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THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

I

ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY

BY

A STUDENT

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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 accommodate 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 good will 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 teachers' 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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I

ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY

EVERY one knows that the great religions of the world *differ* from each other ; and also that in respect to the path of life in which they tell men to walk, they *resemble* each other. They present also many other resemblances and identities.

It has not yet occurred to our scholars that there may be one great religion of which all these are parts.

Nations have always differed in their characteristics, the difference being sometimes due to the region in which they dwelt, sometimes to other causes. One people would be imaginative, another philosophical, another simple ; one pastoral, another nomadic ; one peaceful, another active and warlike. One dwells amid smiling plains, another by the rock-ribbed sea.

If we were to tell some story of science,

say about atoms and molecules, to the classes of a school, we should not use the same language to the little children as to the elders. To every class we should tell the story differently. If we were wise we should illustrate it from the games and stories that the children already knew. To the very little ones we might make the atoms talk and play, and so we might teach chemistry in the guise of a fairy tale. To the boys that were older we might picture the atoms as marbles and balls; to artistic children we might dwell most on the colors and sounds resulting from the movements and groupings of atoms and molecules. And to the higher classes we should begin to introduce some of the abstruse mathematics which are concerned in these questions. We might put the case so differently to the highest and lowest classes that anyone who heard us talking to both might not guess that we were talking about the same things. Yet we should be. And if the children, on going home, tried to tell their parents in their own words what they had heard, the

unlikeness would become still greater, for they would be adding and leaving out.

The word Theosophy is a blend of two Greek words. Together they mean divine wisdom, and also wisdom concerning divine things. There is a similar Sanskrit compound, *Brahmavidyâ*, properly meaning the same things.

Theosophy itself is that complete story of the world and man, of which a part has been told to every people, a part suited to their needs and development and peculiarities, and told in language appropriate to their understanding.

But however simply it had to be told, there were always some among every people whose comprehension ran beyond that of their fellows, and who had prepared themselves to follow the path of life more stedfastly. To such, more was told. And so we find everywhere this fact of two doctrines, one for the multitude and one for the few — that latter, for certain reasons mentioned elsewhere, always told under pledge of secrecy. Jesus Christ, for

example, said that to the multitude he spoke in simple parables — like the fairy-stories of our illustration; but that to the elect he spoke fully the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven — like the abstruse mathematics of our illustration.

Sometime in the near future, scholars will be compelled by the force of their own facts to recognize the common container and source of the world's great religions. Their researches would immediately be easier and more fruitful if they would but take its existence as a hypothesis only. Prosecuting their studies in its light they would soon be rewarded by seeing emerge from the confusion the majestic outlines of the religion-philosophy now known as Theosophy. But those who wish to understand it need not wait till then, nor need they proceed by that method.

II

WHO IS THE MAN?

THE first question answered by Theosophy, a question upon which all else depends, is: *Who am I?* If the answer: *You are yourself*, seems silly, that is only at first glance.

Nearly every one thinks of himself as identical with the body. Is this the case? If it is, any talk about the soul, or immortality, is necessarily absurd.

We use the body; command it; work with it and train it, all as we will. With it we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell, employing each sense just as we choose. It is obviously an *instrument* at our disposal, a wonderfully complicated tool.

Can it then be the man? Can a player be identical with his instrument, a carpenter with his hammer? Yet we habitually blind

ourselves to the difference by saying *I* am ill, or growing old, forgetting that so far as we know, it is the body only, not the man, which is subject to these changes.

If then the man, the soul, is not identical with the body, it will be natural to ask what becomes of him when, as we say, he is unconscious, or asleep, or dead; when in old age his memory is gone, his mind childish once more, his limbs stiff or paralysed. Surely we must admit that in these cases the man himself must have changed.

From this point of view it does look as if the man and his body were one and the same, since he seems to change with its changes. Let us go a step or two further and then come back.

All the waking hours we are conscious of a stream of thoughts. We cannot stop the stream, but we can generally direct it where we will. We can cause our thought to occupy itself with whatever we choose. We can stop thinking of any one thing and think of any other. It is not always easy, for the mind

seems to be a living thing with wishes of its own; but it is always possible.

So for two reasons it seems clear that the mind is not the man. First because, like a restive horse it often opposes the wishes of its owner; and secondly, because the man can, if he uses will enough, turn it where he will as a carpenter turns a chisel. Yet again we must ask what becomes of the man when his mind becomes delirious in fever or childish in old age.

And then there are the feelings, emotions. These too go on all day. We are by turns happy or miserable, hopeful or despairing, irritated or calm, compassionate or resentful. But these too we can control, especially if we have practised doing so. We can refuse to be miserable or ruffled; we can compel ourselves to be hopeful, compassionate, considerate. Feelings also have a life and persistency of their own and may object to being controlled. But as, with practice, we can do it, it seems that they also cannot be the man.

Having thus noted that mind and emotion

are, or ought to be, both under control of the man, the soul, through his will, we note next that there is a limit to this control. Both need a healthy body for their perfect health, and if the body is fevered or very old, mind and feeling are likely to be dim and feeble, or even quite distorted, despite every effort of the will. We have no warrant for saying that the *man* necessarily varies with variations in his body; but we must say that to a very great extent the mind and emotions do. So far as they do not, it is because they are sustained and guided by the will.

This leads to the next point. However ill or old the body may be, however unresponsive to the man's will, and however dimmed may be the mind and feelings, the will itself and the man who uses it may be quite unchanged. We sometimes see that up to the very moment of death, the man may be using his will in its full strength. The results may be small; the stiffening lips may refuse to utter more than a few words, perhaps of love and encouragement to those about; but it

is evident that whatever else is dying, the man and the will are not. Even at the very moment of death the eye may still be speaking its message. The man, the soul, and its will, are passing on in full consciousness. And the last gleam *we* get of that consciousness is often one of unchanged, unlessened love for those remaining behind.

So we have arrived at some answer to our question: *What, or who, am I?* Let us call "I" the soul, and read our answer thus: The soul, the I, the self, is that conscious power which dwells during life in the body, amidst the bodily feelings, amidst the emotions, capable of dominating them; using the mind and capable of dominating it; having for its instrument of control the will. So far as we can see, neither the soul, nor its will, nor its degree of love for those it leaves behind, are necessarily affected by illness or by death.

III

BODY AND SOUL

IF we now turn to Paul's description of man as a compound of body, soul, and spirit, we can more easily understand what he meant.

By *soul* he seems to have meant the same as we do—the *man* himself with his will and power of choice; by *body*, not only the casement of flesh, but all the impulses arising from it which tend to pull the man downward; and by *spirit*, the divine part.

The body—made up of millions of little living cells congregated into various organs, which should all work harmoniously together—is an animal, the highest of all the animals. It is the highest because of the development of its brain; and because of that it is a fit tenement for the soul, the man himself. Thus the soul contacts, in the body, the

highest sort of matter-life. In order that it may do that, that it may have that experience, is, according to Theosophy, one of the reasons why it enters the body and shares the body's life from birth to death.

In order to understand its entry, let us imagine a countryman suddenly set down for the first time in the midst of a thronging city. People are hurrying in every direction; there are a thousand sounds at once, voices, the feet of horses, the roar of vehicles.

Accustomed to the quiet of the country, the man would be dazed by so much activity; he would hardly know himself. His usual current of thoughts would be broken up. It would seem to him as if he would never find his way through the maze of streets. Altogether it would be a sort of new birth for him, the confused beginning of a new life.

In the eyes of a new-born infant we can sometimes see signs of a similar bewilderment. The soul is just then beginning to enter the little body. The body is alive with the intense life of all its millions of active cells and or-

gans. Besides all the growth and activity that is going on in the body itself, the senses are opening and stirring and bringing in all the new sights and sounds of the outer world. Is it not natural that in all this rush of new experiences, the soul should forget itself and the world it has just left?

To return to the illustration. After a while, beginning to understand his new surroundings, the man would begin to take pleasure in them and be absorbed in them. Laying aside all his old country habits and thoughts, he would enter thoroughly into the new life of the city. He would become accommodated to its ways and dive into the rushing stream of its business and activities. His nature might seem to change altogether and in a few years he might have lost all trace and almost all memory of having lived the quiet life of the country.

And so again with the soul. During the first few years of its new life, after the first confusion has worn away, it becomes thoroughly absorbed in the life of the body. Its

pleasures are those of the body; its aims are mostly to get more of these pleasures; its thoughts and feelings are all occupied with the world of which its body is a part. It thinks of the body as itself and of itself as the body. The higher life it had before birth is quite forgotten. And as it grows older into manhood or womanhood and the strain of our modern competitive life begins to be felt, its absorption into the world becomes completer. All its ambitions may be directed to getting things for the body's comfort and luxury. Its forgetfulness of the other life may be so complete as to lead to disbelief in it altogether, to materialism. At best, the memory of the other life is so vague that there are no details, no clear picture. It is so vague that we do not know that it is memory and call it faith. And for a reason which the man therefore cannot give to himself, but which is really this faith-memory, he accepts the accounts of the higher life which some one of the various religious creeds gives him. But curiously enough, though all the creeds

speak of the soul *entering* a higher life after death, some of them say nothing of the soul *leaving* the same higher life at birth.

We can see now why the body is sometimes spoken of as the enemy of the soul. It tends to drown the soul's memories, the soul's knowledge of itself. It often paralyses the will, substituting for the will some passion of its own — for example, to get money or position. Such people are really slaves, not masters; though they only know their slavery when they try to free themselves, when they try to use their will to conquer the master passion. We must remember that though the body is an animal, it is an animal which has become humanized through the presence of a human soul in its midst. The soul lights up in it a higher intelligence than it could ever have gotten as a simple animal. And so it has thoughts and aims which are not possible to any of the simpler creatures below man. If the soul yields to it constantly, never asserting its will, letting itself be carried upon every wind of passion, the man may reach a

point at which he gives not a single sign of being a soul at all. Some of these people are mere sensualists, the utter slaves of some degrading passion. But they may be highly intelligent, cruel, selfish and ambitious, without the slightest care for the welfare of any other person. The animal has won the battle of that life, and after death the soul's key to its own proper world is too rusty for use.

It is by resisting passions, by resisting selfishness, and cultivating compassion and brotherliness, by constant aspirations, and by trying to live the life of the higher nature, that the soul comes while in the body to a knowledge of itself and its immortality.

IV

BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

WHY, then, if entry into the body means so much loss to the soul, even if only temporary, does it come there at all?

The answer given by Theosophy is — that it may gain higher life, and that it may give higher life. It is divine, but it has to recognize that while in the flesh; and there is always a fuller divinity possible to the very highest man.

Theosophy sees life everywhere; nowhere anything dead. It may at once be asked — is not a human body dead when the soul has left it for another world?

If we had eyes that could see, we should find that the body was as much alive as ever, but with a different kind of life. The little busy souls of the millions of cells, which, while the man was present, served him —

left the body with him, or very soon after. Their place is taken by throngs of lower lives, germs, in their way just as busy. Part of each cell goes to form their minute living bodies; the rest separates into molecules of water, various gases, and salts. But the molecules too are alive. They behave like a drill corps when the sergeant dismisses it. The men no longer make a corps, and each goes his own way. One will perhaps join a party going swimming; another may go to a music class. When the bath and the class are over, the men again separate and group together in new combinations. At the end of the day they may seem just the same as at the beginning. But as a matter of fact they are not. Each has profited a little by the drill, the music, and the swim.

So with the living particles of nature's vast life, the particles that we call molecules of water, air, salt, iron, and so on. They pass from one combination to another, sometimes forming part of a plant, sometimes of an animal, sometimes of a human body, the ocean,

or a stone. Age after age they are awakening to fuller consciousness, learning, even though if we watched them for ages we might not notice any change.

What are they learning? *The power to combine into higher groups.* Science knows that from the birth of our planet until now, life has been rising. The orders and species have been progressing to higher forms. This was because the molecules were learning how to combine. At last they could combine and recombine so as to make the body of man; and then man, the soul, came and dwelt among them. It was at last a fit tabernacle.

So, however completely at death the molecules scatter, they can now always be brought together again to make a human form. What nature has been teaching them is the power to combine into higher and more perfectly harmonious forms, forms of which all the parts work together to a higher end.

And that very same thing she is teaching man. Man, according to Theosophy, reincarnates again and again on earth, living life

after life, not one only. We are grouped again and again in all kinds of ways. Among savages there are small groups, the family and the tribe. Tribes make nations; nations disappear, and others come up on to the stage of history. A nation is like a body; the various groups, made of men who follow various occupations, who are joined for various ends, or who live together in towns and cities, are the organs of the body. Each man is a separate cell. Men leave one nation at death and perhaps enter another, making part of all sorts of families and groups as they go along.

What we are slowly learning is the power to hold together, the power to work for each other and for the whole of which we are a part, whether a guild, a family, a city, or a nation; the power of divine comradeship of men and groups and nations to make one vast harmonious organization, the body of humanity. Then a further avenue of progress leading to heights we cannot conceive of, will be open before us.

Behind us are the animals, moving manward, getting the human touch age after age, to be the humanity that shall follow us when we have learned our lesson and gone on—perhaps to another planet, the “child” of this one, says Theosophy. Behind them, the plants, some of them—like the sensitive plant for instance—already showing the tendency upward to the animal.

So we can see that we are in the body for several purposes.

First, that in it and through it we may touch nature, and learn the wise use of her forces.

Second, that we may teach, and help nature in *her* teaching. Among the cells, the little lives, of our bodies, we are like a master in his class. In controlling our impulses, in resisting deeds that make for moral and physical disease, in living in every way the highest and purest life we can, we are training the lower lives that clothe us on the one hand; and training ourselves on the other. In training his boys, the master trains himself. And

whilst they learn from him, he learns much from them.

Thirdly, we are here that we may learn brotherhood, the higher comradeship, that quality which, spreading all over the earth, will one day open a new door to us, leading to a height of happiness and power that has always been the ideal before the eyes of humanity's helpers and Teachers.

REINCARNATION

V

IN a preceding chapter we have considered incarnation. It now remains to say a little of *re-incarnation*.

Is one life enough to learn all that there is to do and to learn on earth? Are we perfect characters? Have we made life on earth all it might be, learned to live in harmony with each other, developed all the faculties possible to us, learned all about the life of the matter of which the planet is composed? If not, does it not seem likely that the causes which brought us here once may bring us again, and again, until we have done these things? Law and inclination will work together and supplement each other. For those who die hating, there is the Law that they shall return in order to learn to love. Those who die loving, will wish to return to those

they love. Would one who loves all humanity and pities it in its pains and struggles onward, willingly leave it for ever while he knew there was help he could render?

What right have we earned to some other heaven while we have not made this life the heaven it might be? Nearly all of us have done injuries and given pain at some time. If we consider that, should we not wish to come again to pour at least as much good into the stream of human life as we poured evil; to meet those that we once pained, and by loving deed take away the pain—even if time should have covered it over and hidden the wound? Sudden unexplained impulses to do kind actions to people we have never met (in this life) before, may sometimes be unconscious desire to pay some debt of old unkindness.

We are not without other suggestions of previous life. Some people we seem to recognize at once, liking or disliking, as we say by instinct. May it not be the mere *re-suming of* an old like or dislike? In that

sense it is a real memory of a past life, though all details are forgotten. We have many more of such memories, memories that in such cases are forces, not details. We are born with marked characters, tastes, aptitudes. powers, in this or that direction. Where did we get them? Where did the infant Mozart learn music? Is it heredity? But how when these things have no counterpart in the parents? They are surely a species of memory. Clearer memory we have not because we have not the old brain. The brain, the *first* fact-storer, is new. The soul, the real and *final* fact-storer, has its memory overlaid by the throng of impressions and sensations that life and the living body bring. At death we have often heard — and Theosophy teaches — that every detail of the closing or closed life comes up from the brain before the gaze of the departing soul. It registers in its own memory all that are of value to it and they become eternal. But at its birth it does not fill the new brain with them. The tablets of the brain are wanted for other things. It merely

brings into the brain and body the general effect, some general memories, as we have noted.

When we have grown stronger in life, when birth does *not* bring bewilderment, when we shall have learned not to be the prey of the body but its strong and quiet master, then we shall have also learned to bring back to our own attention, at need, whatever clear memories of the past will be useful. But so far, the presence of such detailed memories would be confusing and painful, diverting our attention from more important work. Whatever we acquired in the last life, of unselfishness, of will, of power of concentration, of power of thought and observation, of power of self-control—that we bring undiminished for use in this life; and it is enough. Anything more, if in part useful, would have its usefulness outweighed by its painfulness and confusion. We should be tempted to dwell with bygone memories instead of with present duties.

It will be natural to say: Have I then to

be an infant and an old man again and again, with childish faculties and pleasure in the one case, and fading faculties and second childishness in the other?

Are we entitled to promotion to another lesson till we have learned well the one in hand? We have not yet learned to be an infant properly, or an old man or woman properly. These are lessons of life still unlearned. The soul of each of us has yet to learn, at and after birth, to stand apart from the infant body in which it will incarnate; and, while watching and protecting and guiding and developing that, to keep up its own work and self-conscious being. For the soul has work of its own. As the infant body and mind pass to childhood and manhood, the soul will consciously blend itself more and more; until at last, still holding itself as a soul, it will have wholly incarnated. But at present it cannot do that in the case of ordinary humanity. As it detaches itself from its own world, from its "Father in Secret," it loses itself in the body. With most of us it remains almost

lost till death again frees it, without ever having recognized itself as a soul.

But when we have learned infancy, we shall find one of our joys in overshadowing and training the young life with which in due course we shall blend our soul-life to make the perfect man; and in helping the vivid little lives that make up the infant body, to move a step onward in their progress. Those that enter and compose the body later are less plastic.

And so with old age. We have not learned it. There should be no loss of faculty; the mind should become deeper and wiser with the gathering years. Certainly faculties whose use applies mainly to the earlier years and the life-work of middle manhood, will be voluntarily left in disuse to make way for others, just as when a man becomes the head of a business he spends no more time in, say book-keeping or type-writing. He attends to higher matters.

Life should of course be spiritual all through, but old age should be specially so. Genius and wisdom should go on ripening to

the very end. (Genius belongs of course to the spiritual nature, and the word spiritual is here throughout used in a sense much wider than the ordinary. It applies to all of man's highest faculties.) A clearer vision of truth is possible to old age than to the years when physical activities run high.

At last comes a moment when the body as a whole is worn out; the lives that compose it have to return to nature to be re-energized. Without disease, without failure of any special organ in advance of any of the rest, the body should be laid aside. Death in that ideal form will be without pain, perfectly peaceful, rapid, and not attended by any break in the consciousness of the soul.

And in due course the soul will begin once more to give its attention to birth. No more than death, will birth mean any break in the thread of consciousness. Gradually the soul will pour all its acquired wisdom and thought-stores into the new brain and proceed with its growth and work absolutely unhindered.

But this ideal program, which we have to

realize and which will mean such rapid growth, is not achieved yet. We have much to learn. Nevertheless now, if we give our bodies right exercise daily, and if we keep a spiritual ideal of conduct and thought always in view, we need fear neither old age nor death. The one will not mean second childhood nor the other any wrench of pain.

VI

KARMA

A MAN'S DEEDS COME BACK TO HIM ; THAT WHICH A MAN SOWS, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP ; CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS AND IT SHALL COME BACK AFTER MANY DAYS, — are three sayings which contain a law belonging as sister to the law of Reincarnation. To Theosophists it is known as *Karma*. The punishment aspect of it the Greeks called *Nemesis*; but that is only half of it.

It belongs to the law of Reincarnation because there is not time in any one life for all the deeds a man does therein to come back to him. They come back to him because they are his.

Whenever we do anything at all, purposefully, we do three things, though we ordinarily think of one only. Consider, for example, theft. (a) The thing visibly done is the

taking of some one else's property. (b) Invisibly, a change of character for the worse is made; this shows itself in the fact that whatever is done once is easier to do the second time. (c) The third thing, also invisible, is that the world's atmosphere, in which we all share, in which our minds live as our bodies live in the common air, is poisoned. An evil wave has been sent into it. This wave, in however slight degree, does act on and affect the minds of all other men. The world is hard enough, cold enough, selfish enough as it is; this wave worsens it. The minds of men become by it, in however slight degree, more suspicious, more grasping, harder. They feel, though without noticing it, an increase in what we might call the thief element. Of course the wave sent out by one single act of theft is very slight. But when we multiply it by millions every year, we can understand why the world is as it is. Each of the millions has broken the harmony that should have been, the harmony between men in act and thought, which must some time come about.

A whole life may be spent in undetected and unpunished theft. *But it was all registered*; the successive acts were written deeper and deeper on the man's character; and they sent successive waves into the world's atmosphere. To that atmosphere, which he helped to make, with that character, which he entirely made, the man comes back. The echo of his own past deeds returns to him, finding an exactly answering echo in his nature. All the world tendencies, the effects of all the deeds ever done by man, come flooding in upon him, as they do on all of us. Some find *no* echo in his character — he may, for example, have no tendency to murder. He will be tempted only by those that *do* have their echo in his character.

All is now ready for the opportunity. When that comes, what will happen? What is likely to happen? He falls under the load of impulse he built into himself.

The "luck" not to be found out (if it can be called luck) which he enjoyed before, some time or other now fails — perhaps on the very

first occasion. Then there is a calamity, disgrace. By that he may learn to reform, or many such may be necessary, extending perhaps over more than one life. They go on happening until at last he is strong enough to receive out of the world's atmosphere his own current, find its echo in his own nature, *and yet refuse to yield*. When there is no longer that echo, the battle is finally won there. The man has fought and neutralized that much evil; he has cleared the world's atmosphere of that much of the stain which he made in his thefts.

This is one aspect of the law of Karma, the coming back of evil deeds. The law can not "forgive" anything, for that would be to leave our characters still weak. True forgiveness is done by man himself when he turns so strongly to his higher nature that he becomes at one with it. After that he can face the echoes of his own deeds without fear; they find no answer in his own nature.

There are many other aspects, for the law is really an explanation of life. Good deeds

come back as certainly as bad ones. He who does a good deed sweetens the world's atmosphere and his own character. The current comes back as an urge to repeat them, finds an echo in his character, and goes back to others with the benediction of some new good deed. The world is bettered, its burdens eased a little. The man has the inner joy and peace of harmony with his divine nature; just as, by the other kind of action, he has unrest within and without. Ill deeds bring inner unrest and outer pain; good deeds, inner peace and outer harmony. With both hands this law helps us on to our greater destiny, to the real life to come.

But Karma goes even deeper; it replies to defects of character which are *not* seen to injure others. We shall understand if we remember that its aim is to develop, to restore us to our proper and highest nature. It meets our weaknesses with tonics, and tonics are sometimes bitter. Wiser eyes than those of ordinary men are needed to follow its work in individual cases; but the general principles

are easy enough for a child to grasp. Some men meet seemingly unmerited disgrace. Where is the justice of it? Others close their lives in the prolonged pain of some slow malady. Where here is justice? In man's own former thoughts and deeds. It is nature's response to character.

We must try to take nature's long view if we would understand her work in its beneficence. In such cases as we have supposed, there must be a failure somewhere needing correction, some flaw in character needing strengthening. Some characters only bring forth their finest flower after great pain. The pain is transient, the flower eternal; and it was the flower that nature wanted to secure. Perhaps there was a latent love of others' good opinion, which, uncured, remained a weakness and might have led on to all kinds of evil, hypocrisy, ambition, vanity. The weed is now uprooted. But in the last life it may have been very luxuriant—leading, it may be, to some marked sin or crime. Karma carried that over to the next page of her ledger, the

next life. But the possibilities in details are endless.

Physical pain, again, often calls forth the most magnificent endurance, strengthening the will in some cases as nothing else can. In such a case it could be crudely described as punishment for the lack of endurance and patience; or, more correctly, as a difficult bit of nature's beneficent training. A good deal of the work of Karma is to call our attention to failings of which we were before unconscious, and to give us the opportunity to correct them.

So the Theosophist sees in the workings of Karma a law which is *wholly* beneficent, which "punishes" and "rewards" for one sole purpose—the evocation of the Soul. It works behind and through every event of our lives. Nor are its ways inscrutable. If we watched all that happened to us from day to day and from year to year, noted what duties came up to be done, what pains and pleasures came into our path, what accidents befell us—if we watched instead of complaining, we should find that at every turn we were being offered

opportunity for growth of will, of mind, of character. If outer life is monotonous, there is the opportunity to light up the outer life with the radiance of the inner life, with the companionship of the divine. If outer life is painful, it is the opportunity to develop will and endurance. And if we stop the fierce wish to escape pain and procure pleasure, putting that much force into compassionate deed and thought, we should find our minds grow steadily clearer in comprehension of this law and its purpose. There are no accidents. *Whatever happens we have ourselves brought about in this or some other life.* We have done, or left undone, and the effects of both constitute our environment and the stream of events.

Our deeds of yesterday are the parents of the events of today, and events are the mask of opportunity. They press on us from without, as our divine will does from within — both in the same direction. Karma waits at our side and when we have acted or not acted, she adjusts the effect so as to teach

and train us. We have freewill; the future is absolutely in our hands. Karma, if we so choose, will show us her face as friend; it is always inner peace for those who walk with her. She is always the friend of those who make themselves the friends of humanity, who develop every faculty and talent and strength of their nature that they may serve humanity the better.

VII

THE SEVEN IN MAN AND NATURE

WHEN, as children, we begin our study of science, we are told that matter exists in three states — solid, liquid and gaseous. That does very well as a first step. In the same way the student of Theosophy will begin by Paul's division of human nature into body, soul and spirit.

But in both cases, as soon as we come close to the subject, we find that the *three* will not do, will not carry us far beyond the threshold of our study. Human nature, and nature without, are alike *seven-fold*. The number seven runs across the pattern in every direction. Science knows of many sevens, but she has not yet learned to regard seven as a sort of abstract map by means of which she could walk much faster in every field of investigation. For ages, Theosophy has known it to

be one of the keys to which the universe is tuned. Let us study it first in the nature which is outside us.

The finest particles of ordinary matter are called molecules. Sometimes these fly free from each other ; that we call the *gaseous* state of matter.

But short of that entire freedom there is the *liquid* state, where the molecules move readily around each other, but remain in closer contact.

And thirdly there is the *solid* state. But of this there are two divisions, the *crystalline* and the *colloid* or gelatinous. And again, of the colloid there are two conditions, *living* and *not living*. The flesh of man and animals and the growing tissues of plants are composed of living colloid.

In all these states matter is molecular, exists as molecules. But under certain conditions the molecules break up into the still smaller particles called atoms. We then have atomic matter, said to constitute one of the sets of " rays " emitted by radium.

And again, the atoms themselves may break up into the still finer particles called corpuscles or electrons. These constitute still another set of "rays."

So from *this* point of view the seven states of matter are:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| | (1) Corpuscular* |
| | (2) Atomic |
| | (3) Gaseous |
| | (4) Liquid |
| Molecular | (5) Living Colloid |
| | (6) Inanimate Colloid |
| | (7) Crystalline |

But the seven runs across nature in another way. A famous Russian chemist found that if all the elements known to chemistry were arranged one after another in the order of their (atomic) weights, beginning with the lightest, the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-second, and so on, had similar properties to the first;

* Strictly speaking, the word "corpuscular" were better applied to what modern science now calls "atomic," and *vice versâ*. But the terms are now crystallized into a set usage and are adopted for convenience as above.

the ninth, sixteenth, and so on, to the second. Thus it became clear that there was a natural arrangement of all the chemical elements into seven great families.

The seven notes of the musical scale, and the seven colors of the prismatic scale, are of course familiar to every one.

In respect to motion, the American mathematician Southwell, dealing with the nebular theory, has also worked out a natural seven which he thus states:

If two masses are moving in the same plane and at the same mean distance from the sun and are situated at an angular distance greater than 60° and less than 180° from each other, as viewed from the sun, their mutual perturbations will cause them to approach each other until the distance becomes equal to 60° .

But if they are nearer than 60° to each other, their mutual perturbations will cause them to recede from each other until their distance apart becomes equal to 60° ; and they will always remain in a condition of stable equilibrium at that distance apart, and will revolve around the sun forever free from mutual disturbance.

Sixty degrees is of course a sixth of a circle, which with the controlling center occupied by the sun, gives the seven.

Theosophy goes further than any of this. To the higher students it is shown that that one form of matter which, as we have seen, exists in seven states, is itself the seventh of a greater series. And that that white light (white to our vision) which breaks up into our seven colors, is itself a member of a set of seven lights, none really "white," but standing to ultimate light as one of our spectrum colors stands to the light we call white.

But here we are of course far beyond the realm of present human senses. Yet in the course of special training, and much more slowly, yet inevitably, for us all in the normal course of our evolution, all these scales will become evident to us.

Theosophy also concurs with the proverb which gives man seven senses, two of which in most people are almost inactive, dealing with finer forms and essences. Some idea of the sixth of these may be gained from a study

of the life of the woman known as the Seeress of Prevorst. In her however it was abnormally and prematurely unveiled by a peculiar form of ill-health.

Man as a part of greater nature must of course exhibit the seven in many ways. A subsequent Manual will deal at length with the most radical and essential of these sevens. It will suffice here merely to note it briefly.

Most obvious of the seven is of course his body, technically called the *sthûla-sârîra*. But within it is another, made of altogether subtler matter, the astral model body or *linga-sârîra*. And it is because of the presence of this other, which is as it were a sort of architect's plan, that the millions of separate cells are able to arrange themselves in harmony, to form coherent organs, and to assume separate forms for the discharge of separate kinds of work. It is this which translates latent life, omnipresent in space, into life or *prâna*, adapted for the use of the cells. Shortly after death its remains are occasionally visible as the "spook" of so many ghost stories.

Here then we have three of the human principles — the visible body, the subtler “architect’s plan” body, and the vital force. The last, Theosophy, disagreeing on this point with current physiology, teaches to be a form of energy peculiar to itself.

Let us note now, for the fourth principle, that by “body” Paul meant the *animal desires* of the body, or *kâma rūpa*. These, in too many cases, dominate the man. But if he would be really man, would really show himself to be a soul, he must reverse that. It is through *thought* that he begins to establish himself as a man. Mind or *Manas*, is the fifth of the human principles. Animals show the first traces of it, but they cannot even begin that inquiry which seeks an answer to the question, *What am I?* They are living units, and inwardly indestructible; but they are not yet *self-conscious* souls.

The sixth principle or *buddhi*, is the crown of mind, that department of man’s conscious nature from which come the inspirations of genius. Towards it ascend in their highest

moments the musician, the poet, the artist. It is the soul in its own essentially spiritual nature. What it knows and feels when it is there, what it sees of divine truth, it must as far as possible bring down to the mind for expression on earth. Much is necessarily lost on the way. We all know that there are things which we feel but to which we can give no expression.

Lastly, the highest of the seven is Spirit or *Âtmâ*, that which sustains all the rest and is their life; that which may be felt and known in the heart, but whose being is inexpressible in any kind of language. All the religious wars and quarrels that have ever rent mankind have come from attempts to dogmatize in words and terms about this indescribable presence and sustainer. "Theosophy," says H. P. Blavatsky, "as a whole, is based absolutely on the ubiquitous presence of God, the Absolute Deity; and if IT itself is not speculated upon, as being too sacred and yet incomprehensible as a Unit to the finite intellect, yet the entire philosophy is based upon Its Divine

Powers as being the source of all that lives and breathes and has its existence." Man, however, is not limited to his "finite intellect," the fifth of his seven. He can know with another faculty which to intellect is unknowable, that which by language is inexpressible.

The path to this knowledge lies through aspiration renewed from day to day, meditation, duty, compassion towards all that lives, self-mastery, and study.

VIII

THE MEANING OF DEATH

WHAT then is death according to Theosophy? It is not at all the horror that the world has made it. It is the passing of the soul into its own nature, for rest. In life it has permitted itself to become, as it were, of the nature of the body. If it has had joys, it has had pains that far outweigh, pains of body and pains of mind. It needs rest from all these and from struggle. Though it came from the Divine and is divine, in the case of the great majority of men it has never yet recognized that. It goes to the temporary rest and "sleep" of death with all its purer earth memories clustering around it. And of these it fashions its unclouded and beautiful dream. The Divine Law shows itself at its tenderest, to the dead.

But the "sleep" does not come at once.

After the eyes have closed for the last time, after pulse and breath have stopped, life lingers long. And in those first hours, while the brain is yielding up its stores, and the soul is watching every detail of the now closed life pass again before it, there should be silence and peace in the death chamber. Loving thought — yes, that helps. But passionately expressed and selfish grief is felt by the soul as a disturbance, hindering its work. For as memory is unpicked to its last fiber, the soul is learning, noting in the clear light where it failed, where it sinned, where it achieved victory in the hard life-battle with the thronging lower impulses. Not till this is done, till the wheat has been garnered, is that life really over. But at last there is the change. A sleep begins whose dreams are unclouded by anything evil, anything painful. The soul is no longer conjoined with the source of evil; it rests in the pure divine light.

That is why death is in nature's program — that the soul may rest and progress. And whilst it rests it is out of touch, mercifully,

with life on earth. It can neither be reached by word or thought. Nor can it break its rest to communicate with those on earth.

Nevertheless there *is* one line of communication both ways. The pure current of love from those on earth does reach it, touches and enters the dream and makes it more living. And in return its love for those it left behind touches them, strengthens them in the battle of life, helps them in their highest efforts for right, purifies them. Except for this current, *which is deeper than thought, deeper than word*, there is no communication possible. How otherwise could the soul rest?

But the rest is over at last; the divine light has given new energy for another life. The dream fades; the soul is drawn again to earth to take up its work. It comes once more among those with whom in other lives it has been associated. We pass from birth to birth, resuming old ties, making new ones, suffering, rejoicing, and through all growing. This great human family is ever getting closer and closer. As a man will find some old acquaintance un-

expectedly in passing through some foreign city, so, it may be, there is already hardly a spot on earth where any one of us could incarnate and not find some he had known in other lives. There are many hates still to wear out between man and man; every one of us has much to overcome in his own nature. But we move. We can see that life will not always be as now. Sometime there will be comradeship universal and all men will have awakened to their divinity. They will feel in their hearts the constant presence of that Light to which they have given so many names, to which they have ascribed such diverse qualities, which sometimes they have figured as but a man, a personality drawn large; sometimes as a blind force, sometimes, alas! as an avenging fiend. It will be the more really a presence to them, the more really an ever active inspiration, the more they understand that *in its fulness* it is beyond human imagining and description. They will be content to worship at the point where thought ceases, from that worship gaining perception

of the reason and goal of human life. From it came man's soul; to it returns that soul, yet never more to lose in it the individuality that is the thread of each man's series of existences. Once a living soul, always a living soul. Once we were omniscient because we were parts of its omniscience. It called us forth, to win each for himself omniscience. Yet the very word omniscience, for us, is forever relative. When we have learned one nature, which is its robe, and tasted to the full the beauty of that knowledge, another and higher and richer will be ready before our eyes.

Unhappiness and pain were no part of the program. We made them; unbrotherhood of each to each made them. It is only we that can end them. When man has learned to turn to his fellowman with friendliness and compassion, with the will to give instead of to take, unhappiness is ended. And when he has learned himself, unwisdom and darkness are ended.

IX

THE SOURCE OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHING

IT follows from all the foregoing that there must be, somewhere on earth, men who have fully awakened as souls; who, when they incarnate, are not dazed by the new animal life; who, when they die, carry on the unbroken thread of consciousness; who, life after life, have therefore been able to add wisdom to wisdom.

This is true, and there have been such men since the very beginnings of life on this planet. In this Lodge of men, always slowly growing in numbers, Theosophy has been handed on from age to age, from century to century. Its members, reincarnating in particular times and places according to human need, have founded all the great world-religions — aspects of Theosophy specially adapted to those times

and places. This is not the only work they have done, and do, to further the world's progress; : but it is the one with which we are now particularly concerned.

Nor is the whole of their work done by themselves in person. Many of those who have in every age, including our own, worked strenuously for humanity's enlightenment and welfare, have been their Messengers and pupils. The names of some of these — rarely declaring themselves as such — have been on every tongue and are prominently written on the pages of history. The work of others, quite as necessary and effective, has been beyond the recognition of the historian.

Upon one of these Messengers, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, devolved the task of introducing Theosophy anew and under that name to the Western world. Christianity, the Theosophy of Jesus, was fast disappearing. That great teacher, one of the Lodge, had sounded the keynote of Theosophy two thousand years before. At first the world paid little attention. When at last it did so the greater part of the

teacher's words were lost. Of *all* his teaching but a very fragment remains. And this fragment, sufficient in its purity as a guide to the perfect life, was soon overlaid by the dust of fierce controversies which have never ceased, adulterated here and there by the fancy of successive copyists, and obscured by multitudes of cruel or meaningless dogmas. A new presentation, in new language and adapted to the thought of today, was urgently needed by men. The Christian ranks contained, as always, many pure and lofty souls full of the spirit of unselfish sacrifice. But dogma was and is driving away thousands, and the tide of materialism was rapidly rising.

She began her work in 1875, and before her death in 1891 her heroic and untiring labors had placed the Theosophical Movement beyond the possibility of failure. Enemies of every kind, men who saw in her teachings a menace to selfishness, to ambition, to dogma, gathered thick about her. She had to face open and hidden attack, slanders, libels and calumnies of every variety. The world will

learn a great lesson when the history of these, now being written, is published; when all the threads are traced to their source.

At her death, the successor she designated, William Q. Judge, took up the work, becoming then the target for the same hostility. For twenty years previously, largely under her directions, he had sustained the Movement in America. This great labor, and the exclusive Leadership of the Movement throughout the world which devolved upon him at her death, finally wrecked his health, and in 1896, working to the last, he died.

The successor whom he in his turn had appointed, Katherine Tingley, then assumed the Leadership which she still holds. She has been recognized by every member of the Theosophical Society throughout the world as a real teacher and wise leader. So profound in fact was this recognition that at a series of congresses of the Society held in America and various other countries in 1898 it was resolved with practical unanimity to place the entire guidance of the work absolutely under her

direction, and to accept as her successor whomsoever she might appoint. The Theosophical Society at the same time was merged into the larger body of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, the full and complete title being THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Theosophy by that name, secure from admixture with any lower currents, is thus henceforth assured to the world. And as the world moves on to peace and brotherhood, more and more of the ancient wisdom can be given to it. In the meantime, within the Organization, there will always be some few prepared for those higher teachings which it would as yet be useless and even dangerous to sow broadcast.

THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

II

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAN

The Aryan Theosophical Press
Point Loma, California
1910

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BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

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*F. S. 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

PREFACE



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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INTRODUCTION

LITTLE needs to be added, by way of introduction, to what has been said in the preface to the Manuals. The reader is asked to bear in mind that the teaching of the Seven Principles of Man is a most sacred tenet of the ancient Wisdom-Religion, and should be approached with the seriousness of mind with which one enters upon a serious question. For this is no attempt to offer interesting speculations for the edification of intellectual curiosity. It is a reverent effort to present an outline of teachings which have behind them the sanction of the accumulated wisdom of the ages. Again the reader is asked to dismiss from his mind any wrong impressions he may have gleaned from the writings of certain self-styled "Theosophists" who having deserted the cause of Theosophy, have sought to borrow the influence of its teachings and the name of its Founder in order to further their own

ambitious schemes. Such writings are mere travesties of the real teachings as given by H. P. Blavatsky.

Lastly, it must be borne in mind that a teaching like this can not be presented in the complete and systematic form of a scientific treatise. Any attempt to reduce it to such a form would result in depriving it of its vital essence and converting it into a dogma. Obviously true knowledge can come only in proportion as we progress on the path of self-development. Theosophical teachings cover such a vast domain that, for the most part, all that can be done is to indicate a number of starting-points from which the intuition and further study of the inquirer may set out; and far-reaching side issues are contacted at every turn, which it would be impossible to attempt to follow up within any reasonable limits of time and space.

I

THE SEPTENATE IN NATURE

IF it be asked, "Why seven?" the answer is that the number Seven is the most important one in the Wisdom-Religion. It is one of the key numbers by which are revealed and explained the mysteries that underlie all Nature. In the Wisdom-Religion it is taught that number and numbers underlie all the processes of creation. This numerical key is at once most important and most profound. There is nothing arbitrary about the use of the number seven as applied to the study of man's nature. The septenate is universal throughout Nature; and it would be possible to illustrate this fact by a large number of instances. But for the present we must be content to assume the fact, and to refer the inquirer elsewhere for further information. It should also never be forgotten that no school of modern thought

4 *SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAN*

has anything more definite and reasonable to offer as a substitute.

In some Eastern books one may meet with other divisions than the septenary one — five-fold or fourfold, for instance. But these are either abbreviations, or else corruptions of the original teaching. Sometimes, too, one meets with threefold or twofold divisions, but these are merely convenient abbreviations for special purposes.

WHAT DO MODERN VIEWS TELL US ABOUT THE NATURE OF MAN?

As shown in the Preface, modern authority and modern speculation are in a state of hopeless confusion and nescience on the subjects of which Theosophy chiefly treats, and have therefore no title to assume an attitude of criticism. Let us ask what is the state of the modern teachings as to the nature of man.

The analysis of Man's nature, in our modern conceptions is represented roughly by a

threefold division — Body, Mind, and Soul or Spirit; but our notions about these are extremely hazy. Science has made an elaborate study of the structure and functions of the body, but is much handicapped in its understanding thereof by a lack of knowledge of the principles which come next in order to the body. As to the mind, this word denotes roughly the personal thinking ego and its thoughts, emotions, and volitions. There are various systems of psychology which deal with this, but here again the want of knowledge concerning the other principles has caused great confusion. The "Soul" or "Spirit" is an even more vague conception. It stands for what in religion is regarded as the immortal part of man. Very little is known of its nature, and it is for the most part supposed to function after the death of the body. Dogmatic religion discouraged the intellectual study of such questions; and science, having been introduced in a spirit of reaction against dogmatic religion, has scrupulously avoided pushing its investigations any further than the ma-

terial world. Consequently we have been left without any adequate conceptions of the nature of man; and the most important parts of man's nature are investigated neither by religion nor by science.

But in the past before the wave of materialism swept over the world, bringing with it the destruction of the ancient mystic teachings and their replacement by religious dogmatism, there was a Sacred Science which embraced all that we now call science and religion and much more besides. Our present religions, philosophies and sciences are but detached fragments of that great knowledge, or new growths arising from its remains. This ancient system, which is referred to in Theosophical works as the Wisdom-Religion, the Secret Doctrine, and the Esoteric Philosophy, was once known all over the world. H. P. Blavatsky tells us, referring to the pages of history for her proofs, that at the close of the classical period most virulent and determined efforts were made to stamp out all traces of this ancient wisdom and to place in its stead

dogmatic religion. But in spite of these efforts there have remained enough proofs, in the numerous monumental and documentary records of antiquity, to prove the truth of what is claimed about the Wisdom-Religion. In addition to these archaeological proofs, there have always been in the world Initiates who have made it their care to preserve the sacred knowledge; and although, in the dark cycle spoken of, these Adepts withdrew from their public teaching, yet they have always preserved the knowledge in secret, ready to be brought out again when humanity shall have passed through the dark valley of materialism and be upon the ascending arc towards spirituality. H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, the Leaders of the Theosophical Society, have given out so much of these ancient teachings as it was possible and expedient to give out.

One of the ancient teachings thus outlined is that of the SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAN.

EVOLUTION

IN order to make our explanations clearer, it will be necessary to touch briefly upon the question of evolution as dealt with by Theosophy. A fuller account may be found elsewhere in Theosophical literature.

Evolution means the growth and gradual perfecting of forms through the agency of the universal Life-Spirit which is striving to manifest itself through them. Everything in the universe, from the smallest mineral atom up to man, is thus evolving; for everything is, in one degree or another, a manifestation of the Eternal Spirit. The modern evolutionists have glimpsed a small part of this truth, but their theories are imperfect and misleading. In the first place they have merely studied the *effects* of evolution, tracing throughout the kingdoms of nature a sequence and progression of organisms; but they have neglected to tell us anything about the *Cause* of evolution — that is, about the Intelligence and Will that are working in these forms to bring

about their growth. Those who deny that there is any such indwelling Spirit are guilty of a logical absurdity which it is impossible to account for by any other hypothesis than that their thinking faculties have been impaired. There are others who see the absurdity of saying that an inert substance can raise itself to perfection without there being, inside or outside of it, some life or mind or spirit to work upon it; and who say that "God" is the agency who performs this function. They are much nearer the truth; but there is no need thus to leap at one bound from visible matter to the supreme deity. "God," in their explanation, stands for a vast host of powers and beings and worlds unknown to science, which nevertheless have to be studied. Further, as is shown elsewhere, the word "God" introduces all sorts of theological dogmas with which Theosophy has nothing to do.

Again, modern evolutionists have confined their studies to the visible planes of nature; but, as will be shown, not only the bodies,

but the minds and souls of creatures are subject to evolution.

In every physical atom there is a spark of the Eternal Life imprisoned, and this causes physical matter to become gradually perfected through long ages until it becomes sufficiently plastic and efficient to fit it for the reception of higher forms of life. In the vegetable kingdom also there is the vegetable "Monad" striving to perfect vegetable forms; and so in the mineral kingdom.

Man himself is the product of several different lines of evolution. The matter in his physical body has been perfected through incalculable ages of evolution in lower forms. His physical body itself is the culminating point (so far) of a long line of evolution in the animal kingdom. But it is great error to suppose that an animal can evolve into a man, or Thinker, as some evolutionists say.

There comes a point in the evolution of the animal kingdom when progress can go no further *in that cycle* without the entry of

something else. The animal soul is unable to develop the self-consciousness and power of choice that are characteristic of Man. This "something else" is the *Mânasaputras* or "Sons of Mind," of which the following may here be briefly stated.

Mânasaputras means the sons of mind or mind-born sons; it is a name given to our higher Egos before they incarnated in mankind. They incarnated in the Third Root Race. All our Egos are thinking and rational entities who had lived in the precedent life-cycle (*Manvantara*), and whose destiny it was to incarnate in the Man of this life-cycle. As H. P. Blavatsky says:

Try to imagine a "Spirit," a celestial Being . . . divine in its essential nature, yet not pure enough to be *one with the ALL*, and consequently having to purify its nature so that it may finally reach that goal. . . . In its very essence it is *THOUGHT*, and is therefore called in its plurality *Mânasaputras*, or "Sons of the (Universal) mind." This *individualized* "Thought" is what we Theosophists call the *real* human Ego, the thinking Entity imprisoned in a case of flesh and bones. This is surely a Spiritual Entity, not *Matter*,

and such Entities are the incarnating Egos, informing the bundle of animal matter called mankind, and whose names are *mânasa*, or "Minds." *

This is a most important point. It disposes of the doctrine of the descent of Man from anthropoid apes. Anthropoid apes were no more able to evolve *unaided* in the past than they are now. They are degenerate descendants of one of the early human races who sinned against nature, as explained elsewhere in Theosophical writings. It puts a gulf between the simple animal and man. It shows that, in addition to the evolution of forms upwards, there was a descent of something from above; and that we have a divine heredity as well as a terrestrial one. It throws light on scriptural passages about the inbreathing of the divine spirit.

* *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 180

II

THE SEPTENARY DIVISION

THE septenary division may be given as follows:

THE LOWER QUATERNARY

1. Physical body, or *Sthûla Sarîra*.
2. Astral Body, or *Linga Sarîra*.
3. Vitality, or *Prâna*.
4. Animal Soul, or *Kâma Rûpa*.

THE HIGHER TRIAD

5. Human Soul, or *Manas*.
6. Spiritual Soul, or *Buddhi*.
7. Spirit, or *Âtmâ*.

The names italicized above are the Sanskrit terms. In the impoverished state of our language, so far as a vocabulary to express this class of ideas is concerned, Theosophists may surely claim the privilege accorded to other

systems, of adopting a special terminology; but as little tax as possible will be laid on the reader in this respect.

To simplify now the comprehension of this scheme, it will be best to consider man first as a trinity.

It is impossible to consider Man as being any less than threefold. There is a conscious chooser, oscillating between good and evil. This familiar fact is expressed in Theosophy by saying that the soul is threefold; the three divisions are called:

Spiritual Soul;

Human Soul;

Animal Soul.

This analysis sums up the views of all the greatest philosophers and teachers; it is a cardinal tenet of the Wisdom-Religion, as is shown by H. P. Blavatsky — who quotes the teachings of Plato, of the Neo-Platonists, and of the Egyptians, on this point. The Soul was, according to them, triple, and esoterically sevenfold. One part was divine and immortal, another mortal, animal and passional;

and between the two stood another which hovered between good and evil, and possessed the power of choice. These are denominated respectively the Spiritual Soul, the Animal Soul and the Human Soul. The Human Soul is the personality of Man, and represents the pivotal point in his nature. It is destined to ally itself finally with its divine counterpart, the Spiritual Soul, and thus to overcome the animal soul and turn it into an obedient servant. But first it has to pass through a long process of error and delusion, lasting through many incarnations, during which it is enslaved by the passions and gradually learns and masters them. This process is what is symbolized the world over by the allegories and myths that tell of the hero passing through numerous adventures in quest of the truth, or seeking his true bride and being deceived by enchantresses, or rescuing princesses and killing dragons, or having tasks set him; and so on. This threefold nature of the human character is matter of familiar experience to every one; does it not constitute the great drama

of life, full of the awful and the sublime? Whence our aspirations that impel us to noble unselfish actions and yearning for the beautiful, the true, and the right? Whence again our impulses to selfishness, anger, and indifference? These two incentives must spring from some source within us, and there must also be a chooser who chooses between the two. Any philosophy which tries to explain things with any less than these three can lead only to confusion. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians (*I Cor.*, xv. 40 *et seq.*) explains the distinction between the divine and the mortal natures of man, but his terms have, partly by translation and partly by use, acquired other meanings. In *James* iii. 15, the same thing is described.

Neither theology nor science reverences the immortal part of man. For theology confines its activity solely to the after-life and does not represent it as having any particular part to play during earth-life; and as to its nature and attributes, we are left entirely in the dark. Among scientists, there are those who are con-

tent merely to admit their complete ignorance on the subject, and those who deny their own immortality.

The seven principles may be divided into two parts:

The Higher Triad;

The Lower Quaternary.

It may be mentioned, in passing, that the number 4 prevails in the material world, and the number 3 in the spiritual; a subject which is included in the study of the symbology of the ancient Wisdom-Religion. The Higher Triad is Âtmâ, Buddhi and Manas, and it alone is immortal; the lower quaternary, consisting of the remaining principles, constitutes the mortal part of our nature.

III

THE LOWER QUATERNARY

FOUR is the number which rules in the lower or terrestrial world, as **THREE** is the number of spirit. The four elements are a well known conception of ancient and mediæval science and philosophy. These elements were designated by the names Fire, Air, Water and Earth.

These words were not used in their present sense however. They answer to some extent to our notions of solidity, liquidity, gas-eity and heat or luminosity; but they have a more extended range of meaning than that. The quadrangular shape, the four cardinal points of the compass, the four seasons, the cross, are some of the quaternaries. It would be too much of a digression to enter more fully into this branch here. Suffice it to say that the phenomena of nature cannot be ration-

ally explained unless we postulate these four principles.

In man these are: physical body, astral double, life-principle and animal soul. The life-principle builds up the physical atoms according to the pattern of the astral body, guided and impelled by the instinctual mind of the animal soul. Science has studied the visible form and visible functions of mineral, plant, animal and man; but has suffered from a lack of knowledge of the other principles. These will now be treated of separately.

THE PHYSICAL BODY

SINCE the Theosophical teachings were first given out, modern science has made considerable progress in the direction of regarding the physical body as Theosophy does. That is, the idea of its being an inert mechanism, set in motion by some vital force, or by mechanical and chemical forces, has given place to the idea that the body is composed of an immense number of individual "lives," each

of which has an independent existence in addition to its corporate existence as part of the body, and which are similar to the micro-organisms found in water and other places. A minute study of the bodily structures reveals this fact; for these structures are seen to be composed of minute units which science calls "cells"; and each cell is endowed with a nucleus, protoplasm, and other parts and functions which make it an independent living organism. In disease some of the cells set up an activity which is hostile to the general harmony of the whole body, and diseased tissue results. An extreme case of this is death.

In Theosophy less importance is given to the body. To begin with, it is not regarded as the producer of life or thought, but as the result of them. Life is a universal principle, and the body is built up by its operation. It is impossible to explain much about the body without referring to the other principles; for to do so would be to deal with effects only, leaving the causes unexplained. For instance, the "cell" is not a permanent thing. Every

atom in the cell is constantly on the move, some leaving it and other new ones coming in; so that the composition of the cell is never the same, and in the space of a few years the matter of the entire body has completely changed. Hence the form of the body and its component structures can not inhere in the atoms themselves, but must be preserved elsewhere. (See under "ASTRAL BODY.")

It would be erroneous to say that the minute lives of which the body is composed make up, in their totality, the greater life of the body as a whole. For the body, if left to itself, begins to fall to pieces. In sleep, when the greater part of the controlling influence is withdrawn, there is much more rapid degeneration. The elements of the body are kept in order by the life-principle directed by the intelligence. The body of itself is like an irresponsible automaton. During sleep it assumes attitudes and makes movements that we do not permit when awake.

THE ASTRAL BODY OR LINGA ŚARÎRA

THE term "astral body" is somewhat vague in meaning, owing to two reasons. First, the poverty of the English language in terms adequate to convey such unfamiliar ideas obliged early writers on Theosophy to use the term in more than one sense. Secondly, those pseudo-theosophists, who have elsewhere been mentioned as having deserted the Theosophical cause in order to pursue their personal ambitions, have dragged this, as also other terms, in the mud by using it to express their own peculiar delusions. This latter reason has caused the term "astral body" to have rather a quack sound. But it is one of the objects of the present writing to restore some of these misused words to their original dignity.

While there is no word which can adequately express the nature of this second Principle, perhaps the one that expresses it best is "model-body." This word answers to the Sanskrit term *linga śarîra*. Other words are "double" and "design-body."

When we describe the nature and properties of the astral double, it will be seen that it fills a gap in modern speculation, and supplies a missing link for the lack of which science has been much at fault.

The model-body must here be considered chiefly in connexion with man; but it is of universal application, and every organism in the universe, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, has its own.

It is material, yet the matter of which it is composed is not the matter with which we are familiar in the physical world. It cannot be perceived by the gross physical senses, and has none of the attributes by which matter is defined as such in physics. But it can be perceived by finer senses, and is therefore matter according to an extended but similar definition. It is an older and more evolved kind of matter, having undergone a longer process of evolution and being therefore more highly endowed with properties. For even matter is composed of life-atoms which enshrine a spark of the universal spirit and mind.

We must remember that physical science has had to postulate the existence of a species of matter to which it has given the name of aether. Just as physical forms are made of physical matter so the astral forms are made of this astral matter. There is an astral world corresponding with the physical world and interrelated with it in a peculiar manner; but to discuss that would lead us too far from the present object. It is however extremely interesting to note that, since the founders of the Theosophical Society wrote, modern science has been compelled to admit the existence of finer grades of matter answering exactly to what was described. For instance, in view of the recent discoveries in electro-atomic physics, the statements of W. Q. Judge, made in 1893, are interesting, and the circumstance may serve as a hint to the wise to attach a greater importance to other statements made by the Theosophical Leaders. He says:

The astral body is made of matter of very fine texture as compared with the visible body, and has a great tensile strength, . . . And not only has it

this immense strength, but it, at the same time possesses an elasticity permitting its extension to a considerable distance. It is flexible, plastic, extensible and strong. *The matter of which it is composed is electrical and magnetic in its essence.*

The model-body forms the link between mind and body. Its most characteristic property is its extreme adaptability, elasticity and plasticity, which causes it to take any shape which is impressed upon it by thought. It is prior to physical matter, as mind is prior to *it*. Everything in the physical world exists beforehand in the astral world, in plan. This explains the phenomena of growth, reproduction and all the organic processes by which organisms are created with certain forms and adapted to certain purposes. The acorn contains the future oak-tree modeled entire in astral matter, and the life-atoms merely build up the physical tree on the already existing model. This it is that determines whether a seed shall yield an oak or a rose. For want of this knowledge, science has resorted to many strange hypotheses which will not stand

the test of logic. Without the astral model, we must attribute all its properties to the physical atoms themselves, thus seeking for causes among the effects. But a logical mind will see that an organism cannot grow according to a plan unless the plan previously exists somewhere.

In man the model-body exists closely blended with the physical body, which it sustains. It is this that keeps the physical body in shape. The vitality has an energetic power, and the astral body has a formative power. Both of these factors are essential. Without the model-body there would be nothing to keep the life-forces in place or to prevent them from producing monstrous and excessive growths. It may be compared to a piece of cloth having a design traced on it, which is *afterwards* worked in in colored silks, or to an invisible photographic impression afterwards brought out by chemicals. The body grows from the embryo upwards according to the design of the model.

The astral body explains the fact of birth-

marks due to sudden shock received by the mother. Such a shock affects powerfully the imagination of the mother, and the astral double of the future child is impressed with the picture in her imagination. In the case of amputations, the patient often feels sensations apparently emanating from the severed limb; for in this case the astral double has not been severed. In some animals the severed limb can grow again on the old model.

The astral body cannot, in the case of ordinary people, go more than a few feet from the physical body, which it does during sleep or reverie. But those who have passed through long and arduous processes of development, involving a purification of the whole nature, moral as well as physical, and far beyond the reach of the ordinary man, can project the astral body to a distance and use it as a means of acting consciously apart from the body. Needless to say this has nothing to do with the ridiculous claims of the so-called "occultists," who talk too glibly about the astral body and their pretended "powers."

It is in the double that the real organs of the outer sense organs are located. It has also nerves, arteries, etc., corresponding to those in the physical man. The physical eye, ear and nerve papillae contain only the outer mechanism of the senses, by which the impressions are conveyed to the double. In it are also stored up the subconscious perception and latent memory which afford such a problem to hypnotists.

On the death of the physical body, the astral double is released. The immortal man, the Higher Triad, passes to the state known as Devachan, and the astral double continues for a time to survive the physical man and to exist as a "shell." It is this shell that is attracted to the medium at spiritualistic séances. As it contains all the memories connected with personal existence which the man has stored up during life, it can repeat these like a parrot.

It remains near the deserted physical body nearly all the time until that is completely dissipated, for it has to go through its own process of dying. It

may become visible under certain conditions. It is the spook of the spiritualistic séance-rooms, and is there made to masquerade as the real spirit of this or that individual. Attracted by the thoughts of the medium and the sitters, it vaguely flutters where they are, and then is galvanized into a factitious life by a whole host of elemental forces and by the active astral body of the medium who is holding the séance or of any other medium in the audience. From it (as from a photograph) are then reflected into the medium's brain all the boasted evidences which spiritualists claim go to prove identity of deceased friend or relative. These evidences are accepted as proof that the spirit of the deceased is present, because neither mediums nor sitters are acquainted with the laws governing their own nature, nor with the constitution, power and function of astral matter and astral man.

This quotation is from W. Q. Judge, who then goes on to explain the phenomena of materialization. This may be caused by the astral body of the medium, which detaches itself during trance and assumes the form of the thought-images impressed upon it by the sitters. This explains how it is that sometimes, when the materialized form has been

handled by unbelievers, the physical body of the medium has been found similarly affected. Such an occurrence does not prove fraud, as any injury or mark inflicted on the medium's astral body would be reproduced afterwards on the physical body. Again the materialization may be the actual shell of the departed, made visible and tangible by an alteration of the conditions of the matter of which it is composed. Again the spook may be due to the fact that an unseen mass of electrical and magnetic matter is collected, and upon it is reflected out of the astral light a picture of any required dead or living person.

Thus the phenomenal practices of Spiritualism are most rash and ignorant dabbling in matters not understood. The spook is entirely devoid of conscience, since it is at best but the shadow of the animal man, minus his intelligent and moral part. It obtains a prolongation of its ghoulish life at the expense of medium and sitters, whom it gradually but surely contaminates by its contact. These séances are in fact a species of *Necromancy*

(divination by corpses). That such practices were well known to past sages is proved by the fact that Iamblichus and others of his school warn their disciples most strongly against these spooks.

Many phenomena will occur to the reader which can be readily explained by the astral body; but it will not be profitable to go into these here, the present object not being to interest people in such things, but to aid them in understanding their own nature. The importance of guarding our thoughts is emphasized when we consider that every thought produces an instant impress upon the plastic double, and that thoughts habitually repeated will in time mold the physical body. We also see that, through the agency of the double, the mind is enabled to act on the body purposively. But here the caution must be added, that as our ordinary intelligence is by no means competent to judge what is best for the body, any attempt to interfere with natural processes, along the lines of self-healing or self-culture (so-called) is sure to result harm-

fully. The selfishness of the motive would blind our eyes to our true interests and cause us to bungle the experiment, producing disease or some physical infirmity in the end. We should let our body alone, except so far as the ordinary rules of medicine and hygiene are concerned, and use our will for purifying our minds from selfishness and passion. Then the astral body and the physical body can be trusted to take care of themselves.

THE LIFE PRINCIPLE

LIFE has been spoken of as a "force." But what is meant by a force? We do not know anything of forces except through their manifestation. We can perceive living or moving matter, and we can say that force or life is present there. But, if we try to separate the force from all matter, or even to imagine it as so separated, we must fail. The truth is that our mind, by its very nature as a mind, can conceive of nothing so elementary as force without matter, or matter

without force. No philosophy has been able to resolve things into less than a trinity of fundamentals, called by various names into which we need not enter. What, therefore, Life may be in its ultimate essence, we cannot say, further than to predicate that it is a ray of the eternal and universal Existence. All the life which we know or can conceive must be embodied in some form or other, whether in physical matter or one of the higher grades of matter. Thus the question whether life is a force or matter really involves a distinction without a difference, since we can discover nowhere any matter that is not alive, nor any force that is not embodied. Similarly the question whether light is a body or not, is equally vague. We can reduce it to something which is neither force nor matter in one sense, and yet in another sense is both. If light is a vibration in a medium, then what is the vibration without the medium, or the medium without the vibration? The most we can say of light, electricity, the vital force, and so on, is that they appear to our

cognition as matter in motion. All the universe is pervaded with this mysterious Spirit-Matter, which is the manifestation of the One Unknowable.

In considering the Life-principle in man, therefore, we are considering only a particular manifestation of a universal principle.

The Life-principle is not produced by the body. It is prior to the body; it fashions the body. Life is everywhere, and we live in an ocean of it. Our body is but a special organ for dealing with it.

Science in examining the bacilli, bacteria, and other minute organisms in the body, which have been thought to be the causes of disease, is beginning to realize that some of these organisms are essential to the health of the body, and further that the whole body is actually made up of them. Some of these micro-organisms are constructive, building up tissues, and others are destructive, destroying tissues. This is merely a confirmation of Theosophical teachings, and Theosophy adds that these micro-organisms are in their turn

composed of still minuter lives. So it is also with the vegetable kingdom, and even with the mineral kingdom. Every smallest rudiment of matter must be made up of living atoms; for the "dead" atom is a figment of the "scientific imagination," and has been shown, by not a few logical critics of current scientific philosophy, to be a logical absurdity. But what distinguishes the animal from the vegetable, and the vegetable from the mineral, is the higher overshadowing life which governs and regulates the smaller life-atoms that compose the body. Without this overshadowing life, the body decays, for the separate life-atoms then begin to fall apart and build themselves into lower orders of existence, until finally they are absorbed into the air and the soil, or built up into other living organisms. Thus, in addition to the life of the matter composing his body, man has a Life-principle peculiar to his own particular order of being. It acts in conjunction with the *Linga-Sarîra* to keep the integrity of his human shape.

The real ultimate source of life is *Âtmâ*,

the Universal Spirit; and it streams down through our being, like sunlight, reflecting itself in various vehicles or bodies. Thus, in the higher mind it manifests itself as direct knowledge or intuition, and as enthusiasm for the noble and true; in the ordinary mind it manifests itself as reason or ratiocinative thought; lower still it is animal energy. Everywhere it gives force and activity. The Sanskrit term for this Universal Life is *Jīva*; in its lower manifestation as the Life-principle it is called *Prāṇa*.

THE ANIMAL SOUL, KÂMA RŪPA

KÂMA, desire, is in its fullest sense a universal principle; and, though both the Sanskrit word and its English equivalent are usually identified only with their lowest aspect, yet abstract Desire is really the great impelling force in the universe. But desire can be anything, from the most impersonal unselfish aspiration for harmony and the good of all, down to the basest animal lust. In its higher

sense, it would be better rendered "aspiration" or "devotion."

Desire, like life, manifests itself on all planes; and when it manifests itself in the lower nature of man, it takes the form of selfish passion. This is what is usually meant in speaking of Kâma or desire. The word *rûpa* means body; and the principle of Kâma, acting in conjunction with the *linga śarira*, forms a "desire-body" or animal soul — the fourth principle in our list.

Hence the desires of the incarnated man are located, for the most part, in his animal nature and tend to pull him down and promote the selfish and destructive instincts. These instincts he possesses in common with the other kingdoms of nature. They are clearly manifest in the beast, and even the plant and the stone have them in lesser degrees, where they appear as instinct, preference, attraction, affinity, or by whatever name we may choose to designate what is essentially one and the same force.

But in man there is the Mind, which comes

as the messenger of a higher life, linking him with the immortal and spiritual part of his nature. This at once intensifies and (eventually) purifies desire. In so far as the mind becomes the slave of passion, so does it become intensified; until what was, in the unreflecting animal, a harmless instinct, becomes a calculated selfishness. This is why the desires of man are so destructive; they contain the vivifying force of Mind, which renders them insatiable. It has often been asked, "Why has man the power to enjoy to his own detriment?" The answer is that, misusing the divine power of Mind, he exalts his passions into a God, thus worshiping his own enemy.

It is the destiny of man to have his passions purified by their association in his mind with the higher ideals and aspirations. The contrast produced between the baseness, narrowness and destructiveness of his lower nature, and the beauty and nobility of the higher, causes him to feel revulsion and to purge out the baser elements.

The forces of passion, if manfully resisted turn themselves into stepping stones by which we mount to greater heights; but, if indulged, they drag us still further down. There is no worse delusion than that we can do any good by indulging our passions, or that we can tire out desire by feeding it. Desire, like fire, grows ever fiercer the more it is fed; and though there may be periods of satiety produced by temporary exhaustion, these are but the preludes to a still fiercer outbreak. Desire is overcome by turning our minds from it and fixing our interests on work which is unselfish and impersonal. The holiest desire, if such it can be called, is the aspiration to lose the sense of separateness in the common life of humanity; and this is destined ultimately to survive all lesser desires, since it alone is immortal.

In the mass of people, who are still drifting along in the middle ways between the higher and the lower, unawakened, ignorant of their nature and destiny, the desires and the better aspirations are both fostered and

the life is a more or less unsatisfactory compromise. Perhaps they reach the gates of death without ever meeting a serious crisis or being called on to choose definitely between two paths. But, as birth succeeds birth, the desires grow stronger and stronger, as do also the aspirations towards good ; until there comes a time when it is no longer possible to make a compromise. Many people have reached this stage ; and they find themselves unable to rest content with the ordinary life of the world, but must either plunge into excess or make a final break with the selfish nature. The eternal Life in them has waxed so strong that it can only be fed by vivid experience. Before them lie the way of desire, leading straight down to destruction, and the way of renunciation of desire, leading to eternal life. After much affliction and self-questioning, they realize that the path of personal gratification leads nowhere ; that desires grow the more they are fed, and can never be satiated ; and that to follow them means a degrading bondage in a cage that goes round and round

like a squirrel's wheel. What is the permanent center in life, around which all these changing scenes revolve? It is not in the personal self. It is in the immortal Self. Desire has to be replaced by Love—using this word in the highest sense as meaning a dispassionate solicitude for the welfare of all. This is simply the gospel of Christ and of all other great Teachers and philosophers; there is a higher Life for those who overcome the delusions of selfishness. But the original teachings of Christ have been lost sight of, and we have little more than exhortations without the explanations. Theosophy recalls the ancient knowledge about man's nature which makes these exhortations clear and shows their rationale.

After death, the *linga śarīra* and the principle of desire leave the physical body in company and coalesce. This makes a shape which survives the body for a greater or lesser period, according to the strength of the desires; but finally it also disintegrates and dies. It is this which is attracted to *séance*-

rooms, where it is mistaken for the "spirit" of the departed. But it is entirely devoid of conscience, as the higher Triad has departed to Devachan. It receives vitality at the expense of the medium and sitters, and so its existence is prolonged. Such spooks are shunned by all reasonable people and very much dreaded by many races, who have rites and processes for driving them away. They are known as "devils," "evil-spirits," "bhûts," etc. To have dealings with them is sorcery — a very desperate expedient indeed on the part of those who desire peculiar powers, as such commerce must end disastrously for the sorcerer. Only Western nations have, in their ignorance, encouraged these spooks in good faith.

The immense importance of this subject in connexion with funerary customs cannot be exaggerated. We find that all ancient peoples and the degenerate descendants of ancient races, whom we call savages, have recognized and do recognize the necessity for some sort of what we might call "psychical sanitation"

at the time of death. Always there are rites for the "laying" of the spook. Ancient science knew that this Kâma Rûpa would be liberated at the death of the body, and that it should be let alone and allowed to die out. The process of dying is a very solemn and sacred one. There should be perfect stillness and harmony around the supposed corpse while the Soul is slowly liberating itself from the inmost recesses of the body; and the body needs protection against the attacks of any Kâma Rûpic entity that might seek to enter its open gates.

As W. Q. Judge says:

This Kâma Rûpa spook is also the enemy of our civilization . . . our civilization which permits us to execute men for crimes committed, and thus throw out into the ether the mass of passion and desire free from the weight of the body and liable at any moment to be attracted to any sensitive person. Being thus attracted the deplorable images of crimes committed, and also the picture of the execution and all the accompanying curses and wishes for revenge are implanted in living persons, who, not seeing the evil, are unable to throw it off. Thus

crimes and new ideas of crimes are wilfully propagated every day by those countries where capital punishment prevails.

As the nervous system of people grows more sensitive, under the influence of our civilization, the fact of such obsessions becomes more apparent. We frequently hear of crimes done under sudden impulse by persons whose usual character is the very opposite. There is a whole realm of sanitary science here left untouched. We have rules of hygiene and sanitation, but they do not touch this burning question of contamination by the desire-forces that are floating about in the atmosphere.

Anyone giving way to anger, lust, and other passions, habitually, is opening a doorway for the entrance of he knows not what, and is liable to a loss of control and balance.

IV

THE HIGHER TRIAD

ÂTMÂ-BUDDHI-MANAS

THESE three principles together constitute the real Man, the immortal Man. Âtmâ is, strictly speaking, not a principle of man.

It is no individual property of any man, but is the divine essence which has no body, no form, which is imponderable, invisible, and indivisible.... It only overshadows the mortal; that which enters into him and pervades the whole body being but its omnipresent rays or light, radiated through *Buddhi*, its vehicle and direct emanation.—*H. P. Blavatsky*

It is only in conjunction with *Buddhi* that it becomes the Higher Self of man; otherwise it is universal Spirit.

Âtmâ is neither your Spirit nor mine, but like sunlight shines on all. It is the universally diffused *Divine Principle*, and is inseparable from its one and

absolute *Meta-spirit*, as the sunbeam is inseparable from sunlight.—*H. P. Blavatsky*

The *spirit* of St. Paul may be taken for our purposes to be the Sanskrit *Âtmâ*. Spirit is universal, indivisible, and common to all. In other words, there are not many spirits, one for each man, but solely one spirit which shines upon all men alike, finding as many souls — roughly speaking — as there are beings in the world. In man the spirit has a more complete instrument or assemblage of tools with which to work. This spiritual identity is the basis of the philosophy.—*W. Q. Judge*

This universal spirit, or *Âtmâ*, is the source of all Life. What is its nature, as a unit or One, prior to the manifestation of the worlds, is a question that transcends our utmost powers of conception. But, when the worlds are manifested, the One Spirit becomes a duality — Spirit and Matter — and the interaction of these two causes life and creation and multiplication. In the higher nature of man, the first vehicle of *Âtmâ* is *Buddhi* or the Spiritual Soul, and these two together constitute the embodied spiritual Life of man. They are like the rays of the sun, *Buddhi*

corresponding to the rays, and Âtmâ to the invisible essence of light which these rays manifest or carry. Hence, when Buddhi is spoken of, we must understand that it means Buddhi and Âtmâ together.

Âtmâ-Buddhi is the spiritual "Monad" of Man—that which was linked to the animal nature by the incoming of the Mânasaputras or Sons of Mind, who endowed man with the Manas, thus enabling the Monad to manifest itself in him, and rendering him omniscient, omnipotent, and immortal. This same Monad is also present in all the forms of nature; but imprisoned and unable to manifest itself. In them it is merely a latent spark—the source of life, but with most of its potentialities still unrevealed. It is through the possession of Manas that the Monad can manifest itself fully in Man. This can only happen when he reaches perfection; but meanwhile the Monad endows man with faculties higher than those of the other kingdoms, and more and more grand in proportion as the nature becomes purer and more elevated.

MANAS

THE most important and interesting of all the seven principles is Manas, because it is the critical or turning point in our nature, and that which marks the superiority of Man over the lower orders. The word Manas is best translated as the "Thinker." It is the real Man.

There is but one *real* man, enduring through the cycle of life and immortal in essence if not in form, and this is *Manas*, the Mind-man or embodied Consciousness.—*H. P. Blavatsky*

Manas is a differentiation from Mahat, the universal Mind; Mahat, the universal principle, is the source of Manas, the human principle.

The most important fact about Manas is that its nature is dual. As H. P. Blavatsky says, speaking of the incarnating Egos:

Once imprisoned, or incarnate, their essence becomes dual; that is to say, the *rays* of the eternal divine Mind, considered as individual entities, as-

sume a twofold attribute, (a) their *essential* inherent characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind or higher Manas, and (b) the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalized owing to the superiority of the human brain, the *Kâma*-tending or lower Manas. One gravitates toward Buddhi, the other tends downward, to the seat of passions and animal desires.

We thus see that there are in man two selves (so to say): the lower self, an illusion produced by the union of Manas with Kâma, the passions; the Higher Self, the real Self, formed from the union of Manas with Buddhi the Spiritual Soul. Yet even the lower mind is superior to that of animals, because the human brain has been perfected by its contact with Manas. But above this mind there is a still higher mind—the Manas illuminated by Buddhi.

In studying Theosophy, one must dismiss from the mind any tinge of that modern way of thinking by which it is sought to derive mind from matter and make mental action a result of physiological processes. Apart from the fact that the mind is capable of functions

which could not be represented by any mechanical formula, such a theory reduces mind to a mere abstraction. But mind is an entity and it is prior to matter. It is capable of existing independently of matter (at least of anything we call "matter"). But it is equally incorrect to say that the mind is immaterial, which would be reducing it to a mere abstraction. All we can say about mind is that it is some very refined kind of conscious matter in motion, and the moving is what we know as "thought." We are aware of the presence of this entity about us, around the head, all over the body. The body is a result of it; the body obeys and can be changed by it. We can also feel that this mind may have various tinges or degrees of refinement, from gross and animal up to refined and spiritual, according as we direct it towards the low or the high.

Manas is the Knower, Thinker, Perceiver.

The course of evolution had developed the lower principles and produced at last the form of a man with a brain of better and deeper capacity than that

of any other animal. But this man in form was not man in mind, and needed the fifth principle, the thinking perceiving one, to differentiate him from the animal kingdom and to confer the power of becoming self-conscious.—*W. Q. Judge.*

Manas acts as the link between the divine and the animal nature. Through it the course of evolution is enabled to proceed. "It was given to the mindless monads by others who had gone through all this process ages upon ages before."

Following are some quotations from H. P. Blavatsky on this subject.

What is it that reincarnates in your belief?

The spiritual thinking Ego, the permanent principle in man, or that which is the seat of Manas. It is not *Ātmā*, or even *Ātmā-Buddhi*, regarded as the dual monad, which is the individual or divine man, but Manas; for *Ātman* is the universal ALL, and becomes the Higher Self of man only in conjunction with Buddhi, its vehicle, which links It to the individuality or divine man.*

MAHAT, or the "Universal Mind," is the source of

* *The Key to Theosophy*, p 120

Manas. The latter is Mahat, i. e., mind, in man. . . . It is, according to our philosophy, the *Mânasaputras*, or "Sons of the Universal Mind," who *created*, or rather produced, the *thinking man*, "*manu*," by incarnating in the *third* Race mankind in our Round. It is Manas, therefore, which is the real incarnating and permanent *Spiritual Ego*, the INDIVIDUALITY, and our various and numberless personalities only its external masks.

Manas . . . when inseparably united to the first two, is called the SPIRITUAL EGO. . . . This is the real Individuality, or the divine man. It is this Ego which—having originally incarnated in the *senseless* human form animated by, but unconscious of, the presence in itself of the dual monad, since it had no consciousness—made of that human-like form *a real man*. It is this Ego, this "Causal Body," which overshadows every personality into which Karma forces it to incarnate. It is this Ego which is held liable for all the sins committed through and in every new body or personality—the evanescent masks which hide the true Individual through the long series of rebirths.*

Thus Manas not only endows the lower mind, making it far superior to that of even

* *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 134

the highest animals, but connects it directly with the highest planes of Cosmic Intelligence and renders man's future possibilities infinitely greater than his present attainments.

Manas is the reincarnating Being, who carries the fruition of all the different lives lived. In Manas is stored the memory of all this experience, together with the results and values thereof. From this it follows that anyone who has the Manas fully developed remembers all this; and also that, as most of us do not remember it, we have not the Manas fully developed. Memory is a faculty which can exist in very varying degrees of cultivation, as we all know. Most people do not trouble to cultivate the memory, particularly in these days of universal reading and writing. We allow things to pass from the mind and make few efforts to recall them. But it should be borne in mind that the word "memory" includes two functions—that of storing up, and that of bringing back or *recollecting*; and an inability to recollect does not necessarily imply that the memory is not there. It may

be there, and we unable to bring it back; the muscles of the mind are too weak. It would be possible to train the memory so as to preserve an accessible record of all the ordinary events of life. It is possible to go still further and train the memory until it shows us the events of past lives. But it will be readily understood that this latter feat involves a vast amount of other kinds of training also. Those more distant memories were recorded by a mind that did not function through our present brain. Those memories are associated with the lives of *personalities* entirely different from our present personality. Those memories were imprinted in stretches of time from which we are separated by the gulf of one or more physical deaths. Nevertheless the memories are there. We are not concerned here with discussing the reasonableness or justice of this fact; that is dealt with in another manual — on “Reincarnation.”

Thus the real character of the immortal man is recorded in the Manas (its higher aspect).

The Manas perceives the impressions presented to it by the senses. If the connexion between the Manas and the brain is broken, there is no such perception, unless with a person who can separate his astral body from the physical. The senses alone cannot cognize objects, and the mind can be made to perceive objects without the aid of the senses, as happens when a hypnotist gives a suggestion to his subject; what the subject perceives is only a thought in the mind of the operator. This idea is, however, but an adumbration of the true powers of Manas, which include not only the creation of astral models, but also the power of clothing them in physical matter.

V

DIVINE MAGIC

ANCIENT Divine Magic is concerned with the knowledge of the right use of man's faculties for the purpose of attaining wisdom and emancipation from the delusions caused by his union with the flesh. The real gospel of the Christ, which became lost to the world and replaced by dogma in the early centuries, taught the most sacred mysteries regarding the true nature of man. There were and always have been teachings for the public, veiled in allegory, and teachings for those admitted to the Schools of the Mysteries. The "Christos" is the Buddhi-Manas. Manas is the "Son of God," who sacrifices himself and descends on earth in order to raise up the lower principles.

He takes on the "sins" of the personalities which are formed by the successive incarn-

ations, and suffers for those sins. Finally, he is reunited to Âtmâ-Buddhi—to his “Father”—and redeems the man.

The mystic union of Manas with Buddhi is the theme of many a misunderstood allegory and such has been the profanation to which such allegories have been subjected that one can hardly speak of them at all.

In THOUGHT man possesses a power of unlimited scope. It is a divine power and its possession makes man a God, capable of any height of attainment. Yet how he neglects and abuses his power! For the most part he allows his mind to be the playground of wandering ideas and fancies that drift in from he knows not where, and of passions and emotions that rise up from his lower nature. Even worse is happening in our day. For there has arisen a school known as the “New Thought,” which attempts to use the powers of will and thought for the purpose of “self-development”—that is, development of the *personality*. With this kind of thing which

represents a revival of a feeble kind of black magic, the Science of Divine Magic so reverently spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky can have nothing to do. For Divine Magic the first necessity is an entire subordination of self-interest and a determination to live only for the Truth and for the welfare of humanity. The presence of a selfish desire, even of the kind often regarded as innocent, is enough to bring into play the lower forces of our nature and to exclude the spiritual forces. We cannot approach the Higher Self except by relegating the lower self to its place of subordination. Man may at best succeed in degrading a few of his powers, to his own undoing, but he cannot drag down the God and harness It to his chariot of selfishness. The powers of Manas are great indeed—for those pure enough to be able to avail themselves thereof.

As it was in consequence of the growing selfishness and violence of the world that the sacred Mysteries were withdrawn, so it can only be by the spread of a new spirit of

Brotherhood that they can be restored. Hence this is the first object of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. Manuals can only introduce people to the beginning of that Path which if they are willing to tread it, will lead them to the state where they will need no manuals.

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.

* * *

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.

This Organization is not in any way connected with nor does it endorse any other societies using the name of Theosophy.

THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

III KARMA

The Aryan Theosophical Press
Point Loma, California

9

THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

III

KARMA

BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

The Aryan Theosophical Press
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1910



W. F. Shaw
1916

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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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WHAT WE MEAN BY THE "DOCTRINE OF KARMA"

WHEN Theosophists speak of the doctrine of Karma, they usually mean the doctrine that as we have sown, so shall we reap; and what we reap, that have we also sown. In other words, our fate and fortune are the consequences of our own acts and we incur reward or penalty according to our exact merits. There is no arbitrary interference of a divine dispensation, nor is anything left to mere "chance." This doctrine is not comprehensible without the accompanying doctrine of Reincarnation, because many of the experiences which we meet with are the result of things we did in past lives, and many of the things we do now will not yield their effects until a future life. When we speak of a person's "Karma," and say (for instance) that his Karma is good or bad, we mean — not exactly his luck and not exactly his merit — but something between the two.

Thus the doctrine of Karma is simply a

more fully stated form of the scientific doctrine of the "Conservation of Energy," a doctrine which, as scientific men tell us, holds that there is an exact relation between cause and effect in the workings of Nature. But the doctrine of Karma extends this principle to the realm of moral, mental and spiritual forces, and in fact to the whole of life, making it a universal Law.

It may seem almost a truism when stated clearly; yet most people fail to recognize the Law, and the chief reason is that they are prevented by their religious and scientific ideas from perceiving its truth. We cannot understand Karma unless we admit the Soul's eternal existence throughout a long succession of earth-lives; for a single earth-life is but a minute fragment of a man's life and not enough to "show the pattern." And since neither religion nor science teaches us anything about Reincarnation, but both represent man's life on earth as lasting less than a century, it is impossible to make the notion of absolute justice fit in with them.

I

RELIGION AND KARMA

THE absence of the doctrine of Karma from ordinary religious teaching causes a grave discrepancy — the difficulty of reconciling our conviction of the justice of the Higher Law with the facts of life as we find them.

This difficulty is responsible for innumerable mental conflicts, for sermons and essays innumerable, for disputes, schisms, secessions, creations of new sects, and lapses into "infidelity." It is practically the whole of religious thought in a nutshell, for nearly all questions turn on this difficulty in some form or other. It is, in short, the conflict between our intuition (the Divine voice from within) and our intellect, and arises from the fact that the latter is not developed proportionately but is hampered by ignorance and strange fallacies.

There is no real conflict between intuition and intellect, between faith and reason; the conflict is between true faith and false reason. The justice of the Law ought to be not only felt in the heart but perceived by the mind; and it would be so if we only had a comprehensible science of human life such as Theosophy affords.

There is no need to enlarge upon the subject of the incompatibility between our conceptions of life and our conviction of divine justice; the topic is only too familiar. We all know that on the theory that man lives only one earth-life, the good go unrewarded and the wicked prosper; that people suffer experiences for which there seems neither rhyme nor reason; and that the Deity seems to be totally different. Some have given up religion altogether and profess not to believe in the existence of Deity, and others have sought various ways of explaining the discrepancy; while still others dismiss it as far as possible from their minds. Some say that we cannot expect to understand "God's ways

and purposes, but that he knows what is best." Some try to prove that the good are rewarded interiorly in some way and the wicked are punished in their consciences. Some say that all inequalities will be adjusted in heaven. But at best these explanations are very inadequate, and what they achieve is to show the sublime power of faith against the obstacles of ignorance and superstition.

We have been told again and again that it is "presumptuous to reason about God's purposes and that our poor human intelligence cannot hope to understand them." Nevertheless knowledge and science have progressed, and we slowly recognize that the laws of Nature are but the voice of Deity, and that we need not be afraid of finding out anything we ought not to know, for Deity's wisdom is infinite, surpassing all human knowledge. Our progress in science has enabled us to understand Life better than we did before. In the same way we should surely endeavor to understand its laws in the moral world and to extend our knowledge as far as possible; and

we ought to realize that the more we find out, the more it will exalt our conception of Deity. True science has nothing impious or irreverent in it. Our intellects are god-given and we should use them for what they are meant for — for sounding the truth.

When we find that ordinary theories of human life are altogether at variance with the true religion of our Souls — with the Divine revelation from within — we ought to realize that there is something the matter with those theories. And when we find that the doctrine of Karma, and its twin-doctrine of Reincarnation, explain these discrepancies and reconcile the facts of Nature with our faith in Divine justice, we ought to treat that doctrine with respect, as worthy of consideration.

The idea that the inequalities of this life are adjusted in heaven is more consoling than logical. This is a point that has been discussed under the head of "Reincarnation," where it was pointed out that under such a theory our life on earth becomes meaningless, being an utterly insignificant episode in the midst

of an eternity of spiritual existence. We are sent here to learn lessons and snatched away before we have hardly begun, leaving behind many unfulfilled hopes, unachieved purposes, uncorrected mistakes, and future lessons. There is nothing more glaringly inconsistent than this notion of a single, unique earth-life lost in an infinite ocean of Soul-life. Though it is consoling to read the incomparable words that tell us that "Thy sun shall no more go down," and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," these words acquire a sublimer meaning when understood as the promise of spiritual liberation and of the blessed state of the perfected Man, than when taken as the description of a heaven to which the few elect shall go to be eternally recompensed for what they may have done during the few short years of earth-life.

The doctrine of Karma teaches that there is a perfect relation between cause and effect in the sphere of human acts and experiences, as in the sphere of natural science. In other words it teaches that perfect justice rules in

human affairs, and that experience is proportioned to merit. No man can possibly suffer or enjoy consequences which he has not merited by his own actions; and everything which we reap, that have we also sown. But the doctrine of Karma does more than merely assert this principle. It demonstrates how it is true. Our intuition and sense of the fitness of things tells us that the Power which rules must be just. The alternative is to suppose that that Power is capricious; a supposition which is equally untenable whether we conceive of that Power as Deity or as any "scientific" equivalent for Deity. Theologians and scientists agree in attributing to their respective deities perfect justice and impartiality, the contrary hypothesis being untenable as affording no basis for philosophy. Thus, whether ruled by "God," or by some equally mysterious and all-powerful agency called "chance" or "destiny," we are equally in the hands of Law, just, impartial, unerring.

But how to show the just workings of the omnipresent Law — that is the difficulty.

Difficult, however, only so long as we have an untrue theory of life; for the false must necessarily be out of key with the true.

The acceptance of the doctrine of Reincarnation is an essential condition for the understanding of Karma. For the period occupied by a single life-time is so short in comparison with the career of the Soul, which is the real Man, that it does not suffice for a tracing out of the sequence of cause and effect. Many of the experiences which we undergo in this life are the result of things we have done in our past lives, and many of the things we are doing now will not take effect until a future life. For, as a day is but a single link in the chain of our life from birth to death, so is that life itself but a link in the greater chain of the Soul's life.

The difficulty of reconciling our innate conviction that the universe is governed by just and impartial law, with the facts of life as they appear to our limited view, has been the great stumbling block of philosophy and religious speculation. Deeply religious natures

have been content to trust and rest in the faith that all will be made clear in a future life. But more thoughtful minds have sought a more satisfactory explanation. But, ingenious as some of these explanations are, the attempt is useless without Reincarnation; for it is simply not true that justice is done within the space of a single life. But the knowledge of the fact of Reincarnation makes all simple. The doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma complete and explain each other. On the one hand, the principle of causation demands that we shall live again on earth; for we create during one life causes which cannot be worked out in any other way except in another earth-life. A man dies full of unrealized longings for certain experiences peculiar to life on earth, and these intense desires will draw him back to the field of their fruition. He goes away with many things begun that must be finished, and many purposes planned but not carried out. His life is only the preface to a necessary sequel — one chapter out of many in the great story. On the other

hand Reincarnation explains Karma. The two truths are mutually consistent; and further, they are consistent with the other teachings of Theosophy and the remaining facts of experience. Thus does the truth vindicate itself by its consistency and wholeness.

The notion that perfect justice rules the world is one from which we cannot escape. It may be called a primary axiom of philosophy. No philosophy can be made on the opposite hypothesis; for the statement that all is chaos and hap-hazard is nonsense. We may accept such a statement, if we like, but we cannot build a philosophy on it; for all reasoning proceeds on rules and all thought has definite laws. We cannot do a sum on the hypothesis that 2 and 2 make 4 or 5 or 100 fortuitously. Thus, whether we call the source of eternal Law, God, or Nature, or Eternal Justice, or the Conservation of Energy, we are equally compelled to postulate that it is *law* and not chaos.

Ever since, thirty years ago, H. P. Blavatsky asserted as one of the fundamental principles

of the Theosophical Society the existence of the spiritual powers of Man, there has been in our modern world a rapid tendency to get the Christian religion out of its old dogmatic grooves and back to the original lines of its Founder; to enlarge our conceptions both of God and of Man. We used to hear that the authority of churches and of authoritative interpretations of the scriptures were the last court of appeal, and that any science which contradicted these was wrong and pernicious. Now the cry is rather, "Let us study life and Nature in every possible way and endeavor to comprehend God's plan. No knowledge which science can give us can possibly transcend the limits of that knowledge which is man's right, nor can any study of Nature lead us away from its divine author." Formerly we used to hear that the promptings of our own inner consciousness were unreliable and even sinful; but now we tend rather to recognize them as among the many channels through which the Eternal reveals itself.

Let us then, in the spirit of this larger view

of religion, try to understand eternal justice better. It is the theological God, and the various narrow conceptions of Deity that have so confused our ideas as to the relation between Deity and Man, and given rise to the contrariety between science and faith. The idea of the Eternal has been belittled by attributing to it all kinds of human limitations and infirmities. As said by H. P. Blavatsky:

INQUIRER. Do you believe in God?

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

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

THEOSOPHIST. In such a God we do not believe. We reject the idea of a personal, or an extracosmic 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.

INQUIRER. Then you are atheists?

THEOSOPHIST. 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. . . .

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. (*The Key to Theosophy*, chapter v.)

- It is clear that the God of the Universe can not be limited by those human attributes of personality, etc., which so limit man's knowledge and power. Such a conception of Deity is inconsistent with the notion of omnipotence. Yet there are those who, in their superficial reasoning, imagine that by depriving Deity of personality, we thereby *reduce* him. But there is no question of reducing the Deity to the level of those beings which have not yet developed personality; that would be mere savage nature-worship or fetish-worship. Deity is *beyond* and *above* personality.

NOTE ON THE WORD "LAW"

ATTENTION is drawn to the fact that the word "law" is commonly used in two different senses, which are often confounded with each other. It may mean (1) an edict, command, or ordinance; (2) a principle, rule, or prevalent order of things. The former is the expression of some will which has to be obeyed; the latter is a formulation of known facts. Thus the law of Moses is not similar to the law of inverse squares, nor are the laws of harmony things which must be obeyed under penalty of legal proceedings. These distinctions may seem trivial when thus presented, but they are not so when slipshod methods of thought cause them to be forgotten, as is sometimes done by inexperienced reasoners, who, having clothed their thoughts in words, afterwards forget that some of the words have two meanings and pick them up again by the wrong end as it were. For instance, when we observe that two bodies always attract each other with a force varying directly as the product of their masses and inversely as the square of their distance apart, we call this fact the "law of gravitation"; but when we go and deliberately aver that this law of gravita-

tion (which we have just invented) is capable of actually pulling down an apple off a tree upon the head of a sub sessile philosopher, we are guilty of the above mentioned blunder; because the dry fact is that no general principle, however neatly put, can pull down anything, any more than the laws of thought can compel a man to think. The implication is that what pulled down that apple was some mysterious force whose workings are known as the law of gravitation; but to say that the law did the work is like saying that a man walks by the force of ambulation.

In the expression "Law of Karma," the word "law" would seem to be used in both senses, sometimes the one, sometimes the other; but we must not mix them up. We can use the word to mean an abstraction, a generalization, of our merit and demerit, or of our experiences; or we can use it to denote an actual dynamic force which acts upon us and brings about the experiences. For there are Beings who are the agents of Karma and Man himself is one of them. These Beings are mentioned in another part of this Manual.

II

SCIENCE AND KARMA

MODERN science is proud of its generalizations. One of these is the Law of Conservation of Energy. The Law of Karma may be regarded as an extension, a very great extension, in fact a completion of this.

The Law, as enunciated by modern science, states that the sum-total of energy in a closed system remains constant throughout any changes of form that energy may undergo; and, more broadly, that the sum-total of energy in the universe is always the same. No energy can be lost. When it disappears in one form, it reappears in another. The quantity of mechanical energy used up in friction generates an equivalent of heat-energy. A given quantity of electricity will decompose a given quantity of copper-sulphate and yield a given quantity of copper. The

quantity of copper which will be obtained can be exactly calculated, and any incidental escape of energy can also be calculated and allowed for. It is known to chemists that compounds contain a varying amount of potential energy locked up in them, and that this energy, which is often enormous, is set free when the compounds are decomposed. In other cases energy is absorbed. Of late years this science of thermo-chemistry has been extended by the discovery of new facts which lead to the conviction that the atoms themselves are compounds of still smaller rudiments, and contain in their turn an enormous quantity of potential energy. It is by virtue of this energy that they are so stable; and it is by virtue of the same energy that they may become so potent if we can decompose them. Needless to say, it is radium that is chiefly referred to here.

Of course reasonable and sincere scientists are not disturbed at finding that their scheme of the conservation of energy is liable to extension at any moment. This is what one

naturally expects of a provisional hypothesis. Nevertheless prejudice often contends with reason and renders innovations, however true, unwelcome. Hence there are some who have not welcomed the vast vista which the phenomena of radium have opened out. We are here confronted with an apparently illimitable source of energy, and the only item which figures on the other side of our balance-sheet against this prodigal expenditure is the almost imperceptible wasting of a minute particle.

But this is a very small circumstance when we take into account all the things that science has omitted altogether from its calculations. What of mental energy and the power of a human will? Are not these also forces? If we are to take into account the dynamic value of a human thought, we must indeed measure it in terms whose magnitude and variability are altogether in a different scale from that of the grosser forces. And if we are not to take these things into our calculations, then our calculations are indeed limited and inadequate.

True science declares that not only the gross physical plane which we can see, and those subtler but still physical forces whose effects we can measure, but the whole universe of life, with all its forces, mental, psychic and spiritual, must come under exact law and be subject to the same eternal rule of cause and effect. Otherwise there is chaos, or the arbitrary will of an imperfect Deity.

There are not a few cases in which the workings of the law of Karma can be directly traced, even by our (at present) limited intelligence. We can understand, for instance, how early years spent in physical excess will impair the organism and bring on paralysis in old age. No one nowadays would think of attributing the stroke to the will of an avenging deity; yet such was at one time the belief. True we may still admit that the punishment is by the "decree of Deity," since Deity represents eternal Law and Justice; but this admission does not prevent us from recognizing the part which our own folly has played in the affair. In brief, we recognize that the

acts of man call into play Divine Law; that both God and man may be, in different senses, the cause of the punishment; and that though we invoke God, we must at the same time put our own shoulder to the wheel.

In addition to the effects whose cause we can trace, there are effects whose cause we cannot (in the present state of our knowledge) yet trace. But is there any sound reason for placing these effects in a different category? Does not logic declare that they also are due to the operation of eternal justice? Take the case of a man born lame. We cannot trace the connexion between his affliction and his (*presumptive*) fault. We do not know of Reincarnation, so our speculations are shut off effectually. But if we could see that man's past, in his preceding lives, we should probably be able to recognize the cause of his affliction, its justice and its needfulness for the Soul's experience.

In the case of a bodily disease such as that just cited, we can often trace out the chain of causation, because it inheres in the visible

body which our science can study. Yet even here we fail, because sometimes the beginnings of the chain were in a past life. People are born with hereditary predispositions to disease; and, though we can trace the cause so far as heredity is concerned, we do not discern the moral connexion or perceive how the man's affliction depends on his own past acts. We do not know of Reincarnation, and so our investigations are brought to a final stop.

In the case of other kinds of fate, such as sudden financial ruin, accident, or untimely death, it is harder to trace a connexion, because we have no science which has investigated the phenomena of those inner planes where the invisible forces act. We still have to take refuge in the phrase "visitation of Providence," or, what amounts to the same thing, "chance." Luck and fate are counters which denote the gaps in our knowledge, like the X in an equation.

But it will be easy to understand why we fail to discern the *rationale* of fate and fortune, if we reflect what tremendous gaps there

are in our knowledge. What do we know of thought? We can trace a few of its effects when they operate through our own bodily mechanism and produce visible action, or when they act on our nervous system and produce physiological changes. But thought has a power which acts outside of the body. A thought is a most powerful center of force, and once created it passes away from us and continues to exist, in company with countless other thoughts, in a kind of "space" which is entirely different from the so-called "three-dimensional" space of our sense perceptions. This thought-world is however an objective reality; and we all live in it, breathe it and stumble blindly about in it with our undeveloped inner senses. What about the dynamics of this thought-world? Ay, there is the gap in our knowledge. We are, to use a metaphor of H. P. Blavatsky's, spinning webs of destiny around us like a spider spins his web. We are each hour, each minute, accumulating stores of energy in the thought-world, which, by a law as exact and reasonable as that of

physical elasticity, will sooner or later react on ourselves.

Let us consider how a so-called "fortuitous" event takes place. What is chance, anyhow? If I toss a coin, what determines whether it will turn up heads or tails? Obviously there must be a chain of mechanical causes — the movements of the muscles and nerves, etc. And behind that must be mental causes, since the mind moves the body. If it is not my conscious intelligence that directs the issue, then it must be some unconscious element in my mind or nervous system. We cannot pause to follow out this thought further, but it leads to the mysteries of the lost science of divination. Our fate is perhaps determined by the "chance" direction we take on the streets or the "casual" meeting of an acquaintance. But what determines which road we shall go? A mental caprice. And what determined that mental caprice? All is law; there is a chain, though we may not see it; chance is a word that means nothing.

Sometimes we get up in the morning and

everything goes wrong. It is because of our mental state. Normally our safety is secured by a thousand little unconscious and half-conscious acts and instincts. But, if our senses are dulled and our nerves jangled, our instincts fail us, our reflexes get tangled, and we bump our head and upset our lamp. Or, again, we may have created such an unpleasant atmosphere around us by our thoughts that other people feel it and shun us or instinctively assail us. Here the effect can be traced to the cause. On the larger scale it is the same. In short, life is full of causes of which we do not know the effects, and effects of which we do not know the causes. On such a basis will you presume to deny the doctrine of Karma? Better study a little first.

In short, Theosophy does not admit of such a thing as chance or accident. Nothing can happen without a cause; though the cause may be invisible.

It is further evident that there are several threads of Karma in the skein of human life. An event may have a physical cause and a

moral cause also. Therefore it is absurd to debate whether a thing is brought about by a moral cause or a physical cause, because it is usually brought about by both. We attribute diseases and calamities to physical causes, and other races have attributed them to the visitation of the Gods; but, clearly, whether caused by the Gods or not, they must have a physical cause also; and conversely, an epidemic, although brought about by carelessness in sanitation, may and must also be a moral retribution.

The place where our survey of life breaks down most seriously is at the beginning and end of a life-time. None of our popular teachings tell us anything about birth and death. The subject here trenches upon that of Reincarnation, which is dealt with in another Manual; but it is necessary to say something about it here. Since a man reaps in one life the consequences of what he has sown in previous lives, it is clear that there must be some explanation as to how the influence is carried over from one incarnation to another.

If anyone feels inclined to shrink at the difficulty of the explanation, let him remember that ordinary life is full of similar difficulties which science does not attempt to explain, yet with which we are so familiar that we take them for granted. Why, then, balk at a difficulty which is no greater, merely because it is less familiar?

A good illustration for our present purpose is that of a plant and its seed. In that seed (or around it or somewhere in connexion with it) there must be stored up the germ of everything which the future plant will possess. But what can science tell us about this mystery? Will the microscope disclose the conditions which determine the future character of the plant? Wherein or how are those characteristics contained? We can only whisper, "Molecules," and speculate whether the mere collocation of imaginary particles in an ideal space has anything about it of a causal or determinative power. The fact is that the real seed is invisible, and the entire plant exists complete in all its parts in a finer kind of

matter called astral matter before it does so physically. (See Manual on "The Seven Principles.")

And so with man, it is useless to try to trace a physical connexion between one incarnation and another. Since the Reincarnating Ego is the only part of man which survives the interval, the causes must inhere in that. These causes are in the germ state; they are latent, like the contents of the plant-seed.

SKANDHAS

FOR the purpose of explaining to some extent how the attributes of one earth-life are carried over to the next, it will be convenient to use a term employed in the Buddhistic philosophy — the term *Skandhas*. Skandhas may be defined as the "attributes" with which the essential Man is clothed, and which go to make up his character and personality. In the Buddhist teaching there are five of these Skandhas: *rûpa*, form or body, material qualities; *vedâna*, sensation; *sañña*, abstract ideas; *samkhâra*, tendencies of mind; *viññâna*, men-

tal powers. Of these we are formed; by them we are conscious of existence, and through them communicate with the world about us.—(*The Key to Theosophy*, ch. VIII)

When the Ego enters Devachan, it takes with it only the finest aroma of the Skandhas, the cream of the experiences which it has acquired during life—only the most spiritual essence of those experiences. All the grosser part disappears, with or after the physical death. The bodily skandhas decay, later on the astral skandhas; and so with each set, the kâmic skandhas dying out in *Kâmaloka*. But, though these attributes of the personality disappear from the field of action, they do not utterly perish. They pass into the latent or germ state, thus to abide until the re-entry of the reincarnating Ego into earth-life, when they attach themselves to it and thus become the agents of recompense and retribution. In short the simile of the seed applies. Further elucidation of this point will be found in the Manuals on “Man After Death” and “Kâmaloka and Devachan.” It is sufficient for our

present purpose to point out that there is actually a concatenation of cause and effect bridging the grave and bringing about unerringly exact consequences on all planes, physical, psychic, mental, etc.

The mysteries of the process by which an Ego, about to incarnate, selects, or is assigned by the agents of Law, the physical vehicle which he is to inhabit, are too deep for our present capacity. But let no dull mechanical conceptions of the "scientific" brain mar the contemplation of a subject so solemn and sacred. Not in the realm of "blind forces" moves the Ego, nor does the immortal Self of man obey molecular attraction and fortuity. In the realms whither our Souls pass after death, dwell Intelligences as far superior to those of mortal man as is their radiant vesture to his dull clay. Karma is no mere mechanical law of action and reaction; it uses minds and wills as its agents, minds and wills of all grades, from those of men who blindly obey its mandates, up to those of Great Souls who willingly acquiesce in its sublime equity.

III

THE WORKING OF THE LAW

BUT, though we cannot reduce Karma to the level of a mere physico-mechanical process, neither can we on the other hand leave it an empty abstraction. There must be agents by which are performed the operations that unite cause to effect. And here it is necessary to call attention to a fallacy of modern science. This fallacy is that which postulates in the universe two kinds of force, intelligent or living, and unintelligent or dead. The former kind is supposed to rule in the animated kingdoms of Nature and the latter kind in the mineral kingdom. But according to logic and Theosophy there can be no such thing as a blind force, and even some scientists themselves have analysed the conceptions of modern physics and proved that such a thing is a logical absurdity. (See *Concepts of Modern*

Physics, by the late Judge Stallo, who analyses the meanings of the words "force," "matter," "atom," etc.)

Even the humblest actions of the particles of matter, the lowliest chemical reactions and the play of electrical phenomena are brought about by the action of Mind and Will of some sort; and, furthermore, this Mind and Will must belong to some Being or Beings. The trinity of Self, Mind, and Will is the unresolvable unit of our intellectual conceptions; we must postulate them either directly or in veiled form, and beyond it we cannot analyse. Of course this does not deny that there are also mechanical agencies, but it merely states that such mechanical agencies are the secondary causes, minds being the primary causes. Just as our own body is a mechanism actuated by a mind, so is every other body in the universe. It will thus be seen that modern science has a vast gap to fill, in not accounting for the conscious element in Nature; and into this gap would probably fit many of those conceptions of which we read in ancient beliefs and which

recognized the existence of Nature-Spirits, Elementals, Gods, Devas, Gnomes, Genii, Nymphs, and so on. Degraded as these conceptions often are, into mere popular superstitions, they are nevertheless a survival of what was once a luminous and exact Science of Nature.

In short Theosophy postulates an innumerable host of Beings other than Man and the animals, existing on various planes of space invisible to the physical eye, and graduated from those which fulfil the lowliest functions up to those which preside over the destinies of planets. Such Beings are the agents of Karma — a fact which was surely recognized by antiquity and which is still believed in, though in superstitious manner, by the peasantry and some foreign peoples. For examples we might turn to an almost inexhaustible number of sources. Take Puck and the fairies, for instance; what are they but the agents for carrying out minor operations of adjustment in Nature? Mere fairy-tales and comedies now, perhaps; but not always so. So with the Fates

and Furies of classical mythology and with innumerable Gods in the Pantheons of Oriental religions.

Such beings are the agents of Karma, fulfilling upon Man the destinies which he invites and courts by his acts and thoughts. They act according to the laws of their being, and Man, by acting upon them, causes them to react upon him. As one of the Manuals of this series deals specially with Nature-Spirits, we will not discuss the subject further here, but merely give the following quotation from H. P. Blavatsky:

. . . the "four Mahârâjahs" or great Kings of the Dhyân-Chohans, the Devas who preside, each over one of the four cardinal points. They are the Regents or Angels who rule over the Cosmical Forces of North, South, East and West, Forces having each a distinct occult property. These BEINGS are also connected with Karma, as the latter needs physical and material agents to carry out her decrees, such as the four kinds of winds, for instance, professedly admitted by Science to have their respective evil and beneficent influences upon the health of Mankind and every living thing. . . . It is not the "Rector" or "Mahârâjah" who punishes

or rewards, with or without God's permission or order, but man himself—his deeds or Karma, attracting individually and collectively (as in the case of whole nations sometimes), every kind of evil and calamity. We produce CAUSES and these awaken the corresponding powers in the sidereal world; which powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to—and react upon—those who produced these causes; whether such persons are practically the evil-doers, or simply Thinkers who brood mischief. Thought is matter, we are taught by modern Science; and “every particle of the existing matter must be a register of all that has happened.”—*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, part I, stanza 5.

INEQUALITIES IN KARMA, AND HOW ADJUSTED

It has been stated by the Teachers of Theosophy that no human incarnation is exactly adapted in every detail and degree to the merits or requirements of the Ego;—a statement which, at first sight, might seem to contradict the general statement of Karma. But Karma provides that justice shall be done in the long run. If perfect balance were maintained in every detail and every moment,

there would be nothing left to be adjusted. It is quite in accordance with the workings of Nature that there should be temporary deviations from harmony, to be subsequently restored. In the material world there is never perfect adjustment or completeness. It is a world of adjustments and compromises. In the Manual which deals with Devachan, it is pointed out that one of the results achieved by the Soul's sojourn in that state is the adjustment of inequalities of fate met with during life.

HOW MAN DISTURBS THE BALANCE OF NATURE

ONE way of explaining the Law of Karma is to state that man, by his actions, disturbs the harmony and balance of life; and that the life, in its effort to regain harmony, brings a reaction upon him. This is quite in accordance with scientific conceptions of the balance of forces. It would be stated somewhat as follows. The sum-total of energy within a closed

system is always the same, and every displacement within that system causes a displacement of equal and opposite effect in the other parts of the system. Every act of man rebounds like a stone that is thrown; and in the long run the man will prove to be his own target.

We can also say that an action is by its very nature as such, dual, consisting of an outgoing and a return, or of equal and opposite phases like a wave in physics; but that in our short-sighted philosophy, we discern only one half of the action. Many actions pass through their entire phase in a very short space of time, so that their duality is apparent; as in a quarrel, for instance, the twofold character of which is proverbial. If we put our finger into the fire and are burnt, the double character of the event is obvious; cause and effect are united. But very often there is between the two an interval of time so long that we fail to discern the connexion; and, when it is added that this interval may even include the gulf of death, the failure to trace the connexion becomes still more comprehensible.

IV

THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR MINDS

PERSONALITY. PERSONAL DEITY

IF we are to understand the ways of eternal justice we must be prepared to shake off the fetters of our minds; and when we consider the influences under which those minds have been developed, we shall scarcely fail to admit *a priori* that there must be many such fetters. Spinoza says that the reason why men live in such a state of puzzledom and discontent is that they regard everything from the standpoint of personal interest and allow their passions and imaginations to become mixed up with their perceptions and to give everything false color and perspective. It is therefore necessary, says he, to eliminate carefully such disturbing factors from our mind, as a scientific observer eliminates all sources of error

from his instruments. Now what are the chief preconceptions to which we are liable?

First let us consider some of the narrow ideas which we have unconsciously imbibed from centuries of dogmatic religious teachings. There is the notion of the personal God. This notion gives rise to the ideas of caprice, anger, favor and similar personal emotions assignable to a great personality. To this notion of a personal God who can be incensed or appeased, we have added as a natural corollary the idea of a subservient Man, "born in sin," unworthy and incompetent, dependent for all good upon divine favor. These ideas tinge the mind and cause it to take narrow and mean views. Take, for instance, the way in which we regard our fortune. We call it good or bad according as it pleases or displeases our feelings, according as it meets the approval or disapproval of our little wills and judgments. And we say that we are the "subjects of God's anger or pleasure" accordingly. In brief we take a view of reward and punishment which is not very wise and far-seeing. It cannot be

denied that religious teachings have favored this view, for do they not hold up continually before our eyes the picture of a Deity angered or appeased? Whenever great minds have taken a broader view, it has been in spite of dogmatic teaching and not infrequently in the teeth of persecution.

It is now time that we should free our minds from these elementary notions, by which the ideas of God and of human life are associated with fear and abjectness, as in the case of savages. These notions arise from the lower nature of man, which is mean and narrow; they are not consistent with the dignity that should belong to a divinely inspired being such as man is.

It is the part of a suspicious and surly nature to quarrel with its lot and imagine that it is being punished when it is not. It is not dignified to cry out whenever anything happens that is not quite in accordance with our wishes, and to cringe before providence in a spirit of supplication. The general division of fortune into good and bad is made on very

narrow principles. Wealth is considered to be good fortune and poverty bad; but from a higher point of view this may or may not be true. Again, it is possible that bodily affliction may be a greater blessing than health in certain cases. The higher our point of view the more tolerant become our ideas of fate and fortune, until we arrive at the conclusion that everything which can happen to us may be for the good of the Soul.

But still more important is the attitude we take in regard to our responsibility. If we consider ourselves the victims of external powers, we having no control over our destiny, then it is no wonder if we fall into an attitude of supplication and often feel ourselves ill-used, or grow indifferent to life's duties. But, once let the idea prevail that we are masters of our destiny, and the whole attitude of mind changes. We can say with Faust:

Du, stolzes Herz, du hast es ja gewollt!
" 'Tis thou, proud heart, 'tis thou hast willed it so!"
The so-called misfortunes which beset us are those which we have incurred by our own

Will, for the education of our character; as one who is in training sets himself difficult tasks to accomplish. To quarrel with our fate is to be disloyal to our own Soul; it is to become forgetful of our real destiny. Let us learn to look upon ourselves as knights braving the dangers in search of Truth, like those heroes of the sacred myths who slew dragons and overcame enchantresses in order to win the Princess. In short, let us revive the ideals of Chivalry, which taught manly dignity and womanly self-respect, and which have been largely supplanted by that debasing attitude of mind according to which we are "miserable sinners," whose duty is to go through this life in humble submission until we are released from it to go to selfish bliss. Chivalry upheld the true Freedom — the freedom of the human Soul — and taught men to regard all situations as opportunities, and all so-called misfortunes as chances for showing courage and for learning something. We have become sordid and commercial in our ideas, even of religion. There is too much petty calculation of chances

and weighing of profit and loss; we are too anxious about the fate of what we call our souls. There has been a tradition which associated piety with worldly prosperity and exalted selfish thrift into a cardinal virtue; and, however useful this may have been on occasion, it has been carried too far.

Hence the words "punishment" and "reward" acquire new meanings. The word punishment as implying a visitation of anger or revenge, should be banished from our dictionary. Retribution is but the natural outcome of mistaken acts, and it should be regarded as a just and merciful provision by which we are enabled to learn better. A man with an easy life may be a feeble character who has not yet merited more strengthening treatment; while a man who has a difficult life may be one who has earned the right to be taught.

One could of course dilate to any extent on such subjects; but the present purpose is to show the bearing of the doctrine of Karma on them. The doctrine of Karma simply brings our intellectual convictions into harmony with

our moral convictions; replacing those theological errors which have been such stumbling blocks. We *feel* that man is master of his own destiny; Karma enables us to *see* it.

Personality has acquired altogether too great a prominence in our civilization. It colors all our views. Personal salvation occupies too large a place, and we each aim at a personal and exclusive relationship with God. According to Zoroastrianism, personal attainment was considered, not as being for the benefit of the possessor, but as an addition to the sum-total of good of the world. And truly our personality is a little thing, compared with the greatness of the world — compared with the greatness of the true Self. Looking at humanity in its crowds, how can we imagine that its multitudinous petty personalities are all so important! Dependent on this exaggeration of the personality is an exaggerated attachment to earth-life and an exaggerated fear of death. We are not sufficiently conscious of our immortality. Nor are we sufficiently conscious of our solidarity. There are many social souls

whom the world does not deem very worthy, who may be much nearer the Light than many a pious and respected character, because they are not cankered with the blight of self-righteousness. As a learned divine sings:

Give me an heart that beats
In all its pulses with the common heart
Of human kind, which the same things make glad,
The same make sorry! Give me grace enough
Even in their first beginnings to detect
The endeavors which the proud heart still is making
To cut itself from off the common root,
To set itself upon a private base,
To have wherein to glory of its own,
Beside the common glory of the kind!
Each such attempt in all its hateful pride
And meanness, give me to detect and loathe,—
A man, and claiming fellowship with men!—*Trench*

And we are apt to carry this personal attitude of mind into our reflections on the subject of Karma. The question of our own personal merits and demerits looms too large before the eye. But, though perfect justice is done to each unit of humanity, it might be better if we were less anxious about our own

particular case. The comradeship with our fellows which is so necessary and so precious to us involves us in a system of give and take, as to the exact adjustments of which it is not the part of a generous nature to inquire too closely. We throw in our lot with others for better or worse, and get our fair share of the good and bad luck plus the inestimable advantage of comradeship. There have been times in the world's history when the personality was not so emphasized as it is with us; when people were more conscious of being part of the universe; when they felt so secure in their larger life that they fretted less about their smaller. But this is the age of individualism — say rather of personalism — even in religion, even in prayer, even in aspiration. Hence Karma will, one fears, appeal to many in the light of a personal solace, whereas one would rather offer it as a broad general doctrine affecting the lives of mankind in the mass.

The very inadequate idea of Godhead derived from narrow religious teachings also hampers us in our conceptions of Karma.

For, having endowed God with many of the limitations which go to make up a personality, including caprice, we are obliged to reduce our notions of eternal justice to a somewhat similar human standard. Hence enter the notions of favor and propitiation, which are more proper to savages worshipping a tribal fetish than to advanced people believing in eternal justice.

NATIONAL AND RACIAL KARMA

WHAT has been said about the undue emphasis given to the personality in modern civilization is well illustrated by the teachings as to national or racial Karma. In *The Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky, we find the following:

INQUIRER. But surely all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and **INDIVIDUAL** Karma?

THEOSOPHIST. No, they cannot be so strictly defined in their effects as to show that each individual environment, and the particular conditions of life

in which each person finds himself, are nothing more than the retributive Karma which the individual has generated in a previous life. We must not lose sight of the fact that every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs, and here we come upon the wider track of the karmic law. Do you not perceive that the aggregate of individual Karma becomes that of the nation to which those individuals belong and, further, that the sum total of National Karma is that of the World? The evils that you speak of are not peculiar to the individual or even to the Nation; they are more or less universal; and it is upon this broad line of Human interdependence that the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equitable issue.

INQUIRER. Do I, then, understand that the law of Karma is not necessarily an individual law?

THEOSOPHIST. That is just what I mean. It is impossible that Karma could readjust the balance of power in the world's life and progress unless it had a broad and general line of action. It is held as a truth among Theosophists that the interdependence of Humanity is the cause of what is called Distributive Karma, and it is this law which affords the solution to the great question of collective suffering and its relief. It is an occult law, moreover, that no man can rise superior to his individual

failings without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way no one can sin, or suffer the effects of sin, alone. In reality there is no such thing as "Separateness"; and the nearest approach to that selfish state which the laws of life permit is in the intent or motive.*

Thus the laws of association forbid any one from living separately, and individual fate is interblended and interwoven with collective fate in a way that resembles that in which atoms are interrelated. We share both the good and the ill fortune of others with whom we are associated.

* *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 199, 200

V

KARMA AND FREEWILL

FATALISM

CURIOUS conundrums are sometimes propounded on this question, owing to obscurity of reasoning; but they can be readily solved by maturer thought. For instance, people may argue, "Since all events are indissolubly joined to their previous causes, what is the use of making any effort?" This is the delusion of fatalism. It ignores the fact that owing to the Divine part of our nature, we have a center which stands outside of the Karmic chain and by which we are able to act independently and set new causes in motion.

Besides this, there is a logical fallacy involved, as the following instance will show. Suppose a man should fall off a ladder, ought you to abstain from catching him upon

the ground that that would be interfering with the law of gravitation? Clearly you cannot interfere with the law of gravitation, which will go on acting, whatever you may do; and equally clearly you *can* help the man.

In the same way it is your duty to do your duty and there is no fear that you will thereby interfere with the law of Karma. You yourself are an agent of Karma, and it may be a part of that man's Karma that he should be helped. It is in your power to be that helper or not.

The doctrine of fatalism, in fact, means nothing, and cuts both ways. If it leaves us free to let things alone, it leaves us equally free to act. It is our duty to help others all we can, and if it is not their Karma to be helped, the Law will take care of that. Besides, as said before, the humane motive of a man is an extraneous power, inasmuch as it proceeds from a higher source, and therefore it can add to the total of good in the universe.

KARMA IN ANTIQUITY

NEMESIS was a conception of the ancient Greeks, which represents Karma in its retributive aspect. Their dramas depicted the consequences of rebellion against the moral law. The agents by which this retribution was brought about were called the "Furies," the Eumenides or Erinnyes, female deities of grim aspect, with black and bloody garments and serpents instead of hair. They had a burning torch in one hand and a whip of scorpions in the other. It is noteworthy however that, after they had ceased to persecute Orestes, they became changed in character and were called the Eumenides, which means the "benevolent."

The Fates or Parcae represented another similar conception, being three sisters who determined all destiny and to whose decrees even Jupiter himself was held by many to be subject.

The Norns were the ministers of destiny in

the Scandinavian mythology. Of them it is said:

the Norns shall order all,
And yet, without thy helping
Shall no whit of their will befall.

For even the freest will is conditioned by obligations of some kind, however high those obligations may be; and the Norns represent the sum-total of destiny.

In Buddhism the teaching is most pronounced. In the *Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, we read:

KARMA — all that total of a soul
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,
The "Self" it wove with woof of viewless time,
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts.

Before beginning, and without an end,
As space eternal and as surety sure,
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,
Only its laws endure.

It will not be contemned of any one;
Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;

The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
The hidden ill with pains.

It seeth everywhere and marketh all;
Do right — it recompenseth! Do one wrong —
The equal retribution must be made,
Though DHARMA* tarry long.

It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
Times are as naught, tomorrow it will judge,
Or after many days.

By this the slayer's knife did stab himself;
The unjust judge hath lost his own defender;
The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief
And spoiler rob, to render.

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!

The Books say well, my Brothers! each man's life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

* The Law.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!
So is a man's fate born.

He cometh, reaper of the things he sowed,
Sesamum, corn, so much cast in past birth;
And so much weed and poison stuff, which mar
Him and the aching earth.

If he shall labor rightly, rooting these,
And planting wholesome seedlings where they grew,
Fruitful and fair and clean the ground shall be,
And rich the harvest due.

The Oriental word Kismet is a charm to reconcile one to one's justly incurred lot, but not an excuse for inaction as it is so often made to be.

Following are some quotations illustrating the convictions of various writers as to Karma.

We are our own children.—*Pythagoras*

Nothing can work me damage but myself.—*St. Bernard*

We make our fortunes and we call them fate.—*B. Disraeli*

Men must reap the things they sow.
Force from force must ever flow.—*Shelley*

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk with us still.—*Beau-
mont and Fletcher*

The soul contains in itself the event that shall
presently befall it, for the event is only the actualiz-
ing of his thoughts.—*Emerson*

Not from birth does one become a slave; not
from birth does one become a saint; but by con-
duct alone.—*Gautama the Buddha*

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it
are the issues of life.—*Solomon*

Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for what-
soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For
he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap
corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall
of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not
be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall
reap if we faint not.—*Paul*

Judge not, that ye be not judged: For with
what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and
with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured
to you again.—*Jesus*

VI

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF A FAITH IN THE MORAL LAW

IN conclusion we must emphasize the vital need, which there is at the present day, for a renewed faith in the Moral Law. Although religion ought to inculcate this faith, religion as we have it today no longer does so, nor does any other belief which we have. It will be useless to contest this accusation in face of the undeniable facts; if we are to judge our religion and our philosophies by their fruits, we must bring them in as defaulters.

The ideals of conduct upon which men act prove that they do not realize the existence of the Moral Law, or at any rate they do not realize it strongly enough to influence their conduct. They act as though in the belief that

it is possible to benefit oneself by courses which involve injustice to one's fellow man. Hence we have the reign of what is called "individualism" but were better called "personalism." In commerce this means that one man or one corporation strives after its own individual welfare, disregarding or wilfully sacrificing the interests of others. The result upon commerce as a whole is most disastrous; for whereas with all the inventions of modern science it ought to be possible for every one to live in comfort with very little labor, the average prosperity is very low and a large proportion of the population spend their days in toil. The wastage and friction of commerce, pursued on such wrong lines, is very great; but we scarcely realize it from want of anything better to contrast it with. The growth of disease and insanity, the problem of how to educate and manage our children, the problem of the poor, and all the other problems which agitate us today, are evidences of the lack of law and order in our life.

The "fear of God" is no longer effectual;

it is not real enough; and when it does produce an effect, this effect is not of the right kind. It conduces rather to the establishment of a private and personal relation with the Deity, with a view to personal salvation beyond the grave; whereas it should incite us to reliance on the dignity of our own Divine nature and to efforts to render *this* life a heaven.

In such expressions as Providence, the Moral Law, Divine Justice, God's Will, Nature, and the like, we recognize the Law of Karma; we recognize that, as eternal Life pervades Nature, so an eternal spiritual Life pervades the realms of conscience, adjusting all needs and deserts. As the indestructible Life in Nature preserves the balance, destroying what is useless, recreating what is useful, and being in short a divine law of justice in the lower kingdoms; so the Moral Law adjusts things in the moral or spiritual world, destroying the evil and regenerating the good. We are conscious that a murderer offends against this Moral Law and that retribution will fall on

him sooner or later. The difference between ourselves and other races is that we, with our crude unphilosophical theology, speak of the direct personal intervention of God—the Power that formed the universe of stars; while the other religions have preferred to imagine the Supreme Deity as manifesting his justice and power through a host of celestial Beings. But the difference between Monotheism and Polytheism is largely one of names.

It is maintained that all modern civilization is indebted to the influence of Hebraic and Christian religion for its strong sense of the Moral Law. It is true that the Wisdom of the Past has descended to us largely through the medium of these two religions; but it may well be asked whether they have not cramped our conceptions of Eternal Justice. We shall find in Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, the Vedânta, and the other ancient religions, the same ideas of Eternal Justice and Moral Law, but uncramped by the idea of the personal Deity. This idea has introduced the notion of *fear*. We talk of the “fear of

God." When the absurd theological notions of Godhead cause us to reject our belief in God, we may — possibly — lapse into disbelief in the Moral Law. We need, therefore, a way of recognizing the Law without the theological conceptions.

We need a living sense of the Moral Law and of Eternal Justice, detached from narrow theological conceptions. When we reject the absurdities of some theological teachings, we need not reject the Moral Law too. When we cease to "fear God," we need not give ourselves over to license, as if there were no Law. What we need is a consciousness, a direct feeling or perception, of the Moral Law, strong enough to act as an incentive to justice and a deterrent from injustice, as real as the laws of health. No man needs a church or pulpit to tell him that it is wrong to soak himself in whiskey; he feels that he is defying the laws of health and they will be revenged upon him. It ought to be so with the Moral Law. When a man thinks of swindling you for his own immediate pecuniary gain,

he ought to feel that he is injuring *himself*; it ought to hurt him to do it. But he is ignorant and stupid; he is a fool. He has not the sense of solidarity. He has the impression that he possesses real private interests apart from the interests of his kind, which is a delusion. Experience demonstrates to us over and over again that it is a delusion, yet we are so enslaved by our impulses and so purblind to our real interests that we continue to blunder.

To develop in human society this consciousness of the *Moral Law as a fact in Nature*, independently of religious sanction, what is necessary? We must develop the sense of solidarity, the sense of the unity of life. "Separateness" is a delusion; men are united like the branches of one tree, and disunion means decay. When we do injustice we pollute the fount of our own life. This is a fact which daily experience teaches us, and it is to the shame of religion that instead of confirming and explaining it, it throws every difficulty in the way of our recognizing it.

For our Occidental religion as falsely understood fosters the idea of separate personality, separate souls and separate salvation, and makes Man a radically evil Being. It removes the Moral Law from its state of immanence in human nature and transfers it to the Deity.

Now what is meant by the "sense of solidarity"? Not a mere intellectual acceptance of the principle, for that can do no more good than sermons. We need to be conscious of some fact in our nature that corresponds to this principle; we need to be aware of our unity with each other. Such a consciousness comes gradually as a result of studying the Theosophical teachings as to the nature of man and constantly striving to live up to them. We come to regard the impulses of personal desire as extraneous forces, parasitic to the real life; and to look for the dawn of a deeper consciousness in which the sense of solidarity shall be more palpable. Thus we acquire such a strong sense of the existence of the Soul that we are conscious of a feeling of resistance whenever we are impelled to

act contrary to its Law. In short the *Conscience* awakes. One in whom this sense is aroused no longer feels alone and apart. He feels that he cannot act in secret; he shares in common with others an interior Life — the Soul-Life; and this is so sacred, so important to his happiness, that he feels he can not violate it. Therefore he will not act unjustly, though he knows he may escape detection in the ordinary sense. For he feels that the omnipresent eye of the Soul knows and that his comrades will, in their inner consciousness, also know. The sense of guilt, the sense that he has violated the unspoken oath of a sacred freemasonry and so cut himself off from the ties of fellowship, will restrain him effectually.

Would it not be a blessed thing if we could awaken such a conscience, such a prescience of fellowship, among humanity at large; so that each and all would feel themselves linked in a sacred freemasonry which they dared not violate; and so that this conscience rested, not on the fear of an avenging Deity, or

anxiety for one's salvation, or on a maudlin religious sentimentalism, but on an actual knowledge of one's Divinity and of the oneness of humanity in Soul and Heart?

The establishment of a belief in Karma means all this and more. It means the revival of lost knowledge and the anchoring of morality upon a basis of experienced facts instead of leaving it dependent upon dogmatic or so-called "scientific" sanctions.

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.

* * *

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.

This Organization is not in any way connected with nor does it endorse any other societies using the name of Theosophy.

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THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

IV REINCARNATION

The Aryan Theosophical Press
Point Loma, California
1910

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THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

IV

REINCARNATION

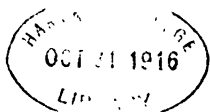
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A STUDENT

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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

WHEN an unfamiliar doctrine is presented to the world, one often hears the cry, Where are the proofs? It is not easy to guess what is meant by such a question, and one can only infer that it indicates a certain confusion of mind on the part of the questioner. It is probably the result of a habit which our minds have acquired in consequence of too much worship of the inductive method used, or claimed to be used, by modern science. But a great teaching concerned with the destinies of the human race may not be susceptible of the same kind of proof as a scientific theory. Nor again can it be proved like a problem in geometry.

Men do not usually in practice arrive at a conviction of the truth of a proposition either by inductive or deductive reasoning; they judge by its consistency, its ability to explain

facts, and its general air of being in harmony with other things which we know to be true. When a teaching is offered the question is not, How did you get it; by the inductive or the deductive method?—but, Is it true? Will it explain my problems? Is it in harmony with other things? And surely, the world is sick of theorizing and is only too ready to accept a teaching that will answer this test!

In this way the teaching of Reincarnation must be judged. It is, from the nature of the case, impossible to produce direct sensory evidence or testimony to the truth of such a doctrine; nor would a conviction resting upon such evidence alone be of much depth or value. We have not heard that the faith in immortality has benefited much by spiritualistic séances, or that the ideals of man have been elevated thereby; and the words of Jesus, “Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead,” apply in this case.

The truth of Reincarnation must be judged by its reasonableness, its harmony with other things, and its ability to explain the facts of

life and to solve problems which no other theory can solve.

Further it is advisable to be warned against the impatience and hastiness of our mental habits in this superficial age; habits so incompatible with the care and patience required by a student of the deeper mysteries of life. Proof can never be given at the outset of a study; the pupil must be content to wait until he has faithfully followed the beginnings of the way, and trust that the conviction will come to him as he proceeds. Faith is necessary in all enterprises — not blind faith, but that faith which is the assurance of knowledge to come. It is this internal conviction of the truth of a doctrine that encourages us to proceed to that point where the conviction may become certainty.

Again, those who propound objections to Reincarnation usually overlook the fact that most of their objections apply with much greater force to the theories already held as to man's destiny. What "scientific" proof have we of the Christian doctrine of heaven

and hell? Could no objections be raised as to the justice, the reasonableness or the mercifulness of some of the beliefs professed in the religious world? What has science to offer in the way of a theory of man's destiny? Here are a few questions out of many which it would be well to have answered first, before proceeding further. It is usual in courts of justice to make the complainant first state his own case and prove the defendant's guilt, rather than to require the defendant to prove his own innocence; if the complainant has no case, judgment goes for the defendant by default. If this procedure should be adopted in the case of Reincarnation, it would certainly not be necessary for its advocates to plead anything in its defense. All they would have to do would be to request their assailants to state their own doctrines and to give satisfactory answers to any questions which might be proposed. What theory of the after-life is willing to come forward and stand such a test? So let it be understood that an explanation of the evidences

for Reincarnation is in reality a *concession* on the part of its advocates. They feel that while so many contradictory and unsatisfactory theories and so many doubts on the subject of the after-life exist in the world, they have a perfect right to present their theory without any explanation whatever and still stand on (at least) an equal footing with others.

Let those then, we would say, who purpose to call in question the truth of Reincarnation, first go carefully over the ground of existing theories, making quite sure what position they themselves intend to maintain in opposition to Reincarnation. Even if the result is inconclusive, it may very likely clear up the mind on some points that have hitherto been obscure.

Another point which should really be insisted on is that in a case like the present, judgment should be preceded by most careful study. In approaching a Theosophical teaching, one is called upon to take a serious view of things, and the usual hasty, slipshod methods of forming an opinion will not do. As

a rule we find people ready to discuss a new subject on the smallest possible acquaintance or on no acquaintance at all; the result being that endless time and breath are wasted in useless talk, the greater part of which would have been saved if the talkers had thought first and spoken afterwards. If we never criticised anything until we had made ourselves thoroughly familiar with it, how little argument we should indulge in! By far the greater part of the questions asked and objections raised by inquirers about Reincarnation are such as a little study would have solved. Hence the advocate of Reincarnation must needs for the most part confine himself to referring the inquirers to what has been written or to their own reflections. All teachers know how distressing it is to have pupils interrupt the lecture in order to ask questions which would be answered in due time without the asking. Such conduct evinces uncontrollable impatience and a lack of confidence in the teacher; who, as a matter of probability, knows better than the pupil what objections

are likely to occur. A modest questioner should realize that it is extremely improbable that he (unless a very wise man indeed) will think of any objection that has not also occurred to other minds. Hence he may expect to find that his questions have mostly been anticipated.

But such remarks as the above will be entirely superfluous in the case of the intelligent and well-balanced reader. For him it will be only necessary that the doctrine of Reincarnation be clearly set forth and the principal points in its favor indicated.

In treating of Reincarnation it will be necessary to presume some acquaintance on the reader's part with the teachings as to the Seven Principles of Man, the subject of a former Manual, and also with Theosophical teachings generally, especially those which tell of Evolution; and references to the other Manuals of this series will be made.

The Evolution of Man is but a part of the general scheme of cosmic evolution, and the teachings of Theosophy form such a consist-

ent whole that they are interwoven at every point and cannot be adequately treated one by one. For the same reason it is futile to attempt to judge of any one teaching, such as that of Reincarnation, by itself and apart from the other teachings. The doctrine of Reincarnation is possibly inconsistent with the *conventional* views put forward by modern religion, science and philosophy; hence it cannot be made to square with them, except in so far as they are true; and any failure to effect such a reconciliation should be set down to the discredit of conventional views — not to that of Reincarnation.

I

WHAT REINCARNATION IS

THE doctrine of Reincarnation teaches that the eternal Soul of man — that is, the real Man — lives many successive lives on this earth, occupying every time a human form, and continually progressing toward perfection. It must be carefully distinguished from a certain teaching which often goes by the name of *Metempsychosis* or *Transmigration* and which holds that men incarnate in animal forms; for certain persons hostile to Theosophy have attempted to make people believe that Theosophy teaches this latter doctrine.

There is a natural tendency to think that the doctrine of Reincarnation means that our personality — Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones — appears again and again on earth; and from this idea arises the common objection that we have no memory of earlier lives. It must therefore

be remarked that in the Theosophical teachings a broad distinction is made between the "personality" and the "individuality." The personality is regarded as an illusion, in a sense like that in which a dream is an illusion. This illusion is due to the fact that in our present imperfect state of development we mistake the mere attributes of the Self for the Self itself. But our personality is a bundle of changing moods, ideas and sentiments, and is not permanent. There is however a permanent factor in it, and this permanent factor gives us the feeling of separate individual existence and an intuition that at bottom we are immortal and eternal. This feeling of individuality proceeds from the Ego, the real eternal Self within. We cannot define it, because, in attempting to do so, we must strip it of all that we recognize as characterizing a mortal man. We must analyse our interior consciousness down to the point where there seems to the brain-mind to be nothing left.

Thus the Self is eternal, while all the attributes with which it is invested during earth-

life are impermanent. Consequently that which survives throughout the incarnations is a part of our Being so recondite that we should not recognize it as ourself; for all that we call "ourself" disappears at death. We might compare the eternal Self and its successive vestures with a string of beads; or better, with an actor who plays many parts. Macbeth knows nothing about Hamlet, but Irving knows about both and about himself as well. We are like actors so engrossed with our parts that we have temporarily lost sight of our real off-the-stage identity.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the purpose of life and its successive incarnations is that the Soul — the real man — may profit. To our present ideas this may perhaps seem as if the Soul were *somebody else*, and we had no interest in the matter; but the Soul is to be sought within, for it is our veritable *Self*, though it cannot manifest itself as such until we have purified and clarified our nature from all illusive and extraneous elements. The mystery of the relation between the im-

mortal Self and the personality is one that can only be solved by much study and experience. Our religions say nothing of it, but the Buddhistic philosophy (not necessarily any modern Buddhist sect) goes deeply into the metaphysics of the subject, and so do many other ancient philosophies. Some light may be gleaned from the Manual in this series dealing with the Seven Principles of Man.

The duration of the interval between two successive lives is a question upon which but little information has been given by the Theosophical Teachers. Obviously there are many things which it is either impossible or imprudent to disclose to the world at present. The length of the Devachanic period must depend on the nature of the experiences which the Ego has to pass through in that state; and it may be short or measured by centuries. (See Manual on *Kâmaloka and Devachan*.)

THE PURPOSE OF REINCARNATION

THE purpose of Reincarnation is that a perfect Man may be produced. We shall understand better if we consider the processes of Life and Evolution *as a whole*, and not as applied to the case of Man particularly. Life consists of a twofold process, of which modern science studies only one half; the processes of Involution and Evolution. Science studies only the *evolution* of forms or organisms upwards from the lower types to the higher. But obviously there can be no such evolution without the operation of a vital or spiritual force, which, descending *from above*, enters these forms and causes them to expand and develop. This latter process is called Involution. To take an analogy from physical science, — consider a piece of ice. It turns to water and then to gas, and the gas may be heated and made to glow with light. But there is no energy in the ice which will accomplish this change unaided. There needs to be an infusion of something which the scientists have

called "heat." In the same way nothing will evolve unless something enters it from a higher plane. Animals will remain animals; and savages, savages.

Applying this principle now to the case of Man, we see that his development requires the interaction of the same pair of forces. In order that his body, his mind and his character may develop and grow upwards, there must be a descent of an informing Spirit from above. And here our analogy from physics will help us again. When the ice is turned into water and the water into steam, in both cases heat disappears from its manifested form and becomes latent. The *raising* of matter from a lower state to a higher was accompanied by a *lowering* of the heat principle from a higher temperature to a lower. In the same way the immortal Spirit which informs Man *descends* and, by lowering itself, raises him. Herein is the *sacrifice* which the Christ makes for Man.

This leads immediately to the question,—
What is it that reincarnates?

WHAT IS IT THAT REINCARNATES?

CLEARLY the nature of Man must for this purpose be regarded as dual — a reincarnating entity, and entities in which the former incarnates, or which are produced by its incarnation. The incarnating entity is that immortal Spirit which is the cause of man's evolution, and the entities in which it incarnates are the successive personalities which arise from its contact with earth-life. The reincarnating entity is immortal, and is the real Man, for whose purposes the reincarnations are experienced; but the successive personalities are transitory and unreal.

We must not, however, expect to be able to define the truth about such a teaching in narrow and simple terms; for, like all questions concerning nature and life, it is complex and vast. We can only speak in approximate terms. A reference to the teachings as to the Seven Principles of Man (dealt with in another Manual) will be advisable. For the moment we may recall that the "Higher

Triad" is composed of the three principles Ātmâ, Buddhi, and Manas (more correctly the higher part of Manas). H. P. Blavatsky says that that which incarnates is the Manas joined to Buddhi and Ātmâ. It is

The spiritual thinking Ego, the permanent principle in man, or that which is the seat of Manas. It is not Ātmâ, or even Ātmâ-Buddhi, regarded as the dual monad, that is the individual or divine man; but Manas. For Ātmâ is the Universal All, and becomes the Higher Self of man only in conjunction with Buddhi, its vehicle, which links it to the individuality or divine man.

And again:

Manas . . . is the real Individuality, or the divine man. It is this Ego which, having originally incarnated in the senseless human form . . . made of that human form *a real man*. It is this Ego, this "Causal Body," which overshadows every personality into which Karma forces it to reincarnate. — *Key to Theosophy*, chap. viii.

And William Q. Judge says:

Manas, Buddhi and Ātmâ, who are the real man . . . are attracted back to earth for reincarnation. They are the immortal part of us; they, in fact, and no other, are we.

It will be convenient, for present purposes, to call the incarnating entity the Ego; also, in Theosophy, the term Individuality is often applied to the real man, in contradistinction to the term personality, which is applied to the transitory self of a single earth-life.

The above teaching implies that we are not aware of our real Life, but are living in a kind of dream or illusion, during which we become so wrapped up in our thoughts and imaginations that we acquire a sort of false personality, like a person in a nightmare. So the saying, *Vita est somnium*, is not so untrue after all. But the real Life is no dream; and it is of this Life that one speaks when he declares, "Life is Joy!" For verily Life, in its purity and reality, is synonymous with joy, and it is only when we stand in the shadow of our own personality that the glorious tide fails us and we are sad.

The error by which we mistake the mere accidents and attributes of the Self for the Self itself, is one that is explained in Eastern philosophies, but we shall scarcely find words in

our own unphilosophical language to expound it adequately.

We know, however, by experience, that the personality is constantly changing, even within the limits of a single life; and that however much the grouping of ideas and beliefs may vary, the sense of individuality persists throughout all and we still call it "ourselves." The sense of individuality is the only thing that does not change; it is the center, and it arises from the Ego.

The personal ends and aims which we set before ourselves are continually thwarted — alas! is it not the theme of the disillusioned mortal from time immemorial? "The vanity of human wishes," and so on! But what is the reason? It is because those ends and aims are not the purposes of the Ego; they are the whims of the lower mind. Like a wayward child, or a pig driven to market, we blunder from side to side and chase butterflies or dawdle to browse, while the Master who holds the lines as constantly pulls us up with a jerk. We have to learn to find out what is the pur-

pose of the Ego — our own real purpose — and concur with it instead of thwarting it.

“God moves in a mysterious way” and “knows what is best for us in his inscrutable wisdom,” and so on. But he does not forbid us from trying to learn his wisdom so that it may be less inscrutable. And then this God is not an extraneous personality, but Man’s real Self. Ultimately it is our destiny to become identified with It, so that its will is our will and its knowledge our knowledge. This is the mystic union between the lower mind and its divine counterpart, the “finding of Christ.”

PROCESS OF REINCARNATION

IN speaking of Evolution (see Manual on the Seven Principles and in other Theosophical writings) it was said that Âtmâ-Buddhi is the eternal omnipresent seed of Life in every atom of the universe; but that while being the cause of all life, growth and evolution, It exists in all the lower kingdoms of nature in a latent or unmanifested state. It

gives rise to all the phenomena which chemist and physicist study in the mineral kingdom, and to the lower forms of instinct and intelligence which are manifested in the plant and animal kingdoms. It is only in Man that this latent spark reaches its fuller unfoldment; and that was brought about by the coming of the *Mânasaputras* or "Sons of Mind," progressed Beings from another plane, who had been through the stages of human evolution before (in a preceding *Manvantara*). These beings endowed Man with Manas, thus enabling him to have a link with Âtmâ-Buddhi, giving him immortality, and the divine knowledge, and the potentiality of all divine power. Previous to this ensoulment, Man was simply a highly developed human animal, without the knowledge of good and evil and the power of choice. This is what is symbolized in the Bible and other sacred allegories. Ever after this ensoulment the history of Man is one of gradual improvement, as the power of the Higher Self gradually makes itself felt and he grows in experience and self-control. But

the process is long and, like every other process in nature, it is divided into alternating periods. These alternations are the succession of life and death. At the death of the body, the Soul lays down for a time its work (just as we lay down our work during sleep), and enters into a condition or sphere of existence in which it lives its own appropriate life as a spiritual being—a state answering to our “Heaven.” After a period of rest in this state or *Devachan*, the hour strikes for the Ego to re-enter bodily life and a new incarnation begins. It is drawn back by the unsatisfied aspirations and unfulfilled duties and purposes of earth-life; and entering the sphere of generation is born again with the developing embryo. But the subject here borders upon the question of man’s state before and after death, so we must refer the reader to the Manuals on those subjects.

II

ARGUMENTS FOR REINCARNATION

IT must be borne in mind that a doctrine is to be accepted for its truth and not for its convenience; and therefore that these arguments are not put forward to induce people to adopt Reincarnation as a comfortable belief, but to confirm the truth of the doctrine by showing how it reconciles all contradictions, explains all difficulties, and harmonizes with those facts of life which experience compels us to accept as facts.

In the first place Reincarnation is the only doctrine which reconciles the conclusions which we are forced to draw from the facts of life with the notions which we are bound to entertain as to divine law, justice, and mercy. Under all other theories these two have been irreconcilable. It has been the strenuous life-work of countless thinkers to try to present some

formula which shall achieve an acceptable adjustment between our spiritual intuitions and our scientific and theological ideas, and to preserve faith in God and religion amid the unsettling tendencies of an age of inquiry. But, to do this, they have always had to leave a large part of the problem unsolved otherwise than by the general formula, "God's inscrutable Will." For instance, how can we account for the inequality of man's opportunities and circumstances on entering this life? Current theology affords no other explanation than that this is the will of Providence; but, as we are enjoined to strive to know God's will and mind, it is certainly as much a duty as a necessity that we should understand more about this particular problem. Science can tell us no more about it, and merely uses, in place of the divine will, other phrases which amount to about as much as using ABC instead of XYZ in an equation. But Reincarnation shows us that birth is not the beginning of Life, but only a point in the middle; and that we take up our life where we laid it down. Hence each

man's circumstances are the outcome of his former living. Here we have at once a satisfactory explanation of a vexed problem; and a doctrine which can explain a problem that no other doctrine can explain must surely be worth further consideration. When we find that the same key unlocks many other doors as well, we shall have good reason for believing that it is the master-key. The subject of individual merit and recompense is treated more fully under its more particular heading, the doctrine of Karma.

Take next the problem of what happens to a man after death. He leaves this life with all his work unfinished and a host of unsatisfied desires and unachieved purposes. What is to become of these? Is he, after such a fragmentary day's work, to disappear forever from the earth, where these things were begun and where alone they can be finished? Will any heaven, however blissful, afford him the opportunities for making good what he has left imperfect, for assimilating the lessons which life has taught him, for correcting mistakes, and

so on? We speak not now of the old hard-and-fast doctrine of heaven and hell, for it has been sufficiently derided and denounced by others. Its injustice, improbability and absurdity are too apparent to satisfy any thinking mind. We speak merely of the various hypotheses and modified doctrines which have taken its place. But these rest on no authority, and are so many attempts to reconcile established belief with probability. Here again the doctrine of Reincarnation shows us how man returns to continue the work he has left unfinished, to repair mistakes, to learn new lessons, to achieve new heights, to become a more perfect image of his Immortal Self. And, as shown elsewhere, no one may claim enough knowledge of God's nature and will to justify him in asserting that Reincarnation is contrary to them. God is great enough to tower above all the science and philosophy that man can formulate, and we do not fear that by using our wits we shall ever dethrone him or expose his secrets. What if Reincarnation should cast down some few tribal gods or

graven images of the human fancy; will that affect the majesty of the All-Father?

Our present life is neither a beginning nor an end, but a middle. All analogy helps us to this conclusion. There is a strict analogy between a day of our life and an incarnation. A day is incomplete, but causes set in motion one day and unfulfilled then may be fulfilled another day; and what we have begun before may be finished, and what we have not finished may be completed another day. Days are separated from each other by intervals during which we are in a different state of consciousness, the bodily life ebbs, and the mind passes to spheres of which we have little or no recollection when we awake, but throughout which the identity is preserved. The sleep refreshes the indwelling spirit and gives it new strength to take up its task of using the body and faculties. Have not writers of all times and places compared death to sleep? And let us remark in passing, that as sleep is pleasant beyond compare, it is absurd to fear death, the greater sleep. Children may not like to

go to bed, and may be afraid of the dark; but they do not fear sleep or imagine that they will never wake up again.

All nature is built on a plan of ebb and flow. As day succeeds day, with intervening nights, so season succeeds season, and the trees die and blossom again. The tides ebb and flow; the moon waxes and wanes. There is not a corner of the earth into which we may look and not find these successive alternations. The life of man, as imagined by conventional belief, exhibits a glaring contrast with all its surroundings, and stands out as the monumental instance of fatuity and incapacity on the part of the caricature of a deity who is so irreverently supposed to have designed it. No truly scientific brain could look at a single earth-life and not pronounce with certainty that it is but a fragment of a whole; so unmistakably are the missing parts forthshadowed in the part that is seen.

One step toward the belief in Reincarnation is the belief in the pre-existence of the Soul before birth. It has always been difficult in

the minds of reasonable people to reconcile themselves with the notion that a Soul can be immortal at one end only. A line infinite in one direction but terminated in the other direction is *a line with one end*—a geometrical conception calculated to make Euclid turn in his sarcophagus! To be immortal the Soul must have pre-existed. This conviction of pre-existence, both as a sentiment and an inference, is very common among our great writers. But with any other theory than Reincarnation, the idea of pre-existence becomes as difficult to understand as the idea of post-existence; especially in its relation with our present earth-life. If the Soul were never on earth before, and is not to be on earth again, our earth-life becomes reduced to an episode as brief as it is utterly purposeless.

III

SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS TO REINCARNATION

THE most familiar of all the alleged objections to Reincarnation is one that occurs instantly to the most rudimentary intelligence; but people of maturer judgment realize that such an objection must surely have occurred to Theosophists before, and must therefore have an easy solution. It is the question, "Why do we not remember our past lives?" wherein is implied the conclusion that as we do not remember them, we did not have any past lives. The Theosophist will at once refuse to admit that the mere fact of not remembering a thing is proof that it never happened; and so the argument falls to the ground at once. We do not remember our past lives; therefore we either

may or may not have lived before. That is the whole argument, and very little it means.

But it is by no means correct to say that we do not remember our past lives. Memory is a complicated faculty, and there is more than one kind of memory. We retain no detailed or pictorial memory of the events of our past lives, it is true; but nevertheless we possess memory of another kind. This other kind of memory exists in the form of innate ideas, instincts, proclivities, intuitions, and the like; and every man comes into the world plentifully endowed with his own peculiar combination of these. These are the memories of past births, treasured in the back of the mind, deeply ingrained in the nature, though not presenting themselves to the pictorial memory as the result of definite events. And little is it to be wondered that we do not remember the details of our past lives; but the fault is surely our own and not anyone else's. For what attention have we ever given to the cultivation of memory? Do we not allow our minds to remain in a state of loose control,

the ideas and impressions coming and going much as they please? Memory is a faculty that needs cultivation; those who have tried it know that the faculty can be cultivated to the most extraordinary degree and in fact without limit. But, as it is, we do not even remember things that happened in this life. How shall we then remember the things that happened centuries ago, and that in another body with another brain, and separated from our present life by the chasm of bodily death? Certainly it is not impossible that a man should be able to recall his past lives; but obviously he must first have learned how to sound the depths of his mind to regions beyond those to which ordinary thought extends; for the record of that past inheres, not in the cells of the present brain nor in any part of the mind which the man recognizes as forming part of his present personality, but in strata of the interior nature which lie deeper; in the consciousness of the reincarnating Ego, which alone endures throughout the chain of lives. To bring back that memory, then, we

should need to have gained a knowledge and mastery over our faculties such as no ordinary man can boast; we should need to have attained to freedom from the delusions which selfishness and desire engender in the mind, and to have curbed and bridled that froward steed, the mind, so that at will we could direct its operations. Such knowledge and power comes to one only after perfection in the study of Râja Yoga, self-mastery.

But a question will arise as to the *justice* and *expediency* of this dispensation by virtue of which we forget our past. The answer to this is simply that it would not be of service for a man to remember his past. We have as much — nay, more, in the experiences of one life, than we can readily assimilate; often we are almost overwhelmed even by that. If we had in addition the memory of countless past experiences, the confusion and the burden would be more than we could bear. Usually a man can make better headway by letting bygones be bygones and concentrating his efforts on the present duty; his reflections

hinder him very much. How often do we, in this life, wish we could wipe out the past and begin again!

It is argued that it is unjust to punish a man for acts which were virtually committed by someone else; but we should remember that whatever theory of life we may hold, the same question arises. If we believe in the ordinary theories of heredity, then we suffer for our ancestors' sins. If Reincarnation is unjust in this respect, it is at least less unjust than any other explanation. Then again, as said before, the life is the Soul's, and the real Man is conscious throughout; and it rests with ourselves how far we will succeed in attaining to the knowledge of the Soul or how long we will remain in ignorance. It might also be shown that we so habitually suffer through the faults of others that a special case of vicarious suffering would be of no account; or that our personality is so constantly changing that the man who suffers is never quite the same man as he who sinned. Again, we must not forget that recompense consists

of reward as well as of penalty; and that we are not apt to be so particular as to the justice of our rewards! In short it is evident that the question only requires a little solid thought, and many solutions will occur. The forgetfulness of past lives is both fortunate and equitable — for natures still wandering in the halls of illusion. Recollection and full knowledge are attainable — *when we are worthy and fitted for them and able to take them.*

The cases in which very young children evince a memory of having lived before are very numerous; but they are usually discredited by parents and the child is snubbed. He soon learns to dismiss these pictures and the strong light of his present life blots them out. But among Theosophists, who are ready to recognize such manifestations, the cases of memory in children are by no means rare.

It is only natural that considering the vanity and weakness of humanity, there should occasionally be found persons who claim to know who they were in their past lives. The characters chosen by them are of course the great

figures of history, such as Napoleon, and Mary Queen of Scots; but there are too many competing candidates for the same characters. Vanity is the greatest foe of genuine attainment; and anyone sufficiently advanced to have a genuine knowledge would certainly not air it in this way. There are many ways in which the mind can become so imbued with the character of someone else—such as by reading about him or enacting him on the stage—and the mere fact of having such an experience does not prove that it is a recollection. If the picture of our past life should come before us, we would have but poor means of recognizing it as such, of knowing whether it was our own past or someone else's, or whether it was a mere dream, or the glimpse of pictures in the records of the astral light. The possibilities of deception are almost infinite for one *not specially trained*.

Another class of objection is as follows: "I am sure I do not want to come back to this earth again; one life is enough for me." This is very shallow; the same person per-

haps, in other moments, repines over the shortness of life and shudders at the idea of being cut off in the midst of its enjoyments. Such ejaculations are not the results of serious reflection; they are the utterances of passing moods. The weary toiler feels, as he goes to rest at night, that he could never face another day. The sea-sick passenger vows he will never undertake another voyage. The petulant child does not want to go to school. Despondent moods may last a minute, a day, a year, several years; but they are temporary. What does it take to heal them? A night's rest, a holiday, a little flattery, a cup of tea — and lo! life is a glorious thing, a heroic battle, a song of joy. Who then can estimate the recuperative effect of the greater sleep, when the Soul lays aside body, mind, and all its burdens, till it re-enters life with the freshness of the infant?

And as to heaven, what do we know about that? There is no ideal of heaven so perfect, reasonable, just and blissful as that of Devachan, the Soul's abode after death. No ideas

of harps, not even the most glowing imaginations of the most refined religious minds, can approach the reality of that bliss. And eternity? A century would outrun most of our ideas of eternity. Eternity is a mere word. People who find the teachings of Theosophy too big for them have no business to be talking about eternity. People who get tired of one earth-life would soon tire of eternity; a modified eternity, consisting of a long while with another long while added to it, would probably suffice.

The idea of Reincarnation may excite reluctance in the hearts of those endeared to the Christian ideas of eternal bliss. But we assure them that this is only due to an inadequate conception of the doctrine of Reincarnation. A flippant way of dealing with the subject may blind our eyes to its real import and meaning; but serious reflection will convince us that there is enough in it to satisfy the most ardent aspirations and the most reverent heart.

We must refer the reader to the *Manual on Kâmaloka and Devachan* for further descrip-

tion of this state of bliss, simply remarking here that as described by H. P. Blavatsky, it exceeds the most ideal states conceived of by Christian thought. We are better off in the hands of the eternal Law than we should be if left to the fulfilment of our own hopes and notions of bliss after death.

And as to the other state — eternal punishment — it is surely unnecessary to dwell on the hideousness of that doctrine. It is entirely done away with in Theosophy, which regards the life on earth as quite sufficient tribulation for the Soul, and can picture no worse state after death. We simply give the following quotations from H. P. Blavatsky.

The only state the Spiritual Self knows of hereafter is that of unalloyed bliss. . . . We believe in no hell or paradise as localities; in no objective hell-fires and worms that never die, nor in any Jerusalem with streets paved with sapphires and diamonds. . . . We believe in an immutable law of absolute Love, Justice, and Mercy. . . . The same unerringly wise and just, rather than merciful, Law which inflicts upon the incarnated Ego the karmic punishment for every sin committed during the preceding

life on earth, has provided for the now disembodied Entity a long lease of mental rest, and the entire oblivion of every sad event, aye, to the smallest painful thought that took place in its last life as a personality, leaving in the soul-memory nothing but the reminiscences of that which was bliss or which led to happiness.—*The Key to Theosophy*, chap. viii.

As to the ordinary mortal, his bliss in Devachan is complete. It is an *absolute* oblivion of all that gave it pain or sorrow in the past incarnation, and even oblivion of the fact that such things as pain and sorrow exist at all. The *Devachanî* lives its intermediate cycle between two incarnations surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth. It has reached the fulfilment of all its soul-yearnings. And thus it lives throughout long centuries an existence of *unalloyed* happiness, which is the reward for its sufferings in earth-life. In short, it bathes in a sea of uninterrupted felicity spanned only by events of still greater felicity in degree.—*The Key to Theosophy*, chap. ix.

In other passages, which we have not space to quote, H. P. Blavatsky speaks of the conditions of man after death as eminently merciful and consoling besides being absolutely just; and speaks in strong condemnation of the

terrible doctrines professed by some who call themselves followers of Christ, according to which the pains of this life are succeeded by even worse sufferings for endless time, or at best by a wholly inadequate and little coveted reward in "heaven." The fact is that the Law treats us a very great deal better than we treat ourselves, and the decrees of Eternal Justice are infinitely wiser and kinder than those which we so falsely attribute to It.

Centuries of mental servitude and spiritual blindness under the rule of bigotry and superstition, followed by a reaction to an equally superstitious extreme of scientific scepticism, have deprived the human breast of that joy of life, that trust in eternal justice, that feeling of dignity, which are the proper attributes of a divinely inspired being such as Man is. We have acquired an altogether flippant and disparaging way of regarding teachings, which is little wonder when one considers the kind of teachings we have been fed on. Of our own religious teachings as to heaven and hell we are accustomed to make fun. We talk

about the soul and its future in an airy way, when we have not the faintest conception of what is meant by any other condition of existence than our familiar daily one. Our notions as to what Deity is preparing for us in the next life are for the most part childish and petty to a degree that insults both ourselves and Deity. The idea that there can be anything in the teachings of Reincarnation to call for flippant treatment is equally regrettable. Deprived by death of our foolish delusions, we shall stand forth in our awful dignity as Souls; and no conceptions which mortal words can paint will suffice to give an idea of the bliss and holiness of that state.

IV

REINCARNATION AND HEREDITY

IT is sometimes said that our being born with ready-formed characters should not be counted as an argument for Reincarnation, because (so it is said) heredity explains that fact. But the word "heredity," as oftenest used, means simply "the fact that we inherit"; that is, it is only a statement of certain phenomena, not an explanation of them. If the word is ever used, in addition to this usage, to denote some cause or agent which may be presumed to occasion or determine the phenomena, such meaning should be most carefully distinguished from the former meaning. This distinction, however, is one that is frequently ignored, not only in this case but in many others; as, for instance, where the process of gravitation is confused with the cause of gravitation, or the phenomena of vitality

with the vital principle itself. Hence, in dealing with the present question, we are dealing with a particular case of a common fallacy, the fallacy of confounding the effect with the cause, or of supposing that a concise and generalized statement of certain phenomena is equivalent to an explanation of their cause. Students of Theosophy, however, must be prepared to give up to some extent the crude and careless modes of thought tolerated among those who are in truth but the camp-followers of science, all untrained as they are in those pursuits by which the faculties of a clear and well-kept mind are brought to bear on the wide range of questions which interest educated people.

Such dabblers, knowing nothing of abstract thought and unable to reason clearly, have found a field in which they can distinguish themselves among others of their kind by a show of cleverness that demands (as they flatter themselves) no knowledge of the laws of formal logic; and they commit blunders from which a lesson or two in Jevons' *Ele-*

mentary Logic might, had they ever heard of it, have saved them.

We will not, then, waste any more time in discussing the question whether a concise and generalized statement of the facts of heredity is or is not an explanation of their cause. Assuming for the present that it is not, we shall proceed to the further question whether science does know of anything, under the name of heredity or under any other name, that can rank as a possible cause or determinant of the phenomena of heredity. And in the first place we remark that science is forced, by its declared materialistic position, to seek its causes in the same place as it finds its effects, that is on the plane of physical matter. This circumstance alone would settle the question in the negative for a Theosophist, who holds that the causes of material phenomena are not themselves material. Scientists, however, ingeniously evade the difficulty by loading the whole burden of causation upon the shoulders of *something* which is at once ideal enough to serve as a cause and material enough to "save

their (materialistic) face" — something which they have conceived in the matrix of the "scientific imagination," and which, like a dutiful offspring, will obey all the laws imposed upon it by the heredity of its parents — a *provisional hypothesis*, in short, put in like a scaffolding to hold up the facts while something more permanent is being sought. This something is of course our old friend the ATOM, sometimes however in this case dressed up anew as the GERM-PLASM or the CELL. The parent transmits to his offspring a Cell, an Atom, or a Germ-plasm. Whether or not there has been discovered anything, which in the case of parents with several children, determines the allotment of the cells, which cell to which child, we do not know; but we do not much care whether this endless chain of physical causes contains one link or a hundred so long as it fails to lead anywhere.

To dismiss the matter, it is clear that the cell or any other materialistic hypothesis is but a subterfuge for the truth, and that the real causes must be sought, postpone the

search how we may, in realms beyond the physical. That is to say, that the more scientific explanations are true, the more they need the Theosophical explanation to explain them; and we can only be grateful to scientists if they succeed in filling in any of the gaps between cause and effect, and will please refrain from denying the existence of things which according to their own admission, belong to other departments; and from seeking for things, which they are not looking for, in a world where they do not expect to find them.

It is the Will of the Ego, conditioned by the requirements of Eternal Law and by the necessities created in past lives, that directs the incarnating Soul to the parentage best adapted to those requirements. It is this Will which determines to what extent the Soul shall modify its instrument or be modified by it. Cells, matrix, seed and all are instruments in the hands of the Being that is using them; and while science is studying the process and trying to believe that it works itself, Theosophists are studying the operator.

If a final word is necessary, it is to assure the genuine votaries of Science — those who sincerely and candidly follow the avowed principles of their noble cult — that the above strictures are intended for such only as the cap happens to fit; and we are sure they, the genuine votaries, will welcome anything that tends to relieve them from the burden of a disparaging association with those who purvey fraudulent imitations of their goods. We can sympathize with them.

V

REINCARNATION IN ANTIQUITY

REINCARNATION has been well called the favorite belief of mankind, inasmuch as it has always been, and now is, the belief of the majority. Later events and discoveries, it may here be remarked, have taught us to pay more regard to the abilities both of the ancients and of the modern Orientals than we were formerly wont to do; and we may therefore estimate their opinion as worthy of consideration. It is in fact only in later times and in Western lands that the belief in — or rather the knowledge of — Reincarnation has waned; and even this waning is but a temporary phase marking a decline of spirituality and a wave of materialism.

Hindûism and Buddhism are of course known to be inspired throughout by the teaching of Reincarnation, and it is neither

necessary nor practicable to digress into quotations from these sources. But once again the student is reminded not to misunderstand the symbolism which is often used, nor to adopt the misunderstandings of the ignorant for whom religion is always a superstition. The use of animal symbols to denote various rôles or conditions of the soul is very common. We do not believe that Buddha died through a surfeit of pork, though he is said to have died from eating too much "hog's flesh"; nor do we imagine that Jesus was ever a lamb or a vine. In the same way, when it is said that a rapacious man will become a tiger, or a gluttonous one a pig, nothing more is meant than that in his next (human) birth he will be afflicted with the corresponding propensities. There was also a teaching that after a man had died and his Soul passed to Devachan, the elements that entered into his *kâma-rûpa* or "animal soul" would, after their disintegration, enter into the structure of animals. But this is no more than saying that the particles of our

body will afford food to the worms, and is no more warrant for a belief in animal transmigration than the fact about the worms is warrant for a belief that we shall be worms in our next life. Whether or not there are any grossly ignorant and superstitious coolies who believe such doctrines does not concern the beliefs of the intelligent, whether in the East or the West.

In ancient Egypt Reincarnation was taught, but to the multitude it was not fully given out; this accounts for the misunderstandings of those archaeologists who have mistaken the exoteric for the esoteric teachings. Here again we find also the symbolical teachings as to the destiny of the various principles of man after disintegration; for the Egyptians recognized seven principles as do the Theosophists. These teachings must not be confused with the doctrine of Reincarnation as applied to the case of the immortal Soul. The latter doctrine was fully understood, but the doctrine was taught only in the Sacred Schools and given to the multitude in veiled language.

The Egyptians communicated some of their knowledge to the Greeks, and certain great Greek philosophers were initiated by the Egyptian priests. Plato's *Phaedrus* is a description of the career of the immortal part of man and its relation to its earthly tenelements, couched in Greek modes of expression. The Neo-Platonists of Alexandria also taught Reincarnation. Plotinus says:

The soul, though of divine origin, and proceeding from the regions on high, becomes merged in the dark receptacle of the body, and being naturally a posterior god, it descends hither through a certain voluntary inclination, for the sake of power and of adorning inferior concerns. By this means it receives a knowledge of its latent powers, and exhibits a variety of operations peculiar to its nature, which by perpetually abiding in an incorporeal habit, and never proceeding into energy, would have been bestowed in vain. . . . Through an abundance of desire the soul becomes profoundly merged into matter, and no longer totally abides with the universal soul. Yet our souls are able alternately to rise from hence, carrying back with them an experience of what they have known and suffered in their fallen state; and whence they will learn how

blessed it is to abide in the intelligible world, and by a comparison, as it were, of contraries, will more plainly perceive the excellence of a superior state. For the experience of evil produces a clearer knowledge of good. This is accomplished in our souls according to the circulations of time, in which a conversion takes place from subordinate to more exalted natures.

In the early days of the Christian era there were Schools which sought to preserve the ancient *Gnosis* and the teachings of the Sacred Mysteries throughout the rising tide of materialism and corruption. The Gnostics and the Essenes were two of these Schools. They admittedly had esoteric teachings for the initiated and exoteric teachings for the multitude. Many of the Church Fathers taught Reincarnation as a doctrine of Christianity; and it continued to be an essential part of Christian philosophy until the growth of Western influences caused it to be expunged from the canon. Justin Martyr speaks of the soul inhabiting more than one human body; but also says that very evil souls are punished by being incarnated in beasts.

Origen advocated the teaching most strongly. He says:

If our course be not marked out according to our works before this life, how is it true that it is not unjust in God that the elder should serve the younger and be hated, before he had done things deserving of servitude and of hatred?

Many other writers of the early Church also held views favorable to Reincarnation; but at the Council of Constantinople, in the year 551, the teaching was condemned and removed from the canon of the Church. Needless to point out, a teaching which upholds man's divinity and responsibility was a thorn in the side of those influences which sought to establish a system of ecclesiastical jurisdiction based on the priestly office of intercession, and on the doctrine of original sin removable by vicarious atonement.

If we ask why modern Christianity does not teach Reincarnation, the answer is that modern Christianity has been specially edited so as not to teach it. The books constituting the Bible are a selection; some of those re-

jected as "apocryphal" teach Reincarnation, e. g., the "Book of Wisdom." St. Augustine says:

The very thing which is now called the "Christian" religion really was known to the ancients, nor was it wanting at any time from the beginnings of the human race up to the time Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which had previously existed, began to be called Christian, and this in our days is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received that name.—(*Opera*, I, 12)

The esoteric teachings of Christ — those which he gave to his disciples — have not come down to us. If ever recorded they were suppressed and afterwards lost. We have only a few of the parables and ethical teachings which he gave to the multitude;*

* There are however not a few passages in the *Logia* of Jesus which point clearly to the real esoteric teachings. For instance:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth for ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—*John*, viii. 32-36.

and to these have been added gleanings from Paganism, Neo-Platonism, etc., and a pile of dogmas accumulated by the ecclesiasticism of subsequent centuries. But we have no philosophical teachings as the Oriental religions have. Hence Reincarnation is not specially taught in modern Christianity. It is this fact which, among others of a similar nature, explains why modern Christianity is so powerless in the face of present-day human problems, and why it derives strength from the natural intuition of the human heart, rather than gives strength.

VI

REINCARNATION THE MASTER-KEY FOR MODERN PROBLEMS

IT is impossible to over-estimate the effect which a belief in Reincarnation is destined to produce in modern thought. We have the inner conviction of our immortality and solidarity, but our reason, instead of reinforcing this conviction, contradicts it, because that reason has been fed on such false teachings. If, on the contrary, the reason were to confirm and explain the inner voice, our faculties would combine towards the same end instead of neutralizing each other.

The vague profession of a belief in immortality is a very different thing from a conviction of it, and there are all degrees and stages between the two. The teachings of Theosophy can turn our professed beliefs

into convictions strong enough to affect our ideas and conduct; and the process is one of gradual growth. Students of Theosophy, who have sought to make its teachings the guiding rules of their daily lives, gradually acquire a new way of regarding life which affects all their views and actions. A sense of the plenitude of time grows up in them and enables them to act as beings with an eternal past stretching behind them and an eternal future before. The feeling that every effort counts and that it is never too late to begin an enterprise inspires them with a new energy. Most important of all, the sentiment of hope is revived; for, while the anthology of our modern literature breathes throughout a note of despair at untimely death, faded hopes ("never to return — alas!"), and unrealized aspirations, the Theosophist knows that all ebbings are but temporary and must be followed by renewed flows. To him death is but an episode; the fading of youthful enthusiasms is a temporary process due to physical conditions. Inspired with this conviction,

he ceases more and more to be dominated by these passing conditions, and preserves eternal hope in his spirit if he cannot as yet do it in his lower principles.

When we think of the note of despair that is filling the world in consequence of lack of knowledge, we begin to realize what a knowledge of Reincarnation with its assurance of immortality may mean. The rush for wealth and luxury, the hurry and impatience of life, are founded on our pessimistic beliefs. If a man asks himself, as all must do sometimes, "What am I here for, and what is the object of life?" the only answers he can make are, first, to shelve the question — banish it to the back of the mind — or to try to feed his hopes and ambitions on the prospect of the theological heaven — a prospect which appeals rather to the wish for consolation and release from effort than to the noble aspiration for more service, greater victories. In both cases the answers are emasculating and calculated to narcotize the human spirit. But Reincarnation holds out the prospect — a prospect which

becomes ever more certain and sure as we grow in knowledge — of renewed youth and joy, fresh opportunities, continued loving service among fellow-hearts, victory upon victory won over the frailties of human nature, and a limitless vista of Life and realization in spheres of consciousness so vast and full that we can not form the faintest conception of them. This is truly a conception calculated to give back to humanity its forgotten vigor and banish all that feebleness and vacillation of thought so characteristic of it at present. When we have again this world-old knowledge we may regain the paradise we have lost and discover what lost elixir quickened the nerves of the mighty men of old and endowed them with such godlike vigor.

Age is but a condition of the body (and even the stiffness of age is not inevitable; in true health it would be unknown); the Soul never grows old, and the more we make its Life our own, the more do we succeed in keeping eternally young and fresh. Death is a sleep in a sense truer than the poets

knew ; for it is attended by a fresh awakening and renewed vigor. The loves of youth, which we so vainly regret, will be born again — but next time more purified from the cloying element of passion. The delusions die — and well it is so — but the seed remains and next time we will love more truly and less personally.

And the death of those we love? What a terrible thing for those who do not believe in immortality! What doubtful consolation for those who have only the uncertain beliefs of theology! But Theosophists feel that the real Man still lives; and that all that was best and most lovable in him dwells eternally in the realms of Soul, where there is true communion and perfect understanding. Freed from the afflictions of mortal life, that loved Soul feels those It loves, helping them interiorly in their own struggles.*

* This has nothing to do with "Spiritualism." Theosophy expressly teaches that the Ego in Devachan can never appear to people on earth except under the most exceptional conditions, such as would

If Reincarnation helps us in prospect, it can help us equally in retrospect. For it is no small inspiration to look back and feel that we are somebody; that our mortal clay conceals an eternal Soul vested with knowledge and power; that we are on a pilgrimage of our own choosing — masters of our destiny, not pieces of driftwood. The great purposes of Nature and Deity are our own purposes; we will them. It is only the wayward personal desires that cause us temporary aberrations from the Path we are treading. It helps us to “will our destiny,” to make our will identical with the Universal Will.

There is no problem, among the many vexed ones of life, which Reincarnation will not clear up. It is a perfect master-key. And

require the presence of a real Teacher and could never occur in a séance-room. What appears or communicates in a séance-room is only a phantasm created partly of the astral substance of medium and sitters and partly (in many cases) of the *kāma-rūpa* or “spook” of deceased persons, which is a wholly irresponsible and unmoral or immoral entity. On the dangers and delusions of Spiritualism see other Manuals.

it is no new invention, but a bringing of our philosophy into line with our secret intuitions of the Truth. It is in fact a revelation; and as all real revelations must, it carries conviction with it, demonstrating itself by its own obvious verity. May this key of the ancient Mysteries unlock many a door that bars the way of human progress!

VII

REINCARNATION IN MODERN LITERATURE

THE works of the poets and other writers show that the truth has always been felt in the heart, though hindered in expression by the overlying mass of mental disabilities and prejudices. The Higher Mind in man, whose seat is in the Heart, *knows and sees*; but it needs the help of the lower intellectual functions to interpret its knowledge into terms which can be expressed in language. When these intellectual functions instead of interpreting, throw up clouds of doubt and obscurity, the result is not a teaching but a poetical aspiration or a pious conjecture. But it speaks well for the truth of a teaching that it should have survived in this intuitive form through so much discouragement. It should be noted that the writers have used,

for want of a better word, the term "Metempsychosis"; but they do not mean animal transmigration.



SELECTIONS FROM POETRY AND PROSE

EDWIN ARNOLD

Nay, but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth,
"These will I wear today!"
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.—*Song Celestial*



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

A presence strange at once and known
Walked with me as my guide,
The skirts of some forgotten life
Trailed noiseless at my side.

Was it a dim-remembered dream
Or glimpse through aeons old?
The secret which the mountains kept
The river never told.—*A Mystery*

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

A prescient lore
Springs from some life outlived of yore.
O swift instructive startling gleams
Of deep soul-knowledge; not as dreams
For aye ye vaguely dawn and die,
But oft with lightning certainty
Pierce through the dark oblivious brain
To make old thoughts and memories plain;
Thoughts which perchance must travel back
Across the wild bewildering track
Of countless aeons.



BAYARD TAYLOR

All outward vision yields to that within
Whereof nor creed nor canon holds the key;
We only feel that we have ever been
And evermore shall be.

The poet came to the land of the East
When spring was in the air,
The East was dressed for a wedding feast
So young she seemed and fair,
And the poet knew the land of the East,
His soul was native there.

All things to him were the visible forms
Of early and precious dreams,
Familiar visions that mocked his quest
Beside the western streams,
Or gleamed in the gold of the clouds unrolled
In the sunset's dying beams.



WALT WHITMAN

Facing West from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of
maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle
almost circled:
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the
vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage,
and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and
the spice islands,
Long having wandered since, round the earth hav-
ing wandered,
Now I face home again, very pleased and joyous.

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of
many deaths.
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times
before.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
And odor from Dreamland sent,
Which makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a something that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere;
Of mem'ries that come and go not;
Like music once heard by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it;
A something so shy it would shame it
To make it a show.
A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know:
As though I had lived it and dreamed it,
As though I had acted and schemed it
Long ago.



WADDINGTON

Where wert thou, Soul, ere yet my body born
Became thy dwelling place? Didst thou on earth
Or in the clouds, await this body's birth,
Or by what chance upon that winter's morn
Didst thou this body find, a babe forlorn?
Didst thou in sorrow enter, or in mirth,
Or for a jest perchance, to try its worth
Thou tookest flesh, ne'er from it to be torn?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell;
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.



DAVID HUME

The soul, if immortal, existed before our birth.
What is incorruptible must be ungenerable.
Metempsychosis [reincarnation] is the only system
of immortality that Philosophy can hearken to.



WORDSWORTH

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,
And cometh from afar.



PROFESSOR WILLIAM KNIGHT

If we could legitimately determine any question
of belief by the number of its adherents, the *quod*
semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus would apply
to metempsychosis [reincarnation] more fitly than to

any other. I think it is quite as likely to be revived and to come to the front again as any rival theory.



PROFESSOR FRANCIS BOWEN

The doctrine of metempsychosis [reincarnation] may almost claim to be a natural or innate belief in the human mind, if we may judge from its wide diffusion among the nations of the earth and its prevalence throughout the historical ages.



GEORGE MACDONALD

We cannot yet have learned all that we are meant to learn through the body. How much of the teaching, even of this world, can the most diligent and most favored man have exhausted before he is called to leave it? Is all that remains lost?



EDWARD YOUNG

Look nature through; 'tis revolution all,
All change, no death. Day follows night, and night
The dying day; stars rise and set, and set and rise.
Earth takes the example. All to re-flourish fades
As in a wheel: all sinks to reascend;
Emblems of man who passes, not expires.

WILLIAM SHARP

None sees the slow and upward sweep
 By which the soul from life-depths deep
 Ascends, — unless, mayhap, when free,
 With each new death we backward see
 The long perspective of our race
 Our multitudinous past lives trace.



ALFRED TENNYSON

Yet how should I for certain hold,
 Because my memory is so cold,
 That I first was in human mold?

.

It may be that no life is found,
 Which only to one engine bound
 Falls off, but cycles always round.

As old mythologies relate,
 Some draught of Lethe might await
 The slipping thro' from state to state.

.

But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
 Some legend of a fallen race
 Alone might hint of my disgrace;

.

Or if thro' lower lives I came —
 Tho' all experience past became
 Consolidate in mind and frame —

I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.

—*The Two Voices*

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 in Nature. 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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