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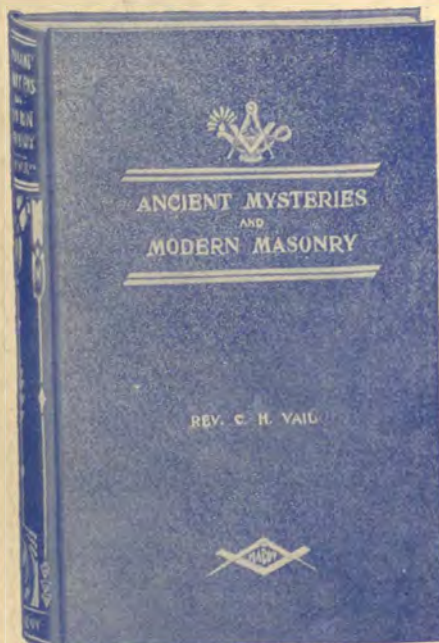
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By the
Rev. Charles H. Vail



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45 JOHN STREET, NEW YORK



Mrs. Annie Besant

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MYSTIC - LIGHT - LIBRARY - BULLETIN

Issued Monthly by Mystic Light Library Association



W. J. COLVILLE, Editor. MARGARET E. DICKSON, Sec'y and Librarian.

VOL. II, No. 4. 49 JOHN ST., NEW YORK Tel. John 4578

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DECEMBER 1911

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The Invisible Presence

A presence that diffuses warmth and glow—
Even as the sun's gold ray doth penetrate—
Commands my being, and the pulses wait
Fulfillment, for life's sweeter ebb and flow.

Subtle the fragrance of the mind attuned
In thought and feeling, blended as the tone
Of some grand vibrant melody we've known
In vast cathedrals, where fine souls communed.

The heart finds food in images of hope;
That which inspires approaches the divine
Creative impulse—which the arts define—
Untold the ways wherewith the masters cope.

A Presence! which with each shall reunite
Like glad hand-clasps, that hold us with no word
Giving in full surrender, to afford
The other's happiness—at its true height.

—Rose M. de Vaux Boyer.

Mrs. Annie Besant

A Biographical Sketch

Among the many truly remarkable women whose work and influence are conspicuously molding the thought of the day, there is surely no one whose career has been more eventful and diversified, or whose enormous energy has called forth more widespread consideration, than that of the heroic president of the Theosophical Society, whose portrait graces our magazine this month. Mrs. Besant, as multitudes know well, has passed thro' the most remarkable transitional experiences in her intellectual and spiritual consciousness. Brought up in the Church of England and married early in life to one of its clergy, who evidently was not touched with the liberal spirit which made Dean Stanley, Canon Farrar and other Westminster divines illustrious, the subject of this sketch soon found herself quite unable to stultify her honest feelings and profess verbally a creed from which she inwardly dissented.

In the opening portion of her fascinating Autobiography,—which has achieved a world-wide circulation and called forth eulogistic comments from the intelligent Press in almost every land,—she takes the reader into her confidence and literally lays bare her heart in a most instructive and helpful manner, for it is thro' the candid narration of just such individual experiences that we can understand what has led so many noble-minded men and women to forsake the faith of their fathers and drift into that unsatisfying Agnosticism which Felix Adler so well characterizes as “no finality.” It was no lack of appreciation for the good side of religion, nor any sort of indifference to spiritual realities which led Mrs. Besant, when a young wife and mother, to part company with her husband on account of utter irreconcilability of religious belief and practise; it was, on the contrary, the intense seriousness and truthfulness of her nature which compelled her to take the step.

We are introduced to Dr. Pusey and to Dean Stanley early in the

narrative and we soon see what fatal errors are involved in the High Church School, as represented by Dr. Pusey, who treated an earnest, storm-tossed, seeking soul as a naughty child impatient of all wholesome restraint and simply wayward, when in reality a searcher for the truth regardless of where the simple truth might lead.

Among the many prominent persons who helped Mrs. Besant to some extent during her severest spiritual crisis was Rev. Charles Voysey, founder of the Theistic Church in London, a purely religious organization, but disconnected from Christianity and all other acknowledged systems. The simple trust in Divine Goodness, coupled with the appeal to reason and common sense, which Mr. Voysey has always rendered prominent throughout the long course of his peculiar ministry, led Mrs. Besant to clearly see that it was quite possible to possess firm faith in Deity and at the same time reject all revolting doctrines, at the head of which stands the dogma of endless misery; and she further saw that it was not necessary to believe in the distinctive doctrines of any special creed in order to be confident of Divine Providence, this being very clearly stated in the works of Theodore Parker and Frances Power Cobbe, from which she derived much mental and spiritual assistance.

But tho' Mrs. Besant is now so widely known as an advocate of whole-hearted sympathy with all, it seemed necessary that in her early days she should break away completely from all restraints upon intellectual liberty imposed by sentiment and launch forth upon the wide bleak ocean of that so-called Atheism of which Charles Bradlaugh was the representative English advocate. Bradlaugh was a philanthropist while many professedly religious people were coldly unmindful of the needs and sorrows of their less fortunate neighbors, and it was without doubt the philanthropic spirit manifested by many unbelievers in institutionalized religion that caused so many earnest spirits during the 19th century to embrace Atheism. Mrs. Besant announces that she accepted, for a time, the Atheistic position as defined by Charles Bradlaugh, whose splendid intellect and self-sacrificing heroism called forth her unbounded admiration and esteem.

The Atheistic attitude, when clearly defined, is not difficult to comprehend, and when stated by brilliant intellects it proves quite convincing to many minds, chiefly on account of the fact that the better type of Atheist does not deny Deity but merely states that the idea of GOD is not included in his concept of the universe. A distinction

which might appear labored, and of the nature of special pleading, to the average untutored intellect, would appear very logical and precise to a mind trained to philosophic reasoning, and there seems never to have been a time after she had reached womanhood when Annie Besant was not engaged in philosophical study as well as in practical benevolent work.

This remarkable woman's introduction to Theosophy, as taught by the famous Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, came about in a very simple manner. The tale has often been told by William Stead, the famous British journalist, who was a very active participant in the affair, for he placed in Mrs. Besant's hands for review that monumental literary output, "The Secret Doctrine," which no ordinary reviewer seemed competent to tackle.

Mrs. Besant's keen intellect and intense love for the bold and the unusual in literature led her to eagerly peruse with real delight those two massive volumes, which, tho' devoted largely to an exposition of the various religious systems of the world, were so written as to please rather than offend an outspoken freethinker who had always claimed that Bibles should be examined exactly as we examine all other books.

Before this great event occurred in her history which compelled Mrs. Besant, thro' definite conviction of the essential truth of Theosophy, to sever her editorial connection with the *National Reformer*, of which Charles Bradlaugh remained sole editor, she had passed thro' the most strenuous periods of fighting for justice in every direction. If Christianity became largely discredited in England at that time, it was certainly very largely due to the shameful persecutions levelled against all who dared to differ from them by men and women who professed to follow the teachings of a Master who pleaded always for equity and love.

Mrs. Besant's "Autobiography" explains far more than any dissertation concerning doctrines and ceremonies could possibly explain, for it should always be remembered that a popular mental drift in any direction is invariably instigated by the emotions, the popular intellect following, but never preceding, the march of the affections.

Immediately preceding her introduction to Theosophy, Mrs. Besant had been very actively engaged in Socialistic propaganda and rendered herself almost the idol of the poor and outcast in the most distressed and distressing districts of the East End of London.

Mrs. Besant went to see Mme. Blavatsky at a time when she was

peculiarly open to new impressions, for she was always a truthseeker, never one who accepts a limited position as an ultimate. As no radical change can ever take place suddenly in the history of any deeply thoughtful man or woman, we are well prepared for the following words written by Mrs. Besant concerning her own experiences in 1889, the year in which she embraced Theosophy:—

"Ever more and more had been growing upon me the feeling that something more than I had was needed for the cure of social ills. The Socialist position sufficed on the economic side, but where to gain the inspiration, the motive, which should lead to the realization of the Brotherhood of Man! Our efforts to organize really unselfish bands of workers had failed. Much, indeed, had been done, but there was not a real movement of self-sacrificing devotion, in which men worked for love's sake only, and asked but to give, not to take. Where was the material for the nobler Social order; where the hewn stones for the building of the Temple of Man? A great despair seized me as I sought for such a movement and found it not. Not only so, but since 1886 there had been slowly growing up a conviction that my philosophy was not sufficient, that life and mind were other than, more than, I had dreamed. Psychology was advancing with rapid strides, hypnotic experiments were revealing unlooked-for complexities in human consciousness, strange riddles of multiplex personalities, and, most startling of all, vivid intensities of mental action when the brain, that should be the generator of thought, was reduced to a comatose state. Fact after fact came hurtling in upon me, demanding explanation I was incompetent to give."

Then follows an account of how she sought explanations from one quarter after another till finally she found what she had been so long seeking and passed mentally "thro' storm to peace." We hope everyone interested in knowing the truth about a truly noble but much maligned character will read dispassionately Mrs. Besant's account of her friendship with Mme. Blavatsky after she had carefully read and studied the report issued by the Society for Psychical Research, which branded that peculiar, but thoroughly honest and straightforward woman, a vulgar charlatan, on wretchedly inadequate and wholly prejudiced evidence.

That is an old story now, but in 1889 it was a burning question. It was Mme. Blavatsky herself who insisted that Mrs. Besant should read and weigh that shameful travesty before in any way associating herself with the Theosophical Society. Tho' twenty years have

now elapsed since Mme. Blavatsky left her material form, there are still those who look upon her as a shameless impostor and ignorantly denounce the Theosophical Society because she was so prominently identified with its early history. Mrs. Besant says, "I laughed aloud at the absurdity and flung the Report aside with the righteous scorn of an honest nature that knew its own kin when it met them, and shrank from the foulness and baseness of a lie."

It was in the pages of *The National Reformer* that Mrs. Besant's wonderful review of "The Secret Doctrine" appeared, and naturally it served to rupture the intellectual comradeship between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Bradlaugh which had so long continued. This caused a new trial in our heroine's tempestuous mental life, but as Bradlaugh was a brave, true man, he never persecuted or accused his former colleague, with whom he earnestly remonstrated, as it was only natural he should, and she could not bring him to see the mighty truth she had discovered in Theosophy.

It is painfully self-evident that people who call themselves secularists and Freethinkers are often no freer from prejudice than those who are attached to conservative religious organizations, therefore it came to pass that Mrs. Besant felt compelled to sever her connection with Materialists who proved just as bigoted in their way as orthodox Christians showed themselves from another standpoint.

After accepting Theosophy, Mrs. Besant soon became an inmate of Mme. Blavatsky's household; it is, therefore, from intimate inside knowledge of that heroic, much-judged woman, who passed away in 1891, that Mrs. Besant speaks as definitely and authoritatively in her praise as she invariably does.

The following words, with which her Autobiography (which only traces her career till the transition of her friend and teacher) concludes, seem to define exactly the attitude of the truly convinced Theosophist: "Quiet confidence has taken the place of doubt, a strong security the place of anxious dread. In life, thro' death, to life, I am but the servant of the great Brotherhood, and those on whose heads but for a moment the touch of the Master has rested in blessing, can never again look upon the world save thro' eyes made luminous with the radiance of the Eternal Peace."

During the past twenty years the career of Mrs. Besant has been both so public and so richly eventful that her deeds and sayings have been chronicled throughout the world. As a lecturer she has no superiors and very few peers. As a writer she is both voluminous

and lucid, profound yet popular, for she possesses the extremely happy faculty of expressing the deepest thought in the clearest language. Tho' years roll on apace and Mrs. Besant is now sixty-four years of age (she was born in 1847), her vigor of mind and body shows no signs of abatement and during the summer of the present year (1911) her lectures in England, alike in London and wherever else she spoke, called together immense assemblies of the most thoughtful and influential people.

That excellent and admirable weekly religious paper, *The Christian Commonwealth*, published every Wednesday in London, has done much to introduced Mrs. Besant's wonderful lectures by publishing many of them in the same issues with the splendid sermons of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, one of the brightest ornaments of the liberal English pulpit.

At the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India, Mrs. Besant is progressively realizing many of her fondest hopes, and of her it may be truly affirmed that she is a most competent stateswoman as well as a brilliant orator and an author of rare distinctive merit.

Those who were privileged to witness the magnificent Par  de thro' the great thoroughfares of London, June 17, 1911, will never forget Mrs. Besant's impressive and imposing appearance, as she rode in Masonic regalia and in her robes of office, representing the Co-Masonic Order, and her thrilling address in Royal Albert Hall to an audience of 10,000 persons. This was the occasion of the famous Women's Procession which antedated by five days the Coronation celebrations. In that procession marched many of England's noblest sons, as well as multitudes of her fairest daughters, together with equally noble men and women from all parts of the wide Empire, and also from many lands over which the Union Jack does not float.

From whatever standpoint one may review the eventful life of Annie Besant, it must be admitted by every candid historian that she is one of the most heroic, and influential women the modern world has known. Long may she yet remain in the influential offices she now holds to exercise a just and liberalizing influence over every section of society, for she seeks to weld all into a true harmony in accordance with the intentions of those Spiritual Guardians of Humanity, of whose presence and influence she is intensely conscious, and whose faithful servant it is her constant will to be!

W. J. COLVILLE.

Universal Religion and Ethics

W. J. Colville

In these days of general religious and ethical reconstruction, there seem no reasonable or valid means of contributing something definite except by a serious and impartial examination of the common origin of all the essential doctrines which constitute the abiding spirit of religious and ethical systems the whole world over, despite the many minor differences existing between the various forms of faith. "An honest man is the noblest work of GOD," is a time-honored tribute to the dignity of human nature when exhibited at its highest and best. But what shall we say to the antithetical statement—"An honest god is the noblest work of MAN?"

At first sight it must strike the reader that if one of these propositions is true the other must be false, as they appear diametrically opposed, so self-evidently mutually exclusive that the acceptance of one by a logical mind must, perforce, necessitate the rejection of the other. But such is not actually the case, and strange tho' it may sound in many ears, we may well be told that there are profound reasoners today who regard these opposite statements as perfectly concordant in the light of a wider than any common synthesis. It is universally admitted that there are at least two sides to every question and that the motto "Hear the other side" is a very just one and susceptible of universal application.

All the Scriptures of the world teach cosmology and cosmogony, and the various Bibles, radically speaking, differ very little one from the other. Some accounts of Creation are more elaborate than others, but all teach something of involution and also of evolution. The Hebrew account in the Book of Genesis is by far the most familiar to Western readers, and it does not essentially differ from other oriental records except for the fact of its extreme brevity.

It is quite possible to detect in the Pentateuch many points of agreement with older and more detailed records, and as no intelligent person believes that the Hebrew word *yom*, translated as "day" and also as "age," means in the opening chapter of Genesis a period of only twenty-four hours, we shall not spend effort in arguing the case with any who are unscholarly enough to contend that it does. Ignorant people have so imagined, but no real student could ever be so dense, unless wilfully prejudiced, and we all know that prejudice renders impartial examination impossible.

In that extremely valuable work, by Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals," we are introduced to parallel passages from the various sacred books respectively venerated by different sections of humankind.

As it is the rightful province of public schools to give as much general information as possible,—altho' dogmatic theology has no proper place in institutions supported out of funds collected from the populace at large,—if it be argued that both religious and ethical instruction should find a place in the curriculum, it may come to pass ere long that Mrs. Besant's manual, or some similar treatise, may be introduced where it would be manifestly unfair to force any exclusive literature on scholars drawn from families professing different creeds. It is not to enforce acceptance of certain

doctrines, but only to inform the rising generation of what is believed and taught by great sections of humanity, that studies in comparative religion should be introduced, and when we come to consider the purely ethical precepts common to all the great spiritual and moral leaders of our race, we can surely help forward human progress much more effectively and avoid needless acrimony, by pointing out how nearly universal are moral inculcations which certain bodies of people have fondly believed were their own exclusive property.

Only the most unthinking elements in any population can be so blind as to imagine that we can permanently overcome strife between nations and communities without acquainting ourselves with what is admirable in each other's moral codes. In the British Empire to an enormous extent, and in America in only somewhat lesser degree, are we confronted with the mighty problem of inter-racial co-operation. It may be presumed that in America Jews and Christians understand each other fairly well, particularly in New York where the Jewish population is unusually large and influential, but when we pass to a consideration of any system lying beyond the pale of Judaism and Christianity, the utmost general ignorance prevails, and this is fostered in Christian circles by the frequent singing of such atrocious words as we find in a hymn of the type of the altogether too well known "From Greenland's icy mountains." Granted that Bishop Heber, when he wrote that extremely popular missionary song, desired to spur his country people to carry gospel (glad tidings) to the uttermost parts of the earth, he made a lamentable mistake when he declared that

"The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone,"

for the inhabitants of Ceylon (an island specially mentioned in a popular version of the hymn), who are chiefly Buddhists, no more bow down to wood and stone than do Catholic Christians, who certainly kneel in front of images while praying, tho' the Catholic Church distinctly teaches that the statues placed in churches are only intended to aid worshipers in concentrating their minds upon the spiritual beings (saints and angels) they are intended to represent.

If you choose to go a step further and maintain that Orientals for the most part believe that there is some real spiritual virtue in the images themselves,—and that belief is intimately connected with ceremonial magic,—tho' we cannot deny the fact, we have a right to add that Christian rites of blessing and consecrating statues, bells, and many other objects used in churches and also as aids to private devotion, owe their origin to exactly the same idea.

There is actually not a single "heathen" practice which is not also Christian, and if it be contended that the ritualistic observances of many Christians border on idolatry, and were never instituted or sanctioned by the Founder of Christianity, then the honest retort may be made that no such practises were enjoined by the Founders of any of the other great religious systems of the world.

We will now pass in rapid review a few of the leading doctrines common to all those widespread and long-lived systems which, despite the disintegrating spirit of these times, continue to flourish and bear fruit. But before examining these convincing proofs of essential similarity, amounting in some instances to unmistakable identity, it may be well to affirm our conviction, at present widely shared by thoughtful examiners, that it is not so necessary to conclude that one system has borrowed from another, as that all have proceeded from a single spiritual source. That the older sys-

tems may have served as models for those more recent, is quite conceivable, while it is utterly incredible that younger systems can have been modeled after the elder have been fashioned.

Christianity and Mohammedanism, being the two youngest of the world's great religions, may have derived much from Brahminism, Buddhism, Judaism and Parseeism; and these religions may in turn have taken much from systems so very ancient that their origin is buried in pre-historic antiquity.

All who acknowledge that there is a Wisdom-Religion constituting the veritable quintessence of all existing cults, can readily take a two-fold position toward all the Sacred Scriptures of the world, by emphasizing the correlated facts, first, that they all possess an interior meaning, which is one throughout them all, and second, that their external forms are adapted to the particular places and periods when and where they took their outward rise.

If fables and allegories are found in one Bible, they are found in all Bibles, and these are not false statements, but permanent metaphorical forms in which vital truths have been expressed pictorially thro' many successive ages. The moral teachings are in most instances so obvious and so practical that they are seldom in dispute.

The objection raised against popular religion, in general, in any part of the world, is that it is not true to the sublime moral inculcations found in the Bibles of the peoples who profess to revere their Scriptures and venerate their Masters, while their average moral standard is shockingly far below what their "divine revelations" counsel.

Voltaire's position is one that multitudes of mis-called infidels have taken, both before and after his day, for instead of denouncing the ethical code of the Gospels, he

found fault with nominal Christians for disregarding it. Much more recently, Tolstoi undertook to castigate religion, as established by law in Russia, by publishing extracts from official catechisms sanctioned by the Græco-Russian Church and used for the religious instruction of soldiers, in which he found that whenever a great moral lesson was conveyed in language so clear that everyone could readily understand it,—taken directly from some portion of the Bible,—a commentary was supplied which so watered it down that when the learners had come to accept the commentary, the original commandment or precept had lost nearly all its efficacy.

Robert Blatchford, the famous English Socialist, in his well-known book, "God and My Neighbor," pays the highest tribute to the sublime ethical teachings contained in many Scriptures and calls particular attention to the noble teachings of Akosa, found inscribed on some Rock Temples in India; but Blatchford is a relentless opponent of the fashionable religiosity which often is substituted, in all parts of the world, for pure and undefiled religion.

Canon Hensley Henson, of Westminster, and many other really advanced clergymen in the English Church, have not hesitated to preach uncompromisingly from the Epistle of James and boldly stated from their pulpits that the two essential elements of Universal Religion are Philanthropy and Purity. What will become of mysterious doctrines and elaborate ceremonies, we may well ask, if such a simple creed be deemed efficient by the rising generation!

Free investigations of widespread doctrines show that they have all an element of truth at their root, no matter how much of error may have long obscured it, and a scientific study of ceremonial proves that it has a value from the psychological or suggestive standpoint, even when we can-

not endorse the peculiar dogmas with which it is often associated.

In the Introduction to the Text Book to which we have already referred, Mrs. Besant summarizes the doctrines of Universal Religion, incorporated in the various systems scattered over the world, in the following language:—

"The Unity of God—One Self-dependent Life, pervading all things, and binding them all together in mutual relations and dependence.

"The Manifestation of God in a Universe under three Aspects.

"The Hierarchies of Spiritual Beings.

"Incarnation of Spirit.

"The two Basic Laws (of Causation and of Sacrifice).

"The three Worlds of Human Evolution.

"The Brotherhood of Man."

These doctrines, she urges, should be taught to all children without denominational or sectarian details, and should form part of the curriculum in every school and college. Denominational schools and colleges, she admits, have a right to give their own additional specific instruction, but the broad teachings should be given to every youth and maiden, that all may grow up broad-minded and tolerant of others, however strong may be their attachment, in individual cases, to some especial system.

Within the narrow compass of a single essay, it is manifestly impossible to quote very freely from the various Scriptures, but the following citations, tho' very brief, may serve to show an outline of the course pursued by Mrs. Besant, and which can easily be supplemented by much wider draughts upon the practically exhaustless treasure-houses of Oriental lore.

To illustrate the similar teachings of at least six of the

world's great and enduring religious Faiths, we will quote the following convincing paragraphs.

A Hindu *Upanishat* contains these mighty words concerning the Infinite One: "Unseen, He sees; unheard, He hears; unthought of, He thinks; unknown, He knows. None other than He is the Seer; none other than He is the Hearer; none other than He is the Thinker; none other than He is the Knower. He is the Self, the Inner Ruler, Immortal. That which is other perishes."

From a Zoroastrian *Yasna* we select the following: "Thou, First Great Thinker, whose splendor pervades all lights, who thro' His Intellect is the Creator of all, who supports righteousness, and the good mind. Thou, Spirit Mazda, Thou who art ever the same;" and from the *Desatir*: "Existence and unity and identity are inseparable properties of His original substance, and are not adventitious to Him."

From the Hebrew Bible, the following passages convey precisely the same idea, "The Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him" (Deuteronomy iv, 35). "I am the first and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God" (Isaiah xlv, 6). When the word "Eternal" is used in English versions in place of "Lord" it brings out the meaning of the original much more forcibly.

In the New Testament there are no stronger passages setting forth the doctrines of Divine Unity and Infinity than the following: "He is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being. . . . We are the offspring of God" (Acts xvii, 27, 29). "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all" (Ephesians iv, 6).

From the following Islamic Scriptures we extract exactly the same idea, as illustrated by what follows from the

Quran: "God! There is no God but He, the Ever-living, the Ever-subsisting. Slumber seizeth Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him, unless by His permission? He knoweth what hath been before them, and what shall be after them, and they shall not compass aught of His knowledge save what He willeth. His Throne is extended over the heavens and the earth, and the care of them burdeneth Him not. He is the High, the Mighty."

From the Sikh Scriptures we extract this profound declaration: "His greatness the Veda doth not know; Brahma knoweth not His mystery; Avataras know not His limits; the Supreme Lord, Parabraham, is boundless."

Numberless citations of similar, indeed of identical, import could readily be offered, but they would only serve, by reiteration, to yet further enforce the fundamental concept of Deity, alike transcendent and immanent, common to all enlightened Faiths. The Greek philosophers and poets taught exactly what Paul quoted at Athens from Cleanthus. The more widely we seek to traverse the fertile fields of the world's profoundest literature, the more evidences do we accumulate of the universal dissemination among all enlightened peoples of that overwhelmingly majestic concept of the Eternal One, in comparison with Whom all lesser divinities appear small indeed.

Thus far we have been surveying the grand essential—the Unity of God—but we must now proceed to trace whence proceedeth that Pluralism which seems opposed alike to Monotheism and to Monism, which many modern scientific men, notably James and Wallace, have appeared to advocate. Plural Divinities are always secondary, and to admit their existence in no way affects our faith in the One Absolute Reality. The manifestation of Deity in a

Universe renders inevitable in our thinking a descent from Absolute to Relative, from Infinite to Finite, therefore, we are compelled to contemplate diversity in expression, tho' unity in essence.

Mrs. Besant truly says that all theologians have discriminated between God in His own Nature and God in Manifestation, but tho' this distinction is much discussed in scholastic theology, it does not enter vitally into aught pertaining to practical religion. Theology is always metaphysical and usually abstruse, while religion has to do with every-day life and makes its appeal to the average man or woman as well as to the cultured metaphysician. Theological speculations are entirely intellectual, while religious precepts are guides to virtuous living. Whenever this important distinction is lost sight of, we bewilder the average mind with doctrines which lead to endless controversy and far oftener divide men than unite them.

In some form or other a Trinitarian concept is to be found among all peoples. We are all familiar with the ancient Egyptian Trinity—Osiris, Isis and Horus—Father, Mother and Child—also with the Brahminical Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—Creator, Preserver and Liberator.

Mrs. Besant has rendered the idea of a Trinitarian concept extremely simple by saying, "In this doctrine of the three divine Aspects—of God in relation to His universe—we have the primary truth of the divine Unity made concrete and applied to the primary functions of Divinity in His worlds. As a man may be a husband, a father, a master, and is seen in one relation by his wife, in another by his children, and in a third by his servants, yet in all his relations is one and the same man, so is Deity, in His three Aspects as Creator, Preserver and Liberator, one and the same God. He is the Father of our Spirits, the Protector

of our lives, the Source of our activities; we come into these close relations with Him as individuals, while in His own nature we know Him as our innermost Self."

If the Christian Church endorses such teaching as the foregoing, then all disputes between Trinitarians and Unitarians must come to an immediate end, for the two opposing schools of theology are completely unified by so widely embracing a Theosophy.

Turning again to a Hindu Upanishat, we find it declared that "Whoever knows the God who is without beginning and without end, who in this solid matter is the creator of the universe, who is of infinite form, the One who pervades the universe, becomes liberated from all bondage." We also read that "When He is manifest, all is manifested after Him; by His manifestation this whole world becomes manifest." In the Zoroastrian Scriptures (Avesta), we find this ascription, "Praise to Thee, Ahura, Mazda, threefold before other creatures." We are all familiar with these words in the first chapter of Genesis (verse 26), "And God said: Let us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness."

The Hebrew word *Elohim* is plural in form, tho' frequently rendered as singular. It may properly imply the several activities of the Divine Mind and has given rise to the enumeration of different Sephiroth by Kabbalists, each Sephira being a distinct divine Emanation.

To many Jews the thought of a Trinity appears Tritheistic, even tho' the Athanasian Creed, which no Jew accepts, but which is regarded as the great historic Trinitarian Confession of Faith in Christendom, distinctly says "There are not three Gods, but one God." The word "Persons" has given rise to endless disputation because "person" conveys very different ideas to different minds. If the term is intended only to convey the idea of some distinct vehicle of

manifestation, it can give no reasonable offense to anyone; and in that sense only is it used by Theosophists.

Coming to the Great Orders of Living Beings, often called Celestial Hierarchies, we encounter nothing difficult to conceive if we only regard the outer universe as a counterpart of the unseen. Angels and Archangels are very familiar terms, but usually they seem to suggest but very vague ideas. There are two directly opposite views entertained of these Intelligencies, supposedly higher than ourselves in the scale of graded beings, viz., that they belong to different orders in the creation, and that they are only further evolved entities than we.

Many Occultists have taught that the "Sons of God," who in the poetical Book of Job are said to have "shouted for joy" when this planet was created, are beings who attained their present august altitude by evolutionary processes on a world which had passed into ether long before the solidification of our globe, and that they are the Guardians of this earth at present. This is a very reasonable theory and one, moreover, that harmonizes remarkably well with inferences drawn by Prof. Wallace in that wonderful scientific work, "The World of Life," which deserves the closest study, emanating as it does from a Naturalist of high repute who was at one time an uncompromising Materialist.

The many gods and goddesses of Hindu mythology are all intelligible when we style them simply "Shining Ones"; we need not be staggered even if we are told that Hindus venerate so many divinities that there may be a million for every day in the year.

One of the most astounding facts confronting us today is that confidence in ordinarily unseen entities is everywhere returning, tho' it appeared quite recently that modern physical science had depopulated the universe of all the spiritual

operators who in olden times were supposed to work in all the elements. The revolution now taking place in scientific thought is making room for every ancient "superstition" and leading us to feel that child-like people may have been endowed with psychic insight, causing them to behold, sometimes, some of the many varieties of sub-human and super-human entities they so graphically described and systematically classified.

We observe on earth the utmost diversity in manifested intelligence. Charles Darwin wrote learnedly and fascinatingly on the part played by earth-worms in the transformation of soil, and if the outer crust of the earth is manifestly manipulated by all sorts of living creatures, all acting according to a fixed law of operation, why should it appear incredible that there are countless orders of living beings working on the unseen side of Nature, unseen indeed by most of us, yet not necessarily invisible, as clairvoyance may as clearly discern much of it as ordinary physical eyesight discovers with the aid of the microscope,—innumerable operators, all sentient, even in a drop of water. We often proudly boast that we are at the very head of all things, and doubtless we are, potentially, world-builders as well as world-governors, tho' as yet our attainments are very meagre, tho' constantly improving. Physical Science cannot possibly disprove a Spiritual Universe, and in these days it is going a long way toward proving it.

Mrs. Besant reminds us that in the Christian Church three great classes of Angels are mentioned, subdivided into nine groups, viz., I, Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; II, Dominions, Virtues, Powers; III, Principalities, Archangels, Angels.

Mohammedanism teaches the existence and ministry of Angels quite as clearly as it is taught by Judaism and

Christianity. Four mighty Archangels are often mentioned. Gabriel, Michael, Azrael and Israfel are very well known names and the minor angels are legions of ministering spirits.

From the Text Book to which we are referring we quote, in this connection, the following expressive passage: "Religion bids us see in the universe not a dead machine, a soulless automaton, grinding away mechanically according to chemical and other laws, but a living organism, in which chemical action is the result of living activities—as the chemical changes in the cells of the brain are the result of the exercise of thought—and in which Spirit, as intelligence, guides matter, as nature, to deliberately foreseen and chosen ends. It shows us man as evolving in the midst of beings, above and below him, evolving like himself to higher and higher stages, unfolding hidden possibilities, developing endless potentialities. He is one of a vast family, dwelling among elders and youngers; elders who help him, youngers who need his help. A dazzling panorama of interlinking lives unrolls before him, and he sees that both above and below him the Divine Nature is working in the changeless and perfect Will which is Law; that below him creatures are compelled by that Law and work unconsciously according to it; that above him creatures associate themselves joyfully with that Law and work consciously according to it; that in the intermediate human Order alone is there an anarchy of warring wills. He begins to realize that this disharmony is a necessary stage between the compelled activities of the lower Order and the voluntary, but equally law-abiding activities of the higher ones; that man occupies the stage in which Will is evolving, and that anarchy must continue until that Will, which is an Aspect of God in him, has grasped the fact that in its voluntary associations with the Parent Will lies its true freedom."

How perfectly this latter sentence accords with Tennyson's beautiful line, "Our wills are ours to make them Thine," needs no arguing.

Concerning Divine Incarnation, a doctrine to be found all over the world, and taught in all ages, the following excerpt from the *Bhagavad-Gita* reveals much. "Tho' unborn, the imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born thro' My own Power. Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharata, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age."

Tho' there may be a little lingual obscurity in any English equivalent of a Sanscrit original, there is no doubt as to the essential teaching herein conveyed, and just so soon as the Christian world is prepared to admit that there may have been several Divine Manifestations, instead of only one, the coast will be clear for a re-statement of a doctrine now falling into disrepute in many quarters in consequence of the narrow exclusiveness which has mutilated its presentation in the Western world.

As the faith of Islam is very sorely misunderstood in Christian lands, and prejudice against it is both widespread and unwarrantable, familiarity with the Koran would help greatly to modify the savage ill-will so often felt against all who acknowledge Mohammed as a faithful prophet.

All religions, on their esoteric side, are merciful, and all are barbaric when the letter that killeth is unduly exalted and the life-giving spirit either denied or tacitly ignored. Persecutions are never prompted or sanctioned by Mystics, or indeed by any whose spiritual eyes are open enough to discern the one Spirit working thro' an immense diversity of

forms. We can afford to differ, but we never need to disagree. The teaching of the Koran concerning gradual evolution of consciousness is quite compatible with the newest statements regarding evolution and it accords well with many of the sayings of Emerson. Here is an example: "The Soul came first to the mineral kingdom; and from the mineral to the vegetable. He passed ages in the vegetable and forgot the mineral in his struggles. When he came to the animal kingdom from the vegetable he lost memory of the vegetable state. Again, from the animal to the human, he is drawn up by the Creator you know. So he went from one kingdom to another—till he grew into an intelligent being."

We hear much today of Karma, a single Sanscrit word recently incorporated into English speech. This expressive word contains so much of meaning that it is difficult to explain anything like all it connotes; for practical purposes we may define it as signifying Action and Reaction. This Law of perpetual reflex action is the first of the two great Laws universally recognized by all the great religions of the world. The second Law is that of Sacrifice.

Mrs. Besant says: "The Spirit unfolds under the Law of Sacrifice, as the body evolves under the Law of Action and Re-action. The Spirit lives and triumphs by sacrifice, as the body thrives and evolves by wisely directed activity; hence, the spiritual declaration is 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' (John xii, 26); and 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts xx, 35)."

From the Buddhistic sayings we learn that "If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.
... If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought,

happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him." Is not this doctrine in exact agreement with the well-known words in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (vi, 7), "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Speaking of the ultimate judgment, the Koran says: "On that day, no soul shall be wronged at all, nor shall ye be rewarded for aught but that which ye have done."

Finally, we must call attention to a few proof texts from different Scriptures which enforce the Brotherhood of Man, which is the foundation of all sound ethical instruction. From the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we cull: "Having an eye to the welfare of the world, thou shouldst perform action. . . . As the ignorant act from attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world." Bharata is a name given to a disciple who is earnestly pressing along the road to sanctity. Attachment to personal concerns, regardless of their influence upon humanity at large, is regarded as the worst of sins by spiritually-minded Buddhists. Another beautiful Buddhistic saying reads, "As a mother, at the risk of her life, watches over her only child, so let everyone cultivate a boundless friendly mind toward all beings, and let him cultivate good-will toward all the world."

From the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, we extract: "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (verse 34). The exquisite teaching in the First Epistle of St. John should be too well known, wherever the New Testament has circulated, to need citation. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" is a heart-searching enquiry on which we all need to ponder. Among the sayings of Mo-

hammered is this: "Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow-beings first."

In this essay we have confined ourselves exclusively to the definitely religious side of the great subjects upon which we have so imperfectly touched. In a future essay, we intend dealing with the ethical, apart from the technically religious, and then it will be our endeavor to comply with many requests preferred from time to time, by those who hear our lectures and read these articles, to consider the practicability of some of those often styled "Utopian" views put forward by the world's greatest Teachers and presented in the "Sermon on the Mount" in their most uncompromising form.



Knowledge.

Krishna:—

"Comprehend

That all proceed by act; for knowing this,
Thou shalt be quit of doubt. The sacrifice
Which Knowledge pays is better than great gifts
Offered by wealth, since gifts' worth—O my Prince!
Lies in the mind which gives, the will that serves
And these are gained by reverence, by strong search,
By humble heed of those who see the Truth
And teach it. Knowing Truth, thy heart no more
Will ache with error, for the Truth shall show
All things subdued to thee, as thou to Me.
Moreover, Son of Pandu! wert thou worst
Of all wrong-doers, this fair ship of Truth
Should bear thee safe and dry across the sea
Of thy transgressions."

—From the Sanskrit,

Translated by Sir Edwin Arnold, in "The Song Celestial."

Rosicrucian Christianity

Series Number Sixteen

The Star of Bethlehem; A Mystic Fact

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More than 1,900 years ago in Palestine there was born a little child. Children are born every day, every month, from one year's end to another, all over the face of the world, but this birth was something very, very different from any other. It was a birth that took place among and amid great spiritual manifestation. Angel choirs heralded this peacemaker, who was to give man the choicest of gifts—Peace on Earth and Good Will among men. How much it is needed! The wise men came and worshiped, they brought gifts to the little child's cradle, and time passes on. The child grows, becomes a man, and says, "I come not to bring peace but a sword." A very different story that from the way he was heralded as a peacemaker; a very different career he pointed out for himself in the world than that which had been sung about by the angels on that holy night. And history goes on to show that this prophecy was fulfilled. That Christian religion he came to found has been the bloodiest scourge the world has ever known, without any exception. The Mohammedan has been somewhat akin to the Christian religion and has been akin in that also, that it has been a religion of blood, of war, and of murder. The gentle Nazarene spoke also of a time of love beyond, but those who came after him have fought like the Indian, they have outdistanced the Indian in cunning, in devising tortures for their victims, and yet they call themselves by his name—Jesuits. The Christian nations maintain and have maintained all along armies and navies. They pay inventors enormous prices for inventing machine guns and high explosives wherewith to destroy their fellow-men. All over the Western world has gone the battle cry and nothing has equalled this religion in fierceness and destructiveness; the religion of

Buddah has won its many hundred millions without the cost of a single life, but this religion of the Western world has cost rivers and rivers of blood; has brought untold sorrow and misery into this world. We see it gradually spreading its bloody trail as these Western nations go all over the world, carrying the sword of Christ, over-coming and subjecting the nations of the world.

Even when there is peace within the nations we have every day the war of competition. Every man's hand is against every other man's; there is no coöperation in this cruel struggle. We see on every hand the evidence of this in the growth of trust systems. All over there is a great strife and struggle. One must look this fact in the face when he is a Christian at heart; he feels at heart that there is something wrong when he sees those things and is forced to ask himself, "Was it a lie that was sung by the angels on that holy night? Was the star of hope that guided the wise men a mockery? Was this all a delusion we have heard about, and is it only a cruel religion that we have here in this Western world?"

I hope, friends, tonight to be able to show you that there is a reason for all of this; that there is a good, sound reason for every act of cruelty Christianity has brought in its wake, and that this trouble is only a necessary forerunner for something better, a state of peace, of joy, of love; that the star of hope was indeed a star of hope and is yet a star of hope for all who will seek it, and that the burden of the angel song is but deferred; that the present unhappy condition is just on the same order that when a person cleans house he puts a fairly orderly house in disorder, piling chairs on top of one another, taking up carpets, raising dust, etc. But that is all done with the ultimate idea in view of making the house cleaner, sweeter, better than before. Those historical facts in that past history of the Christian religion are of the same order; a present chaos out of which shall come the brotherhood of love and good will.

In order to understand we must go back in time. We know from the later lectures that man has not always been as he is; that he has lived in different states. We look upon everything in the cosmos not as it is now, but as it has evolved up to the present stage. Above all, we must cease to look at things in a materialistic manner. We must cease to regard ourselves and this earth as mere *forms*. We must cease to regard the universe as a vast perpetual motion machine, and realize that the stars are the organs of a great Being whom we call by the holy name of God; that these stars are also

the bodies of great spirits and that their motion in the universe means something. When we see a man gesticulate we attach a meaning to it; when we see him hold out his hands with the palm towards us, we attach a meaning to it; he is telling us to go away. We know there is a different significance to it when his palms are turned towards himself, then he is beckoning to us to come to him. So with the stars. As they go around the zodiac year after year every one has a different position with regard to every other, until after countless ages they return to the first position. Every one of them is a feeling, living, thinking organism. The solstices have different meanings. The summer solstice brings about one certain change in the Earth; when the sun goes to the winter solstice in December there is another influence upon the Earth. So with the vernal and fall equinox. They all mean something; they all have significance in the cosmos. The Earth itself is a feeling, living organism. When we go out in the summer time and see the harvesters mowing the grain, let us not think there is no feeling about it; the Earth feels it. A cow that gives its life force to its offspring experiences joy and pleasure of having brought it forth; it feels relieved when the calf takes the milk. It is so also with the Earth when the grain is taken off by the harvester. It is the same when we pluck flowers. On the other hand, when we pluck plants up by the roots it causes the Earth pain, just as it does us when we have our hair pulled. When we break a stone we give the Earth pleasure, for this Earth is the body of a spirit, which has incarnated here in our dense Earth in order that we might have the material wherewith to build the dense bodies we function in just now. The earth spirit is longing for the day of redemption, when man shall have evolved so far that he shall cease to be under the necessity of having such a dense body and be able to function in a more ethereal vehicle. Then this instrument will have been spiritualized so that we may take the spiritual essence of it and discard the dense body. That is to be gained in a certain way by the initiation we shall hear about later in the lecture.

The mystery of Golgotha we spoke of the other night, where we heard of this great Christ spirit going into the earth. That is only the beginning of the sacrifice. It was not just the death of the body of Jesus, that was over in a moment, but it was the continued incarceration of that Christ, who emanated from the cosmic Christ principle and is now the indwelling Earth Spirit, confined here till He has accomplished the redemption of man.

We remember that at one time we dwelt upon the sun; that is to say, that even in this Earth period, when we came here to live the last time, we were in that central firemist, and we were there up to the time spoken of as the Hyperborean Epoch. There we crystallized until we could not respond to the high vibrations the other solar beings responded to; those who are now the archangels. They could progress in solar vibrations, we could not; therefore we crystallized a part of that firemist to shield ourselves, and in consequence we had to be thrown off. Then when we had gone the proper distance away from the sun we could crystallize again, and later we threw off that part which is now known as the moon. Those beings who are now on the Moon were too far crystallized; they were behind us; therefore we had to throw them off. From these two sources come two sets of vibrations; spiritual vibrations from the sun, and hardening tendencies from the moon. It is the balance between these two sets of vibrations that enables us to hold our bodies together.

At that time man was perfectly unconscious. His eyes had not been opened. He only used his force to build organs *inside*. Then gradually the Earth crystallized more and more, until in the middle part of Atlantis the Ego had at last drawn into humanity and man had become possessed of all the vehicles that he has now. Then he became conscious of the world, but he was in a far, far different state than now. When consciousness is awakened it begins to work as a leaven in matter. Since we were in Atlantis and had our eyes fully opened, since the atmosphere cleared and we first saw things about us clearly—since then we have worked in the Earth in the materials of our bodies as a leaven works in the loaf and raises it. So we have lightened conditions and are continually lightening them.

In Lemuria man had the three lower bodies—the desire body, the vital body, and the dense body. Outside hovered the spirit. At that time the earth was in a condition of fire. There were masses of crust and around them seething, boiling water, and volcanic outbursts were very, very frequent. Man had at that time lungs that were like tubes. He had a bladder like the fishes have now, where-with he could lift himself and leap great chasms. As the Earth condensed more and more that fire fog atmosphere of Lemuria condensed into a very dense fog in the early part of Atlantis. There those tubes had changed to gill-clefts, and he was breathing more as the fish do. This can be seen now in embryological develop-

ment, where man goes through the same stages he went through at that time. The embryo lies in the amniotic fluid and has these gill-clefts, such as man had in the early part of Atlantis. He breathed in that manner in the dense watery atmosphere of Atlantis, but gradually that settled more and more, and man began to breathe as we do now. In the early third of Atlantis there was a brotherhood; separation into nations had not begun. Mankind was a universal brotherhood, and when performing the rite of baptism, which makes us a member of a holy brotherhood, such as the church should be, a community that should be the nucleus for a great universal brotherhood, that rite of consecration by water is in remembrance of that time, when man was truly innocent and truly lovable, had no evil in him—the time when he lived in the dense watery atmosphere of early Atlantis. In the middle third of Atlantis all that is changed. He begins to separate into communities, for the watery atmosphere is clearing somewhat and he is beginning to breathe by the means of lungs. The human Ego was very weak, and had to get help from someone else. Therefore Jehovah, the highest initiate of the Moon period, the ruler over the angels and archangels that work with men, breathes into man's nostrils, gives him lungs, and gives him the race spirit in the air that is to curb the hardening tendencies of the desire body and help him to get it under control. The desire body has control of the voluntary muscles, every movement we make is caused by desire, and every exertion breaks down tissue, and hardens more and more every particle of our tissue. Therefore Jehovah aimed to help mankind out of their dense condition, by means of law. The race religions are all based upon law. "I am a jealous God, and if you fulfill my commandments I will bless you abundantly and make your seed as multitudinous as the sands upon the seashore," says the Race God, "but if you do not obey I will send your enemies upon you and they shall gain the victory over you." Jehovah is the ruler of all the races and all the religions. He gave to each of these races an archangel to be their ruler, to be their special Prince. In Daniel 12-1 it is said that Michael is Prince over the Jews, and in the tenth chapter another Race spirit says: "I am going to fight against the Prince of Persia, and the Prince of Grecia shall go up."

Thus these race spirits work with man, punishing him by means of other people, and giving him rewards or punishments for his

good deeds. The fear of God and the desire for material reward was pitted against the desires of the flesh and therefore these race religions under Jehovah are such as to build up the national spirit. They subjected, or rather they neglected the individual for the sake of the nation. The interests of the individual are always made subservient to the interests of the nation. The Jew never thought of himself as Solomon Levi, first and foremost he thought of himself as being of the seed of Abraham. What he wanted most to emphasize was that he was a Jew. If he thought of his status any further than that he would identify himself with his tribe, but last and least only would he think of himself as an individual.

The race spirit took a special care of certain sets of people, for example the Levites among the Jews; who were destined specially for priesthood and they were herded around the temples and were specially bred to be the forerunners and teachers of their brethren. Their system of mating and regulation of the sexlife of these special proteges produces a more lax connection between the vital body and the dense body, which was necessary in order that initiation might take place and help man to advance. As long as the race spirit works with us we are under the law, we are only overcoming the influence of the desire body, therefore, Paul says well, that the law was until Christ. Not until Christ came 2,000 years ago, but "*until Christ be formed in you,*" when we release ourselves from the toils of the desire body and live up to the vibrations of the vital body, we become imbued by the Christ spirit. Then and only then do we rise out of the national, the separating principle. Then do we become capable of being brothers to men.

Now we see why Christ said so emphatically, "Before Abraham was, I am." The Ego was before the nation and must be exalted over the nation. To that end Christ came, because as long as there were nations, there could not be brotherhood. If we have a number of houses, and they built of bricks, they are unavailable for building one building until torn down. When all the bricks have been separated we may begin building. When all nations have been chopped into individuals we may begin to build the grand Universal Brotherhood of man.

That is why the race religions failed, they separate men into antagonistic groups. So the race religions must be abrogated. We cannot do away with nations except we separate the individual. Therefore, we have wars; therefore we have had revolu-

tions, where men have rebelled against kings and rulers, and have instituted republics. But they are not enough. We want to be free individually. We want to be every man a law unto himself,—and this is where a great, great danger lies. We cannot be laws unto ourselves,—*we cannot be free, until we have learned to respect everybody's else rights.*

So then, under the race religions, men grew by obedience to the law. Under the Christ regime that is to come in, man is to rise above law, and to be a law unto himself. As Goethe says,—

"From every power that binds the world in chains,
Man liberates himself, when self-control he gains."

That is the goal, *self-mastery*, which every one must gain, before he is fit to be a law unto himself,—to be above the law,—for no one except the very undisciplined man, who calls himself an Anarchist, will think to improve matters by having the power to shoot down people. By that means he will make conditions far, far worse than they were. The true Anarchist, the one who truly seeks to abolish law, is the one who is living the true life, and the clean life. By obeying every law, he rises above all law. We, for example, have risen above the law against theft. It is not necessary for us to have that law, but some people have not risen so far as that, and they must still have that law. We do not wish to steal, and hence, do not need the law that says, "Thou shalt not steal." By and by, man will rise above the need of all law. Then and only then can he be a law unto himself. In the Christ regime, man will be impelled and guided by love, and "perfect love casteth out fear." The race religions compel man to do right by means of *fear*, but the Christ religion will impel man through *love*. Then he cannot do otherwise than right.

All race religions,—every one of them, without exception,—are looking for some one to come. The Egyptian religion looked forward to Osiris the bright Sun-Spirit; the Persian looked to Mithras; and the Babylonian to Tammuz. All looked for someone to come, to free the Earth. We find the same thing, even in the Norse mythology. We find that the old Norsemen looked for the "Twilight of the Gods," when the present regime must perish, and then out of the South from Muspelheim, the region of heat should come that bright Sun-Spirit Sutar, and he should set up a new

heaven and a new earth. Such we hear of in all religions, and even in the Christian religion, we find them looking forward to a Sun-Spirit. At one time, in the ritual of the Catholic church, they used the phrase, "Our Lord the Sun." It is from the visible sun that every particle of physical energy comes. And it is from the spiritual invisible sun that all of the spiritual energy comes.

At the present time we cannot bear to look directly at the sun. It would blind us. But we can look at the reflected sunlight that comes from the moon. In the same way, man cannot stand the direct spiritual impulse that comes from the sun, and therefore, it had to be sent by way of the moon, through the hands, and through the mediumship of Jehovah, the Regent of the Moon. That is the origin of the race religions. Later came the time when man could take the spiritual impulse more directly, and Christ, the present Earth spirit, came to prepare this. The difference between the Christ of the Earth and the Cosmic Christ is best seen by an illustration. Imagine a lamp in the center of a hollow sphere of polished metal. The lamp will send out rays from itself to all points of the sphere, and will reflect lamps in all different places. So the Cosmic Christ,—the highest initiate of the Sun period,—sends out rays. He is in the spiritual sun. The sun is threefold. We see the outside,—the physical sun. Behind that, or hiding in that, is the spiritual sun whence comes the impulse of the Cosmic Christ Spirit. Outside the two other is something we call Vulcan,—that can be seen only as a half-globe. In occultism, we say that is the body of the Father. There we have the Father, then, the spirit in Vulcan. We have the Christ, the spirit in the Sun; and we have Jehovah, the spirit in the Moon, that sends the reflected light both physical and spiritual.

Before the advent of Christ all spiritual impulses came to man by way of the Moon as race religions. Only by initiation was it possible to get into direct touch with the spiritual solar impulse. A veil hung before the temple.

When the time arrived that the Christ spirit could be entertained on the Earth,—when we had risen so far,—then a ray from the Cosmic Christ came here, and incarnated here in the body of our Elder Brother Jesus. After the sacrifice on Golgotha had been completed, after the death of that body that he had occupied, he drew himself into the Earth. Take his own words for this. In no other way can we account for that saying, "This is my body."

He showed the bread, it is the Earth spirit that brings forth that bread. "This is my blood." The juices that are in the plant make the wine. It was not said, This symbolizes my body or blood, he said unequivocally, "This is my blood."

In John 11-13 in our New Testament, it says: "He that eats my bread hath lifted up his heel against me." Luther, who translated it in Germany, and was not tied by any of the restrictions of the translators of the King James' Bible, put it, "He that eats my bread trampled upon me." We do trample, at every step we take upon the Earth Spirit, and that spirit's body and blood is consumed among us, and that spirit waiting for the day of redemption, when we shall be lifted so far from our material conditions that it shall be possible for the Earth Spirit to become liberated from its present cramped and dense existence.

The Christ Spirit, then, is the first incoming of a direct spiritual impulse. We spoke to you of the different motions of the planets, and their various influences at different times of the year. We know that at the time when the sun spirit is in the northern regions,—when we have the sun away up here at the summer solstice, then we have all the physical impacts upon the Earth. We get all the good there is in the sun along *physical* lines; that is the time when the grain and the grape are ripening, and when everything is bringing forth in the Physical World. Then the spiritual impulse is abrogated for the time being; but when on the other hand, the sun goes into the winter solstice, in December, the spiritual impulse is strongest. Also, we have the spiritual impulse stronger in the night than in the daytime. There were times when the churches were open all night, but closed in the middle of the day, for that was known to be the time of greatest darkness, so far as spiritual influences were concerned. However, when we remember these things, we can see that at the time when the days are the shortest and the nights are the longest, on that Holy Night that we speak of, when Christ was born, as a Sun who was to lighten our darkness,—the spiritual influence, is then strongest, and can be reached easiest. It was this great truth that is at the bottom of the Star in the holy night, illuminating the longest and darkest night in the year.

When Parsifal started to go with Gurnemanz to the Castle of the Grail, he asked Gurnemanz: "Who is the Grail?"

"That tell me not, but if thou hast of him been bidden,
From thee the truth will not stay hidden.
The search but severs from him wider
When he himself is not its guider."

That means that in the olden times, in the time before Christ came, only a chosen few could follow the path of initiation. Nobody could seek that path,—nobody could get beyond the point where the rest of humanity were,—save a few chosen ones, such as were the priests and the Levites. These were brought to the temples, and there herded together. They were married to one another in a certain way, certain people were mated with a definite end in view, namely that they might develop the proper laxity between the vital body and the dense body that is necessary to initiation. A separation has to take place, in order that we may lift the two ethers out, and leave the other two. That could not be done with the ordinary humanity. They were yet much in bondage to the desire body. They must wait until a later time.

Even with those people who were around those temples, it was very dangerous work to free them. It could be done best at certain times, and this longest night was one of those times. When the greatest spiritual impulse is here, they had a better chance to get in touch with it, than at any other time of the year. So on the Holy Night, which we call Christmas, it was usual for the Wise Men,—those who were beyond the ordinary humanity,—to take the ones who were also becoming wise, and therefore entitled to initiation, into the temples. Certain ceremonies were performed and the candidates were entranced. They could not at that time be given an initiation in their full waking state, it had to be done in a trance. When the spiritual perception was awakened in them, they could look through the Earth,—not seeing any detail, but the Earth became transparent, as it were,—and they saw the Star at midnight, the spiritual sun.

Previous to the coming of Christ, the Earth was worked upon from without, as the Group-spirit works upon the animals. Christ came to work from within. Before that, when neophytes were to be brought in touch with him, they could see, in that Holy Night, the Star of the Christ, just as the Immaculate Virgin was on the Eastern horizon, and the little Sun-child of the coming year was starting towards the Northern hemisphere, to save us from the dark-

ness, hunger and want that would result without him. Then these Wise Men could see the Star, in the Holy Night, which is the spiritual hope of man as the physical sun then born is his material savior.

Do not think it shone only at that time, it is easier now than then to see it, for when Christ came he altered the vibrations of the earth and is changing them all the time since. He "rent the temple veil,"—he made the Holy of Holies,—the place of initiation,—open to "Whosoever will!" From that time on, there is no more trance needed,—no more subjective states in order to go through initiation. There is a conscious going forth into the Temple, by every one who wills to come.

And in time that religion that he brought to us will drive away all the sorrows; will drive the tears from all eyes. Where there has been war, there will be peace, and sure, as sure as he came to bring that sword that shall liberate man from the national spirit, and make him an individual that is capable of being a brother to every man, so surely as he came to do this work, so surely as the first part of his prophecy has been fulfilled,—so will that other grand and glorious prophecy be fulfilled, that men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.

We have one more thing to consider, and that is the gifts that these wise men brought,—the gifts that were to be laid at the feet of the Saviour, as we hear of in the old legend. This legend tells us that one brought gold, one brought myrrh, and the third brought frankincense. The gold we always hear spoken of in symbology as the emblem of the spirit. That spirit is symbolized thus in the Nibelungen Ring, for instance. There in the opening scene, we see the Rheingold. The river Rhein is taken as the emblem of the water, and there the gold is seen shining on the rock, symbolizing the universal spirit in its perfect purity. Later it is stolen and *made into a ring* by Alberich, representing mankind in the middle of Atlantis, when the spirit had drawn into them. Then the gold became debased, was lost, and was the cause of all sorrow in the earth. Later still we hear of the alchemists who tried to transmute base metal into gold; that is the spiritual way of saying that they wanted to purify this dense body, to refine it and extract the spiritual essence.

Therefore, the gift of one wise man is the spirit. The next one brings myrrh. Myrrh is the extract of an aromatic plant that grows

in Arabia, a very rare plant, very rare indeed. Therefore, it symbolizes the thing that man extracts when he cleanses himself. When he has cleansed his blood of passion he becomes plantlike, chaste and pure. He became the inverted plant before he became the pure plant, symbolized by the Rosy Cross, symbolized by the Diamond Soul, and so forth, then his body is an aromatic essence. It is an actual fact,—we are not speaking in similes,—when we say that there are holy men, who are so holy that they emit an aroma from them. It is thus said of some Catholic saints, and it is true. Therefore, the myrrh stands for that soul essence that is drawn out of the experience of the body. It is the soul.

The third gift was incense. Incense is a physical substance of a very light character, that is often used in religious services, it serves as an embodiment for the ministering unseen influences. An illustration of the properties of incense is also found in the story of the Servian regicides. The Minister of the Interior has issued his Memoirs, and he mentions as a curious circumstance that every time they used a certain kind of incense to get others into the conspiracy, they succeeded; but at times when they used no incense, they failed. It shows,—he had on certain occasions, unconsciously, of course, furnished an embodiment for certain spirits who wanted to and did aid the conspirators.

There is the key to the three gifts that were offered up by the Wise Men,—the spirit, the soul, and the body. As Christ said, "If you want to follow me, you must sell all you have. *You are not to keep anything for yourself.* You are to give up body, soul and spirit, everything, for the higher life, everything for the Christ. Not to an exterior Christ, but to the Christ within. The three Wise Men are said in the legend to be yellow, black and white, representatives of the three races that we have on Earth, the Mongolian, the Negro, and the White man. Therefore, we see that it is very well shown in the legend that eventually they will all come into this beneficent Christ religion. "To him every knee shall bow." Each one will in time be led by the star to the Christ. But let us emphasize that very strongly,—not to an exterior Christ, but to the Christ that is within. As Angelo Silenius says:—

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn.
The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,
Unless within thyself it be set up again."



Mr. Frank
C. Higgins:
some of his
Theories on
Symbolism

The very deepest interest is being taken in archæological circles in the discoveries which have been and are being made in Central America, Mexico and the Yucatan, showing unmistakably that a very advanced race inhabited these countries at a period estimated to have been fully 12,000 years ago. Ruins have been unearthed which indicate that these aborigines possessed a knowledge of masonry, architecture and building which was afterwards entirely lost.

Mr. Frank C. Higgins, whose portrait we publish herewith, is an acknowledged authority on antiquities. In an article on "The Civilizations of Early America," speaking of carvings, etc., which have recently been brought to light, the *Pall Mall Gazette* says of his work:

"The President of the New York Numismatic Club, Mr. Frank C. Higgins, F.R.N.S., has made some interesting investigations into these relics and has made some surprising discoveries which may throw a new light upon all these ancient symbols of both the Old World and the New. Mr. Higgins, from some elaborate investigations, finds that they all had a geometrical and astronomical, as well as a religious significance, much as has been shown to be the case in the design and construction of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. Most of the ancient star figures and Masonic symbols he finds to have their

mysteries solved by the very interesting geometrical system which was apparently one of the long-buried secrets of the ancients.

"The designs that elucidate these discoveries have all been copyrighted by the author at Washington, but they will be all given to the public in a volume which is now ready for the press, and to which he has given the title 'The Stars of the Gods.' Mr. Higgins has come to the conclusion that these relics, both in the Old World and America, all point to that most ancient of religions, the worship of the sun; and that they have been handed down from a most remote period, both in China and other parts of Asia, into whose remains he has carried these very interesting investigations. Further, he believes they go back to an earlier form of worship, in religions which, from the disruption of ancient civilizations and the ignorance of the real significance of many of these symbols, led subsequent races to fall into the most degrading forms of idolatry."

Mr. Higgins elucidated some of his theories in an interesting lecture on "The Universality of Symbols" delivered recently before the New York Theosophical Society, at 2228 Broadway. Illustrating his convincing talk with numerous designs he pointed out that the ancient systems of symbols were founded on the Pythagorean numerical and geometrical figures, and this fact was further demonstrated by lantern slides showing carvings on stones, etc., found in widely separated places, but which were strikingly similar. We find that many of our so-called modern symbols, as the square, circle, triangle, cross, swastika, etc., were known and used by the ancients the world over, and that their significance was the same, East and West, North and South.

The question naturally is raised as to whether we are on the eve of discovering a universal sign language known to the ancients from whom we are descended, and to whom, till now, we have been considered superior.

M. E. D.





Book Reviews



THE LIFE EVERLASTING. A Reality of Romance. By Marie Corelli. (George H. Doran Co., New York.) Price, \$1.35.

This latest work by a long famous writer (who is always at her best when dealing with questions pertaining to the spiritual side of our existence), belongs in the same class with "A Romance of Two Worlds," "Ardath," "The Soul of Lilith," "Ziska," and "The Sorrows of Satan." In the Prologue the author takes the reader into her confidence and reveals a good deal of her literary experience, which commenced in her early girlhood. The first literary venture of this truly remarkable woman, "A Romance of Two Worlds," brought her immediate celebrity, tho' that amazing narrative was regarded by publishers in general as unlikely to prove a good seller. But as the public is always demanding something unusual and brilliant, even tho' it frequently tolerates and buys the hackneyed, Marie Corelli's first book secured for her a place among romantic writers definitely unique. During the past twenty-five years (since 1886), she has written many stories along less unusual lines, and contributed extensively to periodical literature, but tho' all she writes commands attention, it is when she steps into a field peculiarly her own that her output is particularly impressive.

The author's own words, quoted from the end of the Prologue, may serve as an enlightening introduction to her entire system of philosophy: "Spirit—the creative Essence of all that is—works in various forms, but always on an ascending plane, and it invariably rejects and destroys whatever interrupts that onward and upward progress. Being in Itself the Radiant outflow of the Mind of God, it is the LIFE of the Universe, and it is very needful to understand and to remember that there is nothing which can properly be called *supernatural*, or above Nature, inasmuch as this Eternal Spirit of Energy is in and throughout *all* Nature. Therefore, what to the common mind appears miraculous or impossible, is, nevertheless, actually ordinary and only *seems* extraordinary to the common mind's lack of knowledge and experience. The Fountain of Youth and

the Elixir of Life were dreams of the ancient mystics and scientists, but they are not dreams to-day. To the Soul that has found them, they are Divine Realities."

The motto of the story is the famous saying of Longfellow's "There is no Death; what seems so is transition."

As it is impossible to adequately cover so important a book in a short review, it is our intention to make "The Life Everlasting" the subject of an essay which will appear in the January number.

As the Xmas season is again approaching and books suitable for presents are greatly in demand, we can confidently advise that this fascinating and edifying volume be given a prominent place among offerings to friends who are willing to think and receive edification while enjoying a romantic tale of great dramatic power and intensity.

(For sale by the Mystic Light Library Association.)

W. J. COLVILLE



BYWAYS OF GHOST-LAND. By Elliott O'Donnell.
(Rider & Son, London.) Price \$1.25.

Concerning this peculiar work, it is difficult to speak definitely further than to tell that it contains a great many records of apparitions, hauntings, etc., which seem well authenticated. Tho' there is much of interest and importance scattered thruout the volume, the general tone is too uncanny to render it a pleasant book for general reading tho' it contains much that is well worthy of serious consideration. The author's palpable fault is in his predilection for harping upon the dark side of the unusual, and he carries this to such an extent that he gives to his chapters disagreeable headings positively repulsive,—such, for example, as "Sylvan Horrors," "Occult Bestialities" and "Vampires." Apart from this serious defect, the book may be commended as containing many interesting philosophical speculations in addition to much erudite matter of uncommon sort. If some of the titles could be improved, and a little of the unnecessarily horrifying removed, the treatise would be a fine acquisition to any library. As it stands it is by no means a negligible product.

W. J. COLVILLE.

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Magazine Chats



"The Theosophist," hailing from India, dated October, 1911, is a very strong and intensely interesting number; 158 pages of solid reading matter, and many fine illustrations of Hindu temples, make this issue noteworthy. Among its many valuable contents, we may call special attention to Mrs. Besant's article on the present status of the Theosophical Movement in Great Britain, where she did a great deal of excellent work during last summer. Not only does she speak in glowing terms of the hearty acceptance accorded herself and her message wherever she appeared, but she dwells optimistically upon the general outlook and declares that from an astrological, as well as from all other standpoints, the prospects of Theosophy are very bright. On the Labor difficulties which disturbed England last August, she writes soberly and wisely, and appeals earnestly to the most highly educated and influential elements in the land to take such a stand for justice in their dealings with all sections of the community that the causes leading to strife may be obliterated. The first instalment of "A Text Book of Theosophy," by C. W. Leadbeater, opens very finely and the work when completed promises to be of great literary and historic value. "Theosophy and Social Reconstruction," by Dr. L. Haden Guest, is a paper of far more than ordinary importance, for the writer has gone to the very root of a mighty and complex subject and given us all a great deal of good matter for profitable meditation. "Buddhistic Symbols and Ceremonies in the Roman Church," by Dr. Franz Hartmann, is entirely convincing, as the object of the contributor is to prove the identity in essence of different religious systems which vary only very slightly even in the details of ritual. "Zohak: the Demon King of Persia," by C. E. Anklesaria, is a valuable contribution to Oriental folk lore. "To a Socialist Brother," by Sidney Ransom, is a temperately written letter, breathing a sincere and kindly spirit, and fearlessly applying Theosophical doctrines to social problems. Another instalment in the romantic series, "Rents in the Veil of Time," by C. W. Leadbeater, will delight those students of re-incarnation mysteries which possess great fascination for many people at present. "Form and the Formless," by W. Wybergh, deals with the mysterious "fourth dimension" quite lucidly. "Personal Relations in Successive Lives," by C. E. Rey-

nolds, is curious and fascinating. The Quarterly Literary Supplement adds greatly to the value of an already marvellously full number. The Book Reviews in general give the reader a good insight into many valuable new publications. A long notice of "Fragments of Prose and Poetry," by F. H. W. Myers, gives a splendid insight into the life of a truly noble man and a brave pioneer in the now popular field of Psychical Research.

Our friends will be glad to know that arrangements have recently been made whereby a few extra copies of the "Theosophist" will be sent to the Mystic Light Library Association each month, for sale, while they last, at 25 cents each. Subscriptions may also be sent to us, direct.



"The Occult Review" (15 cents), for November, is on our table, filled, as usual, with a good variety of articles on many phases of the occult. We always enjoy the editor's "Notes of the Month," in which he reviews current topics and is sure to treat events largely from the astrological viewpoint, for astrology is Ralph Shirley's favorite study. We are glad to learn that our good friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hooker, have opened a health resort in a delightful part of England where the more spiritual modes of healing, for success in which Dr. Stenson-Hooker is world-famous, will be demonstrated. By far the most remarkable paper in this issue is the "Mystical Basis of Masonry," by W. L. Wilmhurst, finely illustrated. "Some Experiences of a Psychic," by Hereward Carrington; "The Power of Numbers," by Sepharial; and a very weird article, "Haunted by a Human Cat," by Elliott O'Donnell, followed by numerous reviews of recent books of merit, complete the November banquet.



"The Center" (10 cents), published and edited by Edward Earle Purinton, 700 East End Avenue, New York, is the official organ of the Harmony Club of America, the objects of which, as stated on the cover, are altogether exemplary. The October number contains much sound teaching by the editor on "Fatherhood, the New Profession"; a really fine poem, "The Wife's Answer," signed E. E. P.; an account of the first "Fathers and Mothers Club," and replies to many important questions on really vital topics. This pocket-size periodical is brimful of salutary teaching on subjects of great moment to the entire community.

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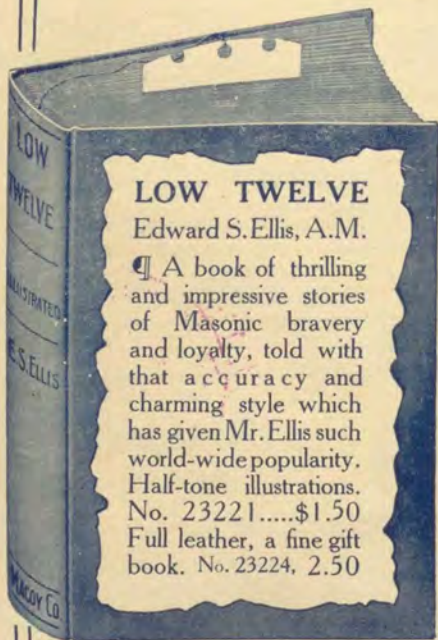
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