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THEOSOPHICAL
MANUALS

XIV
ON GOD AND PRAYER

The Aryan Theosophical Press
Point Loma, California
1907

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XIV

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BY

A STUDENT

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F. E. Chase
Boston

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PREFACE

THE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it

their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc., into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accomodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches however to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely

unexplored, or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from goodwill than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer;

and it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teacher's statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But, as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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INTRODUCTORY

THE purpose of this manual must be to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to help people, while rejecting that which is false in their old ideas, to keep that which is true. It will be shown how the dogmas that have grown up around religion in the course of centuries have obscured the truth and kept men back from progressing in spiritual knowledge to the extent they should have done, by causing them to cling fast to errors sanctioned by authority only, and to expend their devotion on objects unworthy of it. It will be the endeavor to clear religious truth of these errors, thus rescuing that which is holy from that which has debased it. And this will not be done in the old tearing-down iconoclastic way of a certain class of atheists and "freethinkers" — a method that has often caused people to cling the more tightly to

their cherished errors. People may be pardoned for clinging to theology as *the lesser of two evils*, when the greater evil is a superstitious materialism, or rather animalism, that denies and scoffs at all faith and at everything held as sacred. If Theosophy unqualifiedly rejects the theological God, it is only because its own idea of Deity is so much higher that the theological idea seems like a profanation. If Theosophy repudiates the ordinary conception of prayer, it is only because it has a far higher conception of prayer to offer. Theosophy does not pull down and take away without having something better to give instead. It does not pull religion down at all, but merely asks believers to step behind the outer forms of their creeds and examine the inner spirit — that which is common ground for all religions and the source whence all religions are sprung. It asks them to lay aside the mental forms under which ignorant generations have sought to gain an idea of the Eternal, and to try to discover the source of everlasting life and power and wisdom through its manifesta-

tions in the world without and in the heart within. It asks them to give up petitioning a hypothetical personal creator for the fulfilment of questionable desires, and to endeavor to ascertain the spirit of the Eternal Law and harmonize their lives therewith. It teaches that right action is the truest prayer.

In the great extension of knowledge that has taken place in all directions, we can no longer regard the Christian religion as anything unique and specially favored. We realize that it is but one out of many religions that have existed from all time, and that religions are but the temporary and local forms which the one great eternal RELIGION takes during ages of spiritual obscurity when mankind as a whole is not able to grasp that one RELIGION. We can trace the symbology back to earlier sources among the Babylonians etc., and this is upsetting many people, although there is no need to be upset. It merely shows that our religion is, in its essential parts, much older than we had thought; and this surely does not detract from its merits. Our age is just learn-

ing to apply the scientific method of generalization to religion, and to realize that all religions are derived from a parent religion, as languages have descended from a parent language. Just as scholars show that the various tongues spoken in Europe and Asia are derived from some one parent tongue spoken ages ago by the Race from which the diverse nations are descended; so it might be shown that the various religions are offshoots of a Root-Religion understood in antiquity. And if philologists extended the limits of their inquiry so as to include other languages than the ones about which they treat, they might trace the present human races still further back to a still more inclusive and parent Race. And so with religions; if we trace far enough back, we shall draw continually nearer to the original unity from which has sprung all the diversity, and find that all religious symbology and doctrine comes from one and the same ancient source.

The world is very ancient; and the great civilizations of the remote past, whose remains we are discovering here and there, endured for

thousands of years. In comparison with our own brief history, their history was very old and mature; they had advanced farther in knowledge than we have as yet advanced; for our race is yet (comparatively) in its childhood. Hence in remote antiquity there was a general knowledge of the secrets of life and nature — a knowledge which was neither religion nor science, for it was both — and men were wiser and had greater powers than we. It is the scattered and misunderstood fragments of this ancient knowledge that form the basis of our religious symbology and doctrine.

As this ancient knowledge was founded on eternal Truth, which is always accessible to the illuminated understanding, it is eternally true and verifiable. It can be gained again. It is ours now to re-discover the essential truths of life and to re-constitute the WISDOM-RELIGION of antiquity.

I

THE THEOLOGICAL GOD

THE theological God is rather an elusive conception. The conception varies from that of the man whose ideas have been described as implying a "coarse familiarity with the Almighty," and who dares to pray to God to help him to choose new clothing, to the noblest and most intuitive conceptions of our great divines. Therefore it is difficult, in discussing this question, to know what one is discussing. If one points out the absurdity of the baldly stated orthodox dogmas of the creation and redemption, some Christians will deny that that is what they believe. There are many Christians who do not believe in the literal interpretation of the dogma that God created all men with a character that dooms them to eternal torment unless they are fortunate enough to hear of and to accept the teaching of the

Atonement. These crude beliefs do not represent the advanced thought of Christendom. Still it may be taken as a representative view that God favors the Christian religion as being the only true one, and that he sent his son, Jesus, to the world to preach a gospel of salvation which is essential to the future well-being of all men. And when the points of difference are sifted out, there remains a definite idea of "God" which is recognizable and definable as the theological God of ordinary Christian belief. This, then, is the conception with which we have to deal.

II

THE PERSONAL GOD AND PANTHEISM

BUT the principal trait of the Christian God which Theosophy calls in question is that which makes him a *personal* God. Theosophy holds that personality is an attribute which cannot be attributed to the Deity without limiting the conception to a degree that renders it entirely inadequate. Personality is an attribute of man, and of man in his state of illusion. It is a defect in man's nature, an obstacle which he is destined one day to transcend. To attribute this limitation to the Godhead is to create God in *our* own image. It is true that there are some, who, when speaking of God as a person, claim that they are using the word "person" in a larger sense than ordinary, and try to give the idea of a very large personality, including, as it

were, all other personalities. But when the meaning of a word is so modified as to make it entirely different, it would be better to drop it altogether, as misleading, and use another; but this our unitarian friends cannot do so long as they have to maintain the Christian idea of God against what they call "pantheism." Hence it is clear that the Christian God is a personal God, and that it is essential to make him so in order to avoid losing him altogether and becoming a pantheist. On the question of Pantheism, H. P. Blavatsky says:

The [true] Pantheists . . . do not deny a Creator, or rather a *collective aggregate* of creators, but only refuse, very logically, to attribute "creation" and especially formation, something finite, to an Infinite Principle. With them Parabrahmam is a passive because an Absolute Cause, the unconditioned *Mukta*. It is only limited Omniscience and Omnipotence that are refused to the latter, because these are still attributes (as reflected in man's perceptions); and because Parabrahm, being the "Supreme ALL," the ever invisible spirit and Soul of Nature, changeless and eternal, can have no attributes; absoluteness very naturally precluding any idea of the finite or conditioned from being connected with it. And if

the Vedântin postulates attributes as belonging to its emanation, calling it "Ísvara *plus* Mâya," and Avidyâ, . . . it is difficult to find any Atheism in this conception. . . . In this ALL, lies concealed its coeternal and coeval emanation or inherent radiation, which, upon becoming periodically Brahmâ (the male-female Potency) becomes or expands itself into the manifested Universe. — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, Proem.

And again:

Christian theologians . . . will allow of no other God than the personified secondary powers which have worked out the visible universe, and which became with them the anthropomorphic God of the Christians.

Many say that if the idea of a personal God is rejected, either atheism or (what is commonly known as) pantheism is the only alternative. But this is not the case. As H. P. Blavatsky has explained the matter well in *The Key to Theosophy*, it will be advisable here to quote therefrom:

INQ. Do you believe in God?

THEO. That depends upon what you mean by the term.

INQ. I mean the God of the Christians, the Father of Jesus, and the Creator: the Biblical God of Moses, in short.

THEO. In such a God we do not believe. We reject the idea of a personal or an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God, who is but the gigantic shadow of *man*, and not even of man at his best. The God of theology, we say—and prove it—is a bundle of contradictions and a logical impossibility. Therefore we will have nothing to do with him.

INQ. State your reasons, if you please.

THEO. They are many, and cannot all receive attention. But here are a few. This God is called by his devotees infinite and absolute, is he not?

INQ. I believe he is.

THEO. Then if infinite—*i. e.*, limitless—and especially if absolute, how can he have a form and be a creator of anything? Form implies limitation, and a beginning as well as an end; and in order to create, a Being must think and plan. How can the ABSOLUTE be supposed to think—*i. e.*, have any relation whatever to that which is limited, finite, and conditioned? This is a philosophical and a logical absurdity. Even the Hebrew Kabalah rejects such an idea, and therefore makes of the one and the Absolute

Deific Principle an infinite Unity called Ain Suph. In order to create, the Creator has to become active; and as this is impossible for ABSOLUTENESS, the infinite principle had to be shown becoming the cause of evolution (not creation) in an indirect way — *i. e.*, through the emanation from itself (another absurdity, due this time to the translators of the Kabbalah) of the Sephiroth.

INQ. Then you are atheists?

THEO. Not that we know of, and not unless the epithet of "Atheist" is to be applied to all those who disbelieve in an anthropomorphic God. We believe in a Universal Divine Principle, the root of ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of Being.

INQ. This is the old old claim of Pantheism. If you are Pantheists, you cannot be Deists; and if you are not Deists, then you have to answer to the name of Atheists.

THEO. Not necessarily so. The term "Pantheism" is, again, one of the many abused terms whose real and primitive meaning has been distorted by blind prejudice and a onesidedness of view. If you accept the Christian etymology of this compound word, and form it of *pan* ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$), "all," and *theos* ($\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$), "god," and then imag-

ine and teach that this means that every stone and every tree in Nature is a God or the ONE God, then, of course, you will be right, and make of Pantheists fetish-worshippers, in addition to their legitimate name. But you will hardly be as successful if you etymologize the word "Pantheism" esoterically, and as we do.

INQ. What is, then, your definition of it?

THEO. Let me ask you a question in my turn.

What do you understand by Pan, or Nature?

INQ. Nature is, I suppose, the sum total of things existing around us; the aggregate of causes and effects in the world of matter, the creation or universe.

THEO. Hence the personified sum and order of known causes and effects; the total of all finite agencies and forces, as utterly disconnected from an intelligent Creator or Creators, and perhaps "conceived of as a single and separate force" — as in your cyclopaedias?

INQ. Yes, I believe so.

THEO. Well, . . . When we speak of the Deity and make it identical — hence coeval — with Nature, the eternal and uncreate. Nature is meant, and not your aggregate of flitting shadows and finite unrealities. . . . Our DEITY is neither in a paradise nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain; it is everywhere, in every atom of

the visible as of the invisible Cosmos, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality. . . . In short, our Deity is the eternal, incessantly *evolving*, not *creating*, builder of the universe; that *universe itself unfolding* out of its own essence, not being *made*.

We make the mistake of attributing to God thought and feeling as we know them; forgetting that these states or processes of our mind are finite, transitory, conditioned. All thinkers who have tried to analyse the mind have been forced to admit that it proceeds from something higher than itself, and that thoughts are but the conditioned manifestations of this inscrutable something behind. All that we can know about ourselves, are the manifestations — the mental phenomena, the emotional phenomena, and the physical phenomena; the real Self, the real I, lies beyond them all. Shall we then make the Deity less than our own Self?

We speak of the Deity as thinking and

having emotions; but thought and emotion imply the externality of the exciting stimuli. Thus, to imagine the Deity as thinking, it would be necessary to imagine him as being external to the universe and as being conditioned by it. Deep reflection will show that even in order to form an idea of the nature of our own inner Self, it is necessary to go deeper than thought and feeling — to postulate, in short, something higher than the ordinary conception of God; yet such a God is made out to be the Absolute.

The Christian idea of God is limited by being thought of as separate from the universe, which he is supposed to have created as a man would make something out of the materials at hand; or "He" made the materials too. And he is supposed to rule in this universe. Furthermore, he is conditioned by the power of evil, personified as Satan, and by the perverse will of Man. This theological conception of God is extremely crude, and such as, while pardonable in a savage, is not worthy of a reflecting age.

Evidently this God is only a partial power, a minor deity, since so many things are not included in him. He is a personification of certain forces within Man and without. The ancients used many such personifications, such as Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, etc.; yet they did not any the less believe in a Supreme Power above and including all. We boast of having replaced polytheism by monotheism, but really we have the old polytheism over again in a less complete form; for the One God which we have substituted for the ancient Gods is in no way their superior.

Let one meditate on the nature of his own being, and then reflect that there are countless other human beings like himself; and let him try to conceive what must be the nature of the common Soul or Life that links all these human beings together. He will then see that personality must be a limitation — something of the nature of a delusion. The effect of this delusion is to make each man think that he is the center of the universe and that other people are merely external circumstances. He

cannot enter into their self-hood, yet each one of them has the same feelings about himself. The only way to overcome this perplexity is to imagine that there is a Super-Spiritual, or Divine, common Consciousness manifesting in Individual Monads, and that the appearance of separateness is a limitation caused by our brains or some other part of our personal apparatus. In this way we can at least eliminate the idea of personality from our conceptions; and, thinking of the Deity in this way, we may reach a broader and worthier conception than that of theology. Yet to reach this conception, it is necessary to eliminate all familiar mental modes, everything that goes to make up the notion of personal consciousness; even thought, as we know it. And even so, we have but foreshadowed the conception of one of the higher principles of man, and must yet be immeasurably far from a conception of the One God, the Ultimate Universal Spirit.

To the unreflecting person it seems as though if we take away thought and feeling

there will be nothing left; hence he may protest that the Theosophical teachings as to the Universal Spirit make it an empty abstraction or nothingness. But Spirit is that from which all thought and feeling proceed, and it is superior to them. Our ordinary consciousness is but a feeble light in comparison with the fuller consciousness beyond. Beyond intellect there is Intuition, as much superior to thinking as sight is superior to feeling. Even thus, the elimination of all limitations from the conception of the Spirit does not make it less, but makes it more.

It is absurd to jump at one bound from the material world to the Universal Spirit, without stopping to reflect that there must be grades and degrees beyond counting. The physical universe is complex beyond conception, as we know from science; why then expect the more spiritual worlds of nature to be so simple? Is it not clear that what is called "God" stands for the whole of nature lying beyond the reach of our limited senses, being in fact like the x representing unknown quantities

in algebra? Even in man's nature there are principles higher than the mind, and in the natural world around us there are worlds within worlds. Our conceptions of Spirit have been altogether too limited.

A study of the philosophies of antiquity shows that the world has reflected more deeply than we on these questions. For the days have gone by when it was possible to allege with any show of plausibility that the pantheons and cosmogonies of the ancient Egyptians, Hindûs, Greeks, etc., are merely systems of imaginary gods such as are — or are said to be — believed in by savages. We know now that these ancient races were highly civilized, that some of them had elaborate and accurate mathematical and astronomical sciences, and that they had advanced further in metaphysics than we have. The main difference between their science and ours is that where we place abstractions they placed Beings, where we speak of force they spoke of life, where we postulate attractions and affinities they saw conscious Mind. For they recognized a fact

that is at last beginning to dawn upon us — that the forces and qualities of nature are not blind and unintelligent; they may appear so when viewed solely from the standpoint of their manifestation to our physical senses, but in their real essence and to deep thought they are alive and conscious. In fact, all force and motion are the manifestation of conscious mind, and conscious mind appertains to some Being or Beings. Hence in the ancient philosophies we find these Beings represented as what we have called “gods,” “daemons,” etc. These gods and daemons are in fact the names by which were denoted the innumerable hierarchies of creative Beings that go to make up the boundless universe of life. In place of this we have on the one hand our One God, and on the other hand our scientific forces — both of them extremely hazy conceptions and mutually contradictory. Now it is surely no act of irreverence to admit that the Supreme acts through a host of conscious and intelligent Beings of various orders, any more than it is irreverent to say that he acts through

heat and electricity! At one time the Churches persecuted people for making scientific discoveries, and the very same outcries were raised against science as are now being raised against Theosophy — that it was irreverent towards the ideal of Godhead.

H. P. Blavatsky points out that the word “pantheism” has been degraded by modern ignorance and flippancy of thought, until now it means, for the general mind, something that is disparaging. It has come to mean that the Deity is nothing but a kind of summing up of the forces of *physical* nature, and thus pantheists are said to have no God and to be atheists. But the word pantheism has a higher and truer sense. No true pantheist ever claimed that the sum-total of the forces that play in the manifested universe was God. But if the words nature and universe are used in a wider sense, so as to include *all* — not merely the outer manifestation, but the sum-total of the spiritual creative powers — then pantheism becomes the doctrine that Deity is the ultimate Life and Will and Mind underlying

and directing all — a conception which so far from degrading the idea of Deity, elevates the idea of the universe to spiritual nobility.

In contrast to the lofty (true) pantheistic conception of Deity, consider that idea which limits Deity to the status of a personality — purely hypothetical — who established a certain religion in comparatively modern times and made truth and salvation conditional on the acceptance of a special scheme of salvation through Jesus. Add to this the fact that when we visit foreign lands we find swarms of people just as fixed and fanatical in their ideas about Mohammedanism and Mohammed, or whatever the names of their religion and its prophet may be, as some of us are about our current religion and savior. Is it not evident that these popular forms of religion are purely local, temporary and racial? But in all lands there will be found people above the common level, who recognize that true religion is one and universal, and that the less intelligent people are not able to grasp this truth and so have been obliged to reduce their relig-

ion to the form of a set of dogmas. Religion thus becomes dogmatic and exclusive and is thought to be the only true religion. And the conceptions of Deity are equally multifarious and local, in contrast to the universal conception of Deity as the ultimate source of all Intelligence and Power, standing in an equal relation to all religions. As the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* says :

In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine.

Those who through diversity of desires are deprived of spiritual wisdom adopt particular rites subordinated to their own natures, and worship other Gods. In whatever form a devotee desires with faith to worship, it is I alone who inspire him with constancy therein, and depending on that faith he seeks the propitiation of that God, obtaining the object of his wishes as ordained by me alone.

There are many people whose lives are cast in a limited mold and whose duties and interests do not lead them out of a comparatively narrow sphere, who worship in their hearts an ideal of Deity that does not lead them into

any conflict of thought and suffices for the simple needs of their nature, acting as an inspiration to worthiness of life. These people, as the above quoted passage says, worship the true Spirit through a mental form, and will eventually attain broader conceptions. But Theosophy is a universal religion and its appeal is to all men. It must appeal to the remotest peoples of other continents, equally with civilized western nations. Hence its teaching as to the Deity must go beyond the limited racial conceptions. Such a conception is peculiarly necessary for missionaries who undertake to help alien races along the path of spiritual perfection. It is of little use to preach to them the particular God of western civilization.

We are too hasty and impatient in our speculations about the universe and THAT which is supreme in it and over it. We need to study our own inner nature more. All light is from within; what reaches us from outside is the opinions of other people. Everyone who has meditated deeply is conscious of the presence

within him, beyond the reach of thought, of a Power that makes for good, speaks with the voice of conscience, inspires to better things. This Power proceeds from our Divine prototype, the Higher Self, our *real* Self. The Higher Self is far higher than any ordinary conception of God, for the latter is but the highest ideal the mere mind can imagine, and is limited by the imperfections of the mind that imagines it. If it is possible for a man's nature to become so sublimated that he can rise beyond thought to a higher and fuller state of consciousness, this would be a revelation, and its character might be such as altogether to stultify one's speculations as to the nature of Deity.

III

REAL MEANING OF PANTHEISM

AS stated above, to call Theosophy pantheistic is a serious error, unless the word "pantheism" be understood in its original sense. If pantheism be taken to mean that the Supreme Spirit is nothing but the totality of manifested nature, then this kind of pantheism is certainly not the belief of Theosophy but is the belief of certain modern schools of monists. Theosophy does recognize that the sum-total of manifested nature can be conceived of as a Unit, but this Unit is not the Supreme Spirit; it is what is called in Vedântic philosophy *Prakriti*, the basis of nature. But besides *Prakriti* there is another conception called *Purusha*, the Spirit of the universe. This duality of Spirit and Matter, or *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, is a necessary conception in every great philosophy of the uni-

verse. It is the Supreme considered in its dual or creative aspect. The Supreme is One; but, as Creator, It becomes Two; the One and the Two are the Trinity (or rather one of the trinities) found in every religion.

H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* gives the following summary:

- (1) The ABSOLUTE; the *Parabrahm* of the Vedântins or the one Reality, SAT, which is, as Hegel says, both Absolute Being and Non-Being.
- (2) The first manifestation, the impersonal, and, in philosophy, *unmanifested* Logos, the precursor of the "manifested." This is the "First Cause," the "Unconscious" of European Pantheists.
- (3) Spirit-Matter, LIFE; the "Spirit of the Universe," the Purusha and Prakriti, or the *second* Logos.
- (4) Cosmic Ideation, MAHAT or Intelligence, the Universal World-Soul; the Cosmic Noumenon of Matter, the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature, also called MAHĀ-BUDDHI.

The ONE REALITY; its *dual* aspects in the conditioned Universe.

From this it will be seen that the conception of these later pantheists is a long way from the Supreme. It is only one half of number three in the list. Even the "First Cause" and the "Unconscious" of the more philosophical European pantheists is but the first manifestation of the Supreme; beyond that is still a profounder conception — the *Parabrahm* of the Vedântic philosophy.

From all eternity two states are recognized which appear alternately and periodically — a passive latent unmanifested state, and an active manifested state. To quote from *The Secret Doctrine*:

The esóteric doctrine teaches . . . that the one infinite and unknown Essence exists from all eternity, and in regular and harmonious successions is either passive or active. . . . The philosophers of the oldest school of Buddhism (which still exists in Nepaul), speculate only upon the active condition of this "Essence," . . . and deem it foolish to theorize upon the abstract and "unknowable" power in its passive condition. Hence they are called atheists by both Christian theologians and modern scientists, for neither of the two are able to understand the

profound logic of their philosophy. The former will allow of no other God than the personified secondary powers which have worked out the visible universe, and which became with them the anthropomorphic God of the Christians.

This is represented symbolically in ancient teachings by geometrical figures. Speaking of such an ancient book, H. P. Blavatsky says:

On the first page is an immaculate white disk within a dull black ground. On the following page, the same disk, but with a central point. The first, the student knows to represent Kosmos in Eternity, before the awakening of still slumbering Energy, the emanation of the Word in later systems. The point in the hitherto immaculate Disk, Space and Eternity in *Pralaya*, denotes the dawn of differentiation. . . . The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns. Its circumference—a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind—indicates the abstract ever incognizable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one. . . . It is the ONE LIFE, eternal, invisible, yet Omnipresent, without beginning or end, yet periodical in its regular manifestations, between which periods reigns the dark mystery of non-Being; unconscious, yet absolute Consciousness; unrealizable, yet the one self-

existing reality; truly "a chaos to the sense, a Kosmos to the reason." Its one absolute attribute, which is ITSELF, eternal ceaseless Motion, is called in esoteric parlance the "Great Breath," which is the perpetual motion of the universe, in the sense of limitless ever-present SPACE.

The second symbol, the circle with a point at the center, shows the first differentiation in the periodical manifestations of the ever-eternal nature. Even this is impersonal, being the "Unconscious" or Unknowable of European philosophy and the Hidden *Logos* or Word of Greek philosophy.

The third symbol is a circle with a horizontal diameter, and *symbolizes* divine immaculate Mother-Nature.

In the fourth symbol a vertical diameter is drawn, making a cross, and this represents the origin of manifested life. The Cross without its circumscribed Circle represents materialism or materialistic pantheism.

IV

HOW TO APPROACH THE SUPREME

WHAT precedes has dealt with mental conceptions of the Supreme, which at best can only be very imperfect. Yet it is of the utmost importance to have a correct intellectual conception, for illogical and erroneous conceptions are capable of misleading and keeping in the dark people who otherwise, by their intuitions, would be on the right track. The false intellectual conceptions of the Supreme current in Christian theology, are responsible for much ignorance.

Now we come to the question of how to approach the Supreme. An intellectual idea conceived in the mind is imperfect, but a fuller knowledge, above the intellect, is attainable by those who can draw near in heart to the Divine center of their own being and thus know

the Supreme, *so far as that may be possible*, by blending themselves therewith.

The esoteric teachings concerning the relation of man to the universe, on all planes, spiritual, psychic, physical, etc., comprise a subject far too vast to be summarily dealt with. But it may be briefly stated that the Higher Self of man is a radiation from the Universal Spirit. It is through this Higher Self that man comes in contact with the Spirit and attains to knowledge and enlightenment. We cannot do better than quote from an ancient scripture, the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, which deals with the mode of attaining spiritual enlightenment. The speaker is Krishna, who allegorically represents the Higher Self; and the pupil, Arjuna, stands for man.

There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master — *Īvara* — who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bhârata, with all thy soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place.

This perishable body is known as Kshetra; those who are acquainted with the true nature of things call the soul who knows it, the Kshetrajña. Know that I am the Knower in every mortal body.

I am the embodiment of the Supreme Ruler, and of the incorruptible, of the unmodifying, and of the eternal law, and of endless bliss.

Brahman the Supreme is the exhaustless. Ādhy-âtmâ is the name of my being, manifested as the Individual Self [not the personality]. . . . Ādi-bhûta is the Supreme Spirit dwelling in all elemental nature through the mysterious power of nature's illusion.

All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them.

I will now tell thee what is the object of wisdom, from knowing which a man enjoys immortality; it is that which has no beginning, even the supreme Brahma, and of which it cannot be said that it is either Being or Non-Being. . . . It is immanent in the world, possessing the vast whole. Itself with-

out organs, it is reflected by all the senses and faculties; unattached, yet supporting all; without qualities, yet the witness of them all. It is within and without all creatures animate and inanimate; it is inconceivable because of its subtlety, and although near it is afar off. Although undivided, it appeareth as divided among creatures, and while it sustains existing things, it is also known as their destroyer and creator. It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness; and it is wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be obtained by wisdom; in the hearts of all it ever presideth.

Know that prakriti or nature, and purusha the spirit, are without beginning. And know that the passions and the three qualities [goodness, passion, and indifference] are sprung from nature. Nature or prakriti is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions; individual spirit or purusha is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure. . . . The spirit in the body is called Mahêśvara, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the Paramâtmâ, the highest soul.

He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed.

Perceiving the same Lord present in everything and everywhere, he does not by the lower self destroy his own soul, but goeth to the supreme end. . . . This Supreme Spirit, even when it is in the body, neither acteth nor is affected by action, because, being without beginning and devoid of attributes, it is changeless. As the all-moving Ākāśa [world-soul, spiritual ether] by reason of its subtlety passeth everywhere unaffected, so the Spirit, though present in every kind of body, is not attached to action nor affected. As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body.

[Arjuna says:] Thou art the one indivisible Being, and non-being, that which is supreme. Thou art the first of Gods, the most ancient Spirit; thou art the final supreme receptacle of this universe; thou art the knower and that which is to be known, and the supreme mansion; and by thee, O thou of infinite form, is this universe caused to emanate.

Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law. . . . Space and heaven and earth and every point around the three regions of the universe are filled with thee alone.

In the Bible the Higher Self is spoken of as "the Son" and the Universal Spirit as "the

Father." Jesus, the Galilean Initiate, says, speaking as the Christ, just as does Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." And in many other passages he expounds the meaning of Christhood, how it is to be attained, and the relation between the Christ in man and the Universal Spirit or "Father." These records of the Churches are merely echoes of the esoteric doctrine of antiquity.

V

PRAYER

THEOSOPHISTS do not practise prayer in any ordinarily accepted sense of the word; nor do they believe in its necessity, its efficacy, or its rightfulness. But they do believe in prayer in another and entirely different sense.

In the first place, to whom are they to pray? As shown above, they do not believe in the supremacy of a personal God, and to pray to the Absolute is an absurdity. In the second place, they believe that most prayers are more or less selfish requests to the Supreme Law that it will make exceptions in favor of the petitioner. A Theosophist believes that he should endeavor to understand Divine Law and bring himself into harmony with it, rather than wish to alter it in his favor. Ordinary prayer is made for some specific object, some advantage or

possession, material or spiritual. Thus it implies that the petitioner knows better what is good for him than the Supreme Law, and presumes to make suggestions in the light of his erring judgment. The truest prayer is: "Not my will but Thine be done!" followed by energetic and dutiful action, as this implies a complete renunciation of the personal will and judgment in favor of the Divine Law.

Ordinarily a person who prays, simply concentrates his desires and his imagination in an attempt to bring about the fulfilment of his wishes. Desire and imagination are forces which tend to produce results. Hence the suppliant sets up a force that tends to bring about the fulfilment of his hopes. But desires are conflicting, and at other times he will send out other desire-forces tending to neutralize the first; and other people will be doing the same thing. Thus this kind of prayer, which is merely desiring, can only set up a multitude of conflicting currents and bring about conflicting results. This is very obvious in the case of two armies praying each for the other's

destruction. It is evident that if all these prayers be addressed to one God, he cannot grant them all. In fact any prayer for a specific object must involve an interference with the general dispensations of providence. Logically, then, it is absurd to pray for specific results; we can only aspire to bring our lives, our wishes and our thoughts into harmony with the Divine Law. Beginning with the assumption that the Power we invoke is higher than our finite understanding, how can we oppose our personal judgment and wishes to its superior wisdom? Such an attitude is as irreverent as illogical.

Nevertheless people do pray for specific objects: some for material advantages, some for relief from suffering, some for special spiritual gifts, some for rain or fine weather, some for victory over each other. To whom, then, or to what are these prayers addressed? The answer is that they are addressed to personal gods, "graven images," fetishes created by man in his own imagination. They are in fact invocations of the power of desire, meth-

ods of strengthening the selfish will. When two hostile armies pray for mutual victory, it means that each one is combining in an act of will and concentrating its mental forces for the subjugation of the other. The belief which each set of suppliants has in the idea of a personal God enables them to concentrate their efforts more successfully. As said in the *Key to Theosophy*:

Prayer has several other meanings besides that given to it by the Christians. It means not only a pleading or *petition*, but in days of old meant far more, an invocation and incantation. The *mantra*, or the rhythmically chanted prayer of the Hindûs, has precisely such a meaning, for the Brâhmans hold themselves higher than the common *devas* or "Gods." A prayer may be an appeal or an incantation for malediction and a curse—as in the case of two armies praying simultaneously for mutual destruction—as much as for blessing. And as the great majority of people are intensely selfish, and pray only for themselves, . . . the result is that prayer, as now understood, is doubly pernicious: (a) it kills in man self-reliance; (b) it develops in him a still more ferocious selfishness and egotism than he is already endowed with by nature.

Prayer kills self-reliance. In the *Key to Theosophy* the question is asked: "Do you believe in prayer, and do you ever pray?" and the answer is: "We do not. We *act* instead of *talking*." Everybody knows the story of the wagoner who prayed to Hercules to lift his wheel out of the rut. The case of the individual who, instead of acting, waits and prays for an opportunity, is equally familiar. Such prayer is a natural accompaniment of the false ecclesiastical teaching that man is hopelessly sinful and needs the intervention of a savior to rescue him. This is the teaching that has tended to take away man's most precious prerogative, his self-reliance, and to convert him into an abject suppliant. With the belief in a personal God comes the belief in prayers; when the faith in our own divinity departs, we begin to supplicate outside powers. The truest kind of prayer is action; for how can the Higher Nature be invoked better than by allowing it to act? But the man who, instead of acting, petitions an external power to act for him, practically disowns his own divinity. Gautama

the Buddha says: "Seek naught from the helpless Gods — pray not! but rather act."

But there is another kind of prayer. To continue the quotations:

INQUIRER. Is there any other kind of prayer?

THEOSOPHIST. Most decidedly; we call it **WILL-PRAYER**, and it is rather an internal command than a petition.

INQ. To whom, then, do you *pray* when you do so?

THEO. To "our Father in heaven" — in its esoteric meaning.

INQ. Is that different from the one given to it in theology.

THEO. Entirely so. An Occultist or a Theosophist addresses his prayer to *his Father which is in secret* (read, and try to understand, Matthew vi, 6), not to an extra-cosmic and therefore finite God; and that "Father" is in man himself.

INQ. Then you make of man a God?

THEO. Please say "God" and not "*a* God." In our sense the inner man is the only God of whom we can have any cognizance. . . . We call our "Father in heaven" that deific essence of which we are cognizant within us, in our heart and spiritual consciousness, and which has nothing to do with the anthropomorphic conception we may form of it in our physical brain or its

fancy: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of (the absolute) God dwelleth in you?" Yet let no man anthropomorphize that essence in us. Let no Theosophist if he would hold to divine, not human truth, say that this "God in secret" listens to, or is distinct from, either finite man or the infinite essence—for all are one. Nor, as just remarked, that a prayer is a petition. It is a mystery, rather; an occult process by which finite and conditioned thoughts and desires, unable to be assimilated by the absolute Spirit which is unconditioned, are transmuted into spiritual wills and the will; such process being called "spiritual transmutation." The intensity of our ardent aspirations changes prayer into the "philosopher's stone," or that which transmutes lead into pure gold. The only homogeneous essence, our "will-prayer," becomes the active or creative force, producing effects according to our desire.

There is logic in the practice of invoking some of the minor cosmic forces, either in external or internal nature, to come to our aid, as some tribes do by means of their incantations and ceremonies. But let us be frank about it and admit that such powers are nei-

ther high nor specially worthy, but merely inferior powers which we subject to our selfish will in order to bring about desired results. And they are dangerous. Such gods were never regarded by their worshippers as anything else but inferior beings in the scale; sometimes these gods are even punished by their suppliants for not granting their prayers. Multitudes of such gods are recognized, varying in the degree of their importance and power. But all this has nothing to do with the One Spirit — also recognized by the very peoples who worship these minor gods. Yet we, in our confusion of understanding, presume to address the Universal Spirit in the terms which a savage addresses to his tribal god or family fetish.

It is the motive that makes the difference between true and false prayer. Where the motive is selfish, or even tinged with selfishness, the desire-forces of the lower nature are called into play; and to that extent the man strengthens his personality, and, if successful, has merely done a little "black magic." But

where there is nothing but a pure aspiration for Light and a submission of the personal desires to the Law, then spiritual forces are invoked and the nature is elevated and refined. In the Bible, Jesus says: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." But he is speaking as the *Christos*, the Higher Self (*Ātmâ-Buddhi-Manas*); and surely the phrase "in my name" ought to be a sufficient guard against any tinge of selfishness in the prayer. What does it mean, to "ask in my name"? It does not mean simply to use the words, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," at the end of a prayer. It means that we are to ask in a spirit of unselfishness and purity of heart, desiring nothing, but submitting to the Universal Law. Then, and then only, will the prayer be answered, for selfish desires cannot reach the *Christos*.

Delusion though the idea of a personal God is, some people in giving it up may have to pass through a painful experience; for even delusions may be comfortable, and it is not always easy to break away from an old habit even

when we know it was wrong. There may be a sense of desolation and abandonment on losing faith in the old anchor, as if one were left alone and helpless in the universe. But this is only a temporary stage. The only evidence we ever had of the existence of a Supreme Spirit was from our own intuition, and we still have that intuition. The one great unanswerable fact remains that we are alive here in the world; so far as we can tell, without our own consent. This means that a power beyond our ordinary intelligence is the cause of our existence and is watching over the life. We are in the hands of a Law, else how did we come to be here? This Law, whatever it may be, is evidently of immeasurable power and intelligence; we have only to study nature in order to see that. Jesus' words about the "heavenly Father" caring for the lilies and the sparrows come to mind; did he not mean that man, as well as other creatures, and even more than other creatures, must be under the same beneficent intelligence? Clearly it is not our poor erring mind that rules our life; the whole

thing, from the working of the smallest bodily cell to the ordering of the greater events, is managed by powers beyond our ken. And we see that the universal life is self-sufficient, reliable and beneficent. In this life we share; on its tides we were born into the world from some mysterious source; may we not trust its wisdom and its purposes?

What we must do is *Strive to KNOW*. If our ordinary intelligence is so finite and helpless, it need not always be so. Man may choose to consider himself as merely a higher animal sprung from some Javan ape or degenerate Bushman; but it is only his own choice that so limits him. Let him turn away his eyes from the biological ladder up which the bodily organs have climbed in development, and think of his spiritual heredity. Where was he before birth? Where is he during sleep? Who is he? Who are these others? The answer to such questions is to be sought within, not without. The portals of the senses, through which ordinary science issues in quest of knowledge, are only the gateway to a small field of

knowledge — that of the external world, the outer crust of nature. Close the outer senses and open the eye of the mind upon the world within, and we shall find the portals to a greater knowledge. Let us study our mind and try to find out whence spring the thoughts and feelings; search after the permanent factor; ask ourselves who we really are and what is our relation with other beings. In that way we can approach the eternal source of life. Science is sacred; however we came into existence, or by whom or what created, there is no ban upon inquiry.

The fact that we do actually possess the power of inquiry is surely sufficient warrant for exercising it. If we do not know who or what we are, let us search.

Self-analysis shows that our ordinary consciousness is made up of a large number of desires, cravings, fears, prejudices, instincts, habits, fixed ideas, and so forth; and if analysis stopped here we might reach the conclusion that we were helpless driftwood. But deeper reflection shows that there must be a central

master-life somewhere behind the scenery; the very fact of self-analysis proves it.

This mysterious central power is located by theology outside of us, so that we are made mere creatures of it and cannot know it except possibly as we know a stranger. But in Theosophy we are taught that this Power can be known by the process of self-identification with it. It is our Self. The Power that rules our life is not another personality, however great; it is ourself. In striving to know it we should strive to be it; *we must seek it within.*

In this way we shall reach a far loftier conception of Deity than that given by theology. We may tend in thought towards the ocean of infinite Being, in which is "peace beyond all understanding," and perfect wisdom, and boundless beneficence. This shall be our God; the eternal Spiritual Light that shines from our Souls, as the cosmic light shines from the face of the sun, illuminating the whole world with gracious light and warmth, dispelling all mists and darkness.

So there is no need for despair and doubt, which are but the shadows thrown up by the imagination. They are mostly the product of ill health and morbid conditions. To a healthy animal nature, the abundant life is in itself sufficient; to the *spiritually* healthy there should be such an abundant flow of spiritual life that that would be sufficient. Knowledge and certainty flow from within. Remember it.

No 7 of this Series of Manuals is on "Teachers and their Disciples," and in *The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine* there is a chapter on "World-Teachers." Without wishing to rival the Church doctrine of praying to saints — for to pray to anyone is altogether opposed to the teaching of Theosophy and of self-reliance — we may bear in mind that there are and always have been human beings who have progressed beyond the majority of the race to the point of spiritual enlightenment, and who therefore live only as benefactors. The world is very old, and during the countless ages Souls have won their way from darkness to light, and now exist as perfected men,

forming a great guardian wall to humanity by their ceaseless beneficence. Whether they are in the body or out of it does not matter, as they have transcended limitations. It is but rarely, and in response to special circumstances, that they reveal or partially disclose their identity to the world. For the most part they remain unknown, as the conditions of their work demand, for they can work far more effectually in the silence. The weakness of man is not able to treat such Teachers properly and their public appearances stir up much superstition and hostility. It is well, however, to know that there *are* beings who thus fulfil the eternal laws of righteousness and stand as champions of justice, right, and mercy. It helps us to have confidence in those laws, and to feel that in abiding thereby, we do not rely on a phantasy. The enduring laws of life are those that make for purity and mercy. The spiritual life is expansive and generous, giving warmth to all, like the sun. Selfishness and covetousness contract the nature and stifle life. Let us study nature and

learn what is her eternal law of growth and seek its likeness within ourselves.

Prayer, then, is a constant yearning to know the TRUTH and to be worthy of it; a striving of the mind towards its Divine Parent, the Spiritual Sun. Disgusted with the continual striving of the personality to get something for itself, to exalt itself to a state of spiritual pride, we should seek the impersonal center where there is rest from the dissatisfaction caused by personal consciousness, and where there is no vanity nor desire. And outwardly, prayer expresses itself in actions, by which we strive to manifest that which is best in us.



VI

TRUE INDEPENDENCE

THEOSOPHY can rightly be called the gospel of freedom, since its aim is to give man more independence. The circumstances of life continually combine to throw man back on his own self-reliance, which proves to be the only unfailling resource. If there were a personal God, one could imagine him as being disgusted at the attitude which people assume towards him, and that he might ignore their supplications in the hope of inducing them to rely on themselves. This is in fact the very way in which the universal Law does treat us; it continually brings us up against the things we seek to avoid, until at last we are obliged to face them. The whole purpose of life is to strengthen character; it is the Soul's school. But the weakness of our lower nature makes us hang back; we

continually court the smooth paths and try to pamper ourselves. A wiser power gives us what will serve to bring out our strength.

In the ideals of Chivalry we shall find a more manly ideal of human nature than that usually put forward by religion. We can dissociate the spirit that animated Chivalry from the ideas of warfare and so on with which it was associated in accordance with the times wherein it flourished; and aim at a new manifestation of the same spirit in a form adapted to present needs. This spirit made Man himself the central point and regarded character as the thing to be aimed at. It set up ideals of courage, faith, dauntlessness, and honor, recognizing the essential strength and dignity of Man. In the same way one has heard, in connexion with the Red Men, of ideals of courage, endurance, and calmness; of a code of honor in which it was a disgrace to fear or complain. Often have people been driven, after the failure of all other supports, to fall back on their interior strength and to cry, "Be there a God or no God, I will never play

the craven before fate; as long as I have breath, I will fight!"

It is this kind of spirit that Theosophy seeks to restore. It is this kind of spirit that false teachings have done so much to undermine. By substituting for it the attitude of abjection and expectation of favors from without, it has weakened the self-reliance of Man. We need a new Declaration of Independence to proclaim the freedom of the will from the slavery of dogmas, religious, scientific, and otherwise.

Speaking of irreverence, there can be nothing more irreverent than to disown our own divinity; this is truly insulting the Divine Spirit breathing in Man. Let us stand up boldly and rely upon the essential worth of our own inner nature, bidding the doubts and fears and subtle suggestions of incompetency depart from us. There is a little secret that Man has yet to learn, and that is that the hobgoblins of life flee before a dauntless will. Most of these so-called evils are creations of our own imagination, the brood of fear, hate, and doubt; before a right attitude they dis-

appear into nothingness. False teaching has gathered around us a whole army of such fears and doubts that will need some banishing; but the healthy teachings of Theosophy can do it.

Instead of regarding sin as a primordial taint, not to be removed but by special favor, and even then not until after life is over, let us regard it as a weakness which our cowardice has allowed to grow. The passions are great deluders, ever throwing false pictures on the screen of the mind. These passions are insubordinate elements of our own nature, which have profited by our craven attitude toward them, but must depart at the word of command. To be pulled hither and thither by currents of desire, having their origin one knows not where, and passing to and fro from mind to mind gathering strength as they go — this is not a very noble idea of freedom. Why not stand out and apart from these currents and let them go by? Why not hold still the rambling mind, shut our eyes to the stream of pictures that enchain our attention, and *dwell in the stillness within?* Then the truth would

be reflected in the calm waters and we should have an initiation.

The poor conceptions of God and the craven ideas of prayer are inevitable accompaniments of wrong notions about life, especially the *ignorance* of Reincarnation on the one side, and the dogma of vicarious atonement on the other. What rational idea can ever be founded on the belief that we have only a single earth-life, preceded by nothing and followed by eternity in heaven or hell? It is altogether out of key with science and common-sense, to say nothing of man's intuitions. To fit such a theory, one could only expect equally inadequate theories about Deity and prayer. And how the Christos can ever save Man except by descending upon earth and living in the hearts of all men, cannot be imagined. If there was only one Christ, and he lived at an arbitrary point of time and space, and was the only perfect and sinless man there ever was or will be, then the human race is reduced to the level of a tribe of savages worshipping a fetish. Oh let us rise up and declare inde-

pendence from this tyranny in which we have been held, submissive slaves, by those who have perverted eternal truths into means of subjection, withholding the heritage and actually loaning us our own money on conditions of usurious thralldom! To take away from Man the grace, the spiritual dignity, the faith, that is his by Divine birthright, and to dole it out to him again in return for a consideration! There are no words for the crime and no words for the folly that permits it.

Let us take back our religion into our own hearts and manage our heritage ourselves. Let each one seek for God *within*, and decline to accept introductions to any other deity. Let us sweep away the soul-destroying doctrines of the postmortem heaven and hell, and determine to fulfil Man's mission to make of earth a heaven. Let us throw off the debasing pursuit of our own salvation — the very acme of selfishness — and leave the Law to deal with those precious possessions we call our "souls," which are really nothing but our personalities. Religion has too long been grounded on the

motives of fear and cupidity. The fear which a sinner has about the fate of his "soul" is the same fear as a rich man has about his other soul — his bank book. He insures for it, and how often is prayer merely the daily or weekly premium!

The dogma of the personal God has made for selfishness and personal differences. It introduces into the most sacred relations of life that greatest of all limitations — personalism. And accepted modes of prayer have encouraged the process, concentrating the intensest thoughts of each man upon narrow interests. Theosophy is trying to purge out the noxious selfishness and personalism from religion and to restore the old noble ideals of Deity and Prayer, that Man may be truly free and independent.

There is no Religion Higher than Truth

**The
Universal Brotherhood
and
Theosophical Society**

Established for the benefit of the people of the earth & all creatures

OBJECTS

This BROTHERHOOD is part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religions, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man.

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THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York, 1875, continued after her death under the leadership of the co-founder, William Q. Judge, and now under the leadership of their successor, Katherine Tingley, has its Headquarters at the International Theosophical Center, Point Loma, California.

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