

THE VAHAN



A VEHICLE FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND OPINIONS.

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MEMBERS and others are invited to send opinions and questions on Theosophical subjects, notes on current Theosophical literature, reports of activities, cuttings of general interest from papers, &c., for insertion in THE VAHAN to W. R. OLD, Gen. Sec. British Sec. T. S., 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

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NO. 9.

The Mystery of Man.

Esoteric philosophy divides Man into a Triad or Trinity *within*, and a Quaternary *without*. Separated from this divine Triad, the god within each one of us, Man is nothing but a mindless animal, as were the man-germs in the early races previous to the incarnation of the real men, those thinking entities, called very appropriately the "Sons of Mind." In the symbolical language of the Stanzas, the three higher principles are called the "three flames," and the four lower, the "four wicks." The lower quaternary is impermanent, and at the change called death disintegrates as an entity, each principle fading out in a period proportionate to its intensity. Disconnected from the higher triad, this lower four-fold entity is, in every sense, of the same nature as the animal, pure and simple. It is the light of the higher triad alone which differentiates man from the animal. Of the three principles composing this triad, the *Manas* (Mind or thinking entity, generally called the *Ego*) is the most mysterious, for its nature is dual, or two-fold. In itself it is pure or unalloyed with matter, and as such is regarded as the witness and the Sacrificial Victim which gives of its essence or divine fire to the bestial lower entity in order that the latter may become self-conscious. In the vast majority of cases, however, this must not be regarded as a substantial descent of the higher into actual contact with the lower, but must be considered rather as a ray sent forth to illuminate and quicken the nascent mind of the animal entity. Or again we may, perhaps, understand the idea better by the example of the lighting of many

tapers from one flame; the flame never decreases, no matter how many tapers are lighted. So with the countless personalities of each individual; their four-fold wicks are lighted from this triple tongued flame, and yet the flame remains undiminished, for it is inexhaustible. In this way, self-conscious man has two minds, or Egos, the higher, the Witness, whose interest is beyond and above the petty selfishness and narrow interests of physical life, and the lower, the enjoyer, who longs with an insatiable appetite to taste the sweet things of sensuous existence. This is symbolized in the *Upanishads* by the allegory of two birds sitting on the same tree, the one devouring the fruit, and the other looking on.

And yet, in a certain way, the lower is necessary to the higher, just as the higher is necessary to the lower, for self-consciousness results. The higher continually sacrifices itself so that a vehicle may be evolved pure enough to reflect the light of its wisdom into matter.

The Christos crucified on the cross of matter, the four lower animal principles, was the central figure of the drama of the ancient mysteries, preëminently in Egypt.

In studying Theosophical literature on this subject, you will find that the term Christos at one time corresponds to one of the three higher principles, at another, to another of them, and again to two or even all three together. There is no confusion, however, in this, if the nature of the higher triad is carefully studied, and the context of the passage rightly understood. We find among the religio-philosophical schools of the first three centuries of the present era, mention of three Christs, and three Sons: moreover, Jesus is said to have had three fathers!

The importance of the Manasic principle, or the principle of the individuality, which is not the lower animal personality, is that it can focus the infinite and unconditioned wisdom of Buddhi, and conduct its light into the world of men. This wisdom or Buddhi is the vehicle of the absolute Âtmân, which is entirely out of all relation with finiteness, and is that infinite ALL, which is in every vessel, both of honour and dishonour, and which alone is considered by Theosophists to be Deity.

LITERARY SCIENTIFIC.

The March number of *Lucifer* is the first of a new Volume. Commencing in September, 1887, it has lived through good and evil report for three-and-a-half years, and has now reached Vol. VIII. If we may judge by the contents of the present number, the new Volume will be far in advance of any of the previous ones, valuable and interesting as they are. A glance at the table of

contents, which has been printed separately for distribution, shows an astonishing amount of matter, dealing with a range of subjects which are valuable, not merely to a Theosophist, but to students of religion and philosophy in general, and even to the *profane* reader. Many of the articles are parts of a series, which cannot well be noticed until complete. Among these we have. "Is Theosophy Pantheism," by "V. de F.," which will certainly repay careful attention. J. W. Brodie Innes commences a series of papers on "The True Church of Christ, Exoteric and Esoteric," which promises to present this important subject in a somewhat original manner. "Problems of Life," a translation from the Russian, by H. P. B., of the "Diary of an Old Physician," by N. J. Pirogoff, is continued, and is interesting as a contribution on the part of an eminent scientist towards the *spiritual* basis of life and consciousness, so much in contrast with the *material* views which so largely prevail in modern scientific speculation. "The Devil's Own" is a characteristic editorial, dealing with the principle of duality, allegorized in the Zoroastrian system in the legends of Ormuzd and Ahriman. "Life in a Severed Head," is an account of an experiment made by the celebrated Belgian painter Antoine Wiertz, in which, while in the hypnotic state, he identified himself with the consciousness of a criminal who was guillotined. The result was ghastly enough, for consciousness remained in the severed head for *three minutes*, during which time it suffered inexpressible tortures, physical and mental; a veritable *eternity* of *Hell* for the criminal. "The Mysteries of the Saltpetrière," is another article dealing with the hypnotic experiments of Dr. Charcot; in which some cases of "double personality" are recorded. Other articles are "Theosophic Interest of Indian Life"; "Notes on Zoroastrianism"; "The Ten Sephiroth"; "Kāma and Yōga"; "The Zuñi World Religions"; "The Theosophical Society and H. P. B.," a reply by Annie Besant to Mr. Patterson's "protest"; "The Origin of the Christmas Tree"; "Notes on Theosophy"; "Vikramaditya's Jewel"; Theosophical Activities, Reviews, Correspondence, etc.

The March number of the *Path* is the conclusion of Volume V, each Volume covering one year, instead of six months, as is the case with *Lucifer*. The most important article in the present number is probably the "Loss of the Soul," by "Harj." (*To be continued.*) The possibility, under certain circumstances, of the complete annihilation of the "soul" in an individual entity, is a doctrine which it has only recently been permitted to be put forward in *exoteric* Theosophical works; though it was plainly hinted at in *Isis*, and other early teachings. Now, however, it is receiv-

ing much fuller treatment, and the present article deals with it in a way which can hardly fail to impress the reader with the awful reality of that deadly sin, described in the Christian scriptures as the "sin against the Holy Ghost," which leads to the most terrible fate that can befall a human being. This "sin," however, is not the sin of a single act, but rather the result of a long downward course, which ends in the choice of evil *for its own sake*. The vehicle of the *Logos*, the *Karâna Sarîra*, becomes so impure, so degraded that it can no longer reflect the faintest ray of the divine light; and then, severed from the "Higher Self," it becomes a prey to "Karma-Nemesis," every evil thought and deed returning to him who sent it out, the demons of his own creation seize upon his soul and slowly devour him. . . . Hypnotism, Necromancy, and other forms of "Black Magic" lead directly towards it.

"What Can Theosophy Do for the Children," is a contribution towards a very important question, which many Theosophists who are parents find some little difficulty in answering at the present time, and which the Theosophical Society as a whole will soon find of the greatest importance in its practical work for the good of the humanity of the future. Theosophy at present is too much associated with recondite studies, which are apt to put out of sight the fact that its first principles are few and simple, and such as can easily be grasped by the mind of a child, who has not—as so many older students have—to *unlearn* before it can learn. The idea of Unity, of the *oneness* of all things, can easily be impressed on the plastic mind of a child; and so also can the idea of absolute justice, embodied in the doctrine of *Karma*. Mrs. J. C. Ver-Planck, we think, has done good service in this direction, by the publication of the short Theosophical stories for children, entitled "The Wonder-Light." In the present number of the *Path* this writer contributes an interesting little Volks legend, under the title of "The Identity of Soul." Other short articles, dealing with various questions more specifically connected with Theosophic doctrines, will be found, as usual, to maintain the reputation of the *Path* for clear and concise exposition.

Every step of advancement which Science has made in the past, has brought her into conflict with the formulated beliefs of Christendom, with the orthodox church for the time being. But as between Theosophy and Science the position is reversed; every advance on the part of Science is so much gain, is so much clearer light, in exposition of the basis in natural law upon which the Secret Doctrine rests. There are certain facts of *Occult Science*, however, which, though they have been long familiar to a certain class of students, have been derided and ridiculed by the repre-

sentatives of the scientific opinion of the day. Yet if they are *facts*, they are bound, sooner or later, to receive recognition, and it is just here that Theosophy gains immensely by every concession which Science makes; for whereas between Science and Dogma, it is always Dogma which has had to yield the ground, between Science and Theosophy it is Science which gives way. Now although Science now recognizes many phenomena, such as those of mesmerism, which, but a very few years ago, were absolutely derided, Occult Science has still many secrets which have not yet even been guessed at. And of all the branches of Occult Science, there is, perhaps, none which has been more ridiculed than that of *Al-chemistry*, in its search after the "philosopher's stone," and the transmutation of metals. Now, although alchemical symbolism was employed by the mediæval mystics to veil the deeper spiritual truths of man's nature, they had an actual basis in physics; and the possibility of transmuting the baser metals into gold was not a mere figure of speech for the passage of the elements of the animal and human soul into the divine. But what shall we say if this idea of transmutation becomes within the new few years *theoretically* possible, in accordance with the latest and most advanced theories of our modern chemists. Among these, Professor Crookes has placed himself in the foremost ranks by his well-known researches on "radiant matter," and the Genesis of the Elements. Lecturing recently on this latter subject, after indicating the lines on which our present chemical elements appear to have evolved out of, sub-groups of "meta-elements," he goes on to say: "We are sometimes asked why, if the elements have been evolved, we never see one of them transformed, or in process of transformation, into another. The question is as futile as the cavil that in the organic world we never see a horse metamorphosed into a cow. Before copper, *e. g.*, can be transmuted into gold, it would have to be carried back to a simpler and more primitive state of matter, and then, so to speak, shunted on to the track which leads to gold." Here, then, is a clear indication that transmutation is *theoretically* possible; and if theoretically, why not practically? It is just this *practical* knowledge which makes the ADEPT; but it cannot be accomplished by those who deal only with *physical* matter; it requires a knowledge of higher states and forces, in a word—*Spirituality*.

THE ENQUIRER.

QUERY.—*Are there not other conditions of mediumship than those cited in VAHAN No. 8?*

ANS.—To a very large extent, the conditions given will cover

the ground of the average run of phenomena. The fact that the medium exhibits the possession of faculties in the trance-state which normally they are quite unable to emulate, does not militate against the explanation given, *viz.*: that mediumship is due to unconscious rapport with thoughts and images existing in the astral light. If we consider for a moment the transcendent ability of the ordinary sleep-walker, while in the somnambulistic state, the case becomes self evident. That which guides the unconscious somnambulist in his nocturnal peregrinations, is the same power which is responsible for the higher manifestations of mediumistic phenomena, such as trance-painting, poetical and musical composition, etc. In short, there are no phenomena attaching to mediumship, (except obsession by spooks) which need be referred to the direct control of self-conscious entities other than the partially liberated Manas of the entranced medium. It is worthy of comment in connection with this subject, that Swedenborg, who is admittedly the greatest natural psychic seer of recent times, affirms that he *could never see anything of which he could not first conceive an idea in his own mind.* As collateral evidence of the truth of the Theosophic statement concerning the nature of mediumistic phenomena, we may call attention to the fact that Reincarnation, a leading tenet of old-world philosophy, was never mentioned in séance rooms until the writings of orientalist had brought the doctrine under the notice of the Western mind; and even to this day it is in dispute with the denizens of the Spirit-World, if we are to give equal credit to the "controls" of the Alan Kardec, and Jackson Davis schools of posthumous philosophy!

QUERY.—*About a year ago a question was asked in "Lucifer" concerning some strange variations in temperature, and H. P. B. replied to the following effect: "Close of cycle—study Occultism." The present querist would like to know how and where to find the necessary materials for such study.—Scottish Lodge.*

ANS.—In the *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, pp. 634 to 646, you will find enough information on the subject of *cyclic law* to serve as a guide for a closer analysis of the periodic recurrence of Karmic climaxes. The practical application of the knowledge thus obtained is one phase of Occultism. To fully understand the question of distributive Karmic action so far as it affects climatic and seismic phenomena, it would be necessary to make a close study of the correspondence between mental states and physical environment, or in other wards of national characteristics and territorial geognosy. This law of correspondence between internal and external states of existence, applies equally to the individual as to

the nation, and the race. It is replete with the most important facts of life, and all daily occurrences are included within its scope; in brief, the study of this law is an essential part of Occultism.

QUERY.—*In the case of the Döppelganger or wraith appearing to friends or relatives, sometimes just at the moment of death, at others, some time previously,—how is it possible for the “astral” to leave the body in the latter case, when the man is yet full of vigour, and in good health? I thought only Adepts had this power. Sometimes the “double” is seen by the man himself.*

ANS.—It is not the döppelganger which appears, at the moment of a man's death, to his friends, since it is not yet released from its magnetic ties with the physical body, sufficiently to permit of its projection to any great distance therefrom. In this case it is the *thought-form* of the deceased which is impelled, by the strong impulse of a dying wish, into the thought-sphere of those who witness it. Under certain psychic conditions this may happen with those who are in no sense near to death, and who are quite unconscious of the fact of its happening. In the case of the Adept, it is quite another thing. There are many kinds of the thought-forms or thought-bodies, to which consciousness may be related and through which it may function, and whereas in the case of the ordinary man, whether living or dying, this projection is an unconscious, though perhaps, not an involuntary process, yet in the case of the Adepts, the consciousness is for the time being centred in the thought-body, so that he is *sensibly present* in whatever place to which the projection is made. In some rare instances a man's “double” will appear to himself—but authentic cases are few and far between. This does not infer any doubt as to the occurrence of such a phenomenon, but it shows all such cases to be exceptional in their nature, and probably not to be included under the same category with those we have defined. We think it rather illustrates the difference between the brain-mind and the Manasic Ego, than the independent action of the lobes of the cerebrum, to which it is usually referred.

ACTIVITIES.

There has been of late somewhat of a falling-off in the amount of Theosophical correspondence in the columns of the Daily Press; and a like diminution in the number of paragraphs on, and notices of Theosophy generally. As very much useful work has been accomplished in the past, and much more can be done in the future, it will be a great pity if the public interest in Theosophy

is allowed to diminish. Certain members of the Society devote a large amount of time to newspaper correspondence, but their work must be supplemented by coöperation on the part of the Society at large. Members who come across notices, correspondence, or articles in the papers, dealing with Theosophical subjects, should endeavour, by joining in the correspondence, or helping in any way that may seem fit, to keep Theosophy before the eyes of the public. All cuttings should be sent either to Mrs. Cleather, 19, Gayton Road, Harrow, or to H. A. W. Coryn, Trewirgie, Acre Lane, Brixton, S.W., and it should be stated whether such cuttings have been answered, or in any way dealt with.

Members coöperating in this branch of Theosophical activities will be doing a good work for the Society.

HALIFAX.—A class for the study of Theosophy has been formed by L. S. De Jastrzebski, F.T.S., and others, and is now under the direction of F. Strickland, F.T.S. A meeting was convened on the 8th inst. at the Temperance Hotel, Northgate, which we have reason to believe is the inception of an active centre of work in Yorkshire.

GLASGOW.—Members having friends in Glasgow who are likely to be interested in Theosophy, will do well to refer them to F. W. D'Evelyn, Esq., F.T.S., 25, Holyrood Quadrant, who is at present busy in the formation of a new Glasgow Lodge.

BRITISH SECTION LIBRARY.—Building operations have been so far hindered by the late severe weather, that we have been forced to delay the opening of Reference Library at No. 17, Avenue Road, indefinitely; but the earliest possible notice will be given to members, and the times and conditions of reading fully stated, as soon as the room is ready for use.

LENDING LIBRARIES.—Mr. Wm. A. Dunn, 19, Wandle Road, Croydon, has opened a Theosophical Lending Library. Members are requested to notify their friends of this fact, and as far as possible to encourage the use of this, and other lending libraries established by members of the Society, a list of which was given in VAHAN No. 3.

Any members of the T. S. who see their way to forming similar centres of propaganda should communicate with the Countess Wachtmeister, at 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C., who will send a few books from the Library and Propaganda Fund, to form a nucleus, on the condition that 2d. per volume is charged, and that the money thus obtained is used for the purchase of fresh books to increase the library.