

"Point out the 'Way'—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."

The Theosophic Messenger

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statement contained herein unless set forth in an official document.

All readers are cordially invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, Room 7, Odd Fellows' Building, San Francisco, Cal. Subscription, 50 cents per annum.

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VOL. I.

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No. 4.

Edited by W. J. WALTERS

NATIONAL COMMITTEE LETTER.

DEAR CO-WORKERS:

This will reach you at the close of the old year, and with it we welcome in the new, which we hope Theosophists as a body will unite in making of unprecedented progress towards enlightenment. We have a most promising outlook for the coming year in the results of work now being done by able workers in the field; in the earnest studiousness manifested more generally than ever before; and in a more extended recognition of the necessity of theosophic training for children, and the consequent forming of Golden Chain Groups in various localities. In the East, the workers are being received with more than usual enthusiasm. From Butte, Montana, a most encouraging report of a very extended interest is received. Indeed, the outlook is very strongly indicative of a very gen-

eral awakening to the importance of Theosophical teachings, and we who understand that this means an onward move towards human liberation, watch and work and are glad.

From Holyoke, Mass., the report comes that the students there are, for the third time, giving the manuals close study. In Saginaw, Mich., the branch, after going through the manuals carefully one by one, is again studying them with the help of Mrs. Scott's series of questions, with renewed interest and great benefit. These cases serve to illustrate the spirit of earnestness actuating our members, and this is just what is needed to give life to our society as a body, to hasten individual evolution and to manifest to the public the true significance of the ancient Wisdom Religion.

The brain is the vehicle of the lower Manas, and while casual and desultory study may result in an intellectual perception of philosophical theories, it cannot gain for us the ability to respond to vibrations from the higher planes, whence

true knowledge comes. Earnest and persistent study, together with systematic mental discipline, are requisite for spiritual development; and it is through spiritual development, superseding the physical and intellectual, that we shall gain final liberation. The present is full of promise to the student and the Society that we are becoming a channel for the occult forces for the hastening of human evolution; and the National Committee, in connection with its last message—work—would add that of *study*.

Study carefully, study persistently, study systematically. Do not allow the trivialities which flood the days and hours to deprive you of this privilege. We urge every branch and every member to begin this year with an unswerving resolve that "study" and "work" shall become twin activities to hasten their recognition of higher possibilities.

An eastern branch has an excellent method for collecting books. A list of standard theosophical works is made out, with the lowest purchasing price of each, and the list is sent to a member with a request to contribute one or more. Each contribution is checked off and the list as remaining sent to another member, and so on, until every member has had an opportunity to add to the collection. This has proved very satisfactory.

The November MESSENGER contained a lesson in the Ancient Wisdom, with many references, and a continuation appears in the December number. It is very desirable to know whether these lessons are going to be of any value to the different branches, and we earnestly request every branch and every member who desires to do so, to send a candid expression of opinion on the subject to the National Committee. If the lessons are not of any use, it would of course be a mistake to continue them.

We have to announce the anticipated

visit of Col. Olcott to the American Section some time during the coming year. We shall certainly give a most cordial welcome to our President-Founder, to whose unwearied devotion we owe so much.

May our watchword for the coming year be "Careful study and conscientious work."

Fraternally yours,
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

NOTICE.

Editor Theosophic Messenger:

The American Convention of last May adopted a Resolution inviting all present or future T. S. Branches in South America to affiliate with the American Section. The resolution was not discussed, no member gave any reason for it, and I for one was wholly ignorant of the ground for its adoption.

Nevertheless, it was the duty of the General Secretary to communicate the resolution to the Branches concerned. Division of opinion existed among them, and various considerations led me to refer the matter to the President-Founder, Col. Olcott. In his reply, just received, he disallows the Convention's action, partly on Constitutional grounds, partly on grounds of its unwisdom, difference of language and of national associations, as well as expense of translations, making a union unworkable. He had previously advised the young Spanish Branches to seek aid from the older, and the older to give it, and had looked forward to the ultimate formation of a Spanish Section on the same principles and for the same linguistic reasons as have caused the formation of the Dutch, French and Swedish Sections. Upon certain conditions, Col. Olcott has offered to visit the South American Branches in 1900.

All this being so, I doubt not that our

members will coincide with the President's judgment that the projected union is impracticable and that no further proceedings be taken. This is unqualifiedly my own opinion. I publish the above at his request.

On Nov. 29th, the Manasa T. S., Dayton, Ohio, was chartered with seven members. The Secretary is Miss Ida A. Marot, 35 Eagle street. There are now seventy-one Branches in the American Section. ALEXANDER FULLERTON,
General Secretary.

BRANCH REPORTS.

CHICAGO, ILL. (Chicago Branch). L. R. writes:—The annual meeting for the election of officers was held on the evening of Dec. 6, and the following were elected: Ransom H. Randall, President; Dr. Mary Weeks Burnett, Vice-President; Mrs. Laura Randall, Secretary; R. A. Burnett, Treasurer; Miss Mary Adams, Librarian. For Executive Council: Mrs. Emma Brougham, Mrs. Helen I. Dennis, Miss E. Pearl Haywood, Thos. Prime, Chas. G. Snow and Mr. Thornton Hall. Upon this committee, with the President as chairman, will fall most of the work. The Branch is growing rapidly, fifteen members having been admitted since Sept. 1, making a total of ninety-nine. This growth has not come from any effort to secure members, it is the natural outcome of inward growth. The Sunday afternoon meeting has been changed, the time now being eight o'clock Sunday evening, leaving the afternoon hour for the Golden Chain.

BOSTON, MASS. (Alpha Branch).—K. W. writes:—The month just passed has been a very active and busy one for Boston Theosophists. Many extra classes and meetings were held in order that full advantage might be taken of Miss Walsh's stay among us. Attendance at the meetings, and particularly at the Sunday evening lectures, has steadily increased, until the branch rooms became inadequate for the accommodation of the audience. In November, Miss Walsh lectured on "The Bible," "Occultism, True and False," "The Path of Discipleship," and "The Overcoming of Death." On December 3rd, "The Gospel of Beauty." On

Wednesday evenings during November, Miss Walsh gave a course of studies on "Mind Training," every word of which must be invaluable to all who have begun to understand the power of thought in the manifested universe and who desire to build scientifically a good mental body. "The Creative Power of Thought" was the subject chosen for discussion at the union meeting held on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 19. Miss Estelle Bright for the Alpha Branch, and Mrs. Holbrook for the Dharma Branch, ably expressed different phases of the subject, and Miss Walsh speaking in place of Mr. Bean of the Lynn Branch, who was unable to be present, made an eloquent appeal to theosophists to begin the practical work of thought control. The first meeting of the Golden Chain Circle was held November 12, with five links. This promises to be a most interesting feature of the work, and it has been decided to hold the sessions in future at 2.30 P. M., the hour preceding the Ancient Wisdom class, as many members who would like to attend both are prevented by distance from coming both morning and afternoon. The Saturday evening class in Elementary Theosophy, which was conducted by Miss Walsh during her stay, has been suspended, as it seemed best to concentrate effort on the remaining three meetings a week. During her stay in Boston, Miss Walsh was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Russell, devoted members of the Alpha Branch, whose home is in Dorchester, and a large study class was held at their house every week, in addition to the weekly meeting of the Centre which has been assembling at Mrs. Pease's for a year past. Miss Walsh left for New York on the 7th of December, bearing with her the gratitude and good wishes of all who have been privileged to meet with her during her visit to Boston. It is our hope soon to have her among us again; such teachers are sorely needed for the work in New England. On Sunday morning, November 12, Pandit Lalan gave a lecture on "Optimistic Theosophy." During the month he completed his course in the branch rooms on "Meditation," and at the present time he is giving instructions in Sanskrit to several members, who are glad to embrace the opportunity of studying this interesting language under the guidance of so competent a teacher.

The Theosophic Messenger gains a welcome every month from every member; all feel it to be a most valuable bond of union between each branch and every member of each branch throughout the country. The studies com-

menced in last month's number on the *Ancient Wisdom* promise to be admirable and cause some of the Alpha Branch members to wish that their Sunday afternoon class was at the beginning, instead of near the end, of that wonderful book.

Christmas is almost with us and we must close our monthly letter by extending to every brother and sister the old Christmas greeting of "Love and Peace, Peace and Goodwill."

LOS ANGELES, CAL. C. D. G. writes:—At the regular Sunday evening meetings of Harmony Lodge the following lectures have been given: "Man's Place and Function in Nature," "Masters as Facts and Ideals," "Differences" and "Evolution."

The adult class and Golden Chain still have the same subjects and both have had very interesting lessons. The rule at present is that the one who gives the lesson to the children gives his idea to the adult class and this is discussed and, if needed, suggestions are given by the members. The subject is gone into quite deeply, but still not losing sight of the fact that the lesson is intended for the children. This month the ribbon badge is purple, which blended the previous lessons on blue and red—love and strength. Much interest and energy is still manifested in the study class (Friday Evening), and the training-class feature is already doing good work. Our library is becoming a distinctly marked feature and to the many books therein have been added a number of bound magazines. This has been made possible through the kindness of both members and friends, who furnished missing numbers and thus filled numerous broken sets.

We are anxiously awaiting the visit of Mrs. K. B. Davis who is expected to be with us shortly, and trust we can so receive and care for the good seed that she will leave with us, that we may prepare a harvest for the good of Humanity.

TACOMA, WASH. (Narada Lodge)—Mrs. Mary B. Brooks, Secretary, writes:—Narada Lodge has held its usual Sunday evening meetings, at which the following lectures have been given: "The Rationale of Life," read by Mrs. Bean; "Karma," a symposium; "Evolution of Man Revealed by the Musical Scale," Mrs. Savageot; "Astrology and the Soul," Mrs. Mudgett.

On November 26, the Lodge enjoyed a lecture from Mr. Thos. Barnes, of Ananda Lodge, Se-

attle; subject, "What Constitutes a Master?" The Thursday evening class is studying "Man and His Bodies," and enjoys and profits by it. We expect Mr. Will C. Bailey of San Francisco soon, for propaganda work, and hope to secure a generous attendance from the public. We are mourning the loss by removal to Chicago of a valuable member, but rejoice in the safe return from Manila of our soldier member. He reported the fact that the Philippine natives are familiar with the symbols, often expressing surprise that he understood them. He reports them as honest, virtuous and intelligent. Brotherhood should not be difficult of establishment among such a people. The endeavor of the Branch the past year has been largely to maintain its Sunday and Thursday activities, but we believe larger results await our future efforts.

VANCOUVER, B. C. (Vancouver Branch).—T. E. K. writes:—We have again started public work, which we abandoned last spring in order that the members might have an interval of study and preparation. We have rented room 7 in the Inns of Court, among the leading lawyers. The place is in the heart of the city and easily reached. One end has been fitted up as a Lodge room and the other as a hall for public meetings. There is a seating capacity of fifty. We are confining ourselves to the elementary teachings at the public meetings, and also endeavoring to show the relation of Theosophy and Christianity, recent studies along that line being of much help. We are attracting small but intelligent audiences. The papers are very conservative, but it is encouraging to note that the editor of one of the weeklies recently called and requested an article on Theosophy for each issue.

PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA.—O. H. M., President, writes:—We have very interesting and instructive meetings every Saturday. We have gone through the seven Manuals, and are now at the chapter on Karma in the *Ancient Wisdom*. Our lodge is making a perceptible growth, both mentally and spiritually, and we hope ere long to have gained a position where we may be a power for good outside of our own immediate circle.

LYNN, MASS.—H. A. S. writes:—Our Branch still lives and holds its own; but as members are very much scattered we hold public meetings only two evenings each month. But the

very fact of our existence is evidence that our roots have not merely a surface life. During the past two months, we have had the benefit and pleasure of four public lectures and two parlor talks by Miss Marie A. Walsh. While the public did not display the interest we should have liked, the benefit to individual members cannot be overestimated.

NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MASS., (Dharma Branch). F. A. T., Secretary, writes:—Our branch has been much helped by Miss Walsh's stay among us in Boston, and we have had one pleasant evening which may be of interest to others. The committee on the work of the branch asked two members, a gentleman and a lady, to choose each a pilgrim, which they would conduct through a period of evolution, carrying it on its emergence from Devachan, down through the different planes to earth and its experiences there, back to Devachan and so on. These two pilgrims were very different creations and elicited many helpful questions and much conversation, which proved beneficial to all. Our branch unites with the Boston (Alpha) branch and the Lynn branch once each month, each furnishing a paper on whatever subject is chosen by the union committee. At the last meeting the subject was "The Creative Power of Thought" and it proved a most practical and useful subject. One outcome of the Dharma branch is a study class at Weedham, and Theosophy has taken firm hold of a few earnest souls there. They are studying "Man and His Bodies" and show a desire to be mutually helpful.

Our meetings being all open to the public, there are few without one or more strangers present, and the addition of new members is of frequent occurrence. A visit last week from Pandit F. K. Lalan of Bombay, who spoke to us upon the question "What is Mind?" gave us a good insight into the teachings of all philosophies on that subject and showed the wonderful seership of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

PASADENA, CAL. J. H. S. writes:—Pasadena branch is holding regular meetings every Sunday, opened with a devotional reading followed by meditation. Members then answer questions from the syllabus of the "Ancient Wisdom." We have interested a few, who occasionally come to our meetings and take part in the proceedings. We look forward with interest to the prospective visit of Mrs. Kate B. Davis. Our branch has donated half of the

money in its treasury to the fund to help defray her traveling expenses.

TORONTO, ONT. M. D., Secretary, writes:—Toronto branch has started what promises to be a very active winter work. We are holding public meetings every Sunday evening; they are well attended and some very interesting papers have been given. We have organized a Golden Chain with about twenty-seven members. The children seem interested. We also have a Wednesday evening class for the study of "Man and His Bodies," in charge of Mr. Belcher.

CHARLOTTE, MICH., The Secretary writes:—The Charlotte branch T. S., organized last spring after lectures by Pandit F. K. Lalan, is meeting weekly. We are earnestly working on the seven manuals, using Mrs. Scott's text-book and much original thought is brought out in discussion. The branch has recently had a visit from Mr. F. E. Titus of Toronto. His understanding of scientific subjects made plain many difficult problems, and combined with his happy way of answering questions, has given a fresh impetus to Theosophic work here, resulting in renewed interest and greater activity.

LANSING, MICH. M. G. writes:—Mr. Titus recently visited the Lansing T. S. which he organized in July 1898. His work was of great value. Several public meetings were held during his stay, awakening much interest. Two members were added, and more will follow, thirteen names being now enrolled. Visitors are always welcomed and supplied with reading matter. Meetings are held each week on Friday evening at the home of the Secretary, 514 Seymour street. No public meetings have been attempted yet, except during the stay of workers. Mrs. Dayton and Mrs. Davis were here last winter, and gave us valuable help. A course of study will soon be commenced from the Manuals. Hitherto no special line has been taken up, the reading being chosen from the different publications and Mrs. Besant's works, or lectures from the Bureau, the reader for the evening selecting some subject suggested by questions asked at the previous meeting. Mrs. Lincoln of Buffalo was a welcome guest last evening, and took part in the meeting, making many excellent suggestions. What will some day be a Golden Chain Group has been undertaken. This meets on Sunday afternoon at three o'clock. The members of the society are

all busy people, having little time for study or to devote to the work, but notwithstanding, the Lansing T. S. is on a good footing, looking forward hopefully, and sends kindly greeting to all.

SAGINAW, MICH. (Saginaw Branch). J. A. C. writes:—This Branch was organized in August 1898, since which date we have studied the manuals consecutively. We are now reviewing them following the questions prepared by Julia H. W. Scott. We have some faithful students who are trying to live up to the knowledge they have thus obtained. During the last month, our membership has been increased, until we now number twenty-three members. In this matter we have been greatly assisted by Mr. F. E. Titus, of Toronto. The instruction that we have received from Mr. Titus will enable us to go on with our studies with a clearer understanding of their teachings, and greater zeal for the "Great Truth" that is the ultimate goal of all study and effort. We bade Mr. Titus adieu on the 15th, and bespeak for him a cordial reception among those to whom he may be sent. As to the future of our Branch it would seem quite propitious. We will now have to maintain two classes, primary and advanced, and possibly public meetings on Sundays—an effort we have not heretofore attempted.

ST. PAUL, MINN. G. B. G. writes:—The St. Paul Branch will begin the new year with the following corps of officers: President, Mrs. A. K. Pruden; Vice-President and Treasurer, Mr. Chas. G. Withee; Recording Secretary, Miss Maud Simmons; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Gertrude B. Grewe; Librarian, Mr. Harley O. Doolittle. We now have twenty-five members, nearly all of whom are earnest workers and deeply interested, so that our prospects for the future look very encouraging. We hold but two meetings a week, but try to make them interesting. Our public meeting is held Thursday evening, at which a paper is read and discussed, or an address given, and on Tuesday evening we have the beginners' class, now studying the "Ancient Wisdom" under the direction of Mrs. Campbell. After the first of the year we shall organize afternoon study classes in different parts of the city for the benefit of ladies who find it inconvenient to attend meetings at the Branch room. These classes will be conducted by some member of the society who will endeavor to attract all who are interested in theosophic teachings.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, (Topeka Branch). E. R. G. writes:—Since the cool weather began, our Branch has again taken up the study of "Ancient Wisdom." Our secretary and leader, Mrs. Wardall, assigns to each a question for study during the week. Two new members were added to the Branch at last meeting. Sometimes we vary our study by having a devotional meeting.

HONOLULU, H. I.—Since the departure of its President, Dr. Marques, for Australia and India, Aloha Branch has gone quietly on with its work under the leadership of Mrs. Barber. Several new members have of late been added to its study class, which is now using "The Ancient Wisdom" as text-book. The MESSENGER, with its reports from our sister Lodges, will always be a welcome visitor to this far-away paradise of the Pacific. Through its columns we send our greetings, at this Christmas time, to all friends. We are going down through the closing days of the century with our hands full of work and our hearts filled with the hope that the dawn of the new century will be for us the dawn of a brighter cycle of more effective work for humanity.

Word comes from Chicago that Mr. F. E. Titus of Toronto has been at work there, and on Sunday, Dec. 18th, delivered a lecture which created much interest, at the home of Mrs. K. C. Havens.

OAKLAND, CAL. S. E. M. writes:—Oakland Branch still continues its regular meetings, and while rejoicing in the expansion of its neighbor Branch across the Bay, hopefully repeats the saying: "All things come to him who waits."

With the close of the old year we ended the first reading of the "Ancient Wisdom." With the advent of the new, another method of learning its lessons has been adopted. It is that of using the "New Syllabus" as a catechism throughout, and answering all questions with text-books closed. This will enable the student to give in his own language a clear and concise rendering of the subject in hand. At each alternate meeting fifteen-minute papers will be read and made the topic of the evening.

Oakland members were much interested in the National Committee Letter published in the December MESSENGER, and wholly endorse its suggestive plan of co-operative Branch work. A Reference Card Catalogue, after the manner of the Dictionary Card Catalogues in Public

Libraries, should be steadily accumulating in every T. S. Branch having permanent headquarters. No one is more truly benefited by "digging" than the student himself. No greater aid to study can be instituted than the Reference Card Catalogue. Let all help who can by lending a hand. We extend to all members everywhere the Season's Greetings; to our teachers unswerving loyalty; to fellow students pure fraternity; to THE THEOSOPHIC MESSENGER, that bringer of good tidings, long life and continued prosperity.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. Golden Gate Lodge has been passing through a period of change. It has tried the not agreeable task of moving, but the New Year finds it comfortably settled in new Headquarters, sunny, commodious and well furnished. On December 8th, the new rooms were formally opened with appropriate exercises. The members participated in the building of an arch, the foundation-stones of which were Love and Life, the key-stone being Theosophia. There was some good music, and an excellent address by Mr. W. L. Ducey of Michigan. Everyone seemed happy in the new home—for it *is* a home in every sense.

First of all, it is a place we can call *our own*, large enough for most of our public meetings, and yet not too large to make a comfortable reading-room. The main hall (which, by the way, has been christened "Theosophic Hall") will seat two hundred people quite comfortably. At one end, a large platform has been built and framed off from the body of the hall by an arch. This platform, as well as the hall, has been nicely carpeted, and upon it has been placed a fine large pipe-organ, bearing the seal of the T. S. Over the organ, an arch fills the gap between it and the ceiling, and in this appear, in stained glass, the seal of the Society, the svastika and the interlaced triangles. The woodwork throughout the room has been finished in particular colors; the walls are warmly tinted; some modest but generous friend has put in a large new bookcase; there are two hundred new chairs; and from the walls on opposite sides of the platform the pictures of the Founders, H. P. B. and the Colonel, look down upon us. Some plants in the windows lend a home-like air to the place, and a big stove in one corner is very well thought of these cold winter days and does not have a chance to get lonesome.

So much for the main hall. There will hardly be room to more than mention that in

addition there is a large anteroom approaching the hall and cutting it off from the rest of the building, and that back of the platform there is a large dressing-room, which can also be used for committees and as a members' room. The Mercury Publishing Office adjoins.

On December 29th, the Golden Chain Group entertained the Lodge and other friends in the new rooms. On the stage were some dainty, sweet fairies, with nine or ten of the queerest brownies, all very much alive! Santa Claus in all his glory came down the chimney, told funny stories, and he and the fairies and brownies did some wonderful magic and other things which drew forth occasional squeals of delight from some of the small spectators.

Mrs. Mary O. T. Wilmot gave the initial lecture in Theosophic Hall upon "The Song of Life," December 10th. Since then Mr. W. L. Ducey has spoken on "Theosophy and Altruism"; Mr. W. J. Walters on "Christmas and the Christ"; and Mrs. Alice M. Best on "Lessons of the New Year." All these were good lectures, and elicited many questions. The Lodge continues its group study of the "Ancient Wisdom." One new member was added during December. The Inquirers' classes have been continued with the usual interest. So far, it is not too much to say that all the meetings in the new rooms have been interesting and instructive and very harmonious. There is much joy over the anticipated visit of the President-Founder during the coming year, and of Mrs. Kate B. Davis during the coming month.

CLASS WORK AND REFERENCE WORK COMBINED.

(The following references for study have been used by the Ancient Wisdom class of Chicago Branch. The questions are those of the "Ancient Wisdom Syllabus" and the method of class work is to read the answer to each question in the "Ancient Wisdom" and then correlate with the statements made in the references given below. It is hoped that any class or individual using this method of study will send further references for each question. What is given below, being the work of students, mistakes and inaccuracies will constantly slip in, and it is our earnest desire that such errors shall be pointed out. Please mail all additions or corrections to this work to THEOSOPHIC MESSENGER, Room 7, Odd Fellows' Building, San Francisco.)

ABBREVIATIONS USED.

CC. means "Christian Creed," C. W. Leadbeater; L. & F. means "Evolution of Life and Form," by Annie Besant; S. D. means "Secret Doc-

trine" (new edition paging); S. P. M. means "Seven Principles of Man," by Annie Besant; R. means "Reincarnation," by Annie Besant; Dh. means "Dharma," by Annie Besant; Cl. means "Clairvoyance," by C. W. Leadbeater; S. & I. S. means "Self and Its Sheaths," by Annie Besant; D. P. means "Devachanic Plane," by C. W. Leadbeater; Dr. "Dreams," by C. W. Leadbeater.

THE ANCIENT WISDOM.

CHAPTER II, ASTRAL PLANE.

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Vahan, Dec. 1898, Question 470.

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Prana and Kama joined are the "Spirit of Life.".....S. P. M., pp. 14, 15.
Manasic-Kama and Prana joined are the seat of human consciousness.....
.....S. P. M., pp. 18, 23, 24, 29.

(Additional Reference to chapter on Physical Plane.)

What is the particular function of the Etheric Double?

It is the form side of Pranic activity.....
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ENQUIRER.

QUESTION X.

J. D.—How is Mr. Leadbeater's luminous information in *The Christian Creed*—as to the Passion of Christ having never been real, physical and historical—to be looked at when compared with such realistic visions as those of the Catholic seeress Anne Catherine Emmerich, concerning "the sorrowful Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ"? Can some explanation of those visions be vouchsafed from the standpoint of occult investigation?

C. W. L.—I suppose that different people will look very differently at the information given in the book mentioned. Like all other information obtained by clairvoyant vision, it stands entirely on its own merits, and the author has never

expected his readers to accept any of his statements unless they commend themselves to the reason and common sense of those who peruse them. What he has seen he describes; whether others find themselves able to believe that he has seen rightly is their own affair.

Certainly such visions as those of the Catholic seeress can be explained from the occult standpoint. I should myself have no doubt that her statements were perfectly genuine; she was not labouring under a hallucination, but only under a mistake as to the nature of what she saw.

It must be remembered that to read the akashic records clearly and correctly needs a special training; it is not a matter of faith or of goodness, but of a special kind of knowledge. There is nothing whatever to show that the saint in question had this particular form of knowledge; on the contrary, she probably never heard of such records at all. She would therefore most likely be quite incapable of reading a record clearly, and certainly unable to distinguish one, if she did happen to see it, from any other kind of vision.

What she in all probability saw was a phenomenon familiar to all practical occultists. It is well known to all such investigators that any great historical scene, upon which much is supposed to depend, has been constantly thought of and vividly imagined to themselves by successive generations of people. Such scenes would be, say, for the English, the signing of Magna Charta by King John, and for the Americans the signing of the declaration of independence.

Now, these vivid images which people make are very real things, and are very clearly to be seen by anyone who possesses some psychic development. They are real, definite forms existing on the mental plane, and are perpetually strengthened by all the new thoughts

which are ever being turned upon them. Of course, different people imagine scenes differently, and the eventual result is often something like a composite photograph; but the form in which such an imagination was originally cast very largely influences the thought of all sensitives upon the subject, and tends to make them image it as others have done.

This product of thought (often, be it observed, of quite ignorant thought) is very much easier to see than the true record, for while, as we have said, the latter feat requires training, the former needs nothing but a glimpse of the mental plane, such as frequently comes to almost all pure and high-minded ecstasies.

Another point to be borne in mind is that it is not in the least necessary for the creation of such a thought-form that the scenes should ever have had any real existence. Few scenes from real history have been so strongly depicted by popular fancy in this country as have some situations from Shakespeare's plays, from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and from various fairy stories, such as Cinderella or Aladdin's Lamp. A clairvoyant obtaining a glimpse of one of these collective thought-forms might very easily suppose that he had come across the real foundation of the story; but since he knows these tales to be fiction, he would be more likely to think that he had simply dreamed of them.

Now ever since the Christian religion materialized the glorious conceptions originally committed to its charge, and tried to represent them as a series of events in a human life, devout souls in all countries under its sway have been striving as a pious exercise to picture the supposed events as vividly as possible. Consequently we are here provided with a set of thought-forms of quite exceptional strength and permanence—a set which

could hardly fail to attract the attention of any ecstatic the bent of whose mind was at all in their direction. No doubt they *were* seen by the seeress referred to in the question, and by many another. But when such clairvoyants come in the course of their progress to deal with the realities of life, they will be taught, as are those who have the inestimable privilege of the guidance of the Masters of Wisdom, how to distinguish between the result of devout but ignorant thought and the imperishable record which is the true memory of nature; and then they will find that these scenes to which they have devoted so much attention were but symbols of truths higher and wider and grander far than they had ever dreamed, even in the highest flights which were made possible for them by their splendid purity and piety.

QUESTION XI.

J. M.—Is it possible to avert any future calamity or misfortune indicated by palmistry or astrology: and should success in this direction be possible would it interfere with karma?

A. A. W.—All that any system of Astrology or other mode of predicting the future can do is to inform us of the powers and tendencies which shape the circumstances of our life. But of our own action, which forms by far the most important item of these, no one can prophesy. We are told that there is only one case in which an action is inevitable; and that is, where we have done it over and over again so often in thought that the very next time we think it, we as it were pull the trigger and the action follows without conscious intention. Short of this, we can always decline to follow our "destiny." There is a curious illustration of this in the life of Mrs. Kingsford. In one of her trances she seemed to be

taken to the study of an adept, who drew her horoscope and then expounded it to her. The influences under which she was born promised great success for her in one direction only, and that a dishonourable one; all her sufferings had come from her refusal to follow this. Her whole life had been, and would be, one of suffering, because she was always crossing, by her own freewill, the path marked out for her by the influences which ruled her birth. It may thus be not only possible, but our highest duty in life, our only chance of future progress, thus to fight against our "destiny." And if there are so many cases in which "Fate" seems too strong for men, it is because at present but few of us have developed sufficient resolution to make the fight successful; and we let our stars rule us instead of ruling them.

With regard to the special point referred to in the question, the possibility of averting any particular misfortune predicted to us—there is much to be considered. What the Lords of Karma may intend to bring upon us in this incarnation, and at any special time, our will certainly cannot avert. This is, in the fullest sense, our Fate; due, indeed, to our own previous actions, but their inevitable result. Now it is fairly conceivable that something of this may be seen upon higher planes and thus come within the knowledge of an astrologer; whether our present palmists or astrologers are capable of anything of the kind I do not know. But one thing is clear; if we do our best to avert it, and succeed in doing so, it certainly was not our karma that we should suffer it, and we have not (in J. M.'s words) interfered with karma by our efforts. There are, undoubtedly, times when no foresight, no resolution, avails against misfortune; and the value of the doctrine of karma in such case is that it replaces the blind, unintelligible Fate or

still blinder chance by a law whose rationality we can perceive, although many lives must pass before we can expect thoroughly to comprehend its working.

A. P. S.—This is a very pretty problem, open to treatment in two ways. The practical, approximately accurate reply would be, I think, that we cannot circumvent the Karmic Deities whatever tricks we may play. We need not be afraid of trying to. No more comic delusion has ever been generated by Theosophic teaching imperfectly understood, than the notion that it is our duty to refrain from doing this or that, lest we should interfere with karma. We might as well be warned not to sneeze lest we should generate an earthquake. If we think the law of karma to be operating in any case unfairly, and set to work repairing nature's oversights, we shall, if we seem to succeed, have been one of Nature's unconscious agents. But the adept having got to a very high level of evolution, and having got behind the law to some extent, might sometimes be able to impede its course, and that makes him careful not to do so. How does this fact affect the question? In this way—as it seems to me—Palmistry and Astrology are occult sciences—so ill understood and clumsily practised for the most part that they *may* be genuine. Assuming them in any case to be so, it is theoretically possible to regard them as investing the person who can use them effectually with a minute trace of the power exercised in perfection by the adept, and thus, with a minute trace of his moral responsibility. To that infinitesimal degree the palmist or astrologer might be concerned as impeding karma, and thus banking it up against himself, for a future life. He would have succeeded in taking a step in the direction of black magic, and if he persevered through many lives and made

his progress along that path the main purpose of his existence, he might bank up karma to a very formidable extent and succeed in the end in acquiring for himself a fate of altogether indescribable spiritual misery. But that line of reflection has merely a mathematical interest, and the square root of minus two is relatively a matter of daily concern. Practical advice is—when you can ward off the blows of karma, either in the interest of others or of yourself—do so with a light heart by all means.

A. H. W.—The writer thinks that generally it would be a waste of time and energy to try to avert anything indicated by these occult arts. The average palmist or astrologer has neither the profound knowledge, the balanced intuition, nor the perfect selflessness required to read aright the riddle of another's destiny. Forces set in motion by us on any plane, in the shape of thoughts, desires or acts, can be neutralised by sending out equal and opposite forces in corresponding forms. To do this complete knowledge and recollection of the original forms are essential. As far as the present life goes memory will give the indications required, and much may thus be done to rectify old errors. But to attempt to arrest the working out of doom set going in another life, with no accurate recollection, but merely on hearsay indications, will probably be futile. It will be far wiser to brace the will to meet whatever comes with fortitude, and make the best of it; for by doing this the worst calamity or misfortune is turned into a blessing in disguise.

It is absolutely impossible to interfere with karma; any apparent interference is part of the karma. The Good Law is the fundamental law of the evolution of the solar cosmos, just as our little thread of it is the fundamental law of our individual evolution. As it is inconceivable

that anything can get behind, or interfere with, the cosmic order, so it is equally impossible that anything or any individual can interfere with that part of the whole which constitutes our karma.

QUESTION XII.

H. D.—Does the arrangement of atoms or particles in a well-developed astral body through which the ego functions in the physical waking state, differ from their arrangement in that astral body in which he functions during sleep as it is separated from the physical? If so, is this re-arrangement in any way similar to the re-arrangement of the particles of the astral body after death?

C. W. L.—No difference in the arrangement of the particles of the astral body is produced by departure from the physical body during sleep, and consequently there is no resemblance to the condition after death. A certain difference in the *appearance* (though not of the arrangement) of the astral particles is visible when the man is away from his physical sheath, owing to the fact that in one case most of the force and energy of the man is passing *through* those astral particles to act upon their physical counterparts, whereas in the other the astral particle is for the time the terminus and special field of its activity. Probably the querent has clairvoyantly caught some glimpse of this difference, and that is what has caused him to ask this question.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The Theosophist (November).—Colonel Olcott begins the fourth series of "Old Diary Leaves," continuing his account of work and travels in India, and describing an occurrence at Noakhally. Preceding the lecture the curtain rose upon a forest scene, disclosing a Yogi seated in deep meditation. Being recalled to consciousness by the songs of his Chelas gather-

ing about him, and inquiring as to the cause, he was informed that Colonel Olcott, the friend of the Aryan religion, had come. The Yogi, pronouncing this the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, advanced to the footlights, bearing in his hand a flower-wreath, and the Colonel having been called forward, he was garlanded and blessed. All this was taken quite seriously by the audience, and the Colonel's inclination to laugh was overcome by a feeling of gratitude at the friendly regard displayed for him. H. M. Voltec writes on "The Astral Light," and C. G. Kaji's article, "Why Should we not eat Animal Food?" is concluded. "Extraordinary Virtues of Indian Plants," by K. Perrajie, contains some remarkable statements. W. G. John writes entertainingly on "The Resurrection of the Body," dealing with the disintegration and reintegration of the several vehicles which the ego uses in manifestation, and the causes producing them. "The Origin of Language" presents some comments by a student on the article upon that subject in the August issue. He claims that language was never invented, but *evolved*, and declares that the sounds produced by animals are not all "cries," but are indeed a method of communication, not more unintelligible to us than is any foreign tongue. From "Hindu Religious Philosophy," an excellent paper by Jehangir Sorabji, we quote:

"There was but one paramount idea in everything that the divines of India did, viz., to make every walk of life, in the end, a means of making a man conscious of the God within. Life on the material plane was to be led in such a way that man might be fitted for the Kingdom of Heaven. At home or abroad, walking or eating, talking or trading, the Hindu was always reminded that he was not meant for the earth." "But the glory of the Indian thought, which will shine as long as our globe remains habitable by humanity, lies in the Upanishads and in that one book which has been so justly styled the Bible of Humanity, the "Song Celestial," the Bhagavad Gita. The best and noblest of what man can think about his God and his destiny are treasured here. They are not meant for the Hindus alone; they are not meant for any particular country or a certain age; they are the legacy of the Aryan race, the flower of its thought, the germs of the future cosmopolitan religion, the Theosophy of the world."

"It must be stated, without the slightest reserve, that if any race ever made religion a

practical object to live by and die by, it is the Hindu. The Hindu draws his religious instincts with his mother's milk. In this blessed land there is religion for the shepherd and the milkman; there is religion for the trader and the peasant; there is here religion for the boy going to school and the *Grihasta* who sends that boy to school; there is here religion for the saint and the sinner. * * In short, in this God-intoxicated land the leaven of religion has permeated all the walks and grades of life. The Hindu has lost his kingdom, has lost his material rank and dignity, but he still clings to his religion as the oyster shell sticks to the pearl within its bosom."

Theosophy in Australasia, (November) announces the safe arrival in Sydney of Dr. A. Marques, the General Secretary of the Australasian Section. The doctor contributes a circular, a copy of which he has sent to members of the Section, and a paper entitled "The Future Work of the T. S.," in which he speaks of the responsibilities resting upon members and the necessity for their putting forth every effort to become capable workers and teachers. "Method in Madness" is a well told story by Victoria M. Wright; Mr. S. Studd contributes an article on "The Higher and the Lower Self of Man"; and "Reviews," "Questions and Answers" and "Activities" complete the number.

The Theosophical Review (December) is an excellent number. *The Watch Tower* speaks encouragingly of the prospects for a permanent home for the London Center, and there are some interesting comments relative to Cromwell's mission, wireless telegraphy of two hundred years ago, and the opinions of Mr. Corrance, a Catholic writer of note, as to the religion of the future and the very striking parallel between our times and those of nineteen hundred years ago. "The Parable of the Three Old Men," a translation from Leo Tolstoi, teaches unmistakably the superiority of the *spirit of religion* over the *form of worship*. Margaret Carr continues her essay on "The Friend of God of the Oberland," this article dealing with his meeting with a Dominican friar, probably Johann Tauler, known as "The Master learned in the Holy Scriptures" and his instructing him in the *spirit* of True Wisdom. In "Like as the Heart Desireth," Miss E. M. Green tells in story how the Lords of Karma carry on Their work, and how seeming "chance" is the result of human thought and

desire. G. R. S. Mead writes on "The Date and Origin of the earliest Greek Trismegistic Literature," showing Egyptian origin, with distinct tracings of Semitic and pre-historic Greek influence. "The Ethical Side of Theosophy," by Dr. A. A. Wells, is deserving of careful study. It is brimful of good common-sense, particularly along the line of the question as to our attitude and duty toward our fellow men and women. These are divided by the writer into three general classes: (1) the "Philistines," that great, drifting mass of humanity, as yet awake to nothing beyond its material wants and pleasures, who regard aspiration for knowledge and inner growth as useless or even foolish; (2) the "Aspirants," who, like ourselves, are seeking the way onward; and (3) our "elder brothers," or those beyond us in the scheme of evolution—some but a little, some very far beyond. To the first we owe patience, and a love which sees within the groping entity a pure and perfect soul of divine parentage. Toward the second class we must exercise tolerance and helpfulness, for these are our *nearest* brothers, with aims like unto our own, though each may climb a different path. To the third class we give loyalty and devotion, for these have knowledge and love so much greater than ours that it should be our greatest joy to serve them. Mrs. Besant writes on "Theosophy and Modern Thought," pointing out how the spread of the Eastern teaching in the West has modified the thought of the religious and scientific world and is finding its way into the hearts, as well as the minds, of men, and changing even their outer, physical lives. Mr. Leadbeater continues his interesting papers on "Ancient Peru," describing the houses of the people, their ways of building, their methods of warfare and something of their manufactures. "Occultism among the Spanish Troubadours," by Miss Hardcastle; "The Magic Ball," by Mr. Hamilton; with activities, reviews and translations, complete the December issue.

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of *Philadelphia, Teosofia, Mind, The Dawn, The Vahan, The Lamp, Notes and Queries, The Brahmavadin, Prasnottara, Theosophic Gleaner, Rays of Light, Die Uebersinnliche Welt, Humanitarian, Chicago Vegetarian, Sophia, Le Lotus Bleu*, etc.

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