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## The Pacific Theosophist.

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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.]

[Continued from last Number.]

**A**NOTHER great religion, derived from the Wisdom Religion, and also pantheistic, is Zoroastrianism. I shall deal very briefly with that, mentioning it only because it ought to be included. The philosophy of Zoroastrianism is very deep, and, unlike all other religions, it has not materialized great philosophical ideas by connecting them with signs and symbols, or forms, or ceremonies. Almost its sole symbol is the sun, or fire. But its teaching in relation to this symbol is that the sun is but the outward manifestation of the great inner spiritual Source or Energy which calls into existence the entire Universe; and that fire, upon this, the objective plane, is the correspondence and symbol of the sun. Zoroastrianism teaches that there are in the Universe two Principles, eternally warring with each other. It calls one of these

Ormuzd, or the principle of Good, and the other Ahriman, or the principle of Evil. But in neither of these terms is there to be found the idea of an anthropomorphic God or devil. They are used only as symbols of the apparent good and evil in the Universe. Behind them Zoroastrianism recognizes the eternal opposites of spirit and matter, and also that there is an eternal warfare between these two, because of their being eternally associated in the processes of involution and evolution. It further teaches as a poetical, yet very real, dramatization of life, that each soul is a warrior, whose duty it is to fight upon the side of the right and against the wrong.

Its ethical basis may be found in these words of its great Prophet, Zoroaster: "Think purely; Speak purely; Act purely." This plainly implies that the fate of each human soul is in its own hands, and recognizes clearly the law of Karma, or ethical causation; thus bringing it, in these points also, in accord with other great religions. Its philosophy requires Reincarnation to satisfy its postulates, but it does not, so far as I have been able to study it, specifically teach this great truth. It is the only point in which Zoroastrianism is in any kind of disagreement with its parent, the Wisdom Religion, and this may be an error of omission rather than of commission.

The teachings of Confucius—or

Confucianism—are but another presentation of the teachings of Christ. Confucius, like Buddha, was a moral reformer, and did not attempt to teach the deeper philosophical aspects of religion, except, perhaps, to his inner circle of disciples. These were said to have been ten in number, who were thus associated with him, similarly as Christ had his twelve disciples. Like those of Buddha and Christ, his teachings, also, were intended to promote and foster Human Brotherhood. Confucianism recognizes the law of Karma, and its philosophy also teaches Reincarnation—or certainly suggests it, if it does not specifically teach it. So that this great religion has three or four strong roots connecting it directly with the one Source of them all.

We now come to the theistic religions—all having their origin, as I believe, in the Visishtadwaita philosophy of the Vedantin schools. Of these theistic faiths, Judaism is perhaps the chief; but I will deal with Christianity first. This religion teaches that God is a Trinity; that he is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, immutable. Let these words sink into your minds. Omnipotent, or all-powerful; omniscient, or all-knowing; omnipresent, or everywhere throughout all the abysses of space; immutable, or incapable of change. Have we not here, then, a philosophical conception which corresponds very nearly to the Vedantin's Parabrahm? There is very little difference indeed, except that Brahmanism philosophically predicates these qualities of Impersonal Being, while Christianity very unphilosophically

attributes them to a personal God. In fact, the chief fault of Christianity, as I take it, is that as a religion it has no philosophy, and because of this, confuses, in the most illogical and involved way, postulates which must of necessity root in Absolute Being and those which apply to finite existence. It thus continually confuses the Infinite with the finite—the Absolute with the limited and conditioned—and because of this confusion there is no real philosophy in Christianity, as understood by the masses to-day. But if studied deeply and carefully, there will be found golden threads from the common origin running through it; and even in its conception of God, it will be seen that it also roots back, through Visishtadwaita engraftings, into the old Wisdom Religion. Its teaching that man is fallen, is only a forgotten or confused conception of the descent of spirit into matter. Its tenets that, from the consequences of this fall, man can only escape by the acceptance of Christ, the Redeemer, is but a dim remembrance of the truth, derived from the old Wisdom Religion and running through all its off-shoots, that man in essence is one with the Divine, and that only by developing this divine principle within him, can he return to the source from whence he came. This is the true meaning of the esoteric Christ in all religions. Christianity has, in its exoteric creed, misinterpreted and degraded this great truth; but, esoterically, it contains it, in its deepest and most philosophical aspect, and it may yet prove a strong bond to reunite Christianity with

its sister religions. It also teaches Karma, for it declares: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." And the great Catholic Church affirms that all sin must be expiated. In Protestantism, it is true, there is an idea that it is possible for an omnipotent God to forgive away one's sins; but Catholics, at least, do not fall into this error. The forgiveness of the Catholic restores the person forgiven to his former *status* of favor with God, but it does not relieve him from the consequences of his sins. These must be expiated fully and completely. This is Catholic teaching, taken directly from the words of one of its greatest magnates. So it is plainly seen that Christianity teaches Karma; for, if one must expiate the sins and crimes he has committed, there is no setting aside the consequences of any act. Therefore, in this saying: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap," does Christianity fasten another tendril by which it entwines itself securely around the common source and support—the Wisdom Religion. It teaches also, though somewhat blindly, Reincarnation. As examples, are those instances where Jesus declared to His disciples that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of the prophet Elias; and where the Jews asked Jesus whether this man, "*having been born blind*," had sinned, or his parents." It is plain, from this passage in the New Testament, that Reincarnation was believed in by both Jews and Christ; for they evidently accepted the fact that the blind man might have committed those sins, in a former life, whose effects appeared as physical

blindness in this one. Whatever, therefore, the ulterior object of the questioners may have been, the question was senseless, unless they recognized the fact of reincarnation. For how could a man "sin" before he was born? Reincarnation is thus plainly shown to have been a common belief among the Jews, and to have been taught by Christ specifically in the case of Elias and John the Baptist; thus adding still another and unanswerable proof of the real Source of the teachings of Christ. Like all the others, its far-away origin in the Wisdom Religion is thus clearly established.

Judaism is a theistic religion which may be classed as philosophical. It teaches that God is the First Cause of all existence; thus identifying him, in one aspect, with Parabrahm. In others, he corresponds more nearly with the First Manifested Logos of the Vedantins. Judaism falls, however, to some extent, into a similar error with Christianity, in confusing the attributes of God, the finite, with those of God, the Infinite. But yet it does possess a deep philosophy. Thus it teaches that God reveals himself in the Universe; that he is that Universe, as one aspect of himself. That which is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and immutable, as I have already pointed out, corresponds to those conceptions with which we clothe the Eternal Parabrahm of the Vedantins, or the Causeless Cause of Theosophy. Judaism also teaches that every entity in the Universe is first an idea of God, before it is an entity; thus fully accepting the teaching of the

Wisdom Religion that man, as well as everything in the Universe, is an emanation from Deity. How remarkable, except in view of their common origin, is this agreement between the philosophy of Judaism and the philosophy of Brahmanism! This religion further teaches that God only forgives after the sinner repents and expiates his offense; which is but Karma, as was shown in relation to the forgiveness of Christianity. It declares that sins of the parent are visited upon the children unto the fourth generation; thus accepting and tracing out physical heredity. Judaism, also, fully accepts the idea of Karma, and so again roots itself in the Wisdom Religion. Indeed the parallelisms between Judaism and this are so many that much more time might very profitably be spent upon the subject, but enough has been given to clearly establish its right to a recognition as one of the offshoots from the common stock—the Wisdom Religion or Theosophy.

Another theistic religion is Mohammedanism. It is necessary to deal at least briefly with this, because the ordinary conception of it is very erroneous. Mohammedanism has the idea of God that is found in Judaism and Christianity. The latter, it is true, divides this God into a Trinity, but, with Judaism, claims that he is Unity in essence. This is to say, that these two religions take the same idea, at different stages of its conception, in Theosophy. In the Absolute, Deity is Unity; in manifestation, Trinity. Mohammedanism, therefore, agrees with Judaism rather than Christianity in claiming that

God is an Absolute Unity. It further claims that everything in the Universe exists by virtue of and because of the will of God. Its acceptance of Karma, or the law of Cause and Effect, is more far-reaching than that of any other religion, because it claims that all causes and effects are the will of God, and therefore there can be no escape from this will. This is the Mohammedan Kismet, or fate. All that happens in the universe is the will of the Creator of that Universe, and therefore could not but happen. Mohammedanism's mission, then, consists in teaching men to reconcile themselves to the will of God. This it declares they have the free will to do, and can accomplish by being good, pure, and kind. There is no religion which teaches a purer system of ethics—which so insists upon chastity, temperance and abstinence in all things. In its ethical aspect, it is one of the most beautiful religions to be found upon the earth to-day. We have associated Mohammedanism too much with the ideas which have been brought us by Christian missionaries; and we have made the same mistake with Buddhism and Brahmanism. Mohammedanism, in essence, is a beautiful if unphilosophical religion, and its precepts are carried out with a more sincere faith, perhaps, than those of any other religion. The Mohammedans pray five times a day, never omit any of their devotional exercises, abstaining from liquor, and teaching men to be holy and pure. They believe that they will thus attain union with God—by being pure in heart. What more can we ask of a prac-

tical religion? Let its philosophy go; its practice is sublime. There is a mistaken idea that it teaches that women have no souls. It does not teach this. In the Koran it declares that women, if faithful, go to Paradise. It is true that in its exoteric aspect are things which seem to us sensual and material; but, in its esoteric and ethical aspects, it proves itself to be worthy at least of our tolerance in all its beliefs, and of our imitation in many.

Then, summing up ideas common to all religions, we find that the pantheistic religions, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, as well also as those of Greece, Rome, Egypt and Scandinavia, with which I have been unable to deal to-night, and the theistic religions, or Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, are each and all really rooted, in their deepest and most philosophical aspects, in common truths; that they alike have their origin legitimately and logically in the Wisdom Religion. The highest aspects of the philosophy of the Wisdom Religion are beyond the power of ordinary men to conceive of or to explain, and so, such differences are just those we must expect to appear when finite man attempts to deal with Infinite Problems.

In conclusion, permit me to point out specifically, certain teachings, faiths, traditions, and customs, which also prove conclusively a common origin. Thus, as examples of religions having a chief Triad of Gods, derived originally from the teachings of the Wisdom Religion of the Three Aspects or Hypostases of the Absolute to be

found in the Universe, we have:

In Persia, Ormuzd, Mithra and Ahriman; in Hindoostan, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; as also, Agni, Indra and Surya; in Greece, Chaos, Gaïæ and Tartarus; in Rome, Jupiter, Minerva and Juno; in Scandinavia, Odin, Vili and Ve; in Assyria, Oannes, Bel and Ao; in Egypt, Osiris, Horus and Typhon; in Christianity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and, if Catholic prayers are an indication, we might conceive that it, also, has a triad of Gods in Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The following religions have "hells," or states of punishment: Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Christianity and Mohammedanism teach that these hells are eternal.

Christians, Mohammedans, Jews and Zoroastrians have heavens. Brahmans and Buddhists also have heavens, for the Devachan and Nirvana of these philosophies correspond to the Christian heaven. The only difference is that the former religions teach that these are eternal states, while the latter take a more philosophical view, and hold that they are but temporary, and that man returns from them to again take up the work of evolution.

There is also a first or highest Deity in all of these: as Brahma in Brahmanism; Adi-Buddha in Buddhism; Jehovah, in Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism; in Zoroastrianism, Ormuzd, back of whom lies a deeply philosophical conception of the Absolute. Confucianism also teaches a high God, but claims that the conception of this Deity, as well



as that of the future life and of heaven and hell, is beyond human power. It is commonly thought that Judaism does not teach immortality. It does; but, like Confucianism, declares that these immortal states so far transcend our petty, finite conceptions that it is useless to speculate upon them.

Reincarnation is taught by the Egyptians, Brahmans, Buddhists, Jews (in a material sense), and by Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism and Confucianism. In fact, all religions either teach it plainly or in a veiled manner. All also teach Karma; and all agree in speaking of devils or elementary sprites. And common symbols are numerous. The cross is used by every religion on the face of the earth except it be Mohammedanism.

There are also many minor agreements, which go to prove also that all religions really descend from a common source. Thus Buddhism is a representative of pantheism, and Catholic Christianity of theism; yet both of these have many of the same symbols and customs. They have, in common, celibacy, monks, rosaries, chants, incense, candles, the cross, confession, the mitre, the cope, the worship of saints, double choirs, exorcisms, censers (each suspended by five chains), chaplets, benedictions, fasts, processions, litanies and holy water. There are so many things used in common by both these religions, that, when the Christian missionaries first reached India, they declared that the devil had certainly been there ahead of them, and had imitated every Christian rite. Afterwards,

they claimed that these Christian customs had been taught by the Nestorian missionaries in the early days of Christianity; but this assumption, also, was disposed of by evidence that Buddhism antedated Christianity at least five hundred years. How and why came such exact customs to exist in two great religions, differing as widely as do pantheism and theism? Their common origin in the Wisdom Religion explains it; and there is no other explanation.

Brahmans and Catholics have penance and mass, and some of the Brahman ceremonies are simply a prototype of the Catholic masses. In the Jewish religion, as accepted by Christianity, it is taught that man fell by eating an apple. In Zoroastrianism, they teach that he fell by drinking milk. All Saviors are simply the Avatars, —represent the same philosophical idea.

Since, then, all religions, without exception, teach that man can only attain happiness by right conduct, by doing good to others; and as all desire to elevate him, to make him better, happier, and purer in every respect; and as all teach that future rewards are according to our deserts; that ignorance and poverty are the results of human vices; as all seek human perfection by the development of the God-nature within man, is there not enough common ground to abolish sects and establish that Universal Brotherhood which it is the avowed mission of Theosophy to establish?

As hunger is curable by eating, so is ignorance by study.

### What is Matter?

**A**CCORDING to modern science matter is atomic; and yet, science has never succeeded in finding the atom. What it has been able to demonstrate is the molecule; but the atoms of which the molecules are formed have not been discovered. If, then, we would know what matter is, we must turn to the ancient teachings. A portion of these teachings is now being given out through the Theosophical literature, and to this literature I am indebted for my knowledge in the following definition of the atom, and hence of matter.

Now, the Theosophical teaching is, that spirit and matter are but the opposite poles of one and the same substance; therefore, if we discover the basis of matter we will also discover the basis of spirit. In the "Secret Doctrine," we are told that matter is motion, and that motion is force. Then, in reality, matter is force, and the appearance of a state of matter would depend on the quality or intensity of that force. Now, I understand force to mean vibration; and, hence, on the number of vibrations the aspect or appearance of matter would depend.

In this sense, the atom would be the energy or force itself, and the molecules would be the vibrations; so that a certain or definite kind of molecule would depend on a definite and intelligent number of vibrations, and hence we see the infinite varieties of that which we call matter built up; but, in reality, it is only the aspect of matter or force. A certain number of vi-

brations, for instance, forms what we would call a molecule of iron, and a number of these molecules of iron taken together constitutes the iron itself in its solid aspect; so that in reality we never see matter, but only an aspect—in this instance iron. Wood, or any other aspect of matter, would be built up similarly; a different number of vibrations being necessary to form a molecule of wood, and these molecules themselves being determined by the intensity of the force, or matter, in its ultimate and eternal form. This view or analysis of matter gives us an entirely different idea of substance, and we can understand how on other planes of existence, even on the companion globes of our earth chain, matter might not be as we have it on this earth. It would not be molecular. Of course, we cannot understand what aspect matter, as objective, would assume, were it not what we call molecular, or as it appears to us on this planet.

The reason we cannot understand it is, because we have not as yet evolved the sense whereby we would be able to cognize a new aspect of matter; but, given the corresponding sense, a matter in its new dress or appearance would be perfectly comprehensible and objective. A blind man is in a similar state to ourselves. He cannot sense the aspect of nature as form and color, because he has not the sense of sight. Given eyes that can see, and the reality of the appearance of matter is as self-evident a fact to the man that was blind, as it is to the man who has been able all the time to see.

But nature, in all its variety of form and color, did not come into existence simultaneously with the gift of sight, except to the blind man; for others who could see, it existed all the time. So it is perfectly safe and logical to assume that with the development of new senses we would be in a condition to observe nature or matter under entirely new aspects. Now this is exactly what the wise man among the ancients had done ages and milleniums ago, and what some few students of Theosophy have already accomplished. They have evolved the sense or senses, as the case may be, which, in the majority of mankind are yet latent, but which in the course of evolution will be evolved in all humanity. But it is possible to hasten the development of these latent senses, and only when they are developed are we in a fit condition to judge of the reality and truth of what others who have developed these senses tell us.

But a sign of the appearance of a new sense, must be in the need which we, ourselves, find of it; that is, the very fact that we are thinking and reasoning about the atom and other aspects of matter, proves that we are fast approaching the condition where such a new sense is indispensable. We feel the need of it to prove to ourselves the reality of certain things which we can think about, and, as necessity is the mother of invention on this plane, and a demand is followed, sooner or later, by a supply, and "as above so below" is the old axiom, we are justified in believing that a new avenue, or sense, for observing the universe, must be

evolved sooner or later—even if we had not the witnesses that such is law, in our fellow beings who have developed higher and keener senses than humanity generally now has.

The different aspects of matter, or substance, do not depend on our being able to sense them; they exist just the same, but our knowledge of them does depend on our knowing something of those states or aspects. So we are not logical when we say other states of matter do not exist simply because we do not sense them; evolve the sense and the proof is certain. Now, a study of Theosophical literature, and an earnest desire to help humanity, does develop or evolve these new senses, exactly in proportion to our desire to use *all* the knowledge we procure, for the elevation of the whole of humanity; for by helping all we help ourselves as a part of humanity. Altruism—unselfishness—is the real factor in evolution to higher planes.

A. L. B., F. T. S.

### Tolerance.

IT SEEMS as if, in the latter end of this century, we are about to realize a revulsion from the deadly materialism that has had so firm a hold on the western races since their great reaction against the superstitions and dogmas of the Middle Ages. So much the better, and all hail to the triumphs of reason and the intellect, so long as they do not force upon us a still more deadly—because more refined—system of materialism. The power of free thought now belongs to the people, and all will



be well if they but use the reason and intelligence so lately made king, and ponder well their facts before laying down deductions. This is what Theosophy is making so great an effort to teach the race, and it also seeks to teach each to think for himself and to accept no other man's conclusions. True Theosophy is as many-sided as the Universe itself; it has a phase appealing to the interest of every man, if that side can but be presented to his gaze, for it includes science, metaphysics, ethics—all that which is dearest to the intelligence and spirit of man. It is but a small portion that our modern Teachers, with all their efforts, can bring before the gaze of the world; but even that is attracting wide-spread attention. People are ripening for a broader view of all religions and all philosophies than they have cared to take hitherto. Theosophy comes forward and urges upon every man the importance of the study, practice and mastery of all that is true and good in the religion fate has made him to call his own, with a broad tolerance for the religions of all his brothers—more, with an earnest effort to understand and appropriate to himself all the best teachings of his brothers' religions. It does not require a great deal of such study to show him that their fundamental principles and ethics are identical; that it is only in the man-made creeds they differ. Then does the student begin to learn that tolerance is not, after all, a favor shown to his brother man, but the *very first step* in his own upward progress—the clearing of his own mental vision for

the reception of the Light of Truth.

How much the late Congress of Religions in Chicago has done to further this brotherly and truly Theosophical tolerance and sympathy, only time can show. It should start a volume of thought forces which could revolutionize modern thought, turning the western money- and -pleasure-seeker from his dry dust of materialism to thoughts of the real destiny—the divine evolution—of man, the true brotherhood of humanity, deeper, even, in its true sense, than as known to the kind heart of the modern philanthropist, using the word. What this power has, and will yet, set in motion among the forces on the higher planes, we cannot now know; but one thing is evident to each and all of us, if we look for the relationship which these facts should bear to our own actions. Surely *now* is the time for each of us to make every effort possible to us to further the Cause of the Master; to help others to a knowledge of the teachings of Theosophy; to live such lives as will be worthy of Fellows of the T. S. and students of the Wisdom Religion. *Now*, while the great forces of the cycle, the century's end, are moving in this direction, should we throw in with them the small forces at our command—the forces of unselfish daily life and action, of effort to enlighten those who know even less than ourselves, of pure and noble thoughts; forces forming a current, perhaps not great in itself, but when united with those of all true workers for the Cause, swelling into a mighty tide, bearing the Cause of Humanity irresistibly forward toward another

point—another completed cycle—marking its upward progress in the great spiral of evolution.

*L. H. R.*

### Theosophy and Modern Science.

**I**N DEALING with modern science, Theosophy deals with no mean antagonist, for it is the only one of its opponents that can really be said to be active, and to use Theosophy's own weapons, namely, reason, logic and common sense. Yet, one of the greatest illusions of our nineteenth century may be found under the title of "Modern Science."

The main distinction between modern science and Theosophy is: Theosophy deals chiefly with that which is permanent and real; while modern science deals principally with the external, and, therefore, transitory. In dealing with the universe, modern materialistic science leaves out by far the greater and more important half—the psychical, mental and spiritual planes of nature. One of its most vulnerable points is, that it attempts to trace the thinking, intelligent being, known as man, back to a mere correlation of molecules of dead matter. Theosophy presents the contrary view—that mind or intelligence, the living, vital, thinking principle, is as universal, as much a part of nature, as matter or this so-called force.

The further we delve into the mysteries of the Wisdom Religion, the greater the vista that opens up before us. The more we try to understand the language of the Adepts of the East, the more grows our respect for Their wis-

dom. The more we become able to grasp Their ideas, the more grows our conception of men. Their teachings make of man something immeasurably greater than the puny and impotent being known to modern science as a compound of bones, muscles and nerves. Modern science attempts to prove that man is an animal; the teachings of the Adepts show that he inherits god-like possibilities. Modern science invests him with the power to lift his own weight; ancient science invests him with the power to control the destiny of the world. Modern science allows him to live for a very limited number of years; Theosophy teaches that he has always existed, and will never cease to exist if he desires to live.

*H. P. B. Training Class.*

### Two Dreams.

**I** DREAMED that I met a Teacher. I thought that it was necessary for me to undergo, at his hands, a great and severe test. This was to consist, after certain preparatory ceremonies, in his thrusting a dagger into my heart. I wondered whether or no the test was to consist in my willingness to submit to the dagger thrust, or whether the dagger thrust was to be really given, and my life ended, for this incarnation. In either case I decided to take the chances. I reasoned with myself. If the dagger is really thrust into my heart and my life so ended, I shall certainly be fitted for better work in a future life or this would not be done, and so I shall be content. If, on the contrary, the blow be only in-

tended as a test of my endurance, I shall also be content.

After a second of preparation, the teacher lifted up my arm gently, and thrust the dagger directly into my heart, and—I awoke out of my dream, happy and tranquil. I had apparently stood the test of Devotion—even to the laying down of my life.

I dreamed again. I was in the midst of a jungle of dry grasses, at the farther side of which a fierce sea of flame was approaching me, for the jungle was on fire. With me, scattered here and there, were several other people. Suddenly, almost immediately in front of me, there came out of the jungle, disturbed, apparently, by the fire, an immense yellow lion. I looked at him a moment, and the thought crossed my mind that, by steadily meeting his gaze and standing my ground, he would go away without harming me. But the thought was only transient, and was replaced by a feeling of abject terror.

I hoped that his attention would be attracted to someone else, and turned and ran into a grove of trees, with the intention of climbing one and remaining until there was no longer any danger. Upon arriving in the grove, I glanced around, and found that the lion had selected and followed me, and was now preparing to spring upon me. In an agony of terror, I rushed to a tree and began to climb, and in the climbing—awoke, to find my heart throbbing, and my whole physical being thrilled with physical fear; and I realized well, that, though I had stood the test of Devotion before, now I had failed in the test of Courage. X.

## Editorial.

### The Coming Convention.

AS WILL be seen by the official notice in another column, the Annual Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society will be held in San Francisco this year, upon the 22nd and 23rd of April next.

There will also be a "Midwinter Congress of Religions," whose sessions will take place from the 14th to the 20th of April, inclusive. At this writing, the plan of the "Midwinter Congress of Religions" has not been definitely determined. There is no doubt, however, but that Theosophy will have a prominent position in its proceedings. The sessions of this Congress will either be given over to differing religious faiths, for the presentation of each faith, or general religious topics will be selected by the Sub-Committee having control of the Congress, from which representatives of different religions may select. If this latter plan be adopted, at the session or sessions devoted to Theosophy, for instance, some such topic as "The Common Origin of All Religions," will be assigned to the writer or speaker whom the Theosophists may designate for that purpose. After it is read, there will be given an opportunity for it to be discussed by the representatives of other faiths; thus making use of quite a different plan of procedure from that at the Chicago Congress of Religions, and one which, if adopted, will be peculiarly advantageous to Theosophy, for it will enable us to sharply contrast our religion, philosophy, and science with those of others. This will compel a hearing of Theosophical philosophy, primarily, and a defence of its tenets, secondarily, by those whom no motive, short of such a Congress, would induce to consent to such a presentation. It will develop a fraternal feeling, and compel a knowledge of each others' religious beliefs, by a method superior to any other which could possibly be adopted.

As this will, most probably, be the plan of the Congress, it will be at once apparent that Theosophy should be well and ably represented. Therefore, it becomes the duty of each Theosophist upon the Coast, to prepare himself to take an active part in the proceedings of the Congress, if necessary. Certainly, it is the duty of everyone who can do so to attend, and to strengthen, by his presence, those upon whom devolve the responsibility of presenting Theosophy to the Congress. And not only this, but attendance is almost obligatory, in order that Theosophy may be creditably represented in numbers.

The Convention following immediately afterward, permits of delegates attending both events by remaining in San Francisco a single week; and this should be another inducement for all Coast Theosophists to be present. For our Annual Convention, following directly upon the course of the Midwinter Congress, must attract a good deal of attention, and may be made the means of spreading a knowledge of Theosophy in a very wide and comprehensive manner. Let all who can then, come, and let each one, able to do so, prepare a short paper, of not over thirty minutes, as material to be used, either at the Midwinter Congress, or at the Convention, as the exigencies of the case may determine. For, at this time, all personal pride, all petty motive, all ambition to be first or foremost, must be sacrificed for the general good to be accomplished by the double event.

Brethren, make your arrangements now, and prepare yourselves, upon all portions of the Coast, to descend upon San Francisco, *en masse*, during the week or ten days in which the Congress and the Convention will be held.

It is with regret that we have to announce the non-arrival of the new edition of the "Voice of the Silence," which was expected before Christmas. The Secretary has had to disappoint numerous friends, who sent for copies. She hopes soon to supply all demands.

## How to Help the Theosophical Society.

There are many Theosophists eager and willing to help the Theosophical Society, and, through it, humanity, but the question presents itself, "How can I do this?" In the very formulation of the mental question lies the solution of most of our inability and helplessness. Leave out the "I", and put the question, "How can the Theosophical Society be best helped?" and the help is already half accomplished. Upon the plane of the personality—the only one where most of us are willing to work—truly, little or nothing can be done; but, on that of the individuality, much. Yet when we rise, perhaps briefly, to this impersonal region and get glimpses of truth, we must needs distort and color these by our personal preconceptions before we are willing to give them out to the world. The gold must be alloyed, hammered and shaped into forms which *we* conceive to be beautiful and appropriate; it must have the stamp of our personal and petty mint before it can safely be labeled gold. We forget that, with every such personal impress upon it, it becomes less and less serviceable as an universal medium between man and man—more and more restricted and confined to a purely local use. A truth plainly stated is always a truth; yet equally plainly stated over a personal signature, even, it is at once dwarfed into A's or B's conception; and loses much of its original force and strength. How much more is this the case when the same truth has been colored by our purely personal limitation, by our preconceptions arising out of old erroneous teachings; by social customs; by vanities, ambitions, and all the many things which are so real to the personal man that they seem a portion, and a desirable portion, of his very self?

Let us remember that help for the personal man must always come from the higher nature, and that only by purifying our own personalities, now raging in the lusts of the flesh, can any real help to the Theosophical Society and the world be accomplished. The creative or

helpful force is not—cannot be—generated on the personal plane: it is only as we conquer this that we can truly help our fellowmen. The power is always ready and waiting. Let us all strive to make of ourselves impersonal centers for this creative force—to so conquer our selfish longings, passions and desires that the Light can shine through us uncolored. So shall those whom we contact in our daily life know, without uttered words on our part, that we are Theosophists. So shall we become real helpers of humanity; centers of right thought, right action, and right living, more powerful for good than the most eloquent—and most envied—writer or lecturer without these qualifications.

#### Importance of Systematic Study.

The need of the hour is a clear, comprehensive working-out of Theosophical ideas, and their practical application to daily life. This can only be obtained by thorough, definite and systematic study. Take some standard Theosophical work, such as the "Key to Theosophy," and study it as one would a grammar or physics; make a note of the principal points in a chapter, or even on a page. After forming a clear idea of these points, express them in one's own language; but the idea must be clearly and definitely formed, for the first requisite of clear speaking is clear thinking. This is also of the greatest occult importance, since the real potency of our lives is on the thought plane. Thoughts, shaped in a clear and definite manner, are the karma which mould the destinies of men. One hour's concentrated effort of the mind for the elevation of the race may do more good than weeks of drudgery; and how easy, if we only desire it, to find a little time to steady the mind and purify the heart. This may seem to have little connection with the Esoteric Philosophy, but, in fact, it has a very vital one, since you must, in very truth, live the life if you would know the doctrine; and the Theosophical doctrine, abstruse

as it may seem at first, is really an exposition of the deeper truths of nature and their relation to man's principles, by knowing which, we may put ourselves in harmony with universal law, and, ceasing to violate her edicts, reach the "Place of Peace," the state in which all the duties of life can be performed, yet the energies retained within for higher purposes.

The object to be accomplished by the members of the T. S. is the working out of clear conceptions of ethics, religion, and duty, which can be taught to the public and applied in the daily life of the masses. On our efficiency in the discharge of this duty depends the usefulness of the T. S., the success of the movement, and the enlightenment of future generations.

A. B. C.

#### Editorial Items.

There seems to be a great awakening, and an eager search for the truths of Theosophy—Divine Wisdom.

Mr. Alex. McIvor, F. T. S., of Scotland, called at Headquarters and paid his respects to the Secretary.

Mrs. I. C. Ivey, a member of the Aryan Branch of New York City, has been visiting San Francisco recently.

Mr. and Mrs. James R. White have visited San Francisco, and are making preparations for forming a Branch in Fresno.

The Tuesday and Friday afternoon classes at Headquarters are well attended. Thursday and Saturday afternoon classes have been started at the same place.

Members from various Eastern Branches have visited the Headquarters, and were cordially received and entertained by the Secretary.

Letters from Victoria, B. C., show that an increase in Branch and League membership is anticipated. Good work is being done, and new Headquarters are to be formed. Everyone shows great earnestness.



The San Francisco Branch, T. S., will hold open meetings every Tuesday evening, as usual, at 1504 Market St., Headquarters. A cordial invitation is extended to all.

The League of Theosophical Workers has lately presented the Headquarters with a handsome new book case, which was very acceptable, as more room for books was very much needed.

Letters come pouring into Headquarters from other parts of the North, and also from Wisconsin and Michigan, asking for suggestions as to courses of reading, etc.

During the past month, the League of Theosophical Workers has accomplished great good by its efforts. The sick have been visited, and the poor aided and comforted. Much of this has been due to the handsome donation of a banker of this city.

Dr. Mohn is working very hard in Santa Ana, and public meetings are being held.

He contemplates visiting Pasadena and Riverside, as he, Mr. Neubauer and Mr. Gibson, anticipate forming Branches at these places in the near future.

Dr. Anderson has been giving a course of lectures in San Francisco, on "The Seven Principles of Man."

The first lecture was "Man: the Microcosm;" the second, "The Physical Body;" third, "The Astral Body." Owing to the serious illness of the doctor the rest of the course has been postponed, for the present. The entire series will be given to our readers in due time.

The two volumes of the new edition of the "Secret Doctrine" are now for sale at Headquarters. The paper, print, and general appearance are far superior to the old edition, and will give great satisfaction to subscribers. The Secretary hopes to receive the revised and enlarged index bound separately within a few weeks. It will be a great boon to the student.

Lectures in San Francisco during the past month have been: "What Think ye of Christ," by E. B. Rambo; "Satan—Good and Evil," by Dr. Griffiths; "Outlines of Some Theosophical Doctrines," by Evan Williams.

#### Theosophy on an Ocean Steamer.

Bro. Sven Ryden, who left San Francisco for Europe, via Japan, Ceylon, and India, writes from Japan that considerable interest in Theosophy was manifested on the steamer, in the course of his passage thither. He distributed numbers of leaflets, and had animated talks with his fellow voyagers, one gentleman, especially, showing a desire to join the Society. Thus the seeds of Theosophy can be sown, under all circumstances, and it behooves each and all of us to be prepared, should the exigency arise in our own case, by careful study, so that our presentation of it may be able and forcible.

#### Lotus Circle Christmas Party

On the evening of January 1st, 1894, the Headquarters were filled with a band of happy children—members of Lotus Circle, No. 1—and their friends, the occasion being a Christmas party given by the Superintendent, Mr. W. J. Walters, to the little folks. During the day, the room had been decorated by members of the H. P. B. Training Class, and presented a cheerful holiday appearance in their dress of ivy and evergreens.

The entertainment of the evening consisted of a programme of songs, recitations, etc., arranged by a committee of the children themselves, and very well carried out. This was followed by a magic lantern exhibition, with the accompanying talk and explanations, which delighted the little folks, and drew from them some very droll remarks and much laughter. The last picture, a huge roast turkey, labelled "Hot I scream," aroused some little suspicion as to what was to follow in the shape of something "good," and when the trays appeared with cakes and cream enough for all, and some over,

there was a smile of "I told you so" all around. Later, each child was presented with a book by the Superintendent, and then, amid much merriment and social good cheer, the good byes were said, and the little ones went home. In every way, it was a most charming event, and one which will be long remembered by both young and old.

### Among the Coast Branches.

#### Los Angeles Branch.

G. F. MOHN, Sec., writes: The Theosophical work here is steadily progressing. Public meetings are well attended, and a number are talking of joining the Branch. During last month, the following lectures were given: Dec. 3, "Thought and its Potency," Mrs. L. E. Giese; Dec. 10, "The Evolution of Man," H. A. Gibson; Dec. 17, "Occult Powers Latent in Man," G. F. Mohn; Dec. 24, "Evidence of Talents," F. Neubauer; Dec. 31, Magic, Maleficent and Beneficent," Mrs. L. E. Giese. The regular weekly Branch meetings are also increasing in interest. Subjects are now given out, upon which each member writes a short paper, to be presented at the next meeting. The following officers have been elected for the year just begun: President, H. A. Gibson; Vice-President, F. Neubauer; Secretary, G. F. Mohn; Treasurer, Mrs. Isabella Jones. During December three new members were admitted.

In looking back over the past year, we can see that quite a good deal has been accomplished; though that not without a struggle, as many difficulties have had to be encountered and overcome. We hope, during the present year, to accomplish still more in our efforts to remove the ignorance and darkness of the world, and thus help to lift some of its heavy Karma.

#### Golden Gate Branch.

On the evening of December 28th, 1893, Golden Gate Branch T. S. held its regular annual meeting. The following offi-

cers were elected: E. B. Rambo, President and Treasurer; Mrs. M. E. Fountain, Vice-President; W. J. Walters, Secretary; Mrs. Annie T. Bush and T. H. Slator (with the officers), members of Council. It was decided to change the method of conducting the meetings, for a time, at least. All regular sessions of Golden Gate Branch will hereafter be closed to all persons not members of the Theosophical Society, or earnest students of the teachings. "The Seven Principles of Man," by Annie Besant, is being studied, carefully and systematically. One member is appointed to read the lesson, another to prepare a ten-minute paper or talk, another to ask questions, and all the students are invited to participate in the discussion. So far, the study hour has been very interesting and instructive.

#### Santa Rosa Branch.

C. D. Hudoff writes: Since the lectures of Mrs. Schoultes and Dr. Griffiths, which were both well attended, considerable interest is manifested in Theosophy, although people are slow about coming into the Society. We sincerely hope that you will be successful in bringing the Convention to this Coast in April. Our Branch, though small, will do what little it can to help. Dr. Griffiths, while here, gave us a lecture and a parlor talk, and we all felt much benefited. We have determined to get down to earnest work, and increase our membership, if possible.

#### Seattle Branch.

The officers of the Seattle Branch T. S. for 1894, were duly elected at the annual meeting.

We are glad to learn that the Branch has been doing excellent work during the past year. There is a good membership, and, judging from the report of the Branch meetings and public lectures, not to speak of newspaper articles and reports, they keep Theosophy well to the front in the North.

They have our hearty sympathy in all their efforts.

The League of Theosophic Workers continues under the old regime.

### San Francisco Branch.

Mrs. V. S. Beane, Sec., writes: The meetings of the San Francisco Branch, T. S., still continue open to the public, and interest in them is unabated—in fact, the attendance at the last two was larger than usual.

Two new members were admitted this month.

### Pacific Coast Lecturer's Movements

DR. GRIFFITHS gave two lectures in Fresno during Jan.: "Evolution, Terrestrial and Racial," Jan. 11th; "Evolution of the Thinker," Jan. 14th. Several informal meetings were also held. All were well attended. A Branch is in process of formation in that city. The local Press gave extended reports of the lectures.

Sanger was visited; and on request of citizens of that city, a lecture on "Theosophy, Karma, and Reincarnation" was given Jan. 19th, in Tucker Hall. Every seat was occupied, and the lecture of one hour and a quarter was listened to with unflagging interest. Questions followed; a number remained to talk with the speaker after the meeting was dismissed. People called on Dr. Griffiths at his hotel, next day; books were ordered, and the Sanger *Herald* gave a long report.

On our going to press, Dr. Griffiths is in Porterville, Tulare Co., having been invited to that city to give lectures. He will later visit Visalia, Selma, and Merced. He has received an urgent invitation from a prominent minister of Selma, who will secure a suitable hall, and advertise the lecture there. This gentleman met Dr. Griffiths at Sanger, talked Theosophy with him, and was so interested that he made the above offer, which was accepted.

### IMPORTANT.

The Pacific Coast Committee having sent its circular letter in regard to the Coast Lecturer and his maintenance for the next year to all Branches and members on the Coast, is now most desirous of hearing directly from the Branches, stating what amounts they may be able to contribute for the coming year, either monthly or in one sum. It is also important that not only the Branches answer, but that every individual member reply to the Treasurer, as requested. It is very essential that the Committee have full data for their financial obligations for the coming year, and they request a reply from each member. If one proposes to contribute through one's Branch, kindly state that fact. If one can contribute directly, state this, and if unable to support the Lecturer, for any reason, please reply that it will be impossible, for this year, to do so.

### OFFICIAL NOTICE.

Theosophical Society American Section,

GEN. SECRETARY'S OFFICE,  
Headquarters, 144 Madison Ave.,  
NEW YORK, Jan. 3, 1894.

PACIFIC COAST COMMITTEE FOR THEOSOPHICAL WORK, ROOM 35, 1504 MARKET ST., SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.:

SIRS & BRETHREN:—On the 27th of December I addressed a letter to the Executive Committee of the American Section giving reasons why the Annual Convention of this year should be held in San Francisco, notifying them of your request, and urging upon the Committee the adoption of a resolution to that effect. I wrote separately to Mr. Blodgett of Seattle, but there can be no question of his approval of the plan. The remaining members of the Committee have, without exception, endorsed the recommendation, and some of them wrote their enthusiastic approval. The Resolution having been thus unanimously passed, it is settled that the Convention, to open on the 22nd of April, will be held in San Francisco.

Sincerely yours,  
WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,  
General Secretary.