

The Pacific Theosophist.

Vol. VI.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., FEB., 1896.

No. 7.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE LOTUS PUBLISHING COMPANY,

1170 Market Street,

SAN FRANCISCO,

CALIFORNIA.



JEROME A. ANDERSON, M. D., F. T. S.,Editor.
ABBOTT B. CLARK, F. T. S., Associate Editor.



SUBSCRIPTION,

\$1.00 PER YEAR.

Where is Hell?

[Stenographic report, by Clara A. Brockman, of a Lecture given at Red Men's Hall, San Francisco, Sunday, August 18th, 1895.]

THEOSOLOGY, in common with all religions, separates man into soul and body; asserts that the soul is a spiritual entity inhabiting an animal body. Accepting this teaching as true, let us examine briefly that which takes place when the soul is removed from the body by death. The teaching upon this point is, that each man finds himself in a differing condition, but that these differences may still be classified under one general phase of consciousness—desire. This condition of desire is known, technically, as *Kama Loka*, and it will readily be seen that it is a perfectly normal sequence of earth-life. For during life we are full of desires; all our energies are occupied in procuring those things which seem desirable to us; and when death removes the soul from the body, these desires still rage, and our whole being tends earthward. But no longer possessing a molecularly-constructed body, the soul is unable to really experience that consciousness for which it longs, and so its desires remain for ever unsatisfied, although it may spend years in that which seems to it to be their actual gratification. An analogy may be found in dream. All have dreamed dreams in which they have been still hungry after feasting upon the most bounteous repast; or thirsty after drinking gallons of water, and so on. Whatever appetite or desire may possess one, dream leaves ever unsatisfied. So with death. Directly after it, man enters upon a condition of consciousness which is largely subjective, or dreamlike, and occupies himself with endeavoring to still satisfy his strongest earth-desires—a thing which he is unable to do for reasons above given.

But this condition of desire varies with each man at death, just as characters vary during life. Each will occupy himself with those desires which root most deeply in his nature, and it follows, naturally, that comparative happiness, or a very real wretchedness, may be experienced immediately after death. To illustrate: A man who has lived out the natural term of his life, and has been a reasonably good man—has worked no greater ill

to his neighbor than is unavoidable under the social conditions of his country—will, and ought to, find himself under very different circumstances when he dies than one who has all his life wronged his fellow-men. The first would very quickly pass into a condition of comparative happiness. He might be unconscious, even, of having passed through the great change, and would pick up the thread of his old life in his death-dream, and go forward with his ordinary occupation in comparative peace. Or, if he realized that death had occurred, he would fancy himself under circumstances which would grow out of his past beliefs as to the future state. A Christian would fancy himself in the Christian heaven, and it might be, would converse in a very familiar manner with God and the angels. A Spiritualist would certainly find himself in a very material “summer land;” a Moslem would be in paradise; and so on, each according to his former beliefs. That is, supposing, as we have pointed out, the life to have been an ordinarily good one. In the second case, the man having lived a sensuous and wicked life, his desires would rage furiously earthwards, while he would be continuously disappointed in their gratification. And if he had committed some crime which he expiated upon the gallows, or had suicided, or murdered some one, the strong impression thus made upon his consciousness would cause him to pass years in the ceaseless repetition of the act, so deeply graven in his memory. But, even in the latter instances, the fires of earthly passion in time die out for want of fuel to keep up the flame, and both good and bad pass into a second state of consciousness, which, technically known as Devachan, can only be likened to that of high, and purely unselfish dream. The good man will pass into this state much more quickly, however, than the bad one. His dreams after death will soon cease to be those of ordinary selfish desires, and will consist of the dramatizations of the highest ideals of which he had ever conceived during life. He will be in a state of bliss through long years, while the other is being punished in a real hell—both punishment and reward being self-administered, and following naturally under the law of cause and effect. Others, again, are torn out of life by accident, murder, or suicide, and then there is not that complete separation of the soul from the body which follows upon normal death. These souls are of the earth, earthy, and they remain in closer touch with the earth at death than any other class. It is these who are best able to communicate with the earth, and they haunt seances for this purpose for the reason that they not only have all the desires of the ordinary man raging within them, but are able to influence men in the body because of the greater materiality of their nature. Souls of this class are inclined to dwell upon, and to repeat in fancy, some important event of their lives. The suicide, for example, will go on repeating in his imagination the act which cut his life short. The murderer, punished upon the gallows, will re-enact his punishment in his after-death dream. One can see, therefore, that this after-death state can

be one of very real punishment and suffering for the wicked. But no matter how good or how wicked, all souls will, sooner or later, pass out of this condition of desire, and enter into the state of rest known as Devachan. This is accomplished by means of a kind of second death. For, upon leaving the body, all will clothe themselves in forms of astral matter which will take the shape of the old body under the direction of thought, guided and aided by long association with that old body. This form is known as the Kama Rupa, or "form of desire," because, while clothed with it, the soul experiences all the desires of the old earth-life. But, when the real ego passes into the higher state of Devachan, where the vibrations of earth-desires no longer reach it, it abandons this body, and it is left to disintegrate and perish.

In this fact of the dissolution of the astral body in the region immediately surrounding the earth, and which may be identified in all systems of religion without exception, lies the key to the recognition of the source of all religious tenets of hell. All such refer to the condition immediately after death; and the further each religion has gotten away from the original truth, the greater its distortion of it, and the more it confounds the temporary suffering after death with the eternal destiny of the soul. Such states of punishment are common to all religions. Brahminism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity,—in fact all religions,—have their "hells", or states of punishment. The principal difference between Christianity and those older, grander, and more ethical religions from which Christianity sprung, is in the addition by Christianity of endless torment and a personal devil. This is the great chasm which divides the old so-called heathendom in belief from the more recent Christendom—the fact that the Christians have added to the old idea a personal devil and everlasting hell. There was no such thing as eternal punishment in the religions of the past. Punishment was under the law of cause and effect, and each penalty exactly in proportion to the act which brought it about. This was the conception of all religions to the time of Judaism. Judaism, founded by Abram, was, no doubt, a defection, or schism from Brahminism. The very word itself means "those who deny Brahm." At any rate, in this religion we first find the idea of hell, and, later, that of eternal punishment. In early Judaism, hell was only an immense tomb; a place where the ghosts of the dead existed in a kind of trance-like sleep, connected with no idea of punishment or retribution whatever. It was a condition approaching unconsciousness. This is plainly a perversion of the original teaching of the after-death state of the Kama Rupa, not applicable to the soul itself. Jewish hatred of their oppressors during the Babylonian captivity became so great that the idea of an eternal hell was apparently conceived by them in order to deal out an adequate punishment for those against whom they were so enraged. This place of punishment, originally termed Sheol, a name which occurs sixty-two times in the Bible, and translated thirty-one

times "grave", and thirty-one times "hell", became later "Gehenna", and was described as a lake of fire and brimstone. It is a reminiscence of the valley of Hinnam, a little valley near Jerusalem, where, in early times, there was a fire kept perpetually burning, and in which the Jews are said to have offered their children as sacrifices to Moloch. It was a horrible place, and it is little wonder that it should have been associated with the idea, or as a type, of hell. The "lake" is the Dead Sea. Out of these two purely physical sources, and their horrible associations, is built the imaginary hell to which Christianity has fallen heir.

In the original great tomb to which they consigned the dead, there was, as stated, no thought or idea of retribution, and all souls met precisely the same fate. Ezekiel first made a difference by locating the souls of the "uncircumcised" in the "side of the pit." Enoch, after the Babylonian captivity, first spoke of eternal punishment; and he uses a word which means a time of indefinite or unknown duration, but to which ignorant or designing translators attached the former meaning, just as Sheol was indifferently translated "grave" or "hell", as the exigencies of a distorted doctrine demanded.

In Grecian mythology there also may be recognized the teaching concerning this Astral Body. As early as the *Iliad*, Homer declares that in the region to which the dead were supposed to go, there was form and life, but no mind, which would be exactly the state of the shell after the human soul had left it.

In these conceptions of hell may, at times, be seen a reappearance of the original teachings. This was due to there being sent, from time to time, Messengers from the Great Lodge. After Plato there was a change; at the time of the Neoplatonists, and the Alexandrian revival, there was a great modification in men's conceptions of these after-death states. For two or three centuries after Christ, there was taught a correct conception of Kama Loka or an "intermediate state," or a state in which the soul is before it passes into a condition of rest. This intermediate state is still taught wherever the Greek Church holds sway. It is not the purgatory of the Catholics, but is the real Kama Loka. The Catholic Church has changed it into purgatory, or a place into which the comparatively good go in order to expiate their remaining sins; but the intermediate state of the early Church was a place into which all souls went. Changed into the erroneous conception of purgatory, it was made a dogma by Gregory the Great.

How did the idea of fire become associated with hell? The Scandinavian hell was cold and cheerless, the Greek, a state of inanition. It was a perversion of the real truth that it is the duty of every man to sacrifice his lower nature to the higher, and this was called, in the Rosicrucian days, particularly, the dissolution of the lower "animal" in the spiritual "fire". Christ also repeated this tenet, but, like much of his other teach-

ing, it became perverted, and this "spiritual fire," man's best and greatest help in overcoming his lower nature, degenerated into an everlasting torment. It was added to the conception of hell long after the time of Christ.

With this brief statement as to how the idea of hell arose, and why it became associated with that of eternal punishment, fire, torment, and such things, we will pass on to the Theosophical conception of punishment and reward. To understand this, we must recognize that the universe is embodied consciousness; that there is nothing within it which is not conscious; that there is no form in all the infinitude of forms out of which the universe is constructed that is not informed by a conscious entity; that all form is the result of the thought of thinking entities. There are infinite modes of consciousness, and an infinite variety of forms, and through these forms, and, therefore, experiencing their infinitely varying states of consciousness from the lowest material to the highest spiritual aspect of the universe, the ego or human soul must necessarily pass. No matter how wide the experience, or how great the knowledge of a soul may be, the infinite potentialities of an infinite universe will ever present to it infinitely new problems. This must follow, or in the eternities of the past all would have been known. Therefore, all entities must pass through this "cycle of necessity." Even though self-conscious and divinely wise, they have to clothe themselves in the matter of this world; to assimilate its consciousness, and so add this new wisdom to that already attained. No matter how wise in other respects, as to this world they are ignorant, because inexperienced. Being inexperienced, they must make mistakes, and out of those mistaken violations of law arise all the pain, sin, suffering, and everything with which we associate the idea of punishment. There is no hell, no suffering or vice but that caused by ignorance. The vilest criminal is what he is because of mistaken conceptions of the best methods for obtaining happiness; he who robs or steals is mistakenly seeking happiness in so doing, and he, therefore, brings upon himself all the suffering which he endures. All suffering is accurately adjusted by the law of cause and effect, which cannot err, but which metes out to each individual and to each act the effect required to preserve the balance of eternal justice. In a law-governed universe, there can be no injustice, for that would imply chaos, not cosmos—a doctrine which alone reconciles us to the seeming injustices which surround life.

There can be no eternal, and therefore infinite, suffering springing from a finite act. The law of cause and effect would be grossly, infinitely violated. The idea of a child who has lied being punished eternally for that trivial offence, or of an otherwise moral and good man, who has refused to believe that which seemed unreasonable, being consigned to eternal torment, is as unphilosophical as it is unmerciful and fiendish. The exact effect for such cause set up while in the body, is meted out, and when that

is accomplished the account is settled. The place and time of punishment, or of suffering the effects of causes set up in earth-life, are upon earth and in the body, whether the same, or that of a succeeding incarnation.

There is very little suffering after a normal death. Suffering, or "hell," is a state of consciousness; and if we are suffering, we are in hell just to that extent, whether dead or living.

Both the sun and the center of the earth have been the subject of much discussion among Christians, as probable localities of the place of torment. Theosophy has no necessity for such after-death limboes. To most men, it holds, death is a release. Even this condition of Kama Loka, or after-death desire is not one of acute suffering save in exceptional cases. The inability to satisfy our desires wearies us of them, and we relinquish them and pass into rest. Indeed, there is suffering enough while alive to satisfy the most morbid or revengeful. The tearing from us of those we love; the deaths of our children, our parents; insanity, or the fear of it, disease,—are not these enough?

How, then, are we to avoid or remove this condition of unhappiness and suffering? The remedy is simple. It lies in the recognition of the fact that we are souls, and not bodies. It is desire which knits man to his bodily senses. He thinks, "I am hungry; I am thirsty; I desire this or that;" yet all this is untrue; and he does not desire these things. They are the desires and passions of his body. The soul is of the plane of thought, where desire cannot enter. It imagines itself to be its body, and so falls under the sway of passion and delusion. Man must learn to recognize, to distinguish, between the soul and the body and its desires; must recognize the true relation of soul and body; that the latter is but an animal form. Remove the soul, or thinking principle, and what remains but an animal?

Upon the plane of thought all men are equal. Apparent inequalities are caused by the mistakes made in passing through conditions in which the soul has had no experience. Each man finds himself in a body which seems to shut him out and separate him from all other men. All this is pure illusion, caused by the fact that incarnating in a body so full of this new and strange consciousness—desire—confounds the soul, and benumbs its spiritual faculties. Let us put this illusion aside. Let us remember that we are thinking souls; and that we are associated with these animal bodies both to acquire the new strength and wisdom born of effort and struggle, and to help lower entities to take a step upward in the ascent of life.

JEROME A. ANDERSON, M. D., F. T. S.

"That word which all the Vedas record, which all penances proclaim, which men desire when they live as religious disciples, that word, I tell thee briefly, it is OM."—*Birthday Book*.

The Power of Thought to Mold the Progress of the World.

ALL through the pages of history we find that any advance in science, art, philosophy, or religion has been marked by a corresponding advance in the thoughts, or, to put it in other words, the mental capacity of the people affected by it. In fact, for some time prior to any outward change the advanced thinkers have been its forerunners. In European and American history this is most marked, since it is nearer our own time, and we have better records and can trace more readily the progress of events. In England, we can trace what is taking place in America—the blending of different nationalities. This fusion has, in the process of time, molded the thoughts of the English; and these thoughts have again reacted upon the national life and character. Thus, in the days of the Saxon Heptarchy, when there was a large admixture of the Danish element with the purely Saxon, the people displayed certain phases of German life as seen at the present day, though a little lower down in the scale of civilization. They were men of the heavy, stolid type. Beer or mead drinking prevailed. With the advent of the Normans a more flip-pant type of character came on the scene. This flippancy was, however, accompanied by a greater show of outward decorum; and we see a strange blending of apparently conflicting traits of character—a strong sense of honor, yet with it a most selfish tendency for the gratification of everything that could conduce to pleasure and stimulate vanity. Thus, the Norman knight might well have been referred to by Shakespeare in the words: “Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon’s mouth.” These characteristics produced the age of chivalry, immortalized in verse and prose, and satirized by Cervantes in “Don Quixote.” The Knight Templars, blending the spirit of chivalry with that of religion, fought for the holy sepulchre and the Cross.

As race enmity gradually disappeared, and as the different nationalities intermingled together, the change of thought is still more marked. The staid Saxon characteristics blended with the more vivacious ones of the Norman, and these combined molded the progress of the nation, and were externalized, so to speak, in the hardy and intrepid men of the days of the “bluff king Hal,” of the times of Queen Elizabeth, and of the Commonwealth. To these men the United States owe their greatness. Where is the American who does not look back with pride to the daring navigators of those days, and to the Pilgrim Fathers of New England?

That thought really molded the progress of the English-speaking races up to that time—and indeed since—cannot be doubted, if we examine the literature of the different periods. In the Saxon epoch we have the religious and philosophical records of the good king, Alfred the Great, and the religious works of the Venerable Bede. Later, among the Normans, there is the poetry of Chaucer. Up to the reign at least of Henry VII, the

monasteries preserved what culture there was in the country during the Middle Age, which may be compared to the germs of the intellectual greatness that afterwards blossomed and fructified in the giant minds of Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, and their contemporaries of lesser note. And who can estimate how much the present age has been affected by the writings of these three alone? They have molded the progress and advance of the whole English-speaking race.

Yet, whilst recognizing this direct influence, we must also bear in mind that the Latin and Greek classics—which are the thoughts of the ancients—have all along played an important part in shaping the progress of nations. The influence of literature can be traced upon every page of history; and a nation's thoughts are contained in its literature. Can there be any doubt but that this influence has been felt to the present century? And that the writings of men who now live still mold the progress of events, is beyond question. One novel, in England, was the means of a complete change in the management of Private Lunatic Asylums, which had become so corrupt as to be simply prisons for people whom others desired to keep out of the way. The Christmas stories of Charles Dickens caused more acts of kindness at that joyous season of the year than all the sermons in the churches, and many a man whose heart had grown cold in contact with the selfish "business" world had it melted, the first time in years, by reading one of these stories, and the feeling of brotherhood thus awakened. How many boys and girls, on the other hand, have been led to ruin and to wasted lives by the trashy literature that stares us in the face as we walk the streets of any of our cities! Consequently, to the careful thinker there can be no other conclusion but that thought has a power to, and does mold the progress of his own age, as it has that of the past.

The civilizations of India, China, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome have decayed and passed away, yet we know that their literature and thought have exerted a wonderful effect; for if not directly traceable, indirectly we can perceive its workings. For were not the cosmogonies and mysteries of Egypt, India, and Assyria taken up by Greece? And so the gods of Olympus and those of the Hindu pantheon correspond to a very large extent; probably, if fully studied and understood, entirely so. Platonic thought has permeated modern Christianity to an extent little dreamed of by the casual observer; and the very clergy, if they did but express their ideas, would be found in many respects anything but orthodox. Such is the power of thought!

During the brief period of the existence of the Theosophical Society, it is wonderful to note the marvelous change which Religious and Scientific thought has undergone. It is no unusual thing to hear people who know little or nothing of the Society express themselves in a manner which would have been hardly possible before its advent. Unknown to them,

mysteriously, through the interchange of thought, new ideas have been conveyed to them which have been eagerly seized.

We shall now consider thought from a more personal standpoint; and by doing so it will be even more apparent what tremendous influence it has. Can we do anything which cannot be traced back to thought? If a person be really kind and lovable in his acts, these must have been preceded by kind and loving thoughts. On the other hand, if a person be unkind and unlovable in his acts, these, too, must have been preceded by unkind and suspicious thoughts; for these always go hand in hand with selfishness. Unkind, suspicious, and selfish thoughts react upon ourselves as well as upon others. Do not we all know, for have we not felt, the pain resulting from some, perhaps thoughtless, yet unkind word? Have we not likewise realized the impetus given to us by a kind one, nerving us to a new effort to overcome some difficulty or temptation? A word of cheer, how good it is! Do not neglect to give it from a false conception of duty, or the doubt and fear that it may be misunderstood. Sooner or later it will bear fruit, and we may have helped a struggling soul upward in its pilgrimage through this vale of tears.

Thoughts are things—real living things—messengers of peace and joy or else of misery and despair; uplifting the soul, or bearing it down, with hope crushed out. Let our motto be, "Hope on, hope ever," and let us put this sunshine of hope into the hearts of others by noble thoughts and noble deeds, and by kindly sympathy. By making our own thoughts pure, grand, noble, and sublime, by keeping the ideal of Brotherhood and its mighty possibilities ever in our minds, and by fighting whatever is ignoble and debasing in ourselves, we shall influence the thought of the age to which we belong, and in time it will manifest in outward expression, and instead of rivalry, competition, enmity, hatred, and war, there will be the dawning of the brighter day of peace and goodwill to men; and a man will be accounted noble, not by birth nor by wealth, but by greatness of character and true nobility of soul.

Thought has power to damn or to bless, to mold the progress not only of ourselves and our immediate associates, but also the very evolution of humanity. Guard, then, those messengers of power called thoughts, and ever keep them pure and kind and true, until the words of the Master and all nature shall ring in harmony and joyous unison: "Peace to all beings."

T. H. SLATOR, F. T. S.

"Place, then, thy heart on me, penetrate me with thy understanding, and thou shalt, without doubt, hereafter dwell in me. But if thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy heart and mind on me, strive, then, to find me by constant practice in devotion. If, after constant practice, thou art still unable, follow me by actions performed for me. But, if thou art unequal even to this, then, being self-restrained, place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action."—*Bhagavad Gita*.

Notes on the "Voice of the Silence."

[In presenting these comments upon the "VOICE OF THE SILENCE," the writer makes no pretensions to authority, or to superior sources of information. They are only from a student to fellow students, and are offered as suggestive rather than didactic. All the writer claims is to have thought carefully along those ethical (and therefore occult) lines, with which the "Voice" deals. If anything here written shall help a single student to a better conception of the depth and grandeur of the ethical philosophy of this priceless little volume, the purpose of these notes will have been accomplished.]

"These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower Iddhi."

Iddhi, or *Siddhas*, are powers belonging to the Inner Man. They range from the lower psychical—those against which we are specially warned by the text—to the very highest, or spiritual. Among the lower, or psychic, may be instanced hypnotism, mind reading, passive trance, etc. The very lowest are the various "physical" manifestations of Spiritualism, such as table-tipping, rappings, slate writing, trumpet voice, and so on. These are due to the semi-automatic action of the *Linga Sharira*, in obedience to the will-desire of the medium or sitters, but quite independently of their conscious supervision. They are the dumb, unintelligent response of the astral organs to the pressure of desire, unaccompanied by any intelligent, or even conscious, directing of their actions, because of the lack of knowledge of those who call them forth. Others, a shade higher, consist of visions, which may be due to the dramatizing power of the brain-mind (as in ordinary dream), or to pictures in the astral light, seen with the astral vision. In either case they are harmful to the untrained psychic, for the first class nearly always arise from the same stimuli which produce ordinary, sensuous dreams, and are therefore misleading, chaotic and worthless, while the second class only confuse the reason by bringing to the attention of the mind a nonsequential medley of pictures to which it sustains no continuous relationship, and with which it is utterly unfamiliar, and therefore without power of discrimination. Many cases of insanity arise from evoking these psychic powers, for the unfortunate possessors of them often fail after a brief interval to differentiate the astral from the physical plane, and the confusing of the two soon lands them within the walls of an asylum.

"He who would hear the voice of *Nada*, the Soundless Sound, and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dharana*."

The notes say that *Nada*, literally, is the "Voice in the Spiritual Sound." It is called the Soundless Sound merely because it is unheard by our physical senses. All these have to be hushed into perfect quietude, and then the Immortal Ego, no longer confused by their clamor, can hear, and, in-

deed, realize its being, upon spiritual planes. The condition is one of beginning, if not complete, trance. It confronts the psychic student at the very entrance upon the Path of Occultism, as it necessarily and inevitably follows upon the suppression of the senses. To what plane the soul will rise, when freed from the physical senses, depends almost entirely upon the mental purity of that soul while in the body. At this, the very first, step the "Voice" may be that of an Angel of Light or of a Brother of the Shadow. For once these psychic gate-ways are opened, the neophyte has taken birth into a new world, and may contact any of the denizens of that world, either good or evil. This is the reason for the long and arduous course of self-discipline and self-purification to which the neophyte is subjected before he is permitted to draw aside the veil which shields him from the knowledge, and both the help or the enmity, of the inhabitants of the astral realms. Only when the Chela has become a Narjol, or "sinless one," can he be assured of rising through all the lower astral planes into the purity and safety of the spiritual realm. Ordinary dreams afford a touch-stone whereby one may test his own inner purity. If the dream be sensuous, chaotic or salacious, the neophyte would do well to cease all efforts towards psychic development, and to patiently take up the task of overcoming his yet too dominant lower nature.

"Having become indifferent to objects of perception the pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion."

The "Rajah of the senses" is the brain-mind, which is the creation of each personality, and which is, therefore, of the earth earthy. Into it is poured the constant and turbulent stream of molecular impressions, coming from the senses. The pure Ray of Mana, which causes the growth of this brain-mind, bewildered by incarnation and confused by the roar of the senses, falls under the illusion that it is the creature instead of the creator, and thus becomes the servant where it should be master. It is the object of the "Voice" to enable the Soul to overcome this illusion, and to subdue and spiritualize this, its desire-tainted, "mind-born son." Therefore the Soul must go directly to the physical throne of thought, and there grapple resolutely and vigorously with the Thought-Producer, realizing that this is not itself, ere it can still the clamor of the senses, and hear the Soundless Sound.

"The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real."

The Brain-Mind is here referred to, as by its delight in, and response to, the sense impressions, it draws a heavy veil of materiality between the Soul vision and the realms of Spirit, the only Reality.

"Let the Disciple slay the Slayer."

There are few tasks which the neophyte has to undertake of greater

magnitude than this slaying of the mind—meaning, of course, the brain-mind. With most men to think is synonymous with to live, and to separate consciousness from thought is to blot out the Soul from all existence. But this is a great error. Far deeper than mere thought lies the great ocean of conscious Being. Thought, as we know it, is but a mere ripple upon its surface. Thought is the active, creative aspect of Consciousness; the Unknowable, Precosmic Ideation become the Knowable Manifested. Action—ceaseless, restless activity—is its characteristic. Hence that restless darting from subject to subject, which is so characteristic of the brain-mind. Yet through all these vague and seemingly disconnected thoughts, there runs a subtle thread which connects them. This thread is known in psychology as the law of the Association of Ideas, and constitutes a most mysterious quality and mode of the mind. Western philosophy suggests no logical reason for one fitting idea calling up another in the way that they unquestionably do. It is at this point, however, of the association of ideas that the struggle wages most fiercely. It is almost impossible for the untrained mind, when thinking upon a subject to prevent the interjection of associated ideas, which in a marvelously short space of time leads one to matters entirely foreign to the subject upon which one is meditating.

“For—When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams.”

It is a fact that intense concentration, or Dharana, upon some interior object, causes the cessation of all sense of bodily existence. This may be easily proven by any one who will repair to the country, and there, in perfect quietude, gaze steadily upon the landscape. Prolonging this for a few minutes, he will suddenly realize that that upon which he is looking is interior to himself, or that his consciousness has expanded into that which he sees. Some conception of the utter unreality of the body as being himself, or the “I am I”—a state completely realized during intense concentration—will then dawn upon him.

JULIAN S. JOHN.

[To be continued.]

The desire to be at and about any of our headquarters, say in New York or Boston, Chicago or San Francisco, is probably a natural one. But it would seem that upon that desire should just as naturally follow self-questioning as to one's competency, what fitness one has, what acquirements we can offer, and what such headquarters ought to have. Yet we have met those who wanted to be taken by a T. S. headquarters without being able to offer a single thing in return; in fact, sometimes the candidate is lacking in elementary education. Some conversation resulted in discovering not only that the needful education for doing the best work was absent, but the notion was held that T. S. headquarters required only

mediocre talent. What a monstrous idea! The very best talent, the finest education, should be devoted to such centres. But no, these aspirants want to sit around, and by talking with working Theosophists imagine they are doing great things, while they feel an excitement which they mistake for work. Then they are not willing to do drudgery, such as the work of the offices really is. They would be editors and authors at a rush, occultists indeed. No tedious addressing of envelopes or slaving at lists for them. Oh, for more willing drudges and less captains!—*The Path.*

Pacific Coast lecturer's Movements.

Dr. Griffiths lectured in San Jose, Sunday, Dec. 1st, to a good audience upon "Sleep and Death." San Jose Branch has recently had accessions to its numbers with correspondingly better prospects. "Heredity" was the subject of Dr. Griffiths' lecture given in San Quentin Prison Sunday, Dec. 8th. On Sunday, Dec. 15th he spoke upon "The Mysteries of Sex," in Oakland.

Southern Lecturer's Report.

Since last report Mr. Abbott B. Clark has given two lectures in Los Angeles, to crowded houses, on "What is Theosophy," and "Karma." On December 15th, he spoke in West End on "What is Theosophy, and What and Where are Heaven and Hell?" and again on Dec. 22d, subject: "If a man die shall he live again? or proofs of Re-Birth on Earth." Sunday morning, January 12, Mr. Clark conducted the services and made an address at the funeral of Mr. Harmon. Several of the mourners and friends heard of Theosophy for the first time, and all dried their tears. In the evening a lecture was given in Odd Fellows' Hall, on "The Mysteries of Magic, the Secrets of Alchemy and the Philosopher's Stone." The hall was packed and many remained standing. On Jan. 19th, a lecture was given to a large audience at the Co-operative colony of Clearwater.

Among the Coast Branches.

Los Angeles Branch, Los Angeles, Cal.

The Annual Report of this Branch shows a healthy condition. Much has been accomplished by the Branch and interest has been steadily growing. The Branch now numbers twenty-nine members, ten of which have been added this present year. There were three withdrawals during the year. All Branch dues are paid for the year. Fifty-two Branch meetings were held at Headquarters. Sixty public lectures have been given in Los Angeles, and one White Lotus day meeting was held. About fifteen lectures were given at the suburban towns of Compton, Pasadena, and East Los Angeles, by various members. Within the past four months a Beginners' Class has been instituted on Tuesday evenings, and a Training Class on Friday evenings. They have an average attendance of about eighteen.

About thirty-seven press reports giving very full accounts of lectures have been printed. Also three long and independent articles. The average attendance at the public lectures for the first half of the year was about seventy-five; for the last half, about 175. The library contains 116 volumes. The circulation has been 426 volumes.

At the annual meeting on Jan. 1st, the following officers were elected: J. F. Turner, re-elected Pres.; Mrs. Louisa E. Giese, re-elected Vice-Pres.; H. B. Leader, Sec'y.; H. T. Sproul, Treas.; and H. A. Gibson, Librarian. The Headquarters are open daily and the librarian is in attendance.

A. B. C.

Narada Branch, Tacoma, Wash.

Sec. R. H. Lund, writes:—On the afternoon of Dec. 22nd, the Lotus Circle of Narada T. S. of Tacoma, Washington, had a Lotus Circle Christmas entertainment. It being on Sunday and the shortest day in the year, it partook of the nature of the "Yule Tide," a custom of the ancient Norseman, and celebrated by them with the use of decorated trees and lighted candles, long years before the celebration of the birth of a Christ was instituted or thought of by any people. The room was beautifully decorated with evergreens, and a tree profusely lit up with candles, was loaded with candies, nuts, oranges and other fruits. A member gave a short explanation of the ancient custom to the children, followed by Lotus Circle exercises, recitations, songs and music by the Lotus Circle children, after which the candies and fruits were distributed to every child present. An interested audience of about seventy were present, of which fully forty were children.

Aurora Branch, Oakland.

Following is a syllabus of lectures issued by this active Branch, to be given at Hamilton Hall, corner 13th and Jefferson Sts., Oakland: Jan. 5th, "Serpent and Devil Worship," Mrs. J. D. Hassfurth; Jan. 12th, "Mental and Physical Heredity," Dr. Allen Griffiths; Jan. 19th, "The Mystic Third Eye," Mrs. C. McIntire; Jan. 26th, "Job's Choice," Mr. E. P. Jones; Feb. 2nd, "The Unity of Life," Mrs. Mercie M. Thirds; Feb. 9th, "Re-birth and Pre-existence," Mr. Evan Williams; Feb. 16th, "The Scales of Justice," Dr. Jerome A. Anderson; Feb. 23rd, "What is Life?" Mrs. A. J. Patterson, M. D.; Mar. 1st, "The Ancient Wisdom Religion," Mr. E. G. Merwin; Mar. 8th, "Adepts and Their Pupils," Mr. A. J. Johnson; Mar. 15th, "The Meaning of Immortality," Mrs. Mercie M. Thirds; Mar. 22nd, "Modern Crimes," Dr. Allen Griffiths; Mar. 29th, "Theosophy and Social Questions," Mrs. J. D. Hassfurth.

Prometheus Branch, Portland, Ore.

Mrs. L. D. Durkee, Sec'y, writes:—Prometheus Branch has been having a season of active work with an increasing attendance at Branch and Sunday meetings. We have gained four good working members since making last report, and Mrs. Sarah A. Harris has just come among us, so that we now think we are a little host, if not a little hierarchy.

Lectures during December, and to date were: "H. P. B. and Her

Work," Mrs. M. A. Whitney; "Bible and Other Evidences of Reincarnation," S. T. Durkee; "Karma and Reincarnation," Maj. E. A. Weed; "Symbolism," and "Love and Compassion," J. H. Scotford; "After Death Journeys," Mrs. L. D. Durkee; "Origin of Angels and Devils," Rev. J. S. David; "The Esoteric Rendering of The Lord's Prayer," and "Is Francis Schlatter the Lord Jesus Come again?" Rev. W. E. Copeland.

San Francisco and Golden Gate Branches of the T. S. A. in San Francisco, have by a unanimous vote of both, united, under the name of "The San Francisco Theosophical Society. This gives a strong, united lodge of sixty-one members. Dr. Jerome A. Anderson was chosen President; E. P. Jones, Vice-President; Amos J. Johnson, Secretary; Evan Williams, Councillor; and Peter Dewar, Treasurer—all unanimously and by acclamation.

Book Reviews.

"THE PATH" for January is up to its usual standard of excellence. A new series of "Letters of H. P. B. to Dr. Hartmann," is begun in this number, and promises to be of as great interest, if not greater, than the series just completed, for these are from a Master of Occultism, to a student along the same lines, and many an occult hint will, no doubt, be gained by their careful perusal. "Yugas" by Dr. Vosburgh, is a useful synopsis of this subject, while "Some Views of an Asiatic" throw important side-lights upon the subject of reincarnation. "Theosophy and Modern Social Problems," is a clear and modest presentation of this subject by our good and faithful brother, Aug. Neiresheimer. Charles Johnson continues his "Talks About Indian Books", and "General Pertinent Observations" closes a more than ordinarily good number. "The Path" ought really to be in the hands of every Theosophist in America, and its low price of \$2.00 a year makes this possible by the exercise of just a little sacrifice. Address "The Path, 144 Madison Avenue, New York.

"THE IRISH THEOSOPHIST" continues the interesting translation of the Sermon upon the Mount by "Aretas," whom we suspect to be James Price. Charles Johnson gives a few hints in regard to the relation of the Over-soul to Man, under the title of a "Trap for a Friend." Then the magazine drops into pictures and poetry after its usual fashion, which is followed by another installment of the "Enchantment of Cuchullain," in which many useful occult hints may be found. The most important article in this month, however, is that by Mrs. Keightley entitled, "Autonomy; Solidarity; Criticism." It would be well for workers throughout the entire movement to give it careful study and attention. "The Irish Theosophist" may be had by remitting \$1.00 to No. 3 Upper Ely Place, Dublin, Ireland, and any Theosophist who does so will never regret the investment.

"THE LAMP" of Toronto still shines. It contains for January, "Things that are Unseen," and "Five Minutes on the Harp of God," together with

its usual installment of Bible Lessons, Notes, Items, Reviews, Selections, etc., complete a good number.

"THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM" for December continues its helpful answers to questions, reports of Lodge activities, etc. It is almost impossible to review it as it jumps from subject to subject in such a manner that it would be necessary to quote the entire issue in order to get an idea of what it really contains.

"THE THEOSOPHIST" for December continues the Oriental Series of "Old Diary Leaves," and in this number relates the "cup and saucer" phenomenon. An article upon "The Aura" is a dabbling in Occultism, which serves the purpose of exhibiting pretensions to occult development on the part of the writer far more than it does that of conveying useful information to Theosophical inquirers. Indeed, this whole number of *The Theosophist* would seem to indicate that Adyar has got a phenomena craze on again. "The Psychic Powers and Faculties of the Christian Saints" is an example of the abuses to which this running after phenomena may be put. No good end, as it seems to the writer, can possibly be subserved by relating the old and highly apochryphal miracles of so-called Saints. It is only an encouragement to run after psychic development by those totally unfit for its profitable use. "Thoughts on Vedic Sandhya," and "Poetry and Poets," and an unpronounceable article on Astrology complete what may be termed a phenomena-appealing number.

"LUCIFER" for December concludes Mr. Leadbeater's paper upon "Dreams" (a good article,) and continues "Early Christianity and its Teaching" by A. M. Glass, which is a valuable synopsis of the literature upon this subject. "Orpheus," by G. R. S. Mead is continued, and "Theosophy Among the Quietists" concluded. "Unpublished Letters of Eliphas Levi" drag their weary length along. Annie Besant contributes a short paper, and reviews and activities complete the number.

Magazines received:—"THE VAHAN," "ATMA'S MESSENGER," "LIGHT OF THE EAST," "THE BUDDHIST," "NOTES AND QUERIES," "THE MAN OVERBOARD," (an address by Brother Wilson before the Unity Club, Sioux City, Iowa.)

ENVELOPE SERIES.—"The Path" has in press a series of reprint of articles which have been much called for. These will be followed, from time to time, by other pamphlets containing articles of permanent value. The shape is such as to allow of mailing in an ordinary letter envelope, without folding. The articles now being reproduced are:

The Culture of Concentration; of Occult Powers and Their Acquisition, by William Q. Judge; 10 cents.

Astral Intoxication; the Delusions of Clairvoyance; Shall We Teach Clairvoyance? by William Q. Judge; 10 cents.

Devachan, or the Heavenworld, by Dr. H. A. W. Coryn; 10 cents.

The Place of Peace, by Annie Besant; 5 cents. All are for sale by the P. C. C.