one of disappointment. The spirit of the stanzas and commentaries, which for the theosophist make the two first volumes stand out a head and shoulders beyond all other theosophical literature, is entirely absent. The pages are eagerly scanned for the discovery of a new gold-mine of the nature of stanza or commentary, but with the exception of one or two paragraphs none is to be found. In fact, until we come to p. 359 and "The Mystery of Buddha," the sections on which fill pp. 359-432, we find but *dissecta membra*—sections, the majority of which were evidently excluded from Volumes I. and II. because of their inferiority to the rest of the work. The editor was bound to publish these, but we entirely share her private opinion, that it would have been better to have printed them as separate articles in LUCIFER, than to have included them as part of *The Secret Doctrine*. One thing is almost certain, that had Mme. Blavatsky lived these sections in their present form would not have formed part of her great work. They represent her in her least important capacity.

All educated students of H. P. B.'s writings have to make a great distinction between what she wrote from her own first-hand knowledge, or from hints she gleaned from the numerous friends with whom she was in psychic contact, and set down as she understood them, or what she had actually impressed on her mind by her

living teachers (for instance the stanzas and commentaries), and what she compiled from such books as were in her possession, as being in her opinion confirmatory of the great science she knew to be true. The first 358 pages of Volume III. fall mostly within the latter category. It is all her own unaided work, and the task for which she was least fitted. This is of course patent to all really educated readers, though it may still surprise some who, unable to form any opinion of their own on matters of science and scholarship, have laboured under the erroneous impression that H. P. B. was a most learned writer in the usual sense of the term. This was not so. She had no scientific or literary training of any kind whatever. That she had the ability—a rare and extraordinary ability—which would have enabled her to shine most brilliantly in science or letters, had she trained herself in either, is indubitable. But as a matter of fact she was entirely destitute of that training. In her books she deals with the most abstruse mathematical problems; in actual life she counted on her fingers. In her books she deals with all kinds of languages; in actual life she knew, when I knew her, only Russian, French, and English, all of which she wrote most fluently and with a rare literary force, but none of which she wrote grammatically. She has herself told me that her articles to the *Russi Vjestnik*, which were the originals of her brilliant sketches *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, and made her famous throughout the length and breadth of Russia as “Raddha Bai,” nearly drove the editor Katkoff into an early grave because of her contempt for the *convenances* of literary Russian.

Why, then, in spite of this want of training, did she deal at such length with the work not only of the scientist and scholar, but of the specialist? Simply because she could find no one else to do the task. Her work could brook no delay, and better to do something, though very imperfectly, than to do nothing. H. P. B. was essentially a pioneer; she went to work with an axe and lusty muscles, she left the plane and sandpaper of the specialist for those who came after her. She set up finger-posts, and left a “blaze” through the jungles for the emigrants who followed in her footsteps to the unknown land.

She, who was so courageous for theosophy, was timid as to herself. Not content to let the stanzas and commentaries, and what

she wrote of her own knowledge, stand alone and on their own merits, she needs must try to substantiate them by evidence drawn from ordinary scientific and literary sources. She did not know that in the future students would read *The Secret Doctrine* solely for the stanzas and herself, and not because of her controversial and explanatory appendices; that they would welcome with joy, as the sight of an oasis in the desert, her own views without admixture of De Mirville, Ralston Skinner, Kenealy, and the *tutti quanti* (as she would say) of unscholarly and unreliable *dilettanti*, with whom she interlards her pages.

It is strange to observe how frequently when her contention is right, she seems to have chosen, with fatal accuracy, the very worst author to support her view. Books of past generations, which have been entirely discredited by more accurate modern research and scholarship, were just the supports which she singled out, and this in spite of the fact that the *more recent discoveries frequently confirmed her view far more strongly* than the fantastic and chaotic views of slipshod writers whom she, and she alone, had disinterred from deserved oblivion.

Who, for instance, ever heard of De Mirville until unkind fate placed his six volumes in the hands of Mme. Blavatsky? Not that her treatment of him, however, is without its humorous side. Here we have a French writer of fifty years ago reviving the corpse of the old Patristic theory of "plagiarism by anticipation," and producing a mass of "learned" (certainly not scholarly) evidence that the Devil anticipated the whole of the ceremonies and doctrines of Roman Catholic Christendom thousands of centuries before the time of Christ, in all lands and climes. Of course no sane person to-day believes so preposterous an imbecility. H. P. B., taking advantage of this, with great good-humour uses the whole of De Mirville's researches to establish the diametrically opposite position, namely, that Roman Catholic Christendom has copied from the whole of Paganism, and not only copied, but copied badly. Poor De Mirville; *requiescat in pace*. But there will be "much talk" if his spook should come across H. P. B. on the astral.

Such being the facts with regard to this side of H. P. Blavatsky's literary work, we find, as we should expect, many errors of detail and many fantastic mistakes, which every trained student can

immediately detect. This is regrettable, for it strongly prejudices every scientist and scholar against a writer whose value lies in quite a different direction. The theosophist, however, will understand this, and he alone will be benefited by the information which H. P. B. really possessed. In this connection it is interesting to observe how H. P. B. threw back to the literary habits of antiquity. This is shown not so much in her revised and re-edited works as in her early writings, such as *Isis Unveiled* and her unedited MSS. Antiquity dispensed almost entirely with quotation marks and references. H. P. B., being innocent of any literary training in her present birth, threw back to the literary habits of her past. Hence many tears for her modern editors, and much searching for quotations and references.

We therefore appreciate deeply the labour which has been expended on editing the present volume, for we know only too well the long toil of verification necessitated by Volumes I. and II. How Mrs. Besant in her too busy life has found time for the task of supervision and general editing is a marvel. For some of the proof-reading she had, owing to her many absences from London, to be dependent on others, and on the whole Volume III. is not so carefully done as Volumes I. and II. A glance at the Index of the first volumes would have saved the proof-readers from passing over some errors. The most regrettable errors, however, are the mistakes in Greek words. The editor was under the impression that the reader who had the Hebrew in charge was also responsible for the Greek, and only at a late date discovered that her colleague was not a double-barrelled pandit, and that he repudiated any responsibility for the accuracy of words in the Hellenic language. The Hebrew also seems to have been maltreated occasionally after leaving his hands. The Sanskrit transliteration is also sometimes inconsistent; as for the Tibetan and other more obscure tongues we cannot pronounce an opinion. Of course such matters are of no consequence to the general reader, but they are a considerable scandal, or stumbling-block, to the very people who would be most useful to the Society if we could but win their adhesion. The printing also is not quite so good as that of the first two volumes. On the other hand the price is small for a book of this nature, being but 15s. net., to be obtained of course at the T. P. S., 26,

Charing Cross, S.W. Simultaneously with the English edition, an American edition has been published at Chicago.

But enough of explanation and criticism. It goes without saying that every student will complete his set of the volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*. With page 359 we come to a more definite subject and the interesting speculations as to the Buddha. Here we bid good-bye to De Mirville and company, and meet with H. P. B. in another vein. She here treats us to a series of veiled hints, some of which seem to be most valuable. Too few students are aware how most of real worth in her work is hidden away in a note or parenthesis. When we further come to page 433, we are made a present of a number of notes which many have already found of great value. Not, however, that anything is worked out in detail. That was no part of H. P. B.'s task. She was a comet, not a planet, and her orbit was erratic. But she was a bright luminary for all that.

In conclusion we may take the opportunity of saying something in general as to H. P. B., who more than anyone else inaugurated the present great theosophical movement. This is all the more necessary seeing that at one time there was danger in the Society of promulgating a very erroneous notion of her task and character. And let me preface this by saying that I yield to no one in my love for my old teacher, or in my gratitude to her for setting my feet once more on the path that leads to the Gods. But I am no worshipper of persons, and as yet I have not found my ideal on earth. I love her, but I am not blind to her manifold imperfections. I love her for her greatness and not for her littlenesses. If I had found her perfect, I needs must have worshipped her. But no one is perfect but God alone. H. P. B. was far from perfection, but she was and is in many ways great.

By the light then of what is said above—and to that much could be added—how is it possible to make a scripture out of *The Secret Doctrine*? And yet we have seen a tendency in this direction in the Society! Like the *ipse dixit* of the mediæval schoolmen, we have heard appeal made to *The Secret Doctrine* as the arbiter of discussions; and even to this day, in the *devia et longinqua loca* of the theosophical movement, such an unhealthy frame of mind is occasionally revealed. "But *The Secret Doctrine* says" so-and-so is the sacramental formula. Curiously enough the same people are

ready enough to appreciate the arguments which dispose of the absurd dogma of plenary inspiration of the *Bible*, and are prepared to treat it as a human document in the fullest sense of the words! Now the arguments which apply to the one subject equally apply to the other; I say equally, I should say far more fully. The *Bible* is surrounded by the glamour of centuries, *The Secret Doctrine* is of yesterday, of to-day. It is only necessary to state the position to recognize the absurdity of it. From the volumes called *The Secret Doctrine* you can quote diametrically contradictory passages, just as you can in the *Bible* or in any large collection of writings dealing with similar subjects. Again, we do not know what *the* "Secret Doctrine" is; H. P. B. has only laboured to show that there is a "Secret Doctrine."

Who more than she has dinned into our ears the wise advice that we should hold to the "spirit" and not to the "letter" of any doctrine? How consumedly she would have laughed to find herself in the minds of some erected into a sort of prophet of a new faith! How graphic would have been her characterization of such stupidity! "My theosophical geese"!!

Now one of the things she was naturally compelled to do in her task of initiating the movement was to form a link with the past—that is to say, to put the present movement in karmic relation with past movements of a similar nature. Just as a man at a birth takes on a body which is the expression of his old karmic tendencies, his virtues *and his vices*, so the present public theosophic movement had to have a body formed for it which represented the virtues and the vices of all past public movements of such a nature. H. P. B. played the function of the "builder" who fashioned this karmic body, her writings are the first mould of its bones, and sinews, and brain.

But just as a man, if he is to progress, must eliminate the vicious tendencies of his nature and cultivate the virtuous, so must the theosophical movement choose the best in H. P. B.'s writings and let the worst go. In more general terms, we must study the past only for experience and to glean the best we can from that past; we must sift out error and absurdity and ignorance and childishness, and above all we must start *fresh causes* in our new body which shall make for righteousness, and clear thought, and sweet reason.

We must not slavishly copy the past, unless we wish to lose our present incarnation and make it of no effect.

H. P. B. speaks with unqualified enthusiasm of many things in the past which were not unqualified blessings. No doubt she was thoroughly in earnest, but in that she acted as the karmic builder of the embryonic body of the Theosophical Society, into which she had to collect as many elements as that karma demanded, Kabalists, Rosicrucians, Alchemists, Astrologers, Vedântins, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Hellenists, Stoics, Gnostics, Ceremonialists, Devotees, Sceptics, Hermetists, Phenomenalists, Charlatans, Tricksters, Adventurers, all and divers. Such being the elements, the "tañhic elements" of the Society, how will the Ego of our movement purify them? The future alone will show; meanwhile it is open for each one of us to work consciously with that Ego or to be absorbed in the unconscious host of "tañhic elements."

Of one thing we are assured, namely, that we cannot "put new wine into old bottles." If the "new wine" of real initiation is to be poured into any of us, it will only be when we have evolved in ourselves a new vessel to contain it. To fashion ourselves in the old moulds of the movements of the past is retrogression, not progression, at least so it seems to me. And though I love some of that past as much as most people, and have worked hard to bring back some of it to the memory of my fellow students, and shall continue to do so, it is only my playing in my turn the part of a minor "building elemental" and weaving into the body some more subtle matter with the old karmic tendencies. This must be done; but the vehicle of the "new man" must be made of still purer material, and this we should never for one instant forget.

It is now for two years that the Theosophical Society has felt the benefit of its recent purification, and every student in it knows that it is healthier and stronger and more conscious than it has ever been before. And this being so, it is natural that Volume III. of *The Secret Doctrine* should be read with greater intelligence than Volumes I. and II., and that its publication should have led to the remarks which have been made by a lover of H. P. B. and your obedient servant,

G. R. S. M.

REINCARNATION.

(Concluded from p. 274.)

THE third vehicle of consciousness, the mental body, is rarely, if ever, vivified for independent action without the direct instruction of a teacher, and its functioning belongs to the life of the disciple at the present stage of human evolution. It is re-arranged for separate functioning on the mental plane, and here again experience and training are needed ere it comes fully under its owner's control. A fact—common to all these three vehicles of consciousness, but more apt to mislead perhaps in the subtler than in the denser, because it is generally forgotten in their case while it is so obvious that it is remembered in the denser—is that they are subject to evolution, and that with their higher evolution their powers to receive and to respond to vibrations increase. How many more shades of a colour are seen by a trained eye than by an untrained. How many overtones are heard by a trained ear, where the untrained hears only the single fundamental note. As the physical senses grow more keen, the world becomes fuller and fuller, and where the peasant is only conscious of his furrow and his plough, the cultured mind is conscious of hedgerow flower and quivering aspen, of rapturous melody down-dropping from the skylark and the whirring of tiny wings through the adjoining wood, of the scudding of rabbits under the curled fronds of the bracken, and the squirrels playing with each other through the branches of the beeches, of all the gracious movements of wild things, of all the fragrant odours of field and woodland, of all the changing glories of the cloud-flecked sky, and of all the chasing lights and shadows on the hills. Both the peasant and the cultured have eyes, both have brains, but of what differing powers of observation, of what differing powers to receive

impressions. Thus also in other worlds. As the astral and mental bodies begin to function as separate vehicles of consciousness they are in, as it were, the peasant stage of receptivity, and only fragments of the astral and mental worlds, with their strange and elusive phenomena, make their way into consciousness; but they evolve rapidly, embracing more and more, and conveying to consciousness a more and more accurate reflection of its environment. Here, as everywhere else, we have to remember that our knowledge is not the limit of Nature's powers, and that in the astral and mental worlds, as in the physical, we are still children, picking up a few shells cast up by the waves, while the treasures hid in the ocean are still unexplored.

The quickening of the causal body as a vehicle of consciousness follows in due course the quickening of the mental body, and opens up to man a yet more marvellous state of consciousness, stretching backwards into an illimitable past, onwards into the reaches of the future. Then the Thinker not only possesses the memory of his own past and can trace his growth through the long succession of his incarnate and excarnate lives, but he can also roam at will through the storied past of the earth, and learn the weighty lessons of world-experience, studying the hidden laws which guide evolution and the deep secrets of life hidden in the bosom of Nature. In that lofty vehicle of consciousness he can reach the veiled Isis, and lift a corner of her down-dropped veil; for there he can face her eyes without being blinded by her lightning glances, and he can see in the radiance that flows from her the causes of the world's sorrow and its ending, with heart pitiful and compassionate but no longer wrung with helpless pain. Strength and calm and wisdom come to those who are using the causal body as a vehicle of consciousness, and who behold with opened eyes the glory of the Good Law.

When the buddhic body is quickened as a vehicle of consciousness, the man enters into the bliss of non-separateness, and knows in full and vivid realization his unity with all that is. As the predominant element of consciousness in the causal body is knowledge, and ultimately wisdom, so the predominant element of consciousness in the buddhic body is bliss and love. The serenity of wisdom chiefly marks the one, while tenderest compassion streams forth inexhaustibly from the other; when to these is added the Godlike

and unruffled strength that marks the functioning of Âtmâ, then humanity is crowned with divinity, and the God-man is manifest in all the plenitude of his power, of his wisdom, of his love.

The handing down to the lower vehicles of such part of the consciousness belonging to the higher as they are able to receive, does not immediately follow on the successive quickening of the vehicles. In this matter individuals differ very widely, according to their circumstances and their work, for this quickening of the vehicles above the physical rarely occurs till probationary discipleship is reached, and then the duties to be discharged depend on the needs of the time. The disciple, and even the aspirant for discipleship, is taught to hold all his powers entirely for the service of the world, and the sharing of the lower consciousness in the knowledge of the higher is for the most part determined by the needs of the work in which the disciple is engaged. It is necessary that the disciple should have the full use of his vehicles of consciousness on the higher planes, as much of his work can only be accomplished in them ; but the conveying of a knowledge of that work to the physical vehicle, which is no way concerned in it, is a matter of no importance, and the conveyance or non-conveyance is generally determined by the effect that the one course or the other would have on the efficiency of his work on the physical plane. The strain on the physical body when the higher consciousness compels it to vibrate responsively is very great, at the present stage of evolution, and unless the external circumstances are very favourable, this strain is apt to cause nervous disturbance, hyper-sensitiveness with its attendant evils. Hence most of those who are in full possession of the quickened higher vehicles of consciousness, and whose most important work is done out of the body, remain apart from the busy haunts of men, if they desire to throw down into the physical consciousness the knowledge they use on the higher planes, thus preserving the sensitive physical vehicle from the rough usage and clamour of ordinary life.

The main preparations to be made for receiving in the physical vehicle the vibrations of the higher consciousness are : its purification from grosser materials by pure food and pure life ; the entire subjugation of the passions, and the cultivation of an even, balanced temper and mind, unaffected by the turmoil and vicissitudes of

external life ; the habit of quiet meditation on lofty topics, turning the mind away from the objects of the senses, and from the mental images arising from them, and fixing it on higher things ; the cessation of hurry, especially of that restless, excitable hurry of the mind, which keeps the brain continually at work and flying from one subject to another ; the genuine love for the things of the higher world, that makes them more attractive than the objects of the lower, so that the mind rests contentedly in their companionship, as in that of a well-loved friend. In fact, the preparations are much the same as those necessary for the conscious separation of "soul" from "body," and those were elsewhere stated by me as follows : the student

" Must begin by practising extreme temperance in all things, cultivating an equable and serene state of mind ; his life must be clean and his thoughts pure, his body held in strict subjection to the soul, and his mind trained to occupy itself with noble and lofty themes ; he must habitually practise compassion, sympathy, helpfulness to others, with indifference to troubles and pleasures affecting himself, and he must cultivate courage, steadfastness and devotion. In fact, he must live the religion and ethics that other people for the most part only talk. Having by persevering practice learned to control his mind to some extent, so that he is able to keep it fixed on one line of thought for some little time, he must begin its more rigid training by a daily practice of concentration on some difficult or abstract subject, or on some lofty object of devotion ; this concentration means the firm fixing of the mind on one single point, without wandering, and without yielding to any distractions caused by external objects, by the activity of the senses, or by that of the mind itself. It must be braced up to an unswerving steadiness and fixity, until gradually it will learn so to withdraw its attention from the outer world and from the body that the senses will remain quiet and still while the mind is intensely alive, with all its energies drawn inwards to be launched at a single point of thought, the highest to which it can attain. When it is able to hold itself thus with comparative ease, it is ready for a further step, and by a strong but calm effort of the will it can throw itself beyond the highest thought it can reach *while working in the physical brain*, and in that effort will rise to and unite itself with the higher consciousness and find itself free of the body. When this is done there is no sense of sleep or dream nor any loss of consciousness ; the man finds himself outside his body, but as though he had merely slipped off a weighty encumbrance, not as though he had lost any part of himself ; he is not really 'disembodied,' but has risen out of his gross body 'in a body of light,' which obeys his slightest thought and serves as a beautiful and perfect instrument for carrying out his will. In this he is free of the subtle worlds, but will need to train his faculties long and carefully for reliable work under the new conditions.

" Freedom from the body may be obtained in other ways : by the rapt intensity of devotion or by special methods that may be imparted by a great teacher to his disciple. Whatever the way, the end is the same—the setting free of the soul in full consciousness, able to examine its new surroundings in regions beyond the treading of the man of flesh. At will it can return to the body and re-enter it, and under these circumstances it can

impress on the brain-mind, and thus retain while in the body, the memory of the experiences it has undergone." *

Those who have grasped the main ideas sketched in the foregoing pages, will feel that these ideas are in themselves the strongest proof that reincarnation is a fact in nature. It is necessary, in order that the vast evolution implied in the phrase, "the evolution of the Soul," may be accomplished. The only alternative—putting aside for the moment the materialistic idea that the Soul is only the aggregate of the vibrations of a particular kind of physical matter—is that each Soul is a new creation, made when a babe is born, and stamped with virtuous or with vicious tendencies, endowed with ability or with stupidity, by the arbitrary whim of the creative power. As the Mahomedan would say, his fate is hung round its neck at birth, for a man's fate depends on his character and his surroundings, and a newly-created soul flung into the world must be doomed to happiness or misery according to the circumstances environing him and the character stamped upon him. Predestination in its most offensive form is the alternative of reincarnation. Instead of looking on men as slowly evolving, so that the brutal savage of to-day will in time evolve the noblest qualities of saint and hero, and thus seeing in the world a wisely planned and wisely directed process of growth, we shall be obliged to see in it a chaos of most unjustly treated sentient beings, awarded happiness or misery, knowledge or ignorance, virtue or vice, wealth or poverty, genius or idiocy, by an arbitrary external will, unguided by either justice or mercy—a veritable pandemonium, irrational and unmeaning. And this chaos is supposed to be the higher part of a cosmos, in the lower regions of which are manifested all the orderly and beautiful workings of a law that ever evolves higher and more complex forms from the lower and the simpler, that obviously "makes for righteousness," for harmony and for beauty.

If it be admitted that the Soul of the savage is destined to live and to evolve, and that he is not doomed for eternity to his present infant state, but that his evolution will take place after death and in other worlds, then the principle of Soul-evolution is conceded, and the question of the place of evolution alone remains. Were all Souls

* "Conditions of Life after Death." *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1896.

on earth at the same stage of evolution, much might be said for the contention that further worlds are needed for the evolution of Souls beyond the infant stage. But we have around us Souls that are far advanced, and that were born with noble mental and moral qualities. By parity of reasoning, we must suppose them to have been evolved in other worlds ere their one birth in this, and we cannot but wonder why an earth that offers varied conditions fit for little-developed and also for advanced Souls, should only be paid one flying visit by Souls at every stage of development, all the rest of their evolution being carried on in worlds similar to this, equally able to afford all the conditions needed to evolve the Souls at different stages of evolution, as we find them to be when they are born here. The Ancient Wisdom teaches, indeed, that the Soul progresses through many worlds, but it also teaches that he is born in each of these worlds over and over again, until he has completed the evolution possible in that world. The worlds themselves, according to its teaching, form an evolutionary chain, and each plays its own part as a field for certain stages of evolution. Our own world offers a field suitable for the evolution of the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, and therefore collective or individual re-incarnation goes on upon it in all these kingdoms. Truly, further evolution lies before us in other worlds, but in the divine order they are not open to us until we have learned and mastered the lessons our own world has to teach.

There are many lines of thought that lead us to the same goal of re-incarnation, as we study the world around us. The immense differences that separate man from man have been already noticed as implying an evolutionary past behind each Soul; and attention has been drawn to these as differentiating the individual re-incarnation of men—all of whom belong to a single species—from the re-incarnation of monadic group-souls in the lower kingdoms. The comparatively small differences that separate the physical bodies of men, all being externally recognizable as men, should be contrasted with the immense differences that separate the lowest savage and the noblest human type in mental and moral capacities. Savages are often splendid in physical development and with large cranial contents, but how different their mind from that of a philosopher or of a saint.

If high mental and moral qualities are regarded as the accumulated results of civilized living, then we are confronted by the fact that the ablest men of the present are overtopped by the intellectual giants of the past, and that none of our own day reaches the moral attitude of some historical saints. Further, we have to consider that genius has neither parent nor child, that it appears suddenly and not as the apex of a gradually improving family, and is itself generally sterile, or if a child be born to it, it is a child of the body, not of the mind. Still more significantly, a musical genius is for the most part born in a musical family, because that form of genius needs for its manifestation a nervous organization of a peculiar kind, and nervous organization falls under the law of heredity. But how often in such a family its object seems over when it has provided a body for a genius, and it then flickers out and vanishes in a few generations into the obscurity of average humanity. When are the descendants of Bach, of Beethoven, of Mozart, of Mendelssohn, equal to their sires? Truly genius does not descend from father to son, like the family physical types of the Stuart and the Bourbon.

On what ground, save that of reincarnation, can the "infant prodigy" be accounted for? Take as an instance the case of the child who became Dr. Young, the discoverer of the undulatory theory of light, a man whose greatness is scarcely yet sufficiently widely recognized. As a child of two he could read "with considerable fluency," and before he was four he had read through the Bible twice; at seven he began arithmetic, and mastered *Walkingham's Tutor's Assistant* before he had reached the middle of it under his tutor, and a few years later we find him mastering while at school, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, book-keeping, French, Italian, turning and telescope-making, and delighting in Oriental literature. At fourteen he was to be placed under private tuition with a boy a year and a half younger, but the tutor first engaged failing to arrive, Young taught the other boy.* Sir William Rowan Hamilton showed power even more precocious. He began to learn Hebrew when he was barely three, and "at the age of seven, he was pronounced by one of the Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, to have shown a greater knowledge of the language than many candi-

* *Life of Dr. Thomas Young*, by G. Peacock, D.D.

dates for a fellowship. At the age of thirteen he had acquired considerable knowledge of at least thirteen languages. Among these, besides the classical and the modern European languages, were included Persian, Arabic, Sanscrit, Hindustani, and even Malay.

He wrote, at the age of fourteen, a complimentary letter to the Persian Ambassador, who happened to visit Dublin; and the latter said he had not thought there was a man in Britain who could have written such a document in the Persian language." A relative of his says: "I remember him a little boy of six, when he would answer a difficult mathematical question, and run off gaily to his little cart. At twelve he engaged Colburn, the American 'calculating boy,' who was then being exhibited as a curiosity in Dublin, and he had not always the worst of the encounter." When he was eighteen, Dr. Brinkley (Royal Astronomer of Ireland) said of him in 1823, "This young man, I do not say *will be*, but *is*, the first mathematician of his age." "At college his career was perhaps unexampled. Amongst a number of competitors of more than ordinary merit, he was first in every subject, and at every examination."*

Let the thoughtful student compare these boys with a semi-idiot, or even with an average lad, note how, starting with these advantages, they become leaders of thought, and then ask himself whether such Souls have no past behind them.

Family likenesses are generally explained as being due to the "law of heredity;" but differences in mental and moral character are continually found within a family circle, and these are left unexplained. Reincarnation explains the likenesses by the fact that a Soul in taking birth is directed to a family which provides by its physical heredity a body suitable to express his characteristics; and it explains the unlikenesses by attaching the mental and moral character to the individual himself, while showing that ties set up in the past have led him to take birth in connection with some other individual of that family. A "matter of significance in connection with twins is that during infancy they will often be indistinguishable from each other, even to the keen eye of mother and of nurse. Whereas, later in life, when Manas has been working on his physical encasement, he will have so modified it that the physical likeness lessens, and

* *North British Review*, September, 1866.

the differences of character stamp themselves on the mobile features."* Physical likeness with mental and moral unlikeness seems to imply the meeting of two different lines of causation.

The striking dissimilarity found to exist between people of about equal intellectual power in assimilating particular kinds of knowledge is another "pointer" to reincarnation. A truth is recognized at once by one, while the other fails to grasp it even after long and careful observation. Yet the very opposite may be the case when another truth is presented to them, and it may be seen by the second and missed by the first. "Two students are attracted to Theosophy and begin to study it; at a year's end one is familiar with its main conceptions and can apply them, while the other is struggling in a maze. To the one each principle seemed familiar on presentation; to the other new, unintelligible, strange. The believer in reincarnation understands that the teaching is old to the one and new to the other; one learns quickly *because he remembers*, he is but recovering past knowledge; the other learns slowly because his experience has not included these truths of nature, and he is acquiring them toilsomely for the first time."† So also ordinary intuition is "merely recognition of a fact familiar in a past life, though met with for the first time in the present,"‡ another sign of the road along which the individual has travelled in the past.

The main difficulty with many people in the reception of the doctrine of reincarnation is their own absence of memory of their past. Yet they are every day familiar with the fact that they have forgotten very much even of their lives in their present bodies, and that the early years of childhood are blurred, and those of infancy a blank. They must also know that events of the past which have entirely slipped out of their normal consciousness are yet hidden away in dark caves of memory, and can be brought out again vividly in some form of disease or under the influence of mesmerism. A dying man has been known to speak a language heard only in infancy, and unknown to him during a long life; in delirium, events long forgotten have presented themselves vividly to the consciousness. Nothing is really forgotten; but much is

* *Reincarnation*, by Annie Besant, p. 64.

† *Ibid.*, p. 67.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

hidden out of sight of the limited vision of our waking consciousness, the most limited form of our consciousness although the only consciousness recognized by the vast majority. Just as the memory of some of the present life is indrawn beyond the reach of this waking consciousness, and only makes itself known again when the brain is hypersensitive, and thus able to respond to vibrations that usually beat against it unheeded, so is the memory of the past lives stored up out of reach of the physical consciousness. It is all with the Thinker, who alone persists from life to life; he has the whole book of memory within his reach, for he is the only "I" that has passed through all the experiences recorded therein. Moreover, he can impress his own memories of the past on his physical vehicle, as soon as it has been sufficiently purified to answer to his swift and subtle vibrations, and then the man of flesh can share his knowledge of the storied past. The difficulty of memory does not lie in forgetfulness, for the lower vehicle, the physical body, has never passed through the previous lives of its owner; it lies in the absorption of the present body in its present environment, in its coarse irresponsiveness to the delicate thrills in which alone the soul can speak. Those who would remember the past must not have their interests centered in the present, and they must purify and refine the body till it is able to receive impressions from the subtler spheres.

Memory of their own past lives, however, is possessed by a considerable number of people, who have achieved the necessary sensitiveness of the physical organism, and to these, of course, reincarnation is no longer a theory, but has become a matter of personal knowledge. They have learned how much richer life becomes when memories of past lives pour into it, when the friends of this brief day are found to be the friends of the long-ago, and old remembrances strengthen the ties of the fleeting present. Life gains security and dignity when it is seen with a long vista behind it, and when the loves of old reappear in the loves of to-day. Death fades into its proper place as a mere incident in life, a change from one scene to another, like a journey that separates bodies but cannot sunder friend from friend. The links of the present are found to be part of a golden chain that stretches backwards, and the future can be faced with a glad security in the thought that these links will endure through days to come, and form part of that unbroken chain.

Now and then we find children who have brought over a memory of their immediate past, for the most part when they have died in childhood and are reborn almost immediately. In the West such cases are rarer than in the East, because in the West the first words of such a child would be met with disbelief, and he would quickly lose faith in his own memories. In the East, where belief in re-incarnation is almost universal, the child's remembrances are listened to, and where the opportunity serves they have been verified.

There is another consideration with respect to memory that will repay consideration. The memory of past *events* remains, as we have seen, with the Thinker only, but the results of those events embodied in *faculties* are at the service of the lower man. If the whole of these past events were thrown down into the physical brain, a vast mass of experiences in no classified order, without arrangement, the man could not be guided by the outcome of the past, nor utilize it for present help. Compelled to make a choice between two lines of action, he would have to pick, out of the unarranged facts of his past, events similar in character, trace out their results, and after long and weary study arrive at some conclusion—a conclusion very likely to be vitiated by the overlooking of some important factor, and reached long after the need for decision had passed. All the events, trivial and important, of some hundreds of lives, would form a rather unwieldy and chaotic mass for reference in an emergency that demanded a swift decision. The far more effective plan of Nature leaves to the Thinker the memory of the events, provides a long period of incarnate existence for the mental body, during which all the events are tabulated and compared and their results are classified; and then these results are embodied as faculties, and these faculties form the next mental body of the Thinker. In this way, the enlarged and improved faculties are available for immediate use, and the results of the past being in them, a decision can be come to in accordance with those results, and without any delay. The clear quick insight and prompt judgment are nothing else than the outcome of past experience moulded into an effective form for use; they are surely more useful instruments than would be a mass of unassimilated experiences, out of which the relevant ones would have to be selected and compared,

and from which inferences would have to be drawn, on each separate occasion on which a choice arises.

From all these lines of thought, however, the mind turns back to rest on the fundamental necessity for re-incarnation if life is to be made intelligible, and if injustice and cruelty are not to mock the helplessness of man. With re-incarnation man is a dignified, immortal being, evolving towards a divinely glorious end ; without it, he is a tossing straw on the stream of chance circumstances, irresponsible for his character, for his actions, for his destiny. With it, he may look forward with fearless hope, however low in the scale of evolution he may be to-day, for he is on the ladder to divinity, and the climbing to its summit is only a question of time ; without it, he has no reasonable ground of assurance as to progress in the future, nor indeed any reasonable ground of assurance in a future at all ; why should a creature without a past look forward to a future ? he may be a mere bubble on the ocean of time. Flung into the world from non-entity, with qualities, good or evil, attached to him without reason or desert, why should he strive to make the best of them ? Will not his future, if he have one, be as isolated, as uncaused, as unrelated as his present ? In dropping re-incarnation from its beliefs, the modern world has deprived God of His justice and has bereft man of his security ; he may be " lucky " or " unlucky," but the strength and dignity conferred by reliance on a changeless law are rent away from him, and he is left tossing helplessly on an unnavigable ocean of life.

ANNIE BESANT.

AMONG THE Gnostics OF THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES.

(*Continued from p. 287.*)

THE BASILIDIAN SYSTEM (*continued*).

WE next come to the soteriology of Basilides, the redemption and restoration of all things.

“When then the supercosmic planes and the whole universe [ætherial, sublunary and terrestrial] were completed, and there was no deficiency,” that is to say, when the evolutionary stream of creative energy began to return on itself, “there still remained behind in the universal Seed the third Sonship, which bestows and receives benefits.

“But it needs must be that this Sonship also should be manifested, and restored to its place above, there beyond the highest Firmament, the Limitary Spirit of cosmos, with the most subtle Sonship, and the second which followed the example of its fellow, and the God beyond being, even as it was written, ‘And the creation itself groaneth together and travaileth together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God’”—the third Sonship.

The sons of God are the divine sparks, the real spiritual men within, who have been left behind here in the seed-mixture, or bodies, “to order and inform and correct and perfect our souls, which have a natural tendency downwards to remain in this state of existence.”

Before the Gospel was preached, and the Gnosis came, the Great Ruler of the Ogdoad was considered to be the only God, nevertheless no name was given to him, because he was ineffable.

The inspiration of Moses came from the Hebdomad only, as may be seen from the words, “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but the name of God I did not make known unto them.” This God

to whom Moses and the Prophets gave names was of the Hebdomad, which is effable, and their inspiration came from this source. But the Gospel was that mystery which was ever unknown not only to the nations, but also to them of the Hebdomad and the Ogdoad, and even to their Rulers.

“When, therefore, the time had come,” says the Gnostic doctor, “for the revelation of the children of God (who are ourselves), for whom the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in expectation, the Gospel, [the Glad Tidings, the Gnosis,] came into the universe, and passed through every principality, and authority, and lordship, and every title that man can use. It ‘came’ of very truth, not that anything ‘came *down*’ from above, or that the blessed Sonship ‘departed from’ that blessed God beyond being who transcends all thought. Nay, but just as the vapour of naphtha can catch fire from a flame a great way off from the naphtha, so do the powers of men’s spirit pass from below from the formlessness of the conglomeration up to the Sonship.

“The Son of the Great Ruler of the Ogdoad, as it were, catching fire, lays hold of and seizes on the ideas from the blessed Sonship beyond the Limitary Spirit. For the power of the Sonship which is in the midst of the Holy Spirit, in the limit space, shares the flowing and rushing thoughts of the [supreme] Sonship with the Son of the Great Ruler.

“Thus the Gospel first came from the Sonship through the Son that sits by the Great Ruler to that Ruler, and the Ruler learned that he was not the God over all, but a generable deity, and that above him was set the Treasure of the ineffable and unnameable That beyond being and of the Sonship. And he repented and feared on understanding in what ignorance he had been. This is the meaning of the words, ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ For he began to grow wise through the instruction of the Christ sitting by him, learning what is That beyond being, what the Sonship, what the Holy Spirit, what the apparatus of the universe, what the manner of its restoration. This is the ‘wisdom, declared in a mystery,’ concerning which Scripture uses the words, ‘Not in words taught of human wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit.’

“The Great Ruler, then, being instructed and taught and made

afraid, confessed the sin which he had done in boasting himself. This is the saying, 'I have recognized my sin, and I know my transgression, and I will confess it for the eternity.'

"After the instruction of the Great Ruler, the whole space of the Ogdoad was instructed and taught, and the mystery became known to the powers above the heavens.

"Then was it that the Gospel should come to the Hebdomad, that its Ruler might be instructed and evangelized in like manner. Thereupon the Son of the Great Ruler lit up in the Son of the Ruler of the lower space, the light which he himself had had kindled in him from above from the Sonship; and thus the Son of the Ruler of the Hebdomad was illumined, and preached the Gospel to the Ruler, who in his turn, like as the Great Ruler before him, feared and confessed [his sin]. And then all things in the sublunary spaces were enlightened and had the Gospel preached unto them.

"Therefore the time was ripe for the illumination of the formlessness of our own world, and for the mystery to be revealed to the Sonship which had been left behind in the formlessness, as it were to one born out of due time [an abortion]—'the mystery which was not known unto former generations,' as it is written, 'By revelation was the mystery made known unto me,' and 'I heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter.'

"Thus, from the Hebdomad, the Light—which had already come down from above from the Ogdoad unto the Son of the Hebdomad—descended upon Jesus, son of Mary, and he was illumined, being caught on fire in harmony with the Light that streamed into him. This is the meaning of the saying, 'A Holy Spirit shall come upon thee'—that is to say, that which came from the Sonship through the Limitary Spirit to the Ogdoad and Hebdomad down as far as Mary [the body]—and 'a power of the Highest shall overshadow thee'—that is to say, the divine creative power which cometh from the [ætherial] heights above through the Demiurgos, which power belongeth to the Son."

The text of Hippolytus is here exceedingly involved, and he evidently did not seize the thought of Basilides. The "Son" apparently means the soul. The power belongs to the soul and not to Mary—the body—the divine creative power making of man a god, whereas the body can only exercise the power of physical pro-

creation. Moreover, Jesus seems to stand for a type of every member of the Sonship, every son of God.

“For the world shall hold together and not be dissolved until the whole Sonship—which has been left behind to benefit the souls in the state of formlessness, and to receive benefits, by evolving forms for them [the spirit requiring a psychic vehicle for conscious contact with this plane]—shall follow after and imitate Jesus, and hasten upward and come forth purified. [For by purification] it becometh most subtle, so that it is able to speed aloft through its own power, even as the first Sonship; for it hath all its power naturally consubistent with the Light which shone down from above.

“When, then, the whole Sonship shall have ascended, and passed beyond the Great Limit, the Spirit, then shall the whole creation become the object of the Great Mercy; for it groaneth until now and suffereth pain and awaiteth the manifestation of the sons of God, namely that all the men of the Sonship may ascend beyond it [the creation]. And when this shall be effected, God will bring upon the whole universe the Great Ignorance [mahâ-pralaya], in order that all things may remain in their natural condition, and nothing long for anything which is contrary to its nature.

“Thus all the souls of this state of existence, whose nature is to remain immortal in this state of existence alone, remain without knowledge of anything different from or better than this state; nor shall there be any rumour or knowledge of things superior in higher states, in order that the lower souls may not suffer pain by striving after impossible objects, just as though it were fish longing to feed on the mountains with sheep, for such a desire would end in their destruction. All things are indestructible if they remain in their proper condition, but subject to destruction if they desire to overleap and transgress their natural limits.

“Thus the Ruler of the Hebdomad shall have no knowledge of the things above him, for the Great Ignorance shall take hold of him also, so that sorrow and pain and lamentation may go from him. He shall desire naught of things impossible for him to attain and thus shall suffer no grief.

“And in like manner the Great Ignorance shall seize upon the Great Ruler of the Ogdoad as well and all the [ætherial] creations

which are subject to him in similar fashion, so that nothing may long after anything contrary to nature and thus suffer pain.

“ And thus shall be the restoration of all things which have had their foundations laid down according to nature in the Seed of the universe in the beginning, and which will all be restored [to their original nature] in their appointed cycles.

“ And that everything has its proper cycle and time, the Saviour is sufficient witness in the saying, ‘ My hour hath not yet come,’ and also the Magi in their observation of his star. For he also was foreordained in the Seed to be subject to the nativity of the stars and the return of the time periods to their starting places.”

Now the Saviour, according to the Basilidian school, was the perfected spiritual “ man,” within the psychic and animal man or soul. And when a man reaches this stage of perfection, the Sonship in him leaves the soul behind here, “ the soul being no longer mortal but remaining in its natural state [that is to say, having become immortal], just as the first Sonship [left behind] the Holy Spirit, the Great Limit, in its proper space or region”; for it is only then (on reaching perfection), that the real “ man ” is “ clothed with a proper [and really immortal] soul.”

Every part of the creation goes up a stage, and the whole scheme of salvation is effected by the separating from their state of conglomeration the various principles into their proper states; and Jesus was the first-fruits, or great exemplar, of this process.

“ Thus his physical part down here—which belongs to formless matter—alone suffered, and was restored to the formless state. His psychic vesture or vehicle—which belongs to the Hebdomad—arose and was restored to the Hebdomad. That vehicle in him which was of the nature of the height of the Great Ruler he raised aloft, and it remained with the Great Ruler. Moreover he raised still higher that which was of the nature of the Great Limit, and it remained in the Limitary Spirit. And it was thus through him that the third Sonship was purified, the Sonship left behind in the state of mixture [or impurity] for the purpose of helping and being helped, and it passed upwards through all of these purified principles unto the blessed Sonship above.”

The main idea at the back of this system is the separating forth, classification or restoration, of the various elements or principles

confused in the original world-seed, or universal plasm, into their proper natures, by a process of purification which brought unto men the Gnosis or perfection of consciousness. Man was the crown of the world-process, and the perfected man, the Christ, the Saviour, was the crown of manhood, and therefore the manifestation of Deity, the Sonship.

So far Hippolytus, who undoubtedly gives us the outline of the true Basilidian system. It was only in 1851 that the *Philosophumena* were published to the world, after the discovery of the MS. in one of the Libraries on Mount Athos in 1842; prior to this nothing but the short and garbled sketches of Irenæus and the Epitomators was known of the great Gnostic's sublime speculations. The *Philosophumena* account has revolutionized all prior views, and changed the whole enquiry, so that the misrepresentations of Irenæus, or those of his prior authority, are now referred to as "the spurious Basilidian system." To this we shall refer later on. Meantime let us turn to Clement of Alexandria, who deals purely with the ethical side of the Basilidian Gnosis, and therefore does not touch the "metaphysical" part, using the term "metaphysical" in the Aristotelian sense, namely, of things beyond the Hebdomad, the things of the Hebdomad or sublunary space, being called "physics" or in the domain of physis or nature.

As to marriage, Basilides and his son Isidorus taught that it was natural but not necessary, and seem to have taken a moderate ground between the compulsory asceticism of some schools and the glorification of procreation by the Jews, who taught that "he who is without a wife is no man."

As to the apparently undeserved sufferings of martyrs, Basilides, basing himself on the doctrines of reincarnation and karma, writes as follows in Book xxiii. of his *Exegetica* :

"I say that all those who fall into these so-called tribulations are people who, only after transgressing in other matters without being discovered, are brought to this good end [martyrdom] by the kindness of providence, so that the offences they are charged with being quite different from those they have committed without discovery, they do not suffer as criminals for proved offences, reviled as adulterers or murderers, but suffer merely for being Christians; which fact is so consoling to them that they do not even appear to suffer,

And even though it should happen that one comes to suffer without previously committing any outward transgression—a very rare case—he will not suffer at all through any plot of any [evil] power, but in exactly the same way as the babe who apparently has done no ill.

“For just as the babe, although it has done no wrong previously, or practically committed any sin, and yet has the capacity of sin in it [from its former lives], when it suffers, is advantaged and reaps many benefits which otherwise are difficult to gain; in just the self-same way is it with the perfectly virtuous man also who has never sinned in deed, for he has still the tendency to sin in him; he has not committed actual sin [in this life], because he has not as yet been placed in the necessary [karmic] circumstances. In the case even of such a man we should not be right in supposing entire freedom from sin. For just as it is the will to commit adultery which constitutes the adulterer, even though he does not find the opportunity of actually committing adultery, and the will to commit murder constitutes the murderer, although he may not be actually able to effect his purpose; for just this reason, if I see such a ‘sinless’ man suffering [the pains of martyrdom], even if he has actually *done* no sin, I shall say that he is evil in so far as he has still the *will* to transgress. For I will say anything rather than that providence is evil.”

Moreover, even if the example of Jesus were to be flung in his face by those who preferred miracle to law, the sturdy defender of the Gnosis says that he should answer, “If you permit, I will say, He has not sinned; but was like a babe suffering.” And if he were pressed even more closely, he would say, “The man you name is man, but God [alone] is righteous; for ‘no one is pure from pollution,’” as Job said.

Men suffer, says Basilides, from their deeds in former lives; the “elect” soul suffers “honourably” through martyrdom, but souls of another nature by other appropriate punishments. The “elect” soul is evidently one that will suffer for an ideal, in other words, it is possessed of faith, which is the “assent of the soul to any of the things which do not excite sensation”; such a soul, then, “discovers doctrines without demonstration by an intellective apprehension.”

The vulgar superstition of transmigration, the passing of a human soul into the body of an animal—so often confused by

the uninstructed with the doctrine of reincarnation, which denies such a possibility—received a rational explanation at the hand of the Basilidian school. It arose from a consideration of the animal nature in man, the animal soul, or body of desire, the ground in which the passions inhere; the doctrine being thus summarized by Clement.

“The Basilidians are accustomed to give the name of appendages [or accretions] to the passions. These essences, they say, have a certain substantial existence and are attached to the rational soul, owing to a certain turmoil and primitive confusion.”

The word translated essences is literally “spirits”; curiously enough the whole animal soul is called the “counterfeit spirit” in the *Pistis Sophia* treatise, and in the *Timæus* of Plato the same idea is called “turmoil” as may be seen from the commentary of Proclus. The primitive confusion is of course the chaotic conglomeration of the universal seed-mixture, and the differentiation of the “elemental essence” of some modern writers on Theosophy.

“Onto this nucleus other bastard and alien natures of the essence grow, such as those of the wolf, ape, lion, goat, etc. And when the peculiar qualities of such natures appear round the soul, they cause the desires of the soul to become like to the special natures of those animals, for they imitate the actions of those whose characteristics they bear. And not only do human souls thus intimately associate themselves with the impulses and impressions of irrational animals, but they even imitate the movements and beauties of plants, because they likewise bear the characteristics of plants appended to them. Nay, there are also certain characteristics [of minerals] shown by habits, such as the hardness of adamant.”

But we are not to suppose that man is composed of several souls, and that it is proper for man to yield to his animal nature, and seek excuse for his misdeeds by saying that the foreign elements attached to him have compelled him to sin; far from it, the choice is his, the responsibility is his, the rational soul's. Thus in his book, *On an Appended Soul*, Isidorus, son of Basilides, writes:

“Were I to persuade anyone that the real soul is not a unit, but that the passions of the wicked are occasioned by the compulsion of the appended natures, no common excuse then would the worthless of mankind have for saying, ‘I was compelled, I was carried

away, I did it without wishing to do so, I acted unwillingly,' whereas it was the man himself who led his desire towards evil, and refused to battle with the constraints of the appendages. Our duty is to show ourselves rulers over the inferior creation within us, gaining the mastery by means of our rational principle."

In other words, the man is the same man, no matter in what body or vesture he may be; the vestures are not the man.

One of the greatest festivals of the school was the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus on the fifteenth day of the Egyptian month Tobe or Tybi. "They of Basilides," says Clement, "celebrate his Baptism by a preliminary night service of readings; and they say that 'the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar' means the fifteenth day of the month Tybi." It was then that the Father "in the likeness of a dove"—which they explained as meaning the Minister or Holy Spirit—came upon him.

It is evident, therefore, that the Basilidians did not accept the accounts of the canonical gospels literally, as Hippolytus claims; on the contrary, they explained such incidents as pseudo-historical legends of initiation, the process of which is magnificently worked out in the *Pistis Sophia* treatise, to which I must refer the reader for further information.

We learn from Agrippa Castor, as preserved by Eusebius, that Basilides imposed a silence of five years on his disciples, as was the custom in the Pythagorean school, and that he and his school set great store by the writings of a certain Barcabbas and Barcoph, and by other books of Orientals. Scholars are of opinion that Barcabbas and Barcoph, and their variants, point to the cycle of Zoroastrian literature which is now lost, but which was in great favour among many Gnostic communities. It must have been that among the learned Jews and Essenes, after the return from Babylonia, and also among the theosophically-minded of the time, the traditions of the Magi and of the great Iranian faith were an important part of eclectic and syncretistic religion. The Avesta literature which has come down to us, is a very late recovery from memory of a very small portion of the great library of Persepolis destroyed by the "accursed Alexander," as Pârsî tradition has it.

Such then, is all that can be deduced of the real Basilidian system from the writings of Hippolytus and Clemens Alexandrinus,

who respectively selected only such points as they thought themselves capable of refuting, that is to say, such features of the system as they considered most erroneous. To the student of comparative religion it is evident that both Church fathers misunderstood the tenets they quoted, seeing that even such hostilely selected passages easily fall into the general scheme of universal theosophy, once they are taken out of the setting of Patristic refutation, and allowed to stand on their own merits. It is therefore a matter of deep regret that the writings of the school have been lost or destroyed; they would doubtless have thrown much light not only on Christian theosophy but also on the obscure history of the origins.

It now remains for us to refer briefly to the spurious Basilidian system. The following points are taken from Irenæus and the epitomators, and are another proof of the unreliability of Irenæus, the sheet-anchor of orthodox heresiology. The series of writers and copyists to which we refer, had evidently no first hand information of the teaching of Basilides, and merely retailed whatever fantastic notions popular rumour and hearsay attributed to the school.

The main features of the confection thus brewed are as follows. The God of the Basilidians, they said, was a certain Abraxas or Abrasax, who was the ruler of their first heaven, of which heavens there were no less than 365. This power was so denominated because the sum of the numerical values of the Greek letters in the name Abrasax came to 365, the number of days in the year.

We learn, however, from Hippolytus (II) that this part of the system had to do with a far lower stage of creation than the God beyond all. It is not, however, clear whether Abrasax is to be identified with the Great Ruler of the Ogdoad or the Ruler of the Hebdomad, and the region of the "proasteioi up to the æther." In any case the 365 "heavens" pertained to the astrological and genetical considerations of Egyptian and Chaldæan occult science, and represented from one point of view the 365 "aspects" of the heavenly bodies (during the year) as reflected on the surface of the earth's "atmosphere" or envelope, which extended as far as the moon.

Now it is curious to notice that in the Pistis Sophia treatise, the mysteries of embryology are consummated by a hierarchy of elemental powers, or builders, 365 in number, who follow the dictates

of the karmic law, and fashion the new body in accordance with past deeds. The whole is set forth in great detail, and also the astrological scheme of the one ruler of the four, which in their turn each rule over ninety, and so on, making in all 365 powers.

Not till Schwartz translated this treatise from the Coptic, in 1853, was any certain light thrown on the Abrasax idea, and this just two years after Miller in 1851 published his edition of *The Philosophumena*, and thus supplied the material for proving that the hitherto universal opinion that the Abrasax was the Basilidian name for the God over all, was a gross error based on the ignorance or misrepresentation of Irenæus and company. The elemental forces which fashion the body are the lowest servants of the karmic law; the God over all is the supreme ruler of an endless galaxy of rulers, gods, archangels, authorities, and powers, all of them superior to the 365.

In fact the mysteries of the unseen world were so intricate in detail, that even those who devoted their lives to them with unwearied constancy could scarcely understand some of the lower processes, although the general idea was simple enough; and thus Basilides imposed a silence of five years on his disciples, and declared that "only one out of 1,000, and two out of 10,000" could really receive the Gnosis, which was the consummation of many lives of effort. Curiously enough this very phrase is also found in the *Pistis Sophia* treatise.

The term Abrasax is well known to students of Gnosticism because of the number of gems on which it is found and which are attributed to the followers of Basilides; in addition to the great continental scholars who have treated the matter, in this country King has devoted much of his treatise to the subject. The best and latest authorities, however, are of opinion "that there is no tangible evidence for attributing any known gems to Basilidianism or any other form of Gnosticism."

In fact, in the Abrasax matter, as in all other things, Gnosticism followed its natural tendency of going "one better," to use a colloquialism, on every form of belief or even superstition. Doubtless the ignorant populace had long before believed in Abrasax as the great power which governed birth and everyday affairs, according to astrological notions; talismans, invocations, and the rest of the

apparatus which the vulgar mind ever clamours for in some form or other, were all inscribed with this potent "name of power." Back of the superstition, however, there lay certain occult facts, of the real nature of which, of course, the vulgar astrologers and talisman makers were naturally ignorant; the real facts, however, seem to have been known to the doctors of the Gnosis, and they accordingly found the proper place for them in their universal systems. Thus Abrasax, the great God of the ignorant populace, was placed among the lower hierarchies of the Gnosis, among the building powers of the physical body.

As to the rest of the "spurious system," there is nothing of interest to record; we cannot, however, omit the silliest tale told against the Basilidians, which was as follows: they are said to have believed that at the crucifixion Jesus changed bodies with Simon of Cyrene, and then when his substitute hung in agony, stood and mocked at those he had tricked!—with which cock and bull story we may come out of the Irenæic "store-house of Gnosticism" for a breathing space.

Of the history of the school we know nothing beyond the fact that Epiphanius, at the end of the fourth century, still met with students of the Basilidian Gnosis in the nomes west of the Delta from Memphis to the sea. It seems most probable, however, that the school was gradually amalgamated with the general stream of Gnosticism of the latter half of the second century and the great Valentinian movement of which we have next to treat.

G. R. S. MEAD.

(To be continued.)



THE ORDER OF THINGS.

IT has been, and remains, a standing puzzle to the Christian apologists how the first presentation of the new religion—to their minds so immeasurably superior to the old in morality—a revelation, as they believe, for the first time made to the world of the *goodness* of God, was received by the ancient world with a shock of most unmistakable horror and disgust. Of the *fact* there can be no doubt. As soon as the Christians came to be distinguished from the Jews (themselves perhaps the sect most unpopular in Rome—their history repeats itself in all ages!) it was universally understood that the difference lay in a still deeper and more unspeakable depravity; and the popular imagination exhausted itself in wondering what secret horror was the object of their diabolical worship. How came this about?

Was it, as is usually said, that the immorality of the Pagan world was roused against the purity of the new religion? This is, at first sight, a plausible explanation; and Cardinal Newman in his classical tale *Callista* has worked it out with vast power and learning. But it is not true; the Roman world was *not* given over to vice and dissipation. The accounts which Tacitus gives of the extravagances of the Emperors and the young nobles about them, no more furnish a complete picture of Roman society than the cases which come now and then before the divorce and police courts in relation to the morals of *our* young nobles, do of our modern English life. The main characteristic of the Roman world was precisely that of our own Anglo-Saxon race—an intense *respectability*; inclined in the one case as in the other, to run into actual cant and hypocrisy, rather than open, shameless vice.

Had there been nothing more than *this* in Christianity the *bourgeois* of ancient Rome would have received it as the correspond-

ing society of modern London or New York does now—would have welcomed it—professed it, occasionally burnt other people for not doing the same; and for the rest, have gone on their own way regardless, as ever, of its precepts and views of life. But the evident satisfaction with which the moral and religious society of Rome received Nero's brilliant idea of illuminating his gardens with blazing Christians as a due and fitting sacrifice to the Proprieties (with a big P) means much more than that.

For one thing, of course, it means the indignation of respectability in all ages against anyone who presumes to have any other standard of value than its own. Whether that new standard is in itself higher or lower does not matter; it is an insult always deeply felt and energetically resented. The Roman Christian who would not swear by the genius of the Emperor—a mere, harmless legal form as the bystanders considered it, was simply a forerunner of the Elizabethan Catholic who would not take the sacrament in his parish church, of the Friend who would not remove his hat to the justice nor swear to speak the truth.

Only a week or two ago there was in one of our daily papers an amusing example of the same feeling, as strong as ever. It seems that amongst the multitudinous sects in England there is a Peculiar People who think it wrong to vote at a Schoolboard Election, and it was simply comical to read how evidently the leader-writer would have enjoyed having them hauled before the justices and bullied and beaten, as they certainly would have been but a couple of hundred years ago.

This, then, is something; but it is not enough. Was it that Christianity was a *secret* society, one which kept its doctrines to itself and allowed no one to enter its meetings but the professed? This, to a Roman, *was* a serious accusation, and one which could not be denied. For the Roman, like his re-incarnation, the Anglo-Saxon, looked at religious matters mainly from the police point of view. For the gods he cared very little; for their orderly and regular worship, under an "established" priesthood, whose "convocations" could be properly kept in order by the civil power, he cared very much. Similarly, he was liable occasionally to lose his head in a panic, when confronted with faiths and practices he did not understand. Many thousands of mostly innocent victims were slaughtered

as Initiates of unlawful mysteries, as witches, as poisoners, long before the Roman world became Christian. Nay, the very persecutions under which the Christians suffered were simply such outbreaks of nervous terror; as were the cruelties against the Jews in Spain and the witch-burnings in Germany, England and America in later times. Men did these things in the Middle Ages, not because they were Christians, but because they were of the great Roman family, great in its powers—great, vast, and terrible even in its panic terror.

But even this is not enough to explain the universal outcry against the Christians, in every place and time, that they were *hostes humani generis*—*enemies to the human race*. Preposterous as it seems to a modern Christian, whose ideas of society and of life have been formed by nearly 2000 years of the Christian tradition, this was the first and last impression the new faith made on the world around it, the honest, even if mistaken, judgment of the leaders of thought—the prejudice of the crowds who yelled tumultuously “Christians for the lions” in the amphitheatres, the “common form” of the indictment of a Christian before the magistrates. *Hostes humani generis*—what could it mean?

It meant the instinctive recognition of a new and utterly unpardonable crime, a crime which has darkened the western world until now; which renews itself in many a plausible shape even amongst those who regard themselves (and rightly), as the most enlightened of their time, a stain in the air we breathe and through which we see the world around us, from which the wisest of us can hardly completely free ourselves; in a word, Disloyalty to the Order of Things!

I have spoken of it before in these pages as a declaration of *want* of Faith in Man—the peculiar characteristic of the three *exclusive* religions which have plagued mankind, the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mohammedan; the true origin of the torrents of human blood which these three religions (and these *only*), have shed, and the desolation which has followed their path. But the wider statement has the advantage of linking itself to a still broader view which may be worth the consideration of a good many even amongst ourselves.

The ante-christian world, however low fallen from its earlier

height of knowledge, had never quite lost the tradition of its continuous evolution upwards. No more than we, would its philosophers and sages have claimed that "all that is, is right;" *that* was left for the wooden, mechanical "philosophy" of the eighteenth century Anno Domini. But at least when confronted with the crude pessimism of the new Christian faith, declarations that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," "the imagination of man's heart is only evil continually," and so forth, it felt itself outraged, indignant; and not without reason. And when men came to them insisting that the noblest of their ancestors, with all the public and domestic virtues which had gained them renown and love (we must not forget that reverence for the ancestors was in truth the *real* Roman religion, not any worship of God, their own or any other) were burning in an everlasting hell for want of believing in a "Saviour," who was not even born till hundreds of years after their time—can you much wonder that men who believed this and who tried to press it upon them as a Gospel, a glad tidings! seemed to them a new and unheard of degradation of mankind, and that they reached out instinctively to sword and faggot to rid the world of them.

Look down the history of the Church, and what do we see? Common-sense, the natural and uneradicable love of man for his fellowman, growing time after time too strong for dogma—Popes and Bishops speaking and acting as if the wisdom of this world were *not* "all foolishness with God"—religion entering into a *modus vivendi* with the movements of a world it could not control and had not the heart to denounce; and then a "Reformation" to reprobate such "corruptions" and reaffirm the original sin. What is the actual state of things about us at the present time but a tacit confession of religious people that this process is a failure—that the world is in reality far better and wiser than their doctrines can allow or explain—that it moves on its way quite regardless of all said against it; and that the only thing to be done is to live accordingly—to adapt ourselves to it as we do to the law of gravitation and leave our formal dogmatic religion to do the same as best it can. It is a sort of "slack water," between tides; and our mission as Theosophists is to take advantage of this. The essence of *our* gospel is a justification of this very position; a formal declaration that the world does *not* lie in wickedness, and that true and right religion actually *demands*

that men shall openly and with a good conscience place themselves in full sympathy with its movement, knowing that it *can* end in nothing but God.

But we ourselves have mostly come to our present position through Christianity, and the habit of abusing the world—the feeling that religion requires of us the hopeless attempt to turn back its course instead of aiding it—is hard to get rid of, even when our intellect has learned wisdom. And the new view is not altogether easy to make our own. Frequently we perceive that the world is in fact moving *downwards*, not upwards; and it needs courage as well as faith to sit steady and not pull at the reins. The great claim of Christianity is that after the fall of the Roman Empire the Church succeeded in holding back some part of the world from the lowest depth; and that was good. But now, as the world is again on the downward arc of the spiral, we who know must not forget that downward and upward are *both* onward, and the downward arc moves forward the faster for the very rapidity of the fall. The Golden Age with its Divine Rulers and its wise laws was good; but thousands upon thousands of years passed and left humanity much as it found them—happy but not moving on; and the traces of it left on earth now are simply wide regions where the people to this day are absolutely incapable of corporate life and of self-defence—children still. In this Iron Age of ours men suffer, beasts suffer; “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth”; but out of all this comes life and growth. A single life now means more progress for the true Self than many lives in what we foolishly call better times. It was good that children should be nursed as children; now we are men, and have to be developed to our full growth by toil and labour and hardship.

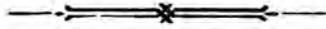
Does this mean that we are to be careless of suffering? Not so. Our own growth is only possible as we do our best to remove hindrances out of the way of our fellows. If we can plan a new society on new lines in which the struggle for life which now ruins so many, body and soul, may be replaced by a holy and joyous labour for the life of others, good; if we can do anything to bring such a society into actual existence—good also. If we, feeling our limited possibilities, prefer to concentrate our efforts on some smaller relief of the world-suffering, or some improvement in our

social habits or our diet, good again—provided only we keep our loyalty to Nature. We are told that we must set ourselves in harmony with, work along with, Nature; our difficulty is to understand that this Nature is not Nature as we think it should be improved, but the actual order of things in which we find ourselves. It is true that there is a teaching that certain developments of the present Nature are not in accordance with the primitive plan on which the world was originally framed, but we must not suppose that it is left to *us* to set things straight. It is our faith and our happiness to know that the Powers who guided the evolution of the early world guide it still, and have made the needful adaptations for the new course. Unless we thus keep ourselves in harmony with the actual movement of the world we risk what befel the Church in later times—to miss the turn of the spiral and find too late that our habit of hanging back has been trying to keep the world from *rising*, and that we are left behind.

Another thing in which we are apt to miss the full *comfort* of our new faith is the enormous relief to the horror with which the Christian faith invests the world around us, contained in the knowledge of the renewal of our earth-lives. As long as this one life was *all*, and “after death the (final) judgment,” there was excuse—nay, reason—for hysterics over the suffering of the world. As I think it is O. W. Holmes says, there are religions such that it is discreditable to their members if they *don't* go mad over them. But now that we know that the end of a life, to man or beast, is not the blind huddling-up of everything to a chance conclusion which popular theology teaches, but a passage to a state of happiness in which every suffering undergone is shaped into new power and hope for the new life; we can look calmly, though often sorrowfully, on the world about us, and see in what goes on not the mad and aimless blow of a blinded Titan, but the measured, calculated hammer-strokes of the Powers who know fully, completely, what to make of us, and how best to do their work. What we chiefly have to avoid is the sad catastrophe of one known and revered by many of us who, loving “not wisely but too well” one single small portion of the universe, rashly set herself in its defence across the order of things, and was crushed like a gnat under the great wheels. The Powers have no need of *us*—even the wisest and best of us; and They will see that

no suffering in this world fails of its appointed help and service to the soul which has needed it. Let us take for ourselves the assurance given to an English Mystic of six hundred years ago by her "Father in Heaven"—"I *can* make all things well; and I *will* make all things well; and thou shalt see with thine own eyes that every manner of thing shall be well."

A. A. WELLS.



AUTHORITY.

(*Concluded from p. 337.*)

It is not going too far to say that many organizations lose much of their effectiveness as agents, because of the want of discipline resulting from too popular a method of control. The tie that binds a number of people together (*i.e.*, the aim) may be of the widest, but if it is worth while to organize at all, it is worth while to organize *well*; and if an organization is to be effective, "discipline," as Sergeant Bagnet used to say, "must be maintained," or there will be no cohesion. This is entirely irrespective of aim or motive, purely from the point of view of effectiveness *as a body*, and the effectiveness of a body depends not alone upon the healthy working of all the parts, but upon the due control of the brain over the whole system. Otherwise the spasmodic desire of one limb to travel in an opposite direction to the others might lead to disastrous results. So that here again we see that control or authority is the price to be paid for power of achievement, and perhaps there is no better illustration of the working of this law than we find in the history of the Society of Jesus.

We may now turn to the question of authority as it affects individual evolution. If we grant that authority exists universally, that the only way to escape it is to become one with it—the Divine Will; that this is our aim; that to put our aim into practice we must begin by endeavouring to discover what *is* the Divine Will; that we cannot learn this all at once because we are so far off from the Divine that its nature must filter down to ours through

the hierarchies of entities on stages of "the great world's altar stairs" above our own ; that within our own stage there are many grades and through these from highest to lowest must come the divine light which is to make us wise unto salvation—then surely there can be no degradation, no sycophancy, in receiving with gratitude to the light-bringer the light which we thus obtain, even though it be said to come "on authority."

There is a very right and proper attitude of independence of judgment (not to be confounded with "cocksureness" and conceit) which is nevertheless humble ; and there is a humility (not to be confounded with servility) which is nevertheless firm and confident. A man may be thoroughly self-governed and yet be immeasurably helped by a teacher whom he recognizes as standing on a higher platform than himself, one to whom he looks as an ideal—a standard in ethics and wisdom—one whose regard is, before everything, a stimulus to the best that is in him, and of whom the very thought is sufficient to make him refrain from deceit or meanness of any degree. In short, one in whom he recognizes "the true king, or able man, who *has* a divine right over him" and whose command he is prepared to obey. The necessity for such an ideal seems to have been inculcated by the Stoics, and it has been urged that the influence of their teaching was largely instrumental in building up round the very slight framework of the historic Jesus, the glories of the Ideal Man—the Type—and this has meant much indeed to Western civilization. On this necessity for an ideal the words of Seneca are worth quoting. "We should," he says, "choose out some good man, and keep him ever before our eyes that we may live as in his sight and do all things as if he were looking on. . . . Let the soul have some one to reverence ; by whose authority he may hallow even his innocent nature. O happy he who corrects not only appearances, but also thoughts ! Happy he who can so revere some one, as to compose and order himself in accordance with his memory. He who can so revere another, will quickly be himself an object of reverence. . . . If you see a man unterrified by dangers, untouched by desires, happy in adversity, calm in the midst of storms, looking down upon men from higher ground, from a level among the gods, do you not feel veneration for him ? Will you not say, This thing is too great and lofty to be believed like to

this little body in which it is? A divine power has descended thither; an excellent soul under government, that passes over all things as if too small, smiling at all that we fear and desire, is stirred by heavenly power. So great a thing cannot stand without the aid of deity. For the most part it is yonder whence it came down. Even as the rays of the sun touch the earth, but are there whence they are sent; so a great and sacred soul, for this end sent down that we might more nearly apprehend divine things, converses with us indeed, but cleaves of its origin." A theosophic conception, surely.

It may be urged that there are difficulties which human experience meets in this connection. For large numbers of mankind an ideal conception is not enough, there must be a living embodiment of the virtues as an aid to their spiritual growth. Where are these rarely embodied ideals to be found? I would suggest that as man is in such innumerable stages of growth and development, he naturally makes innumerable varieties of ideals, and the ideals of some of us may well be found among historic or living characters. Even in what we call friendship—if it is the real thing and not acquaintanceship or mere passion—this stimulating and corrective function is present. In the sight of our best friend we would wish to be at our highest level—to be worthy the love we have received—and the desire ever acts as the spring of worthier actions. George Eliot has put this truth in the words: "There are some natures in which, if they love us, we are conscious of having a sort of baptism and consecration; they bind us over to rectitude and purity by their pure belief about us; and our sins become the worst kind of sacrilege, which tears down the invisible altar of trust."

But there is the further difficulty that these human ideals or idols have sometimes feet of clay. There are those who have gone through life setting up idol after idol and worshipping thereat, only to be as often overwhelmed in the ruins of their fall. Albeit, I hold that if the worship be *sincere* it is not entirely in vain, for it is the attitude of sincere love and devotion, even if misplaced, that is the real stimulating force in the soul. The shocks and disappointments are but the necessary painful experiences by which the growing ego assimilates the lessons of life.

Granting that some are fortunate enough to find a living man

or woman whose influence is ever towards the highest, who draws out that which is instinctively felt to be the best we know—is the attitude of obedience misplaced? I say attitude of obedience advisedly, for it seems to me that given such a relationship—of teacher and pupil, helper and devotee—it would not be a case for the issuing of orders and commands, but rather the mind of the lesser being ever in process of turning to respond to the vibrations of the greater soul, the impulse of the latter would find answer in the former, in thought and action according to the degree of his ability and devotion. In readiness of response would be the measure of the pupil's fitness or progress. "There is no act more moral between men than that of rule and obedience. Woe unto him that claims obedience when it is not due; woe unto him that refuses it when it is!" is Carlyle's answer to the question, and Ruskin in the following quaint passages enforces the attitude of obedience.

"It has been a prevalent notion in the minds of well-disposed persons, that if they acted according to their own conscience, they must, therefore, be doing right. But they assume, in feeling or asserting this, either that there is no law of God, or that it cannot be known, but only felt or conjectured.

"'I must do what *I* think right.' How often is this sentence uttered and acted on, bravely, nobly, innocently; but always, because of its egotism, erringly. You must not do what *you* think right, but, whether you or anybody think or don't think it, what *is* right.

"'I must act according to the dictates of my conscience.' By no means, my conscientious friend, unless you are quite sure that yours is not the conscience of an ass.

"'I am doing my best, what can man do more?' You might be doing much less, and yet much better: perhaps you are doing your best in producing, or doing, an eternally bad thing.

"All these sayings, and the convictions they express, are wise only in the mouths of wise men; they are deadly, and all the deadlier because bearing an image and superscription of virtue, in the mouths and minds of fools.

"'But there is every gradation, surely, between wisdom and folly?' No. The fool, whatever his wit, is the man who doesn't know his master, who has said in his heart, There is no God, no Law. The wise man knows his master. Less or more wise, he per-

ceives lower or higher masters; but always some creature larger than himself, some law holier than his own. A law to be sought, learned, loved, obeyed; but in order to its discovery, the obedience must be begun first, to the best one knows. Obey *something*, and you will have a chance some day of finding out what is best to obey. But if you begin by obeying nothing, you will end by obeying Beelzebub and all his seven invited friends."

I have quoted at some length because this extract raises the question of conscience in a way which is provocative of discussion. It cannot be too clearly stated that what we call our conscience is the best guide we have got, and that we are not called upon to commit its keeping to another; although it may, after all, be only what Ruskin calls the "conscience of an ass"; but what is needful, and what I think Ruskin means to enforce, is the necessity for making a real endeavour to find out what *is* the law, and not allowing the prejudices of our personality to masquerade as the divine light within. Such endeavour will be best promoted by a true humility. Nor must it be forgotten that those to whom we feel we could readily render obedience, on whose wisdom or teaching we can implicitly rely, are those with whom we have brought ourselves into harmony, possibly in past lives. Responsive to their vibrations we feel them as our own. Their words and acts call forth in us approval because they are in harmony with, but octaves higher than, our own. "Freely we serve because we freely love," and in the case of a teacher or helper, "perfect love casteth out fear"—doubt. Where there is love—harmony—there is no doubt of the teacher, but ever illumination as the result of the teaching. No degradation in obedience, but pleasure in the rendering of service.

It may be that some never find such a helper in the flesh. Well for them if their strength is such that they can stand outside the bond at once human and divine, without developing a crustacean armour of self-righteousness; let them not despise others whose help and teaching come through human lips, for, be it remembered, the helper must not be too far off, nor the teaching too high, otherwise the help is not felt nor the teaching assimilated. The light may be there, but too blinding for our eyes to sense, "for all *we* have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool." Strong meat is not for

babes, and the more effective help must often be rendered to us by those nearer our own level, just as we see the Salvation Army more successful as a reforming agency to a certain class than many more refined methods, because the ideal it presents is not beyond the conception of those to whom it appeals, whereas it may happen that effort from a higher level, so to speak, fails utterly because the moral sense of those who are to be helped is absolutely incapable of realising the standpoint of the would-be helper.

There is one other point for consideration which, in the case of teaching, may from time to time arise, namely, the conflict of authorities. Many not unwilling to accept authority in itself, are yet puzzled to decide between authorities making conflicting claims. This may and does occur in all departments of human knowledge, and the unfortunate laity, lacking the information of the specialist, take refuge for the most part in blank indifference, or swing with blind impartiality from side to side. But in matters theological this does not apply, for, unhappily, rival authorities have herein the vigorous support of numbers, and the bitterness of religious warfare is painful evidence of our distance from the goal of the race. In its more individual aspect, this question is really settled on the authority of the law of affinity, to which reference has already been made; for in the long run, the authority we accept will be the one with which we have brought ourselves most into harmony, the authority whose appeal or teaching causes responsive vibrations in our own souls. This inner standard will alone enable us to distinguish the true from the false guide as far as we are concerned, but, being based on past experience, our standard is not necessarily the standard for others, and the remembrance of this working of the law might do much to modify the rigor of sectarian differences. This recognition of one's own helper or teacher can only be a spontaneous thing, one cannot conceive of it being ever associated with fluctuation between two opinions, or decided with painful doubt and uncertainty. The following lines seem to express the truth in this matter :

Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by any din of drums,
Nor the vantage of his airs ;
Neither by his crown,

Nor his gown,
 Nor by anything he wears :
 He shall only well-known be
 By the holy harmony
 That his coming makes in thee !

For a teacher, coming with such credentials, reverence, gratitude, devotion are the rightful meed ; obedience to such authority the natural outcome. For the rest, we may find with Aristotle, that "virtue lies in a first medium between two extremes." Not the blind subservience to the authority of priest, person or party, is asked of any of us, nor yet the hedgehog-like attitude bristling with suspicion of tyranny and priest-craft at every point, but a due and reasonable recognition of the fact that we are here as part of a vast and complicated mechanism, in which it falls to each to fill a different sphere ; in which some play more commanding parts than others, not by favour, but by merit, by law. A system in which some who have learnt to obey through service, now serve by ruling ; they who have been faithful over a few things are made rulers over many ; whereas others are still in the ranks of the Shúdras. By such due recognition and the determination to fill worthily the niche assigned by karma, shall those whom the builders rejected as not yet ready, become later the headstones of the corner.

EDITH WARD.

ERRATUM.

Page 331, line 3. For "Vausenarques" read "Vauvenargues."



THE GEOMETRY OF NATURE.

IN the April number of LUCIFER, Mr. Mead wrote on a recently published work by a Spanish author, Señor Soria y Mata, in which some remarkable discoveries were said to have been disclosed. Some months ago the first book of the author, *Origen Poliédrico de las Especies*, appeared, and was noticed in this journal. This contained only the beginning of a system which has been since elaborated and is now more fully displayed in two small volumes entitled, *Contribución al Origen Poliédrico de las Especies*. The first volume has already been translated into French, and it is hoped that ere long it will also appear in an English form; the second is as yet only obtainable in Spanish.

The purpose set before himself by the author is indeed a huge one, nothing less than to find a general law underlying all nature, whether in the physical realm, or in the mental, or spiritual. The scheme is, in truth, the old formula "as above, so below," *in excelsis*, that mysterious and much-abused occult axiom having at last a real meaning attached to it, providing the discoveries *are* discoveries and not the product of an ingenious imagination. Roughly put, the main theory of Señor Soria is that the basis of nature is geometric law, and the essence of this geometric law is to be found in the five regular solids, the tetrahedron, the cube, the octahedron, the dodecahedron and the icosahedron. These, with the sphere, are the only regular solids which can possibly exist in space (three dimensional, of course), that is, they are the only solid bodies of which all the points are at the same distance from the centre, and the faces of the same size and shape.

The development of this idea is really most ingenious. The laws of chemical combination, of crystal-formation, of vegetable and animal growth, of mental processes, and even of social organizations, are drawn upon to illustrate the theory—not, it must be confessed, with unvarying success.

Fundamentally, the whole of physical nature is regarded as built of these regular polyhedra, or solids. They are very small, much smaller than the chemical atoms, these being groups, perhaps of a complicated description, of the primary forms. Throughout all the complications, however, the same laws of combination hold.

The first pamphlet published by Señor Soria, while it does not give quite the same views as his more recent works, is remarkable chiefly for a scheme of geometrical development in which all the regular solids are built from the tetrahedron as a unit. It seems scarcely credible that such a simple fact as that of the tetrahedron being the basis of regular solids should have remained undiscovered, but I am unable to find any trace of it. Very little indeed is known as to the formation of solids, this branch of geometry having apparently been almost disregarded.

Whether or not our Spanish investigator has been the first to search out the strange relationship between the Platonic or regular solids, the relation is one not generally known, even to masters of modern mathematics, and is of singular interest to all who pay heed to the old ideas of mystical geometry. The philosophical Greeks, and by tradition Pythagoras especially, regarded the regular solids as the groundwork of nature. How much or how little they knew of that nature we may not be able to say, but it is worthy of note that long before any light had come from modern methods of research, the idea of a regular mathematical order in the universe existed. Now we know how true this idea is. We have in chemistry alone a vast range of examples of the fundamental fact, and there can be no doubt but that in the future chemical science will use not only ordinary mathematics, but also the long disregarded geometry of solid bodies, to investigate the relations which exist between the atoms of the various groups.

To make the subject at all clear diagrams are necessary. Those accompanying this article are rough drawings showing the method of building up the bodies from the primary figure. Fig. 1 is a cube, the most familiar of all solid figures. On joining the four points, *a, b, c, d*, the four-sided figure shown by chain lines is obtained. This is a tetrahedron, or four-sided body with all the sides and edges equal. Joining up the other four points in the same way we obviously obtain a precisely similar figure crossing the first symmetri-

FIG. 1

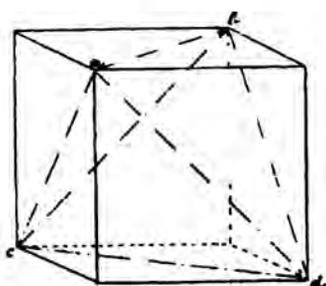
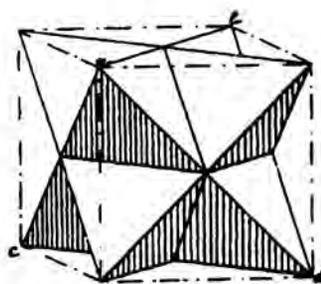


FIG. 2



cally. The result is shown in Fig. 2, where two intersecting tetrahedra are drawn, and the enclosing cube is indicated in chain lines. As the edges of each figure are diagonals of the sides of the cube, they cross at the central point of each side. Joining these six points we have the octahedron, or regular eight-sided figure. This is not quite so familiar as the cube, but is like two pyramids placed with their bases against each other. Thus both the cube and the octahedron are formed by the symmetrical crossing of two tetrahedra.

Fig. 3 shows the dodecahedron. On joining the points a' , b' , c' , d' , at equal distances from each other, a tetrahedron is formed, as shown in chain lines. Starting at each of the five points in the

FIG. 3

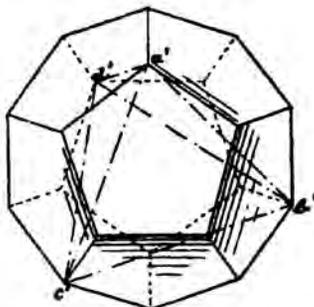
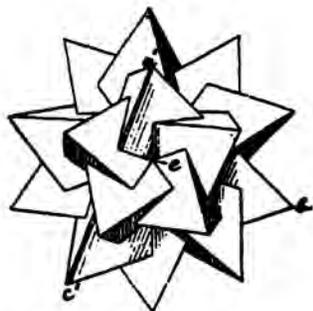


FIG. 4



central pentagon we have evidently a series of five tetrahedra. All these are symmetrical, that is, intersect each other at regular intervals. The result is shown in Fig. 4, where the points a' , b' , c' , show the relation between this figure and Fig. 3. Each point in the latter can in a similar manner be traced in Fig. 4, so that it is obvious that the twenty points of the five intersecting tetrahedra

correspond exactly to the twenty equidistant points of the dodecahedron.

As we have seen in the case of the cube that the octahedron is formed from it by joining the central points of its six sides (an octahedron having eight sides and six points) so there is a figure having a similar relation to the dodecahedron. This is the icosahedron, a regular figure with twenty sides and twelve points, each side forming an equilateral triangle. This icosahedron, or twenty-sided figure, is formed by joining the twelve inner points of the five tetrahedra, or the points at which they intersect. Only one of these, *e*, is visible, at the centre of Fig. 4.

We have thus a series of regular solids, all of which are related to the one type—the tetrahedron.

The order is. (a) Tetrahedron. (b) Two tetrahedra intersecting; cube, formed by joining the outer points of tetrahedra; octahedron, the result of joining the inner points, or points of intersection. (c) Five tetrahedra intersecting; dodecahedron, formed by joining the outer points; icosahedron, produced from the inner points.

We have here seven figures in three groups, a curious example of the "mystic" number. In fact a fresh field of symbolism seems to be opened, and it may be that in some such scheme we shall find the key to many of the so-called "occult" numbers, which have played an important part in mystical systems.

Before leaving this branch of the subject it may be of interest to give a further development of Señor Soria's discovery, a development that the ingenious Spaniard does not appear to have noticed. Figs. 5 and 6 show us a somewhat unfamiliar figure and its analysis.

FIG. 5

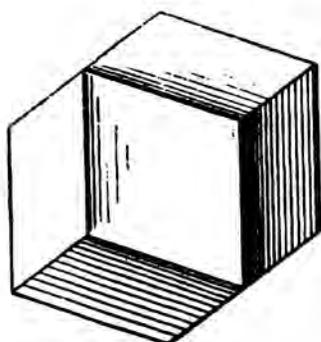
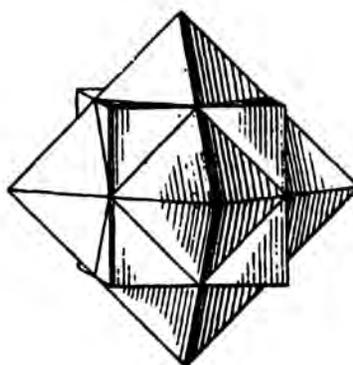


FIG. 6



This figure is known as the rhombic dodecahedron, so-called because each face, instead of being a pentagon, as in the case of the regular dodecahedron (Fig. 3), is a rhomb, or surface enclosed by four equal lines not at right angles to each other. This figure possesses a peculiar interest as it is the one which would be formed by each one of a series of equal spheres packed together and touching each other, and then compressed equally, or expanded equally, to form cells. All space could be filled by a series of such cells without an aperture or crack, the sides of one meeting the sides of the adjacent ones. As can be easily seen, one sphere or ball can be surrounded by twelve equal spheres, all of which touch the next ones, and if any number of equal spheres be placed in a box each one of the inside ones will be surrounded and touched by twelve others. Again we meet numbers (twelve and thirteen) playing an important part in mystical tradition.

I have said that space could be completely filled by such figures, but if we accept occult observations of the nature of the ether, space actually *is* so filled. Such observations, some of which appeared in Mrs. Besant's article, "Occult Chemistry," in a previous issue of LUCIFER, show that the highest form of ether (interplanetary) is of cellular structure. This is produced by the arrangement of atoms, all of which are at equal distances from their surrounding ones. Each atom is the centre for a stream of energy, this stream meeting the opposing streams from adjacent atoms and having to return upon itself. Each atom is thus the centre of a vortex, the sides or walls of which are of the form of a dodecahedron or rather rhombic dodecahedron. To such a structure is probably due the elasticity of the ether which allows it to transmit waves of light and electricity.

This peculiar figure is produced, as shown in the drawings, by the intersection of a cube and an octahedron. Both of these are built from the tetrahedron, as shown above, so that the latter is the basis for yet another geometrical solid. The edge of the octahedron is equal to the diagonal of one face of the cube.

All this is, however, but the introduction to the main theme. Señor Soria's purpose is to show that the laws governing the formation of these solids and their combinations are the true laws of the universe, underlying all things from the atom to the solar system, and from

the first dim glimmering of sensation to the thoughts and designs of the creative mind.

One of the fundamental conceptions is the law of combination, giving rise to new forms. In the cases already described we have the combination of two tetrahedra, giving rise to the cube and the octahedron, and five tetrahedra to the dodecahedron and icosahedron. Of these two resulting figures, one is regarded as positive or masculine, and the other as negative or feminine. The cube and dodecahedron, resulting from the joining of the external points, are masculine, and the octahedron and icosahedron, formed by joining the internal points, are feminine. It may be noted that in the so-called male figures the points predominate over the surfaces, while the reverse is the case in the female or negative ones.

This triple grouping is one of the chief points of the scheme, endless illustrations being given in all directions.

Señor Soria in his second work, *Contribución al Origen Polédrico de las Especies*, begins with the ultimate atom, many stages behind anything that comes under the observation of science. This atom is regarded as the result of force (used apparently in the Spencerian sense as an equivalent for the "Unknowable"!) welling up from a mathematical point, expanding and returning again upon itself. Each atom is thus an oscillation or vibration. It is not a permanent thing, but one gives birth, so to speak, to its successor. An atom has itself but a momentary existence, but as it is followed at once by another, there is no break in the apparent continuity. The energy of motion thus inherent in the atom becomes transformed by the various combinations into our known forces of light, heat, and so forth. This atom is also rotating, and is regarded as having poles. In its formation we have two elements, force and matter, the combination of which brings forth the atom as the third in this trinity.

The next combination is that of one atom with another. These atoms are represented as at each end of a line, placed so that one end is positive and the other negative, this combination bringing a new form into play. Two of these lines or groups then combine in such a way that they are placed perfectly symmetrically, and a fresh geometrical form is the result. This is the tetrahedron; for if we place two of such pairs of atoms so that they are equi-distant

or symmetrical, it is obvious that we must obtain the tetrahedron. Two points of this will be positive and two negative.

Our progress has been, up to the present, from the first two unknowables, force and matter, to the point of junction, or the atom; from the atom to the line or union of two, and from the line to the tetrahedron.

The fourth form, that of the octahedron, is obtained by three lines or pairs, giving the six points of that figure. A new kind of polarity appears here. It will be seen on drawing the figure that one side will have all its three corners composed of positive poles or atoms, one of negative, and the others partly of positive and partly of negative poles.

The other regular figures are produced in a corresponding manner, the underlying conception being that of balance or symmetry, the pairs of atoms, having + and - poles, being grouped so as to balance themselves, and thus to attain stability. The result is, that they will by their inherent forces arrange themselves into the shapes of the regular solids; not, of course, actually solids, but shapes in three dimensions, at each corner or point of which is an atom or centre of force, linked to the other atoms in the group.

The method by which polarity is maintained is of interest, as in the different forms there are always (excepting in the case of the tetrahedron) positive sides and negative sides, and others intermediate. Assuming some kind of polar attraction, it is easy to trace the building of geometrical forms by the union of one with another.

It will be seen that no attempt—beyond the peculiar theory of the vanishing atom—is made to enlighten us as to the real nature of the atom or the forces employed. The scheme does not touch such fundamental points as the modern vortex-ring and like hypotheses. It deals with the arrangement or plan, and not with the actual concrete things. It tells us nothing, for instance, of the cause of the atoms' attraction, or the mechanism by which such attraction (or repulsion) is brought about. What it gives us is a possible system, worked out on mathematical and geometrical lines, in which the forces work—a system, according to the enthusiastic originator, of universal application.

As far as we have gone, we have arrived at the differentiation from the primordial atoms (regarded as all of similar nature) into

groups constituting the five regular solid figures. This, as already said, is the result of the balancing of the forces, the double polarized atoms arranging themselves in a symmetrical manner.

The next development is most ingenious. The regular solid figures are regarded as possessing regularity of the first class, but we have an infinite number of classes of regularity. The second class or order is produced when we place a number of the regular solids around a central one of the same kind, the faces of course lying together. For example, on each of the six faces of a cube another cube can be placed. The figure so produced is called by Señor Soria an octahedron of the second class, the six points of the octahedron being represented by the outer surfaces of the six surrounding cubes. On placing eight octahedra around a central one a cube of the second class is produced. Similarly thirteen dodecahedra give a icosahedron of the second order and twenty-one icosahedra (a central one on each side of which an external one is placed) a dodecahedron. There is no need to stop here, for these figures again will reproduce themselves in more complicated forms.

Señor Soria enunciates a law of the reproduction of forms which is of great interest. He shows how the geometrically regular figures can be made to reproduce themselves infinitely. But immediately we introduce irregularity such power is destroyed. This we can easily see by drawing a pentagon or hexagon and continuing the sides to form a star. These form the points of a second pentagon or hexagon and so on. But if the sides are not of equal length the inequalities are magnified at each operation until the projected lines diverge instead of coming to a point, and no further geometrical figure is possible. For infinite reproduction, that is, for continuance of life, there must be perfect harmony or symmetry. This is found in the regular solids and in no other forms. Hence these must be the material basis of nature.

Continuing the series of combinations on the lines laid down, and by interpenetrating one form with another, we arrive at the atoms and molecules of the chemist, and here Señor Soria claims to have discovered the general laws governing the combinations of the elements. This is one of the most interesting parts of the subject, but its elucidation would take up too much space for this article. I hope to devote a short paper especially to this branch of the subject

in a subsequent issue. Briefly, however, the system is but a continuation of the laws of combination already given, in which the geometrical bodies (formed by an ultimate atom at each point, linked by some unknown force of attraction to the others) arrange themselves around each other symmetrically.

How many stages from the primary five solids we have to go before we reach the chemical atom we are not told. Probably many, as the atom of the chemist is a most complicated body and may contain many thousands of those ultimate five forms. The first combination of the five regular bodies, one with the other, in every possible symmetrical manner, produces what may be called the meta-elements, of which there must be twenty-six. The combinations of these again produce an enormously greater number of more complicated forms, all, however, having lines of symmetry. The number of chemical elements possible might thus be calculated, if we knew the degree of complexity. This we do not know, but we can easily prove that the weights of the elements follow generally a certain law, which has been variously set forth, but which is commonly known as the Mendeléef grouping of the elements. It is known that when these are arranged in order of their weight, those bodies whose weights are multiples or integral parts of each other have properties in common. All this fits into the geometrical scheme of combination, as do the combinations of atoms to form molecules. The various acids, salts and bases can all be represented by forms built out of the primary figures.

In the formation of crystals we have the most obvious illustration of the geometry of nature. Each crystal has definite angles formed by its faces, which angles never vary, whatever may be the sizes of the surfaces. If the basis of forms be the geometrical bodies claimed by Señor Soria, it is obvious that their combinations must form geometrically regular bodies, the angles of which will depend on the nature of the substance—or, according to the theory, on the geometrical structure of the atoms and molecules forming it.

So far the inorganic world. Can the same laws be applied to the organic? An attempt is made so to apply them. By placing one body—cube, octahedron, or the like—on another, a chain or line is formed. Not a line according to Euclid, but a line of real bodies, the only kind of line that can, if this theory be true, exist in

nature. Previously in combining the bodies we had a central one around which the others were placed, and so we could imagine lines or chains radiating from this point. This is regarded as the arrangement of the atoms in inorganic nature. But if we start now with the line and group other lines around it, we get quite different figures. By grouping dodecahedra and icosahedra together we can obtain curves, and some illustrations are given in the works referred to showing how cylinders, cones and spirals can be produced. These are the fundamental forms of the vegetable kingdom. One of the predominant features of vegetable life is the formation of stems and leaves around axes, producing spirals and various curves. These are considered as due to the fundamental law governing vegetable life—the grouping of the geometrical bodies around lines of symmetry. A practically infinite number of forms is thus possible, far greater complexity being obtained than in the mineral kingdom.

And now we have another step to take. By arranging these bodies around a line we can form a plane, or rather an infinite number of planes can be constructed differing in constitution. Such planes can serve as the basis of further development, and by arranging the bodies around a plane of symmetry we have the origin of animal forms. Still further extensions carry us to the human form, then to the social constitution, to astronomy and to metaphysics, these five geometrical forms being the root of all.

In the later developments one cannot resist the feeling that there is something fantastic in the scheme. It is too great for its foundation. The effort to include all things in nature, physical or spiritual, over-reaches itself. An astonishing amount of ingenuity is displayed in the working out of details, but at least in the scheme as applied to social matters and to the laws of thought and metaphysics I feel sure that the writer will see reason to modify his views, whether or not he retain his fundamental ideas.

I have not attempted to do more than mention this wider region, partly because of the lack of space, and also because of the difficulty of rendering the subject intelligible.

Briefly summarizing the main conceptions and avoiding details, we may give the following bald scheme :

The universe is built through the application of geometrical

laws, applying to all forms of life. The matter is built of ultimate atoms grouped into geometric forms. These forms are essentially the five regular solids, which are all combinations of the tetrahedron, this being the basic figure. By combining these primary figures in every possible symmetrical manner we arrive at a gradual evolution of form giving us chemical elements and combinations, crystalline bodies, plant, animal and human forms and so on, up to the universe itself. Symmetry and regularity are found everywhere, and are essential to life and reproduction.

The further developments of the subject (for certainly Señor Soria will not stand still in the matter) will be looked for with interest by all who have come into contact with the fascinating speculations, and we may hope to hear more ere long.

A. M. GLASS.



THE ÂKÂSHIC RECORDS.

(Concluded from p. 323.)

BUT, it may be asked, how is it possible, amid this bewildering confusion of records of the past and previsions of the future, to find any particular picture when it is wanted? As a matter of fact, the untrained clairvoyant usually cannot do so without some special link to put him *en rapport* with the subject required. Psychometry is an instance in point, and it is quite probable that our ordinary memory is really only another presentment of the same idea. It seems as though there were a sort of magnetic attachment or affinity between any particle of matter and the record which contains its history—an affinity which enables it to act as a kind of conductor between that record and the faculties of anyone who can read it.

For example, I once brought from Stonehenge a tiny fragment of stone, not larger than a pin's head, and on putting this into an envelope and handing it to a psychometer who had no idea what it was, she at once began to describe that wonderful ruin and the desolate country surrounding it, and then went on to picture vividly what were evidently scenes from its early history, showing that that

infinitesimal fragment had been sufficient to put her into communication with the records connected with the spot from which it came. The scenes through which we pass in the course of our life seem to act in the same manner upon the cells of our brain as did the history of Stonehenge upon that particle of stone ; they establish a connection with those cells by means of which our mind is put *en rapport* with that particular portion of the records, and so we "remember" what we have seen.

Even a trained clairvoyant needs some link to enable him to find the record of an event of which he has no previous knowledge. If, for example, he wished to observe the landing of Julius Cæsar on the shores of England, there are several ways in which he might approach the subject. If he happened to have visited the scene of the occurrence, the simplest way would probably be to call up the image of that spot, and then run back through its records until he reached the period desired. If he had not seen the place, he might run back in time to the date of the event, and then search the Channel for a fleet of Roman galleys ; or he might examine the records of Roman life at about that period, where he would have no difficulty in identifying so prominent a figure as Cæsar, or in tracing him when found through all his Gallic wars until he set his foot upon British land.

People often enquire as to the aspect of these records—whether they appear near or far away from the eye, whether the figures in them are large or small, whether the pictures follow one another as in a panorama or melt into one another like dissolving views, and so on. One can only reply that their appearance varies to a certain extent according to the conditions under which they are seen. Upon the astral plane the reflection is most often a simple picture, though occasionally the figures seen would be endowed with motion ; in this latter case, instead of a mere snapshot a rather longer and more perfect reflection has taken place.

On the devachanic plane they have two widely different aspects. When the visitor to that plane is not thinking specially of them in any way, the records simply form a background to whatever is going on, just as the reflections in a pier-glass at the end of a room might form a background to the life of the people in it. It must always be borne in mind that under these conditions they are really merely re-

flections from the ceaseless activity of a great Consciousness upon a far higher plane, and have very much the appearance of an endless succession of the recently-invented *cinematographe*, or living photographs. They do not melt into one another like dissolving views, nor do a series of ordinary pictures follow one another; but the action of the reflected figures constantly goes on, as though one were watching the actors on a distant stage.

But if the investigator turn his attention specially to any one scene, or wishes to call it up before him, an extraordinary change at once takes place, for this is the plane of thought, and to think of anything is to bring it instantaneously before you. For example, if a man wills to see the record of that event to which we before referred—the landing of Julius Cæsar—he finds himself in a moment not looking at any picture, but standing on the shore among the legionaries, with the whole scene being enacted around him, precisely in every respect as he would have seen it if he had stood there in the flesh on that autumn morning in the year 55 B.C. Since what he sees is but a reflection, the actors are of course entirely unconscious of him, nor can any effort of his change the course of their action in the smallest degree, except only that he can control the rate at which the drama shall pass before him—can have the events of a whole year rehearsed before his eyes in a single hour, or can at any moment stop the movement altogether, and hold any particular scene in view as a picture as long as he chooses.

In truth he observes not only what he would have seen if he had been there at the time in the flesh, but much more. He hears and understands all that the people say, and he is conscious of all their thoughts and motives; and one of the most interesting of the many possibilities which open up before one who has learnt to read the records is the study of the thought of ages long past—the thought of the cave-men and the lake-dwellers as well as that which ruled the mighty civilizations of Atlantis, of Egypt or Chaldæa. How the vistas of the past open up before such a student—not only the story of all the vast achievements of man, but also of the processes of nature, of the strange chaotic life of earlier rounds—we can indicate only slightly here; but the reader will readily realize that in these directions an almost limitless field lies waiting for the patient investigator.

In one especial case an even closer sympathy with the past is possible to the reader of the records. If in the course of his enquiries he has to look upon some scene in which he himself has in a former birth taken part, he may deal with it in two ways ; he can either regard it in the usual manner as a spectator (though always, be it remembered, as a spectator whose insight and sympathy are perfect) or he may once more identify himself with that long-dead personality of his—may throw himself back for the time into that life of long ago, and absolutely experience over again the thoughts and the emotions, the pleasures and the pains of a prehistoric past. No wilder and more vivid adventures can be conceived than some of those through which he thus may pass ; yet through it all he must never lose hold of the consciousness of his own individuality—must retain the power to return at will to his present personality.

The accurate reading of the records, whether of one's own past lives or those of others, must not, however, be thought of as an achievement possible to anyone without careful previous training. As has been already remarked, though occasional reflections may be had upon the astral plane, the power to use the devachanic sense is necessary before any reliable reading can be done. Indeed, to minimize the possibility of error, that sense ought to be fully at the command of the investigator while awake in the physical body ; and to acquire that faculty needs years of ceaseless labour and rigid self-discipline. Many people seem to expect that as soon as they have signed their application and joined the Theosophical Society they will at once remember at least three or four of their past births ; indeed, some of them promptly begin to imagine recollections. At the present moment there are, I think, four people who are all quite certain that in their last incarnation they were Mary Queen of Scots (why Mary Queen of Scots should be so frequently selected is not very clear, considering the character which history assigns to her, but she certainly is), two who were Cleopatra (another not very desirable progenitor, surely), and several who were Julius Cæsar ! Of course such extravagant claims simply bring discredit upon those who are so foolish as to make them ; but unfortunately some of that discredit is liable to be reflected, however unjustly, upon the Society to which they belong, so that a man who feels seething within him

the conviction that he was Homer or Shakespeare would do well to pause and apply common-sense tests on the physical plane before publishing the news to the world.

It is quite true that some people have had glimpses of scenes from their past lives in dreams, but naturally these are usually fragmentary and unreliable. I had myself in earlier life an experience of this nature. Among my dreams I found that one was constantly recurring—a dream of a house with a portico overlooking a beautiful bay, not far from a hill on the top of which rose a graceful building. I knew that house perfectly, and was as familiar with the position of its rooms and the view from its door as I was with those of my home in this present life. In those days I knew nothing about reincarnation, so that it seemed to me simply a curious coincidence that this dream should repeat itself so often; and it was not until some time after I had joined the Society that, when one who knew was showing me some pictures of my last incarnation, I discovered that this persistent dream had been in reality a partial recollection, and that the house which I knew so well was the one in which I was born more than two thousand years ago.

But although there are several cases on record in which some well-remembered scene has thus come through from one life to another, a considerable development of occult faculty is necessary before an investigator can definitely trace a line of incarnations, whether they be his own or another man's. This will be obvious if we remember the conditions of the problem which has to be worked out. To follow a person from this life to the one preceding it, it is necessary first of all to trace his present life backwards to his birth and then to follow up in reverse order the stages by which the ego descended into incarnation. This will obviously take us back eventually to the condition of the ego upon its own plane—the arûpa level of Devachan; so it will be seen that to perform this task effectually the investigator must be able to use the sense corresponding to that exalted level while awake in his physical body—in other words, his consciousness must be centred in the reincarnating ego itself and no longer in the lower personality. In that case, the memory of the ego being aroused, his own past incarnations will be spread out before him like an open book, and he would be able, if he wished, to examine the conditions of another ego upon that level

and trace him backwards through the devachanic and astral lives which led up to it, until he came to the last physical death of that ego, and through it to his previous life. There is no other way but this in which the chain of lives can be followed through with absolute certainty; and consequently we may at once put aside as conscious or unconscious impostors those people who advertise that they are able to trace out anyone's past incarnations for so many shillings a head. Needless to say, the true occultist does not advertise, and never under any circumstances accepts money for any exhibition of his powers.

Assuredly the student who wishes to acquire the power of following up a line of incarnations can do so only by learning from a qualified teacher how the work is to be done. There have been those who persistently asserted that it was only necessary for a man to feel good and devotional and "brotherly," and all the wisdom of the ages would immediately flow in upon him; but a little common-sense will at once expose the absurdity of such a position. However good a child may be, if he wants to know the multiplication table he must set to work and learn it; and the case is precisely similar with the capacity to use spiritual faculties. The faculties themselves will no doubt manifest as the man evolves, but he can learn how to use them reliably and to the best advantage only by steady hard work and persevering effort.

Take the case of those who wish to help others while on the astral plane during sleep; it is obvious that the more knowledge they possess here, the more valuable will their services be on that higher plane. For example, the knowledge of languages would be useful to them, for though on the devachanic plane men can communicate directly by thought transference, whatever their languages may be, on the astral plane this is not so, and a thought must be definitely formulated in words before it is comprehensible. If, therefore, you wish to help a man on that plane, you must have some language in common by means of which you can communicate with him, and consequently the more languages you know the more widely useful you will be. In fact there is perhaps no kind of knowledge for which a use cannot be found in the work of the occultist.

It would be well for all students to bear in mind that occultism

is the apotheosis of common-sense, that every vision which comes to them is not necessarily a picture from the âkâshic records, nor every experience a revelation from on high. It is better far to err on the side of healthy scepticism than of over-credulity; and it is an admirable rule never to hunt about for an occult explanation of anything when a plain and obvious physical one is available. Our duty is to endeavour to keep our balance always, and never to lose our self-control, but to take a reasonable, common-sense view of whatever may happen to us; so shall we be better Theosophists, wiser occultists, and more useful helpers than we have ever been before.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

DELIVERANCE.

SEEKING for some one supreme condition wherein may be found the happiness and the rest that are denied us in this Samsâra, we are told that Nirvâna is. We joyfully receive this news of solace and forthwith begin to feel a foretaste of that Bliss Unspeakable in the Peace of Faith, when lo! another comes and speaks of a Paranirvâna, beyond that Nirvâna wherein we had begun to think our final haven of rest from turmoil would be found. Then a third passes by speaking of Mahâparanirvâna that is far higher still, and throws us back amazed into the old whirl of doubts and fears. Mukti, deliverance's self, is similarly broken into pieces and classified in many ways—Salokya, Samîpya, Sarûpya, Sayugya; or Jîvan-mukti, Videha-mukti, etc.; till in that deliverance we find no whit of freedom from the old questionings. Whence this confusion as to the meaning of a single word, and why?

A world-period, any and every world-period, between Pralaya and Pralaya, call it a Manvantara if you like, or better still, take a whole Kalpa (with its ready-made division into Purvârdha and Parârdha) is divided into two equal halves, one the semi-circle of the Pravṛitti-mârگا, the downward arc, of the fall into matter, the other the semi-circle of the Nivṛitti-mârگا, the upward arc, of the

return from matter to the "original state." At that turning-point where the one ends and the other begins, every Jīva comes in sight of Mukti, and so in one sense may be said to attain Mukti.

Every Jīva, I say. Doubt thou not, O timid Soul! that in thy blessed humbleness of spirit thinkest thou art not fit for that last goal of all, but that thou, too, shalt surely reach it; aye, and none other shall attain it sooner. For art not thou, too, one with the Supreme? A Self amidst all Selves? A part of the one Whole? Nay, even the Whole itself? And how, then, can a Self that is none other than the Highest Self be lost and perish? Thou thinkest thou hast sinned! But so have all thy brothers in their time. For did not even He who grew to be the blessed Buddha say, when thorns once pierced those holy feet that wandered bare over the earth, bringing soft peace to all who needed it, and they who were with him doubted and questioned him why one so sinless and so holy should still suffer pain, did He not say, how in some long-past life his brother died and left his infant son and all his wealth into his trustful keeping; how he broke the trust, and how for avarice of that wretched gold he stabbed his little nephew in the night, and how he had to expiate that sin in many later lives, and how it was only the blood drops of the last thorn-prick which had washed away the last remaining Shesha of that sin? So fear thou not, but take heart from that example! *Because* thou art a Self like all thy brother Selves, so thou, and all, must pass through all experiences of ever-varied pain and pleasure, which make the essence of all, the experience of all. Thy present doubt itself is but one of such moods.

How could the Omnipotent be omnipotent if It possessed not the power to render Itself wholly helpless? How could the Omniscient be omniscient if It knew not the means to become the most ignorant of the ignorant? How could the Eternal be Master of All Time if It could not become limited in time? As the Upanishads say:

"It moveth and It moveth not; 'Tis far and yet 'Tis near;

All It pervades and yet It is outside of All and aught."

O Self! Thou art the very home of all gross contradictions,

wherein they all are reconciled, wherein they lose themselves, each in its opposite!

When all the permutations of all the possible experiences of a world-period are completed, what is the difference between the various permutations except of insignificant time and space? What is the difference between abcd, adbc, acbd, adcb, etc.? And still more so where $a=-b$, and $c=-d$, good balancing evil, pleasure pain (for all experiences whatsoever are absolutely nothing else than different *forms* of pleasure *or* pain, and all life whatsoever, so-called lowest or so-called highest, nothing else than a ceaseless series of such different forms)? Every Jîva is but such a permutation of experiences, and the *particular order* of the permutation is the Sûtrâtman, the Kâraṇa Sharîra, the Individuality, of the Jîva!

Thus it is that the Upaniṣhad says that all the Jîvas of a Brahmāṇḍa attain deliverance together with the Brahmâ of that world, this Mukti meaning the true Mukti of a Pralaya.

But truly that is not the Mukti which every professing Mumukshu looks for! To most, such Pralaya-mukti presents a very desolate and gloomy picture of "do-nothingness," whereas what these want is the very reverse—ability to fly in air, to dive through earth, fire and water, to turn all metals into gold, to pry into the secrets of sun, moon and stars while sitting comfortably here on the earth; to them psychic powers, the Siddhis of Yoga-shâstra, mean Mukti. To a few who have realized that psychic powers are no more and mean no more than our ordinary present physical and mental powers, though Mukti may not mean such "spirituality" as mere psychic powers denote, it still means but an undefined, glorious, mystic haze of blissful and altruistic emotion (vaguely approaching to the Maitrî, Karuṇâ, etc., of the same Yoga-shâstra).

Neither of these classes has yet experienced the true Vairâgya, the cessation of Râga (Vâsanâ, Trîṣṇâ), the Passion-Force that is the form assumed by the "Necessity of Manifestation" for driving the Jîva down the arc of Pravṛitti (as the Vairâgya-force is the form assumed by it on the opposite arc); neither has quite

passed the turning-point where begins the Path of Nivṛitti ; though the latter is perhaps very close to it, in any case much nearer to it than the former.

The Jīva that has passed through the true Vairāgya, in whom the outward-driving Force of Passion is exhausted, longs for the "do-nothingness" of Pralaya as ardently as the over-worked labourer longs for the rest and the peace of night after his day's heavy task-work.

"The Self-born pierced the senses outwards, and so the Jīva seeth only the things outside and not the Âtman within. Some satiated one, longing for immortality, turned his eyes inwards and beheld the Supreme Self." (Upaniṣhads.)

"If thou hast access at the Monarch's gate,
Neglect thou not the Monarch for the gift.
Against the Way 'twould be if devotee
Wished aught of God but God Himself alone." (Sâdi.)

"Who from the world did turn his face away
Was lost not, but found his lost Self again." (Sâdi.)

But the work of repayment of the debts incurred, of the renunciation of the world's goods acquired, takes just as long as the incurring of the debts and the acquisition of the goods. The two arcs are equal. The sun can take no less a period to ascend from the nadir to the zenith than it has taken to descend from the zenith to the nadir. And even as throughout the process, from the starting-point to the turning-point, the Jīva may appropriately be called Baddha (bound), so throughout the return, from the turning-point up to the starting-point back again, it is entitled to be, in a certain sense, called Mukta (free). It is possible to say that throughout this period it is Jīvanmukta, and therefore, in Pralaya, Videhamukta, although this is scarcely the sense in which the two words are ordinarily used, the ordinary use implying that a Jīvanmukta is still attached to a living, physical human organism and Sthûla Sharīra, while a Videhamukta has become dissociated therefrom, though he may have got an Upâdhi of subtler matter instead. But the stages from

the turning-point upwards to the starting-point are numberless, and each stage may be called a special sort of Mukti or Nirvâṇa if it be found necessary to do so for any special reason; and hence have arisen the many classes and sorts of Mukti, the later stages, attained by the advanced Jîvas, being called the states of the Amarâh, the Immortal Gods. But what this immortality is, is explained by the books themselves.

“Existence up to the Mahâpralaya of the elements is known as immortality.” (Purâṇas.)

The tree has been cut down, the huge Ashvattha that has its branches on the earth, its roots in the sky; its ultimate death is certain, yet its limbs are full of sap, and before they dry up and the whole vast framework crumbles and perishes, periods as long must lapse as were spent in the building up of the whole, and there may even be new sprouts, though short-lived, from the dying branches.

How are these periods to be spent?

“Surely none may rest even a moment absolutely actionless.

. . . The journey of thy Upâdhi, too, could not be accomplished without action.” (Gîtâ.)

The world-plan has already laid down the law. The life will pass through subtler and subtler matter, through psychic conditions as now called, the conditions of the Gods, till the very end in the nothing that is everything. And thus it comes about that much shall be given to them that want not, while from those that want may be taken away perhaps even what they have.

To such Viraktas, who would sit down on their cars, casting aside the bow Gâṇḍiva, saying they will move no more, is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gîtâ well addressed. After Virâga follows necessarily the Sight of the Truth, the One Supreme Self that slays not nor is slain, and after the sight thereof follows the journey thereunto, which is nothing else than the exhaustion of remaining past Karma, the repayment of old debts, the manful doing of the duty of the moment, and the quiet waiting for and experiencing the gradual thinning of the veils of matter.

The place of Yoga, in chronological order, is after the Vedânta, not before.

Knowledge begins the Path ; knowledge lights it throughout ; knowledge ends it. Karma Yoga accompanies the traveller on the way, and amuses him and helps to pass his time. Bhakti, the spirit of self-surrender and self-sacrifice to *all*, not to one particular fellow-creature, or if to one fellow-creature then to him only as embodiment of still greater self-sacrifice for all if possible, and therefore entitled to the name of teacher, guides the Upâdhi onwards.

Beware, O man ! thou fix not thy faith too deeply on any particular Upâdhi for the sake of that Upâdhi only.

“Thy will be done, O Lord ! not mine,” the Bhâkta cries. O noble-hearted one ! who layest out that noble heart of thine in utmost sacrifice before thy idol and passest into ecstasy and bliss ! Would that thy cry were true ! Would that that ecstasy and bliss lasted for evermore ! Alas ! the cry is not true. That ecstasy is not the peace thou shalt search for again. That idol of thine—monstrous as the ravening tigress that rended the self-proffered flesh of the future Buddha, if it selfishly accept thy sacrifice ; or beneficent and self-sacrificing in turn as the mother that accepts a service of affection from her child, if it have the spirit to reward thy homage befittingly—that idol must in any case, as *other* than thee, render thee back full measure of the loan advanced by thee, though thou ask not, if it make thee do *its* will and *not* thine own. The true cry is the cry that sayeth : “Thy will and mine are but the same.”

The calm that cometh when the Self perceives its oneness with all other Selfs hiding behind the tiniest atoms of so-called dead matter ; when it sees clearly that these outward veils, though they be gross or subtle, are all but mere illusion, and that naught abideth but the Self alone ; when all the multifarious movement of the world is seen to be but one vast sacrifice unto that Self, that calm, that peace and goodwill unto all is true Devotion.

As the various stages on the upward Path make the different kinds of Mukti, so Nirvâṇa, Paranirvâṇa, Mahâparanirvâṇa, etc., have their explanation as representing the culminating stages at the end of gradually greater and greater world-cycles. Thus if the final

condition at the later end of the upward arc of the circle of a Manvantara is to be called Nirvâna, the corresponding condition at the end of a Mahâmanvantara may be called Paranirvâna, that at the end of a Kalpa, Mahâparanirvâna, and so on through unending circles. For there is no absolutely final dissolution of any individuality, but it will lie dormant through the Great Sleep and rise again with renewed Desire for work and activity, to return again to sleep, and so on, endlessly.

How should that *begun* not *end*? And yet how also should anything ever partaking of Sat, of existence, ever cease to be? The result of the two laws is the feigning, the illusion, of both conditions, the Anâdi-pravâha, the beginningless and endless flow of Mâyâ, the ever-becoming. The Supreme includes, or excludes, both Bandha and Moksha, Kalpa and Pralaya, whence Shankara sang:

“(The) I desire(th) not Moksha, nor yet the wealth of the world.”

GOVINDA DÂSA.



ECKHARTSHAUSEN'S CATECHISM.

Translated from the German by MADAME DE STEIGER.

PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured in the translation of the following curious “Catechism” to keep the archaic simplicity of style intact. The first translation made by a friend, has been carefully revised by me with the original German work, so that though I have tried to put it into at least readable English in the obscurest passages, I have faithfully kept a necessary literalness, lest in altering a word, the sense appearing to me deficient, I might really obscure the author’s own meaning, for it most evidently requires a key; and whether there *are* any readers who *really* understand the drift of this strangely interesting and most suggestive “Catechism” I do not know, but I should be sincerely glad to understand more myself, seeing that it evidently refers to the Higher Alchemy or the true spiritual work of regeneration.

This "Catechism" is a separate work included in the three volumes before me. The publisher dates his preface from Munich, September 1st, 1818, and his part of the work appears to consist in publishing two essays. The first is entitled the "Magic of Nature, a Free Translation of Egyptian MSS. from the Coptic with a Supplement of Magical Symbols deciphered from these MSS." The second is the "Catechism" now translated. The publisher states that there may be doubts respecting the authenticity of these works, in view of their posthumous appearance, but he adds, those readers who are well acquainted with Eckartshausen's style in his other works will recognize this and the flow of his ideas to their entire satisfaction. He adds, moreover, that the MSS., with title pages in the hand of Eckartshausen, are recognized by his former copyist, still living (1818).

With regard to the "Catechism" I cannot help thinking it might never have been intended for publication, that it may refer to a society for mystic association and research of a very high and spiritual nature. However, as no manual secrets seem to be revealed, there possibly was no harm in the publisher printing the MS. or in my offering this translation to LUCIFER.

The greater part of the same volume before me is occupied by a work (not posthumous) of Eckartshausen's, entitled "The Arithmetic of Nature, or a Key to the Hieroglyphs of Nature," printed at Leipzig, 1794. The second volume is "An Explanation of Magic from Experimental Knowledge of the Hidden Philosophy and Secret Science of Nature," printed at Munich, 1788. The third volume is much smaller, and entitled, "Mystic Nights or the Key to the Secrets of the Miraculous," published at Munich, 1791. Leutner is the publisher of all but the posthumous works. Those bear the name of Lindauer. "The Arithmetic of Nature," brought out at Leipzig, is "commissioned by Herrn G. E. Beer."

Whether any or all of these works are translated into English I cannot ascertain.

I. DE S.



CATECHISM OF THE HIGHER CHEMISTRY FOR THE PROOF OF THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE TRUTHS OF NATURE AND THOSE OF FAITH: BY ONE WHO IS A DEVOTED STUDENT OF RELIGION AND NATURE: WHOSE AGE IS FIFTEEN: TO THOSE RECEPTIVE OF LIGHT CONCERNING MAGICAL STUDIES: HELIOPOLIS.

Question. Who art thou?

Answer. I am a human being, who knows the Light and follows it.

Q. What constitutes such a person?

A. He is one who, after he perceives the Light, is illuminated by it, and follows implicitly, clearly and intelligently, what the old real Light-Community always knew and practised, were it inscribed, or not, in the Light-Book.

Q. By what mark is the follower of Light recognised?

A. By this, that he knows the Cross-Sign of nature, the great symbol of the science of analysis, of the separation of the clean from the unclean, and of the perfect from the imperfect, that he avoids all impure works and errors, which the true teachers of the real Light-Community unanimously reject.

Q. How is the follower of Light distinguished?

A. He is distinguished by the great sign of the cross of nature †, that is by the sign of the science of analysis he speaks and performs all in the name or the qualities of Fire, Light, and Spirit, by which he brings all to its conclusion and completion.

Q. How many of the principles of the real Light-Community is it necessary for each follower of Light to know?

A. There are five; the first is the true conviction and belief in or dependence on the Light.

The second contains the seven means to attain the Light.

The third, the ten commandments of Light.

The fourth, the knowledge of the creative power as the active, and of the pure form as the passive.

The fifth is the knowledge of the analysis of Light.

FIRST PRINCIPLE.

DEPENDENCE ON LIGHT.

Q. What is the first principle of the real Light doctrine?

A. The dependence on and knowledge of Light; for without

this dependence and knowledge it is impossible to obtain strength, to accomplish and effect anything.

Q. In what should each son of Light believe, and on what should he depend ?

A. All that the men of Light have taught and written in the twelve articles of the Light-Community.

Q. Which are the twelve articles of the real Light-Community ?

A. 1st. I depend on and believe in a creative Fire-force, out of which originated heaven and earth, or the "extensum" and "concretum," the volatile and the fixed.

2nd. And in one Light, produced by this Fire-force, the ruler of the world, or the omnipotent force in nature.

3rd. This pure Light, which proceeds from the Fire, is received from the purest Spirit, and demitted into the purest form.

4th. But it must suffer in the kingdom of the impure ; it must be divided, put to death, and buried in the earth.

5th. Then the Light descends into the inmost part of matter, and after three epochs, that is, after three unions of three spiritual forces with three purified forms, it rises again as living.

6th. It rises to the highest perfection as a glorious Light-force of the omnipotent Fire.

7th. And after the attainment of this highest perfection, it is capable of making all the dead living, and the imperfect perfect.

8th. I believe in and recognize the Light-spirit, which proceeds from fire and warmth.

9th. I believe in the holy, universal, real Light-Community, the Communion and Union of the followers of Light.

10th. The annulling of sickness and misery.

11th. The renewing of our being.

12th. And the extreme happiness of life.

Q. In what consists the main tenor of those twelve articles ?

A. It consists in this, that a follower of Light obeys the laws of Light, which he knows through his reason, and practises by his will, namely, that universal force is one in substance and in essence, and that at the same time it is threefold in its development, namely, the Fire-force as the creative, the Light-force as the connective, and the Spirit-force proceeding out of Fire and Light, as the formative force of all things.

This final force brings all to perfection, and by pre-arranged means to their true completion.

SECOND PRINCIPLE.

THE SEVEN MEANS OF HELP TO OBTAIN THE LIGHT.

Q. What is the second principle of the doctrine of the true Light-Community?

A. There are seven means of help to obtain the Light, which the Community holds most venerable and holy.

Q. What is such a means of help?

A. It is a visible baptismal operation, by which an invisible force effects inner perfection.

Q. How many are there of these means of union?

A. Seven, and they stand in analogy with the seven sacraments

1. Baptism, by water and light.
2. Confirmation of matter, according to water and light.
3. Purification.
4. Reception of Light from above in essence and substance.
5. Consecration, perfecting of the process.
6. Heavenly chrism.
7. The union of Fire and Light into a perfect body.

Q. What is Light baptism?

A. It is that first most necessary means of union, by which matter is purified by water and by the Word, operating in water, and is again placed in the Light-being as a new and perfect body.

Q. What is confirmation?

A. Light confirmation is a means of union, by which the above prepared matter is strengthened by the Light chrism and by the Spirit, which is therein, and is made further capable of perfection.

Q. What is the third means of union?

A. It is that, by which Light and Fire receive their being in the ceremonial form of the principles of bread and wine, when a Priest of nature knows how to change these principles on the altar.

Q. What is the fourth means of union?

A. It is the means of union by which the Priest of nature, who is a receiver of Light, purifies the matter, which is susceptible of Light, and even takes away all the effects of imperfection.

Q. What is the fifth?

A. It is that means of union by which the pure Light-force is raised in the form of chrisem to the perfection of healing forces.

Q. What is the sixth?

A. The sixth is that by which matter is consecrated through seven operating forces, and made receptive of Light.

Q. What is the seventh?

A. It is the perfect union of Light with Fire by a medium, which proceeds out of Light and Fire, thereby effecting the union of perfect parts.

THIRD PRINCIPLE.

THE TEN LIGHT COMMANDMENTS.

Q. What is the third principle of the Light-Community?

A. The ten Light commandments, of which it is written: If you wish to accomplish anything, bring it to pass by fulfilling the commandments of the law.

Q. Which are the ten Light commandments?

A. The following:

1. There is but one Substance.
2. The properties of this Substance must be used in order.
3. In six operations, matter completed its day's work, since three forces produce three essences, and rest in the seventh force, as in the fulfilment of their workings, and this seventh force shall be holy to thee as the Sabbath of Light.

4. Light and Fire, as passive and active, are sacred to thee; for Fire is the male and Light is the female—Father and Mother of all things.

5. Light must not be robbed of its living power, in case the matter, which is to be raised up, die.

6. Confuse not the order of thy work. Everything has its time and rotation. Let it be thy duty to unite the scattered forces.

7. Neither draw their properties away from Light and Fire, it is wise to let both work fully. To each should be left its property.

8. Mistake not a false appearance for true, neither take anything impure and foreign, which is not capable of receiving Light, so that thy skill may not lead thee falsely.

9. The Spirit, proceeding from Light and Fire, desires nothing which is not united with others, neither anything separate.

10. This Spirit longs for no matter strange and dissimilar to it.

Q. In what consists the main tenor of this Light law ?

A. In this, that Light shall entirely penetrate thy body or matter, so Fire through Light becomes one, and the Spirit, proceeding from Light and Fire, entirely animates thy body. This is the first law.

The second is like unto it, namely: In this manner shalt thou treat the matter upon which thou workest and all such that thou wilt bring to perfection.

On these two leading conditions the whole knowledge of the science of Light depends, and all those which are subject to it.

Q. What are the commandments of the working Light-Community?

A. There are five.

First: Keep holy the resting-point in thy work, for Light has its sabbath, and the worker must observe it.

Secondly: On these Light holidays consecrate the matter to the holy sacrifices; separate by Light-water the pure from the impure, the active from the passive.

Thirdly: Abstain in thy work from everything that is against the law of Light, in the forces and their operations, as well as in the forms and essences of things; these are the four divisions of the Light school.

Fourthly: At least once in the year, try to talk with a wise friend about the progress which thou makest, and make known to him what hinders thee, that thou mayest have support on thy way, which leadeth thee to perfection.

Fifthly: At these seasons, which thy reason appoints for thee, avoid opening thy heart too freely to another, as well as also closing it too hastily.

Q. Why should the commands of the Light-Community, the true knowers of nature, be kept?

A. For this reason, that the Light-laws, or Light-conditions, require that man shall not obey that only which is requisite for the attainment of the aim within nature, but that also is required which is without as well, for the fourth Light commandment presupposes this requisite, and he who listens not to the Light-Community and honours not their good laws and statutes, shall be considered an infidel and a materialist, who knoweth not the laws of the Spirit.

(To be concluded.)

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

AMERICAN SECTION: MRS. BESANT'S TOUR.

May 25th.—On White Lotus Day we reached San Francisco, and were met in Oakland and escorted across the bay by Mr. Walters, the earnest and energetic Editor of *Mercury*, as well as by Mr. J. C. Chatterpâdhyâya, who is doing such good work by his classes and lectures on Theosophy and Eastern Philosophy. We were most hospitably received in the house of one of our members, and a celebration of White Lotus Day and a reception took place in the evening; over 300 people were present.

In San Francisco, amongst other people, we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Marques, whose observations on the human aura have lately been brought to the notice of the public.

Mrs. Besant's time was much taken up by the usual routine, with the addition of as many Branch meetings and talks to members as could be crowded into a limited time. On one day *five* meetings were addressed by Mrs. Besant, for by some misapprehension a public announcement had been made of a lecture which had been refused from want of time, and yet she would not disappoint those who might come, for it is difficult for her to draw the line when it seems that good can be done.

From this centre visits were made by Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister to Alameda, Oakland and Stamford University, and lectures were given in each place, with the result that many new members joined the Society.

Then we passed on to San José, Santa Cruz, with its earnest group of members, and to Sacramento, and at each place lectures and talks helped the people to a fuller comprehension of the realities of the inner life.

At midnight on Friday, May 21st, we left Sacramento by the beautiful Mount Shasta route, and on Sunday morning found ourselves in Portland, Oregon, and some of our members on the station platform to greet us with the same warm welcome and kindness that have been shown everywhere.

A halt of two days for two public lectures was made there, and then we came on to Tacoma, on Puget Sound, where last night Mrs.

Besant's lecture was attended by the more thoughtful people of the town.

June 4th.—Pugit Sound with its fir and cedar clothed hills, guarded by isolated snow-capped peaks, is left behind us. We visited three towns upon its shores. At Tacoma, where two members of the Society met us in rather a hopeless state of mind about the prospects of Theosophy in their town, we only remained one full day, a very short time to start things when little work has already been done, but even in that time the town showed its readiness to respond, for Mrs. Besant's lecture was attended by the most thoughtful people in the place, and a group gathered round her on the night before she left.

We passed on to Olympia early on Friday morning, and a very quiet day was spent in this little tidal town, whose life ebbs and flows with the coming of the judges to the court-house.

The Countess knew one or two of the people who had been interested in Theosophy, but all was very quiet, and Olympia only began to rouse up after Mrs. Besant's evening lecture. Amongst others the Governor of the State attended, and was afterwards presented. Much regret was expressed that we could not remain, but we had already arranged to take the 6.30 boat next morning.

In beautifully situated and pure-aired Seattle we found a strong Branch of the Society, and much hopeful work progressing. This is one of the many Branches which owe their origin to the tireless energy of the Countess Wachtmeister. It was only started last summer, but already has its lecture room and library, and over fifty members. Its President, Mr. Barnes, is a capable and devoted worker, and the Seattle Lodge promises to be a strong centre.

Mrs. Besant gave three lectures in the Theatre to a full and deeply appreciative audience. "Theosophy and its Teachings," "Man, the Maker of his Destiny," and "Thought Forms, a Glimpse of the Unseen Universe." This last lecture was with the illustrations of the human aura and thought-forms, which, as I have before mentioned, do such good service in making the subject comprehensible. The five days spent in Seattle passed swiftly, and much good work was done by Mrs. Besant in interviews and meetings for the members and the public at the Society's rooms, and by the Countess who, wherever we go, is engaged in her whole-hearted endeavours to create and foster interest in the Society.

Two members came over from Tacoma for the lectures and returned when we left, with a better understanding of the real strength of the Theosophical Society and of the important work that it has to do.

One of the ideas mooted by Mrs. Besant here was that of a Federation of all the Lodges in the State of Washington, on the plan of the Northern Federation in England, for the purpose of the interchange of Theosophic thoughts and help in the work generally. This would mean a meeting each six months in one or other of the towns, and would tend to foster outside interest and to promote a closer tie amongst our members by personal intercourse.

On leaving Chicago after the Convention, it is proposed to visit the following towns, though the exact dates cannot yet be given. Streator, Clinton (Iowa), Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Detroit, Windsor, Toledo, Sandusky, Cleveland, Buffalo, Hamilton, and Toronto.

June 19th.—From the Sound we went direct to Ellensburg, a small town interested chiefly in dairy farming. We were met by Mr. Ross, one of our members, who had gladly undertaken the supervision of proceedings in the hope that his fellow townspeople might be sufficiently interested to form a branch. On Friday evening, June 4th, Mrs. Besant lectured to a small audience in the Opera House and again the next afternoon. Here the people were remarkable for their unpunctuality, and at the time the lecture was advertized to begin *two* people only had arrived. This did not look promising, but Mr. Ross was quite cheerful, and explained that it was the custom of the place to be late for everything. It certainly proved to be so, not only here, but at other towns also, whose inhabitants have evidently been spoilt by past lecturers. At last they came, and Mrs. Besant spoke clearly and eloquently upon the power of man over his own future, and the work of the Theosophical Society, and twice during our short stay held her usual reception for inquirers. When we left by the night train some new members had joined, and enough were expected to come in to form a branch there very shortly.

On we went then to Spokane, a mining centre of importance, again to be met and driven to the Hotel by members of the Society, who were glad to have Mrs. Besant and the Countess amongst them. The usual routine was followed, and Spokane distinguished itself by flocking in such crowds to the first lecture that some hundreds had to be turned away.

Butte, in Montana, came next, a desert of hills—honeycombed by mines of copper, silver, iron and gold. We arrived there on Wednesday, June 9th, and the next day Mrs. Besant gave a splendid practical lecture to a good-sized audience, amongst whom were many miners. It created a very good impression in the town, as could be seen by the

tone of the notices in the local papers, and some people joined the Society on our return from Anaconda, where Mrs. Besant spent one night, lectured, and formed a promising group for study.

From Butte it was only three hours to Helena, the last of our mining towns; we arrived there at 1 o'clock on Sunday, and found it quite a new field in regard to the Theosophical Society, though a number of its inhabitants were more or less interested in various "occult" studies. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Brown, the Unitarian minister, who gave up a lecture in a course he was in the midst of, and advertized Mrs. Besant's instead, we had a good audience at each of the two lectures, and there is now a group of people who are interested and intend to study with the view of ultimately forming a branch.

On Tuesday, June 15th, after a night in the train, we found ourselves in Sheridan, Wyoming, near the home of Buffalo Bill and many of his "Wild West" riders. Here we encountered quite a distinct type of men from the miners amongst whom we had been lately working, and it was a cheering sign that the young Branch had already thirty members.

Mrs. Besant held several talks at Coffeen's Hall and gave two fairly attended lectures in the Opera House. Three new people joined the Lodge and we hope that some of the scattered ranchers carried back to their homes ideas to work into their daily lives.

A. J. W.

The report of the General Secretary, Mr. Fullerton, is most satisfactory. Nineteen Branches have been formed since the last Convention, the number of active Branches, deducting two which have disbanded, being now thirty-two. The membership has increased to about two and a half times its number in the past year, 405 new members having been admitted and forty-four restored. The work of the Countess Wachtmeister has been largely instrumental in this increased activity and Mrs. Besant's lectures have had remarkable results in strengthening the Section. The financial report is also very satisfactory, showing a good surplus after all expenses have been paid. There is every sign of the Section flourishing and recovering rapidly from the injury it received.

EUROPEAN SECTION.

A valuable gift has been made to the Library of the Section by an anonymous donor. It consists of *Texte und Untersuchungen der Altchristlichen Literatur*, edited by von Gebhardt and Harnack, a

large collection of texts and studies of early Christian works, the most complete undertaking of its kind that has yet appeared.

At Nice a new Branch has just been formed, with Mrs. Terrell as President. Several members have recently joined in order to make up the necessary number, but most of them have been attending for some time at the meetings held by Mrs. Terrell. There is every reason to hope for a good future for the Branch.

The South-Western Federation of Branches of the Section held meetings at Bournemouth on July 3rd and 4th. A good number of members attended. The special feature was an open-air meeting in the New Forest, to which the members drove or rode on bicycles. Mr. Leadbeater presided and lectured on "Life on the Astral Plane."

The Blavatsky Lodge held its business meeting on July 3rd, and elected delegates for the Convention.

AUSTRALASIAN SECTION.

The activities of this Section pursue the even tenor of their way. We have hopes that one or more branches will shortly be established in various centres in Western Australia, and our membership slowly but steadily increases.

Miss Edger, M.A., General Secretary of the New Zealand Section, generously volunteered to help us and to give three months of her time lecturing to and visiting our various Branches.

Arriving in Sydney, May 12th, she delivered three public lectures in the Hall of the Sydney Branch to crowded and appreciative audiences, also a public lecture in the room of the Dayspring Branch, besides holding meetings for enquirers and for members.

On May 25th she leaves for Brisbane, Maryborough and Bundaberg, and will spend about six weeks working with these Branches. Then coming southwards she will visit Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart, finishing in the latter city about the middle of August.

H. A. W.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

The General Secretary left New Zealand on May 8th for a lecturing tour in Australia, and will probably be away for three months.

The loss sustained by the Australian Section in the death of Mr. Staples is also keenly felt in New Zealand. The Branches and individual members alike testify to the love and esteem which were felt for him throughout the Section.

Active public work is carried on in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin; there is a good deal of general public interest,

and the meetings and lectures are fairly well attended, and membership increases.

The number of "unattached" members has been increasing lately. They are most numerous in the neighbourhood of Auckland, but are pretty well scattered over the Colony.



REVIEWS.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By George Salmon, D.D. [London: Murray, 1897. Price 3s. 6d.]

EVERYTHING that comes from Dr. Salmon's pen must be received with respect by the student, and the few "Thoughts" which he has so modestly put forward on the chaotic subject of the "Textual Criticism of the New Testament," show that he has a thorough grasp of the difficult problem he discusses. The essay before us presupposes some familiarity of the reader with the subject, but only such as may be expected from a well informed layman.

The problem discussed is as follows:

The Authorised Version of the N. T., was made from the "received text," which had "taken its origin in a haphazard way from the edition hastily scrambled together by Erasmus." This text is innocent of the most elementary critical treatment, the most unreliable and untrustworthy of guides.

When the so-called Revised Version was attempted, the first requisite was to settle on a text which should stand the canon of the most elementary criticism. In the college of revisers there were two men who had made a speciality of textual criticism, and the rest of the revisers were afraid to oppose their opinion to the judgment of this pair of noted specialists. The consequence was that the text from which the Revised Version was made, was practically the text of Westcott and Hort, and in the last analysis of Hort alone.

Hort's one idea, the prime clause of his textual creed, was the plenary inspiration of Codex B.

The opponents of the W. H. text were headed by the learned and boisterous tongued Burgon. His theory was that the "received text" had been specially looked after by the Holy Ghost. No matter what corruptions had crept into the older texts, the "textus receptus" was directly inspired of set purpose by the Holy Ghost, to upset the rascality of the mutilators and falsifiers of the original texts.

The reader should remember that we are not dealing with the views of mediæval divines, but of men who were with us but a year or two ago.

Burton is to-day represented by Miller, while Westcott and Hort are represented by their many pupils, that is to say, by the main body of the theologians of the Established Church. The W. H. text is regarded with as much reverence by them as the "textus receptus" was regarded by Burton.

It is evident to the outside student, who has no interests to serve, that both positions are not only untenable, but so stupendously silly, that he can only suppose that much learning has made our theologians mad.

Dr. Salmon wisely declares that the whole matter must be reopened; he rudely arouses the younger men from their slumbers on the soft couch of the W. H. text. True, he does it all so modestly, and so timorously, scarce daring as it were to breathe a word against the great idol, that one does not at first see the full effect of his criticism; but the blow is struck and the whole propped fabric is once more on the totter.

G. R. S. M.

RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

By A. Wiedemann, Ph. D. [London: Grevel & Co., 1897. Price 12s. 6d.]

THE success attending the translation of his short essay on *The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul* (1895), has induced Professor Wiedemann to venture the translation of one of his larger works, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*. Those who have read the learned Professor's clear and scholarly exposition of the present state of Egyptological knowledge as to the doctrine which formed the subject of his shorter work, will know that they are not to expect any surprises or startling theories, but simply the striking of an average opinion, and the most stringent endeavour to keep to the texts and monuments. This expectation is fulfilled on every page of Wiedemann's new work, which is thus of enormous value to the lay student who desires to know the exact state in which modern Egyptological research stands.

The main impression left with us is that Egyptologists are still in the twilight when not in the dark; they are puzzled immensely if not entirely baffled by ninety-nine things out of a hundred. Moreover the vast majority of important texts have not yet been translated.

The Egyptian religion is apparently a specimen of the maddest syncretism which has ever existed on the face of the earth. The Egyptian mind was so fanatically conservative, that it could dispense with not even the meanest rags of its past; the sublimest views are found alongside of pure fetishism. So it appears. Add to this the fact that in official Egyptology, any hypothesis may be entertained except the absurd assumption that there can be such a thing in reality as the unseen world, and you have the frame of mind of orthodoxly scientific Egyptological research, especially of the German mould!

On these lines Professor Wiedemann has done most admirably; his book is the most useful which has appeared on the subject, and will serve as an excellent introduction to the vast subject of ancient Egyptian religion, not only because of its moderate views, but also because of the excellent bibliographical notes which will supply the student with a guide for further exploration. *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* is a splendid drag on the enthusiasm of the mystic who would find in Egypt the pansophy of the ages; it will teach him "so far canst thou go and no farther," if he would base himself on really acquired facts, and not plunge into a wild whirlpool of speculation.

But as there is a middle ground for Professor Wiedemann among his scientific colleagues, so there is a middle ground for the theosophical student among the mystics. Scores of times after Wiedemann has questioned the texts and stated the acquired facts, he is ludicrously at sea for an explanation, which immediately occurs to a mind furnished with the most elementary theosophical information. On the other hand, the careful theosophical student will in no case seek to alter the facts merely to accommodate some vague mystical theory. He knows that though his general point of view must be the view to which real science in the long run will approximate, in details he must carefully weigh evidence and take an infinity of pains before he can be satisfied with even the most overwhelmingly convincing solution or any difficulty.

It is a matter of profound regret that so few members of the Theosophical Society have entered the field of Egyptological research; the work to be done in this direction is endless, the crop of theosophical knowledge to be reaped inexhaustible. "The Theosophy of the Egyptians" could form the title of a series of volumes of the greatest value to modern theosophical research, and form a link in that great chain of theosophical tradition of which a few of the links are being reforged by two or three of our members. Who will attempt it?

G. R. S. M.

THE TREASURE OF THE HUMBLE.

By Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Alfred Sutro. [London: George Allen, 1897. Price 5s. net.]

IN this volume we have a series of mystical and philosophical essays which will prove of much interest to those who have hitherto only known M. Maeterlinck as a dramatist. He is here devoting himself to analyzing the ideas of life which he has previously illustrated in his plays; strongly imbued with the doctrines of Neo-Platonism, these essays bear the impression of the thought of that period and the dominant note running through all of them is that which insists on the importance of the supra-sensuous world, that which "lies well beyond the domain of thought." In taking this line M. Maeterlinck sets himself in direct opposition to most of the current thought and literature of the day which tend more to the exposition of the realistic side of life. These essays will furnish many useful thoughts and suggestions to those who feel that the deepest and best emotions of their lives do not deal with the concrete so much as with the abstract, "the veiled life of the soul." It seems as if at times M. Maeterlinck grasps intuitively the theosophical conception of the true man, "the thinker," who stands behind all thought and is beyond intellect; indeed there are many points of sympathy which students of theosophy will at once perceive.

In the essay on "The Awakening of the Soul," M. Maeterlinck points out that in various periods of the world's history there have been spiritual epochs, during which "the soul . . . seemed to rise to the very surface of humanity," and he cites India and Egypt as especially showing the traces of such epochs. Since then there have been periods when the intellect has reigned supreme but the soul has slept. To-day, however, "it is clearly making a mighty effort. Its manifestations are everywhere." After showing how in every department of life old barriers are being broken down, and orthodoxy is being assailed on all sides, he goes on, "I feel that a more pressing offer of spiritual freedom has rarely been made to mankind," spiritual phenomena are manifesting themselves more widely than ever before, and are being universally studied, showing "that the human soul is a plant of matchless unity whose branches, when the hour is come, all burst into blossom together." It is the realization of this unity, though still only half comprehended, that draws men closer to each other, and heralds the time when "souls will know of each without the intermediary of the senses."

Many more passages might be quoted but space only permits the special mention of "The Star," "The Deeper Life," and "The Inner Beauty," as the essays of peculiar interest. L. M. C.

FOUR GREAT RELIGIONS.

Four Lectures delivered on the Twenty-first Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Adyar, Madras, by Annie Besant. [London. T.P.S. : 1897. Price 2s. net.]

Most interesting and most useful are the four lectures which our prolific colleague has added to the literature of the Theosophical Society. The great religions of which Mrs. Besant treats are Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. Without surprise we read that it was with feelings of dismay that our greatest speaker stood on the platform to deal with these four mighty and complex themes in the short time allotted to her. How was she to treat the enormous wealth of material which lay before her? Libraries could not exhaust even one of her subjects; what hope then was there that she could make four such stupendous themes intelligible in four short hours? The solution of this difficult problem was only to be found in the theosophic method, the method of synthesis, of eliminating non-essentials. In brief, Mrs. Besant has made a "symphony" of these four great faiths, has pointed to their common origin and common truths, and most worthily contributed to the carrying out of the second object of our Society.

The principles underlying the treatment of her subjects are stated by Mrs. Besant in her preface to have been as follows: (1) each religion is looked at in the light of occult knowledge, both as regards its history and its teachings; (2) each religion is treated as coming from one great Brotherhood, which is the steward and guardian of spiritual knowledge; (3) an attempt is made to distinguish the essential from the non-essential in each religion; and to treat chiefly the former. Moreover Mrs. Besant tells us: "I have striven to sketch each religion in its best, its purest, and most occult form, and each as though I belonged to it and were preaching it as my own."

This is the really theosophic method, to believe in the best in each of the great religions with all the ardour of an exclusive religionist, to write and speak of the essential truths of each with deepest sympathy and a full heart, to do this honestly and not merely academically—this is the method which shall revolutionize the study of comparative religion and make it the grandest and most helpful work that any one can engage in.

As Professor Max Müller justly says, the study of "comparative religion," is a misnomer, it should be called the study of "comparative theology." This remark is profoundly true, but not in the sense that our veteran orientalist intends it.

He is finding fault with the term "comparative religion" on philological grounds. He avers that we cannot use such a term as "comparative religion," and can only speak legitimately of "comparative theology." He is right, for so far all our scholars have paid attention to "comparative theology" alone, with "comparative religion" they have had nothing to do, seeing that they none of them *believe* in all the great religions of which they treat. Some of them may believe in Christianity, some of them may be philosophically drawn to the main tenets of the Vedānta or Buddhism, but none can say I believe with all my heart and soul in all the great truths which the great religions teach. They are mostly critics trying to insist on differences, making their reputations by the number of differences they can discover, shrinking from synthesis as from the pest, and contemptuously referring to it as "syncretism." It is just here that the theosophical student takes his stand. Our second object bids us encourage the study of "comparative religion," and not "comparative theology," and this Mrs. Besant has most worthily done in her present work.

It should of course be remembered that the lectures were addressed to an almost exclusively Hindu audience, and that Mrs. Besant was compelled to continually bear this in mind in many of her explanations. If, however, we may venture to particularize, we would say that our Pârsî members owe most to our colleague for her admirable exposition of Zoroastrianism. The magnificent description of the first Zoroaster bringing down the sacred fire from heaven is perhaps the finest passage in the book.

The attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Buddhism is admirable, but we doubt whether the Buddhist will consider it so admirable as the Hindu. Fundamentally the doctrines are the same indubitably for the student of comparative religion, and the Buddha was an Hindu in his body, but caste and the Vedas, as such, are hard to find in the tradition. The lecture devoted to Christianity is, as we should expect, entirely Catholic, in the original and true sense of the term; we would, however, point out with regard to the doctrine of reincarnation, that it cannot be *orthodoxly* established, and that its evidences—overwhelming evidences—must be found in the Gnostic Schools alone and their interpretation of the Sayings. With the exception of Synesius, no Father of the Church accepted the doctrine, though some few believed

in the doctrine of pre-existence. The passage quoted from Tertullian's *Apology* is most remarkable, it is true, and apparently confirmatory of reincarnation, but we should recollect the numerous other passages in which the Church Father inveighs most bitterly against the tenet, and then we shall be inclined to believe that the Bishop of Carthage is elaborating a mystical doctrine—of a somewhat materialistic nature, as we might expect from his Montanist tendencies—of the “resurrection of the body.”

As a student of comparative religion, however, we would refrain from further theological criticism, and have only referred to the point to show that our deep appreciation of our colleague's labours is not prompted by mere indiscriminate endorsement of every statement to be found in her lectures. We have read the book with the greatest interest and pleasure, and warmly recommend it, not only to students but also to all who wish to imbibe the spirit which ensouls the four great religions which have been so admirably treated in the volume before us.

As with all books printed in India, there are a number of misprints, the worst of which is “historical” for “heretical” on page 133. Mrs. Besant, however, is to be congratulated that the printer's devils of all sorts have not made more, for the name of the errors of the said devils is legion in that ancient land.

G. R. S. M.

THEOSOPHICAL
AND
MYSTIC PUBLICATIONS.

COL. OLCOTT fills his “Old Diary Leaves” for June with accounts of phenomena and occult matters in general. Damodar is the chief figure in the story just now, and his interior development and relations with his teacher are freely described. At this time the letters and messages appear to have been in full swing, and several were, according to the Colonel's account, evidently quite free of Madame Blavatsky's influence, as she was distant several days' journey. A visit of the Master to the Colonel in his tent is told in an interesting manner. The sketch is followed by a Theosophical disquisition on character and its formation, translated from the Swedish by Mrs. Haig. “The Plague and its Causes” deals with the causes with what may appear to many to be unnecessary fulness, as not only have we the physical, astrological and karmic reasons for the plague, but also the religious, the astral and the auric, and the plague considered as a sign of the close of the first 5,000 years of Kali Yuga! Truly the trouble had a multiplicity of causes. “The Union of Three Buddhist Nations” is an intimation of what may prove a most important movement. This movement has been begun

by Prince Prisdan Choomsai of Siam and Colonel Olcott, and its purpose is to unite the Buddhists of Siam, Burmah and Ceylon. A petition has been laid before the King of Siam, and the result of the efforts will be awaited with interest by all friends of Buddhism. K. Narayansami Iyer contributes a "White Lotus Day" appreciation of Madame Blavatsky, and Mr. Marques an account of the occult correspondences of the days of the week. The concluding papers are on Mlle. Couédon, the prophetess, and on the symbology of astrology.

A new edition of Mrs. Besant's *Seven Principles* has just appeared. This manual is now in its fifteenth thousand, and with the present edition it has been extensively revised according to the later and more complete information available. It is now properly "up-to-date," and those possessing it in the original form should obtain the new one, as the improvements and emendations are many and important.

The Vâhan for July is noticeable for a very lengthy answer by C. W. L., probably the longest that has yet appeared in "The Enquirer." The subject of the question is the three Logoi, and in the reply we are taken into the loftiest regions of the universe, regions not often described with the detail now afforded us. The whole paper is of remarkable interest, in spite of the fact that it deals with matters entirely beyond human intelligence. A. P. S. and A. A. W. continue (and we hope, conclude) the correspondence aroused by the latter. A. A. W., as usual, forms delightful reading, whether we agree with his views or not. A. P. S. on beef and claret is also likely to stagger "the orthodox."

Mercury begins its June number with a paper having the title "The Royal Road," by which is meant the "Path" of occultism, and continues with articles on vegetarianism and politics. The latter paper endeavours to show the influence that Theosophical ideas should have in expanding political views. The "Forum Department" discusses the question as

to whether the astral body of a person cut off prematurely continues to exist and grow until the karmic hour of death.

Theosophy in Australasia contains an excellent portrait of the late and much-regretted General Secretary of the Australian Section, Mr. J. C. Staples. The body of the journal is made up of the report of the third Annual Convention of the Australian Section. The section devoted to questions and answers is excellently conducted and the replies are interesting.

Along with *Le Lotus Bleu* each month comes a section of the French translation of *The Secret Doctrine*, and this laborious undertaking has now reached the commentary on the sixth stanza. Our French workers are to be congratulated on the energy and devotion they are displaying in such work. Amo contributes a very short ethical discourse entitled "Towards the Light," and following this is a good article on Bhakti Yoga. Mons. Courmes writes on the terrible fire in Paris, and attributes it to our old friend, the end of the cycle. Some interesting questions are answered in the department devoted to that purpose.

Sophia consists entirely of valuable translations, including Dr. Wells' "Letters to a Catholic Priest," Mr. Keightley's "Sânkhya Philosophy," and a historical sketch of the Jews from the French.

Nova Lux continues Signor Calvari's article on man and his vehicles and publishes various papers and notes on mystical subjects, Martinism especially. *Theosophia* from Holland opens with "A Fable" by Afra, and contains articles on "Magnetism" and "Teachers," besides one or two translations.

From Germany come the *Metaphysische Rundschau* and *Lotusblüthen*, the latter opening with a new article on Paracelsus, purposing to give an account of his life and teachings. A lecture by Hermann Krecke, "Our Daily Bread," has also been published in pamphlet form in Berlin.

The *Prashnottara* contains a somewhat amusing though not very intelligible

note on the pandit, to whom some attention was paid recently in LUCIFER. "The Last of the Old-world Pandit?" is the heading of the note, and it appears that but little can be expected from him. The freedom with which doubts of the good faith of the learned gentleman are expressed, and the criticism of what little he has done, form entertaining reading. The "Questions and Answers" is occupied by a discussion of the relations of Buddhism to the Upanishads. The *Ārya Bāla Bodhini*, is filled with chatty notes and short papers, generally well adapted for their purpose. The May number contains a short parable about a stone-cutter whose desires were all gratified until by experience he discovered their futility. *The Theosophic Gleaner* opens with a paper on "The Doctrine of Reincarnation in the West," quoting from various authors. The other articles are reprinted, and brief notes on current topics end the number. *The Dawn*, the new Indian religious magazine, contains some excellent but rather technical articles. All show a care in their preparation that might well be imitated by other publications of a similar nature. The May issue contains papers on Hindu philosophy, "Reality and Appearances," and the situation in India. *The Journal of the Mahā Bodhi Society*, is more interesting than usual, containing an account of a great Buddhist traveller, the Cingalese address to the King of Siam, and "The Mythology of Buddhism." *The Buddhist* is filled with the difficulties arising out of the visit to Ceylon of the King of Siam. The King wished to touch the sacred tooth of Buddha kept by the priests as a relic, and his request was refused by some officious guardian. As many others, including Europeans, had touched it before, His Majesty was not unreasonably indignant at the affront. The plentiful apologies of the other officials it is hoped will smooth matters a

little. We have also to acknowledge the receipt from India of *The Thinker* and *The Sanmārga Bodhini*.

The Metaphysical Magazine appears in a new form as *Intelligence*. Considering the nature and size of the journal, its present price, 10 cents (or 5d.), is astonishingly cheap and we hope it may continue prosperously in the same form. The articles are of the kind characteristic of it, among them being "Man and Nature," "Modern Astrology," and "The Bhagavad Gītā," by C. Johnston. *The Open Court* has always been one of the best publications of its kind, and the number now before us is well up to the proper standard. An excellent portrait of Schiller is given, accompanying an article on "Schiller as a Prophet," by the editor, Dr. Paul Carus. He points out that even after many of Schiller's works appeared, the very things described in the poems took place. "The Lion and the Ass" is a delightful old fable of Martin Luther, translated from the German. The most interesting paper is an illustrated one, also by the editor, on the Inquisition.

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of a number of pamphlets from "The Order of the Temple"; *Rays of Light*; *Light*; *The Agnostic Journal*; *Modern Astrology*; *The Vegetarian*; *The Vegetarian Review*; *Theosophy*; *The Theosophical Forum*; *A Plan of Moral Instruction*; *The Mystical World*, filled with astonishing "Thought Awakeners," by Jos. M. Wade, and equally amazing poetry by William Sharpe, M.D.; *Reformador*, from Rio de Janeiro; *The English Mechanic*; *The Zoophilist*, an anti-vivisectionist publication; *The Literary Digest*; *Food, Home and Garden*; *Star Lore*, in the March issue of which is a horoscope of Mr. Barnato, with a warning to avoid dangerous places in spring and winter—an apparent approach to a true prophecy.

A.