THE ESOTERIC BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY

OR

Theosophy and Christian Doctrine

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"That which is called the Christian Religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity."

St. Augustine.

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PREFACE

Part I. of the following Essays was published in pamphlet form in April, 1891. Part II. was published in the same manner in 1893. Parts III. and IV. are now offered as a further contribution, together with an Introduction, which, it is hoped, will make the whole subject clearer to those who have not hitherto had any acquaintance whatever with Theosophical literature, and Theosophical teachings.

A certain amount of technicality will, I trust, be pardoned by those who are not Theosophical students. Hints and phrases are sometimes used which are only intended for Theosophists; their explanation would entail an amount of matter which could not be introduced in these, somewhat fragmentary, Essays.

It remains to add that the THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is not responsible for any of the opinions herein expressed, since the members of that Society are not pledged individually or collectively to any creed, doctrine, or interpretation; save only to

the principle of UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. This work, therefore, must be considered merely as setting forth the author's interpretation of the Esoteric Philosophy of the *Secret Doctrine* known more generally as *Theosophy*, in its relation to Christian Doctrine.

THE AUTHOR.

January, 1895.

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this work, the *Esoteric Basis of Christianity*, implies the existence of a foundation or origin of the Christian religion other than that which is commonly accepted. It also implies that there are some hidden or inner truths or doctrines which lie deeper than those forms, creeds, or doctrines which are associated with the term *Christian* in the popular conception. The historical difficulties of the Bible narrative, the want of reliable information respecting the central figure of the Gospels, the uncertainty respecting the date and authorship of the various books of the Old and New Testaments, the obscurity of the early centuries of the Christian era, and the astonishing contradictions among various sections of the Christian community respecting the very essentials of their faith, though all claim their authority from the same records : these matters are well known to all who have passed beyond the mere Bible-class curriculum, and are seeking for more light and certainty than can be afforded from the orthodox

presentations. They find but little encouragement in their search, from the accredited teachers of the religion they are seeking to understand. Their very attitude of mind is regarded as a want of *faith*, and they are repelled and alienated where they should find sympathy and help.

There are thousands of such, to whom the traditional teachings have become for ever impossible, but who still feel that behind the exoteric forms and records there is a real basis of truth, which those forms serve to conceal rather than to reveal. Such a basis is presented in Theosophy, and we shall now attempt to outline its teachings and method in the relation of some of its fundamental principles to Christian doctrine and tradition.

That which has been the highest and noblest theme of human thought and aspiration in all ages, that which is the object alike of philosophy, of science, and of religion, is the Truth concerning the nature of the great First Cause, which some name *God*, the nature of Man, and the relation which subsists between these two, God and Man. The very slightest acquaintance with the nature of the problem, with the limitations of human knowledge contrasted with the infinitude of time and space, and the unlimited possibilities of progress and evolution which lie behind and in front of the individual and the race, suggests at once that in the very nature of the case there must be

a knowledge which is exoteric or revealed, in so far as it has already been discovered or made known to mankind; and an esoteric or hidden knowledge, in so far as that knowledge is still beyond his reach, is still veiled in *mystery*. But further than this, it is clearly seen that the knowledge which is exoteric, in so far as it has already been discovered and formulated, may be beyond the reach of any but the most highly trained intellects or the deepest intuitions, and must therefore be esoteric for the great majority. Any religion, or philosophy, or science which is to be presented in a popular form, in a form which can touch the minds of the masses, must be presented in popular language, in language, that is to say, of common and familiar experiences of every-day life. But in doing this, the subject presented is degraded and obscured just in proportion as it is one requiring the utmost refinements of language and thought. In philosophy, this is well recognised; and very little attempt is made to popularise this department of human research, because any such attempt would necessarily stultify the result. In science, all that is popularised is the merest externals of the phenomena of the world of sense perception; and it is well understood that a man must qualify himself by much arduous work, if he would understand well a mere portion of the results which have been already attained in the field of inductive research.

But when we come to religion, to that which should be the height and depth of all knowledge, which should unite philosophy and science, and claim as its own their utmost efforts and furthest results, we find quite a different method; an assumption of superiority and an independent order of phenomena, which separates it from all other departments of human experience, and makes of it the great exception.

We speak in this respect not of religion *per se*, considered apart from any particular forms or creeds, but of the Christian religion in its traditional methods and ecclesiastical authority. The effects of that tradition and authority are too clearly written on the page of history, for any mistake to be made as to the relation which it bears, in its authoritative presentation, to science and philosophy. The influence of ecclesiasticism has ever been on the side of darkness and bondage, not for freedom and light. The darkness and cruelty of the Christian era has been deepest, when the authority of the Church was most supreme. Every advance in knowledge and freedom during the present century has been won in the face of bitter opposition on the part of orthodox religion. It is little wonder, therefore, that at the present day, thinking men and women of all classes should find themselves compelled to repudiate Christianity; that science and philosophy will have none of it; and that even social and moral reforms are

brought about in spite of, rather than through its influence and initiative.

Were it not " Bible truth ", it would be considered the greatest insult to human reason, that any should be found who could accept as history the Bible narratives. But the children of Christian parents are brought up by the million to accept the Bible as literal history, presumably because their adult parents do so also. From thousands of pulpits, and in thousands of Sunday schools, the Bible stories are put forward as reliable history. The result is deplorable, and is seen in two ways: in the narrowness and bigotry of ' orthodoxy ', cramping and warping the judgment and intuition; and in a reaction which throws men altogether out of a religion which they have discovered to have been playing them false, into a life of irreligion, if not of positive vice. We can excuse childish things in children, but it is lamentable to find that the teachers and leaders should thus discredit their religion with those who are no longer babes.

If it were well recognised that religion, like philosophy and science, is necessarily progressive; that it has its outer or popular form, and its inner or esoteric aspects; and if it were a legitimate step for all who were qualified to pass naturally from the exoteric to the esoteric, finding at each step those who could initiate them into a deeper knowledge, which would harmonise their own expe-

rience and those of their fellows, in all departments and phases of human nature, then it is possible that religion might occupy the highest place of honour, and its representatives belong to the best and noblest of the race.

But as it is, there is no choice offered us but to accept or reject an exoteric form, antagonistic to our deepest convictions, to our commonest experiences,and to our innate sense of justice and morality. And if behind the exoteric forms, we desire to discover a deeper meaning, a hidden truth which we may suspect to exist, we find, not help, but antagonism from those who would profess to be our guides and teachers in the " mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven. "

If therefore there exist such a thing as an esoteric basis of Christianity, an inner truth underlying the external forms and doctrines, either not yet discovered, or if known at one time, now lost and obscured, such an esoteric basis is no part of the teachings and methods of professed Christianity ; and it is more than likely that any attempt to disclose it will meet with strenuous opposition and denunciation from those who should be the first to welcome it.

That form of truth which satisfies one race or generation, is always found to be insufficient for the next. There is no standing still, but always transition. Those who cling to the old forms remain behind as the ' orthodox ' ; they are the

drag, preventing the cycle from moving too fast. Those who press forward and anticipate the new departure, are always in the minority, and have to suffer denunciation and persecution. The concepts of 'God' and of his relation to human nature which are found in the old theology, may still be popular; but the " new theology " is evidence that the time is close at hand, when the teachings which have been put forward by the *few* will become generally recognised. It is more than likely that many of the teachings now put forward by Theosophy, and which meet with the most vehement opposition and denial, will be quietly appropriated in the next century, and become well recognised tenets of orthodox Christianity. There are already signs of it on every hand in the literature of to-day.

The question here, let it be noted, is not one as to the necessary existence of mystery within mystery in the department of religion, as in all other departments of human experience; but as to whether the particular forms and doctrines of the Christian religion arise from, or contain within them the highest and furthest results of human knowledge, and an adequate answer in terms of those results, to the great problem of our own nature and existence.

That traditional and historical Christianity does not comply with these results is clear enough, in its divorce from science and philosophy ; but it

may be that Christian doctrine really does contain the necessary elements, and that in its origin and inception it was not so divorced. This is a matter upon which considerable light is likely to be thrown by historical and critical research ; but we wish to approach the matter now from a different point of view, and in relation to general principles rather than to a line of evidence requiring peculiar qualifications for its successful application.

Looking over the vista of human history, we are able to trace a cyclic law of rise and fall, a rythmic outbreathing and inbreathing like that of summer and winter, producing well-marked epochs of activity and repose, periods of *revival* alternating with a time of decline or stagnation. Families, communities, nations, races, all come under the operation of this law. The cycles which we are able to trace, however, in what is known to us of history, must be regarded merely as minor cycles, included within the operation of some larger period, of which our historical records cannot give us any adequate account. That which has commonly been regarded as *ancient* history, is beginning to be understood as being very modern indeed, in comparison with the real antiquity of man ; and the proofs are gradually accumulating of the existence, in remote ages, of a degree of civilisation which equalled, if indeed it did not far surpass, our present boasted achievements. In the light of the teachings of Theosophy we trace this

rythmic or cyclic motion deeper than the mere external events of history; these *events* being in themselves effects, not causes. Like the rise and fall of the tides, due not to the actions or qualities of the individual or combined drops of the ocean, but to great cosmic laws which the ocean as a whole must obey; so the great cosmic laws of BEING carry with them the tide of human evolution, in rise and fall, of which the *events* of history are but the merest ripples left on the sands of time, quickly effaced and obliterated.

It comes to pass, therefore, that in human history certain results are attained, certain periods are observable, in which great progress is apparently made in literature, science, art, philosophy, or religion; but these results, instead of being handed on intact for future races to work upon and enlarge, become obscured or altogether lost; to be re-stated or re-discovered in a later age. From this it results that certain knowledge which at one time was exoteric, may in course of time become esoteric; either because it has been altogether lost, or because those who still hold it, find it impossible to communicate it, owing to the condition of the community or race at some particular period.

In using the terms exoteric and esoteric, therefore, I do so in a purely relative sense. There is no such thing as the esoteric *per se*. The whole universe is an open book, were we but qualified to

read it. And not merely so, but it is a part of our theosophic faith, that as we cast aside the limitations which veil our sight, the limitations of our physical sensations and desires, that which is now hidden from us becomes ours by natural right.

Seeing then that Christianity in its traditional form and orthodox presentation is so little in harmony with the furthest results of human knowledge, with certain well-established principles of reasoning, inductive and deductive, we might suspect that the operation of this cyclic law has caused it to lose its real meaning and true presentation, and left us only the shell or exoteric form of that which was once a living truth. We might suspect this not merely because of the inadequacy of Christianity, but because we trace this process of deterioration in the history of all religions, and we cannot grant to Christianity any exceptional position in this respect; unless indeed it is one of exceptional deterioration.

Let it be understood, that when I speak of *Christianity*, I speak of Christian doctrine by whatever Church or section it may be formulated, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. I do not speak of the Christian *life*, or the Christian ideal, so far as that is ethical or moral. I speak of ecclesiastical and historical Christianity; and since certain doctrines accepted by one portion of the Christian community are repudiated by another, it is out of the question to consider here as to whether

they are or are not "truly Christian"; it is sufficient that they are, or have been, associated with some portion of the community which claims to rest its teachings on the authority of the Christian Scriptures. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is largely repudiated to-day by men of eminence in the Protestant Church; but there can be no doubt as to the applicability of the term *Christian* to this doctrine. We hear something nowadays about a "new theology" and a "higher criticism", all of which is so much acknowledgment that the theology and exposition of the past has been inadequate, if not false; but still the forward movement in this respect is an attempt to adjust Christian doctrine to the imperative demands of human progress, rather than a true enlightenment originating in the Church itself.

Now it is our contention in this work, that there is a true esoteric basis underlying the historical records of Christianity; *esoteric* in the sense that the original meaning has been entirely lost or obscured, with the result that Christianity has nothing left but the merest husk and shell of what were once spiritual truths. Upon the basis of exoteric records, for the most part purely allegorical and symbolical, but having an inner meaning at one time well understood, the Church has built its fabric of Christian doctrine; accepting the exoteric and outward records as literally and historically true, and investing the very letter and

word with a supernatural and arbitrary authority which it was never intended to bear.

If this be so, how shall we regain that which has been lost; how shall we succeed, not merely in freeing ourselves from the false doctrine, but in gaining the deeper knowledge, the esoteric truth which the outward forms only serve to conceal?

It is at this point that Theosophy comes forward with a clear and definite message. It offers not merely an exposition of the exoteric records, a key which harmonises these records with the profoundest philosophy and the truest science; but it discloses the very source and fount of hidden truths, an inexhaustible mine of esoteric knowledge underlying the broken and fragmentary records of all ages, and uniting these into one harmonious whole.

When I speak of *Theosophy*, I mean something more than the teachings which have been brought into prominence through the Theosophical Society, and originating in their present form in the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky. Primarily it is to those teachings we are indebted for the present exposition; but in putting forward modern Theosophy as our immediate guide in the matter, it is necessary to guard against one or two popular misconceptions.

In the first place Theosophy is not a new system, much less is it a new religion, or a new creed. It is the oldest of the old. It has meant in previous

ages, and it means to-day, the highest and noblest conceptions of the nature of the soul and of the nature of the divine which have ever been presented to or recognised by the human mind. It means infinitely more even than that ; for it means *divine wisdom*, or the wisdom of divine beings ; while at the same time it carries with it the idea that such divine wisdom has been and can be attained by human beings, as the natural and legitimate goal of their own evolution.

Theosophy claims the best that has ever been taught by the noblest teachers the world has ever known ; not merely because the best and noblest must necessarily be a part of that wider knowledge which is included in the term, but because through its teachings we discover certain unifying principles which are found to be embodied in all these teachings ; though in their historical developments they have led to various and conflicting religious forms and systems.

But the exposition of Theosophy by its modern representatives must necessarily be partial and faulty, and liable on every side to misrepresentation and perversion. Thus we find many writers of acknowledged authority putting forward our identical teachings, and yet using every opportunity to disparage and misrepresent our aims and methods. Prof. Max Müller in his recent work on " Theosophy, or Psychological Religion ", puts forward certain views which in the main are iden-

tical with those we are endeavouring to teach ; his book being indeed a valuable contribution to our own literature. Yet with regard to the use by us of the term *Theosophy* he says that : " This venerable name, so well known among early Christian thinkers as expressing the highest knowledge of God within the reach of the human mind, has of late been so greatly misappropriated that it was high time to restore it to its proper function ". Now it is quite possible that some of our writers may have laid themselves open to a charge of misuse of the term, but it is also more than probable that the Professor is only echoing the popular misconceptions regarding the subject. But, to quote his own words : " It should be understood once and for all that one may call oneself a Theosophist without being suspected of believing in spirit-rappings, table-turnings, or any other occult sciences and black arts. " We must add to this, that it should be understood once and for all that one may call oneself a Theosophist, and may also be a member of the Theosophical Society, without being identified as such with any particular doctrines or statements put forward in theosophical literature. The Society is absolutely unsectarian, and its teachings eclectic. Its members belong to many religions and many phases of thought, and none are bound by the opinions and teachings of others. Theosophy cannot be hardened into a creed or a formal system, for its very essence and genius lies in its

escape from the bondage of forms and formulas. It is the one TRUTH which underlies all forms all phenomena, all experience. Every system of religion arises from the attempt to formulate this underlying TRUTH, to give it a definite expression in human language. The impulse is given by some great teacher, whose words in course of time become authoritative, and give rise to various creeds and dogmas or articles of *faith*. But these, from the very nature of the case, are inadequate and temporary, and as such must pass away with the changing ages. But if we can catch the underlying *principle* which the form is intended to express, we are no longer dependent on those forms of faith which place one religion in antagonism to another.

The value of modern Theosophy does not lie in any mere formulated doctrine which would supplant the creed or faith of other religions. It is not antagonistic to any form of religion, but only to the dogmatism, intolerance, and bigotry which arises therefrom. Its value lies in the disclosure of some hidden and forgotten principles, which are applicable to human experience at all times, and under all conditions, and not merely to one section of the community, to one phase of thought, or one period of human evolution.

Customs, manners, forms of thought and religion, change with the changing ages. But what we require is the TRUTH underlying all these changes ; the TRUTH which changes not, and which is yet

expressed in each and all of these temporary manifestations.

Now that TRUTH is Theosophy; and we shall reach it and understand it just in proportion as we recognise in its modern presentation, and in every presentation, an attempt—necessarily imperfect—to express this esoteric truth; and not a form of doctrine, adequate in its mere intellectual expression, to teach us the deep mysteries of our own nature and of the universe around us.

Most people, however, require a definite creed. They have been brought up to understand that all that it is needful for them to know for their 'salvation' can be expressed in a form of words; and it is very difficult for such to grasp the genius of Theosophy, in the freedom which it effects from all forms of doctrine. Thus the popular conception will represent Theosophy as a *creed*, as a new religion, in spite of all we may say. And there is indeed a distinct danger that modern Theosophy may, in course of time, follow the same lines as other teachings, and harden into a mere dogmatic form of faith.

When we examine in the light of Theosophy the sacred books of various religions, and the original sayings, so far as these are available, of the world's greatest teachers, we are able to perceive a singular uniformity. We might readily suspect that this uniformity is something more than a coincidence, apart even from the consideration that—as there

can only be one TRUTH—the highest and best teaching must always approximate to this, and therefore present a considerable amount of correspondence, when we strip it of all merely fortuitous circumstance, in the mode of its presentation.

But Theosophy gives us an actual basis for this uniformity, by disclosing once more the existence of a Hierarchy of *Initiates*, who preserve from age to age the esoteric teachings which would otherwise be entirely lost. There are several considerations which would point to the existence of such a Hierarchy—of some original source from whence all great teachers have derived their knowledge—apart from the actual evidence which Theosophy offers. The very proposition that there does exist a unifying TRUTH, an esoteric knowledge or *Theosophia*, within the reach of every member of the human race, and the natural goal of his development, carries with it the idea that such knowledge must have its living representatives.

We may state the proposition in another way. Absolute knowledge, absolute wisdom belongs only to the supremely divine, to ' God ', whatever may be conceived of under that term. But between that supreme divine intelligence which comprehends all, and the highest knowledge which is disclosed to us in exoteric forms, or which we are at present capable of grasping with our finite intellect, there is a great, a seemingly infinite gulf. Is there naught to fill that gulf? Are there no

intelligences, no beings representing all the degrees and planes of knowledge, wisdom, and power, which lie in front of man's evolution, just as behind him lie the grades and degrees of the lower kingdoms of nature. If the gulf between a moneron and a man is bridged by ascending grades of consciousness; if between an aborigine and a Plato we can trace all degrees in an ascending order of human evolution: is it not a matter of absolute certainty that the further stages of evolution—which we can perhaps as dimly conceive as the beetle which we crush under our foot can conceive of the intelligence which crushes it—should have their representative beings? If the whole creation moves in orderly succession towards one great end; if evolution has any meaning whatever as an intelligent purpose of a divine wisdom; if man must have reached his present stage through the lower degrees in the scale of Being, through ages and æons of evolution stretching behind, and with ages and æons stretching in front: is it not an absolute and logical necessity that there should be those in front of us, the "Elder Brothers" of the Race, who have passed through the stage at which we now stand, who have perfected themselves through the same trials and difficulties with which we now contend, and without which we could not reach that higher goal which can only be won by individual effort and conquest?

Furthermore, that which we may call the econ-

omy of experience, demands that the results attained by the race as a whole should not be lost. But nothing is more clear than that we possess in exoteric records a merest fractional part of the results which have been attained in various ages. Are those results lost for ever, or perchance only to be re-discovered in some happier period of human history? Have the great teachers and reformers been mere isolated individuals, appearing fortuitously at various times ; and do the portals of the grave close over their efforts, and cut them off for ever from human progress and human endeavour?

Who are those whose names are most honoured in the records of history—the great Masters and World Saviours? They are those who have taught and practised the highest renunciation, who have shown the deepest love for humanity ; those whose hearts respond to every cry of human suffering, and who in their love and pity would spend their life's blood from age to age for the salvation of their fellows. And how else should the world be saved, but by the continued efforts of these from age to age? For when we have realised the unity of Humanity, the great principle of Human Brotherhood ; when we have realised that the individual cannot separate himself from the race, either in the past, the present, or the future ; when we have understood that it is neither an accident of birth, nor yet an arbitrary divine will which makes

one man to be born a philosopher and another man a clown : we shall see that the unity and continuity of the whole demands the connecting link which is only supplied by the law of *Karma, working through reincarnation ;* and not merely bringing about the perfectment of the individual, but ensuring the results of that perfectment for the progress of the whole.

And thus we teach that behind the ever-changing scene of human history, with its apparently fortuitous events, there are those who watch over and help on the progress of human knowledge and perfection. From the " Silent Watcher ", down to the man who still moves among his fellows, not boasting of or acknowledging his connection with the great Lodge of Masters, there is an unbroken line of Initiates ; of those who have entered into a higher knowledge and a nobler purpose than that which the great majority of their fellows can as yet recognise. Hear what is said in the *Secret Doctrine* of this same " Silent Watcher ". " He is *the* ' Initiator ', called the ' GREAT SACRIFICE '. For, sitting at the threshold of LIGHT, he looks into it from within the circle of Darkness, which he will not cross ; nor will he quit his post till the last day of this life-cycle. Why does the solitary Watcher remain at his self-chosen post ? Why does he sit by the fountain of primeval Wisdom, of which he drinks no longer, as he has naught to learn which he does not know—aye,

neither on this Earth, nor in its heaven? Because the lonely, sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their *home*, are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in this limitless desert of illusions and matter called Earth-Life. Because he would fain show the way to that region of freedom and light, from which he is a voluntary exile himself, to every prisoner who has succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of flesh and illusion. Because, in short, he has sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, though but a few Elect may profit by the GREAT SACRIFICE. "

Unlimited are the possibilities which lie in front of us, yet each step must be won by trial and effort. We can only claim at any time such knowledge as we are fitted to receive, and in the very nature of the case we can only receive that for which we have fitted ourselves. If we do not *know*, it is because we are not fitted, because we have not learnt how to ask aright. Let none ask to be initiated as a favour. When he is ready he may demand it as a right, nor can it be refused; but the pass-word must first be given, the pass-word which none can be told, but each must find for himself.

The progress of the individual is not in separation from his fellows, but in closer union and identity. All great teachers have taught that individual progress is attained through renunciation; that the more we seek our individual good and

happiness, the more we shall miss it. The knowledge of unity in diversity is the sum of all knowledge. The practice of altruism is the first essential of progress. The Brotherhood of Humanity is the sum of all doctrine, and of all practice.

All TRUTH is before us as an open book; there is nothing *esoteric* save that which is so by reason of our individual limitations. Men speak of *revelation*, as if they had only to be told the truth on *divine authority* in order to recognise and accept it. But if they cannot recognise the word of God speaking in all ages, in all history, in all nature, and in their own hearts: the traditional authority which may attach to a particular book or a particular Church will only lead them into the grossest error and superstition. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the doctrine of personal salvation which the Christian Church has promulgated. The idea of enjoying a heaven of bliss, when friends, relations, even the most dearly loved ones may be doomed to unspeakable torture for ever and ever, beyond the reach of our help, is so utterly diabolical, that only those can profess to believe it whose moral sense has been utterly ruined by the terrorism of a traditional authority, under whose sway it has been their karma to fall.

But not so have taught the great Masters, and not so teaches Theosophy to-day. It says:—

Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Com-

passion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF ; a shoreless universal Essence, the light of Everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal. "

" The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which IS, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE ". (*Voice of the Silence*).

The world has never been without its Initiates, who have all derived their teaching from the one Central Lodge, and have all taught the same esoteric doctrine ; sometimes in one form, sometimes in another, according to the particular needs of those whom they addressed. But it may be asked, how are we to recognise who among the great teachers have been really Initiates ; who are those whom we may regard as speaking with authority ? We would reply, that no authority can be given, nor is it needed. The question carries with it an implied principle which has been the curse of mankind in all history ; the implication that a man may bring with him a supernatural or divine authority other than which is contained in the message he delivers. Men ever seek after a sign, and ask for a credential. Wherever a belief in the supernatural prevails, such signs are demanded, with the result that the slightest exhibition of abnormal powers is magnified into a *miracle*, and made the basis of a superstitious and credulous

faith. The existence of abnormal phenomena is a matter of scientific evidence. Modern ' miracles ' are not one whit less numerous than ancient ones, but it is only a certain section of the community who now claims them as miracles, or as a basis for dogma. A miracle is simply an unexplained phenomenon having a supposed religious significance. The Roman Catholic Church has still her miracles by which she holds sway over her devotees. The Protestant Church asserts the age of miracles to be past, yet still holds to the miraculous in Bible narrative as proof of doctrine. Spiritualists invest their phenomena with a supernatural authority, and very many give a servile and superstitious obedience to the ravings of any one claiming to communicate with the " spirits. " Materialistic science falls into the opposite error, and in denying the supernatural denies also the superphysical. Those who deny the existence of a spiritual world, refuse to believe in certain abnormal phenomena, because those phenomena have ignorantly been labelled miraculous or supernatural, whereas they are only super-physical. We do not reach the spiritual world immediately we part company with the material plane of sense-perception ; and science must sooner or later recognise the teachings of Theosophy with regard to the existence of various *planes* of matter and consciousness transcending the physical ; of which the 7th or highest can alone be called the truly *spiritual ;*

and the phenomena of which are utterly beyond our reach in our present stage of evolution. Most so called *psychic* phenomena belong only to the *astral* plane (See diagram, page 30).

But if we wish to know who are the true Initiates we must be able to recognise for ourselves the one message, the one truth which they all proclaim. It is no use asking for credentials ; the message must be its own justification. Those who ask for credentials are just those who least understand what they demand. Orthodoxy is always demanding such credentials, and persecuting and rejecting the noblest and best teachers, because in the very nature of the case they cannot comply with the demand. Theosophy claims to come from those who *know*. But it does not ask acceptance of its teachings on that account, but for the inherent truth of the teachings themselves, which are found to harmonise with the facts of our own experience, and with the teachings of the best and wisest in all ages. We cannot be far wrong when we can lay claim to the best and furthest results that have been reached in any age or by any teacher, so far as these are known exoterically. But there is a deeper truth, an esoteric teaching which we also disclose. It is no use, however, to look for that, if we cannot discern the truth in all its numerous forms and symbols. Of what use is it to look for the precious metal, if we cannot recognise its signs in the ore and dross ? Theosophy enables us to

detect the pure metal in the slag-heaps and rubbish of exoteric creeds and religions. For it is the fate of all things that come into this lower world to be materialised and debased, to take a physical and outward form, which often totally obscures the pure incarnating ray.

And in proportion as men worship the outward form, they miss the inner truth; nor can a physical phenomenon ever be a demonstration of a spiritual truth, save in so far as all phenomena are the witnesses of eternal verities. Theosophy finds its justification in all phenomena, not in any special ones.

The message of Theosophy, therefore, both in its explanation of things present, and in the vista of human attainment which it discloses, is clear and harmonious. But if we are to reach to the goal of our perfection we must comply, at every step, with the necessary conditions. These conditions are not arbitrary, but natural; they are not pains and penalties and pious mortifications imposed by a Church in the name of deity, but the natural conditions of our own inner nature in its relation to the outer. Why the upward road of our evolution should only be accomplished through pain and suffering is not yet clear; but that road is hard enough, without introducing arbitrary and unnatural difficulties. It is so hard indeed, so difficult even to discover, that men prefer the easier way of compliance with outward conditions, and deem

that it may be accomplished by religious observances. Here again the Church has ever been an unfaithful witness, lulling men into a fancied security through the observance of her ordinances. Yet still it is true that " narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it."

The conditions, we say, are natural, not artificial. And the natural law which operates is one which all religions recognise in theory, but fail to carry out in practice, because natural law has been separated from spiritual law, and religion invested with a supernatural quality. The natural law of our progress is simply our renunciation and disentanglement from the illusions of physical life and sensation. " The self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear : there is no place for both ". (*Voice of the Silence*). How much this implies is not even guessed at by the great majority. The very nature of the illusion is misunderstood, otherwise men would not speak of passing beyond the veil at death. Renunciation of the world, of all that most hold dear, will not in itself bring spiritual knowledge or enlightenment ; and if performed merely at the dictates of a religious authority or an emotional fervour, will often lead to deeper obscurity.

The spiritual life and knowledge which we must win is no mere quality of religious devotion. It is a real and true knowledge of the unseen world, of

that *inner* world on which the outer rests, and from which our own phenomenal lives, and all phenomena of *nature* springs. 'God' works in the stone as well as in the human heart, and the method by which we apprehend his work is that which we call the *natural law* of each. In neither the stone nor the human heart do we look for direct intervention of an arbitrary will. That which the heart can manifest forth of the divine nature by reason of its complex organism and subtle qualities, is infinitely more than the stone can reveal through its inertness and unawakened consciousness. And if the heart be near or far from 'God', it is so only in this sense, that it can respond more or less to the vibrations of a higher plane. The stone is dead and inert because it cannot so respond. But the heart may also be dead to the divine order of nature, in which case it acts only under the influence of physical and vital laws, nor can it when once dead respond to the higher vibrations, any more than the dead flower or the stone can open and unfold to the magnetic influence of the summer sunshine. The organism must be responsive, whether it be in stone or in plant, in animal life, or in the human heart and mind; nor can we presume to find throughout the whole range of the seen and the unseen aught but the appropriate operation of *natural* law, which indeed is the very nature and Being of 'God'; and which, could it be altered or changed by caprice, would shatter at a

blow our faith in the immutability of the divine Word ; that faith which alone makes life bearable in a world which otherwise were one of mocking shadows. Be assured that though with ' God ' all things are possible, the stone cannot speak with the human tongue, neither can the heart which is dead to the higher vibrations, receive the divine influence, though it may still serve the physical man for a brief span of years.

Spiritual knowledge is a real knowledge of our own SELF ; accurate, scientific, assured, and therefore *potent* ; not helpless and inane as at present, a mere *something* which we hope to have *revealed* to us when we pass the portals of the grave. The mere religious ideal or *faith* is of no service here. All such ideals will have their due fulfilment ; but they are not the *reality*. So long as there inheres in them a *personal* quality, they are temporary and finite ; they are part of the hopes and desires of our lower nature, and belong not to that ONE REALITY which lives and moves in all, and is free from all conditioning qualities.

To renounce everything in this world under the stimulus of religious enthusiasm is comparatively easy : we see examples of it in every form of religion. It is not the result of any one ' faith ', but is produced under the influence of the most diverse forms of belief. The extreme sacrifice of life for a religious ideal is also exemplified in various forms of religion, and when examined

in the light of a higher doctrine, which takes no account of the truth or falsehood of one religion as against another, and which understands the term ' life ' in a much higher sense than mere physical existence, it is seen to be only an exalted form of selfishness.

We say again, that the straight and narrow *Path*, which few find, lies outside of the quality of any mere religious belief, though a man may be found willing to die a physical death for the sake of that belief. It is far easier to die such a death, under the inspiration of a religious ideal, than it is to find the straight and narrow way which leadeth to life ETERNAL. For the life ETERNAL, that which we call the ONE LIFE, lies outside and beyond all personal aspirations, and hopes, and fears. It lives and moves in all, and has lived and will live from eternity to eternity, ever the great enigma to all that is personal and temporary. The personal devotee who loses his life for his *faith*, does so in the hope of a personal reward, it is still the personal " I " who will meet in heaven with all " I " hold blessed ; " my " friends, " my " loved ones, " my " ideal of a personal God and a personal Saviour .This is not a renunciation, but an intensification of the personal, and therefore temporary and finite. Far deeper than that lies the PATH to life ETERNAL. It lies *within*, not without ; in the *innermost* of our own *Being*, in that *Life* which is itself the ONE LIFE,

the ONE BEING. The life ETERNAL which we must find will never be found in a heaven of personal bliss, where we seem to approach 'God' as we would approach the throne of an earthly king. To *know* 'God' is to know our own life and *Being* as part of his *Life* and *Being*, and to merge all personal interests in that larger life which is "no respecter of persons". Let those who can do so, put away from themselves all that conceit which places them in some specially favoured relation to a 'God' who takes a personal interest in every little triviality of their life. For if we are to understand the term 'God' in any sense which is adequate to the conception of the universe in its totality, as the sum of all Being, all consciousness, and all manifestation, and not merely as an expression of one or other of those anthropomorphic conceptions which have gathered round special names of the deity in various ages: then we must recognise that that ONE LIFE, expressing itself in countless forms of manifestation, is subject to no such qualities as those of like or dislike, of love or hatred, of good or evil; but that as it lives and moves, and has its being in and through all, there are no individual interests, whether it be those of an atom or an insect, a man or an archangel, which are more or less to IT than any other. And if any say that their God is a jealous God or if any other qualities be given, we may readily assent—only that God is *a* God and not GOD; is

some concept of God, coloured and limited by personal considerations.

But this concept of an impersonal God is deep, mystical, esoteric, hidden. Nor can we wonder that its place should be taken by exoteric forms of religion, based on the personal needs of devotees. Yet, perchance, if the priesthood itself had not lost the esoteric doctrine, the exoteric forms would be less conflicting and degrading.

But if we would penetrate the secret of our own life, the riddle of the Sphinx, the mystery of the ages: we need in a superlative degree the quality of *faith*. Not faith in a creed or doctrine, not faith in something done for us, but faith in what we can do ourselves, that is to say faith in the possibilities of our own nature. Faith governs all action in which we look forward to results not yet realised. The agnostic scientist, who devotes his life to the experimental methods of inductive philosophy, has faith in a certain inviolable order of nature. If he thought that order could be altered at any time by supernatural agency or caprice, his faith and motive for work would be shattered in a moment. Apart from the arbitrary use of the term, as *the* faith, we find that all religions have this element in common, that is to say, a belief in something in human destiny which transcends those affairs which pertain to our temporary physical life. But faith, like *intuition*, is apt to shade off by imperceptible degrees into imagination. It needs

to be checked by reason and confirmed by experience. Now the faith of the theosophist partakes of this religious quality in the highest degree, without being limited by the creeds or beliefs of any particular religion. It is a far deeper and truer faith in the ideal of human perfection than any which can be offered by any one religion, because it recognises all religions as more or less imperfect efforts towards this perfection. But the great distinction lies in this, that the perfection which Theosophy discloses is a *natural* process, and is not arbitrarily separated from "natural law", nor is it the mere perfection of isolated personalities, but the perfection of humanity as a whole, through one great evolution in which the whole 'creation' partakes. Thus all science and all philosophy, as well as all religion, belongs to Theosophy; which is greater than any one, as the whole is greater than a part. It lifts us above the region of sectarian strife, to the apprehension of a deeper principle of unity; enabling us to lay the foundation for a nobler and better social life, in which the observance of a particular form of religion will no longer constitute the test of respectability, or serve as a cloak for hypocrisy.

As there is only one RELIGION, so there is only one *Theo-sophia*, of which all exoteric teachings are but broken and reflected lights. For all that we can have in outward form must come *from those who know*. And in all ages, these, watching over the

progress of their fellows, have given out again and yet again, in many and divers forms, from their own store of knowledge, for the enlightenment of the world. But the history of all such efforts has been one of gradual debasement and obscuration. Men cannot as yet distinguish the pearl of truth from the earthly scrapings they rake together in their short and passion-driven lives. Therefore, lest the pearl itself should be defiled, it is concealed in a shell, in an exoteric form of doctrine, in allegory and fable, which those who lack the necessary qualifications cannot penetrate. This was the invariable method. All great teachers have had their exoteric doctrines for the uninitiated, their esoteric teaching for the few. A thorough understanding of this gives us the key to much that is obscure in ancient mythology and symbology. We find the same allegories among nations widely separated by geographical barriers, and by other circumstances which make it highly improbable that they could have borrowed from each other, or have derived their teachings from any but a common and very ancient source.

There must have existed at one time a perfect art of symbology and mythology, a rare genius for expressing and yet concealing the profoundest secrets and teachings of that ancient wisdom or *Theo-sophia*, which is the root and origin of all the historical records and systems. This art was a faithful following of the symbology of ' nature ' in

her outward manifestation ; for in her outward garb she ever displays to us her deepest secrets, yet conceals them so effectually that we see naught but *common* objects, where we might perceive the glory of the divine presence. The art, and the understanding of it has been so utterly lost these many centuries, that men now read their Bible allegories with no further discernment than the literal narrative ; and accept as ' gospel truth ' in their own Scriptures the most absurd and improbable fables, while denying in other records the veracity of similar stories. The art is lost. It was a copying of the divine expression in the visible symbology of nature ; a deep spiritual intuition of eternal verities, which, when brought into the realm of time and space, can only produce an allegory and a symbol, behind which is that *mystery* which only the *Mystic* can sense. Nor is the materialism of the present cycle more apparent than in that loss. To the learned theologians and philologists of the Schools, the Bibles of the world have become a mere dead-letter narrative, behind which there is no esotericism. To the learned scientists, nature presents no higher aspect than that of a fortuitous conglomeration of unconscious and irresponsible atoms of *dead* matter.

Part of the veil hiding the inner meaning of the ancient records has been drawn aside in Madame Blavatsky's great works : " Isis Unveiled ", and the " Secret Doctrine ". We find the profound-

field for expansion. The well-known historical conflict between science and religion, however, is misnamed. It is not really a conflict with *religion*, but with a special form of ecclesiastical authority and dogmatic theology. We can conceive of no religion properly so called which is not also scientific, nor of any science which is not religious. True science must include spiritual and psychic, as well as physical man. Something more than half of man belongs to the invisible world. Can we imagine what the history of the Christian era would have been, had the Church not asserted her dogmatic and arbitrary authority? Can we imagine what society would be like to-day, if all the strife and bitterness of creed and sect were broken down? The majority of professing Christians are not merely afraid of being *unsettled* in their faith by the advances of modern science and criticism, but they carry their distrust into their social relationships, and label their fellows with credit or dishonour, according to their profession of belief. From this springs all the hypocrisy and shallow veneer of our social order; while underneath are unspeakable evils which modern Christianity is powerless to touch; at the very name of which indeed all *respectable* people draw aside their garments and pass on.

If criticism succeeded in destroying the historical validity of the Gospel history, what would be left of modern Christianity? Are professing Chris-

tians prepared for such a result? Perhaps it is because they are not prepared that the matter is still so uncertain. Religion must rest on the basis of all history and all science; and when Christianity has become thus expanded, the particular events on which it is supposed to rest will have lost their importance. Could those supposed events be proved, beyond possibility of doubt, to be false as history, the effect would be disastrous in the extreme, would destroy at one blow the *faith* of thousands, and fill our lunatic asylums. Such proofs and such changes must come gradually. It is notable that when Mr. Sinnett suggested to one of the Masters as a conclusive proof of the possibility of certain occult powers, that a copy of the London *Times* should be reproduced in India on the same day that it was published in London, the reply was, that just because such a test would be conclusive it could not be given, for it would throw thousands into a state of the utmost perplexity and distress.

But to-day there are many Christians who, like Mary Magdalene, are saying: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." To such we would point to the risen *Christ*, to that *Logos*, which was in the beginning, which has been from all ages, and ever will be "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.". That *Christ* cannot be limited to one historical personality.

Let them no longer seek for the living among the dead. Whatever we may think of Jesus of Nazareth as a manifestation of the Logos, it is with the indwelling *Christ* in our own hearts that we have to do, in the working out of our salvation. For the *divine man*, the *Higher Self, is the Christ*. This was taught in the schools of initiation ages before the Church limited the divine manifestation to one particular man. It is the esoteric teaching of the DIVINE NATURE OF MAN.

The divine man, the divine 'Son', is and ever has been perfect and complete in his own essential nature as the "only begotten of the Father." And even as the Sun ever shines in the glory of the heavens, though his light may be hidden from us by the clouds and storms of our terrestrial sphere, so that divine light which emanates from the source and root of our Being, shines behind and within our human nature, but can only shine *through*, in proportion as we clear away the grossness of our physical and lower nature, in which the pure rays of *Alaya* are blurred and distorted, or altogether lost. The vibrations of the lower must be attuned to those of the higher, before the outward man can act in the power of his inner nature. And as the Sun loses naught of his glory and splendour, though the rays which he sends to this earth are absorbed or lost in the grossness of the material world, so neither does the divine Ego lose aught of its essential nature, though the ray which

incarnates in each one of us as the informing principle of our present personalities, may be blurred and marred, or lost altogether in the darkness of our physical mind, or the mire of our sins. If that ray be withdrawn or wholly lost, the man dies the soul death, though among his fellows he may have a name that he lives. These are the withered branches that are cut off from the vine. There is nothing immortal in our nature save that which is divine, or which can assimilate itself with the divine.

And that divine light which is the *Christ*, vibrates through the whole universe; not in man only, but in every atom of 'matter' also; and as it vibrates there, the 'matter' responds, begins to unfold, to seek outward towards the light which seems to come as an *external* sensation. Thus we get what is now called *evolution*. All evolution is religion. It is the seeking back to the divine. At first unconscious (in our limited sense of the term) in mineral and stone. Then expanding into larger sensation in lowly forms of life in plant and cell. And as the organism becomes responsive to the vibrations, the impulse passes on to forms of ever-increasing beauty and complexity. From vegetable to animal, from animal to man; ever and ever moulding the organism into higher and higher manifestations, the ONE LIFE works in and through all. But Man as we now know him is still imperfect, is still only half-way on the great journey. And up till now

that ONE LIFE, working in his nature, is felt after rather than perceived ; it is an *instinct* giving rise to religion, rather than a true knowledge of his own nature ; it is regarded as an external object of search and worship, and is not recognised as the real SELF.

But now let those who can, step from the exoteric to the esoteric ; let them no longer look outside for that which dwells within ; let them no longer look in the outward expanse of space or of time for that kingdom of heaven which cometh not by observation. Let them look beneath the surface of this changing world of phenomena, for the changless BEING from which all phenomena spring. Let them no longer rely on historical events, but on ever present verities. Historical events are but the accidents of eternal verities.

The eternal verities of Christianity—if indeed we can apply that term to this teaching which so much transcends the common acceptation—are neither the historical narratives of the Gospels, not yet any event that can be looked forward to as as a particular external phenomenon. The very fact of these being *time* phenomena, precludes them from the category of *eternal* verities. Time phenomena are but the symbols of the everlasting noumenon.

There never was a time since man became man —that the birth of the *Christ* was not. And mystic as that birth is, deeply hidden in the mys-

tery of our spiritual and divine nature, it could only be dimly presented in the myth of an immaculate conception.

It was thus represented ages before the Church appropriated the myth, and materialised and debased it by making it an actual physical birth of a particular man. There never was a time since man became man—that the Christ was not crucified and resurrected; for that also is a symbol of an ever present fact of our dual nature, human and divine. And in so far as the personal Jesus enables us to understand the character of the *Christ*, whether by his actual life and example, or by the mystical and allegorical events which have been attached to his personality: we are able to accept his mission and teaching at their true value and for their own sake, apart from the authority and dogma with which they have become invested. But the revelation of the Christ is not limited to Jesus of Nazareth, otherwise Paul could not have written that "our Fathers... drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 4.) Neither is our salvation accomplished by the mission of Jesus of Nazareth; but by the indwelling *Christ*, fulfilling that mission in all humanity, and in all ages. Thus Jesus also speaking as the *Christos*, says to the Jews: "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John viii. 56). No clearer indication

than this could possibly be given, that the 'day' of the Christ is not identical with the mere historical life of Jesus of Nazareth. That life only personifies the work of the Christ from the beginning, and through all time. Yet the Church has been no wiser than the Jews, who took his words in their literal and personal application; for they have made all their dogmas rest in the personal historical Jesus.

But those who take their stand on eternal principles can watch without alarm the change of creeds and opinions. They are no longer in bondage to the letter, or to the law. They have entered into that freedom in which all things become lawful, though all things may not now be expedient.

Let those who can enter now into this freedom, and passing from that exoteric religion of Christianity which rests on particular facts or isolated events, let them lay hold of the hidden spiritual verities, of which all facts and all events are a symbol and a revelation.

PART I.

THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

" Wisdom in a Mystery, even the Wisdom that hath been hidden. " ST. PAUL.

THEOSOPHY claims to be the truth underlying all religions in their *exoteric* or popular form ; and it claims this in virtue of its being a presentation or interpretation of a very ancient system known as the *Secret Doctrine*, or ancient *Wisdom Religion*. The world has never been without its *Initiates*, who have preserved the *esoteric* knowledge which has assumed such numerous *exoteric* forms in all ages. This *esoteric* knowledge, however, has always been guarded with the greatest care, and preserved a profound secret, for reasons which have been fully dealt with elsewhere. I need merely instance here the instruction of Jesus to his disciples, not to cast their pearls before swine ; and also the statement of St. Paul. (I. Cor., iii., 1) that he was only able to feed his converts with milk, not with meat. The " Wisdom in a Mystery " has been reserved, as St. Paul says (I. Cor., ii., 6), for the perfect or full-grown, for

those who have attained to *spiritual* manhood: something which is altogether different from, and not coincident with, physical or intellectual manhood.

The particular point, however, to which I wish to direct attention, and which is a fundamental one, before we can establish any relation between Theosophy and Christian Doctrine, is this: that in the nature of things, in the nature of history, of human progress and development, in the nature of man's capacity for growth, for the expansion of his limited and relative mind and consciousness, in the nature of the universe itself, there is and must be an inner and an outer, an esoteric and an exoteric; an outward form, and an inner meaning; an outward expression, temporary, finite, mutable; an inner *principle*, eternal, unvarying. If there be any *reality* whatever, underlying what we term *phenomena*, the objective changeable world of sense and form: that reality must constitute an inner *mystery*, which is a *mystery* simply on account of our inability to sense and cognise it, owing to our limited faculties. And if there be any *reality* in that growth, development, or evolution, which is the most prominent factor in our experience: that reality consists in our coming into more and more intimate *conscious* relation to this inner principle which underlies phenomena; consists in an apprehension of the noumenon; in the casting-off of the temporary illu-

sion of *form*, of that bondage of the senses which causes attachment to form, attachment to the impermanent and temporary, whereby the permanent and eternal is lost sight of; consists, in short, of the development of that faculty which cognises unity in diversity; or in a word consists of—spirituality.

In theosophical language this faculty resides in the fifth principle, or *Manas*, the immortal spiritual Ego. (See diagram, page 30.) But setting aside specific theosophical doctrines, let us see what relation this principle of an inner spiritual reality and an outer expression in *form*, and of a corresponding evolution or expansion of human consciousness from particulars to universals, bears to the subject before us.

It is well known that the claim which has been made by the Church, from its earliest traditions down to our present day, on behalf of Christian doctrine, has been that of a special divine revelation by a personal God. Beginning with the first chapter of Genesis, and ending with the last verse of Revelation, we are asked to believe that the collection of ancient writings known as the Bible, has been specially prepared and inspired by this personal God, as a record of his dealings with, and his will towards, the creatures he originally created. This, I believe, may be accepted as the fundamental basis of Christian doctrine, the centre round which all the teachings of the Church,

whether Protestant or Catholic, have revolved, and from which they cannot get away without breaking up and destroying all that has ever been known historically as *Christianity*. I say specifically that this is the claim made by the *Church*, because it is a fact commonly overlooked, and one indeed of which the majority of professing Christians are ignorant, that what is known as Christianity, in its doctrinal form, in its traditions, a[redacted] the selection and compilation of the subject-[redacted] of the Bible, is purely ecclesiastical [redacted]ECT. its present form, the creeds, and [redacted] ceremonies which go to make up tl[redacted] what is known historically as Chr[redacted] compiled by the early Church a[redacted] miscellaneous sources. This, howev[redacted] of literary and historical data into [redacted] enter now; but I wish to be und[redacted] speaking of Christianity and Chr[redacted] I am dealing at present with its ec[redacted] historical forms, and not with the teachings of its supposed founder.

We have then this fundamental [redacted] anity as a revelation of the person[redacted] between a creative God, and the[redacted] created; and upon this basis is [redacted] doctrinal superstructure with whi[redacted] familiar in its many variations and [redacted]

Now the question which we have [redacted] before us, in connection with the principle of expansion of the

human mind which I have already laid down, is simply this :—Is there room within the limits of Christian doctrine, within that system known as Christianity, for this natural evolution and expansion ? Does Christianity give us, as it claims to do, all that is necessary for man to know of his spiritual nature and destiny ? We may even narrow the question down, and setting aside all the varied, and often conflicting teachings of the Churches, we may confine ourselves to the root idea, and ask whether the relationship of man to a personal creator which Christianity postulates, is a permanent or only a temporary phase in the evolution of the human mind and consciousness.

Let me point out here the great mistake which is made by all religionists and sectarians with regard to what they call the *truth* of their own particular doctrines. A doctrine is simply a formulated statement of a principle : and since the human mind is only capable of dealing with that which is *relative*, is only capable of formulating principles which are relative to its limited and finite consciousness : and since every mind differs in some degree in its powers of observation and intuition : what is called the *truth* of a doctrine is merely a term for its *relativity*, for the relation which it bears to the individual mind at a certain stage of its experience or evolution. Uniformity of doctrine and believe is impossible, except in a world where every individual is at the same level or point

of evolution, and all progressing, or it may be retrogressing, at the same rate.

The mistake which is made by the individual, the sect, or the Church, (and Theosophists need to be warned against this quite as much as others) is in supposing that what is true to them, or true of their own experience, must be true for all the rest of humanity. It is this constant tendency to individualise and restrict, which gives rise to dogmatism, hatred, bigotry, and all the uncharitableness of sectarian religion.

But, I can hear some say, if *truth* be thus merely relative, what test or assurance have we of anything? None whatever, I reply, save the assurance of your own judgment, of your own mind and consciousness. Do not deceive yourselves in this matter, as you value your eternal salvation, as you wish to escape from this fatal illusion of relativity, into the realm of eternal truth. Those who make this fact of man's ignorance the basis of doctrines of revelation and infallibility, are guilty of self-deception and sophistry. The man who asserts his belief in an infallible book, or an infallible Church, is exercising his own individual judgment just as much as the man who asserts his right to question both. The final test in each case is the test of individual experience.

But although all that we call *truth* is thus relative, there is one test, one principle, which cannot be ignored and which must always decide as to the

value of truth, must decide as between truth and error. This principle may be defined as that of *universality*. So long as we confine our attention to one set of phenomena, to a limited area of experience, all that is postulated as theory or doctrine may be true in relation to that with which we are dealing. But when other phenomena or experience is brought in as a factor, we must, if it does not harmonise with our previous conclusions, extend our conceptions and doctrines so as to include the new area. The test of truth therefore is its *universality;* it must harmonise all known phenomena, and every factor in human experience; and if we find any set of doctrines dealing merely with a limited portion, and inapplicable to the rest, we have to reject them for wider and deeper principles. Ideas which are absolutely absurd to those who have a wider range of experience, are often "gospel truth" to lesser minds. The distinction between the untutored savage and the member of a civilised community is a very marked one in this respect, but where are we to draw a line, where fix upon a limit, where find the individual who stands at the furthest point of human progress? *We can only draw the line where the possibility of further experience ceases.* And since man is finite, and the universe infinite, the possibility is also infinite. The ideas of the most advanced philosopher of to-day, will one day be regarded as we now regard the primi-

tive ideas of the savage. And if this be not merely possible, but inevitable, as the human race advances : why should there not be those who have already reached that far point of development, who already stand as far removed from the modern scientist or philosopher as the latter does from the savage ?

In this vast universe, which appears as one grand field of consciousness, individualised in innumerable manifestations of varying degrees, and ever progressing activity, we can conceive no break in the ever-widening circle. The fundamental axiom of the Unity of the Universe forbids us to conceive of any part or portion, of any manifestation or individualisation, which does not share in degree and kind in the universal consciousness. There is no single atom of so-called *dead* matter, no single cell or organism, however minute or rudimentary, which is not instinct with this universal principle of *consciousness*, which is the basis of all manifestation, phenomena, and sensation. Assuredly it was this idea which inspired our own poet Tennyson to write :—

> " Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is. "

And as we can trace this principle in all stages of evolution, in ever-widening spheres of con-

sciousness up to man, so we are bound to go on with the process, and conceive of individual intelligences of higher, wider, and nobler character, until the whole series is summed up in that absolute consciousness of the whole, which we can postulate and name as ' God ' or otherwise, but of which we can form no conception, and therefore formulate no doctrine.

And this is not merely true as a speculation of the mind, one which has found expression in all ages in various conceptions of superior Beings, in Gods, Angels and Archangels, Dhyan Chohans, &c. : but it is claimed as an actual fact that there are those human beings, with no elements of supernaturalism or superstition about them, who stand to-day where the majority of men will only stand after thousands, and it may be millions of years. Why not ? I ask again, where are we to draw the line at the possibility of further human progress ? And if the gulf is so great to-day between the savage and the philosopher, why should there not be as great a gulf between the philosopher and the Adept ? The existence of these Masters of Wisdom is a fact, which all may prove who are not too prejudiced to investigate and form an unbiassed judgment.

And now observe in connection with this relativity of doctrine to the experience of the individual, its application to what has been called ***revealed truth***, as distinguished from human discovery.

There is no possibility of revelation save in connection with the relative nature and capabilities of the individual mind. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi., 12). Revelation necessarily deals with that which is subjective, with that which is supposed to be beyond the reach of actual experience or observation; and it is just here that we have the special claim of Christianity, that it supplies information which man could not in the nature of things have found out for himself. In Christian dogma the Bible is nothing if not superhuman.

But the whole question is, what is superhuman? To the savage there is much that would appear superhuman in that which is familiar in the every-day experience of the civilised man. To the average man of to-day, even to the most advanced scientist —and probably more so to him by reason of his one-sidedness—the powers of the Adept appear superhuman, and are therefore denied. Much that has at one time been denied, as belonging to the category of the *supernatural*, is now admitted, as having been brought within the line of the natural. Science denied the facts of mesmerism, but is now compelled to recognise them. It denies the facts of spiritualism, and will not investigate because it has settled beforehand that the phenomena are impossible. Professor Tyndall says:—"There are men of science who would sell all that they have, and give the proceeds to the

poor, for a glimpse of phenomena which are mere trifles to the spiritualist. " And yet he will not investigate, although one of the most eminent scientific men of the day, Professor Crookes, has published scientific researches which give something more than the required glimpse. On the other hand Professor Huxley virtually contradicts Professor Tyndall when he says : " Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me. " And so he also will not investigate. These men have made up their minds that there cannot be anything supernatural or superhuman ; and they define these as anything which lies outside the range of their own particular experience.

The Christian makes exactly the same mistake in the opposite direction. He has made up his mind that his Bible is superhuman and revealed, and not only so, but that there is no other record in the world which can make a similar claim, or can be compared in any respect with this book ; and starting from this as a first principle he is compelled to reject all other records, religions, and experience as false and mischievous.

Before we can decide, then, as to the authority of the Bible as a supposed superhuman record, we must first of all decide as to the limits of the human, as to the line of demarcation between the human and the superhuman, between the natural and the supernatural. And if there be no such line —or rather if the line be relative, not absolute—if

the possibility of human development be infinite, as indeed all reason and analogy lead us to conclude ; if further than this we have direct evidence that there are, and always have been, those who are so much in advance of the race that they stand in the position usually assigned to the superhuman : we have offered to us at once a rational solution of the difficulties in connection with the Bible record. Let us glance at a few of these difficulties before presenting more specifically the solution which Theosophy offers.

We may divide these difficulties into two classes : (*a*) historical, literary, and critical ; (*b*) doctrinal ; or briefly : those which relate to facts, and those which relate to doctrine. It is necessary to make this distinction, because facts are so often confounded with doctrine in matters of controversy. The facts of the Bible, and the doctrines based thereon, are two totally different things. A fact must underlie a doctrine, it is the basis on which doctrine rests, and if the supposed fact is found to be false, the doctrine must necessarily be false also. In too many cases this is reversed, and fact is made to rest upon doctrine, as in the instances I have educed of the attitude of mind of the scientist and religionist respectively. The position taken up by each of these is, that if the facts and the doctrine do not harmonise, so much the worse for the facts. We must observe, however, that so long as the fact is admitted, or

supposed, or stands as a first principle, or premise, the doctrine may be relatively true to that fact, although absolutely false. On the other hand, a fact may be admitted, but the conclusions drawn from that fact be widely different.

Now we have in the Bible a record which on the face of it appears to be historical; on what grounds are we to decide its validity as history; how are we to decide as to the truth of the statements it puts forward as statements of facts? The common argument is, that it is true because it is the inspired word of God, but that is putting doctrine before fact; and as such a large portion of it is evidently untrue as matter of fact, the doctrine of inspiration becomes a difficult one to accept. Modern apologists endeavour to strike a kind of mean between the old doctrine of literal inspiration, and the idea that the Bible is purely human in its origin. This, however, is merely one of those forced concessions by which the Church is dragged in the rear of advancing thought, which she vainly endeavours to retard.

We have, then, in the first place, the fact of the existence of the Bible, and in the second place, the doctrine of the Church with regard to its origin and inspiration. We have, in the first place, certain statements made in the Bible with regard to supposed facts in history, and in the second place, the doctrines of the Church built up upon these statements.

It is no part of my task now to enter into contro-

versy on these matters. What I wish to do is to state the question so that we may see clearly where it is that Theosophy offers a solution of the difficulties which beset the earnest student, and more especially those who are endeavouring to free themselves from the narrow and inconsistent concepts of Christian orthodoxy. Theosophy has much to offer to these enquirers ; a great responsibility rests upon Theosophists in connection with the revolution through which so many minds are passing in connection with the elements of the faith in which they have been brought up. There is, I fear, too much tendency on the part of those who have passed through this stage, and reached the goal of freedom, to look with something approaching to contempt upon those who are still unable to enter into that freedom. There is a contempt of intellect, as well as a contempt of wealth ; an air of *nouveau riche* in the one as in the other. There is much need that we should bear in mind the injunctions of St. Paul as to our behaviour towards our weaker brethren, those who are not yet freed from the bondage of forms and ceremonies, of custom, prejudice, and early training and bias. While jealously guarding our own freedom, while boldly denouncing those systems which are responsible for the moral and intellectual thraldom of so many of our fellow-creatures : those systems which take advantage of ignorance in order to enslave it by means of superstitious fear ; let us be careful

lest thereby we cause our weaker brethren to stumble. There is a flagrant and blatant atheism in vogue in some quarters which delights in holding up to ridicule of the grossest form, matters which are sacred to many minds. I do not think any Theosophist can be in sympathy with such. But there are hundreds and thousands to-day, who are questioning the basis of the Christian faith, and are going through a mortal struggle in their efforts to reach that *something* which is dimly perceived to lie outside and beyond the teachings of the Church. The success of *Robert Elsmere* was due to the skill with which the author portrayed this stage of doubt and questioning through which so many are passing. Some of us have passed through it in a more or less acute form in this incarnation, others have not experienced it now, having passed through it before ; but assuredly at some time or another all must fight and conquer that particular illusion which enslaves a man to some special form of religion, constituting in its lowest phase that bigoted and intolerant dogmatism of priestcraft which is so indissolubly connected with the history of Christianity. Our object is to help those who are struggling for the light, and we can do this best, not by fiercely denouncing and ridiculing those doctrines which they have hitherto believed, but by showing their *relative* nature and interpreting them on deeper principles.

And so we may take one by one the difficulties

which arise in the minds of those who first suspect, and finally conclude, that Christian doctrine cannot be literally and historically true; and we may show that all these doctrines have a basis in deep and abiding principles of human nature; that when the shell has been cracked and thrown away, the kernel will be found. The shell is the result of human sin and ignorance; it is the encrustation of matter and form which is inevitable when the spiritual is brought down into the material. The Word must be made manifest in the Flesh, otherwise it is not seen of men; but the Flesh is never the Word, is never the reality, though men in their ignorance fail to discriminate, and the Church has perpetuated the error, and materialised the Word into grosser and still grosser forms; so that now when men cry for the spiritual bread of life, it has nothing to offer them but a stone.

The Church gives us no alternative but to accept or reject its dogmas. It offers no inner or spiritual meaning in its teachings apart from their literal acceptation. There is no Esoteric Christianity in the Church, we must go elsewhere for it; and it is Theosophy which now proclaims it.

So, taking this first and fundamental difficulty with regard to the origin and nature of the Bible, we do not deny, but we assert that it is a revelation; that it is an inspiration; that it is, if you like, *superhuman*, inasmuch as it comes from those who, in virtue of their position and knowledge, would be

generally regarded as superhuman. But the Bible as we have it now is not the original record. It has passed through many hands and many translations, and the process is inevitably a deteriorating one. The faults and errors and discrepancies are human, the result of ignorant intervention ; the underlying truth is divine, inasmuch as it deals with eternal verities.

How are we to distinguish the truth, how are we to get at those verities ? By accepting facts, knowledge, revelation, from every other source available, and interpreting the Bible by these facts, not the facts by the Bible. If we ignorantly and superstitiously suppose that the whole of revelation is contained between the covers of the Bible, and refuse to accredit—as the Church has done in all ages—anything which appears to conflict with the Scriptures, we shall never reach the truth. All that history, all that science, all that symbology and mythology can teach us, must be applied to correct and interpret the record.

And here we must notice another fact. The Bible as we now have it, is a collection of a number of scattered records, selected from a great many more of a similar character. There is no reason for regarding those which have been selected as of greater value or inspiration than those which have been left out. Not only is this so, but we have in other languages, and coming

down to us from nations antedating the Jewish race, similar records, dealing with the creation of the world and the relation of man to the universe, in a totally different way, though still to all appearances historically.

Now these accounts cannot be all true ; they are on the face of them quite at variance with each other. Either the Bible is true as history—I am referring now to the account in *Genesis*—and the others false, or the Bible is false and the others true ; or there is a third alternative, that they are all allegorical. Up to a certain point in their experience, men may be satisfied to accept one or other of these records as historically true. There are thousands even to-day who accept literally the narratives in *Genesis*. But if we reject them as history, how shall we deal with them ? Shall we throw them aside as worthless fables, belonging to a primitive and ignorant age ? The answer is, No ! We must call to our aid the result of literary research into ancient civilisations, customs, religions, and symbology ; and by careful comparison we shall soon discover the key which we require. For there is a great mass of research and literature now available for those who really desire to get at the truth.

And when we do this we shall find that the collection of writings known as the *Bible*, constitutes but one of a number of records which are all derived from, and based upon one unifying sys-

tem, known at times as the *Ancient Wisdom Religion* or *Secret Doctrine*. We shall find that these teachings were always symbolical and mythological ; that they have been given out from time to time, and from age to age, in a form appropriate to the particular nation or age for whom they were written ; and that they were usually based upon some actual historical narrative, which thus gave a colour of literal truth to them. As in our childhood we demand fairy stories, and delight in fancies, so in the spiritual childhood of a man, of a nation, or a race, there is much which naturally takes the form of allegory. But these allegories are not the invention of primitive man, any more than children invent their own fairy tales. They were put forward by the divine Hierarchy of *Initiates*, as the only available method of presenting truths which as yet could not be grasped in any other form, or which were too sacred for open exposition.

And as it was with the early Initiates from whom all the sacred records were originally derived, so it has been with all the great teachers of whom we have historical records. Confucius, and Buddha ; Moses, Jesus, and Paul ; one and all have had to teach in accordance with the capacity of their hearers ; veiling the deeper spiritual truth in a form which was comprehensible to the people they addressed. Yet they have all indicated plainly that there was a spiritual truth

underlying the form in which they taught; they have all had their *esoteric* doctrine, and their initiated disciples.

And this esoteric doctrine is the same all the world over and in all ages; for it is the spiritual truth of man's relation to the universe, the spiritual mystery of his life and consciousness, and can only be discerned and understood by those who have risen above the illusions of time and sense, of matter and form. Let those who deny the existence of this esoteric truth explain what St. Paul means when he tells the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ, I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal." (I. Cor. iii., 1.)

And it is just this *esoteric* truth, this inner spiritual meaning of the great teachers of the world, and the records they have given us, which Theosophy now offers. Not by any means the whole of it, for there must still remain mystery within mystery, until the final triumph, but assuredly enough to point the way to those who are striving after a deeper knowledge, and a purer light.

And the proof that the key which Theosophy offers is the true one, is its universality. The proof lies in the fact, which each one must verify

for himself, that it does unify the records and teachings, which, taken in their mere outward form, appear to be contradictory and mutually destructive.

This point cannot be emphasised too strongly; it is ever the letter that killeth, but the spirit that giveth life. We have learnt nothing of our own individual life, or of the universe around us, until we have learnt to recognise the unity which underlies diversity; until we have learnt to detach the underlying spiritual principle from any mere form of doctrine, from any mere arrangement of letters in the name of deity, from any particular scriptural record, or conventional form of worship. How many professing Christians are there who can conceive of deity—using the term for the ultimate spiritual basis of the universe—apart from the conventional name of the personal God, *Jehovah*? They regard with pious horror, if not with contempt, the 'heathen' whose conception of deity is expressed in some other arrangement of letters. To whisper to them the name of *Brahmâ* is to call up in their minds vague notions of idol worship, strange figures of Hindu gods, and a mysterious and superstitious worship. They send missionaries to convert these ignorant heathen from a worship of Brahmâ to a worship of Jehovah, and the missionaries soon find out that, far from being ignorant, the Brahmins are more than a match for them on every point. However, they

send home a few samples of the four-headed Brahmâ and other 'idols', and these serve to keep up the pity and contempt—and the subscriptions. And all the time Brahmâ and Jehovah are essentially identical! Even exoterically, in the mere external form they are identical, Jehovah as the tetragrammaton or "four-lettered word" I H V H; Brahmâ as the four-headed god. To understand this in its deeper meaning, you must understand the relation between the triad and the quaternary (See diagram, page 30), as symbols the spiritual and the material, the eternal and the temporal, the subjective and the objective. The Brahmin will explain this to you, the Christian will commonly deny the whole subject.

Alas! for the illusion of forms and formulas; how shall we teach men to escape from it? How shall we combat that fatal disease which is the cause of all the cruelty, intolerance, and bigotry, which has ever been associated with the name of religion? There is only one way in which it can be done—by disclosing the unifying principle, the basis upon which all religions rest, and from which they have all been derived. And for those who cannot enter into the literary and critical evidences of this unity, we must present a few easily understood principles which will enable them to appreciate its practical and moral aspect. And this is done in our Theosophy by the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma. Reincarnation and Karma

do not apply merely to our individual lives, they are universal principles. They find a reflection in our individual lives, because they are universal principles ; for there is nothing in man, the microcosm, that does not exist in the universe, the macrocosm ; nor is there anything in the universe which does not exist in man. We are sometimes asked to prove the truth of Reincarnation and Karma in their individual application by chapter and verse from the Bible ; but those who demand such proof are those who are still in bondage to the letter, and the least likely to grasp an underlying principle. What is there that cannot be proved or disproved at will, by taking mere isolated texts of Scripture? "The Devil can quote Scripture for his own ends",has become a proverb. There are, however, many isolated texts and incidents in evidence of these doctrines as applied to the individual, as, for instance, the reference to the reincarnation of Elijah (Mat. xvii. 10) ; the mystical application of the principle in John iii., 3-15 ; and the reference to Karma operating at birth in the case of the man who was born blind (John ix. 1). In this case Jesus is made to say that the blindness was not the result of sin, either in the case of the man himself before birth—for it is evident that the sin which could cause a man to be born blind could only be accomplished in a previous life—or of his parents ; and the rest of the chapter is made to turn upon this incident

in order to convey deeper spiritual truths, which those who read the mere narrative will inevitably miss. The key to the whole chapter is contained in the last three verses: "And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they which see not may see; and that they which see may become blind. . . . . The Pharisees said unto him, Are we also blind? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth." Thus the man who was born blind in the narrative, stands for the natural spiritual blindness of those whose evolution has not yet reached that point where the "works of God" became manifest in them through the indwelling Christ principle, "the light of the world". To this natural blindness no sin attaches, but the sin remains with those who say, "We see", yet cast out of the synagogue those whose eyes have really been opened by the divine master. Are there no such Pharisees to-day?

The whole chapter is a good illustration of the method which pertains all through the Bible. "The narratives of the Doctrine are its cloak. The simple look only at the garment, that is, upon the narrative of the Doctrine; more they know not. The instructed, however, see not merely the cloak, but what the cloak covers." And it is only when we have grasped this principle, when we have understood that the genius of the Bible is not in its narrative, that we shall be able to under-

stand the value of the book, or harmonise it with natural law, and with those factors which enter into man's spiritual aspirations in all ages, and in every form of religion. And when we have been able to do this, we shall see how the whole relation of man to the universe, of humanity to divinity, which the Bible discloses to those who can put aside the narrative, is based on the principles of Reincarnation and Karma ; on Reincarnation of *Life*, or the constant interchange between the subjective and the objective, the alternate bringing into objectivity, and as constant disappearance into subjectivity, known to us as birth and death ; on Karma as the principle of the conservation of energy, or the co-relation of forces, operating between the subjective and the objective, applied to the universe as a whole, and to man in all his relations, physical, psychic, mental, and spiritual. For just as the whole objective universe comes into existence out of subjectivity, so does our individual life. Nothing that exists in the universe can ever cease to Be. It may change its form, or disappear altogether from our present objective plane of phenomena, but it is only the *form* which has been destroyed, and death is ever coincident with birth.

Let us now proceed to examine more in detail the Bible narrative, and the key which Theosophy offers for its interpretation; and in doing so, I will remark first of all upon the solution which

Theosophy offers as to the supposed connection between the Old and the New Testaments in the fulfilment of prophecy.

The prophetic utterances with reference to the Messiah, and their supposed fulfilment in Jesus Christ, constitute one of the most difficult subjects in connection with Biblical criticism, as well as one of the fundamental doctrines upon which Christianity rests. If there be no connection between the Old and New Testaments in this matter, Christianity falls to the ground. The necessity for the coming of a Messiah according to Christian doctrine was owing to the ' fall ' of man ; he was pre-ordained, prophesied, and awaited from the moment of that fall.

Now that fall is allegorically represented in *Genesis*. I am not speaking now to those who believe that the whole of humanity is sinful and degraded because Eve ate an apple some six thousand years ago. There is no spiritual knowledge possible for those who are so wedded to the letter, for the letter kills the spirit. But the question is : was there in the history of man's evolution, in his relation to the spiritual world, anything equivalent to a ' fall '? The Esoteric Doctrine answers, Yes ; and explains this ' fall ' in connection with certain well-recognised cyclic laws of involution and evolution. Spiritual man ' falls ' every time he incarnates in physical life : for all are agreed that our present state of existence is not merely

temporary, but subject to conditions which are much lower than those of a spiritual state. And so also Adam, representing generically the whole human race, 'fell' from his original state of freedom and purity by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, in order that there may be evolution there must be involution. Man as a spiritual being can only become self-conscious through experience of 'good and evil'; that is to say, through a descent into matter and physical life, by passing through those lower planes of cosmic life and consciousness which constitute the phenomenal world of manifestation, where everything is inseparably connected in our consciousness with its opposite; for it is this opposition or duality in all things—good and evil, light and darkness, life and death, here and there, then and now—which is the basis of all phenomena. And so when we look beneath the mere words of the allegory we find the deepest philosophical meaning; we have room for the mind to expand towards those deeper problems of life and consciousness which have occupied the profoundest thinkers in all ages, and in which the mystery of our spiritual life is hidden.

But as man has fallen, so he must also rise; and his final triumph over evil, or Satan, or matter —for the three are synonymous—is foreshadowed in the type of the Messiah, and fully represented in the New Testament by the resurrected Christ.

" For as in Adam all die, so also in the Christ shall all be made alive. " (I. Cor. xv. 22.) Do you suppose this refers to mere physical death? It does so apply on the lowest or physical plane of consciousness, but—" as above so below. " There is a spiritual death as well as a physical ; but they are only synonymous inasmuch as every mystery in ' heaven ' is repeated on ' earth ' ; and they are not coincident.

Spiritual man must ' die ', otherwise there could be no resurrection from the dead in a spiritual sense ; and since spiritual man is immortal and eternal, he ' dies ' every time he incarnates upon this earth ; for verily this world is the grave of the spirit, where it sleeps, unconscious of, or but dimly recollecting, its higher and nobler life.

And as with the invidual, so with the race. As Adam is the type, so also is Christ. As the Old Testament deals with the history of man in his ' fall ', foreshadowing at intervals his final redemption under the type of the Messiah, so the New Testament is the natural fulfilment of that prophecy, because it deals with the nature and conditions of the redemption under the type of Jesus Christ.

Is not that a natural and rational explanation of the nature of prophecy, and of the connection between the Old and the New Testaments ? You will see at once how it places in the background, as of quite secondary importance, all those sup-

posed discrepancies between the actual words of prophecy, and their literal fulfilment in the historical narrative of Jesus of Nazareth. We pass over the lowest aspect of the question, we ignore those controversial points over which such an enormous amount of learning and sophistry has been expended, and draw our inspiration from the deep philosophical and spiritual meaning of the record.

The Old Testament contains the record of man's 'fall', contains under the form of an historical allegory the secret of those vast cosmic cycles by which spirit manifests in matter, by which the divine becomes human. These cycles are portrayed in the sacred books of the East as the outbreathing and inbreathing of Brahmâ. Even modern philosophy, which as yet, is but the echo of the ancient Wisdom, has given a hint at the philosophic rationale of the 'fall'. According to Hegel, the "Unconscious" would never have undertaken the vast and laborious task of evolving the Universe, except in the hope of attaining self-consciousness. As above so below: our individual sentient life is the reflection of the macrocosmic principle.

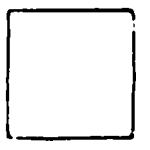
And as in the Old Testament the divine becomes human, so in the New Testament the human re-becomes divine. The New Testament contains in the form of an historical allegory the conditions of man's 'redemption', that is to say, of his return to the spiritual planes of being, plus that self-

consciousness, that ' knowledge of good and evil', which is the purpose of his incarnation.

The eternal law of ceaseless motion which lies at the root of cosmic evolution, finds its reflection in both small and great ; in the tiniest atom and in the most glorious sun ; in the sentient life of the lowest organism, up to man, and from man onward through all the divine hierarchies to that sum total which is unnameable.

To those who are familiar with the teachings of the *Secret Doctrine* this is readily understandable ; but for the sake of those who are not I must now call attention to a symbolism which will be found to apply to these principles under whatever form they may be given, whether in the Bible or in other ancient records.

Considering man as dual in his nature, as spiritual and material, we have as a symbol of spiritual man, a triad, represented geometrically by the triangle; and as the symbol of material or physical man we have a quaternary or square. Now the three and the four together make up seven, or the seven *Principles* of man as taught in Theosophy.

7		Atma	*Spirit*	The Immortal Spiritual Man or Divine Ego.
6		Buddhi	*Spiritual Soul*	
5		Manas	*Mind*	
4		Kama	*Animal Soul*	The Mortal Physical Man or Temporary Personality.
3		Prana	*Vitality*	
2		Astral	*Double*	
1		Physical	*Body*	

The three higher principles constitute the immortal, divine, spiritual man ; the individuality,

the *Ego sum*. The four lower belong to the temporary personality of physical, material man.

At death, the four lower principles disappear, or disintegrate into their natural elements on the four planes to which they belong, while the consciousness of the man that was, is withdrawn into the higher triad. At rebirth, or reincarnation, this is outbreathed again, clothes itself in the elements of the four lower planes, or 'matter', and becomes again a human being for the purpose of a new cycle of experience. Thus we see that at every birth into this world, or at every reincarnation, there is relatively a 'fall', though absolutely it is a rise, on account of the experience gained. Now we see this great law of cyclic motion, of outbreathing and inbreathing, in operation in every form of manifestation in the universe, taking the form of a law of periodicity, or of alternate subjectivity and objectivity ; smaller cycles operating within larger ones in ever-increasing magnitude, to infinity. And just as individual man in his repeated manifestations or incarnations follows this law, so does the whole of humanity in its aggregate of evolution upon this earth, during *its* period of manifestation; and this descent into matter constitutes the allegory of the Book of Genesis, and is continued under other symbols in other books of the Old Testament.

But man has to win his way back to his orginal freedom. Having entered 'matter' he must fight

and overcome it. The necessity for reincarnation is conditioned by his not having as yet accomplished the object for which the original impulse to incarnation was given. When that object is accomplished, man rises as the conqueror over death—because the conqueror over the necessity of rebirth—as the glorified *Christos*, the perfected Adept, or full Initiate. "Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (I. Cor. xv. 54.). And it is this victory, this conquest, and the conditions under which it must be obtained, which is portrayed in the New Testament.

Thus we may trace the connection between the Old and New Testaments, and find the clue to their interpretation; for it is impossible to do more than give the clue to those whose minds are open to the underlying mysteries; and we must now pass on to deal more specifically with some of the doctrines based on the New Testament record.

The first thing which is necessary in doing this, is to dispose of the historical difficulty. There are many who will accept an allegorical Adam as a type of humanity, who will not accept an allegorical and typical Christ. But the one without the other is an impossibility, as indeed is plainly seen in the writings of St. Paul. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (I. Cor. xv. 49.) There is no choice between the literal personal and histor-

ical character of both, and the doctrines of the fall and atonement as taught by the Church, or the allegorical and typical character of the one as of the other. They are indissolubly connected, and whatever key is used for the one must be used for the other.

But the difficulty is not so great as it appears, and admits of a very simple solution. Just as in the Old Testament we have the historical Jewish race, into whose history is cunningly woven the thread of the mystical allegory of man's evolution, so in the New Testament we have the historical Jesus, into whose life and teachings is woven the mystical truths of the nature of the divine man. There cannot be an historical *Christ*, any more than an historical Adam ; for every man is Adam, and every man will become *Christos* or 'anointed'. But we have an actual historical *Jesus* and every-one is at liberty to believe what he likes as to that historical character being already *Christos*, the perfect man, or Initiate.

Thus we may reconcile in whatever way we please, from literary and critical evidences, the difficulties which arise in the Gospel narratives respecting the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, without interfering in the slightest degree with the divine nature and mystery of the *Christ*.

It will be seen at once how this disposes of the importance of those difficulties over which so much controversy has been wasted, during centu-

ries of ecclesiastical teaching, and which still rages in the present day. The " divinity of Christ " has been the great dogma of the Church, and at the same time the great stumbling-block of rational thought, simply because the *blind* was so complete — or rather because the early Church authorities were so successful in destroying the clue, so that the derivation of their doctrines from the Gnostic and Egyptian *Mysteries* could not be traced— that the personal *Jesus* became absolutely identified with the typical *Christ*.

But the truth cannot be withheld from the world much longer. Literary and historical research, and comparative symbology and mythology, are gradually disclosing the fraud which has been imposed upon the world for centuries. The truth will soon be clearly and undeniably demonstrated, and while ecclesiastical Christianity may remain as a remnant of superstition, the truth as it is in Christ will shine forth as the spiritual light upon the inmost mystery of man's nature.

The divinity of Christ is as certain as the humanity of Adam. The one completes the other. If Christ is not divine, then is humanity not divine ; and there is no salvation possible for it. If humanity is not divine, then there can be no Christ, and all men's spiritual aspirations are empty dreams.

The doctrine of the divine incarnation was taught in the Ancient Mysteries. We have the

story, incident by incident, almost word for word as in the Gospels, in many other so-called *heathen* systems. In the Egyptian, as Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, we have the same typical Messiah in connection with a solar or astronomical glyph. So also with Krishna, the son of Vishnu and Lakshmi, we have so near an approach to the Gospel narrative, that it has been the greatest puzzle, and has led to the most flagrant literary dishonesty, to endeavour to account for the narratives, without deriving the one from the other. But all these difficulties vanish the moment we understand the real nature of the divine incarnation, and its connection with natural evolution and universal laws.

And observe further how this is the bridge which spans the gulf between science and religion. We are often told that there can be no conflict between true science and true religion; yet nothing is more notorious than the open conflict between the representatives of the one and the other. The Church has ever been the deadliest enemy of scientific discovery, and to-day, if she had the power, she would burn its votaries as she did of old. But there can be no conflict with the religion we now advance, based upon the relation of man to the universe, instead of upon an anthropomorphic God. The scientific materialist may doubt our conclusions, but we have no quarrel with the facts he brings to light. If his special

line of research blinds him to higher spiritual possibilities, so much the worse for him ; but we welcome as so much gain all that he can teach us as to nature's methods of working. And so also in other departments of research, all that is brought to light is clear gain to us. There is no longer any fear lest our favourite dogmas should be overturned, lest the foundations of our faith should crumble to dust before the advancing tide of knowledge. We welcome knowledge in every shape and form ; for in knowledge there is freedom, but in ignorance there is superstition, fear, cruelty, and death.

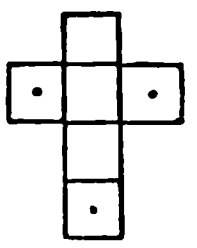
Let us now turn for a moment to the symbol of the cross, which is supposed to be so pre-eminently originated by, and associated with, Christian doctrine. It is a matter of secondary importance to us whether the personal Jesus was or was not crucified in the manner described ; as to whether he did or did not rise from the grave, and appear afterwards to his disciples. The speculations, and arguments, and physical probability or improbability of this event may be left to those who still cling to the idea of a carnalised personal *Christ*. Supposing for a moment that it did happen as narrated, it by no means follows that the dogmas built thereon are true ; but whether it did or did not happen, does not interfere with the spiritual meaning and significance. Here again the Church is a blind leader of the blind. We must go further

and deeper, we must study symbology, mythology, and astronomy even, before we can understand how the symbol of the cross came to be associated with spiritual man, as the *Christos*. In selecting and editing the books of the New Testament as we now have them, the Church took care to obliterate all traces which would disclose the real source and meaning of this symbol. They did more. The hordes of fanatical Christians searched for and ruthlessly destroyed all the ancient manuscripts, sculptures, hieroglyphs, and other records which bore testimony to its use prior to the Christian era. Some of the hieroglyphs, cut into the hard stone of the Egyptian rock temples, which they could not deface, they plastered over with stucco, thus taking the very best precautions to preserve the writing clear and well-defined for our use. But the evidences are now too numerous to be denied, that the cross has been a universal symbol in all ages. What did it mean?

The cross in its simplest form, as +, is the glyph for the quaternary or square, representing as we have already seen the four lower planes of consciousness, or more simply, *matter*. Astronomically also, in conjunction with the circle, as ⊕ it is the symbol for the earth. It is also known as the " mundane cross," and is expressed in various forms in different systems, as the " swastica ", 卐, the " ansated cross " ☥, the " tau " T, etc; On our three dimensional planes the square becomes

the cube, and the cube unfolded again displays the cross.

The two members counted separately, give us 3 and 4, or together 7; while the addition of the three nail-marks gives us the suggestion of the triangle, or the divine man crucified on the cross of matter.



We shall thus see, in accordance with what has already been explained, that every incarnation of the divine spirit, whether individually or collectively, constitutes of necessity a crucifixion. The incarnated Christ must needs be crucified. It is simply the summing up in one glyph, in one allegory, of the whole mystery, the consummation in one figurative emblem of the whole drama of human existence. And as he must needs be crucified, must needs descend into matter, so he must needs resurrect, and re-ascend to claim his spiritual birthright. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain." (I. Cor. xv., 14.)

There are other applications and interpretations of this symbol, too numerous and complicated to enter into here. Each of these symbols has seven meanings, corresponding to the seven planes of consciousness through which the man passes, or in which he lives. In its lowest signification the cross is a purely physiological symbol, and as such led to its identification with phallic worship.

The astronomical key, the connection of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles with the twelve signs of the zodiac, and of the Messiah, in the various events and characteristics of his history, with the yearly passage of the sun through these twelve signs, is full of interest and significance. Some writers having discovered this astronomical key in connection with the Messiah, and its equal application to other mythical characters, more particularly to Osiris and Horus, in the Egyptian system, have supposed that this was the real source and origin of the Christian Mythos, and the only explanation of which it is capable. The *Secret Doctrine*, however, draws aside the veil from some of the other interpretations, gives the clue to other of the seven keys, and thereby raises it once more from the physical and material into the psychic and spiritual.

The symbolism of the zodiac was, and still is, one of the greatest secrets of the *Mysteries*. It is the type of that great law, which operating universally in periodic cycles, brings about that change which we call *evolution*. Working eternally through the material basis of the universe, through 'root substance', it brings to life and brings to death, and brings to life again. Atoms and worlds, organic life in every phase, from tiniest cell, from the first germs of sentient life onward through all its grades, from the first dawn of individual consciousness, through plant and animal, to men and

gods : this great law holds its sway. Cycle within cycle in ever-widening magnitude, until the mind of man is lost in contemplation of the infinite ; and yet, through all and in all, such unity and harmony that could we but see and understand, we should find at every mathematical point in space — the whole universe. And thus one type stands for all, one symbology is of universal application ; and were we wise as those ancient sages who gave to the world that symbology, of which we have now but the broken fragments, we should indeed be able to read man's destiny in the stars.

We must now turn our attention for a few moments to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, or as it ought more properly to be called, the at-one-ment. I am not supposing now that any of my readers are believers in the dogma that the actual sufferings of a physical Christ were the propitiation of an angry God. One would think that the actual sufferings of humanity itself since the ' fall ', was propitiation enough to satisfy any God with a sense of justice at least equal to our own. But be that as it may, I must now show that this doctrine, grossly as it has been materialised, can still be reconstructed on esoteric lines.

Turn to our diagram of the seven principles of man. (Page 30.) We have spiritual or divine man as a *trinity*, corresponding to the supreme divine trinity which is found in every ancient system, and from which the Christian trinity was derived,

and ultimately promulgated as a dogma when Athanasius triumphed over Arius. Now in this trinity of Atma-Buddhi-Manas, Atma corresponds to the ' Father ' and Manas to the ' Son '. Manas is always spoken of as the incarnating Ego, that which is the informing principle of our successive re-births upon earth. This statement, however, is only partial in its application. The mystery of the trinity, the three in one and the one in three, is repeated on earth. Atma-Buddhi-Manas are not three, but one, yet viewed *relatively*, or in their individual capacity, they have to be treated as separate entities. A very familiar analogy will illustrate this, and indeed, under the form of "divine ideation," lies at the root of this metaphysical trinity. Wherever we have a *thinker*, we must also have a *thought* and a *thing thought of*. We cannot separate these three, the one cannot exist without the other, yet each of these three principles may be individualised and treated separately. In other words, wherever there is the action of conscious intelligence, whether of God or man, there must be a trinity. Now *Manas* is an individualised aspect of *Atma*, the seventh or highest, the one universal principle, or synthesis of all the others. It is, so to speak, a ray of Mahat, or universal mind. So also our personal consciousness, the thinking principle of the lower quaternary —or in short, ourselves—is but an individualised aspect, or ray of Manas. In other words, Manas,

the divine Ego, is not comprised in the personality, but overshadows and guides it. We have already seen that in doing this it is symbolically crucified on the cross of matter, for it attaches to itself and becomes responsible for all the deeds of the personality, good or evil. Thus it is truly the sacrificial victim, suffering for our transgressions, for the sins of humanity.

And observe how the only hope of salvation for the personality—for ourselves—the only way in which we can escape from the evil of matter, from the ' great illusion ', the ' great deceiver '—or, in short, the *Devil*—the only way in which we can reach that perfection of our humanity which is typified in Christ : is by union with our *Alter Ego*, our *Higher Self ;* or by means of that indwelling Christ which Paul preached. If we persistently turn from the light, if we refuse to follow the promptings of our conscience, and choose the path of evil, we weaken more and more the bond which connects the higher with the lower, until at last perchance the link is snapped, and there is no longer any possibility of salvation. This is the " sin against the Holy Ghost ".

Observe how this is taught all through St. John's Gospel. " I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no one cometh unto the Father, but through Me " (John xiv., 6). For, as Manas is one with Atma, we can only reach the latter, or the ' Father ' through union with Manas. And this

is something which must take place here and now, by our own conscious efforts, and not as a miraculous dispensation of ' providence '. At death all that is *spiritual* in our character becomes indrawn, so to speak, by the overshadowing Ego. All that belongs to the four lower principles is dissolved and disintegrated, or awaits us as *Karma* for our next rebirth ; while the personal consciousness realises in full all its spiritual aspirations in a state of bliss or ' Heaven '. But this is only possible to the extent to which each individual has cherished and intensified those aspirations. Each one goes to his appointed place, or rather state. The judgment book is opened, the imperishable record of every thought and deed, traced by the great law of cause and effect, will assign to each his appropriate reward, and in rebirth his appropriate penalty. Let none hope to escape the law of absolute justice.

" 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 no wrath nor pardon ; utter true
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs ;
Times are as nought, to-morrow it will judge.
Or after many days."

And if we would escape rebirth, if we would triumph over death and the cross, we can only do so by this perfect union with our Higher Self, with the Christ within us. And just as the accom-

plishment of this individually, is the complete union of the personality with the higher triad, so for the race collectively it is the return of that cycle when spirit will once more triumph over matter, typified in the New Testament as the "second coming of Christ." And then the 'Son' having accomplished his work, becomes once more one with the ' Father '. This is the *Pralaya*, or " inbreathing of Brahmâ ", in Eastern phraseology ; while St. Paul expresses it by saying : " And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all " (I. Cor., xv., 28).

Read the mystical Gospel of St. John in the light of this interpretation, and see what a flood of light it throws upon the constant references to the relationship between the ' Father ' and the ' Son ', personified in Jesus. The ' Father ' of St. John's Gospel never was and never can be the personal tribal God of the Israelites—Jehovah ; although the Church has fathered him upon Christendom. The sayings and claims of Jesus are absurd when personified; but are pregnant with meaning, and the deepest truth when applied to universal principles. " As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me,he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven : not as the fathers did eat, and died : he that eateth this bread shall

live for ever". (John vi.57.) This passage bears on the face of it its mystical and figurative character. Yet because the Church has materialised it, and succeeded in imposing upon the world a personal *Christ*, it has given rise to some of the grossest forms of superstitious ritual.

The Pharisees of old were the representatives of all that was narrow, formal, mechanical, and material in religion. They practised a ritual from which the spirit had fled, of which the key had been lost; they made clean the outside of the vessel, but inwardly it was full of extortion and wickedness. And so it was the Pharisees who cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Do you suppose that was merely an historical event, or rather that it stood as the type of what happens in all ages, when the truth is sacrificed at the hands of formalism and bigotry? The crucifixion as we have already seen, stands for the descent of spirit into matter, in whatever aspect we may regard it; whether definitely and individually in our own nature, or in a more abstract way as the bringing into objectivity, the giving shape and form, or the representation on the limited and conditioned plane of materiality, of universal spiritual principles. So, whenever we endeavour to give these spiritual mysteries a definite shape and form, to confine them within the limits of some system, of some cut and dried formula, of some dogma and creed, we crucify the divine on the cross of matter.

And as it was with the Pharisees, so it is with the Church to-day. It daily and hourly cries out : " Crucify him ! Crucify him ! " In every promulgation of its dogmas ; in every frantic effort which it makes to stay the advancing tide of knowledge, and keep back the truth from mankind ; in every anathema it utters against those who have awakened to a sense of the deeper mysteries of their being, and seeking in vain for any light in Christian teachings have turned elsewhere : the Church crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open shame.

We do not deny or destroy Christian doctine ; we affirm and re-establish it. It is the Church which destroys it by making it limited and conditioned ; refusing to recognise its elasticity and application to natural laws and universal principles. All that belongs to the world of form and formulas is subject to change, decay, death. There can be no change in TRUTH ; yet nothing is more palpable than the ever-fluctuating value of what is termed—*orthodoxy*. Nothing is of less value to-day than the teachings of the Church in its practical influence on the conduct and social relations of the nation. The vast majority of thinkers are alienated from the Church, the masses are scarcely touched by its influence. Those who profess, do not practice ; they quietly ignore everything in the teachings of Jesus which would interfere with their social affairs. All that affects

our social relationships is decided on grounds of expediency which have no special basis in Christian doctrine. The Church itself has decided that it shall be so. What it teaches has reference to a future life, to a future spiritual state, not to the eternal spiritual *present*. It has no ethical standard which is not found elsewhere, for on those very points where the ethics of Jesus are in advance of the common morals of expediency, it tacitly admits, and even expressly declares, that they are *impracticable*. If one tithe of professing Christians believed all that they profess, there would be no "submerged tenth."

We have no quarrel with the sincere and devout religionist, with those who are striving to the best of their ability, with the light they have, to live up to their ideal. There are hundreds of thousands who cannot in the nature of the case enter into the esoteric teachings. The truth must be presented to them in some familiar and understandable form, otherwise it is a dead letter, and a sealed book. To many, the personal Saviour is a living reality, because they have made it such by daily and hourly dwelling upon the ideal. To ruthlessly destroy that ideal, without substituting an equivalent, might lead to untold evil. Let us deal gently and carefully with such.

Nor is there any need to destroy that ideal which is so dear to many sincere Christians. The personal attachment to the life and character

of Jesus of Nazareth may still remain in all degrees and forms. It even becomes greater and stronger when we understand the true nature of his divinity, and the true nature of his humanity. Jesus Christ is both human and divine, *because we are such.*

Understand this matter well :—*Jesus* is the personal historical character, *Christ* is the *type*, which has been grafted upon and associated with that character. *Christ*, the "second Adam", could no more be historical than the "first Adam"; and those who have accepted the mythical and allegorical character of the one, have no choice but to do so for the other. Both are types of humanity. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. *And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*". (I. Cor. xv. 47.)

There always has been, and must be, an exoteric and an esoteric; a religion for the masses, an initiation for the few. But when we see the blind leading the blind we are bound to step in. Even as Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees of his time, so we are bound to denounce the formalism and bigotry of to-day. The Church has no esoteric doctrine, no initiated priesthood. To-day the priest nominates himself; his qualifications are for the most part social or sermonising.

Read the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as to the connection between Christ and Melchisedek as the type of the high priest, of whom Paul says : " We have many things to say, and *hard of interpretation*, seeing ye are become dull of hearing. For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that someone teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. " (Heb. v., 11.) And so history repeats itself.

But those who would understand that " wisdom hidden in a mystery", which Paul preached, and which may still be discerned like a thread of gold running through his Epistles, sadly as they have been tampered with, must lay aside the " weak and beggarly elements " which hold men in bondage to the letter. And it is only when we have done this that we can know what is that " glorious liberty of the gospel of Christ ", which Paul preached. " Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years ", he says : " I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain ". (Gal. iv., 10.) It is only when we can say with Paul, " I have been crucified with Christ ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me " (Gal. ii., 20), that we can lay claim to be either Christians or Theosophists. Paul meant just what Theosophists mean when they speak of union with their *Higher Self*.

" O foolish Galatians, "—he says again— " who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? " ; that is to say : to whom he had openly taught the knowledge of the mystic Christ, which had been kept a profound secret hitherto by the initiated Gnostics ; for he adds : " Are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, do ye now make an end in the flesh? " ; that is to say, having begun with the highest or spiritual signification, do ye now return to the outward worship of a carnal Christ? Nor is it difficult to trace the connection between these words and the relation of Paul's teachings to those of Peter and the other apostles who founded the Church of Rome. Paul was an Initiate and a Gnostic. Just as St. John's Gospel is Gnostic, so are St. Paul's Epistles ; and in spite of the interpolations and emendations which were made by the Church Fathers before they would allow them to be placed in the Canon, the fact cannot be disguised when once the clue is found. It was Peter, and those who with him, as apostles of the " circumcision", preached a personal and carnal Christ, against whom Paul warned the Galatians. The subject is too large to deal with here, but it is necessary to give this hint in order that the question of Christian doctrine, derived from the authority of the Church, may be understood.

I have thus traversed briefly the whole ground of Biblical narrative in its connection with Christian

doctrine. I have shown how every doctrine—inspiration and prophecy, the fall and the redemption, the crucifixion and the resurrection, the divinity of Christ and the atonement—are one and all susceptible of an esoteric interpretation. How these doctrines are based upon earlier teachings, known as the *Mysteries* or *Gnosis*, but were perverted and obscured by the Church, until finally the key was lost, and the Church, gaining the temporal power it coveted, imposed upon the world those dogmas which have ever been synonymous with all that is most opposed to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and Paul the Apostle.

All that I have been able to do, however, is to point out the landmarks, to give the clue to the complicated and intricate question of Biblical history and authority. To those who are familiar with the endless controversies on the subject, with the frantic efforts which are made to reconcile legend with history, and the supernatural element with the known laws and facts of nature, this interpretation may come like cool and refreshing waters in a parched and arid desert. If they will follow up the clue they will find that the difficulties are but mirage—illusion. They will rise to a high and serene level of thought where such contentions cannot affect them. They will "shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." And Paul adds to this a piece of advice which

Theosophists would do well to remember: "A man that is factious after a first and second admonition—avoid." (Titus 3, 9.) It is impossible to teach the underlying spiritual truth to those who are still in bondage to the law, to those who have not yet cast aside the material form, but can rise to no higher ideal than that of a material heaven of endless enjoyment, and an equally material hell of endless torment.

It is time that the Christian world should lay aside the spell which has been so long cast over it. It is time that all thinking men should awake to the spiritual realities which constitute the ever-present NOW. And it is the work of Theosophy to lead the way in this spiritual revival; to free mankind from ignorance, superstition, sin, and death.

Would that it might ring through the world like a trumpet-call—"AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL SHINE UPON THEE."

PART II.

GENESIS.

" We use great boldness of speech, and are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face . . . . for until this very day at the reading of the Old Testament the same veil remaineth unlifted. " St. PAUL.

IN the previous Part we have endeavoured to show how, in their broad outline, the sacred books of the Christian religion may be harmonised with the teachings of Theosophy concerning the origin of man, his natural evolution, and his final destiny—expressed as a fall and redemption—and more particularly what is the relation of his own inherent divine spiritual nature to the mystic *Christ* of the New Testament. We have endeavoured to show how, by unlocking the esotericism of the Old and New Testaments, Theosophy offers an easy way out of the difficulties which so many have to encounter, in the defence of their cherished faith against the onslaughts of modern criticism. We have shown that this is to be done—not by destroying—but by reconstructing on a firmer basis, on a spiritual basis, which cannot be touched by the destructive criticism which deals merely with the outward form.

In this connection we would once more incul-

cate the general principle which seems to us to lie at the root of the whole matter as between *truth* and *error*. We have already shown that all so-called truth is necessarily *relative*, but that the test of its value is its *universality*. (Part. I, page 7.) Now universality may be taken in this sense as a synonym for spirituality; or in other words, in stating spiritual truths we must deal with underlying and universal principles—universal that is so far as the experience and concepts of humanity can reach—and not with the limitations of some particular *form* or of some particular section of humanity. The reason for this is, that all that enters into the world of form (and formulas) follows the inevitable law of *change* and ultimate death. Therefore, if the principle be not perceived apart from the form, if the individual, or the sect, or the Church, cling to the outward form, afraid to let go of that, because the *spirit* of which the form is only a temporary expression, is not recognised: then for such there can be naught else in store but the throes of death and rebirth; they must follow the history and fate of the form to which they are wedded.

Is it not even this which we see in the Christian Church to-day? The old forms of doctrine are dead or dying; a "new Theology" is springing up; and between those who cling to the old dead forms, and those who would advocate the new, are innumerable sects, each of which lays claim

to the largest measure of truth; each of which claims the title of *Christian*, to the exclusion of the others.

And as it is with the various sects of one religion, so is it with one religion as against another; each one claims a superiority over all the others, and will compass sea and land to make converts and proselytes. And meanwhile, in every form of religion we see the same elements of change, decay, and death, as is perceived in the world of physical forms. To-day one religion may appear to predominate, may appear to have in it the elements of strength and permanency; but let a thousand, ten thousand, a million years pass over the race—as millions have already done, burying continents, races, civilisations, religions— and the religions of to-day will not merely become the superstitions of a more enlightened age, but will in their turn sink into utter oblivion.

And now, if we want TRUTH, we must get at the underlying principle of this great cyclic change; if we want RELIGION, and not *a* religion, we must apprehend the spiritual principle which is independent of all religious forms, which is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, but which reincarnates from time to time, in forms which correspond to the race or cycle in which it is necessary that it should reappear.

Theosophy is such a reincarnation. It is the restatement of underlying spiritual principles,

which have been lost sight of in the accretions of religious forms and dogmas. But such a restatement implies a primal source, where these principles have been preserved pure and uncorrupted. That is so, otherwise would mankind be utterly lost in ignorance and darkness. Again and again must those who preserve the TRUTH give to the world that measure of enlightenment which it is fitted to receive. Now in one form, now in another, the central truth of man's spiritual nature, and the way in which he must fulfil his destiny, are given out by various teachers, by the great INITIATES, and founders of the world's Religions; one and all deriving their authority from that unifying system known as the ANCIENT WISDOM RELIGION, or SECRET DOCTRINE.

For in the light of that Ancient Wisdom, now given to the world once more as THEOSOPHY, the underlying principle of all religions is discovered; that test of truth, its *universality*, which we are seeking, is found; and we possess, not *a* religion, but RELIGION itself, that upon which we can take our stand, and watch the conflict of sects and creeds without concern; for were the whole fabric of any individual religion to crumble to dust to-morrow, as it inevitably will in course of time, the TRUTH would still remain with us.

The whole is greater than a part, and Theosophy in disclosing the underlying principle of all religions, proves thereby its superiority to any

one. This of course will be strenuously denied by all sectarians. But we do not appeal to sectarians. The orthodox are always the furthest from the truth, because they are the most wedded to form. In so far, however, as it is now our object to deal with the fundamental principles which Theosophy discloses, in their relation to Christianity, it will be necessary in the first place to present these principles in a concise form, and then compare them with the records on which the Christian religion is based. We shall have to give an outline of the Esoteric Philosophy in one of its symbolical forms, to trace briefly its cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, and then compare them with the Christian Book of Genesis.

With regard to this same Book of Genesis, there was a time, in the days of our childhood, when we regarded it with a feeling akin to reverence and awe ; when we endeavoured to realise the idea of the personal Creator producing the heavens and the earth — out of nothing—by the word of his mouth; when we endeavoured to picture to ourselves the six days' work, the creation of the plants, animals, and finally man, and the seventh day of rest ; this latter day being most real to us by reason of the restrictions to which we were subjected every Sunday. We have endeavoured to realise to ourselves the garden of Eden, the forbidden fruit, the naked man and woman, the tempting serpent, the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of

the day, the sentence on the trembling, guilty couple, the expulsion from the garden — and the rest. Perhaps the greatest cause of wonderment with us at the present time, is not that we ourselves once believed, or endeavoured to believe, in all this as literal history ; but that there are to-day people who call themselves adults who still believe it. We were taught this in our childhood, and knew no better ; we had to grow out of it. And so must those who still hold to the literal form of the narrative, those who are still children in their spiritual perceptions, though adults in their present physical form.

But when these records have been rejected as history, when it has become for ever impossible to accept them in their orthodox interpretation, what shall we say of them ? Are they altogether fables, or are they allegories concealing the deepest truths ? Where shall we look for enlightenment ? The Church fails us utterly at this point. All that it can give to us is some tardy and reluctant concession to the facts which science has forced it to accept after centuries of conflict. We ask for bread, and it offers us a stone ; and had we not happily lighted upon the solution of the problem elsewhere, we had been fain, as so many have, to turn to materialism or agnosticism. For it is not science that draws men from the Church ; no knowledge of any kind can be incompatible with TRUTH. It is the *ne-science* of the Church

that has brought about the avowed materialism of the age, and the still more deadly lethargy of conventional religious observance ; and unless the priesthood can become once more *initiated*, unless it can not merely accept, but forestall, the advance of knowledge, unless it can discount beforehand those wider and deeper generalisations which are resulting from the discoveries of investigators in every department of research : it will sink deeper and deeper into disrepute, as the present cycle of enlightenment rises to its culmination.

Theosophy comes from those who *know* ; its teachers are the *Initiated* of all ages. Every advance in knowledge, every fact which science brings to light, is so much clear gain in confirmation of its teachings ; for it does not rest on special doctrines, but on universal principles.

Let us endeavour now, as far as is possible within the limits of this work, to elucidate some of those principles, as bearing upon the question of ' creation ', and the Christian doctrine in general.

If we endeavour to realise broadly what it is in the growth of our experience and conceptions which forced us out of the old forms of faith, we find it to lie principally in connection with ideas of time and space. For it is just exactly in regard to such concepts that exoteric Christian doctrine, based upon so-called history, is found to be utterly wanting in its premises and conclusions. Until it is clearly perceived that the now and the hereafter,

the past, present, and future, the natural and the spiritual, the real and the ideal, the objective and the subjective, are merely *relative* to our conceptions or state of consciousness; that they are imaginary lines of latitude and longitude, that they are not realities, but conditioned aspects of the One Reality: until this is understood and brought to bear upon Christian doctrine there can be no revelation in the latter of *eternal* truth, of that TRUTH which is beyond the illusions of time and space.

To perceive the relativity of the relative, the finality of the finite, this is the first step into the arcane. Until this is perceived, no advance is possible into that region where lie the *realities*, the eternal verities. This is the root of all true mysticism; it is the key-note of the *esotericism* of all religions. It is the difference between the "world" and the "Kingdom of Heaven" in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the difference between the *Maya* of the phenomenal world, and the *Nirvana* of the noumenal, in the teachings of Buddha.

All that pertains to our *external* life is transitory and illusive; it is not here, in the world of forms and phenomena that we can find the secret of our being. Nor can that secret be expressed in terms of the finite; therefore are all those religious conceptions found to be utterly wanting, which deal with a personal God and a personal Devil as

the origin of good and evil; with creation and final judgment, with heaven and hell as localities, with time and eternity as successive periods, with a material here and a spiritual hereafter.

When once the awakened soul has looked into the depths of its own nature, even though the vision be but momentary, and the mists of the physical close again over the spiritual insight, it has become for ever impossible to satisfy it with the forms and formulas of exoteric religions.

" The kingdom of God is within you ", there lies the secret of the whole universe. Look not for it beyond the furthest stars, nor think to enter it at death, or at the judgment day. " It is not in heaven . . . neither is it beyond the sea . . . but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. "

And learning this, we place our feet with firm and certain tread upon the PATH; for we are ourselves that Path. " Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself. "

> " Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
> Each man his prison makes. "

For it is the Christ *within*, our own HIGHER SELF, that is " the way, the truth, and the life. '.

Let us now examine briefly some of the ideas that lie at the root of Christian doctrine, in order that we may understand clearly where the point of departure lies between the exoteric and esoteric.

We may commence with the idea of ' creation'.

There are doubtless many who still believe that by the power of God something may be created out of nothing. This class, however, we must leave entirely out of the question. There are others, however, who, though not willing to admit such a concept, cannot get beyond the idea that God, as a personal creator, exists apart from the universe he has created. Now it will be seen later on that Theosophy does in a certain sense recognise such a creator, or rather such creators, but rejects the idea that anything that is personal can claim to be absolute deity; for personality implies relativity and finiteness. To those who hold to the idea of a personal creator, who is separate and distinct from the universe he has created, the next step appears to involve a pantheistic idea which they are by no means willing to admit. It is not necessary for our purpose that we should follow this out here; we may simply point out that the conception of God *and* the universe, as an eternal duality, implies the existence of a something—call it matter, or substance, or what you will—out of which the universe is made, which is not God, and which God did not make, since something cannot be made out of nothing.

"God is a spirit," we are taught; but what is spirit, and what is matter? If they are eternal dualities, and if the God-spirit did not make matter out of its own self, whence came the matter or substance out of which the universe is fashioned?

This is a mystery, we are told, into which it is useless for us to enquire. Yea, truly it is a mystery; for the finite can form no conception of the infinite. But although the secret of the first cause must remain for us an ever concealed mystery, there is no reason why we should introduce into our conceptions two mysteries instead of one; it is not beyond the limits of our capacities to view the universe as a unity, instead of a duality. Such a conception is a fundamental one in the Esoteric Philosophy, which cuts the knot of the controversy by postulating spirit and matter as the two poles of the one eternal REALITY. Spirit *and* matter they *appear* to us; subject *and* object in the universe of our perceptions; but there is a state of consciousness in which subject and object merge in one, where Man becomes once more that which he was—and is.

Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity, is the key-note of our teachings. The Universe as a unity eternally IS. There is no such thing as 'creation' in reality. 'Creation' implies existence in time and space—but time and space are not realities, they are but *aspects* of the One Reality. That which is 'created' comes into existence *(ex-sisto)* on the plane of our perceptions by the operation of the "great breath", that eternal law of cyclic motion by which things issue from the subjective into the objective, and return again to the subjective.

Viewed from another standpoint, it is rather our perceptions, or states of consciousness, which change, and not things in themselves. The phenomenal world appears to pass before us as an external change, but this, like all else on this plane of illusions, is appearance only. Time, space, the phenomenal world, these are creations of our own consciousness. Within ourselves lies the creative power, it is there resides the 'God' who creates the heavens and the earth; who "in the beginning"—that is, when the first conception of time arose in our consciousness, when the finite issued from the infinite—separated the firmament from the waters—that is, separated the space of our perceptions from that infinite 'void' or abstract space, which is spoken of in many exoteric works as the "great waters" or the "deep".

Thus is MAN — not the temporary personality which is now called man, but the HEAVENLY MAN, the divine Prototype—the creator of the temporary world in which he lives. That world is, so to speak, the particular cross-section of the whole, which alone can be viewed by the conditioned and finite; and which being thus viewed is called the *present* and the *real*. For man has fallen into the illusions of matter; he has lost his divine birthright; he perceives no longer the eternal verities; he exercises no longer the conscious function of creator, but lives wholly in the phenomenal world

which he has created—the creator has become merged in the created.

Yet even man as we know him on this earth is in his own sphere a ' creator ', the creator of his future sphere of life; for out of the infinite All, the choice still lies with him to bring what he will into objective existence, and for a brief space to call it the *present reality*. This he does by *Karma* working through *reincarnation*. He reaps that which he sows.

The present is but the objectivisation of past thoughts and desires ; the present thoughts and desires will in due time become a temporary objective reality. Thus " there is nothing hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light ".

And as it is with ' man ', so is it with those other orders of intelligences which rise in " ascending scale until we reach something practically indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. "* Each is the creator of its own universe, its own objective sphere. All is law and order here ; there is no caprice, no supernaturalism in ' creation ', viewed in this light. It is a profoundest philosophy, giving the fullest scope for the exercise of our highest intelligence and intuition ; giving promise of an infinite

* *Vide* " Essays upon some Controverted Questions, " by Professor J. H. Huxley, page 36.

growth and extension of our own life and consciousness. For these higher powers and intelligences are not separated and isolated from each other and from man. The whole is united and blended into one harmonious unity. It is no more possible to separate Man from the Universe, than it is to separate ' God '. Each lower power ' creates ' within the limits of law determined by higher powers. Free will is limited by law. And if we enquire in this light what are the ' laws of nature ', we find them to be the very nature and essence of these higher creative Intelligences ; the ' forces of nature ' are their very bodies and substance. " Every force is an emanation from an entity ", says the *Secret Doctrine*. This must be qualified, however, as meaning the *noumenon* of these forces, and not their lowest phenomenal aspect on our plane of matter. And though now to the man of flesh these entities appear as ' forces ', ' laws of nature ', ' spirits ', ' gods ', and what not, *above and beyond him;* yet we touch the deepest truth of all, the profoundest *mystery* of our own nature, when we state that MAN in his totality, in the fulness of his seven principles, *is himself these entities.*

To quote again from the *Secret Doctrine :* " There is naught higher than man in the Universe : everything has been, is, or tends to become man ".

And again, the Archaic Stanzas from the *Book*

of Dzyan, in describing the consummation of the drama of human existence on this globe, says :— " Then the Builders, having donned their first clothing, descend on radiant earth and reign over Men—who are Themselves. "

" Who are Themselves " truly. " It is they who are thou, I, he, oh Lanoo. They who watch over thee, and thy mother earth. " And though now the divine appears to be the not-ourselves, yet is there naught higher in the Universe than perfected Man ; he who has risen triumphant over the illusions of this world ; who was " dead and is alive again. "

" Him the Gods envy from their lower seats ;
Him the Three worlds in ruin should not shake ;
All life is lived for him, all deaths are dead. "
(*Light of Asia*)

and again : —

" Yea, He is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is HIMSELF, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahm and Indra. "

" He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand. " (*Voice of the Silence.*)

And this is the Christ whom Paul preached,

the HEAVENLY MAN, the divine Prototype; "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens, and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." (Col. i. 15—18).

Thus does the ancient Archaic Wisdom, the teachings of Theosophy, unite with the doctrine of Buddha, and of Paul. Herein lies the true key which opens the door of RELIGION to him who is spiritual enough to use it. Here is the link between Esoteric Christianity and Theosophy; the one central doctrine of the great INITIATES of all ages. In this we strike the key-note of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, when the "cloak of the narrative" is laid aside. Not God *and* the universe; not divinity *and* humanity; not Christ the divine Son, *and* man the lost creature; not an eternal duality of good *and* evil; but all these as the finite *aspects* of the ONE REALITY. God *becoming* the Universe, and the Universe *becoming* God; the divine *becoming* human, and the human *becoming* divine; Christ *becoming* man, and man *becoming* Christ; good *becoming* evil, and evil *becoming* good. For the Universe, when once it is viewed in one or any of its finite aspects, is the *ever becoming*.

Sects, creeds, religions—what are these to him who has grasped this deeper truth, save in so far as he can thereby influence for good his fellow-men. It gives to him the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Christ which Paul preached; he is "quit of the priests and books." The whole universe is his temple; within himself he finds the 'Holy of Holies."

If these principles have been fully grasped they will be found to modify profoundly the ordinary conceptions of life and immortality; it is only through them that true life and immortality are brought to light. For true life and immortality is not of the temporary, but of the eternal; is not of the human but of the divine. And if our real nature be divine, then it is eternal; and the temporary personality is but a passing phase of the real divine Ego.

"Never the Spirit was born, the Spirit shall cease to be never;
Never was time it was not, end and beginning are dreams;
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the Spirit for ever,
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems."

And so our real Self, our immortal spirit, is divine and eternal. To give it eternal life *hereafter* but no *heretofore*, is a philosophical and logical absurdity. That which begins in time and space must end in time and space; and that is our tem-

porary personality only. Hence the necessity for incarnation and reincarnation. The universe as the ***ever becoming***, is the eternal reincarnation of the divine spirit, the Logos; not merely in the physical man as we know him, but in all forms of *life*, in infinite varieties of manifestation. Thus reincarnation being a *universal* principle, the doctrine of rebirth as applied to man is once more not an arbitrary teaching, but the application of a truth, which is *true* because of its *universality*.

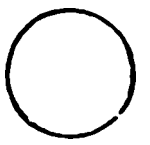
The idea of that immortality implies pre-existence, is one which has been touched in many ways by intuitional writers of the present age, although it now receives no acknowledgment in the teachings of the Church. Yet it was well understood in the early days of Christianity, and even explicitly taught as late as the ninth century. And if our individual spiritual Ego has incarnated this once, in our present physical body, why may it not have done so before, and why may it not do so again? There are many who will admit our future life to be the natural sequence and outcome of the present; after death, they say, we shall begin just where we leave off here; we shall reap that which we have sown. And if this be so of the future, it must also be so of the present, which is but the reaping of that which we have sown in the past. This is *Karma*, and only by this law can we reconcile the unequal lots which fall to men in this world. For although the true Ego is immortal and divine, yet

once that it has ' fallen into matter ' it has to follow the *Karma*, the sequence of cause and effect, which is generated by the man of flesh, the lower personality. For on all the planes of the universe the same law holds good—like generates like. The physical generates the physical—hence heredity. The astral generates the astral. The thoughts and desires of the present personality build up the *character* of the personality that will be in a future incarnation. And it is only when that *character* becomes freed from all *desire* on this plane, when it has exhausted all *Karma* which can only have its legitimate outcome in this world, because it is connected with the thoughts, desires, and *illusions* of sense life, that reincarnation ceases. It ceases because there is no longer any cause to produce the effect. It ceases because the human has once more become the divine : because the lower personality has become one with the higher individuality ; because the Christ within us, which is our own SELF, has accomplished his mission ; has wrought out our salvation.

In order that we may understand better how these principles are embodied in the Bible narrative, it will now be necessary to give an outline of the Esoteric Philosophy in its symbolical form, and then compare it with the Biblical account of the creation.

We shall choose the geometrical and numerical form of symbology, because it is in some respects

perhaps the easiest to understand, and because these symbols are of the greatest antiquity, and prove the identity of these teachings in all ages, and among all races.

The Esoteric Philosophy is deductive in its methods, proceeding from universal to particulars. Taking first of all the highest intellectual concept that can possibly be formed in respect to the principle of the unity of the universe—the idea which is set forth in various philosophies under the terms, the ' Absolute ', the ' Unknowable ', the ' Unconscious ', etc.,—we have this symbolised by a plain white disc. 

It represents the ALL, the INFINITE, the ever concealed Causeless-Cause, or Rootless-Root of the Universe in its TOTALITY. No name can be given to it, no qualities postulated of it. It is simply IT, or THAT. It can only be expressed by a paradox ; it is absolute light which is darkness; absolute consciousness which is unconsciousness. In it all opposites are united. It is OM TAT SAT. It is OM AMITAYA. It is ALAYA ; a shoreless sea of absolute motion, which is infinite rest. It ever is, yet is not ; for it is all and in all, yet has no relation to aught that is relative. It is absolute Being, which is Non-Being. Before this mystery the highest celestial beings, Archangels, Dhyan-Chohans, or Gods, bow their heads in silence.

" Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here?
Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
The Gods themselves came later into being—
Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
THAT, whence all this great creation came,
Whether its will created or was mute;
The Most High Seer that is in highest Heaven,
He knows it—or perchance even He knows not. "

(*Rig Veda.*)

Time and space have no relation to it; it is infinite space, and endless duration. Its centre is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere. It is in its totality in the smallest atom of ' matter '; yet the infinite depths of the starry heavens cannot contain it. We walk through its temple, and live and move and have our being in it, yet is it ever at an infinite distance from us.

In symbolising it by a  we make the first concession to our limited and conditioned consciousness. Everything lower than this is relative and subject to our ideas of time and space; and since we must introduce such ideas in any attempt to form an intellectual concept, it is done in the following manner.

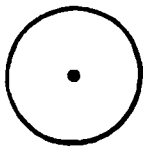
The  is first of all conceived of as existing alone, in unbroken slumber. It is the " Night of Brahm "; it is the " darkness upon the face of the deep " (space). " Alone the one form of exis-

tence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep ; and life pulsated unconscious in universal space " (*Book of Dzyan*). Or to quote from the *Rig Veda* :—

> " The only One breathed breathless by itself,
> Other than IT there nothing since has been.
> Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
> In gloom profound. "

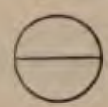
We have now to introduce the idea of the first beginning of manifestation ; the first dawn of differentiation ; the first ideal 'breath' of the Manifested Universe that is to be.

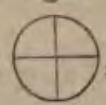
" The last vibration of the seventh eternity thrills through infinitude. The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the germ that dwelleth in darkness ; the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters of life. Darkness radiates light, and light drops one solitary ray into the mother-deep " (space).—*Book of Dzyan*.

It is the " spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters ". It is the commencement of the " day of Brahmâ " (or Jehovah). " And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.' This was not our little day and night, for the sun, moon, and stars had not yet been created. It is the *universal* day and night. It is the first manifestation of the 'Word ', the ' first Logos', the ' point within the circle '. 

It is the nucleus within the ' egg of Brahmâ ' ; the *nucleole* within the nucleus rather. It is the point at which that differentiation commences, which—spreading through the homogeneous substance of the Universe — becomes by successive stages the world of matter and form. Behind that *point* lies the ever concealed cause of *Life*.

Profoundly significant is that ancient symbology which made the Universe in all its diversity issue from the ' Egg of Brahmâ '; for in this is the mystery of life and generation seen to repeat itself below as above. Truly " the microcosm is but a reflection of the macrocosm ".

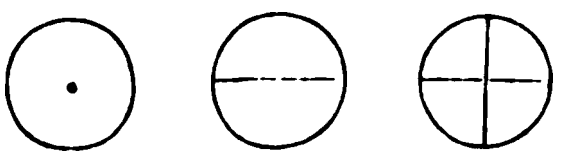
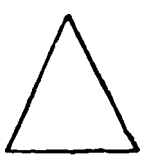
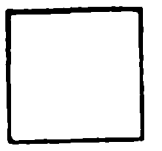
When differentiation commences from this ' primordial germ ', we get the second stage, the *second Logos*. The point within the circle becomes a diameter. 

At the third stage this diameter is crossed by another at right angles, and we have cross within the circle , which is the symbol of the *third Logos*.*

The term *Logos* or *Word* must not be taken as indicating any spoken word on the part of a creative power. It is simply the idea of speech or words

* Those who have studied embryology will be struck with the similarity between these symbols, and the appearance under the microscope of the nucleus of an egg, during the first stages of germination.

as the manifestation of thought; a very imperfect simile, but the only way in which we are familiar now with the expressions of thought; whereas the ancients held — and those who know hold it to this day—that thought, properly directed, will at once produce its corresponding *objective* result. The idea therefore that is associated with the *Logos* as the first process of manifestation, is simply that of the divine thought, or ideation, expressing itself immediately as an objective effect.

We have now obtained three distinct symbols, expressive of the Divine Trinity, which is found at the root of all the ancient theogonies. Thus the three *Logoi*  may now be expressed in the one symbol of the triangle,  Sometimes the  is used as the symbol for the second Logos, while the third Logos is represented by a square.  Thus the symbols may be represented in an extended form as :— 

where the point in the circle is the apex of the triangle, and the base line of the triangle is extend-

ed, or projected downwards to form a square.

We have already pointed out in Part I. that the cross ✝ is a symbol for the quaternary or square ; and this, being the third Logos, is the manifested Universe ; and is also Jehovah and Brahmâ. For this reason the manifested Universe is said to exist on the four lower planes of Cosmos, (see diagram *Secret Doctrine*, vol I, page 221), also the manifested ' Man '—the personality—consists of the four lower principles (see diagram, page 30).

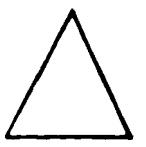
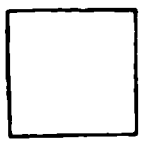
It is on the constant repetition and permutation of these symbols that the later symbology, as found in various religions, is based. It is very difficult sometimes to follow these permutations, especially when, as in the Bible, in the Purânas, and other exoteric writings, they are purposely confused.

All that we can do now, however, is to give a general idea of this symbology, in so far as it will afford a clue to show that the Bible can only be interpreted *esoterically* on the lines of the ancient Wisdom Religion.

It must be remembered that this geometrical and numerical symbology is not a concrete thing, but an abstract formula ; it is not like a two-foot rule to be placed against the Universe, but it is a metaphysical key, capable of infinite extension or contraction. For wherever the germ of life lies latent, wherever manifestation begins in time and space, there is the point in the circle ; and as every

manifestation is but the reflection and repetition of the *universal* process, the same numerical order is found, whether we deal with the universal or the particular.

There is nevertheless a profound signifiance even in the numbers themselves; for what is the manifested Universe, whose symbol is the square, but the perfect quadrature of the infinite circle.

It has already been pointed out in Part I. that the  and the  taken together constitute the number seven, or the seven 'principles' as taught in Theosophy; the upper triad belonging to the 'divine' world, and constituting the immortal spiritual principles, and the lower quaternary belonging to the world of temporary manifestation and form. (See diagram, page 30).

We must now turn our attention to the connection between this symbolism and the Biblical records, together with the Christian doctrines founded thereon.

It will be necessary, in the first place, to throw more light upon the doctrine of the trinity, which has become so much obscured by theological speculations based upon the literalisation of the Gospel narratives. In this, as in other matters, the key can only be obtained by comparing and interpreting the Bible with those older systems from

which all its allegories are borrowed—without any acknowledgment—and made to appear as *history*.

In the older philosophies, however, in the Egyptian ritual, and in the still older Hindu system, the nature and symbolism of the trinity is perfectly clear. It is at best but an anthropomorphic conception, to introduce the terms of human relationship into the divine mysteries of creation ; and the danger of it is fully exemplified in the history of the Christian Church, where for centuries the original philosophical conception has been altogether forgotten, and the degradation of the symbolism fully completed, by making the *divine Son* the physiological offspring of a *human virgin !* The anachronism of this will be made clearer as we proceed.

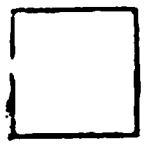
In Christian theology the trinity consists of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; but in the Esoteric Philosophy it is Father-Mother-Son— the natural order and relationship. In the Christian trinity there is no female principle, and to suit the exigencies of the case the Son is made the second person, instead of the third, while the Holy Ghost —which is really a permutation of the Father— is put in the third place.

Now in the Esoteric Philosophy, Father-Mother is the dual aspect of that which is really one, *viz.*, Spirit and Matter. It is the infinite co-operation of these two which produces the third *aspect*, the

divine ' Son '; or more simply the manifested universe.

To quote again from the *Book of Dzyan :*

" Father-Mother spin a web whose upper end is fastened to spirit—the light of the one darkness —and the lower one to its shadowy end, matter ; and this web is the universe spun out of the two substances made in one, which is Svabhavat. "

' Father-Mother ' are the first and second Logos (more strictly the second Logos only is so regarded) ; and the ' web ', which is " the universe spun out of the two substances made in one ", is the third Logos, the divine ' Son ', symbolised by the  or cross.

Many are the aspects in which this trinity can be presented, both in its collectivity and its component parts. The whole pantheon of the ancient gods and goddesses are only permutations of these three fundamental principles. For " every mystery in *heaven* is repeated on *earth* "; and whether we take it in its universal aspect, or whether we take the birth of a solar system, or of a single planet, of a human being, or a speck of protoplasm, or a single atom of matter, the process, the problem, the mystery, the symbology is the same. " There is no great and no small, to the soul that maketh all ". The Infinite repeats itself in endless manifestations ; it is " the beams and sparks of one moon reflected in the running waves of all the

rivers of earth". (*Book of Dzyan.*) There is not one law for the gods, and another for mortals ; one life for the atom, and another for the globe. " Each is a part of the web. Reflecting the Self-Existent Lord like a mirror, each becomes in turn a world". (*Book of Dzyan.*)

It is this which places the deductive Philosophy so infinitely beyond the methods of inductive science, with its endless speculations and contradictory theories. It is this which places it so infinitely beyond those little systems of so-called religion, which can mete out a 'plan of salvation', by which perchance a few favoured mortals may enter into an eternity of bliss.

' Spirit ' or ' Father ' is often symbolised by fire or light ; and ' matter ' or ' Mother ' is symbolised by water or the ' deep '. This, as we have already seen, is also a term for abstract space. " Darkness radiates Light, and Light drops one solitary ray into the Mother-Deep " (Space).

Now this is exactly the same symbolism as found in the first chapter of Genesis : ' Darkness was upon the face of the deep ; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be Light. " Here the ' deep ' and the 'waters' are synonymous, and are the female principle, the ' Mother-Deep ' ; while the ' Spirit ' is the ' Father '.

It is not difficult to trace this also in the New Testament, where the birth of Jesus is only a

repetition of this symbology. Mary is *Mare*, the sea ; representing again the ' waters ', or the ' deep '. She is " found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Mat.i.18). Now, one symbol for the Holy Ghost is fire (Acts ii. 3), and we have thus again the dual symbols, fire and water, as representing spirit and matter, or Father-Mother ; the " spirit of God " and the "waters" of Genesis. It is clearly seen here that the Holy Ghost is the Father, the first person of the trinity and not the third. The Church has left out altogether the female principle in the *divine* trinity, has put in two ' Fathers ', and taken the ' Mother ' only in the lowest physiological sense. The immaculate conception was a *divine* allegory ages before the Church appropriated and materialised it.

Moreover, it is not difficult to connect the Virgin Mary with the personified female principle of the older religions. She is also identified with the Hindu *Maya*, with the Chaldean Mar-Ri, and with many other " divine mothers ", all conveying the same signification, and even bearing a singular phonetic resemblance. Her direct prototype is the Egyptian Isis, whose son Horus corresponds to the Christ of the later symbology. She also corresponds to the moon, which is another type of the feminine ; the sun (Osiris) being masculine. Hence her title of ' Queen of Heaven ' and her pictorial representations in connection with the crescent moon.

It must be remembered, if these variations seem to be somewhat confusing, that this symbology has assumed many forms, and been dressed up in all kinds of guises, exoteric and esoteric, for thousands of years, and by different races, nations, and teachers. We have but broken fragments of the original, whether in the Bible, or any other similar book. In many cases—in the Bible notably—they are worse than broken ; they are deliberately perverted to fit a special system of anthropomorphic theology, and ecclesiastical authority. But enough remains to show that they have a common origin, and that they have been handed down and repeated from cycle to cycle of human history ; from the earliest beginnings of the Aryan race, through Hindu, Babylonian, Chaldean, Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and other nations, who have had their golden age, and then been swallowed up by the great devourer. Enough remains to prove the antiquity and the preservation of the *Secret Doctrine*, which alone can give the key which is the synthesis of the philosophy, religion, and science of all ages. For while all these change with the changing races and cycles, while the allegories are passed from one to the other, ***mutatis mutandis :*** the facts of the Universe, the laws of nature, remain ever the same. That which has been, is, and will be. All forms perish ; and the altars and temples of to-day shall in their own turn become as those whose fragments now strew the sands of the desert.

The wheel of birth and death turns round, and those who once shook the sistrum before the Egyptian Isis, now burn candles before the Virgin Mary; who shall say to what form they will be wedded, when once more the wheel turns round.

Let us now see how far the broken fragments given to us in the Book of Genesis, may be pieced together, so as to bear some resemblance to the original teachings.

" In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void. "

" In the beginning ", is the commencement of the *time* cycle of this present manifested Universe. There is no beginning nor end in eternity; but since in this also we must make concessions to our finite ideas, it is necessary to introduce the idea of periodicity. We have already referred to the " days and nights of Brahmâ ", or the outbreathing and the inbreathing, the periods of ***Manvantara*** and ***Pralaya***. The conception is a fundamental one in the Esoteric Philosophy, that everything that makes its appearance in time and space is a *manifestation* of something already existing; and that it has to pass through alternate periods of subjective and objective existence. This is what we, on this plane of consciousness, call birth and death; and it holds good—as do all other *universal* principles—equally for the small as for the great. Thus the whole manifested Universe has its period

or *cycle* of existence ; and within the great cycle, or " Age of Brahmâ " (or Jehovah) are smaller cycles without number ; cycle within cycle in infinite series, yet each one a faithful reflection and mirror of the universal.

Now the cycle with which we are at present concerned, is simply that of our earth or globe. The cycle of evolution which this globe has to accomplish, is but a minor cycle comprised within the greater cycle of the solar system. But the cycle of this globe is itself composed of many minor cycles. The earth itself has to pass through several periods of subjectivity and objectivity, of birth and death, or successive reincarnations. For convenience of classification, and following the septenary law which governs the present order of manifestation, the major periods of the earth's evolution are divided into seven, and these are called *Rounds*. Thus the present period of activity, or of the evolution of *life* on this globe, is the *fourth* in the series ; hence our earth is said to be in its *fourth Round*. Each cycle or Round is allotted, by laws of correspondence and analogy, to a definite purpose or order of evolution. Thus, once this order is known, the history of the world, past, present, and future, is an open book. For by correspondence and analogy, since the infinitely small reflects the infinitely great, the life history of the smallest thing is the life history of the whole, and any portion of that life history is the history of any similar portion of

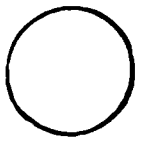
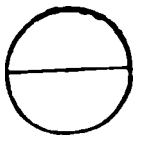
the whole. Take as an illustration the development of the human fœtus. Its *physiological* development is the epitomised history of *physiological* man of the earlier rounds or cycles ; and could the astral and spiritual forms and forces which lie behind the physical, and which mould the latter into form, be discerned, the whole line of descent of 'Man' from 'God' would be unveiled. It is this descent or 'fall', and the re-ascent or 'redemption', which constitutes the divine allegory of the Old and New Testaments.

Following out the principle of correspondence and analogy, we find that this earth being now in its *fourth* Round, humanity is most strongly characterised by its fourth *principle*. (See diagram, page 30.) Each Round, however, is subdivided into seven minor periods or cycles, and these constitute the various *Races* of humanity. These Races, however, are not the races known to profane history, the latter being minor subdivisions of the *Root* Races. Each Race is concerned among other things with the development of one of the *senses*. We are now in the fifth Root Race, hence our five senses ; while the coming of the sixth Root Race is already foreshadowed in the development of a sixth sense, which is a *psychic* faculty : hence the psychic phenomena which are at present attracting so much attention. Coming events cast their shadows—*verbum sap*.

We shall now be better prepared to trace the

outline and the correspondences as given in Genesis. The first chapter deals with the evolution of the earth during the first three *Rounds;* the second, third, fourth and fifth, deal with this present Round only ; or with the evolution of the first four Races of our present humanity. Broadly speaking, the first four chapters correspond also to the first four Races, but the narrative is not consecutive.

We have already seen what the words " in the beginning " imply, and we must now take note of the singular phrase, " the earth was without form and void ". Thi is the only clue given to us of the nature of the creation described in the first chapter, and which is so essentially different from that of the second chapter ; yet with the key which the *Secret Doctrine* supplies, the difference between the creation by the Elohim in the first chapter, and the creation by Jehovah in the second chapter is quite clear. The creation in the first chapter is *archetypal*. In order to understand better what this means, we must fall back on the concept of ' creation ' as being the result of divine ideation. The first order of creation is the existence of the thought or plan of the Universe in the divine mind. As the potter has in his mind the thought and image of the vessel he is about to mould, so that which ultimately assumes shape and form in this world, exists first in the universal mind ; where it is—to our perceptions—" without form and void. "

Bearing in mind what has already been said about the successive emanation of the three Logoi, we have now to enquire which of these is the creative power with which we are concerned in the first chapter. There is no difficulty in settling this question. The Absolute, the  cannot 'create', for there can be nothing relative to it. The first Logos also, the *unmanifested* Logos, is too near to absoluteness to be regarded in any sense as a creator. Indeed the term ' creator ' is really only applicable to the third Logos, who is the *personal* creator in all theogonies. But this personal creator, being the third person of the Trinity, is also the ' Son ', or the HEAVENLY MAN—Adam-Kadmon, or in a later aspect, Jah-Hevah; and this HEAVENLY MAN, or archetypal man, is the culminating creation of the first chapter. It is therefore the second Logos, the  which is the creative power in the first chapter. If we want confirmation of this, we find it in the Hebrew word which is translated ' God ' in our Bibles. That word is ALHIM, and its numerical value is 3.1415, or the mathematical value for the ratio of diameter to circumference of a circle ; in accordance with our geometrical symbology.

We may quote again from the *Book of Dzyan*

in confirmation of what has been already said, and as a clue to what follows.

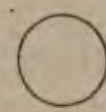
" For thus stands the eternal Nidâna (concatenation of cause and effect).

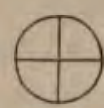
' Darkness ', the boundless, or the no-number, Adi-Nidâna Svabhâvat : —

I. The Adi-Sanat, the number, for he is one.

II. The voice of the Lord Svabhâvat, the numbers, for he is one and nine.

III. The ' formless square '.

And these three enclosed within the 

are the sacred four. " 

It is this " sacred four " which, in its individualised aspect, is the third Logos; and which in its turn becomes the creative power of the lower planes of manifestation ; which contains within itself the power and potency of the *manifested* Universe that is to be—which is *Itself* that manifested Universe, the ' divine Son. '

The whole esotericism of the Bible, the whole secret of man's inherent divine nature, the whole key to the teaching of the Initiates of all ages, lies in the understanding of this ' divine Son ', who in his turn becomes the ' Father. ' He is the HEAVENLY MAN of the Kabala and the Hermetic philosophy ; the Tetragrammaton of the Rabbis, and the Divine Tetractis ' of Pythagoras. He is

the ' Adam-Kadmon ', the archetypal ' Man ', of the first chapter of Genesis, and the creative power—the ' Lord God '—Jehovah-Alhim, of the second chapter ; the ' Word ' of St. John's Gospel ; the ' Christ ' of St. Paul — " the first-born of all creation " (Col. i. 15) ; and finally, the " Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world, " of the Revelation* of St. John. He is the Divine Ego in man, and is thus " the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. "

Having thus outlined the fundamental principles, in the order of creation, or *Emanation*, up to the appearance of this archetypal man, so far as we are able to do so without entering too far into the region of metaphysics ; and having traced the correspondence between these principles and their symbolical representations, we are now in a better position to understand the following quotation from the *Secret Doctrine* :—

" Every form on earth, and every speck (atom) in space strives in its efforts towards self-formation to follow the model placed for it in the HEAVENLY MAN . . . . Its (the atom's) involution and evolution, its external and internal growth and development, have all one and the same object —man ; man, as the highest physical and ulti-

* *Revelation*—from *re* and *velo*. Should it not rather mean to re-veil, or to hide the *Esoteric doctrine* under a new symbolism?

mate form on this earth ; the MONAD, in its absolute totality and awakened condition—as the culmination of the divine incarnations on earth. " (*S. D.* I. 205.)

We must now turn our attention to this HEAVENLY MAN in his pilgrimage on ' Earth. ' This commences properly with the fourth *Round*, to which we have already referred. The first three *Rounds* correspond to the emanation of the three Logoi, and the third Round therefore culminates in the formation of archetypal Man ; the model of the man that is to be. Physical man as we now know him—separated into two sexes—is only the product of this fourth Round, and of the fourth *Race*. Now ' MAN ', in order to reach his present form and consciousness has to evolve through all the forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. This he does in the first three *Rounds*. It is difficult to convey to those who are unaccustomed to such studies, or who have not examined closely the teachings of the *Secret Doctrine*, any conception of what is meant here, without a long explanation which cannot be attempted within the scope of this work. When we say that ' Man ' has to pass through the lower kingdoms of nature, we mean that ray or spark, so to speak, of the divine, which after emanating and passing through the lower planes of consciousness in the universe, reaches in MAN an awakened state of self-consciousness and becomes an individualised

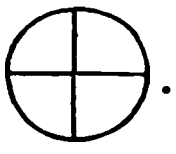
being. It is that which is spoken of as the MONAD, which strives to reach "its absolute totality and awakened condition."

Perhaps a purely physical analogy will help us here, and is also useful as showing once more the law of correspondences. Modern chemical research is beginning to demonstrate that the so-called chemical *elements* are all derived from some one elementary primordial substance; to which the name of *Protyle* has been given. This *Protyle* is not any of the chemical elements with which we are acquainted, nor even any condition or state of *matter* with which we are familiar. It is *homogeneous substance* not yet *differentiated* into the forms of matter which come within the range of our physical faculties. It is, so to speak, the *world-stuff*, which becomes in process of evolution the material world of our sense perceptions. But as such it contains the potency of all forms of *matter*, of all the chemical elements with their various individual characteristics and infinite possibilities of combination. Now, what *Protyle* is to the individual chemical elements, so is the *monad* to that which in MAN becomes an individual self-conscious being. It is only in the human kingdom that it breaks up, so to speak, into its constituent drops, or atoms. In the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, it is diffuse rather than individuated. *Protyle* is the *seventh Principle* of the matter of our plane; just as Atma is the

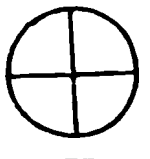
seventh Principle of man, and the First Logos is the seventh Principle of the Universe. It contains the forms and potentiality of all that is to be in the *Manifested Universe*. And just as the heterogeneous world of physical matter and form has emanated from this one primordial homogeneous substance, so have all those varied forms of *life* and *consciousness* with which we are familiar, emanated from the MONAD. What the various chemical elements, with all their varied results in combination, are to *Protyle* : so are the individual units of humanity, with all their possibilities of combination in races, nations, communities, or families, to that MONAD from which all has emanated or differentiated during this great cycle of manifestation or ' creation. ' Some chemical elements in combination produce deadly poisons and noxious gases ; others give life and health. These we term bad or good, according to their relative effects on our own organism. But where is that distinction in the *Protyle*, before it had differentiated into the chemical atoms, with their affinities and antipathies, their loves and hates ? And so is it with humanity. The distinction of good and evil vanishes in that MONAD from whence all come, and to which all must return. For the great sweep of cyclic law, which in due course breaks up the homogeneous into the heterogeneous, will again in due course cause the heterogeneous to return to the homogeneous.

As the chemical elements have come from *Protyle*, so must they return to *Protyle*. As man has come from ' God ', so must he return to ' God ', in the great day " Be with Us. " The good and the evil both come from God ; for the Universe is not an eternal duality, but a Unity.

Following out this ideal of the passage of the Monad through the lower kingdoms, and bearing in mind what has been said of the first chapter of Genesis corresponding to the first three *Rounds*, we are prepared for the order of creation given in that chapter, and its culmination in the creation of

MAN, whose symbol at this stage is .

And we are further prepared for the complete reversal of this order in the second chapter, and for the change in the name of the ' creator ' from Alhim to Jehovah-Alhim, whose symbol is also

.

For, once that the order of creation has culminated in the HEAVENLY MAN, it is now that HEAVENLY MAN who becomes in his turn the container and creator of all things on this earth Hence the words of St. Paul already quoted : "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible . . . all things have been created through him, and unto him ; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist " (Col. i. 16,

17). There is a perfect correspondence between this declaration of St. Paul, and the fourth and fifth verses of the second chapter of Genesis, when once we have understood that the " Lord God ", or Jehovah-Allim, *is* the third Logos, the HEAVENLY MAN. For we are told : " These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field *before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.* " It is once more, at the commencement of the fourth *Round* — by correspondence and analogy as it was " in the beginning " —the creation of the type of all that was to be, " before it was in the earth ". And because MAN at this stage contains the ' seed ' of all forms of life, *he is the first to appear on earth in this Round.* Everything now is dependent upon, and has to accomplish its evolution through him ; he is given " dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ". Bear in mind, this is not man as we know him, it is the MAN " made in the image of the Elohim " (Alhim) of the 26th and 27th verses of the first chapter, who is also the " Lord God " Jehovah-Alhim, of the fourth verse of the second chapter.

After the verses already quoted from the second chapter, we have in the seventh verse the creation

by the HEAVENLY MAN ⊕ of the Adamic Man, who becomes the Humanity of our present Round—in short ourselves. It must be noted that in the second chapter the creation of the animals *follows* that of man. This is in harmony with what we have already said ; and it is one of the fundamental teachings of the *Secret Doctrine* that in *this Round* MAN made his appearance *before the animals*. Thus in the *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I., p. 183, we have the following :—" Arrived on our earth at the commencement of the Fourth in the present series of life-cycles and races, MAN is the first form that appears thereon, being preceded only by the mineral and vegetable kingdoms —even the latter *having to develop and continue its further evolution through man*. During the three Rounds to come, Humanity, like the globe on which it lives, will be ever tending to reassume its primeval form, that of a Dhyan Chohanic Host. Man tends to become *a* God, and then—GOD, like every other atom in the Universe. "

We must now leave the *Rounds*, and deal with the evolution of MAN during his present cycle, turning our attention to the correspondences and analogies of the various *Races*. It will be necessary to outline the teaching of the *Secret Doctrine* respecting the evolution of the *Races* before we can compare it with the account given us in Genesis.

It will not be difficult to follow the main idea, if it be remembered that everything evolves from spirituality to materiality, and involves back again from materiality to spirituality ; using these two terms, spirit and matter, as we have used them before, as representing the two poles or aspects of the One Reality. Thus MAN is a spiritual being before he becomes physical Man,* before he ' falls into matter '. MAN of the first Race was an ethereal being, a ' spirit ', a ' shadow ', thrown off by the HEAVENLY MAN, as the model of the MAN that was to be. Round this model the ' forces of nature ' work, and gradually mould MAN into the being we now know. This process gradually results in the concealment of the real spiritual man, and the dominance of the material and physical. " The inner, now concealed, man, was then (in the beginning) the external man. "

We would remark here how beautifully this follows the laws of correspondence and analogy which we have already traced, and which we have insisted upon as the dominant principle in everything that enters the world of *form*. Each one of us in every incarnation follows this same law—we ' fall into matter ', truly.

We cannot refrain from quoting here the beautiful lines by Wordsworth, the " Ode to Immor-

* We use the term ' Man ' as synonymous with *Humanity*. It is so used in Genesis, where Adam is not a single man, but the Race.

tality," in which this principle is set forth with all the clearness and strength of the poet's intuitional nature.

> " Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come,
> From God who is our home.
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy ;
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy ;
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy.
> The youth who daily further from the East
> Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.
> At length the man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day. "

This is the epitomised history, not merely of one human life, but by the law of correspondence and analogy is that of the whole of humanity up to the present day. The spiritual fades in the material. To-day humanity has lost sight of its origin and inherent divine nature ; the " vision splendid " has become only a hope, a ' faith ' ; man scarcely dares hope for immortality hereafter; birth and death—these shut in the boundaries of his vision. Science—gives him no soul at all. Religion—a jumble of superstition, scarcely conceding ' salvation ' to a favoured few. It is Theosophy alone which restores Man to his due place in the eternal

order of things, which reinvests him with his natural dignity, which gives the certainty of his immortal nature, and the true hope of the ' resurrection ' through the divine power which is the Christ within him.

In the first Race then, MAN comes from 'God', he is made in the image and likeness of the HEAVENLY MAN ; he *is* that HEAVENLY MAN in his pilgrimage through the Universe. Heaven lies about him, in the infancy of the first Race ; but soon," shades of the prison-house begin to close", and during the second and third Races they grow denser and stronger, though even then

> " The youth who daily further from the East
> Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended. "

Hence the nature worship and symbology of the early Aryan races, before the vision, in our present race, had quite " faded in the light of common day ".

Pari passu with this decline of spirituality and corresponding evolution of the material form, we must notice one of the most important factors in MAN'S history, *viz.*, the evolution of sex. MAN of the first Race was a-sexual, neither male nor female, but containing the potency of both. If we turn again to the first chapter of Genesis, we find no mention of the woman or Eve, as separate from man. The 27th verse reads : " So God created

man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." There is an evident confusion here between the singular and the plural. The verse should read: "Male-female created He him" (or *them*, because it was not one man, but Humanity). There is no difficulty about this when we remember that this 'man' is the PROTOTYPAL MAN ⊕, who becomes in his turn, in the second chapter, the creative deity. This gives us the key also to the bi-sexual nature of the creative deities of all the ancient pantheons. Jehovah also is Jah-Hevah, or Jehovah-Eve (male-female), as is well understood by students of the Kabala.

First Race MAN then, being the image or shadow of the HEAVENLY MAN, partakes of his nature in this respect; not as an actual double-sexed being, but as containing the *potency* of both. But this potency becomes an actuality at later stages of evolution; and when MAN in the third and fourth Races becomes physical MAN, he is first of all double-sexed or Hermaphrodite (Hermes-Aphrodite), and then of two sexes, as at the present day. On his return journey, or involution, Man will once more rebecome that which he was (and is—spiritually), and all distinctions of sex will vanish. Sex is therefore, like all else in this phenomenal world, only a *temporary*

affair, a mere passing phase of human evolution. We need indeed these deeper philosophical teachings, and a correct understanding of Man's *inner* nature, to rectifiy the degradation of modern sexual relations.

The separation into two sexes took place towards the end of the third Race. There is no very clear indication of this in Genesis; the second, third, and fourth chapters being variations and permutations of the same allegories concerning the three early Races, with the names and events altered. Jah-Hevah, Adam-Eve, Cain-Abel,* Seth-Enos, are all permutations of the same double-sexed type, representing the first three Races of humanity. We are not wanting in confirmation of this, even in the authorised version. Chapter five begins with an enumeration of the generations of Adam. "In the day that God (Alhim) created man, in the likeness of God (Alhim) made He him; male and female created He them and blessed them, and called *their* name Adam." Now in the previous verse, the last verse of the fourth chapter, is a curious sentence, rendered in the authorised version, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Jehovah). A marginal note, however, gives it "to call themselves by the name of the Lord" (Jehovah); or more simply, to call themselves Jehovah, or Jah-Hevah, male and female.

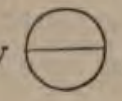
* Abel is *Hebel*, feminine. The narrative of his murder by Cain is a blind, concealing other matters.

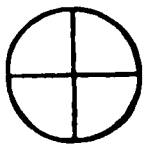
This is an allusion to the separation of the sexes, and Seth is the progenitor of the fourth Race, which was the first complete physical Race of Man as we know him now, while Enosh *is* that Race. It is to be noticed that in the opening of the fifth chapter, already quoted, no mention is made of Cain and Abel, but Seth is made to be the first offspring from Adam. Moreover, there is no mention of Eve, but it is Adam only who begets a son, "in his own likeness after his image", just as Alhim has done for Adam in the previous verse. Thus both Jehovah and Enosh represent humanity after the separation of the sexes, for we have just been told that after the birth of Enosh, men began to call themselves Jehovah. The first verse of the fourth chapter also bears out our statement that Jehovah, Adam, Cain, Enosh, are permutations; for the sentence translated, "I have gotten a man from the Lord", should read: "I have gotten a man even Jehovah" (Cain.)

With the history of the Patriarchs after Seth and Enosh we have the history of the fourth and fifth Races. We cannot follow these out here, except so far as to hint that the history of the fifth, our present Race, properly commences after the deluge, which, so far as it is historic, refers to the submersion of the continent of Atlantis, and the destruction thereby of the great portion of the fourth Race, the Atlanteans. Our present fifth Race commenced about one million years ago.

The deluge, however, has many more meanings than this. Every allegory has *seven keys*.

It should be noticed further, however, in confirmation of the bi-sexual interpretation here given of the various names in the first five chapters of Genesis, that it is only in the fifth chapter that we begin to have mention of the birth of both male and female offspring. It is only after the birth of Seth (the fourth Race) that Adam (the generic name for Humanity) begets "sons and daughters". Eve, the first " woman ", is no woman at all, but is simply the personified female principle of the bi-sexual Adam ; Adam-Eve, or Jehovah-Eve (Jha-Hevah). She is the " mother of all living", *viz.*, the female principle.

There is still another confirmation of the interpretation we are now offering, based upon ancient symbology and the evolution of sex. We have seen that the Hebrew word translated *God* in chapter I. is ALHIM. In chapter II. the Hebrew for *Lord God* is IHVH ALHIM, or Jehovah Alhim. In Chapter III. we have also *Lord God*, but in Chapter IV. it becomes the *Lord* only, or simply Jehovah. The English version of course offers no clue to these changes in the name of the deity, but in the light of the interpretation now given the importance is at once apparent. ALHIM, as we have already seen, is symbolised by  ,

Jehovah Alhim is , and Jehovah is +, or the cross with the circle removed, representing the complete fall of the spirit into matter, and also the separation of the sexes. Thus these three symbols stand for three different stages of emanation or evolution, and the use of the various names of the creator in the various chapters of Genesis is a clear indication of the stages to which they refer.

We have said that the account given in the first five chapters is not consecutive, but that some of it is a repetition and permutation of other parts of the account. This is clearly indicated in the opening verses of the fifth chapter, where we commence again with the creation of 'Man' by ALHIM; thus going back to the name used in the first chapter. After this 'MAN' comes Adam or Humanity on this earth, and then the various Patriarchs, beginning with Seth — Adam representing bi-sexual man of the early races, and Seth being the progenitor of the fourth Race, in which the sexes become fully separated, and whose symbol becomes the cross, +, or Jehovah. "Then began men to call themselves Jehovah."

To many no doubt, to those who still cling to the traditional interpretation of Genesis, and to the 'orthodox' theology, the interpretation which has now been given will appear to be a complete

reversal of the order of things—if not something worse. But so it has always been in the history of orthodoxy, when new facts have been brought to light. When Geology brought forward its teachings respecting the age of the earth, and the evidence of the fossils, we were told by orthodoxy that it completely invalidated the inspired record in Genesis. Those who advocated the new teachings were 'atheists', 'blasphemers', and what not. We were seriously told that the devil put the fossils where they were found, in order to seduce men from the truth. To-day it is still possible for a defender of the orthodox faith—unable to deny the *fact* that the doctrine of the Trinity was taught ages before Christ—to tell us seriously that the devil, having been turned out of heaven, was of course acquainted with the true doctrine of the Trinity which was to be revealed in Christ; and that he therefore managed to impress upon the 'Pagan' religions a false doctrine of the Trinity, so that they might not accept the true when it was disclosed.

But *facts* are ever stronger than doctrines, and the *fact* that the Bible is only a copy and a fragment of older writings, will soon be beyond dispute; and will be regarded with as little fear as those teachings of science which at one time it was dangerous to life and reputation to advocate. The *fact* that the Bible is not history, but allegory —or rather that the *narrative*, so far as it is

historical is only the " cloak "—when once it is realised and boldly faced, as all facts must be sooner or later, will be the death-blow to dogmatic theology, and the supremacy of priestcraft. It will not be a loss, but an infinite gain to true RELIGION ; for it is only when the shell is broken and thrown aside that the kernel of TRUTH can be discovered. Whether it will be the death-blow of *Christianity* we cannot say, because this latter term is not definable ; it means so many things nowadays. Many would have us believe that *Christianity* is quite played out ; but it is our endeavour here to show that it may at least be reconstructed on the permanent basis of the Ancient Wisdom Religion.

A word must now be said as to the connection between the 'creator ', the so-called 'personal God ' of the Old Testament, and the first person of the Trinity, the ' Father ', of the New Testament. Those who suppose that *Jehovah* and *God* are synonymous, and that as there is only one ' God ', there is nothing more to be said, are very far from having any conception either of the meaning of the words, or of the real problem of deity.

It was a fatal day when the Church Fathers ' fathered ' the Jewish Jehovah upon Christendom. For Jehovah—the tetragrammation IHVH—was only a *mystery name*, concealing the real Deity, the Absolute which in the Esoteric Rab-

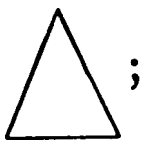
binical system, as in all other Esoteric systems was the  , the AIN-SOPH — the No-Thing, the Beingless. Absoluteness cannot be personal, but its *aspects* as seen by us are relative, and can be personified. This indeed is the true meaning of the term ' personal '. It means in the first place *a thing sounded through*, or a mask ; and is derived from the Latin *per-sona ;* referring to the masks used by the actors of those times. Thus the three *persons* of the trinity are the three *aspects* of that which in its entirety cannot be cognised, because when absoluteness is reached there is no longer anything relative to it to cognise it. Hence the teaching of the Esoteric Philosophy already referred to, that during *Pralaya*, the *night* or *inbreathing* of Brahmâ, everything returns to a state of absoluteness ; there is no external world ; there is no-*thing* (not *nothing*). Even the three Logoi disappear, for these are simply the three *primary aspects* of the One Reality.* Hence also the statement of St. Paul (I Cor. xv. 28.) " And when all things have been subjected unto him, (the Son, the third Logos) then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him, * * * that God may be all in all. " This is a clear enunciation of our teaching.

* The three aspects may be taken as :—(*a*) the external, objective, or manifested world—the third Logos ; (*b*) the internal, subjective, or unmanifested world—the second Logos ; (*c*) the One Reality, or Absoluteness Itself,

When the manifested Universe has run its cycle it is withdrawn gradually into the source from whence it emanated, into the 'Son', or the third Logos, who as Paul says in the *Colossians* (I. 15.) is "the image of the invisible God."

We have already seen that this 'Son' is the Man made "in the image of God" of the first chapter of Genesis, who becomes in the second chapter the creative power called Jehovah-Alhim. The 'Son', therefore, to whom Paul refers, is this *aspect*, this *persona* of the "invisible God" (the One Reality). It is perfectly clear therefore that the 'Father' cannot be Jehovah; nor could Paul, who was an *Initiate*, ever have made such a mistake.

A *personal* God must always be an *aspect* merely; and that aspect is always conditioned and determined by the nature of the finite consciousness which is the cogniser. Every race and nation has had its personal God or Gods, partaking of the

considered as the *first cause*; that which contains both the objective and the subjective yet is not either of them, but gives rise to both simultaneously—the first Logos. Thus also Space contains all things, yet is not any *thing*. The three aspects of Space are, length, breadth and depth; depth really including the two others. Subjectively this is the trinity, the ; objectively all forms arise through these three aspects. On the physical plane these three dimensions give us the idea of a solid form or cube. The symbol of the objective universe is the cube unfolded, the cross, or simply the square. There is an intimate relation between "Space" and "Deity."

characteristics of that race or nation ; nay, every individual has his personal God, who is somewhat different from all others. It is only when we set up our own image, and demand that others shall worship it, that we fall into error ; and the result of such an error is fully seen in the history of Christianity, which has imposed upon its devotees a tribal God, who exhibits all the worst characteristics of human nature. Some of the Church Fathers knew better, but they were silenced. Origen, however, speaks out boldly in many places. He says : — "If we take our stand on the literature (according to that which seems good to the Jews or to the crowd generally), let us receive what has been written in the Law, and if we do this, I blush to say and confess that God has given us such laws ; for the laws of man will appear to be more elegant and reasonable." (Homil. VII., in Levit.)

The highest revelation we can obtain of the ever concealed Deity, the ' invisible God ', the *unmanifested* Logos, is through the Logos, *third* the divine ' Son '. That Son, in his cosmic aspect, is the manifested universe ; and the personality of God, therefore, that through which the ' Word ' *sounds*, is the Universe of our perceptions. In his Human aspect, the third Logos is the HEAVENLY MAN, the divine indwelling Christ ; and it is through that again that the Eternal principle is manifested in his *human* aspect, as the FATHER. Hence the constant reference to the relation of the

Father to the Son, and of the Son to Humanity in the Gnostic Gospel of St. John. Hence also the teaching of St. Paul, whose Christ never was the personal Jesus of Nazareth, though it has been made to appear so in some parts of his Epistles; and though he may have considered that Christ to have had a special incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth.

Compare with the explanation just given the table of the Seven Principles, on page 30, and you will see how accurately the correspondences hold good. The three higher principles correspond to the three Logoi, and constitute the divine; the four lower are the *manifestation* of these and constitute the human. The three higher are the Individuality, the four lower are the *Personality*. Of the three higher, Atma is the Father, Manas is the Son. Atma is spoken of as the HIGHER SELF; Manas is the Higher EGO; while the four lower principles are the manifestation of this Ego in its finite aspect of the temporary personality. This holds good whether applied to the universe as a whole, or to man individually. We can only know God, cosmically, through the manifested universe — hence the importance of natural science. We can only know him in full by knowing ourselves, for we are made in his image and likeness. Hence we must look *within* if we would find God. "The problem of the Ego in man is the problem of God in the universe." But we

can only really *know* when we become the thing we desire to know. Real knowledge is identity, not external cognition. Hence St. Paul says: "Now we see in a mirror darkly"; our knowledge is an external cognition, a reflection merely. But when we attain "unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ", then we see "face to face". Thus it is only as we *become* the divine, it is only as we "put on Christ", it is only as we put aside all that is personal and temporal, that we learn the true secret of the divine and eternal. In theosophical language this is "union with our HIGHER SELF."

So long then as the Church teaches a personal God—whose personality was coloured by the racial characteristics of a "peculiar people"—and a personal Christ to correspond thereto, there can be no difficulty in answering the question we asked in Part I, page 5. All that is personal is temporary and finite.

But we have further evidence against the identity of the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the 'Father' of the New Testament. We have seen that Jehovah becomes in one of his permutations, or aspects, *Cain*, representing man at a later period of evolution. This is because Man *is* the Divine become the Human. Humanity itself *is* the Son in one of *his* aspects. As 'matter' is the reverse aspect of 'spirit'; as 'evil' is the reverse aspect of 'good'; as 'light' is the reverse aspect of

'darkness'; so is Humanity the reverse aspect of Divinity, and the Devil the reverse aspect of God. Hence the saying, *Demon est Deus inversus.* And in the anthropomorphic deity, Jehovah, of the Old Testament, we have the fullest possible exemplification of this. When the divine is dragged down into matter, when the sublime conception of the absolute Unity of all in that absoluteness which is the "invisible God", is dragged down into a mere magnified image of human passions—it is no longer *Deus,* but *Demon*. The God of the Old Testament who repents, and hates, and curses, and tempts men to their own destruction, never was and never could be the 'Father' of the *Christ.* It was only the latest and most materialistic perversion of the ancient *Mysteries*, known as Ecclesiastical Christianity, that could adopt such a 'Father'. And if Jesus were with us now, He would answer the modern Pharisees as He answered those of His own time, when they claimed to be Abraham's seed: "I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from *your* father. . . They said unto him, We have one Father even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your father, ye would love Me. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there was no truth in him." (John viii. 38-44.)

Thus did Jesus, the Initiate, the *Christos*—one with the divine Father—repudiate the inverted image, the human conception, the God of the Jews, the religion of forms and formulas, of bigotry and priestcraft, which the Pharisees represented. And though Jesus thus repudiated the Jewish God, the Church has shown itself no wiser than the Pharisees, and the latter have had a terrible revenge in passing off upon Christendom this same anthropomorphic Jehovah, as the personal God of the Christian faith. For in his name the "works of the devil" have been repeated now for many centuries.

Thus does the Old Testament portray the *fall*—truly a fall in every respect; the spirit fallen into matter, the god fallen into the human, the sublime conceptions of the ETERNAL fallen into the ridiculous conceptions of the temporal. No longer is it man created in the image of God, but God created in the image of man.

And if *Christianity* still means the acceptance of such a God, if Jehovah, the tribal God of a small sub-race, with a national history of a few thousand years only, be still declared to be the FATHER who is revealed to us through the *Christ* of the New Testament—so be it. Between such Christianity and Theosophy there is an impassable gulf.

But there is another and a better Christianity rising up, like a Phœnix, out of the fire of controversy, which is burning to ashes the old fetishes

and shibboleths. And as it rises from the flames it grows more and more into the likeness of the glorious truth which Sages and Initiates have proclaimed in all ages—the immortality of man *because of his divinity*. Whether the new Gospel be called Christianity or Theosophy, matters little perhaps—for they are one and the same.

Truth is immortal, and man is immortal; yet must both needs suffer crucifixion. And though as yet we cannot penetrate this mystery, though as yet the reason why Man should set out on his long pilgrimage through the universe, why the law of progress should be self-sacrifice, and life be only consummated through death, can only be dimly guessed at by us; yet when once we have realised that we are co-workers with the divine; that it is not we who live, but the divine that liveth in us, we have realised that which makes us no longer the children of wrath, but the children of redemption; and we plant our feet on the PATH which leads us back to our eternal home.

"FOR SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, BY MAN CAME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, SO ALSO IN THE CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE."

PART III.

THE LOGOS.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." JOHN i. 1.

THIS sentence, with which the author of the fourth Gospel commences his discourse, strikes the key-note of the esotericism of the Christian Scriptures; it is the connecting link between the exoteric narrative of Genesis, the inner meaning of which we have already traced to some extent, and the exoteric narrative of the Gospel, beneath which we must now endeavour to penetrate.

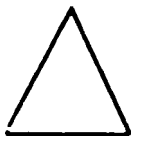
But this sentence is something more than the key-note of the Christian Scriptures, it is the key-note of the esoteric doctrine of all ages and all systems; and when we find it used thus by the author of the fourth Gospel, we recognise at once the pass-word of the Initiate; and applying the esoteric key, we read clearly where others grope and falter. For when our author proceeds to identify the Logos with the *Christos*, under cover of an

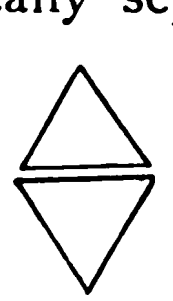
historical narrative concerning the personal Jesus of Nazareth, we are prepared at once to interpret that narrative as a key to man's (to our own) outer physical historical nature in its relation to his inner spiritual and divine nature, and the relation of the latter to that divine principle—the ' Father ', the Atman, the eternal ONE—to THAT, incomprehensible, immutable, eternal, in which, and through which, and by which all things live, and move, and have their being.

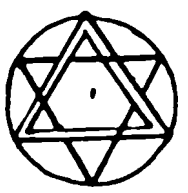
We have already seen, in our study of Genesis, what are the various aspects of the ever-concealed ' Causeless Cause ' in its first emanations or manifestations. We have seen that this must necessarily appear as a trinity, the first and second Logoi,—' Father-Mother ', or Spirit-Substance—producing by their inter-action the phenomenal world, which is the third Logos, or the ' Son '. Yet these three are ONE. Neither can exist without the other. Each is an aspect, a *persona*, of the one ' Rootless Root '.

This mystery of the one in three aspects, of the infinite, indivisible, and eternal, becoming the finite, phenomenal, and temporary, repeats itself " as above so below "; so that in the minutest subdivision, in every ' atom ', we see the faithful copy or reflection of the whole; nay, what could we expect to find in that ' atom ' but the whole Itself; for could we fix our wavering mind in concentration upon that ' atom ',

which to us is but an abstract mathematical point, it would expand into the infinite All.

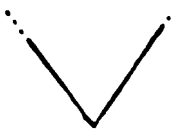
We may resort for a moment to our geometrical symbology to illustrate this. The three Logoi are symbolised by the . This is the divine trinity, and includes the whole universe, manifested and unmanifested, or objective and subjective. But when we regard the universe from the point of view of our normal consciousness, this divine trinity appears to be above and beyond us, it belongs to the *subjective* world. How then shall we represent the objective world? All things, we have seen, are a copy or reflection of the whole, and the objective world must therefore be represented symbolically as a reflection of the divine trinity. This is done in the symbol of the interlaced triangles. The divine triangle reflects itself downward, so to speak, into matter, where it appears in an inverted form. But since the two are not really separate, but interblended—the separation being due to our finite and limited perceptions—they are represented as interlaced; and the upper one is usually represented as light or spirit, the reflected one as dark, or matter. These taken together make six, and with a point in the centre, or a circle circumscribing the whole, we have the seventh, the synthesis



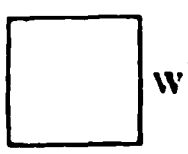
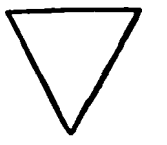
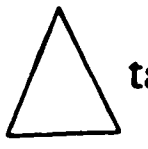


of the six. *

Now consider for a moment what is our objective view of the universe. We are situated, so far as our physical perceptions are concerned, at the apex of the lower triangle, that apex being turned *downward*. The result is that we look upward or outward, and see nothing but infinite expansion in every direction ; from our point of view the two sides of the triangle expand to infinity. And if we look down or inward we find nothing but



infinite contraction ; the two sides of the triangle meet in a mathematical point of no dimensions, beyond which we cannot pass even in imagination, just as we cannot stretch our imagination to the outermost limits of *space*. Consider further that everything that comes into objective existence on this plane of consciousness, makes its appear-

* Those who have some difficulty in harmonising this symbol with that of the  which has already been given as the symbol of the third Logos, or manifested world, may remember that the four consists of the  with the  taken as one instead of three. These symbols must not be hardened, but used only as aids.

ance through this mathematical point, the inverted apex of the triangle, and expands and grows therefrom. If we take ' matter ' we find it built up from this point, which scientists call the *atom*, though no one as ever seen it physically, and though it reduces itself to a mere metaphysical abstraction when strictly examined. If we take ' life ' we find it originating also at a point ; at the nucleole within the nucleus of a single cell. From that nucleole it becomes active and potent on our plane of matter, spreading out on all sides the differentiating and formative impulse, and ever working from within outwards.

Does it not suggest itself, therefore, that if we would get at the root and source of our life and being, we must look inward not outward ; we must pass through that mysterious *point* from which it originates. That point is the *laya point* of occultism, the *laya centre* which exists on every plane. And see how our symbolism lends itself to the idea. For the lower triangle being the reflection of the higher, the apex of the one corresponds to the apex of the other ; and when we pass through the apex of the lower, the phenomenal, we find it expands into the infinite life of the higher, the noumenal and *real*. For the phenomenal is but the *mayavic* reflection of the noumenal on the " waters of space ".

What then is ' space ' ? It is to our sense perceptions the " great illusion ", the *maha-maya*

It gives rise to the "great heresy", the *sense of separateness*. Nor is there any clearer demonstration of the nature of this illusion, than in those exoteric systems of religion which for ever separate Man and God ; which are for ever looking upward and outward, if happily they may thereby approach nearer to the throne of God ; which seek for the kingdom of heaven in time and in space, and speak ever of the mysteries of that kingdom in terms of the illusive life of sense.

Outward forms, outward ceremonies, outward prayers, these in all ages make up the exoteric religion of those who worship in the outer courts of the temple. But where to-day in the Christian Church is the Priest-Initiate, who can pass into the inner sanctuary, who can in his turn initiate those who are prepared to pass beyond the exoteric forms ? Aye, there was a time, and shall be again, when the Priest was also the high Initiate, when the nations were ruled by the divine King-Initiates. All that has passed away in the darkness of the *Kali Yuga*, and remains but as mere tradition of prehistoric races.

"*The kingdom of Heaven is within you*". Is it not time that the Christian Church began to understand and teach this doctrine of Jesus and of Paul, this doctrine of the Initiates in all ages ? "He that loseth his life shall find it", is another of those hard sayings which only the *Mystic* can understand ; and, so surely as this is true of the individ-

ual, it is also true of the race, of the community, of the Church. That Church whose whole efforts, whose whole teaching is based on the salvation of the individual, can never be the gate through which we may pass into a realisation of, and *identity with*, that ONE LIFE which containeth all, of whom all things are an expression, to whom there is no great and no small, no mean and no noble, no good and no evil: for all things are its very SELF.

Let us glance now at the idea which the Logos represents, as being the divine 'Son', the *manifestation* of the divine 'Father'; that ever-concealed 'Causeless Cause', which no man hath seen or can see at any time.

Any attempt to rest the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ as the Logos upon the historical foundation of the New Testament, must be as futile as that which would rest the origin and evolution of the world upon the literal narrative of Genesis. The use of the term *Logos* or *Word* comes to us from the ancient Greek Philosophers, and more especially from the teachings of Plato. The idea, however, is of far older origin, and means something more in esoteric philosophy and in occultism than that of a spoken word as being the expression or manifestation of a thought. It is intimately connected with the occult power of sound, and with the potencies of the *akâsa*, whose one characteristic, we are told in the *Secret Doctrine*, is that

of sound. It is sufficient, however, for our purpose here, to take the mere exoteric meaning, and to attach to it the idea of the manifested universe being the Logos or Word of God, in the sense that it is the expression of the divine thought; it is the divine thought uttering itself in an objective form.

But it is something more than the creative idea, or the creative Word, thought or uttered "in the beginning." It is a continued and active potency, an ever present reality, sustaining and upholding all things. Thus the German Mystic Eckhart says: "If God were to cease from this speaking of the Word, even for one moment, Heaven and Earth would vanish." And again: "He who standeth at all times in a present now, in him doth God the Father bring forth his Son without ceasing" *. Thus also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul speaks of the Son "upholding all things, by the word of his power"; that Son being the Logos "through whom he (God) made the worlds" and who is "the effulgence of his glory and the impress of his substance." In Bhagavad-Gîta, Krishna the Logos speaks of his unceasing activity, whereby all things are sustained, and says that if he were to cease from action, all creatures would perish.

We have now to trace the connection between Man and the Logos, as set forth in the New Tes-

* VAUGHAN, "Hours with the Mystics." Vol. I, p. 189.

tament. We have already traced the connection in *Genesis* and we have seen that the third Logos *is* Man, or Humanity in its complete and full nature ; made in the image and likeness of the Alhim.

But we should endeavour to grasp this idea more clearly before we can understand the identity and yet the difference between the Old and the New Testament presentation of this doctrine. The difficulty lies in our conventional ideas of Man, limited and conditioned in his nature as we now know him. We have to throw off those limitations, born of our finite faculties and sense-perceptions, before we can grasp that higher divine nature which is really ours by birthright as "Sons of God ".

But let us endeavour for a moment to grasp the idea that the perfect *type* of all things that come into existence, must of necessity exist on the noumenal plane, before they can by any possibility be represented on the phenomenal. If there be any meaning whatever in that which we call *evolution*, or unfolding, that evolution—whether we postulate it as the result of divine wisdom or not—presupposes and implies the existence of a type, already existing in the noumena ; or as we should say, on a higher plane ; whether that plane be called the universal mind, divine ideation, or whatever term we choose to employ in order to designate it. Our own mind and powers reflect the same process. Before we can bring

forth anything from our subjective sphere, and clothe it with matter or form on the physical plane, it must have its own definite existence on our own thought-plane. We are so apt to regard the sphere of operation of the mind, that which we call the mental plane, as being vague, formless, chaotic. Yet a little reflection will show that, on its own plane, a thought must be a *thing*, having a definite form and existence of its own; aye, even though it be but a *vibration*, as our materialists would have us believe. To think a thought is to create a form. That form, if imbued with will and desire, becomes an active potent force, an *Elemental*; working blindly, unless controlled by the higher Manas, for its realisation on whatever plane, in whatever direction, or towards whatever object it is directed.

Thus, if we ask why we are incarnated here, why our life is so and so, the answer is: because we have thus created it by those thoughts and desires to which we gave an active potency in our previous existences. We are the incarnation of our own thoughts, the manifestation of our own Logos.

And if we ask what will be our future, let us examine the contents of our own consciousness, our present thoughts and desires; it is these which in due time will be born into the phenomenal world, and shape for us a new incarnation.

Man is the mirror of the universe, the micro-

cosm of the macrocosm. He repeats on every plane the universal Law. He is himself the creative deity, the manifestation of the divine thought, the Logos of the infinite ONE. If then Man is the incarnated thought of God, and we postulate that thought to be absolute wisdom and perfection; and, moreover, since all things are summed up in THAT, since with THAT all things already exist, and there is neither good nor evil, neither past, present nor future: it follows that the divine thought (the Logos = Man = the Universe) is already perfect, and the Universe in its perfection eternally IS.

How then do we see the imperfect and incomplete; how do we sense this law of evolution which appears to us to be a continual progress towards a perfection not yet attained ?

Suppose that instead of regarding it as a progress, as the effort of something ever striving to perfect itself, we regard it simply as an *unfolding* of that which already *is*. In that case the aspect is changed.

The seed is not yet the perfect plant, the rose-bud is not yet the full-blown rose. But if there were no such thing as the perfect plant already existing, there could be no such thing as the seed. The existence of the rose-bud presupposes merely the unfolding of that which already exists, the full-blown rose.

The perfect type of all things exists eternally ; the individual manifestations vary infinitely. An

individual manifestation, a ***persona***, being an aspect merely, being partial, limited, and therefore incomplete, appears to us to present ever a struggle towards conformity with the perfect type. Let it be understood then, once for all, that when we speak of MAN as being the Logos, we do not mean *a* Man, but the type MAN, that which we have already named the ***Heavenly Man***, the divine Prototype, the Christ.

If this divine Prototype, this divine Logos, did not exist, no single man could ever appear. And as it is with Man, so it is with the types of all things that appear in the manifested world; they are ' created ' first in the ***archetypal*** world. " These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field *before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew*".

Moreover, Man being the Logos, and therefore the creative deity of the manifested universe, (the *Jehovah* of the second chapter of Genesis) the type or ' seed ' of all things in that universe exist in him; he brings them forth, and they have to continue their evolution through him. (Vide Part II. page 96). This is also why Noah—who is also the Manu of the Hindu records—takes into the ark with him a pair, or the ' seed ', of all living things. The deluge,

as well understood by students, is the period between two *Rounds*, a Pralaya ; and the ark is Man himself; as also is the tabernacle in the wilderness, and King Solomon's temple, the measurements of which are the " measure of a man ". The same may also be found in the measurements of the Great Pyramid.

Conformity to type is the great law of physical manifestation ; but the type must pre-exist before ever the first representative could appear. One of the latest theories of science concerning heredity, is that of Profess. Wiessmann, known as the " immortal germ " theory. Speaking of this the *Secret Doctrine* says : (vol. 1. p. 244) " Complete the physical plasm, the ' Germinal cell ' of man, with all its material potentialities, with the ' spiritual plasm ', so to say, or the fluid which contains the five lower principles of the six-principled Dhyan—and you have the secret, if you are spiritual enough to understand it. "

And as from parent to child, and from incarnation to incarnation we have the ' immortal germ cell ', which is the *seed* of all the potentialities which later on will unfold an evolutionary process : so also from Race to Race, and from Round to Round we have the ' Seed Manus ' of whom Noah is an exoteric type. Verily our boasted science of to-day is but the faintest reflection of the Wisdom of the Ancients, who cared nothing for the physical, regarding it merely as a reflection and symbol of the spiritual and divine.

Material science seeks ever the permanence of force and matter on this plane; but the very continuity of these, that law of the conservation of matter and energy which has become a scientific axiom, is an additional proof of the existence of that "spiritual plasm" without which they could never have been called into existence.

The very existence of the universe, its gradual unfolding which appears to us under the guise of evolution, presupposes that operation to have taken place already in the divine mind, in all its completeness. Nay, that which appears to us as the manifested universe, having extension in time and space, *is* the operation of the divine mind, complete and perfect from eternity to eternity. Extension in time and space are but illusions. The dream of a single moment gives us often an apparent extension of many days and years. So by our finite and conditioned consciousness, fallen under the influence of the great illusion, we project the *Mayavi Rupa*, and live for centuries and eons in the thought-forms we have projected.

"Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes".

Learn to know thy true Self, to know thine own creative powers, then shalt thou cease to build the prison-house of sense-life from age to age.

It seems strange that any should think that

the manifested world, that which is termed nature, could be merely casual in its origin and development. It is forced upon us from all sides that it exhibits reason and intelligence—if not always wisdom—in every feature and detail. There is a type, an idea, embodied in all its work. Whose idea? Not necessarily the idea of a theological 'God'. It is because the old philosophy of the Logos and the Hierarchies of 'Builders' has been forgotten in the enforcement of an arbitrary theology, that men have now nothing to fall back upon, when that theology fails them, but atheism and materialism.

We have seen that in *Genesis* we are concerned with the first conception or outbreathing of Man and the Universe, in its widest and most general aspects. We have seen that we have there a mutilated fragment of the ancient Esoteric Wisdom, but that sufficient is left for us to trace its real source and origin. We have seen that the process of outbreathing or manifestation, stated first of all in its broadest and widest terms, becomes more and more differentiated as we descend from the universal to the particular; from Man considered as the Logos, to man considered in his merely human and historical aspects.

The human and historical aspect represents man as 'fallen'; represents that which we call our own individual selves, that which we ourselves are

to-day, in our limited, finite, and terrestrial nature.

It is just here, at this point, that the New Testament takes up the problem. Individually we are 'fallen', in so far as we are but incomplete and imperfect representations of the perfect type MAN. In the New Testament that perfect type is still the Logos, the Word; but instead of this being a mere abstract conception of a perfect type existing from the beginning, towards which all are endeavouring to conform, through long ages of evolution: we have set before us an individual presentation of the perfect man in the person of Jesus the Christ. "The Word became incarnate and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth".

Among all the uncertainties and difficulties of New Testament narrative, there can be no doubt on this one point, that the *Christ* of the Gospels is the divine 'Son', the Logos, the *type* of Man, perfected in his spiritual and divine nature. There can be no doubt also that the Logos or Christos is represented as having had a special manifestation or incarnation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

We have already shown the importance of distinguishing between the personal Jesus, and the typical Christ; and the real difficulty of the New Testament in the light of the interpretation we are now putting forward, is not a doctrinal one, but simply and purely one of historical evidence. More-

over, as we have before pointed out, the historical difficulty becomes of very secondary importance, instead of being a stumbling-block at the very outset of our endeavour to find the truth.

The question is not one as to the existence or nature of the Logos or Christ, and its relation to Humanity; it is not one as to the divinity of *Christ*, for that goes by definition ; it is simply a question as to whether the man Jesus of Nazareth was an exceptional or unique incarnation of the Logos or Christ.

If that question was one of dispute in the very earliest days of the Christian Church, how shall we settle it now? We have already hinted (Part I. p. 50) that this was the whole matter of dispute as between Peter and Paul. We find it referred to also in John's Epistles. In I John iv. 2. 3. we read : " Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. " Those who opposed the carnal doctrine were denounced as *Antichrist* The use of the term *Jesus Christ* in this passage is curious. If Jesus were an historical character who had only lately been crucified and resurrected, how could any one doubt that Jesus the *Christos* had come in the flesh ;—or was his history so uncertain even then ? On the other hand, the passage implies the coming or incarnation of some one who existed before this coming. What could

this have been but the Logos? And if so, we see that in the Epistles the terms Christ, or Jesus Christ, are used promiscuously for the Logos, and do not necessarily refer to the historical Jesus. But the doctrine of the Logos is pre-Christian, and the whole of ecclesiastical Christianity is based on its application to one historical character, on the carnal doctrine of Peter, instead of on the spiritual doctrine of Paul.

We are not concerned to solve the historical question now; as it is not essential to an understanding of our own nature, it may well be left in abeyance. But in order that our position may be clearly comprehended, the general nature of the problem must be indicated.

If the Gospels are in the main historical, we may be inclined to accept that which was evidently accepted by some portion of the early Church, and regard Jesus of Nazareth as being such a special incarnation. It by no means follows, however, that the doctrines which have been built up by the Church on that basis are to be accepted. We cannot gather from the Gospel narrative, even if that narrative be accepted as mainly true, that which has passed for centuries as Christian doctrine. The very general rejection of the doctrine of the atonement by men of note in the Church itself to-day, is a significant indication of this.

On the other hand, if we accept the Gospels as being in the main historical, we have to account

for the parallelism between the events narrated of Jesus of Nazareth, and similar events ascribed to the incarnations of the Logos in the earlier Egyptian, Hindu, and other systems, of the most remote antiquity, and in all parts of the globe, among savage as well as civilised races.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that there was a mystical or typical Saviour, whose history is repeated in many ways and with many variations, but always with the same leading events. It would appear to be an equal certainty that Jesus, having in course of time come to be recognised as an incarnation of the Logos, had ascribed to him the same allegorical and symbolical events which had been taught concerning the Logos in the earlier systems. These events have, all of them, their deep and significant esoteric meanings, some of which we have already glanced at, and more particularly the symbol of the cross. But the exoteric presentation was always in the form of narrative which the uninstructed regarded as history, while the inner meaning was taught only to the initiated.

There can be no doubt that some of the early Church Fathers were initiated to a certain degree, and knew the inner meaning of the symbols ; but the bulk of those who settled the course of Church history were ignorant ecclesiastics, with a still more ignorant and fanatical following. These in the end prevailed, and the darkness and depravity of the middle ages followed as a natural sequence.

Moreover, we must bear in mind the literary facts concerning the Gospels as we now have them, the uncertainty of tradition in the early centuries, the enormous number of Gospels which were in existence, out of which the Church chose the four that were ultimately placed in the Canon. Those Gospels, moreover, were chosen because they supported the already formulated theology of the Church. They were altered and amended from time to time to suit the existing orthodoxy. In the later manuscripts the compilers did not scruple to add whole passages in support of some favourite dogma. A very large proportion of the documentary evidences upon which Christian apologists rely, rest entirely upon the authority of Eusebius. Yet this very man unblushingly advocates lying and cheating for the benefit of his religion, and makes the following boast: "I have repeated whatever may redound to the glory, and suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of our religion." Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelica*, Bk.XII.Ch. 31.

The fetish of the Bible has been such, however, that there is still a great reluctance on the part of competent scholars to depart from the time-honoured phraseology, or to admit the flagrant literary dishonesty of the Book. If it were any other sacred book, such as the Vedas or Puranas, we should have a minute and critical examination of every word and phrase, the various manuscripts would be quoted and compared, and the proper alternative

readings given. We may well ask, why have we no such exhaustive work on our own sacred book? The answer is quite plain: Ecclesiastical authority and influence is based on the fetish of the Bible.

But in endeavouring to ascertain whether Jesus of Nazareth was really a special incarnation of the Logos, there is one fact which is apt to be altogether overlooked. That fact is, that it would have been impossible for him to have been so recognised, had not the doctrine of the Logos, and the possibility of such a divine incarnation, been already well known and understood.

We have seen that the doctrine of the Logos, so far as it was a part of the Greek or Alexandrian philosophy, may be attributed, without going any further back, to the teachings of Plato. Moreover, it is a very significant fact that Philo Judæus, who must have been contemporary with Jesus, if the accepted chronology is correct, and who speaks of having visited Jerusalem, wrote much about the Logos, and even calls it "the only begotten Son of God"; yet he makes no mention of Jesus.

So far as Jesus has been identified with the Logos, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the pre-existing teachings concerning the nature and character of the Logos, were simply transferred to and centred round him, and with the doctrines were transferred also the mythical stories which were related in the exoteric teachings concerning the earlier supposed incarnations of the Logos. For

just as it would have been impossible to originate the philosophical doctrine of the Logos from the life or sayings of Jesus, so also it would have been impossible to originate from these the idea that he was a special incarnation of the " only begotten Son. "

The idea of such special incarnations may probably be traced back to the prehistoric " Divine Kings " of Egypt. But apart from that, the Hindu doctrine of *Avatârs* is well known, there having been several special incarnations of Vishnu, the supreme Lord, of which the best known is that of Krishna.

Let us bring the matter home to our own experience. The question has often been asked : if Jesus were to appear now, how would he be received ? If he were to come now as he came then, a poor man of lowly parentage, born in an obscure village, one who simply went about preaching and doing good ; of extraordinary speech perhaps, and reputed to have performed several miracles; calling himself, or claimed by a few ignorant and disreputable followers, fishermen or country folk, to be a divinely sent Messiah : how would you or I recognise in him a special incarnation of the Logos, even if we knew all about the philosophy of the Logos, and the doctrine of *Avatârs ?* Would our Churches and our learned theologians accept him as such, if he openly proclaimed " I and my Father are one", and made himself equal with God?

Would orthodox science accept his miracles, any more than orthodox religion would accept his morality? Would he obtain a certificate from the Society for Psychical Research, after having submitted himself to rigorous "scientific tests". What would the Fellows of the Royal Society, or the learned members of the medical profession have to say of his superhuman powers? Charlatan and impostor would be the least offensive epithets by which he would be named, even if he did not as before openly consort with publicans and sinners.

And why should he not come now as he came then? Is it because we are now more enlightened that we should be less able to recognise him? Let us not deceive ourselves here. We are so apt to look back at what we consider to be the mistakes of others, and think how differently we should have acted had we been in their place. We look back upon history and think how different we are today. But that is not so. Human nature is the same, though custom varies its outward expression; and if we look beneath the surface, we see the same principles repeating themselves in different events over, and over, and over again.

Might we not even in the present century name some incarnations, that have sought no recognition from the many, but have been known to the few; and round which in the course of time there might gather a special significance and a legendary lore. The measure of opposition and persecution of

one century is often the measure of acceptance and deification of the next.

Much uncertainty seems to exist as to when or how the term *Christ* or *Christos* came to be applied to Jesus, and from whence this term was derived. Like the term *Logos* it appears certain that it did not originate with the life and personality of Jesus, but was derived from an earlier source*.

It would seem then, that Jesus first became recognised as an Initiate, and gradually passed on in tradition to become a special divine *Avatâr*. What is really important, however, is that there is no single so-called *Christian* doctrine which cannot be traced as having been derived from earlier, and so-called pagan systems. The same is true also of the ritual of the Church, its symbols, vestments and sacraments are all pre-Christian; nor have they even assumed a new or deeper significance, on the contrary they have lost their connection with the great cycle of human evolution, have been invested with an exceptional character, and become important *de facto* in mere events, instead of representing eternal realities.

In the Gnostic Gospel *Pistis Sophia*, the esoteric significance of the characters and events which

* For much valuable information on this question consult *Lucifer*, Vol. I. Art. "The Esoteric character of the Gospels."

have been taken by the Christian Church in their mere historical sense is clearly seen; as also the distinction between Jesus and the Christ which we have already pointed out.

Deeply interesting, therefore, as it is to ascertain how much of the Gospel is, and how much is not history, the question really becomes unimportant when we pass on to an understanding of the esoteric doctrine in the light it throws upon our own dual nature, human and divine. For the importance of the outward, whether it be in matter of doctrine, of ritual, of history, or of our own outward sense-life, diminishes just in proportion as we penetrate and understand that inner *noumenon*, of which the outward is only a phenomenal and transitory aspect. Only thus can we dispossess ourselves of the fever and unrest of life. And only thus in matters of *faith* can we hold ourselves free to accept facts, however or whenever they may be brought to light, without fear lest those facts should upset our cherished convictions, should uproot the very basis of our religion.

How many people one meets who are afraid to face facts, afraid to open an inquiry into the credentials of their religion — "it is so unsettling you know." And so they lull themselves in the fancied security of orthodoxy. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, Amen". Unhappy indeed is that man or that Church, which

stands in such a predicament, whose house is built upon the ever-shifting sands of conventional beliefs.

In considering the life of Jesus in its historical aspect, and apart from any dogmatic theology or esoteric interpretation, we find that it has a twofold value ; (*a*) a character-value, which is the same in kind, though perhaps different in degree, from that which we derive from the example and character of all great men ; (*b*) a *type*-value, that is to say the revelation which it gives us of the possibilities of our own nature.

The character-value is dear to every devout Christian ; it is the inspiration of the example of the Master which carries them through life's dangers and difficulties.

But the type-value is the most important, and may be understood and appreciated by those who do not feel that intense personal attachment which the emotional devotee endeavours to cultivate. The type-value consists in this, that all that Jesus was—aye, even to the divinest attributes with which we may invest him—we can and must become.

How much this has been lost and misunderstood in the doctrine of the merits of Christ and the vicarious atonement. How many Christians are there who think of becoming Christ-like in this or any future incarnation ? It is only in *heaven* that such perfection may perchance be reached.

Of what value can his life be to us, as a revela-

tion of the possibilities of our own nature, if instead of regarding him as our elder brother we are to make him the great exception, related to the deity but not to humanity ? We lose the value of his life just in proportion as we make it exceptional, just in proportion as we isolate it, and invest it with the attributes of the superhuman, the supernatural, and the miraculous.

Passing now from the personal Jesus—whatever may be the view we may take of that personality—we must examine more specifically the doctrine which the New Testament presents of man regenerated and resurrected. We pass from the personal Jesus to the typical Christ ; Christ the Logos, divine man, our own *Higher Self*.

We have already seen that, taken in its broadest outline, the whole cycle of Man's evolution considered historically, resolves itself into two main divisions : his descent into matter, or ' fall ', and his re-ascent or ' redemption '. This great cycle, or *maha manvantara*, is divided into seven minor cycles called *Rounds*, and these again into seven subdivisions called *Races*. After this we have the sub-races and other minor cycles, until we come down to the individual, who has to pass through all these cycles in various incarnations.

Each cycle, by correspondence and analogy, reflects all the principles of the major cycle of which it is a part. Thus man in every incarnation

reflects the whole process of the manifested universe.

In order to represent the two main divisions we must have two types, a type of spiritual man falling into incarnation, and a type of physical man resuming his spiritual nature.

These two types are represented in the Christian Scriptures by the two Adams: the first, the Adam of Genesis; the second, the Christ of the New Testament. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. xv. 47).

But popular religion needs something more than an abstract type. How fully Paul recognised this is seen all through his Epistles. Although with the full-grown or initiated he spoke "wisdom in a mystery", with the Churches he determined "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"; he spoke to them "not as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ".

The difficulty of expressing the *esoteric*, that which can only be grasped by the intuition and spiritual faculties, in the language of everyday life, is one which is insurmountable. It has compelled the world's Initiates at all times to teach in parable

and allegory and symbol, and to have their inner circle of disciples, composed of those who were prepared to grasp that which must necessarily elude the less advanced, whose ideas were entirely formed on the lines of their external sense-life. For the difficulty is not one of language merely. The language may be clear enough when once it is understood to be symbolical, and the symbol can be interpreted. A word, a sign, a geometrical figure may express to some, more than whole volumes could convey to others. The real difficulty is the same as that which exists with all children, as they grow from childhood to maturity. They cannot in the very nature of the case understand that which is an open book to the adult. The esoteric teachings concerning man's spiritual evolution are seen to harmonise here with the facts of our daily experience. Spiritual evolution is a matter of long ages and eons, of many cycles and many incarnations in each cycle. To be a spiritual adult is therefore quite distinct from physical or intellectual maturity in any one incarnation. A man may be an intellectual giant and a spiritual babe. Many such are seen in our materialists to-day. The very faculty of perceiving, even intellectually and logically, the necessity of the noumenal world, is often entirely wanting.

Exoteric religion is for those who, in the very nature of the case, are not able to grasp the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven". To be

understood by such it must be brought down to their own level in some familiar form, but in that very process it is degraded and obscured, it takes to itself a body of form which must of necessity be partial, incomplete, and subject to change, decay and death.

Such are all historical Religions, forms that change from day to day, from age to age. But RELIGION remains ever the same. "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrim" (*Voice of the Silence*). That which is not *a* religion, but RELIGION itself, is *Theo-Sophia*, the Esoteric Wisdom, incarnated in many forms from age to age.

Religion then, to be serviceable to the multitude, requires a popular and simple presentation in terms of everyday ideas and experience. How far that has been successfully accomplished in the Christian religion, let each judge for himself.

But we are concerned now with the esoteric significance of the Christian forms. For surely at the end of this nineteenth century it is time that at least the teachers in the Church should cease to cling to the outward forms, should understand something of the deeper principles of spiritual evolution. For on every hand are incarnating Egos who have passed the state of childhood, who look on the universe with open eyes and fuller knowledge; who are demanding now from the Church the interpretation of their spiritual life

and intuitions, of that which is striving vaguely and strangely within them. They demand it from the Church, simply because being born into this Christian country, they have been brought up to know no other spiritual guide. What answer does the Church give to these advanced Egos? Many, aye, thousands, have already turned away in disgust. The Church has nothing to offer them. But Theosophy has. Theosophy strikes immediately the key-note of their inner nature, and they pass beyond the exoteric forms to that inner mystery to which the Church has no key, and upon which she lays her anathema.

In the New Testament then, although Christ, the Logos, stands for the type of the 'second Adam',—Humanity rising out of the cycle of its fall into matter, and resuming its divine nature, —there is a special value in the more specific application of the general type to our own individual requirements and present conceptions, to our individuality or personality which at present assumes the most prominent position.

Few indeed are those who can rise entirely above the personal, who can blend their individual life in the ONE LIFE, who can learn to "live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF".

And in the personal presentment of the man Christ Jesus, we have an ideal which is brought

home to our personal requirements, through which we may rise from the personal to the universal, by gradual stages, as our own spiritual life unfolds; from the mere character-value, to a full realisation of the type-value; to a full realisation that it is the Christ, the Logos, verily incarnated in our own nature, in Humanity to-day, as in all ages, who is the redeemer and saviour of the world; for it is the divine spirit, the divine thought, the incarnated Word, ever working out its own divine and perfect expression.

The central doctrine of Theosophy, that round which all else revolves, is the doctrine of the *Higher Self*. Briefly stated, that doctrine teaches that our own true Self, the immortal Ego, is ONE with the universal SELF, with that which in ordinary phraseology is called 'God'.

In the *Key to Theosophy* (page 174) we read:

"Atman or the "Higher Self" is really Brahma, the ABSOLUTE, and indistinguishable from it. In hours of *Samadhi*, the higher spiritual consciousness of the Initiate is entirely absorbed in the ONE essence, which is Atman".

In the *Secret Doctrine* (vol. I. page 297) we have the following:

"By paralysing his lower personality, and arriving thereby at a full knowledge of the *non-separateness* of his higher SELF from the one absolute SELF, man can, even during his terrestrial life, become as one of us"..

In the *Voice of the Silence* (pp. 20 and 21) the state of *Samadhi* is described as follows :

" And now thy *self* is lost in SELF, *thyself* unto THYSELF, merged in THAT SELF from which thou first didst radiate " . . .

" Behold! thou hast become the Light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search : the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one, the VOICE OF THE SILENCE ".

This doctrine of the *Higher Self* has been the central doctrine of the highest systems of religion in all ages. The method by which the lower self, our own personality, can reach this knowledge and this oneness, not as mere theoretical doctrine, but as actual knowledge and experience, bringing with it divine powers and wisdom, making each man a full Initiate, an Adept, a Mahâ-Atma, (Mahâtma) or Great Soul: is the method of initiation into the esoteric wisdom, the hidden " Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven ", or that which is put forward to-day by Theosophy as the highest attainment of *Occultism*.

The whole evolution of the race has many cycles yet to run before it can attain the full perfection of this knowledge, but every individual may step out in advance of the race. For such the road is difficult and dangerous. The conquering of the

lower nature, the complete subjugation of the personal self, with its accumulated load of karmic energy, hereditary tendencies, acquired habits, and structural defects, is in itself an immense task, requiring many incarnations of steady and persistent effort for its accomplishment. And then, and only then, when this is accomplished, can the real task be begun, and the higher powers come into operation.

"Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion."

"Give up thy life if thou wouldst live."

"Ere thy soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out; the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection."

"Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere thy first step is taken on the solemn journey. Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder."

"The pupil must regain *the child-state he has lost*, ere the first sound can fall upon his ear." (*Voice of the Silence*).

In the Christian Scriptures we still find this high doctrine; though in all that is known historically as *Christianity*, it is blurred, obscured and finally lost altogether. Is it not passing strange that Christianity should deem God most honoured when man is most debased? Is it not strange that

this oneness of God and Man, taught clearly and expressly ages before the Christian era, taught in Christianity itself in its origin and inception, should have resulted, after so many ages, in nothing better than the hideous theology and demonology of the Church to-day.

The divinity of man, of all men, was taught ages before the divinity of Jesus became an accepted dogma. We have seen that it is implied in the 'fall' of man as given in Genesis, and in the 'redemption' of man as given in the Gospels. All through St Paul's Epistles we find it also the one dominant note, though it is often concealed under a phraseology which makes it appear that it was only the divinity of Jesus to which Paul was referring.

Many quotations might also be given from the writings of Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, St. Augustine, and others, to show that this doctrine was also held in the early centuries of the Christian Church; indeed, once it is understood, it is seen to stand out with startling clearness in places where we might least expect to find it. Plato's philosophy (400 B. C.) is saturated with it; his well-known doctrine that all knowledge is reminiscence, is based upon it; and, as we have already seen, the doctrine of the Logos in the Christian Church owes its existence to the earlier teachings which identified the soul of man with the universal soul.

But earlier than Plato, and more explicit even than in his teachings, we find this doctrine in the ancient Hindu philosophy, in the Vedânta philosophy, based upon the oldest books in the world, the Sanscrit Vedas and Upanishads. Prof. Max Müller in his recent work on "Theosophy, or Psychological Religion". states this in the following terms: "If we ask what was the highest purpose of the teaching of the Upanishads we can state it in three words, as it has been stated by the greatest Vedânta teachers themselves, namely: 'Tat tvam asi'. This means, Thou art that. *That* stands for what I called the last result of Physical Religion, which is known to us under different names in different systems of ancient and modern philosophy. It is Zeus or the Εἷς Θεός or τὸ ὄν in Greece; it is what Plato meant by the Eternal Idea, what Agnostics call the Unknowable. what I call the Infinite in Nature. This is what in India is called Brahman, as masculine or neuter, the being behind all beings, the power that emits the universe, sustains it and draws it back again to itself. The *Thou* is what I call the Infinite in Man, the last result of Anthropological Religion, the Soul, the Self, the being behind every human Ego, free from all bodily fetters, free from passions, free from all attachments. The expression Thou art that, means Thine Atman, thy soul, thy self is the Brahman; or, as we can also express it, the last result, the highest object discovered by Physical

Religion is the same as the last result, the highest subject discovered by Anthropological Religion; or, in other words, the subject and object of all being and all knowing are one and the same. This is the gist of what I call *Psychological Religion*, or Theosophy, the highest summit of thought which the human mind has reached, which has found different expressions in different religions and philosophies, but nowhere such a clear and powerful realisation as in the ancient Upanishads of India."

Yes, this is indeed "the highest summit of thought which the human mind has reached"; but if it be true, then all that has ever been taught or expressed as to the possibility of passing from the human thought to the divine realisation, must also be true; though, indeed, human thought and human language is powerless to express the *mystery* which is beyond. It is one thing to grasp this great truth as a mere intellectual or philosophical concept; it is quite another to realise it so that our every thought and action is moulded upon it; and beyond that, again, is that straight gate and narrow way which leadeth to *life eternal*, the full realisation of the divine in our own nature—"and few there be that find it."

We can understand now, that Christian doctrine is capable of covering the whole ground of human experience, from the "highest summit of thought" down to the lowest requirements of exoteric religion. It is only when the lowest requirements are

put forward as " Gospel truth ", and the higher is entirely lost sight of and denied, that Christianity becomes nothing more than a degrading superstition.

It is really difficult to say, amid all the conflicts of sects, and creeds, and Churches, what Christian doctrine really is ; or even what Christianity really is. Certainly we find no agreement among Christians themselves; but by studying the matter in the light of the deeper principles of human nature which Theosophy discloses, we are able to discern that, however much in one period, or in one Church, Christianity may be limited and narrowed by formulas, creeds, or rituals, it is capable of expanding, until it becomes identical with that deeper stream of Divine Wisdom which incarnates in many forms from age to age, and which we name *Theosophy*. When the " new theology " has carried Christian doctrine to the furthest point which its most advanced professors can at present anticipate, it will still stand only on the threshold of that Divine Temple of Wisdom, into whose inner courts those only can pass who have done with outward forms and ceremonies.

That Temple is not being built, as some imagine; it is an eternal edifice " not made with hands. " It is Man's own nature, it is the Logos, the Divine Thought, perfect in all its proportions. And if thou would'st find the Holy of Holies within that Temple, penetrate into the inmost recesses of thine

own nature, and there shalt thou find the secret of death and of life, the Alpha and the Omega.

For as with Adam we die, and as with Christ we are made alive again, for us also it is written : " I BECAME DEAD, AND BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE UNTO THE AGES OF THE AGES, AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND OF HADES. "

PART IV.

THE GOSPEL.

"But and if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. *II Cor.* iv. 3.

WHAT is the true Gospel of the Christ? What is that TRUTH, that Word of God which abideth for ever; which changes not amid all the changing ages, and cycles, and races, from end to end of that great *Manvantara*, in which the visible issues from the invisible, and returns again to the bosom of the 'Father'?

No lesser truth than this can satisfy us; no Gospel can be such to us if it stands related merely to our human nature in its temporal aspects, expressed in terms of our finite consciousness and personal desires. Our Gospel must be nothing less than the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the Logos, the image of God; in whose image indeed we also are made, and of whose nature we also are partakers.

Our Gospel, therefore, the Gospel of the Christ in all ages, the Gospel of the Initiates of all ages; based upon the eternal order and fitness of all things, upon that which was, and is, and is to come, upon the nature of God, upon the nature of the Logos, upon the nature of man; that Gospel or good news to " fallen man ", to man asking the why and wherefore of his conditioned and limited existence, and seeking to know his true nature and the source of his life: that Gospel is nothing less than the Gospel of his own inherent and essential divine nature; it is the Gospel of the DIVINE NATURE OF MAN.

It is, and has been, and will be a Gospel for all time. It was taught, as we have seen, ages before the day of Jesus of Nazareth; both explicitly and also in allegory and symbol; *veiled* indeed, even as Moses put a veil upon his face, and as Jesus taught in parables, and as Paul wrote not as unto those whose spiritual discernment was clear, but " as unto carnal "; veiled indeed, as it always must be, to those whom the god of this age, or of any age, hath blinded with an appearance of reality, where there exists nought but a *mayavic* illusion, or a temporary form of doctrine.

Whether the doctrine of our *divine nature* be ' Christian ' doctrine at the present day, does not concern us; but it is clearly to be found in the Christian Scriptures; as a *hidden* doctrine perhaps, but still hidden rather by the prominence which is

given to the personal Jesus, than by reason of its own inherent difficulty or mode of presentation.

The Christian Scriptures indeed give us two Gospels : an exoteric or personal Gospel, corresponding to the requirements of exoteric religion; and an esoteric, or impersonal Gospel, corresponding to the needs of those who have passed beyond the exoteric symbols. The first is the Gospel of the personal Jesus, as example and Saviour ; the second is the Gospel of the Christ, as related to our own inner and divine nature. The first proclaims " Jesus Christ and him crucified " ; the second, " know ye not that ye are the temple of God. " For both of these we find ample confirmation in the New Testament ; but it is the former only which has been brought into prominence by the Church, and has given the stamp and character to what are now the traditional doctrines of Christianity. It is the latter, however, which is the permanent and fundamental teaching; and it is indeed open to question whether the former was taught at all, in the origin and inception of Christianity; whether it is not altogether a perversion and materialisation of the original esoteric doctrine.

That the Gospels are mythical and allegorical to a large extent, we have already seen ; that Paul's Epistles have been tampered with and revised to suit the carnal doctrine, can hardly be doubted.

We know, moreover, that it has been the policy of the Church from the very earliest times, to des-

troy all documents or other evidences which did not agree with her dogmas and teaching. Nor did she stop short at the destruction of documents, and other acts of vandalism which stand to her eternal disgrace. Thousands and millions of noble lives have been ruthlessly sacrificed for the purpose of keeping the *truths* of Christianity intact. Yet even that we might let pass, to be carried down the stream of time and oblivion, were it not that the Church is the same in spirit to-day, though her power is broken; were it not that the battle for religious freedom is not yet won, and that persecution and hatred are still the lot of those who dispute her dogmas. *

But what is important to point out now, is that it has been the exoteric Gospel which has been responsible, and is responsible to-day, for the unholy divorce of Christian doctrine—or, as some would say, of religion— from science and philosophy. No such divorce pertains to the esoteric doctrine. On the contrary, science and philosophy are an essential and indispensable part of its method; the synthesis of these three, science, philosophy, religion, constituting the very root and genius of the

* The temper of Christian theologians is well exhibited in the words of Dr. Wace, Principal of King's College, who says: "It is, and it ought to be, an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe in Jesus Christ." *Vide*—Official Report of the *Church Congress* at Manchester, 1888; pp. 253-254.

Secret Doctrine. This must necessarily be so, if underneath all appearances there lies the one eternal unchangeable TRUTH. In science, this TRUTH is found and understood in the unvarying order of natural law.

Between the exoteric Gospel in its lowest form, and the esoteric Gospel in its highest conception, there are necessarily an unlimited number of grades and degrees. It is the non-recognition of this which makes Christianity of so little avail to-day ; on the one hand, to touch the masses and to deal with our great social problems ; on the other hand, to ally itself with the progressive thought and intellect of the age. We hear this complaint going up from our pulpits on every side. Only ten per cent of our population conform, even to the outward observances of religion, in the matter of attendance at places of worship. Would this be so if the Church had a Gospel suited to the needs of each and all ? Is it because men are careless or indifferent in matters of Religion ? We think not ; or if it is, it is because that indifference has become a mental habit, originating in the hopelessness of any solution of the problems of life as presented by that which passes for religion in our Churches and Chapels.

We spend thousands and millions in sending the Gospel to foreign lands. What is the " good news " which we send ? It is quietly and tacitly

assumed that if it is not good news to the 'heathen', it ought to be; and the measure of success of missionary work is reckoned by the number of baptised converts obtained. That is utterly and entirely false. Far be it from us to say that the Christian Gospel has not been, and is not, an enormous power for good in many dark places of the earth; nor even that the degraded forms of some religions—whose esoteric meaning indeed is identical with esoteric Christian doctrine—might not well be replaced by the forms of the Christian Church. But it is surely time that it were recognised that to be a Christian in name is the least important thing; and that a man may be better as a Buddhist, a Brahman, or a Mahometan, or in whatever religion he may have been brought up, than the man who has been brought up as a Christian, and knows no other form of faith. The cry is ever for converts, the money is paid to make converts; yet this is not merely false in principle, but leads to all the evils of outward conformity for ulterior reasons, and the strife and hatred of one religion placed in antagonism to another.

The exoteric Gospel of Christianity cannot in the very nature of the case be a Gospel for all humanity, when it limits and restricts, where it should unfold and expand; and appears as an antagonist and an enemy, where it should reconcile and deepen the Brotherhood of humanity;

expanding each and all religions until they are merged into that one RELIGION, which like the ONE LIFE lives and breathes in all forms, but is independent of any.

But this can only be done when Christian doctrine claims as its one fundamental truth, the DIVINE NATURE OF MAN. For that is also the fundamental doctrine of all religions, however much it may be lost and obscured in their outward forms ; and through it all religions may be harmonised and perfected, until at length, once more, the whole of mankind is of " one language and one speech ".

Modern Christianity may claim to teach the divine Sonship of man, but the teaching rests on an anthropomorphic basis, and not on the inherent and essential nature of man himself. In the Christian doctrine we become Sons through belief in the work of a personal Saviour. In the esoteric doctrine man (Humanity) *is the divine Son*.

Christian theology has made the difference between Jesus Christ and ourselves an absolute one in very nature, and not one of degree only. We may become *like* Christ, but there will always be a difference as wide as that between the creator and the created. Yet this is opposed to what Jesus —speaking as the Logos—says about himself, and to the whole teaching of Paul. The exoteric Gospel is the Gospel of separation, of outward knowledge as between subject and object. But

the esoteric Gospel is the Gospel of identity; for true knowledge is not an external cognition, but an at-one-ment.

The ONE expresses itself in the many, and the measure of our progress and evolution is the measure of our understanding of this great truth, our separation from the individual, and our identification with the ONE.

Thus in the *Voice of the Silence* we read : " All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of *Alaya*. Man is its crystal ray ; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. That beam is thy life-guide and thy true Self, the Watcher and the silent Thinker, the victim of thy lower Self. Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body; control and master both and thou art safe ".

" Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion ".

" In order to become the knower of ALL-SELF (Atman), thou hast first of SELF to be the knower. To reach the knowledge of that SELF thou hast to give up *Self* to Non-Self, Being to Non-Being ".

" Give up thy life if thou would'st live ".

Thus in the apprehension of the higher doctrine which Theosophy discloses, there can be no such thing as strife of religious opinions and dogmas; there can be no such thing as proselytism, for the ONE is understood as underlying the many; and

though the many may continue to exist, they will exist in harmony and not in strife, because of the fundamental unity.

Immeasurable is our gain in this respect. To be placed far above the strife and war of creeds and sects, is in itself a power and a blessing which only those can understand who have fought their way through the doubts and difficulties of orthodox religion, and out of the mould of a traditional and inherited sectarianism, into a larger apprehension of the one purpose moving through all humanity. And this freedom is not one acquired by mere rejection, denial, or antagonism. We are antagonistic to no religion and to no sect, but only to the narrowness, bigotry, and bitterness engendered by their exclusive and individual interests.

And if it be true of the individual, that he must give up his life if he would live, that he must resign all personal interests, and merge them in the interests of all humanity, identifying himself more and more with the ONE LIFE which lives and moves in all; the same is also true of the community, of the Church. The individual life reflects the whole; the whole evolves as an individual unit. The law of the individual is the law of the community, of the race. Not till humanity has put aside the war and strife of individual interests, of race against race, and nation against nation, religion against religion, and creed against creed, can the Kingdom of Heaven reign upon Earth.

And if the Church would bring about that kingdom, as indeed she is ever ineffectually praying that it may be accomplished, she must first learn the truth of the ONE in the many, and kill out of her own life all those individual and personal interests which belong not to the Kingdom of Heaven, but to the kingdom of this world, and which perpetuate from age to age the reign of darkness and illusion.

But what hope is there of this result being brought about in the Christian Church? It is to Theosophy and the Theosophical Society we look for the leaven which shall leaven the whole world. For that Society is gathering together into one vast community, those of every nation, and race, and religion, who have apprehended this one fundamental truth of the unity of all, and who swear allegiance to no principle save that of Universal Brotherhood, which includes all others.

We are often asked, can a man be a Christian and also a Theosophist? The very question reflects the narrow and exclusive spirit of Christianity as it is ordinarily understood. It limits Christianity to certain articles of belief, and tacitly assumes that a Theosophist is one who has also a creed, which may possibly be found to be antagonistic to Christianity. If by Christianity is meant the practice and theory of any particular Church or sect, the answer may possibly be, that he cannot; for our own experience in this matter negatives the hope

of finding the principle of Universal Brotherhood within the four walls of any Church. But we cannot limit Christianity in the way which Christians themselves submit. We believe that whatever the practice may be, Christianity in its inception and realisation *is* universal Brotherhood ; and that it needs only the understanding of the central doctrine of the DIVINE NATURE OF MAN, to harmonise the discordant elements, and bring about a practical realisation of that which at present is regarded merely as a utopian dream.

What hinders? Why does not the individual, the community, and the race, rise to a practical realisation of an ideal, admitted and prayed for? The answer is to be found in a recognition of the action of Karma through reincarnation. The race has to reach its higher perfection through the perfection of each individual ; humanity cannot become perfect till each individual has reached the perfection of his nature; and this is only accomplished through long ages of evolution. It is when we look into our own nature, and in the light of the ideal of the perfect divine man—which we can dimly discern as the goal of our evolution—realise our own imperfection and catch a glimpse of the long upward road which we must tread ; it is then that we understand something of the slow progress of humanity towards that perfection, and in the light of our own repeated failures and follies we read the failures and follies of nations and races in a new

light. For as we fail and suffer, and fail again, so do those larger units of humanity of which we are parts. Our failures and follies now, will be the sufferings of some future race or community, in which we must also partake by reason of our share in the karmic causes we are now generating. For as all things flow together by natural affinity, so those whose characters and karma are alike, are drawn together into incarnation, and give the stamp and mould to some particular epoch of human history. How could it be otherwise? What other law can cover the facts of human nature and human experience? Even materialism is more logical than that teaching which separates and isolates the individual soul from all participation in the progress of the race, save at that small infinitesimal point where it touches this earth in one single incarnation. No wonder the Church with its enormous influence and wealth is so powerless to effect a practical realisation of universal Brotherhood, for it has no teachings which give that Brotherhood a logical basis, no law which binds the experience of the individual and the race into that unity which must necessarily underlie the vast and ever varying phases of human life, from age to age.

But we can hardly wonder, in view of the strife and conflict, and sin and failure of this life, that most, aye, even the strongest, shrink from the thought of returning in another incarnation to take up again the cross of Christ. For what is this life

we bear, but in very deed the cross of Christ. Has it never occurred to any reader of these pages, that their life here is to accomplish a purpose which not God himself, but only they, can accomplish. How else exists the necessity for the incarnation of the divine Son; what else is the meaning of the redemption of the world by the divine sacrifice? For it is in each one of us that that incarnation, that sacrifice, that redemption is made. And as Christ is our own very Self, our own Higher Ego, we shall—when we have learned to think and speak of ourselves from the standpoint of that Ego, and not from our personal standpoint—see that Christ's work is our work, and that it is only by identifying ourselves thus with the work of the Christ, and first purifying ourselves so that we may become fitting vehicles for the manifestation and work of the divine principle in us, that we as individuals, and in due time, through the individual, the whole race shall reach the goal and perfection of our nature.

But how is this to be accomplished if at death each human Ego has finished for ever with this earth, and the evolution of humanity thereon? If at death the world loses for ever its best and noblest; if at birth the soul comes into existence, a fresh creation from the hand of God, to be moulded merely by the chance circumstances of physical heredity and environment; then indeed the perfection of humanity appears to us a mere dream; for there is no higher law of cause and

effect to bind the whole of man's nature, his hopes, aspirations, and experiences into one harmonious unity, to connect the past, present, and future in one purpose, in which every member of the human Brotherhood is a partaker, now and for all time.

However consoling, therefore, may be the personal Gospel, in which personal salvation and rest from the world's troubles for ever and ever takes the most prominent place, we can imagine nothing more mischievous in its practical effect on those whose moral character is weak. We see the results in the impotence of Christianity to-day in all great questions of social reform, which have to settle themselves as best they may on lines of expediency and utility. For the good orthodox Christian has no thought of coming back to this sinful world when once he has gotten safely into heaven. What will the bitter cry of humanity be to him then, or a thousand years hence?

Ever and always the Church is praying: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven". And for ever that prayer will be ineffectual until it is realised that God does not work by outward intervention, that he is not a being, looking down from heaven upon this earth, to whom we must offer up prayers and praises; but that in the silence and stillness of the mysterious womb of nature, in the inner depths and motion of the metal and the stone, in the darkness of the

soil and the hidden life of the seed, in the heart of conscious existence, expanding from lowly forms of simple cell and structure to higher life and nobler service; and in the mind and soul of man: in all, and through all, the ONE LIFE which some name 'God', works ever in that perfection which is the very law and nature of its own Being.

Therefore it is that the Kingdom of God "cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, there! for lo! the kingdom of God is within you."

But this is meaningless verbiage unless we can reduce it to natural law, harmonising with the great facts of human nature and experience all through the ages. And that law is the law of individual progress and evolution, working out the progress and evolution of the whole race through repeated incarnations, linked together by karmic cause and effect. We join hands here with science and philosophy; and all phases of human knowledge and experience are found to be not merely accessory to true religion, not merely of more or less utility in this world, but necessary steps on the upward road of our perfectment.

The fall of Man, the evolution of Man, the perfectment of Man: these three are the beginning, the middle, and the end. The past, present, and future, can have no meaning to us unless linked together by a divine purpose, running through all, and perfect in itself. For if of that absoluteness, which we

predicate as the sum of all things, it be possible to conceive any qualities whatever under such terms as, wisdom, goodness, justice, or love : these must find in IT an expression of absoluteness which precludes any separation of the temporal and phenomenal from that absoluteness. It is clearly seen that if Love, Wisdom, and Justice lie at the root of the universe, then all that appears to us to be evil must be appearance merely, and must subserve a wise and noble purpose. In view of this, what room is there for such a phantasm as the orthodox God and Devil theory of the universe, with its accompanying " plan of salvation " ?

Through all doubts and difficulties, through all life's sorrow and storm and stress, through all the vista of interminable cycles of evolution, of incarnation after incarnation of ceaseless toil : there comes to us a deep assurance that the end in view must be commensurate with the effort ; and though we now see but dimly and partially, yet we can recognise an eternal and unvarying order which is the signature on the phenomenal world of a divine wisdom and guiding intelligence. And in a higher sphere and nobler life, when all veils have been cast aside, and we are merged once more in conscious union with the divine source of our being : then we may hope to know in full, that the price we have paid during our long and weary pilgrimage has not been too great for the end in view. Paul expresses this when he says :—" For our light

affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory". (II Cor. 4. 17.) Therefore we say—expressing the matter as well as we are able in terms of our finite conceptions—that all things, be they good or evil, exist through the power of a divine necessity, which is the very essence and nature of THAT—which IS the universe.

And herein lies the glorious hope of our humanity, and the Gospel of our divine perfectment; that as by necessity the divine must incarnate, as by necessity man must fall, as by necessity Christ must be crucified in him: so also by necessity he must rise again from the dead, resume his divine nature and power, and rebecome that which he was and *is*.

For it is only that aspect of man, that *persona* which we call our *human* nature which has 'fallen.' Man in his essential nature was and *is* the Logos. Our own higher Ego, the Christ within us, was, and is, a pure spiritual being, conscious of its own nature and powers and mission, yet sacrificed to, and the victim of, the lower personal self, that that lower self may in due time become of like nature with the higher.

The higher and the lower, as we have already seen, are but aspects of the ONE; yet in order to treat them intelligibly we are obliged to deal with them as if they were separated, for as such they appear to our finite perceptions.

Thus it will be seen how the esoteric Gospel is necessarily an impersonal one, for it is the loss of the distinction between the higher and the lower ; the lower self being merged in the Higher Self, the life of the lower personality with its limited and temporal interests, being lost in that larger life which knows itself to be spiritual and divine. But for the present the Higher Self, the Christ, appears as the victim and the Saviour of the lower self, our own personalities.

All through the New Testament, the esoteric meaning of the Christ, as the sacrificial victim, bears reference to this sacrifice of the higher to the lower ; it is the crucifixion of the Christ in our own bodies, that these bodies or personalities may be raised to the same glory as that of the divine man ; and the consummation of the work of the Christ is the attainment by us of " the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". (Eph. vi. 13). Also in another place, Paul speaks of the Saviour " who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able to subject all things unto himself. " (Phil. iii. 21).

It seems strange indeed that this high doctrine should have become dwarfed to the traditional Christian doctrine of atonement and justification by faith ; or that the resurrection should have

been so materialised as to mean the actual restoration of the physical particles of our present bodies. That such teachings as these could ever become ' gospel truth ', must cause us to look with the greatest suspicion upon everything that has ever been received into the traditions of the Church ; and indeed might well cause us to turn in disgust from everything that bears the name or stamp of Christian doctrine, were it not, as it is our effort here to point out, that underneath the corrupt and materialised forms into which that doctrine has hardened, we can still discern the ancient esoteric teachings.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find the same esoteric doctrine with regard to the indwelling of the Logos or Christ. Thus Krishna says : " Those who practise severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures, are full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past, and desiring more to come. They, full of delusion, torture the powers and faculties which are in the body, *and me also, who am in the recesses of the innermost heart.* "

" I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of beings ; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things. "

" It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind, in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again . . . The deluded do

not see the spirit when it quitteth or remains in the body, nor when, moved by the qualities, it has experience in the world. But those who have the eye of wisdom perceive it, and devotees who industriously strive to do so, see it dwelling in their own hearts . . . I enter the earth supporting all living things by my power, and I am that property of sap which is taste, nourishing all the herbs and plants of the field. . . . I am in the hearts of all men, and from me come memory, knowledge, and also the loss of both . . . I am known as the Supreme Spirit. He who,being not deluded, knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things, and worships me under every form and condition."

As Saviour of the individual, Krishna speaks thus :—" In those for whom knowledge of the true Self has dispersed ignorance, the Supreme, as if lighted by the sun, is revealed. Those whose souls are in the Spirit, whose asylum is in it, who are intent on it, and purified by knowledge from all sins, go to that place from which there is no return . . . Neither the sun, nor the moon nor the fire enlighteneth that place ; from it there is no return ; it is my supreme abode "

" I will explain further the sublime spiritual knowledge, superior to all others, by knowing which all the sages have attained the supreme perfection on the dissolution of this body. They take sanctuary in this wisdom, and having attained

to my state, they are not born again, even at the new evolution, nor are they disturbed at the time of general destruction."

"Every action, without exception, is comprehended in spiritual knowledge. Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, by humility; the wise who see the truth, will communicate it unto thee. . . . By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself, and then in me. Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge."

This is the gospel of the Christ, of Krishna, of the Logos, of the Supreme Spirit, or whatever name or form we may give to the one central truth of essential unity under apparent diversity. It is the doctrine of our own inherent immortal and divine nature. We say that it is Christian doctrine, in all that is fundamental and permanent in the Christian Scriptures. Its beauty and harmony is perceived just in proportion as we can give up the personal and finite, in our religious ideals, as in our own lives and desires. A personal God and a personal Christ become impossible when we have perceived this deeper truth. However much the Gospel of a personal Saviour may be necessary at certain stages of our own experience; however much that Gospel may be preached to-day, and found to be 'good news' to thousands and mil-

lions; however much the New Testament may give prominence to the personal Gospel, there must always be the deeper impersonal Gospel behind; a 'wisdom in a mystery' perchance, yet one which may be obtained by "doing service, by strong search, by questions, by humility", and one which "the wise who see the truth will communicate."

All through the Gospel of St. John the esoteric doctrine supplies the key by which we must interpret the "hard sayings" of Jesus. The enigmatical discourses of Jesus concerning himself become intelligible the moment we understand that he speaks as the Logos, in the same way that Krishna speaks in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. All through Paul's Epistles the esoteric doctrine is continually coming to the surface, in spite of every effort on the part of the writer to confine himself to the personal Gospel; or, as is more likely, on the part of those who have transmitted his writings to us, to obliterate the traces of the impersonal and esoteric truths. Thus Paul speaks of the 'Fathers', who "did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ." Compare this with the passage from John 6. 53: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life", *et seq*. If this mystic life principle was

brought to light only by *Jesus* Christ, how could Paul speak as he does? Also he speaks of his Gospel as being one " which was preached in all creation under heaven " (Col. I. 23).

Many indeed are those things of which Paul speaks, and which are " hard of interpretation " until we possess the esoteric key. The whole of the epistle to the Hebrews, whether written by Paul or not, is based upon the symbology and allegory of the Old Testament, as applied to the esoteric Gospel of the Christ, and not to the historical Jesus. For all those things of which we read in the Old Testament concerning Moses and the Law, the tabernacle, and the institution and the services of the priesthood, and other '*historical*' matter, are here plainly declared to be mere symbols and types, " a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. " This has been the method of the esoteric schools of Initiates from the very earliest ages, and it is through this that we obtain those exoteric records which, by tradition, have become the sacred books of the East or of the West, but whose inner meaning is entirely lost to those " in whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving " ; who deny indeed that there is any esoteric knowledge whatever behind the mere dead letter, or who regard as *history* in their own books that which they reject as fable, myth, and superstition in other records.

To understand why or how it has come about

that humanity has fallen so deep into matter and illusion, that the profound spiritual philosophy of the ancient Wisdom-Religion is entirely lost to the Church or the official priesthood, we need the wider and deeper view of human history and evolution which the *Secret Doctrine* discloses, an evolution extending over millions of years, and with well-defined cycles of rise and fall. We need further to study the peculiar conditions of the present cycle, the *Kali-Yuga* or ' Black-age ', the first 5000 years of which end in 1897.

This is too large a subject to enter into here, but meanwhile we may notice one very important factor in bringing about the present condition of religious superstition and fetish. That factor is the creative power of man ; the inner creative power on the mental and astral planes, by means of which he brings into objective existence those thoughts and ideals upon which he centres his desires. This power in the present day is exercised unconsciously, but it is none the less real. We have already seen that Man is the Logos, and as such is the creative god of the manifested universe, containing in himself the power and potency of all that makes its appearance in that world. This power finds its reflection and counterpart on all planes of his nature, and applies not merely to the physical world of forms, but also to those subjective planes or states of consciousness which can sometimes be entered under certain abnormal conditions during

physical life, and which also form the post-mortem life of the individual.

Now, by reason of the authority which has always been attached to the religious order, and the power and influence which the priesthood is able to exercise thereby over the uninstructed, it has come about in this *Kali Yuga*, that this power, falling into the hands of unworthy representatives, has been debased and degraded, and used for illegal and unholy purposes, used for the exercise and possession of temporal power and wealth, by a priesthood which fattened on the ignorance and credulity of their dupes, and taught a hateful lie in order to terrorise and subject to their power.

And now we see that long centuries of so called Christian theology, with its necessary concomitant of demonology, have created powerful astral currents, into which men are swept by karmic action, and carried helplessly down the stream of illusion, not knowing it as such, because in very truth to them it *is* reality.

Thus Eliphas Levi writes: "Human thought creates what it imagines, the phantoms of superstition project their real deformity in theAstral Light, and live by the very terrors they produce. They owe their being to the delusions of imagination and to the aberration of the senses, and are never produced in the presence of any one who knows and can expose the mystery of their monstrous birth. . . . The evokers of the Devil must before all

things belong to a religion which believes in a Devil who is the rival of God. . . . Within the circle of its action every Logos creates what it affirms. He who affirms the Devil creates the Devil." (Eliphas Levi : Waite's Digest. p. 118).

Thus to-day we see men and women by thousands, who on all other matters, save that of religion, refuse to yield their judgment to others, and are capable of sound reason and common sense; yet on this one subject they are not merely illogical, but profoundly superstitious and credulous, and refuse even to commence an investigation of their traditional religion, because such an attitude of mind, they are told, is in itself a sin. In their own faith however they accept without question that which they reject as superstition in other departments of human experience and history.

But Theosophy proclaims anew the Gospel of freedom. Once more it shall break the power of superstition, fetish, and intolerance ; once more it shall enable men to stand upright before the Lord, in the strength of their own birthright as Sons of God ; once more the veil of the temple shall be rent in twain, and the stone rolled away from the sepulchre of the dead Christ. The age is ripe, fraught with momentous issues. The old order is passing away, the moulds of custom, forms, and dogma are breaking ; and men's minds expanding into nobler life and wider knowledge.

And the Gospel of the new order is still that

ancient wisdom ; taught once more, as it has been taught in all ages : the Gospel of THE DIVINE NATURE OF MAN.

According to the needs of mankind, so must be the Gospel that is preached to them ; whether it be to ' babes ', or to those who are full grown. And if the personal gospel of the old theology and demonology is still found to be a power unto salvation to thousands who believe : far be it from us to deny its appropriate value.

But there are those who in this incarnation have freed themselves from the old currents of thought, or never come under their influence ; having indeed happily reached a spiritual manhood, and put aside childish things. By such the esoteric doctrine is known and welcomed. It brings with it the recognition of past experiences ; it unfolds the hidden sources of their life, of hopes and fears, of aspirations and memories, for which perchance they have sought long and vainly in exoteric teaching.

To such the surrender of the personal to the impersonal, of the exoteric to the esoteric, is an easy and natural step. Intuitively they put aside the outward forms ; and presently, " the wise who see the truth " reveal to them the deeper mysteries of the kingdom of heaven within them.

But Karma leads men through strange paths, through strange forms, through incarnation after incarnation ; ever giving them the due reward of

their toil and strife, whether it be in this world, where the fruit is sweet to the taste, but bitter to the stomach, or in those ideal heavens on which some fix their hopes. " In my Father's house are many mansions " ; or as stated more clearly by Krishna :—" Those enlightened in the three *Vedas**, offering sacrifices to me and obtaining sanctification from drinking the soma juice†, petition me for heaven, thus they attain to the region of Indra (Devachan) the prince of celestial beings, and there feast upon celestial food and are gratified with heavenly enjoyments. And they having enjoyed that spacious heaven for a period in proportion to their merits, sink back into this mortal world, where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted ; thus those who long for the accomplishment of desires, following the Vedas, obtain a happiness which comes and goes. "

" Every Logos creates what it affirms ", and thus for those who affirm a ' heaven '—whether it be the Christian, the Mussulman, the Hindu, or any ideal whatsoever,—the heaven they affirm must in due time become an objective reality. But all such heavens belong to the sphere of personal hopes, fears and desires, and as such are necessarily impermanent, temporary, and—compared with the

* The *Vedas* here stand for ceremonial or formal religion.

† Analogous to drinking the communion wine.

One Reality—illusive. Only when all that is personal is merged in that larger life which moves through all, can the One Reality be perceived, and the man cease to fall, through incarnation after incarnation, under the sway of the "happiness that comes and goes".

But this is a 'hard saying'; and though it is clearly to be perceived in the Christian Scriptures, forming indeed their esoteric basis, as it is the esoteric basis of all religions, yet in all that passes for Christian Gospel we find the foremost place given to that which ministers to and accentuates the personality. Personal salvation occupies the foremost place. Not so the esoteric teaching. Let us glance at the vista of the PATH which that teaching opens out to us.

In its broadest and widest sense, the PATH is that upward evolution which all humanity is accomplishing. But there is a special sense in which that PATH commences for the individual. We have it set forth in the parable of the prodigal son. Man wanders far from his 'Father's' home, out into the universe of *Maya*, seeking self-gratification. It is the natural result of his fall into matter and physical life. And having wandered through incarnation after incarnation in the illusive realms of sense life, he presently "comes to himself", and remembers the "home" he left. In the teachings of Buddha we have the same representation. Buddha taught the *four great truths*, of which the fourth

only is the "Way", the "Noble Eightfold Path". The first truth is *Sorrow;* the discovery that the sense-life which we prize and to which we cling is a delusive mockery, bringing ever pain alternating with pleasures that are "as birds which light and fly". The second truth is *Sorrow's Cause;* the discovery of the root of suffering in desire for personal gratification. The third truth is *Sorrow's Ceasing;* to learn the truth of the larger life, which can be ours when we have put aside all strife for personal gratification, and perceived the deeper current of spiritual life which flows from age to age, and abides for ever.

When these have been learnt, we may place our feet on that PATH, at the end of which we may obtain liberation from Karma, from birth and rebirth under Karmic law, for we shall ourselves have become one with that law, one with the divine source of all.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we read: "When one hath hewn down with the strong axe of dispassion the *Ashwattha* tree with its deeply imbedded roots, then that place is to be sought after from which those who there take refuge never more return to rebirth, for it is the Primeval Spirit from which floweth the never-ending stream of conditioned existence."

When once we understand that this "Primeval Spirit" is the Logos, the Christ, our own Higher Self, we are able to understand and harmonise all

that Jesus is represented as saying with regard to his own nature. All that Christianity says with regard to our taking refuge in him, is in harmony with the impersonal Gospel, in a far deeper sense than that in which it applies to a personal Saviour; it is in harmony with the deepest esoteric teaching, and the declarations of mystic teachers in all ages. " I am the way, and the truth, and the life", says Jesus, speaking as the Logos. Krishna also says: " For those who worship me, renouncing in me all their actions, regarding me as the supreme goal and meditating on me alone, if their thoughts are turned to me, I presently become the saviour from this ocean of incarnation and death. Place, then, thy heart on me, penetrate me with thy understanding, and thou shalt without doubt hereafter dwell in me ".

But when the Path is thus entered, through an apprehension of the first three truths, there are still many stages and experiences to be passed, before progress along that Path can be assured; and those stages may well occupy many incarnations, and lead a man through strange forms of religious fervour. Therefore there is, in a theosophical sense, a still further stage to be reached before our feet are really planted on that Path; there is a more special sense in which the Path must be entered than that which makes a man merely a religious devotee. The conviction of sin, and conversion, on which Christianity lays so much stress, may repeat

itself over and over again in many incarnations, assuming each time a different form, and leading the man to cling to the first form of religion which offers itself, that form which belongs to the community or family in which he happens to have been born.

But the deeper truth which must be perceived before the Path can really be entered, is independent of all religious forms. It is the perception of the ONE in the many, the perception of the oneness of our own life with the divine, of that life which, as Paul expresses it, is " hid with Christ in God. " (Col. iii. 3.) When this is perceived, there is no further question of immortality or salvation. Our immortality is not something which is effected either for us, or by us ; that which alone we can call the True Self, has been, is, and always must be, immortal and eternal.

It will now be clearly perceived that the root of the whole matter lies in a firm apprehension of the distinction between the temporary or personal self, and the permanent, immortal, or impersonal SELF; impersonal because it is not my-self or your-self, but the SELF of all ; of which our personalities are but temporary reflections. The ONE SELF manifests itself in infinite forms, but still remains the ONE SELF. In each form the whole is reflected, and the consciousness of self springs up, the consciousness of ' I am I ', becoming stronger and deeper as it expands, in what appears to us to be the

evolution of the race or of the individual. The ultimate goal of that evolution cannot be aught else than a full knowledge of the true SELF, a return to our identification with that SELF, the consciousness ' I am THAT '. Once such a SELF is postulated, whatever it may be termed, whether it be God, or the Absolute, whether it be the Unknowable or the Unconscious of western philosophy, or the Atman of the eastern schools : all things must of necessity flow from and into it. Hence evolution and involution, hence the outbreathing and the inbreathing, hence creation and redemption. Hence also those conceptions as to the final goal of the individual which have assumed such various forms in different systems, but at the root of which this fundamental idea may still be found, whether it be the absorption in the Supreme Spirit of the Nirvana of the Hindu religions, or the at-one-ment with God through the Logos of the Christian Scriptures.

We can now perceive also, why the Path is only entered by *renunciation*. Every personal desire ministers to the life and continuance of the false self, which thus repeats itself from incarnation to incarnation in the enjoyment of " a happiness which comes and goes. " A partial apprehension of this truth has led to strange forms of asceticism and self-mortification ; but a true apprehension of it will purify and refine and ennoble the lower self, until it has become a fitting vehicle and instrument for the divine manifestation. The goal is not won

by renunciation of action, but by the renunciation of the *fruit of action*, by non-attachment to the results of our actions; for then we do not identify ourselves with the line of karmic effects which result therefrom. Therefore Krishna says : " Perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all times unmindful of the event; for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. " But meanwhile we have a load of past Karma to dispose of, nor do we find it easy to subjugate the personality, which has a strong vitality of its own by reason of acquired habits and physical infirmities. Thus Paul says, " I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. " (Ro. vii. 22.) And he recognises also the distinction between the true Self and the personal self when he says : " But if what I would not that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. " But this sin is not imputed to those in whom Christ dwelleth; " for if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. " (Ro. viii. 10.)

When, therefore, we have placed our feet on the Path, by reason of our apprehension of this central truth of our own divine nature, we have still a long upward road to travel, on which may be many failures and many trials. And in view of

the little we can accomplish in one incarnation, we may well understand how that Path must be trodden from life to life; in view of the infinite possibilities stretching before us in the illimitable future, we may well understand how that which now appears to be our ultimate goal, the consummation of our upward evolution through our present humanity, may lead us merely to the threshold of an infinite vista of higher and higher perfection still opening before us.

But for the present the perfection of our humanity, in its gradual approximation to the type which the doctrine of the Christ presents, is a difficult enough task. When all mankind shall have become Christs and Buddhas, and not till then, will our task and our renunciation be complete. For as we grow more and more in the likeness of that type of the perfect man; as we merge our individuality more and more in that higher life which is no longer ours individually, but the life of *Humanity*, our task becomes more and more one of compassion and sacrifice. Deep and profound indeed is the mystery of the sacrifice of the Christ, the continual redemption of the lower by the renunciation and sacrifice of the higher. And we, if we are partakers in the life of Christ, must follow the same law, all through the ages and cycles, and "remain unselfish till the endless end."

And when we have understood this deeper law of our divine nature, when we have identified

ourselves with that higher life which is the life of the Christ in us, when that life and that work has become our life and our work : what room can there be left for those personal hopes and fears which toss men hither and thither on the sea of life and death. We stand unmoved where others fail and shrink; we watch the changes of forms and customs, the change of death, the change of cycles, without dismay or dread; knowing that all things change, but that in us, as in all things, abideth THAT which changes not for ever.

And when we have understood this deeper truth of the impersonal Gospel, of what value to us is that personal Gospel of salvation which is all that the Church has to offer in the name of Christianity? Personal salvation ! What is there of our personality we care to save? Have we not already lost our life in order that we might find it?

Therefore it is that in the esoteric teaching we find a higher and nobler doctrine of renunciation, than any that can be found elsewhere. For at the end of that PATH which is now opened out before us there lies a double choice.

Sweet is the teaching of rest for the weary, of that place where the wounded and broken in heart are healed, and where the tears are wiped away from the eyes of the mourners. Aye, for every wounded soul, there is rest and peace; bliss a thousandfold for every human sob. For in tha personal heaven which each one pictures, there is

compensation for all life's sorrows ; for every true and noble aspiration, checked and crushed in this world of evil, there is a realisation past all imagining. But in so far as this is personal it is also temporary and finite, though it may last for thousands of years as we measure time. It is merely the fruit of the lesser cycle of a single incarnation. How many will renounce this fruit for the sake of the larger life of humanity, still stricken with sin and suffering ?

But there is a larger cycle, the cycle of our spiritual life, perfected through suffering in many incarnations. What fruit shall that bear of individual bliss ? When our feet have trodden the PATH which leads to final liberation, when we have conquered all the forces of evil and illusion which bar our progress, when we have reached the goal of our perfection, even to the " measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, " shall we not then enter into an eternity of bliss, shall we not then lay aside for ever the strife and toil and enter into a rest which knows no end ? Aye, great is the reward which then awaits the victor. " Know, conqueror of sins, once that a Sowanee hath crossed the seventh Path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale ; dark ocean-waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound ; scent-laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately

pines mysteriously whisper : A Master has arisen, A MASTER OF THE DAY. "

" *Now*, he shall surely reach his great reward ! " (*Voice of the Silence*).

Yes, if he so choose, *Nirvana* shall be his ; " the glorious state of *Dharmakâya*, which is oblivion of the world and men for ever. "

But shall he so choose ? he the mighty MASTER, strong to help and save; while still from the suffering earth goes up the cry of anguish and despair ? Shall he be saved, and hear the whole world cry ? Not so. " The Bôdhisattva who has won the battle, who holds the prize within his palm, yet says in his divine compassion : " For others' sake this great reward, I yield "—accomplishes the greater Renunciation, A SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD IS HE. "

" Now bend thy head and listen well. Compassion speaks and saith : " Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer ? Shall thou be saved and hear the whole world cry ? "

" Thou art enlightened—Choose thy way. "

. . . . . .

What shall we say then of the Gospel of Christianity to-day. Is there no hope that this high doctrine, which is the very life and essence of the sacrifice of Christ, shall rise again from the grave in which the Church has buried it ? Is there no hope that Christianity shall cease to be a religion of many creeds and strifes, and become only the religion of divine Humanity ? Or must the Gospel for a new and

enlightened generation come to the coming age through a new source and a new community; meeting at every step, as indeed it has met hitherto, with deadly hatred and persecution from the old order, from the professed servants of the Christ. Alas, that history should repeat itself in this also; still making the word of God of none effect through tradition.

But those who have entered the PATH belong to an order which changes not with the changing cycles. Upon their hearts has fallen that peace which passeth all understanding. The fever and unrest of life is stilled. All doubts have passed away in a knowledge which cannot fail. All things are theirs, in life and in death, in things past, in things present, and in things to come. Resigning all, they gain all. Losing their life, they gain the larger life. Seeking nothing, they gain the incorruptible treasure, the pearl of great price. It is ever so. It is the first and the last word of the impersonal Gospel, of that wisdom hidden in a mystery, which only the *Mystic* can understand. "The *way* begins and ends outside of self." And yet, "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself." And if we would learn this mystery as it is revealed in Christ, in him who is "the way, the truth and the life," we must learn the mystery of the incarnation of that Christ in our own self, in all Humanity; and thus identifying ourself with that divine principle

which *is* our true Self, the veil is taken away from our hearts and minds, and " we all with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed with the same image from glory to glory. "

But this transformation is a *natural* process. It is the work of the Christ in Humanity through all the long ages of evolution ; the divine purpose accomplishing itself by immutable law which cannot fail. What ! shall divine wisdom and love be brought to nought through our personal failures ?

When the work of the Christ is thus viewed in the larger and broader events of human history, extending over cycles and milleniums untold, instead of being limited to the salvation of our personalities which are but as the fleeting forms of the wind-driven ripples on the surface of the ocean ; when Christ is understood to be the impersonal divine principle, the life of all that lives, and the Ego seated in the heart of man : then the prayer "thy kingdom come" will no longer be a meaningless and ineffectual petition offered up in temples made with hands, but will express itself naturally in the life of the individual and the community, and will accomplish itself as *certainly* as the unfolding of the leaves and flowers in the spring time of the year.

And that time *must come*, in the fulfilment of that larger cycle in which one day is a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The

drama of human evolution accomplishes itself on this globe through milleniums untold, yet the whole period of that evolution is but a ' day ' in the larger cycle which extends from eternity to eternity. Such is the " never ending stream of conditioned existence " ; birth and rebirth in endless sequence of all that *becomes*. Gods and Men, Angels and Demons ; system within system of planetary chains, worlds within worlds, atoms within atoms —all *become*, and cease to be ; are born and die, and reincarnated in fresh manifestations ; ever rising and falling in that cyclic rythm which is the mighty breath of IT.

Long ages ago, before the darkness of the *Kali Yuga* fell upon this earth, when the " Divine Instructors " walked openly among men, and taught them the mysteries of their own nature : the secrets of the cycles were not hidden as they are now. Some little of the ancient wisdom is left to us in sacred Scriptures, blurred and defaced, not so much by time as by the ruthless hand of man himself ; some grains of gold we may still gather from those exoteric records. But if we look for it there, without the light of a larger knowledge and a wider faith ; if we look for it from those who are now its professed exponents, who have made a fetish of the book, and would narrow down the eternal incomprehensible to a literal and verbal expression, and measure its workings by human days and years, and human emotions and thought :

we shall inevitably miss that deeper wisdom wherein is hidden the secret of our life.

Yet the Gospel of our divine nature, the Gospel of the Christ, is still proclaimed, perchance where men least expect to hear it; and where it is most proclaimed, there it is hardest to find. For never is the true God worshipped "in temples made with hands, neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything." Such worship verily hath its use and its due reward. But deeper than that lies the secret of the life which is revealed in Christ: *the secret of our own divine nature*. And since this wisdom is hidden in a mystery, it can only be expressed in a paradox. It is summed up in that one saying—so hard to understand, so much harder to practise—found in all Gospels, and the key-note of that higher science and higher mysticism which is the hidden stream of true RELIGION from age to age:—

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