

"The organization of Society, depicted by Edward Bellamy, in his 'Looking Backward,' admirably represents the Theosophic idea of what should be the FIRST GREAT STEP towards the full Realization of Universal Brotherhood."

—Madame H. P. Blavatsky, in the Key to Theosophy

THE NEW CALIFORNIAN.

VOL. I.

MARCH—APRIL, 1892.

No. 10.

THEOSOPHIC CONCEPTS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

Under an ordinary microscope, properly arranged, we observe a minute speck of jelly-like substance. It has no limiting membrane; no organs, nor even the prophecy of these. Under the very highest power, it is still absolutely structureless.

Yet this speck of protoplasm is alive. Floating aimlessly in the water, it brushes against some substance capable of affording it nutriment by accident—if the contact really were accidental, for there are those who hold that on its own plane, it may be quite as conscious as we on ours. At any rate, it is very difficult to define the boundaries in nature separating design from seeming chance.

Be this as it may, the speck adheres to and gradually surrounds the object touched, so as to include it within an artificial stomach, especially prepared for the occasion. This it does by its mass protruding slowly, now upon this side and then upon that, until at last the foreign body is seen in the center. Having then by some alchemy of nature extracted that which it desired, it slowly opens and extrudes the residue.

Because of this process we say that it is alive. It eats, digests, and assimilates. A few hours later the same speck, floating against a similar nutrient body, takes no notice, does not adhere, and drifts helplessly by, to be soon dissolved into apparent nothingness. We give it a careless glance and recognize that it is "dead," and move the slide to new fields of examination.

Now what constituted life in the first instance, and death in the second? The matter in both was absolutely the same,

in chemical composition and molecular arrangement. Yet at the one examination it was "alive," at the other "dead."

The sole difference consists in a certain mysterious unifying "vital" force being present, pervading and controlling the speck when alive and in its absence when dead. Yet there are philosophers who would have us believe that this conscious force—conscious because it acts with design—which guides, quickens, and controls the molecules it ensouls is but a function of these same molecules, so helpless when it is withdrawn. The materialist says that this force comes from without; is only the response of the molecules for a time to the general laws of nature. The Occultist declares that it comes from within, and in specific response to an ebb and flow entirely independent of any particular molecular arrangement whatever, except as these respond and permit certain phenomena to be observed on the physical plane. One is exactly the opposite concept of the other in appearance, yet both are an attempt to enable the mind to conceive of that mysterious appearance from the depths of space—may be its mysterious Fourth Dimension, which is, and yet is not—of that we recognize as life.

This ebb and flow of conscious force—or of force directed by consciousness—which completes its cycle in a few hours in the instance, we have cited, is the type of all that we know as life or fear as death. In a man its flow lasts, or ought to, one or more hundred years. In the *Seqoyia Gigantea*, of our California forests, it persists thousands of years. In a planet, its impulse endures countless ages. In a universe, the human mind fails to form any conception of the interval, although the sacred Brahmanical teachings give it expression by 15 places of figures, which we patter over with an ease from which familiarity has removed the awe and grandeur.

This ebb and flow of subjective into objective existence in an endless succession of cycles, then, is divided by horizons which we have named "life" and "death." As there are an infinity of these cycles, so there are also an infinity of cycles within each great cycle, and which by their interweavings constitute the complex web of existence. Thus the life of a human soul, while in the objective arc of its proper cycle, subtends the arcs of almost an infinitude of cell cycles, constituting the body in which it is magnetically incarnated. Even the very hardest of bone cells wears out its own material form in a comparatively small portion of the total physical life of a man. And each one of these cells

again subtends the arcs of almost innumerable molecular cycles, myriads of which pass from life to death or from objectivity to subjectivity at each separate function of the cell. Within these, again, is the atom—not that of science—but the Seventh, or conscious, principle informing each separate division of the homogeneity of the plane of matter above ours into the heterogeneity of this. And the homogeneity of the plane next, or within ours is, by all the evidence of analogy, the seventh, or most heterogeneous one to the plane still within it, and so we proceed, reasoning from without within, until, as in the figures expressing the duration of a major manvantara, the mind is wandering in a maze of ideation, without the faintest comprehension of that of which it is thinking.

But of this we may be sure, that the cyclic law is absolute; that we are describing in our inner, spiritual essence a cycle coeval and coexistent with this great unthinkable period we know as a major manvantara or the duration of a universe. Yet ours is not a steady sweep around the awe-inspiring circle, for like the revolutions of the earth upon its own axis as it traverses its great orbit about the sun, so do we describe countless lesser cycles as we journey from the Infinite, through matter, space and duration, back to the source from whence we came. Each time we lay us down to sleep our soul retreats within, to describe a lesser subjective cycle while the body as a whole rests. Each time we lay a worn-out body completely aside at our so-called death it is only that the soul may wing its way unhindered along a greater, grander cycle of subjectivity, at the close of which it again impinges upon matter in the form of a fecundated cell, and which by the very force and momentum accompanying its returning swing, it causes to expand and “grow” into a suitable material form.

There is that in the cycle of sleep which, intuitively studied, will give us the clue to the larger cycle of death. For the phenomenon of sleep is one before which all materialistic theories of life break hopelessly down. According to these, ideation and consciousness are the expression of the molecular activities going on within the body; just as electricity is the expression of chemical action going on in copper and zinc in the presence of a saline solution. Given sufficient molecular action according to them and consciousness and ideation result. But there are methods of measuring molecular and chemical activity other than by the accompanying ideation. Heat is such a delicate test that

a perfectly motionless man will instantly betray any mental effort or emotional perturbation with a sufficiently sensitive instrument in contact with the superficies of his head by the increase of its measureable heat. Molecular and chemical activities are also roughly, but including the point of nicest accuracy, measured by the respiration, circulation, and especially the temperature of the body. Now, for a healthy man, in full exercise of ideation and consciousness, the normal standards of these are well-known. He will breathe about 18 times a minute; his heart will beat from 60 to 80 times during the same interval; and his temperature will rarely vary a degree from 98.6 from year's end to year's end, and though exposed to polar snows or tropic heat. Within these limits lies a molecular isotherm at which, if consciousness be only the expression of molecular activity, it ought to be constantly expressing or functioning. How is it possible, then, for consciousness to disappear and sleep to occur with molecular activity just the same? "Aye, but it is not the same," claim the materialists. "It is well known that in sleep the respiration is slower and the circulation more tranquil." "But that won't hold," responds the Occultist, "for the temperature, the truest gauge of molecular activity remains the same. Besides both sleeping and waking consciousness occur with the respiration as low as 6 or 8 times a minute and as high—in children's illnesses—as 180; with the circulation at 40, or up to 240; and with the temperature from 2 to 4 degrees sub-normal to as high as 8 degrees above this. At what point does this mysterious molecular activity effervesce, so to speak, and give off that expression of its activities we know as consciousness?"

The fact is that neither sleeping nor waking are the result of molecular or chemical activity but depend upon cell exhaustion, within limits largely increased or diminished by the will. It may be objected that this is the same thing in essence. But it is not. Molecular activity may go on even more rapidly in an exhausted cell than in a fresh one, and must do this when these disintegrate. Yet there is no accompanying consciousness.

The weariness of cells compelling sleep is but another evidence of cycles within cycles. So that the cycle of sleep is a perfect antetype of the larger cycle of death. Both are followed by renewed activities; the one in the same body, the other in a new one. The separation of the true thinking principle, whose reflection in matter is our "I am I," is identical in essence, and only differs in degree. While alive, the strong, magnetic chain,

woven out of the desire for material existence, is a potency as actual and constant in its strain as gravity. When dead, this strain is relaxed by the ebb of the cyclic law of life; to again tighten with the flow of this until the pilgrim in this cycle of necessity awakens after death in a new body just as surely and as certainly as he does in the old one after a night's sleep. Waking and sleeping are but the spiral stairs by which one climbs the hill of one life and descends on the other side to the valley of the shadow. Life and death are but larger steps by which one ascends to the hills and vales which lie between earth and Deva-loka, the abode of the Gods.

If we can but grasp the conception, then, that physical life as we experience it is but the flow from within without of the great ocean of existence, we can look upon its ebb with tranquil unterrified eyes; being assured that the Cause of the one is also that of the other, and that though our bodies are locked in the icy embrace of the grim conqueror, our souls are borne safely and triumphantly between the wings of Kala-Hamsa, the Great Bird of Life. If we further realize that the extent to which our souls are stranded on the shoals of material existence is entirely governed by the law of cause and effect, and that these causes and effects we set in operation ourselves, we shall have taken a long step towards solving the immediate problems of life. One of the many great laws which all at last resolve back into the ONE, is that the higher must help the lower, else neither ascend. At least, this is certainly the law of the ascending spiral of evolution upon which we are now faintly beginning to grope our way. The vegetable kingdom reaches helping fingers down into the mineral, and upon the eternal granite rock appears the creeping lichen. The consciousness locked for untold ages in a sleep as numbing as that which overcame the Seven, of Ephesus, begins to falter upwards along the new avenues. The animal in turn, lifts the vegetable matter to its own plane, and in its highest representation or man, spiritual life reaches lovingly down with the whispered message, "Come up higher." And as we yield our souls willingly and more willingly to the Divine influence so will the effect of the new influx be felt to the very lowest kingdoms with which we are associated. Not meaningless is the assertion that all nature thrills and rejoices when an Arhat is born. For the Divine love and compassion flowing through our hearts will first banish sin, sorrow, suffering and disease from among men, and then stream down the stairway be-

neath us into the lower kingdoms, until the vision of St. John shall become our common heritage, and we shall all see a "new heaven and a new earth." For the unlovely, ferocious forms in the animal kingdom below us are but the reflections of our own lower natures, and will die out or be changed by our progress as certainly as have the mammoth monsters of prehistoric ages disappeared with the disappearance of their mammoth, brutal human contemporary. And in the very vegetable kingdom new forms, of more surpassing beauty, of purer fragrance, of more radiant tints, will spring up, and we shall once more inhabit a new and glorified Garden of Eden, which was our ancient birth-right and to which it is our happy destiny to return.

And how can we accomplish this except through the opening and closing of the portals we so foolishly term life and death; deeming them utter opposites when they are only two aspects of the One Reality? To the Theosophist, then, there is no death; only a change from objective to subjective consciousness; which change loses all its terrors when the light of knowledge and wisdom is thrown upon it, as has happened to many another grisly phantom, conjured into an unreal existence by our ignorance. Knowing death to be only a subjective rest, and life but a renewal of opportunity for climbing upward on the stepping-stones of matter towards perfected, spiritual Being he will look upon both with unterrified eyes. Especially will death, but the vesper bell announcing the cessation of another life's toil, be as welcome as is now sleep to our tired eyes at the close of a weary day. This is the great boon Theosophy offers to Humanity—knowledge as to the conditions of life beyond the grave; the certainty of a continued, connected existence life after life by the return of the ego from its subjective cycle through reincarnation. And it further assures us of a time when these lapses into forgetfulness between lives, which make death seem so terrible to those who do not know of its Beyond, will be bridged over by the union of our higher and lower egos in a perfected consciousness. This is the goal towards which we strive; towards which we would assist all humanity; the absolute unbroken continuity of life; the assurance of a conscious existence not only through the lesser cycle we know as sleep, but through its greater counterpart, its "grim sister," we know as death. Then, though we pass through the "valley of the shadow of death," we shall recognize it as only a shadow, for we shall also know that our "Redeemer," our immortal Higher Ego, our Christos within, liveth and shall

bear us safely not only through the dissolution of our decaying mortal bodies but through the awful grandeur of that time when the stars shall fall from their places and the "heavens be rolled together like a scroll."

Jerome A. Anderson, M. D., F. T. S.

WHEN THE GRASS SHALL COVER ME.

When the grass shall cover me
 Head to foot where I am lying ;
 When not any wind that blows,
 Summer-blooms nor Winter-snows
 Shall awake me to your sighing ;
 Close above me as you pass,
 You will say : " How kind she was,"
 You will say : " How true she was,"
 When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me
 Holden close to earth's warm bosom ;
 While I laugh, or weep, or sing,
 Nevermore, for anything,
 You will find in blade and blossom
 Sweet small voices—odorous,
 Tender pleaders in my cause,
 That will speak me as I was—
 When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me !
 Ah, beloved, in my sorrow
 Very patient, I can wait—
 Knowing that, or soon or late,
 There will dawn a clearer morrow :
 When your heart will moan : " Alas
 Now I know how true she was ;
 Now I know how dear she was"—
 When the grass grows over me !

—Ina D. Coolbrith.

THE ARRAIGNMENT OF ORTHODOXY.

I have no quarrel with any creed that expresses hope for all of the human race. I find fault with no one for filling the future with joy—for dreaming splendid dreams and for uttering splendid prophecies. I do not object to Christianity because it promises heaven to a few, but because it threatens the many with perdition.

It does not seem possible to me that a God who loved men to that degree that he died that they might be saved, abandons his children the moment they are dead. It seems to me that an infinite God might do something for a soul, after it has reached the other world.

Is it possible that infinite wisdom can do no more than is done for a majority of souls in this world? Think of the millions born in ignorance and filth, reared in poverty and crime. Think of the millions who are only partially developed in this world. Think of the weakness of the will, of the power of passion. Think of the temptations innumerable. Think, too, of the tyranny of man, of the arrogance of wealth and position, of the sufferings of the weak—and can we then say that an infinite God has done, in this world, all that could be done for the salvation of his children? Is it not barely possible that something may be done in another world? Is there nothing left for God to do for a poor, ignorant, criminal human soul, after it leaves this world? Can God do nothing except to pronounce the sentence of eternal pain?

If the orthodox creed be true, the universe is a vast blunder—an infinite crime. Better, a thousand times, that every pulse of life should cease—better that all the gods should fall palsied from their thrones, than that the creed of Christendom should be true, for then Christianity would be, and is, the bearer of a message of eternal grief, and a large majority of the human race are to become eternal convicts, whom God has deprived himself the power of pardoning. According to this creed no word of mercy to any of the lost can ever fall from the lips of the Infinite.

The Church has not been in the habit of pursuing enemies with kind words and charitable deeds. To tell the truth, it has always been rather relentless. It has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven. There is in the history of Christendom no instance where the Church has extended the hand of friendship to a man who denied the truth of its creed.

There is in the Church no spirit—no climate—of compromise. In the nature of things there can be none, because the Church claims that it is absolutely right—that there is only one road leading to heaven. It demands unconditional surrender. It will not bear contradiction. It claims to have the absolute truth. For these reasons it cannot consistently compromise, any more than a mathematician could change the multiplication table to meet the view of some one who should deny that five times five are twenty-five. It does not give its opinion it claims to know—it demands belief. Honesty, industry, generosity, count for nothing in the absence of belief. It has taught, and still teaches, that no man can reach heaven simply through good and honest deeds. It believes and teaches that the man who relies upon himself will be eternally punished—and why should the Church forgive a man whom it thinks its God is waiting somewhat impatiently to damn? The Bible upholds human slavery—white slavery. The Bible was quoted by all slave holders and its defenders. The man who went to Africa to steal women and children took the Bible with him. He planted himself firmly on the Word of God. As Whittier says of Whitfield :—

“ He bade the slave ship speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by winds of the Holy Ghost.”

So, when the poor wretches were sold to the planters, the planters defended their action by reading the Bible. When a poor woman was sold, her children torn from her breast, the auction block on which she stood was the Bible; the auctioneer who sold her quoted the Scriptures; the man who bought her repeated the quotations, and the ministers from the pulpit said to the weeping woman, as her child was carried away:—
“ Servants, be obedient unto your masters.”

The Church has been, and still is, the enemy of education; because it has been in favor of intellectual slavery, and the theological schools have been what might be called the deformitories of the human mind.

For instance :—A man is graduated from an orthodox university. In this university he has studied astronomy, and yet he believes that Joshua stopped the sun. He has studied geology, and yet he asserts the truth of the Mosaic cosmogony. He has studied chemistry, and yet believes that water was turned into wine. He has been taught the ordinary theory of cause and effect, and at the same time he thoroughly believes in the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes. Can such an in

stitution, with any propriety, be called a seat of learning? Can we not say of such a university what Bruno said of Oxford:—"Learning is dead and Oxford is its widow?"

The sciences have advanced in the proportions that they did not interfere with orthodox theology. To the extent that they were supposed to interfere with theology they have been obstructed and denounced. Astronomy was found to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, and the astronomers were imprisoned and despised. Geology contradicted the Mosaic account, and the geologists were denounced and persecuted. Every step taken in astronomy was taken in spite of the Church, and every fact in geology had to fight its way. The same is true as to the science of medicine. The Church wished to cure disease by necromancy, by charm and prayer, and with the bones of the saints. The Church wished man to rely entirely upon God—that is to say, upon the Church—and not upon himself. The physician interfered with the power and prosperity of the priest, and those who appealed to physicians were denounced as lacking faith in God. This state of things existed even in the Old Testament times. A king failed to send for the prophets, but sent for a physician, and then comes this piece of grim humor:—"And Asa slept with his fathers."

The writers who have done most for science have been the most bitterly opposed by the Church. There is hardly a valuable book in the libraries of the world that cannot be found in the "Index Expurgatorius." Kant and Fichte and Spinoza were far above and beyond the orthodox world. Voltaire did more for freedom than any other man, and yet the Church denounced him with a fury amounting to insanity—called him an atheist, although he believed not only in God, but in special providence. He was opposed to the Church—that is to say, opposed to slavery, and for that reason he was despised.

And what shall I say of D'Holbach, of Hume, of Buckle, of Draper, of Haeckel, of Buchner, of Tyndall and Huxley, of Aguste Comte, of Bruno—one of the greatest and bravest of men greatest of all martyrs who perished at the stake because he insisted on the existence of other worlds and taught the astronomy of Galileo—of Humboldt, of Darwin, and hundreds and thousands of others who have filled the scientific world with light and the heart of man with love and kindness?

The Christian nations of the world to-day are armed against each other. In Europe, all that can be gathered by taxation—

all that can be borrowed by pledging the prosperity of the future—the labor of those yet unborn—is used for the purpose of keeping Christians in the field, to the end that they may destroy other Christians, or at least prevent other Christians from destroying them. Europe is covered with churches and fortifications, with temples and with forts—hundreds of thousands of priests, millions of soldiers, countless Bibles and countless bayonets—and that whole country is oppressed and impoverished for the purpose of carrying on war. The people have become deformed by labor, and yet Christianity boasts of peace.

Christianity teaches that all offenses can be forgiven. Every Church unconsciously allows people to commit crimes on a credit. I do not mean by this that any Church consciously advocates immorality. I most cheerfully admit that thousands and thousands of ministers are endeavoring to do good—that they are pure, self-denying men, trying to make this world better. But there is a frightful defect in their philosophy. They say to the bank cashier:—"You shall not steal, you must not take a dollar—larceny is wrong, it is contrary to all law, human and divine—but if you take every cent in the bank, God will as quickly forgive you in Canada as he will in the United States." On the other hand, what is called infidelity says:—"There is no Being in the universe who rewards, and there is no Being who punishes—every act has its consequences. If the act is good, the consequences are good; if the act is bad, the consequences are bad; and these consequences must be borne by the actor. It says to every human being:—"You must reap what you sow. There is no reward, there is no punishment, but there are consequences, and these consequences are the invisible and implacable police of nature. They cannot be avoided. They cannot be bribed. No power can awe them, and there is not gold enough in the world to make them pause. Even a God cannot induce them to release for one instant their victim.

This great truth is, in my judgment, the gospel of morality. If all men knew that they must inevitably bear the consequences of their own actions—if they absolutely knew that they could not injure another without injuring themselves, the world, in my judgment, would be far better than it is.

—*Robert G. Ingersoll, in the New York Evening Telegram.*

THE NECESSITY FOR REINCARNATION.

To most persons not already Theosophists, no doctrine appears more singular than that of Reincarnation, *i. e.*, that each man is repeatedly born into earth-life; for the usual belief is that we are here but once, and once for all determine our future. And yet it is abundantly clear that one life, even if prolonged, is no more adequate to gain knowledge, acquire experience, solidify principle, and form character, than would one day in infancy be adequate to fit for the duties of mature manhood. Any man can make this even clearer by estimating, on the one hand, the probable future which Nature contemplates for humanity, and, on the other, his present preparation for it. That future includes evidently two things—an elevation of the individual to god-like excellence, and his gradual apprehension of the Universe of Truth. His present preparation therefor consists of a very imperfect knowledge of a very small department of one form of existence, and that mainly gained through the partial use of misleading senses; of a suspicion, rather than a belief, that the sphere of super-sensuous truth may exceed the sensuous as the great universe does this earth; of a partially-developed set of moral and spiritual faculties, none acute and none unhampered, but all dwarfed by non-use, poisoned by prejudice, and perverted by ignorance; the whole nature, moreover, being limited in its interests and affected in its endeavor by the ever-present needs of a physical body which, much more than the soul, is felt to be the real "I." Is such a being, narrow, biassed, carnal, sickly, fitted to enter at death on a limitless career of spiritual acquisition?

Now, there are only three ways in which this obvious unfitness may be overcome,—a transforming power in death, a post-mortem and wholly spiritual discipline, a series of re-incarnations. There is evidently nothing in the mere separation of soul from body to confer wisdom, enoble character, or cancel dispositions acquired through fleshliness. If any such power resided in death, all souls, upon being disembodied, would be precisely alike,—a palpable absurdity. Nor could a post-mortem discipline meet the requirement, and this for nine reasons: (*a*) the soul's knowledge of human life would always remain insignificant; (*b*) of the various faculties only to be developed during incarnation, some would still be dormant at death, and therefore never evolve; (*c*) the unsatisfying nature of material life would not have been fully demonstrated; (*d*) there would have been no deliberate conquest of the flesh by the spirit; (*e*) the meaning of Universal Brotherhood would have been very imperfectly seen; (*f*) desire for a career on earth under different conditions would persistently check the disciplinary process; (*g*) exact justice could hardly be secured; (*h*) the discipline itself would be insufficiently varied and copious; (*i*) there would be no advance in the successive races on earth.

There remains, then, the last alternative, a series of reincarnations,—in other words, that the enduring principle of the man, endowed during each interval between two earth-lives with the results achieved in the former of them, shall return for further experience and effort. If the nine needs unmet by a merely spiritual discipline after death are met by reincarnation, there is surely a strong presumption of its actuality.

Now, (a) *Only through reincarnations can knowledge of human life be made exhaustive.* A perfected man must have experienced every type of earthly relation and duty, every phase of desire, affection, and passion, every form of temptation and every variety of conflict. No one life can possibly furnish the material for more than a minute section of such experience.

(b) *Reincarnations give occasion for the development of all those faculties which can only be developed during incarnation.* Apart from any questions raised by Occult doctrine, we can readily see that some of the richest soul-acquirements come only through contact with human relations and through suffering from human ills. Of these, sympathy, toleration, patience, energy, fortitude, foresight, gratitude, pity, beneficence, and altruism are examples.

(c) *Only through re-incarnations is the unsatisfying nature of material life fully demonstrated.* One incarnation proves merely the futility of its own conditions to secure happiness. To force home the truth that all are equally so, all must be tried. In time the soul sees that a spiritual being cannot be nourished on inferior food, and that any joy short of union with the Divine must be illusionary.

(d) *The subordination of the Lower to the Higher nature is made possible by many earth-lives.* Not a few are needed to convince that the body is but a case, and not a constituent, of the real Ego; others, that it and its passions must be controlled by that Ego. Until the spirit has full sway over the flesh, the man is unfit for a purely spiritual existence. We have known no one to achieve such a victory during this life, and are therefore sure that other lives need to supplement it.

(e) *The meaning of Universal Brotherhood becomes apparent only as the veil of self and selfish interest thins,* and this it does only through that slow emancipation from conventional beliefs, personal errors, and contracted views which a series of reincarnations effects. A deep sense of human solidarity presupposes a fusion of the one in the whole,—a process extending over many lives.

(f) *Desire for other forms of earthly experience can only be extinguished by undergoing them.* It is obvious that any one of us, if now translated to the unseen world, would feel regret that he had not tasted existence in some other situation or surroundings. He would wish to have known what it was to possess rank or wealth or beauty, or to live in a different race or climate, or to see more of the world and society. No

spiritual ascent could progress while earthly longings were dragging back the soul, and so it frees itself from them by successively securing and dropping them. When the round of such knowledge has been traversed, regret for ignorance has died out.

(g) *Reincarnations give scope for exact justice to every man.* True awards must be given largely on the plane whereon they have been incurred, else their nature is changed, their effects are impaired, and their collateral bearings lost. Physical outrage has to be checked by the infliction of physical pain, and not merely by the arousing of internal regret. Honest lives find appropriate consequence in visible honor. But one career is too short for the precise balancing of accounts, and many are needed that every good or evil done in each may be requited on the earth where it took place.

(h) *Reincarnations secure variety and copiousness to the discipline we all require.* Very much of this discipline comes through the senses, through the conditions of physical life, and through psycho-physiological processes,—all of which would be absent from a post-mortem state. Considered as training or as penal infliction for wrong done, a repeated return to earth is needful for fulness of discipline.

(i) *Reincarnations ensure a continuous advance in the successive races of men.* If each new-born child was a new soul-creation, there would be, except through heredity, no general human advance. But if such child is the flower of many incarnations, he expresses an achieved past as well as a possible future. The tide of life thus rises to greater heights, each wave mounting higher upon the shore. The grand evolution of richer types exacts profusion of earth-existences for its success.

These points illustrate the universal maxim that "Nature does nothing by leaps." She does not, in this case, introduce into a region of spirit and spiritual life a being who has known little else than matter and material life, with small comprehension even of that. To do so would be analogous to transferring suddenly a ploughboy into a company of metaphysicians. The pursuit of any topic implies some preliminary acquaintance with its nature, aims, and mental requirements; and the more elevated the topic, the more copious the preparation for it. It is inevitable that a being who has before him an eternity of progress through zones of knowledge and spiritual experience ever nearing the central Sun, should be fitted for it through long acquisition of the faculties which alone can deal with it. Their delicacy, their vigor, their penetrativeness, their unlikeness to those called for on the material plane, show the contrast of the earth-life to the spirit-life. And they show, too, the inconceivability of a sudden transition from one to the other, of a policy unknown in any other department of Nature's workings, of a break in the law of uplifting through Evolution. A man, before he can become a "god," must first become a perfect man; and he can become a perfect

man neither in seventy years of life on earth, nor in any number of years of life from which human conditions are absent.

The production of a pure, rich, ethereal nature through a long course of spiritualizing influence during material surroundings is illustrated in agriculture by the cotton plant. When the time arrives that it can bear, the various vitalities of sun and air and ground and stalk culminate in a bud which bursts apart and liberates the ball within. That white, fleecy, delicate mass is the outcome of years of adhesion to the soil. But the sunlight and the rain from heaven have transformed heavy particles into the light fabric of the boll. And so man, long rooted in the clay, is bathed with influences from above, which, as they gradually pervade and elevate him, transmute every grosser element to its spiritual equivalent, purge and purify and ennoble him, and, when the evolutionary process is complete, remove the last envelope from the perfected soul and leave it free to pass for ever from its union with the material.

It is abundantly true that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Re-birth and re-life must go on till their purposes are accomplished. If, indeed, we were mere victims of an evolutionary law, helpless atoms on whom the machinery of Nature pitilessly played, the prospect of a succession of incarnations, no one of which gave satisfaction, might drive to mad despair. But Theosophy thrusts on us no such cheerless exposition. It shows that re-incarnations are the law for man because they are the condition of his progress, which is also a law, but tells him that he may mould them and better them and lessen them. He cannot rid himself of the machinery, but neither should he wish to. Endowed with the power to guide it for the best, prompted with the motive to use that power, he may harmonize both his aspirations and his efforts with the system that expresses the infinite wisdom of the Supreme, and through the journey from the temporal to the eternal tread the way with steady feet, braced with the consciousness that he is one of an innumerable multitude, and with the certainty that he and they alike, if they so will it, may attain finally to that sphere where birth and death are but memories of the past.

GIVE us, oh, give us the man who sings at his work! One is scarcely sensible to fatigue when he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness; altogether past calculation its power of endurance. Efforts, to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous, a spirit all sunshine, graceful from very gladness, beautiful because bright.—*Carlyle.*

THE CONVENTION AT ADYAR, MADRAS.

In a private letter recently received, Colonel Olcott, the President of the T. S., writes :

“We never had a more successful or interesting a convention than this. One striking feature was the presence of a number of intelligent, well educated and influential women, viz ; Miss F. H. Müller, of England ; Dr. Alice B. Storkham and Dr. Emily B. Rider, of U. S. A. (the latter now of Bombay) ; Mrs. Musæus Higgins, Colorado ; Miss Anna Bolland, journalist, U. S. A., and Mrs. Storey. All have been charmed with the Headquarters, the Convention, and the Delegates.

“This year we had a Lama Delegate from the Tibetan Great Lama, assary, at Pekin. His brother is Governor of Lhasa. Occult results are to follow.”

CONSCIOUSNESS.

Webster defines Consciousness as 1. the knowledge of sensations or mental operations, or of what passes in one's own mind. 2. The act of the mind which makes known an internal object. 3. Immediate knowledge of any object whatever. Whether self-consciousness is the product of physical evolution, or its accompanying phenomenon, is a question upon which modern science and philosophy appear to be somewhat divided. Properly speaking, Science is a term which should include all forms of knowledge. Modern Materialistic Science, however, is limited in its field of observation and experiment to the grosser forms of matter, those effects produced upon the consciousness through the organs of sensation. Since with scalpel and microscope it is unable to penetrate the mystery of being, it arrives at the illogical conclusion that Consciousness, in its varied modes of organic manifestation, is but the product of cerebration, or an automatic action of nervous centers, while “Will” as one aspect of consciousness is gravely postulated as a more complicated form of reflex action of these nervous plexi.

To the materialist, the entire Universe, with its myriad forms of manifested life, and its countless adaptations, is but the result of blind, unconscious force, ever creating, preserving and destroying, out of senseless matter, certain forms, the conscious-

ness of which is higher in the scale of evolution than its own. The spontaneous motion of the molecules of matter is set forth by Hæckel and Buchner as being the original of life. But the cause of Motion is not yet accounted for; thus this philosophy of life is incomplete. This hypothetical creation of living children from dead parents, of a stream rising higher than its source, we would gladly pass in silence were its effects limited to its inventors. But when, as materialistic specialists, they attempt to sit in judgment over the intellect of man, we should not be condemned for exposing their pretensions, as is admirably depicted by the author of "Spiritism and Fakirism", in his latest work and quoted in "Lucifer."*

"A number of persons extremely enlightened on some special point of science take upon themselves the right of pronouncing arbitrarily their judgment on all things; are ready to reject everything new which shocks their ideas, often for the sole reason that if it were true they could not remain ignorant of it. For my part I have often met this kind of self sufficiency in men whom their knowledge and scientific studies ought to have preserved from such a sad moral infirmity, had they not been specialists, holding to their specialty. It is a sign of relative inferiority to believe oneself superior. In truth the number of intellects afflicted with such gaps (lacunes) is larger than is commonly believed. As there are individuals completely refractory to the study of music, of mathematics, etc., so there are others to whom certain areas of thought are closed. Such of these as might have distinguished themselves in . . . medicine, or literature, would probably have signally failed in any occupation outside of what I will call their lucid zone, by comparison with the action of those reflectors, which, during night, throw their light into a zone of luminous rays, outside of which all is gloomy shadow and uncertainty. Every human being has his own lucid zone, the extension, range and degree of luminosity of which, varies with each individual. There are things which lie outside the conceptivity of certain intellects; they are outside their lucid zone."

The force of this criticism may be evidenced by the writings of that eminent scientific specialist Professor Huxley, F. R. S., who in his Essay on Animal Automatism attempts to show:

"That a series of propositions which constitute the foundation and essence of the modern physiology of the nervous system are fully expressed and illustrated in the works of Descartes. By ingenious adaption of the teachings of Descartes, such as are suited to his purpose, and by cursory rejection of those portions which are not: it may appear to some that he has proven his position. Let us compare the first of these propositions with the teachings of Descartes. Says science: 'The Brain is the organ of sensation, thought and emotion. That is to say, some change in the condition of the matter of this organ is the invariable antecedent of the state of consciousness to which these terms are applied. In support of this proposition, Descartes† is thus quoted by the professor. Although the soul is united to the whole body, its principal functions are, nevertheless, performed in the brain. It is here that it (the soul) not only understands and imagines, but also feels; and this is effected by the nerves, which extend in the form of delicate threads from the brain to all parts of the body, to which they are attached in such a manner that we can hardly touch any part of the body without setting the extremity of some nerve in motion. This motion passes along the nerve to that part of the brain which is the common sensorium . .

* April No. 1891.

† *Principles de la Philosophie.*

and the movements which thus travel along the nerves, as far as that part of the brain with which the soul is closely joined and united, cause it, by reason of their diverse characters to have different thoughts. And it is these different thoughts of the Soul, which arise immediately from the movements that are excited by the nerves in the brain, which we properly term our feelings, or the perceptions of our senses."

Elsewhere Descartes says :*

"The opinion of those who think that the soul receives its passions in the heart is of no weight, for it is based upon the fact that the passions cause a change to be felt in that organ." . . .

And after describing this sensation in the heart as proceeding from the brain, he adds :

"So that it is no more necessary for the soul to exert its functions immediately in the heart, to feel its passions there, than it is necessary that it should be in the heavens to see the stars there."

Professor Huxley† in his attempts to reconcile these apparent contradictions maintains that :

"Modern physiology aided by pathology easily demonstrates that the brain is the seat of all forms of consciousness, and fully bears out Descartes' explanation of the reference of those sensations in the viscera, which accompany intense emotion, to these organs. It proves, directly that those states of consciousness which we call sensations are the immediate consequence of a change in the brain excited by the sensory nerves, and, says the Professor, on the well known effects of injuries, of stimulants and of narcotics, it bases the conclusion that thought and emotion are, in like manner, the consequences of physical antecedents."

That the brain is the organ through which consciousness experiences sensation we cannot deny.

That molecular vibration of the brain antecedes sensation has been fairly demonstrated. But upon what facts, may we ask, does science base this conclusion regarding thought and emotion? None; for injuries, stimulants and narcotics alike produce their first effects upon the sensory nerves and are therefore but the causes of sensation and can effect the thoughts and emotions only so far as they are necessarily modified by these sensations or cerebral vibrations which also accompany the emotions and the thoughts. Thus it would be difficult for a person while undergoing the amputation of his left hand to inscribe a thoughtful treatise with his right.

What physical antecedent produced the "Principia" of Newton? What aggregate of material processes the Geometry of Euclid? To what stimulant can we attribute the discoveries of Galileo, and Harvey? To what narcotic the plays of Shakespeare? Whence come these thoughts and emotions that are independent of physical impressions or sensation? Before this problem materialism is silent. Says Professor Huxley :

* "*Les Passions de l'Ame.*"

† Animal Automatism.

"What consciousness is we know not ; and how it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as the result of irritating nervous tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the Djin when Aladdin rubbed his lamp, in the story."

Man, according to the professor, is but "a conscious automaton, endowed with free will." This curious machine, which is at once automatic and yet has a will of its own, presents a singular anomaly : Again, asks Professor Tyndall :

"Can you satisfy the human understanding in its demand for logical continuity between molecular processes and the phenomena of consciousness ?

He answers :

"This is a rock on which materialism must inevitably split whenever it pretends to be a complete philosophy of life."

Sterling in treating of this subject says :*

"How any material impressions should awake thought, but still more, how, in independence of all impressions, thought should be all the while there, alive and active—a world by itself—that is the mystery. And that no scalpel, no microscope, will ever explain. Mechanical balances, the most delicate, chemical tests, the most sensitive, are all powerless there. And why? Simply because consciousness and they are incommensurable, of another nature, of another world from the first, sundered from each other, as I have said, by the whole diameter of being."

(To be continued.)

Geo. P. Keeney, F. T. S.

THE Church of to-day, much more the church of the future, must take to its heart the duty of combining and massing its forces against that gigantic atrocity, that diabolical conspiracy, that nameless *monstrum horrendum* of Christian civilization, that mothers nine-tenths of the woes and sorrows which blight and curse our modern age—the traffic in intoxicants, which hides its deformity under forms of law. How long shall the face of our Christian age blister with this worse than Pagan shame? Has the virtue of our time degenerated so low that we do not even blush at the legislated traffic in the souls of our own children? That by the very doors of our own homes and our temples an army of miscreants should by authorization of laws, made by Christian law-givers, prosecute a work of murder and death? Are we reduced to the shame of admitting that a civilization which has grown up about our altars is impotent to cure the evil? How can we go to the Heathen with this cancer of worse than Heathen infamy festering in our bosom?—*Bishop R. S. Foster.*

* Life in Nature.

THEOSOPHY IN AFRICA.

Colonel H. S. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society; writes to us from Adyar:—"I have been struck, upon reading in Thursday's paper your very interesting review of Mr. Stuttfeld's 'The Brethren of Mount Atlas,' with the fresh proof it affords that the romancer and poet often unwittingly stumble upon important truths. Though he intends his book as a pot-boiler and selects the subject of Theosophy as his most promising card at the moment, yet there is in reality an adept brotherhood in Africa, where it has existed since the remotest ages. Its seat is elsewhere than on the Atlas range; but that does not matter. It is a section of an universal Brotherhood composed of members of all nations and creeds, who occupy themselves in the acquisition of knowledge and altruistic efforts to benefit mankind morally and spiritually. They find their agents wherever there are good men and women who dream philanthropic dreams and are impelled to work in any way for their brother man. When such willing workers band together into a Society without selfish motives, then these hidden benefactors are drawn to them, inspire their zeal, and help to make their way smooth. Race and creed are not even considered, for these are only bars to the lower self. They themselves are of all nations and have evolved out of all the world's religions. I speak from personal knowledge. Before I came into contact with the Indian Section of the Blessed Brotherhood I was under a Teacher of the African Section, and saw him last in Egypt, while passing through to India, in 1879. From him I received the ethical and philosophical instruction which I needed at that stage. I shall not divulge his name nor tell where is the African Headquarters, but if you will drive out to Adyar some day I will show you in confidence a document in which he had a hand, and which you will admit to be a most interesting case of telepathy, or psychical rapport. The invitation is not extended to third parties, as I have had enough of giving sacred things to be trampled in the mire. The instance of Mr. Stuttfeld's accidental find of the African Adepts reminds me of a similar instance in the case of the late Wilkie Collins. Writing to me about a notice in the *Theosophist* of his strange novel 'Two Destinies,' in which I explained scientifically the phenomena of projection of the thought-body and the precipitation of writing by will-power, described

in his book, he declared that among the many strange incidents in his eventful life none had so struck him with surprise as the fact, shown by me, that he had unconsciously hit upon principles of occult science when he thought he was exercising the purely imaginative faculty. And he said his only regret was that I had not been his friend while he was writing the book, as he might have made it better. The late Charles Reade had told him that he, Wilkie Collins, had written more into the novel than he suspected. The simple fact is, as these two and many more examples prove, that when men forget their physical selves and surroundings and pass into the creative realm of the 'imagination,' they are on a plane of consciousness where they get glimpses of arcane truth hidden from them in the normal waking state."—*Madras Mail*.

THE KABBALA AND ANCIENT AND MODERN KABBALISTS.

Philologically the Kabbala is much older than I care to discuss in the present paper. Its root is KBL, "to receive;" its Hebraic meaning is supposed to apply to the Oral Law; or, in fact, to all laws, interpretations and exegetical explanations deduced from but not found in the Bible. As a proper name, the Kabbala signifies, "Traditional Secret Doctrine." Various synonyms, like *Chochmah Nisthara* (Secret Wisdom) and *Pardes*, the "Paradise of Knowledge," are expressive of what the *Mekubalim*, the Hebrew Adepts are pleased to call the science of God, World, Man, Revelation and Law.

As a speculative and independent philosophy the Kabbala became first known during the 16th century after Christ. It differs from the anthropomorphism of Hebrew Mystics, of the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries after Christ. Its predecessors were the Secret Doctrine, of the Talmud, (from 300 B. C. to 600 A. D.) and the philosophy of the Mystics. The Kabbala goes far beyond either of these, and is the true Theosophy of the Hebrews. The Mystics are regarded unfavorably by the adherents of the Kabbala and considered vulgar. In the book, *Zohar*, (*Zohar* 11, p. 42) the doctrine of the Mystics is under anathema, and is called such names as "slave" and "stranger." The Kabbalists emphasise this by saying that one is cursed who makes or gives any form to AYIN SOPH.* The Mystics give God's

measure as follows: "From one world to another world there is a distance of 236 Miriades Parsangs; each Parsang is 2,000,000 feet long; and this doubled is the measure of the Mystic God." It is fortunate for the Mystic God that life is too short to examine the correctness of this measure: otherwise, he would surely find some one in America who would expose him—for a consideration—and think of the humiliation.

The Kabbala, like modern Theosophy, is divided into two parts. There is the practical Kabbala—*Kabbala Massioth*—and the theoretical Kabbala—*Kabbala Injunith*. Taking the Bible as a first postulate, the Kabbala treats upon every conceivable subject. Permit me to quote a few which it discourses upon, according to its own lights. These are: God, World, Creation, Man, Soul, Spirit, Spooks, Angels, Demons, Revelation, Law, Prophecy, Freedom, Sin, Prayer, Forgiveness, Offerings, Exile, Messiah, The Kingdom of the Messiah, Cosmothetic Existences, Divine Providence, Punishment, Judgment Day, The Hereafter, the End of the World, and a multitude of other subjects too numerous to mention. Regarding the doctrine of God, it is interesting to know that the Kabbala offers no evidence as to the existence of God, but gives a definition of his being. It takes the positive stand of the Bible, and presupposes the existence of a Creator, who is recognized only by his works. The Logos is simply an AYIN—a NOTHING. He is the most secret of the secret, and regarding his Knowableness he is termed AYIN SOPH, the Endless.

The Tetragrammaton, of the Kabbalists, is quite inexpressible. It contains 72 letters. There are over 92 different names for the Logos. The Kabbalist and Initiate, who by some is supposed to have been the author of the Zohar—the Bible of the Kabbalists—was Hai Gaan, who lived in the 10th century. Others ascribe it to Sixben Jodhai. But even that date is much too early. I am almost convinced that the Zohar was written during the 12th century. The Sephiroth of the Kabbala are identical with the Logoi of Philo, being the medium between God and the World. These Logoi are properly speaking intelligences, or, as the Zohar expresses it, "beams emanating from the AYIN SOPH that radiate upon the world in a creative capacity." But this idea was fought against most bitterly by some of the most prominent Rabbis of the 13th,

* Assar Iemebed tzura udiokena bealma. Also written Ain Soph.

14th and 15th centuries. The difference of opinion regarding the nature of the Sephiroth was a conspicuous feature among the Kabbalists of as late as the 17th century; some maintaining that the Sephiroth are emanations from the AYIN SOPH and of the same nature; while others as strenuously objected to this line of explanation, claiming that the Sephiroth are merely the qualifications of the AYIN SOPH, but not himself nor of any creative capacity.

I am forced to omit much that might have been of interest to many, as, for instance, the various positions of the various names by which the Kabbalists know, or imagine they do, the mysterious power of the Tetragrammaton. This, however, belongs to that portion of the Kabbala termed the theoretical or speculative Kabbala, which may or may not be correct—I do not know. I say with Goethe, “Ein Kerl, der speculirt, ist wie ein Thier auf duerrer Heide von einem boesen Geist im Kreis herum gefuehrt und ringsherum liegt, schoene gruene Weide.” Which, roughly translated, means that a fellow is most undoubtedly an ass who permits every phantom to lead him by the ears.

The speculative Kabbala lacks all interest because it dabbles in things it cannot prove; it speculates without the smallest chance of verification. The practical Kabbala is different. It comes nearer to what may be grasped; it is in fact the ethical portion of the Kabbala. Practical Kabbalists were the Pharisees and the Essenes, of the pre-Christian period. In fact, all the Prophets, Jesus included, were Kabbalists. All Orientalists are Kabbalists, by which I mean that, primarily, oriental people loved to teach law and legend by word of mouth. It is the romance of the Orientalists. The teacher gave oral instruction to his pupils. The latter, being the receivers, are therefore styled Kabbalists; from *Kabal* “to receive.” In this manner, the Rabbins claim, Moses received the Law from Jehovah, transmitting it, then, to others. The Rabbis from the year 70 A. D. until 425 A. D., were all—or nearly all—practical Kabbalists. Then there came a time when there was a great lull in Kabbalistic discussions and practices. The Jews, under the Moors in Spain, rose to opulence and high station and all Messianic speculations ceased. In fact, the Jews in Spain lived as happy and contented, and perhaps more so, than in Palestine.

In Babylon flourished a school of men who took occasional flights toward the realm of the Unknowable, otherwise all was tranquil until Catholicism drove the Half-Moon from the bat-

lements of the Alhambra, and placed the thumbscrews upon the Jews. In their trouble, they took to study and speculation, and though some of them rose to the very highest positions in the land, like Don Isaac Abarbael, Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs to Alphonse, of Spain. Yet even his writings are not free from that silly speculativeness which borders on the ridiculous.

In Russia and Poland, where the Jews settled after being driven from Spain, the Kabbalists rose again. But they were not satisfied with speculation, then made a business out of their knowledge. They sold talismans, healed the sick, and accomplished other miracles—for a consideration. This practical portion of the Kabbala was fraught with many dangers, the proprietors of the business claimed; and those seeking advice therefore had to become submissive slaves to the “men of wonderful powers,” and these “men of magic” never failed to take advantage of the popular credulity. They announced themselves as Messiahs and found adherents. In this manner the Jews experienced the rise and fall of 64 men, each of whom claimed the exclusive right of being a Messiah. The last of these, Sabbathai Zevy was the greatest fraud of them all. He was the son of a poultry dealer, and in the year 1643, at 18 years of age, was famous as a public teacher. Born in Smyrna, and endowed with a wonderful imagination, vast learning and a great reputation for piety, he proclaimed himself, in the year 1648 the only and true Messiah. As the Jews had suffered a great deal from Russian persecution (over 100,000 Jews being massacred in the Ukraine) it became an easy matter for the false Messiah to gain followers, especially as he promised them Palestine and a splendid future. But why dwell upon this subject? he was exposed, and to save himself embraced Mohammedanism. He died in 1673 in Belgrade, an exile despised and cursed.

An even now the Kabbalists are at work. Some are quite learned and honest, while others—and these are in the majority—make their Kabbalistic magic a stepping stone to ease and wealth.

One must have seen these miracle workers to appreciate the matter. One must have observed those faithful adherents in their tri-annual pilgrimage to the “Holy One,” as the chief Kabbalist is styled, to appreciate the credulousness and enthusiasm which, being begotten by blind ignorance, permeates these creatures.

The true Kabbala, that is, the transmission and reception of

Divine Truths, is not the sole property of the Jews. Truth is found everywhere; it requires the sapient counsel of those who are open to truth to eliminate it from the shell of illusion and deceit. Aspiration towards the highest, even, is undesirable if it takes the speculative form. To live in harmony, to work for the fraternisation of mankind, and to teach eternally the divine lessons of truth is the practical Kabbala.

Dr. G. A. Danziger, F. T. S.

SPEAK PLAINLY.

Speak all thy thoughts, O Thinker! howsoe'er
 They flout the speculation of the age,
 Its pet conceits or phantasies; speak on,
 Marshal thy thoughts like phalanxes of horses;
 Scattes the idle dreamers of the time.
 The phantom hosts of popular ignorance
 Shall strike their cloudy tents, and silently
 Shrink to their own nonentity again.
 The age needs plainness and simplicity;
 To mystify the people is the trick
 Of painted harlequins throughout the land,
 Be true, O Thinker! to thy nature's law,
 And borrow not another's style, but speak
 Thine own brave thoughts in thine own spirit's tongue,
 Call things by their right names, right minds shall hear.

—*Anonomous.*

IF our way-back grandfather Adam used any land (and he did, for no man can exist without it) he neither paid rent nor was he obliged to pay some syndicate a big price for a title. When he got through with it the next users got it on the same terms. Why, when and how was the system changed? When did warranty deed become necessary?—*Iowa Farmers Tribune.*

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

In a short review of the life of the great mathematician and scientist, Father Joseph Bayma, of Santa Clara, California, W. C. Morrow has brought to notice more than one point in which, by pure mathematics, Father Bayma had arrived at conclusions held by Occultists from purely metaphysical reasoning. This will not surprise the latter, for they know that truth is one, and that this ONE may be approached by many avenues. Therefore, if mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, or other aids or vehicles for the human reason be really true, they ought to arrive at common conclusions upon any clearly-defined subject. And in proportion to their differences, as in the estimates of geology and astronomy concerning the age of the earth, may we justly suspect error either in their methods or conclusions.

One of these points is in the apparent emptiness of the space surrounding the earth. To us, the air is almost imponderable, while the ether—language fails to express its utter tenuity and imponderability, according to scientific teachings; Newton, for example, estimating its density, compared to air, as 1 to 700,000. Yet Occultism holds directly the contrary, and Madame Blavatsky has well expressed its conception by likening our apparent freedom in space to the condition of a fly entombed in a ball of pitch. The force liberated by Keeley from "airy nothingness" ought to have awakened our suspicion as to the terrible potentialities of energy about us, and from which we are only secured from instant annihilation by our being so completely unrelated and unresponsive to it. Still, it is of most absorbing interest to find Father Bayma declaring, upon purely mathematical data that ether "is really vastly denser than air."

Another point in regard to which Occultism and Father Bayma are at one is as to the ultimate—from the physical plane—division of matter. He quite rejects the hypothetical and "indivisible" atom, of science, substituting an inconceivably [physically, not mathematically], small portion of matter, which he terms a molecule. Yet he seems, if his reviewer has understood his position accurately, to have fallen into the common error as to the nature of the atomic theory, taught by Epictetus and the older Grecian philosophers. Briefly stated, this is that the atom is the informing intelligence of the very molecule which Father Bayma postulates, or the consciousness which is at the base of those "affinities" which cause it to select certain combinations and reject others. Of course, we already hear the shriek, "blind force," from the agnostic ranks, but their day of triumph is past—thanks, in part at least, to such men as this quiet, scholarly Catholic priest.

If anything were really wanting to show how completely Christianity has lost all moral and ethical influence over the masses, it is to be found in the way our great newspapers treat religious subjects. When Jay Gould recently secured an option on a preferred "mansion in heaven" upon the payment of \$10,000 cash to the Presbyterian Church, San Francisco's greatest daily devoted more than a column to a caustic criticism and biting

sarcasm upon the transaction, which a few hundred years since would have sent its whole editorial department to the stake, and fifty years ago would have ruined it financially, but which to-day does not cause even a clerical subscriber to "stop his paper." Speaking of the gathering of the divines to welcome this exceedingly fleecy and fleecing "lamb" to the fold, the writer uses the following language, which is true and forcible enough to bear quoting here. He says :

"We remember that many of these divines were probably present in their official capacity, and we are charitable enough to hope that some of them did not burst their gloves in applauding Mr. Gould. But we do not see how the assembly as a whole can be excused from the charge of having given religious sanction to a very vulgar exhibition of toadying to mere wealth. One of the clergymen who spoke on the duty of generosity and the dangers of selfishness which beset the rich, closed with an apology for venturing to treat of such a subject in such a presence. We cannot refrain from putting his words alongside those of a writer who seems to be getting old-fashioned in religious circles :"

A Presbyterian of the Nineteenth Century. | *A Presbyterian of the first Century.*

I hope I haven't spoken in such a way as to give offense to any one of our guests, or to our host, Mr. Gould.

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted—your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you. Behold, the hire of laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth aloud, etc.

Shades of burning Bruno, how the "glory has departed from Israel" when such a criticism is published and endorsed by journals who make it the study of their existence to "please" the public! Truly, if Christ were really betrayed in Gethsemane, that were a venial crime to the betrayal of these 19th century Christians in so debauching his teachings that such a criticism were possible!

NOTES.

THE ARYAN BRANCH of the T. S., at New York, has purchased a building to use as a General Headquarters for the American Section, at a cost of \$42,500. It is situated at No. 144 Madison Ave. The ashes of Madame Blavatsky will be preserved there, and it will no doubt soon become a kind of Mecca for American Theosophists. Maybe an incarnation of Crœsus has occurred in the Aryan Branch; at any rate, they are to be congratulated, and envied—mildly, of course.

DR. ALLEN GRIFFITHS, the Coast Lecturer, began his work in February, at San Diego, from which point he will slowly work northward, leaving no accessible spot unvisited where there is the slightest hope of arousing an interest in Theosophy. Let there be "a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together," by the Local Branches and Members at Large wherever he may go. The Coast ought to be studded with local Branches before the tidal wave of the closing cycle ebbs, and that it will be the

present generous and united efforts of our Western Theosophists affords every promise.

The following clipping is inserted to show how honest-minded people regard the silly and ignorant attacks upon Theosophy, which still occasionally appear in the lower Press. It is not the first time an entire stranger has come to its defense solely because of the glaring injustice of the criticisms published. Annie Besant was thus first interested.

To the editor of the Examiner—Sir: I was somewhat surprised to read an article like that entitled "A Theosophic Fraud Exposed" in the pages of what purports to be the leading paper of San Francisco.

Although only calculated to mislead the ignorant, yet many well-meaning persons who are unacquainted with the pure ethics and sublime philosophy of the wisdom-religion would be led to suppose that theosophy is an emanation from spiritualism, or a semi-lunatic, wholly fraudulent society of cranks.

As the press is in a great degree the pioneer of thought in this nineteenth century, the public have a right to expect and demand that its representatives at least possess an elementary knowledge of the subjects on which they write.

The press in my own country (England) have long since opened their columns to the discussions of theosophic questions, which naturally attract more attention from the scientific and literary world than the Mother Hubbard tales of orthodoxy.

I am traveling through California, and am not a theosophist, but when I see a person or a body maligned or misrepresented, I feel impelled to protest against it, although I do not suppose a society numbering amongst its adherents such men as Crookes, Varley, Edison, Wallace, Zollner, Olcott and men of similar mental caliber needs an apology from my pen, or will be materially benefited by aught I can say in its favor.

Faithfully yours, GEORGE ELSLEY.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES REVIEWED.

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY.*

Titles of books very frequently give hardly a hint of the contents, but this is a genuine Handbook or as the title page still further explains, it is "An Outline of Theosophical Teachings relating to man, the Universe, Occultism, etc." It contains nine chapters, a preface by Mrs. Annie Besant, and a conclusion.

Members of the Theosophical Society are often asked by beginners, What book shall we first read? and the answers have been various; no book being exactly adapted to interest and enlighten those who have just begun to know something of the Wisdom Religion. Some have been too brief, others written in a style unnecessarily obscure. In this volume we have what has long been desired, a book to be placed in the hands of enquirers which shall partially satisfy their curiosity and at the same time shall awaken such an interest in the subject that the reader will want other books. Mr. Olds has written in a simple way, in general using words of which everyone knows the meaning, and translating the transcendental ideas of Theosophy into language more easily understood. In some respects, this is the best book which has appeared; some topics are put before the reader in a clearer way than by any other author. Chapter II, on the universe, con-

* A Handbook for Enquirers into the Wisdom Religion, by Walter T. Olds, F. T. S. For sale by the P. C. Committee, 1504 Market street, and by P. O. 2659, New York, Price 35 cents.

sidering planetary chains and cycles, one of the most difficult topics in Theosophy, puts the matter in a way that will be of great help to older students. The chapter on States of Consciousness sheds much light on another abstruse but most important topic.

The chapter on the Mahatmas, in a short space, gives the strongest argument for the existence of this Occult Brotherhood which has yet appeared. After reading it one cannot well resist the conviction that these great souls do really exist and have the Theosophical movement under their control.

Mr. Olds has not only prepared a Handbook, which is the very thing wanted to give to enquirers, but he has put his ideas on Theosophy into such shape that members of the Theosophical Society will need to keep this book on hand for frequent reference. When one has read through "What is Theosophy," he can but be surprised to know into how small a space it can all be considered, only about 125 pages of a small-sized book being needed to sum it all up. But the reader will also see, that only hints are given on many subjects, and when older students tell of large volumes which only give after all outlines, he will understand that whole libraries are needed to fully explain the comprehensive teachings which are called variously Theosophy, the Wisdom Religion, or the Secret Doctrine, including Science, Philosophy and Religion. When the student learns that Theosophy undertakes nothing less than a Philosophy of the Universe explaining the Whence and Whither of all things, he can understand that no one book can possibly contain all that is to be said on so vast a subject. Had Mr. Olds enlarged his book to twice its present size he would have given us a better Handbook and busy people could just as easily have read it and would have known more of the subject when they were through. While the author has done better than his predecessors, who have given outlines of Theosophy, he has been afraid that his book would grow too large and has left unwritten some things which should have been written. Yet this may be a virtue rather than a vice, since thereby the reader is led to open other books and become a student, which would not have been the case had the book been so complete as to seemingly present the whole subject. The little volume is made more valuable by containing portraits of Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, both of them good and giving to the reader a fair notion of the physical appearance of the two principal founders of the Theosophical Society.

There should be a large sale for this book and every member of the Theosophical Society should have several copies to lend to friends.

W. E. C.

THE THEOSOPHIST, for January, contains a detailed report of the Sixteenth Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, in addition to articles by Lieut. C. L. Peacocke, of the Royal Artillery; Dr. Henry Pratt, and Col. H. S. Olcott. Valuable papers are also furnished by well-known Hindu F. T. S. Lieut. Peacocke's article serves as cumulative evidence of the trained psychological powers of the Hindu yogis, as has been repeatedly attested by scores upon scores of British officers and other credible witnesses in India. Following this is a paper on "Mantras, their Nature and Uses," by S. E. Gopalachariu. He says: . . . "Mantras being a combination of sounds to suit a purpose, they may be either of one syllable or a thousand syllables. . . . Mantras of one, two and three syllables are strictly speaking arrangements of sounds scientifically blended together to produce a result and are consequently very potent." The paper is replete with occult physiology and the dynamic power of sound, and is a fitting prelude to Col. Olcott's article upon "The Influence of Music in Psychic Development," which contains many rare hints to students of psychology and hypnotism as well as theosophy. An Epitome of the Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs, drafted by Colonel Olcott, as a common platform upon which all Buddhists can agree, and signed by the great subscribing prelates of Burma, Chittagong, Ceylon and Japan is a strong feature of the issue, as illustrating the magnitude of the results accomplished during the past year by this tireless worker in the field of universal brotherhood.—G. P. K.

DREAMS OF THE DEAD.*

This story of psychic adventure may fairly be credited with elements of more vital human interest than would be inferred from its forbidding title, since it deals far more with thoughts of the living than with dreams of the dead. Indeed, the author's object appears to be to set forth the old-new teachings of Theosophy mingled with personal views regarding industrial questions. Why he should have strung these doctrines on a thread of events hardly consistent with his borrowed philosophy, but familiar only to the annals of seance rooms, is less easy to discern; and the reader is left wondering why his author should pay such scant courtesy to the source of his subject matter. But whatever his reasons for these violations of consistency, he has succeeded in giving a generally fair statement of theosophic views. These are set forth by two adepts in conversation with our narrator who comes to know them through astral voyagings with one of the dreaming dead. Although the greater, Hasta, is never met in waking life, Cecil, a less advanced member of the Brotherhood becomes his friend and associate in philanthropic work. There is the expected display of occult power, coupled with wholesome insistence upon the necessity for goodness. The tone throughout is pure, strong, and hopeful. Even poverty and disgrace echo a cheerful note to an explanation of life which always finds in circumstance the needed avenue for progress. Of course the progress meant is in character development, but its relation to worldly condition is clearly shown. Not so commendable is the taste which permits an author to enforce personal opinions by putting them in the mouth of a superior being. Especially may we object when these opinions contradict fundamental precepts of all such beings, as, for example, Cecil's declaration: "Life on this earth is given to the children of an immortal destiny for their enjoyment. The spiritual soul descending into the illusions of physical sense for an earthly incarnation, whether taking form of male or female, fulfills its destiny only by a perfect, proper use of every bodily faculty. It is not the thin-blooded ascetic who best obeys the eternal law. It is the vigorous, passionate manifestation of energetic thought, arrayed in full strength of matter, that answers the hidden call." No doubt this will commend itself to the man of the world, but it is not the teachings of adepts. It is a common protest against that law of reincarnation, which, whatever its merits, has been proclaimed by every Master, including the Christ whom our author, through Cecil, so reverently exalts.

THE VAHAN for February has devoted its "Enquiry" department to the answering of two questions. The first, in regard to the nature and extent of the authority of H. P. B., receiving answers from Mrs. Besant, and several others, who make it quite clear that they understand her to be authority in so far as she expounds the Secret Doctrine, or Esoteric Doctrine, not that she is the only expounder the Secret Doctrine has ever had, but that she, at this time, has given the key by which the Secret Doctrine, in the hands of "Those who Know," throughout the Ages, may be recognized.

The second question, "What is the Nature of Intuition, and which are the best means of developing this faculty?" has many interesting answers, and must be gratefully received by many who are much concerned as to how this very desirable and mysterious faculty can be developed.

There is no dissension, in the answers, from the injunction, "Purify the mind, and the heart," "Live a pure life, and it will develop itself."

Over four pages of "Activities" report much interesting work in and about London.—G. P.

THE PACIFIC THEOSOPHIST contains the A. B. C. of Theosophy which in its lucidity and succinctness contains the most possible information that could be condensed into the space allotted to it, thus making it interesting to any Theosophical student, and invaluable to the younger students and enquirers.

The oft repeated question "Why do we not remember our past incarnations" is treated clearly and logically.

* Lee and Shepard, 10 Milk street, Boston, cloth \$1.00, paper 50 cents.

Coast News Items, and over three pages devoted to a copy of a short "Glossary of Theosophical Terms," by Annie Besant and Herbert Burrows, completes this interesting number.—G. P.

THE MODERN MAGAZINE is the great register of current thought. The newspaper records and treats only of the surface of daily events; the magazine uncovers what lies beneath. The magazine, therefore, is the surer guide to the real trend of the public mind. The February number of LUCIFER is an admirable illustration of this thought reflection. It is a comprehensive echo of the modern protest against the introduction of the dead-alive features of Indian Buddhism into the vigorous western Theosophy. The number begins with an article from the pen of Annie Besant, purporting to be a reply to a question by Rev. G. W. Allen as to what attitude "Theosophists intend to take towards those whose apprehensions differ from their own." In reality, the article is a strong protest against the Theosophical Society becoming a sect, or establishing fixed doctrines and forms. In an article on "Reincarnation" the same writer insists upon the absolute necessity for each individual to do his own thinking and to work out his own salvation in his own way. An article on "Karma and Reincarnation" by Rama Prasad brings out the same thought coupled with much information. Last, and most important in this relation, appears an article by Col. Olcott entitled "A United Buddhist World," in which is set forth the fourteen articles of "faith or doctrine upon which all sects of Buddhists agree." A study of these fourteen articles discloses that all but two treat of eternal truths upon which all mankind might unite. The two exceptions relate to the methods by which these truths are to be understood and attained. The magazine also contains articles on "The Law of Cycles" and an "Outline of the Secret Doctrine" into which a fund of knowledge has been skillfully compressed.—G. C. W.

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.—"A United Buddhist World, being the fourteen Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs," compiled by Col. H. S. Olcott, P. T. S. "The Pickett Tragedy."—Col. H. S. Olcott.

THE PATH for March has its usual amount of clearly digested matter, with much that is suggestive of thought. It should also serve to arouse the spirit of investigation in the minds of many F. T. S.s as well as to determine each to do all in his power to further the cause, so nearly related to the welfare of humanity. The opening sentence "Six Years Gone" is a synthesis of the independent adherence to its original purpose, its many struggles in the midst of discouragements, and its determination to still continue in "the path which stretches on and ever upward." The last of these six years "has had to chronicle the departure of our great leader, our friend, our champion Adept, in all the noble arts in righteous warfare.—H. P. Blavatsky. It was as though a mighty tower had fallen causing the whole theosophic body corporate to quiver for a space. That was but momentary, for the great forces that held the tower in place at once transferred themselves throughout the whole range of the society, informing it with added energy, new zeal, and greater strength." "Professor Dean's consultations" is continued, and seems to indicate the fact that a person may be possessed of a decided "mental twist," even though his eyes be perfectly true in their position. "Reincarnation a Physical Necessity" until the ego has exhausted and risen by actual experience above the physical plane of flesh, sense, and animal passions, is an excellent paper by Dr. J. D. Buck. "The Synthesis of Occult Science," shows that Theosophy is not a religion a philosophy, nor a science, but a synthesis of the three. The philosophy of occultism is the line of the higher evolution of man, and sooner or later every soul must follow it, or retrograde and cease to be. The functions of the ego on the higher line of evolution must be clearly understood before one can follow or hope to grasp even the outline of occultism. "Some Hindu Legends," sentences of which will appeal to theosophists. Thus all along the road we meet those who help us, and those whom we must help. "Affirmations and denials" (by William Q. Judge) explains a system employed by a certain school which tends to destroy the relativity of ideas and things, and at the same time inculcates a false philosophy calculated ultimately to deprive man of will, and to negative the very purpose of existence. A

"Catechism Of Brahminism" would seem to require annotations to make it comprehensible to the average reader. Of "Men as Karmic Agents" it may be said that H. P. B. held that there are many people who are, without knowing it, karmic agents bringing to others suddenly good and bad effects, which otherwise would have been delayed. Theosophists should not make the mistake of considering themselves specially called upon to administer karma, it is both cowardice and conceit to say we will not help this or that man because it is his Karma to suffer, when it is our Karma to relieve if it is in our power. Hence it is wiser not to assume too much as reformers or punishers, as agents for Karma, of those who seem to offend." "The Future and the Theosophical Society," tells how in 1888 H. P. Blavatsky wrote: "I saw a few earnest theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general and with other nominal ambitious—theosophists. The former are greater in number than you think, and they prevailed, as you in America will prevail if you only remain staunch to the Masters' programme, and true to yourselves. The defending forces have to be judiciously—so scanty are they—distributed over the globe wherever theosophy is struggling with the powers of darkness. "About killing Animals" for food is a common sense view of this subject, by W. Q. Judge, from which it would seem that natural evolution under the great law must ultimately bring about a harmonious adjustment of the various realms of existence. "Literary notes," "Tea Table Talk," Report of the 16th Annual Convention at Adyar India, Resignation of the President of the T. S., Col. Olcott, etc., etc., make a very interesting and instructive number of the PATH.—S. A. H.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS.

The Theosophical Society holds Open meetings at which Lectures are given every Sunday evening at 320 Post St., 7:30 P. M.

The Society has a Free Circulating Library of Theosophical Works at 1504 Market St., Cor. City Hall Ave. It is open from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M., Sundays excepted; and from 7 to 9 P. M., Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

The Oakland Theosophical Society holds open meetings at Fraternal Hall, Washington St., every Sunday evening at 7.45.

Nationalist Club No. 1 of Alameda meets every Friday, at 8 P. M., at Capt. J. J. Harran's residence. The Theosophical Society, Mrs. C. McIntyre, President, meets at the same place every Monday at 2 P. M.

The Central Nationalist Club of Oakland meets Monday evenings, at the Upper Hamilton Hall, corner Thirteenth and Clay streets.

The Oakland Nationalist Club meets every Friday evening at 7:30, at Grand Army Hall, Thirteenth street, between Broadway and Franklin.

The Single-Tax Society meets every Sunday evening at 909½ Market street, San Francisco.