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The World's Great Religions.

[Stenographic Report by Miss Clara Brockman, of an Address given in San Francisco by Dr. Jerome A. Anderson.]

THE STUDY of Philology, or the Science of Language, makes us familiar with certain strange facts. These are, that languages as unlike as are Sanscrit, English, German, French, Scandinavian or Italian, are all originally derived from a common source. This parent language was older than Sanscrit, which is, perhaps, the oldest of all existing languages; and, by means of certain words expressing such primitive ideas as "home," "god," "sky," "man," etc., it has been found that these which I have mentioned, together with many others, forming that which is now known as the Aryan Group, have all been derived from this old Pre-Aryan tongue. If it be possible for people who originally understand each other well to have their languages become so dissimilar because of mere difference in location that they are unable to converse together—the slight and at first un-

noticed changes in vernacular growing at length into all the differences of a strange tongue—we can see how old religious beliefs, common to all the world, perhaps, through being handed down by different and isolated peoples also become divided into such apparently contradictory interpretations, together with dogmas and schisms growing out of these, that their common origin in common teachings is no longer recognized.

Theosophy claims—and, indeed, it is a part of its mission to try to demonstrate—that this is so; that every religion worthy of the name, which certainly includes all the principal religions of the earth, has been derived from a common ancestor—the Wisdom Religion of our Fathers of the Golden Age; and that just as languages have diverged, so the conceptions of the nations of this original Wisdom Religion have also diverged. Yet, because of their common origin, all great religions contain common teachings by means of which, as in the case of languages, their common ancestry may be absolutely established. These common teachings which appear in all religions in a more or less veiled form, and which thus afford the most complete and convincing proof of their common ancestry, are in part ethical and partly philosophical. They may be classified as: Evolution, or the philosophical conception of the coming forth of

the phenomenal out of the noumenal and its subsequent orderly cyclic procedure; Karma, or the law of Cause and Effect upon all planes either material or spiritual; Reincarnation, or the repeated rebirth of the human soul in physical bodies; and the real, dynamic Brotherhood of Humanity.

Taking up these basic postulates of Theosophy in order to show the relation they sustain towards the later derivatives of the Wisdom Religion, by Evolution it is understood that the entire Universe proceeds out of that which we term the Unknowable in an orderly succession of phenomenal manifestations, which, related to time, appears as cycles. In common with Western philosophy and especially with German Pantheism, Theosophy postulates an Unknowable—the Infinite or Absolute—which no finite mind can ever comprehend. Out of, or rather, within, the abysses of this Unknowable, then proceeds, in orderly sequence, the manifestation of the Universe as we perceive it. It is orderly because it is under the law of cause and effect from its very dawn to its return to the bosom of the Absolute from whence it came, for, as said before, the whole stupendous and really inconceivable process appears from our finite standpoint to take place in cycles. A Universe will manifest itself, pass through all the various stages which we now designate as evolution, and which occupy unthinkable periods of time, and return again to the Source from whence it came, to be again breathed out during a following "manvantara"—or the period in which a Universe is objectively

manifested—in order that the evolution of the next great out-breathing, or world formation, shall again proceed along lines followed, and left incomplete by the close of its last great out-breathing or manifestation. This is a generalization of the process of evolution; and, as I have said, it takes place under the iron law of Cause and Effect—the one law which binds the finite to the Infinite; a law which proceeds out of the very abysses of the Unknowable; the one stable bond which binds the manifested and conditioned to the unmanifested and unconditioned.

All reasonable foundations for philosophies must take their origin in this law of Cause and Effect, which is unerring, which cannot be set aside, which makes no mistakes, and this because, in the Infinite Heart of the Universe, Cause and Effect are united in One Grand Unity—are but opposite poles of the One Reality.

Now, this evolution in cycles, when applied to the human soul, is termed Reincarnation. By this we mean that the soul comes to this earth, constructs here a body, occupies that body in order to obtain experience, and, out of that experience, all the wisdom possible; dies or casts its body off, retires again to subjective realms, and reappears, in due time, clothing itself with another body, to again take up the lesson of life where it last laid it down. This is the parallel of the same process taking place upon all the planes of the Cosmos. The formation of a world, its passing through the fiery nebulous, aqueous, and other stages down to a habitable one, such as

our world is in now, then to a state similar to the dead moon, and the still farther one of entire dissipation in space—all this is in obedience to cycle law, and it is this same law which obtains in the Reincarnation of the human soul. Reincarnation also proceeds under the same law of Cause and Effect that obtains upon the physical, cosmic, and all planes; for there cannot be one law for one, and a conflicting law for another plane of the one Cosmos. Reincarnation, then, which enables the soul, by continually coming to this earth, to at last garner all the wisdom to be gained in this sphere, is another of the basic truths of the old Wisdom Religion, for which we must seek evidence in its derivatives.

A third is, that men are really united in an actual dynamic Brotherhood; a Brotherhood as real as anything in the Universe can be. It teaches that all men are of one essence, having the same potentialities; that there is no difference in essence between our souls and those of the humblest and lowliest Fiji Islanders. All have the same potential powers, and in this or future manvantaras must continue the process of Reincarnation, until all shall have developed the godlike powers potential in them.

If these four postulates be truths, and if they were portions of the teachings of the old Wisdom Religion, then we shall find traces of them running, like golden threads, through all the great religions of humanity, and this will be the task which I have set myself to very imperfectly perform to-night.

Passing in brief review, then, the great religions of the world, we find that they fall naturally into two principal divisions; one of which may be termed the pantheistic, the other the theistic conception, of the Universe. Beginning with the pantheistic religions, the greatest of all these is that known as Brahmanism. What is Brahmanism? In its esoteric aspect, it is a most deep and comprehensive pantheism. In its exoteric aspect, it has degenerated, perhaps, into mere polytheism. For it is the fate of all religions to be overlaid with the rubbish of error and superstition; and while Brahmanism is esoterically a most magnificent system of philosophy, in its exoteric aspect it appears most unreasonable and foolish; and the same thing can be said of all exoteric religions, without exception.

Brahmanism teaches, in common with Theosophy, that all the Universe proceeded out of a great Unknowable Causeless Cause. It calls this Causeless Cause, Parabrahm, or that which is above Brahm. It holds that all the manifested universe is Brahmà, or the manifestation of the hidden power latent in Parabrahm. Brahmanism is divided into two principal sects, and in these two sects is to be found, perhaps, the earliest point of divergence from the Wisdom Religion—a divergence which will give us the clew to most of the theological warrings since.

These are the Visishtadwaita and Adwaita philosophies. The Adwaita teaches that all is Unity in essence; that the manifested

Universe, in its infinite variation, is but the manifestation of the One Unity, and will eventually return to that Unity; be absorbed in it; become that Unity in actual essence. This belief is at the foundation of all philosophic pantheism. It is the God in Nature—which is Nature; Nature being but the manifestation of God. It teaches that all the Manifested Universe being in essence Parabrahm, and Parabrahm being unknowable to finite minds, must of necessity be an illusion, meaning by illusion that we do not perceive the real essence of anything.

The Visishtadwaita Schools teach that everything proceeds out of Parabrahm, but that in Parabrahm itself is the power, or quality, to be both Being and Non-Being; or, as they express it, Parabrahm can be both Chit and Achit, Atma and Non-Atma. Note the distinction: The Vedantin believes that his soul, as well as all other souls in the Universe, will be actually reabsorbed into Parabrahm. The Visishtadwaita believes that in Parabrahm are the qualities which manifest as Nature, and that these *qualities* are eternal. Therefore, he separates himself from Parabrahm. The soul, according to the Visishtadwaita belief, descends into matter, passes all through the evolution which the Adwaita accepts, and returns into a state in which it is with Parabrahm—has all the glory and the knowledge of the Infinite, and yet it is not the Infinite. Here is the very first step towards the erection of a personal God, and

at this point takes origin all theistic beliefs, because the Visishtadwaita Brahmins are in one sense theistic. Separate from Parabrahm, eternally descending to pass through the cycle of evolution, such almost infinite progress as is contemplated must eventuate in even finite beings attaining states equivalent to the ordinary conception of God. Such, indeed, is the Theosophic conception of Evolution, and its Creative Logoi, if postulated as a single Logos, would make of it a distinctively Theistic philosophy. For Visishtadwaita theism avoids the unphilosophical error into which Judaism with its offspring, Christianity and Mohammedanism have fallen, of confusing a God, himself the product of evolution, however unthinkable, the eternities necessary for this to take place, and that Absolute Causeless Cause concealed behind, and necessarily untouched by any evolutionary or conditioned process. The God of the Visishtadwaita is conditioned, as all creative power must by the very act—using this word in the sense of modifying or changing only; the God of Christianity is unconditioned theoretically, yet conditioned by innumerable attributes in his practical relation with manifestation.

But it is also the teaching of Theosophy that, after reabsorption into the, from our present standpoint, Unknowable, at the end of a manvantara or world-period, the same monad re-emerges, to again take up its evolutionary activities; thus showing that there is not the amount of difference between these two conceptions

that we might think, for the Adwaita claim that, though the soul is absorbed in Brahma during the Great Pralaya, or Subjective existence of the Universe, at the dawn of a new manvantara the same human monad reappears. This relation of the monad to the Absolute is really the chief difference between the Adwaita and the Visishtadwaita Brahmins.

It will be noted that these, together with most points of disagreement between great religions, have their principal field of operation in tenets which really transcend human conception. We quarrel more about things we never can understand than about the things we can comprehend. Let us, then, be charitable in our religious opinions, and not think our brother an infidel because he does not entirely agree with us.

At the bottom, both these conceptions are so deeply philosophical, that they far transcend my own petty powers of analysis. They are Brahmanical conceptions of the relation of the Infinite to the finite—the hypotheses of thinkers who have spent life after life in profound metaphysical thought and investigation. But, passing these hyper-metaphysical conceptions by, the after processes become easy of comprehension. The Vedantin says that, just as I waken to consciousness in this body, and recognize in it an "I am myself," which seems real to me, and yet is not real because it will disappear from this body at death; so, at the out-breathing of the Manvantara, Brahma himself, or the "I" mani-

festation of the Universal Consciousness, recognizes himself in the Phenomenal Universe as a great "I", in many Creative centers or Logoi. This is philosophical; and, as indicated by the analogy of the human center of consciousness in the body, it seems the only logical conclusion to be drawn. Now this great "I," thus manifesting at the dawn of the Universe, Brahmanism calls the first Logos; and that first Logos the Theist may well term God, because it corresponds to all of our very highest conceptions of the powers of God.

The chief distinction between the Christian and the Theosophical doctrine of God consists in the Christian thinking there is but one Logos—Jehovah—while the Theosophist and Vedantin postulate an almost infinite number of Creative Logoi. In the consciousness of these first Logoi is the plan of the future Universe, and in their will, the power to put that plan into execution. This creative action is seen in those laws, the knowledge of whose action constitutes a part of the teachings of the Wisdom Religion. These are, as we have seen, the law of Cycles, the law of Karma, and the law of Reincarnation; and in all of these, Brahmanism is in direct accord with the Wisdom Religion, showing that it, perhaps, is closer than any other to that old religion, even as Sanscrit is closest to the old language from which all Aryan tongues have been derived.

Passing on to Buddhism, the chief distinction between this and other pantheistic religions, arises,

as it seems to me, through the intensely practical teachings of Lord Buddha. Brahmanism had become a system of castes, of inequalities, of a favored priesthood, these holding in their possession divine truths, which Buddha thought mankind at large ought to know, and he made it his mission to reveal many of these sacred and hidden truths to the common people. But, realizing that the common mind could not soar to those metaphysical heights embraced in the basic aspects of Brahmanism, he dwelt more largely upon the things of this earth. In other words, his was an ethical religion, a religion which teaches people to do right rather than to flounder among metaphysical hypotheses. And the very fact that he did dwell upon the things which more nearly concern the human soul, and refused to discuss those deeper philosophical questions, has led to his being called, even by many Brahmans, a negator; an atheist; as one who denied the philosophical conceptions of Brahmanism. He did not do this; but only dwelt upon the more practical aspects of the problems of human existence. In its esoteric philosophy Buddhism is identical with Brahmanism. But Brahmanism attempts to solve the deeper problems of human existence by philosophical explanation, while Buddhism sets such hypotheses aside as beyond the human intellect for the present; or, at least, holds that religion should occupy itself with problems more nearly concerning the present needs of the human soul than

these metaphysical and philosophical discussions.

Buddha taught four great truths, and in these are the essence of Buddhism. You will perceive that they do relate to human existence, as we find it here and now. These are, first, that misery always accompanies existence, meaning by this, no doubt, sensuous or material existence; second, that this material existence results from desire; third, desire must be destroyed—meaning all the time, remember, material or sensuous desire; and fourth, to destroy desire, the four paths to Nirvana must be taken. The first path is the realization in consciousness that these four truths are truths, the intellectual conception and also the heart conception—the realization and acceptance of these truths intellectually and the living of them in the heart practically. This is the first path to Nirvana. Following upon this must be the killing out of impure desire, revenge, and all the lower appetites, passions and unholy things. The third path will be the freeing of one's self from all desire of any kind, and from all ignorance and doubt. The fourth will be freedom from the great illusion—the illusion that we are separate from Brahma, from Christ, from God, according to the religious aspect from which we view this great truth. Buddhism, like Brahmanism, accepts and teaches Karma, or the law of Cause and Effect; Reincarnation, or the repeated rebirth of the human soul in physical bodies; and, in common also with Brahmanism, teaches Nirvana, or that sublime state when

the human soul shall have passed through and beyond all these sensuous states of existence, and shall have obtained a condition whose felicity may be imagined, but which can never be described in words or thought upon this plane. Buddhism states that all human woe is due to ignorance. It does not assume vice, wickedness, or any of these things as being inherent in the human heart, but holds that, in descending into matter, spirit is of necessity inexperienced in that matter, and will in itself make mistakes, and that out of these mistakes grow all of those things which we recognize as the miseries and woes of human existence. You will see how kindness and compassion lie at the very bottom of the great, grand Buddhist religion, and you will also perceive how near it is to Theosophy in its conception of all the grand truths of Theosophy, of Karma, Reincarnation, Human Brotherhood, and of the involution and evolution of the human soul. All these things are at the very base of esoteric Buddhism, but, like Brahmanism and Christianity, Buddhism has also been overlaid with creeds and dogmas, until it has become more unreasonable, more given to idol worship, and to many other things which seem weak and puerile to us, than perhaps any other of the great religions. But; if thus degraded in form and ceremony, it still, at its heart, has something of the purity derived from its ancestor, the Wisdom Religion, which makes Buddhists, throughout the world, the purest, most kind, most charitable, most honest, most forgiving, of all human peoples.

[To be continued.]

The Trials of the Future.

As man makes progress only through trials and temptations, and not when pursuing a smooth and easy pathway, as a nation poor and bravely struggling for a foot-hold and rights among nations and against the forces of nature is in but little of the danger which menaces old established governments grown rich and secure, so in any organization the most insidious danger lurks concealed when apparently all is most serene and fair.

The Theosophical Society has passed through its initial years of struggle and warfare with opposing forces, of winning ground by many a hard fought battle; receiving its full share of jeering laughter and sneering comment, and now it seems to be attaining a measure of success and winning a well defined position among the organizations of this century as well as a certain amount of respect and attention. The time is upon us when the Society is in far more danger from the want of harmony within itself than from attacks from without. It is made up of widely differing elements, but whose harmony and union is certain if they but hold fast to the true meaning of our watchword and our motto. There is the difficulty—to always hold fast to that which if universally practiced would make of our earthly hell a comparative paradise. But it can be done, and only requires of each member faithfulness to the principles represented by the words of our motto and the grand doctrine of brotherhood.

How often has the dis-union among the various representatives (or rather unrepresentative) sects of Christianity—their pitiful squabbles over the mere husks while the seeds of wisdom were lost and unnoticed at their feet—been a subject of sorrow to spiritual minds, and the points at which atheists and unsympathizers aim their shafts with the most certainty of never failing to strike home. Is it not the disgrace of so-called Christianity that its many sects indulge in mutual recriminations over the method, for instance, of administering a baptism of water—a merely material symbol of something spiritual, with no meaning whatever when the spiritual is ignored? If we can see so plainly their folly, let us take care not to fall into the same errors. If it is ridiculous in them to war over so immaterial and foolish a thing, would it not be so for us to dispute over some equally unimportant point?

Ah, when will we learn the substance of things, and not wander, erring and lost, among the shadows? Not until man can see something else besides his own personality. But each one can, if a very little effort is made, contribute immensely toward the harmony and consequent strength of the Society. Let us each be willing to yield on points where the general sentiment may differ from our own; even if we are right we can lose nothing, nor can the Society, by such a course. For it is nearly always on questions of policy or expediency, scarcely ever on points of ethics, that these

differences arise; so it is not a question of standing firm in the cause of right, truth and justice; it is only our own prejudiced opinion on some question of policy, which may be right, or may be wrong. Whichever it be it is of no consequence compared to the danger of bringing one element of discord into our midst which may grow into the "little rift within the lute." Union is strength, and where should one look for union if not in a Society professing the Brotherhood of man? Without it our organization is the veriest sham and mockery and its grand and glorious precepts will be held up to the scorn and derision of the world because of our failure to live up to them.

But we will not fail. There is a golden thread of determination, and a desire for Truth and its furtherance running as a strong and sure tie among our members which is warrant for a prophecy of high success, and that our Society will not permit any disruptive or inharmonious elements to creep in, for the very love we bear our principles.

The germs of Truth and Love are sown broadcast in our ranks by leaders whose honesty of purpose, self-sacrifice and broad love for humanity make them worthy of our warm support and affection. Let, within the heart of each member fructify those germs, later to grow into the "tree which brings healing to the nations"—the Tree of Knowledge and life eternal, whose roots are in heaven and whose branches are on earth.

Lulu H. Rogers, F. T. S.

Brotherhood.

The Best Methods Towards Its Realization.

TO BRING about a realization of the law of Universal Brotherhood seems almost an impossible undertaking in this selfish age of the world, when most men are eager only for material prosperity, forgetting the promptings of the Higher Nature, and trampling in the dust all that stands in the way of their own selfish achievements. But, to form a nucleus for such a Brotherhood is the task which the Theosophical Society has undertaken. The nucleus exists—a living, active force for good; and the question now is, how shall that little nucleus go to work to bring about a realization of this Great Law.

Three methods have been suggested as good ones to be pursued by the members of the Society in the attainment of this object, and they are (1) by education; (2) by thought; and (3) by example.

As to the first—by education. It is one of the main functions of the T. S. to spread the truths which have been given to it by the Lodge of Masters in the East, through their Messenger, H. P. B.; and to awaken in the Western mind a realization of their importance. To do this, it is not necessary to go into the depths of ancient mysticism and philosophy—for which the average Western mind has neither time nor inclination. But all possible publicity should be given to what are called the Ethics of Theosophy—which

are but the same great truths which have existed for ages in all the old religions of the world. The simple and logical doctrines of Karma, Reincarnation and the Septenary Constitution of Nature and of Man, should be spread abroad, for they open up to Man a view of the Higher Life—the life of the individual, of the Soul. With a proper understanding of these teachings, Man will come into a knowledge of the law of Universal Life; and the idea of Brotherhood, which has hitherto seemed to him very beautiful, but likewise impracticable, will assume a new aspect of reality.

Each member of the society can assist, to some small extent, at least, in this work of Education, which is to be done largely by the spread of Theosophical literature. But it is also possible to do much in this direction individually, by first gaining a correct understanding of these truths which have been given us. On this subject, a noted Theosophist once said:

“All about us are persons straining at the tether of their creeds, eager to break away to pastures of living Truth. Before the great mysteries of Life they stand, dumb as the brute, but with enlarged capacity for suffering; endowed with the reason which in the brute is lacking, but which, in the man of to-day, received little support, scant sustenance, from all that he has been taught heretofore. If such a man be met, at the critical moment, by a Theosophist willing and able to explain and give reason for what he believes; to indicate the bearings of Theosophical truths upon the mental, social and other conditions of the present time; to point out the relations of Karma and Reincarnation to universal law, as partly known to the

average mind; the value of the service rendered thus becomes evident, and the need of self-education among our members is perceived. * * * It is better to know a little very thoroughly, and to frankly say that we know no more (which always placates an inquirer and inspires confidence in our sincerity), than to seek to impress others by the wide range of our thought."

Another method is by thought. Thoughts are things, having force and power, and we are taught that they are eternal. What, then, can we not accomplish by right thinking? To quote Mrs. Besant:

"Every change must begin in the mind, and only such are permanent and stable in their character. Great nations are made by great ideals, and great people grow out of great thoughts. A law is only potent as the people who administer the law are in sympathy with that which it proclaims; and you cannot form a brotherly society without brothers, nor can you use laws for good, save as the people's hearts expand to the impulse that has made the law. It is our thought that has made the society of to-day, and that gives it its vitality and its permanence."

Theosophists, by standing together as one, and keeping in their minds—their thoughts—this ideal of the Unity of Humanity, will create a wonderful force towards the realization of that ideal. They will, by this united effort, be able to raise the thoughts of others, to create a new standard of public opinion, to replace the human law with the divine. Some one has said that "the will of man is the mightiest factor in the world." And as all our laws are inoperative without the sentiment of the public supporting them, it becomes the duty of Theosophists to unitedly use this will for the purpose of

creating public sentiment. To again quote Mrs. Besant: "You have to make brotherhood a reality in men's hearts as well as on their lips."

The third method, by example, though mentioned last, is not the least in importance. It is the duty of every Theosophist to put his faith in the law of Brotherhood into daily practice; for, we are told, "Theosophists must actually be the thing they talk about." The Theosophist should endeavor, by his own conduct, to prove to others that the knowledge which Theosophy has brought to him has made his own life better and more useful. He should try to act with sympathy and justice toward all his fellow men. And how shall this be accomplished in the individual? Here, again, the three-fold method applies.

1st. By mediation. In "Letters that have Helped Me," the writer says:

"In cogitating lately, I thought of you in respect to some of my own thoughts. I was reading a book and looking around within myself to see how I could enlarge my idea of Brotherhood. Practice in benevolence will not give it its full growth. I had to find some means of reaching further, and struck on this, which is as old as old age. I am not separate from anything. 'I am that which is.' That is, I am Brahma, and Brahma is everything. But, being in an illusionary world, I am surrounded with certain appearances that seem to make me separate. So I will proceed to mentally state and except that I am all these illusions. I am my friend—and then I went to them in general and in particular. I am my enemies; then I felt them all. I am the poor and the wicked; I am the ignorant. Those moments of intellectual gloom are the

moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones who are myself. All this in my nation. But there are many nations, and to those I go in mind; I feel and I am them all, with what they hold of superstition or of wisdom or evil. All, all is myself."

The second method is action; giving to those with whom we may meet such help as they may need and we are able to give, whether it be material aid, or sympathy, patience, kindness, encouragement. For philanthropy may be practiced as well on the spiritual plane as on the physical; and we are taught that we are building good Karma for others and for ourselves, by the practice of philanthropy.

The third method is unselfishness—self-sacrifice—the surrendering of selfish hopes and pleasures for the benefit of others. It is only when freed from the chains of personal motives and feelings that Man can experience, appreciate and realize Brotherhood. In the language of Dr. Keightlry:

"It is the absolute duty of every Theosophist to keep constantly before him the ideal of Universal Brotherhood—to keep it so constantly before him that he is drawn into it and it into him, so that he works for it in the vital strength of the whole Theosophical Society and of Humanity. Then we shall lend our individual strength to merge into a vast and powerful unity of force. The vast promise of the future can be realized by work, by effort, alone; by stern and indomitable effort to kill out the sense of separateness in search for the life within—the Brotherhood of the Universal Soul. To obtain illumination, Man must be indeed a brother to every soul that suffers, and to every spirit that aspires, and he must open his soul to the divine ray, and climb toward

it with all his strength and will, all his mind, and with every faculty of his soul."

Mr Mead has summed it up in these words:

"He alone is a true Theosophist who develops all his higher faculties and learns to sense the fitness of things, their underlying harmony on all occasions. Right thought, right speech, right judgment and right action are the signs of such a one, and will indubitably lead to that consummation of Brotherhood which we have before us as our ideal."

Abbott B. Clark, F. T. S.

Editorial Items.

The World's Congress of Religions.

THEOSOPHISTS on the Coast have reason to congratulate themselves. At this date there is small doubt but that there will be held a comparatively large and successful Congress of Religions during the Midwinter Fair. The latter itself has assumed such proportions as to assure the success of any and all Congresses held in connection therewith. But there is still more than this—there is a strong probability of the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society coming to San Francisco this year. There is a general desire that this city should have its turn as well as New York, Boston, Chicago and other places. And the World's Congress of Religions occurring at the same time will be an additional reason for our being granted the favor this year. In case the Executive Council of the American section consents to holding the Annual Convention here, the Pacific Coast Committee will use all their efforts to have their assignment in the Congress of Religions made for the same date, so that delegates will have the pleasure of attending both events. While no definite statements can yet be made, the probability of both the Conventions and the Congress are so strong that we urgently request all Brethren on

the Coast to begin now to make their arrangements for visiting San Francisco during the last week in April or thereabouts. The Pacific Coast Committee will attend to all local details and will probably be able to provide accommodations for the delegates who attend.

Let the Theosophists upon the Coast turn out *en masse*, for we are so distant from the Eastern States that we cannot expect many delegates to come so far. But there is enough of us upon the Coast to make the event a most successful one if we all put our shoulders to the wheel.

The Game of Knowledge.

The "Game of Knowledge," recently published by Col. Geo. H. Thistleton, F. T. S., has been purchased by the Pacific Coast Committee, for Theosophic Work, with a view of aiding, by means of its sale, Theosophic propagandi. The "Game" is one of Oriental origin, having been invented and played in India ages since. It was published originally in the Oriental Department Papers of the American Section of the T. S., and taken from there and put into a convenient and artistic form by Col. Thistleton with a view to aiding the Theosophic movement, and it is with the expectation of its being more helpful that he now generously makes it over to the P. C. C. on very favorable terms.

It is a most interesting Game, and while it interests it also instructs, and as almost the entire proceeds will be devoted to Theosophic propaganda—and most probably towards keeping a Lecturer in the field—it is hoped that the sales among Theosophists will be large, for they will not only have the innocent pleasure and profit of the Game but also the further satisfaction of knowing that they are aiding the Theosophic Cause.

Those desirous to purchase, will please send their orders direct to the Pacific Coast Committee. Price, \$1.00 for each Game, which will be mailed promptly upon its receipt.

Notes and Items.

MEMBERS are earnestly requested to secure and read the report of World's Congress of Religions. Many strong and valuable addresses were given and as the report of the entire proceedings of the Theosophical Congress can be procured for the small sum of thirty-five cents, no one can afford to miss the treat therein provided. The addresses of Prof. Chakravarti, Annie Besant, Wm. Q. Judge, Dr. Buck, Mrs. Thirds and others will amply repay a careful study, and in point of literary merit will compare favorably with any work done at the Congress.

"SHE OF THE HOLY LIGHT,"

By John G. Claxton, is evidently written by a student of the occult. Those who understand its interpretation can readily see the dangers of Black Magic—the dangers of developing the selfish or lower, rather than the selfless or higher. The author is evidently a mere novice in his occult studies, and has much to learn. The story will not attract the general reader, unless some study is given to unravel its hidden meaning. V. S. B.

THE P. C. COMMITTEE has reorganized and added to its Lecture Bureau, and is now prepared to supply Lecturers to any and all points within reasonable distance of San Francisco. The following Lecturers and Subjects are available: Dr. J. A. Anderson—*Reincarnation, Karma, Septenary Man, Evolution*; Mrs. S. A. Harris—*The One Life, Functions of the Seven Principles*; Abbott Clark—*Theosophy: The Science of Life, and the Art of Living, Karma and Common Sense, Wise Men of the East*; E. B. Rambo—*Mahatmas, Objections to Reincarnation, The Good Law, The Heart Doctrine*; Julius Oettl—*Ambition, Duty, Enthusiasm*; Mrs. V. S. Beane—*The Destiny of Man, The Gates of Life, The Lost Chord*; Mrs. J. R. V. Shoultes—*The Inspiration of Theosophy, Facts of the Astral World, From Man to God, From the Human to the Divine*.

THE PACIFIC THEOSOPHIST is pleased to announce to its readers that, in the near future, it will begin the publication of a series of letters by Jasper Niemand. These will be in the form of notes upon "The Voice of the Silence," and those who have had the pleasure and profit of reading, "Letters That Have Helped Me," by the same author, will appreciate the treat that is in store for them. The first of the series will probably be published in the next number of the THEOSOPHIST. When all are completed they will be brought out in book form and will, no doubt, prove as helpful to all sincere students.

A LARGE CLASS for the study of the Secret Doctrine has been organized in Oakland. It meets at the residence of Mrs. H. W. Merwin, 1262 Franklin St., Monday evenings, and is presided over by the veteran worker of the Coast, Mrs. S. A. Harris, of Berkeley.

The good example has been caught up and followed by Mrs. M. V. Shoultes who holds reading in the Secret Doctrine on afternoons for those who cannot attend in the evening. Mrs. C. J. Gilbert, of Berkeley, holds classes in Oakland, on Tuesday afternoons, for the study of the Ocean of Theosophy.

IT is very gratifying to find the Headquarters always so cheerful and inviting. The number of visitors has greatly increased since the Religious Congress and all are earnestly inquiring into Theosophy. Mrs. V. S. Beane is at her post early and late, and those who call and meet her seem pleased to report their visits.

THE League of Theosophic Work, two classes a week, to meet on Tuesday and Friday afternoon. They are presided over by Mrs. Anna F. Bush. The League has also opened a class for beginners on Thursday afternoon, conducted by Miss Anne Bryce.

Notes from the Sound.

THE Sound will be glad to welcome the Pacific Coast Lecturer, Dr. Griffiths, when he can come to see us.

ALBERT C. THEES of North Bend, Washington, a member at large, is visiting in Seattle at present and is enjoying the Branch meetings.

THE office cat bit quite a piece from my copy last month. "Mrs. Elin," should read Mrs. Elin E. M.; C. White, now of London headquarters, etc.

THE Seattle and Tacoma Branches have both started on a new course of lectures, issuing neat programs giving date and subject of lecture.

THE second *conversazione* of the Seattle branch was held at Pettis Music Hall on Tuesday evening, December 19th. The affair was in every way pleasant and profitable.

EVERY Monday morning the Seattle *Telegraph* publishes a synopsis of the Sunday evening lecture, consequently the *Telegraph* has the thanks of the Seattle Theosophists.

SHOULD Wm. Q. Judge, our genial and hard-working General Secretary, come West this winter he will receive a warm welcome by his friends on the Sound. His visit will be of great value to us all.

INTEREST in Theosophy is kept alive in Ballard, a suburb of Seattle, by Mr. B. A. Welbon, a member of the Seattle Branch who lives at that point. A meeting is held every Sunday, conducted by him, with the assistance of other Seattle members.

OLYMPIA BRANCH is holding open meetings every Sunday now. They have a few energetic members there who are holding up the light to the best of their ability. Miss Ida Wright, President of the Tacoma Branch, addressed them recently and her visit was much enjoyed as well as the able address delivered. Olympia gives welcome to all Theosophists who will come her way.

MR. THOMAS A. BARNES, of the Seattle Branch, opened the lecture course Sunday evening, Dec. 10th. Subject, "The Perfect Way." There was a good audience present, and the paper was enjoyed.

THE Victoria Branch open meetings have failed to materialize thus far, as word was received not to send over the lecturer, for the reason that a hall could not be secured. At last reports they were still working to get a suitable hall.

Yours, K. M.

Pacific Coast lecturer's Movements

DR. GRIFFITHS, spent the last weeks of Nov. in Stockton. Many informal, semi-public meetings were held, besides others, Branch and private. A lecture upon "*Satan: Good & Evil*," was delivered Dec. 3d, attended by a fair audience.

Stockton Branch has a good library and maintains local Headquarters, in which all meetings are held. Hitherto, Branch meetings, to which the public were invited, have been held on Sunday evenings, but now the Branch meets during the week, pursues more systematic study, and does some training, thus fitting members to take an active part in the regular Sunday evening open meetings. These will be conducted especially to present Theosophy to interested inquirers and the general public. This is an important step, and if persistently carried out, will certainly effect a new and better order of things in Stockton as it has in other Pacific Coast T. S. centres. With few exceptions, and generally speaking, the F. T. S. of the Coast are woefully lacking in that definite knowledge of Theosophy itself, and in efficient methods of imparting it to the public, which is so indispensable to success in Theosophical propaganda work. Systematic study, and training as to best methods of work, have always been the prime factors employed in every T. S. centre where success in making

Theosophy and the T. S. potent influences has been accomplished. Devotion and enthusiasm, study and active work, command success. That success is not attained in any given place, is because of the absence of these factors. This has been so often tested that it stands as a demonstrated fact. Faint-heartedness never accomplished anything but to lull the faint-hearted to sleep. Excuses are subterfuges and confessions of weakness or laziness, more often than genuine reasons for inactivity. A Master has said "There is scarcely any position in which an F. T. S. can not do something." We are so often the rocks in our own path! "He who does the best he can, does enough for us." A. G.

Among the Coast Branches.

Santa Rosa Branch.

MRS. M. V. SHOULTES was sent on request of Santa Rosa Branch, to Santa Rosa by the P. C. Com. Lecture Bureau, Dec. 10, and on that date gave an address upon "The Evolution of Man to the Divine."

Mrs. S. had prepared a paper upon that subject, but on facing the audience she thought seized her that she could do better work, come closer to the head and heart of the people and thus better help them, by speaking instead of reading. She followed her intuitions, reading but little and speaking directly to the audience. Results proved the wisdom of that course, for the audience were deeply interested for an hour and plied numerous questions at the close of the address. For audiences composed of people who know little or nothing about Theosophy, extempore speaking, or speaking from notes, is much more effective as has been demonstrated repeatedly. There is nothing that equals the flash of the eye, the direct appeal to the head and heart of an audience and a sensing of their conditions and needs, like extempore speaking. While most of us are novices as speakers, yet do not the immensely greater good

results possible when this method is pursued, imperatively demand that efforts be made in that direction?

Papers and lectures that are suitable for San Francisco audiences, are not suitable for the best work in outside towns. The former, if not too deep for city audiences, are beyond the understanding of people who know little or nothing about Theosophy residing in suburban towns. Yet these same people are desirous of learning. If really good work is to be done by speakers upon Theosophical Subjects among people at large, they must deal largely with the primary concepts of Theosophy, and make up their minds to repeat the same things over and over again. People often remark at the close of a lecture, "What was he talking about; did you understand?" or, "Well, he seems to know a good deal, but Theosophy is too deep for me." Are we not to blame, for shall we not profit by these honest comments of people really intent upon knowledge and desirous to understand Theosophy? If Theosophy is to reach and help the million, it must be presented in a way the million can understand and benefit by it. Let us give the A. B. C. of Theosophy more, and its occult phases less.

Narada Branch, Tacoma, Washington.

Fannie A. Sheffield, Sec., writes:—During October and November, the members of Narada Branch put forth a great deal of individual effort in every direction, to make good the loss of so good a President as we had in Mr. Gibson. Miss Wright is coming to the front, and we are now assured that the interest of both meetings (public and study) will be maintained. The numbers coming keep up well, and as a result of our renewed effort, nearly all of our attending members have become workers. The newer members write articles on our Thursday evening subjects, and so give the others more time to prepare for public meetings. From now on during the winter, we are

prepared to aid other Branches on the Sound. Miss Wright read a paper before the Branch in Olympia, Dec. 3rd. The interest there in Theosophy is increasing, and the few who are pushing the Cause shall be helped by us in every way possible. We have just completed a course of Sunday lectures in which the Seattle members helped us, and are now preparing another, to extend through the winter, interchanging with Seattle. Our membership is increasing, and we are working in perfect harmony. Our rooms are kept open afternoon and evening. We are reaching many, by loaning books and answering inquiries.

We were much disappointed in not seeing Dr. Anderson on his way home from Chicago. His book upon Reincarnation is doing a wonderful good among materialistic thinking people here, and paving the way for the other doctrines of Theosophy.

Geo. Sheffield, Jr., writes:—We are doing nicely here Theosophically. Our League is not very active, but is still alive and doing a little. We hope soon to get the Puget Sound League to work on lectures, which had about stopped for want of money, but is showing signs of life again. Our Tacoma League tries to keep things going in Tacoma by keeping the room open, and the library in good working order.

Los Angeles Branch, Los Angeles, Cal.

Dr. G. F. Mohn, Sec., writes:—The workers in Los Angeles are unceasing in their efforts. At the public meetings, in Blavatsky Hall, the large audiences evince much interest by handing in numerous questions. Last Sunday, some twenty-five questions were presented after the lecture. Our third syllabus of lectures is now printed, and leaflets and books are constantly going out. We need more of the standard works. During November, we added two new members to the Branch. In our Friday evening Discussion Class, which is quite in-

formal, we seem to do our best work. The "Key" is used as our text book. At our last Branch meeting, Bro. H. A. Gibson gave an excellent paper upon "Fear," and the numerous questions could hardly be adequately answered, without keeping the audience too long, which the audience, however, seemed willing to submit to. We consider that we have a most excellent and earnest worker in Bro. Gibson; but we have yet room for more workers. May their Karma lead them this way. The following public lectures were given: Nov. 5th, "Instinct, Intelligence and Intuition," Mrs. L. E. Giese; Nov. 12th, "Theosophy and Ethics," H. A. Gibson; Nov. 19th, "Post-mortem States," G. F. Mohn; Nov. 26th, "Reality and Illusion," Frank Neubauer.

We are pleased to notice that Santa Ana is going ahead, and if we can do anything for them, they have simply to command us, and we will gladly help them in any way possible. This holds equally good with other neighboring places. Bro. L. P. McCarthy visited our meetings several times while here.

Stockton Branch.

Fred M. West, President writes:—Dr. Griffiths spent about two weeks with us from Nov. 20th to Dec. 4th, and gave quite a number of lectures to the public and several good, square talks to the Branch, all of which were both instructive and useful. Since he left our Branch has opened its doors wider than ever to the public Sunday evenings and changed the Branch Meeting night to Wednesday eve. All the members seem in earnest, and willing to do their share of work. We are not yet prepared with matter of our own production for the public, but have succeeded so far in interesting them, and we hope very soon to give them some of our own thoughts gathered from the combined efforts of our members.

We have taken up the Seven Principles of Man, each one separately and all members gather what they can; then a

paper is prepared from these, and when all have been taken up, a paper will be written composing the whole.

Eureka Branch.

Sec. M. B. Smith writes:—The recent election in Eureka Branch returned all last year's officers to their posts with one exception. To concentrate the clerical work and records at Hdqs. the librarian in charge was elected Branch Secretary. So the official list now stands: President, Albert Hart; V. P., H. A. Burnett; Sec., M. B. Smith; Treasurer, Dr. J. S. Cook.

In the Branch, we have begun the study of Besant's Seven Principles; it being the intention to pursue it with vigor by means of questions, answers, examinations and reviews.

Considerable interest is evident among the young men, which is quite encouraging. A desire is expressed for an afternoon study-class for ladies; and some talk also of a Children's Hour on Sundays; both of which we hope to establish as soon as may be.

Triangle Branch, Alameda.

Mrs. C. McIntire, Sec., writes:—Triangle Branch has now a membership of ten, and holds meetings every Tuesday afternoon at Red Men's Hall. Parlor talks are also given every second Tuesday evening at the residence of the Secretary, 2328 Clement Ave. The attendance is increasing. Branch members are very active, circulating Theosophic literature, etc. Mr. Sully has been lecturing before the Socialists upon Sunday evenings with good success. The Branch is united and devoted, and in this way is strong and active.

Chicago.

CEN. STATES COM. T. S., }
26 Van Buren St., Room 48. }

Mrs. M. M. Thirds, Secretary, writes: All goes well with us. We are growing in numbers and solidarity, and our work continually widens. The lecture bureau is established, with more good speakers arising among us, so that we shall soon be really strong in the field. Besides, we have added to our Hall a platform, fitted it up nicely, bought a piano, and otherwise improved Headquarters.