



O my Divinity! thou dost blend with the earth and fashion for thyself Temples of mighty power.
O my Divinity! thou livest in the heart-life of all things and dost radiate a Golden Light that shineth forever and doth illumine even the darkest corners of the earth.
O my Divinity! blend thou with me that from the corruptible I may become Incorruptible; that from imperfection I may become Perfection; that from darkness I may go forth in Light — *Katherine Tingley*

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G. DE PURUCKER, D. LITT.

ARE LIFE AND DEATH THE SAME — OR DIFFERENT?

FRRIENDS at a distance and here in this our Temple of Peace: this afternoon I am going to talk to you on a question which will interest every thinking man and woman — the question whether death be the same as life, or whether they be two distinct things which cooperate or work together, and produce the various phenomena which we see in the Universe around us.

Now you know that the old idea always has been that they are two different things entirely. I cannot tell you how this idea arose in the world, but it has existed for many ages, to wit: that death and life are

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fundamentally contrasted: springing forth into manifestation from radically different sources, although those sources are perfectly unknown; indeed, that death and life were two fundamental radicals, existing in the universe itself, as natural laws thereof. Nobody, however, ever knew anything about them; they had always existed as supposititious — what may I say? — things, laws, substantial operations of the Kosmos, instead of being, as we Theosophists claim that they are, two aspects or two manifestations of the working of the universal cosmic energy, which in periods of evolutionary manifestation takes this dual form.

The Theosophist also says that these two, death and life, can equally well be considered as two processes: one including all the upbuilding of manifested forms and the so-called vital functions thereof; and the other including all the so-called manifestations of disintegration or dissolution of the forms so upbuilt, and therefore the cessation, in any particular space and time, of the vital functions of such forms.

Yet the instinct of man — of his heart, of his intellect, when it brings its insight to bear upon this problem — always has reflected the whisperings of the spirit-soul within him, which says that 'life' and 'death' are but two forms or manifestations of one underlying Reality; that this underlying Reality is the thing *per se*, the thing in itself, as the German philosopher, Kant, would have said, and that this only is properly called 'Life.'

'Life' and 'death,' in modern European thinking, really represent but two different *processes*. Life is supposed to be the building up of a body and the existence of the vital functions which that body manifests, as modernly said, through the protoplasm of the twenty-six trillion cells, more or less, of which the average human body is supposed to be builded; and death, on the other hand, is supposed to be a breaking down, or a disintegration, or a dissolution, or a falling to pieces, of what the other process — the building-process, the constructive process, popularly miscalled 'life' — has builded up.

Now we Theosophists have no objection whatsoever to this last definition, provided, however, that it be clearly understood that these two words represent but two definitions of two processes, and that they do not represent radicals, fundamental things in themselves. Every human being knows that things are born or take the first step into manifested existence, grow, reach maturity — the full bloom of the powers of whatever the entity may be — and then decline, and decay. Then

what is called death ensues. These are obviously processes; they do not represent either, on the one hand, life, or, on the other hand, death — what is called 'death,' anyway. My meaning is a protest against using the words 'life' and 'death' as signifying processes only, and then arguing as if they were fundamentals or actualities, the one radically different from the other.

Have you ever asked yourself: "What is death?" Have you ever asked yourself what 'life' is? Pause for a moment. Do not be satisfied with mere words. Try to come down to the radical idea. If some one asked you: "What is life?" or, *vice versa*, "What is death?" what would be the answer that you would give to either question?

"Progress," a friend in the audience answers. Quite true. 'Life,' thus used, means change, growth, evolution — two phases of the same underlying spiritual energy which we Theosophists call 'life'; and this procedure or process is everlasting progress, precisely as this friend has said. Does anyone here (I doubt it, because you would not be here unless you had that divine hunger for truth which drives you to hear all sides and to take the best) — I doubt, I say, if anyone here has ever thought for a moment that life is just one continuous process of building up, constantly building up, and then, when the building-up has reached a limit, that it is followed by sudden collapse due to the influence of something radically different called 'death.' Why, Nature does not ever act in that way. All its steps are methodical and continuous and composite. You always find it so.

Examine the building of your own body as an instance in point. What is the process that 'life' follows, which process is popularly mis-called Life itself by our modern European biologists? At every step we meet these two processes going on together, hand in hand as it were, to wit: Life and Death — twin sisters or twin brothers absolutely inseparable in activity, and working in co-ordination to produce a vitalized organism. Not a single cell of the body when it is worn out remains there forever; but, as we say, it disintegrates, dissolves, disappears, and is replaced by a new, probably by a better cell, which takes its place. Thus in the midst of life we are ever in death; and we see by this that death in a sense is more beautiful than what is called life, for it means progressive change and the continuous opening of ever new doors. Think over it a bit.

Friends, I will diverge for a moment from the direct theme of my

discourse in order to illustrate this point. We Theosophists have some very beautiful teachings, which as a rule, however, we do not expose in public lectures — not because we are selfish, which idea is an absurdity, nor because we have anything to hide, which idea is still more absurd: but simply because no one can understand — not even a Theosophist can understand — these deeper teachings without study and reflexion and mental and spiritual digestion of them.

One of these more beautiful teachings is this: that there exist spheres and worlds in the Universe (and remember that when the Theosophist says 'Universe' he means not only the physical Universe, which is but the shell of things; but also the inner Universe, the root of things, the causal realms) where the beings who live on them, the inhabitants of them, in other words, do not die after the manner in which we die — for a reason which I shall expose in a moment — but pass by gradual stages to a larger growth, even as a baby passes into boyhood, and the boy passes into manhood; and that when there occurs to such an individual of such an inner world the terminus of his sojourn there, he simply passes into the invisible realms without either break in consciousness or loss of his physical vehicle; yes, and more, our teachings also set forth that as our human race progresses into the far distant aeons of the future, death as a dissolution of the then existing corporeal encasement or body will no longer take place as it now does.

In those far future aeons of time the bodies of these future men, when the end of what we may call 'life' comes, will disappear or vanish away with scarcely a break in consciousness, and without a laying aside of the then physical vehicle; for the reason that, as death approaches, that vehicle will grow progressively more ethereal and tenuous, thus fitting it for its passage into the inner realms.

Preceding by long aeons this stage of the far distant future, death will occur under the form of a quiet 'falling asleep,' at which time the then physical body will evaporate rather than decay, as our present gross physical encasements do. It is difficult to describe these future occurrences in words of the present, because a Theosophical speaker has to consider the relative complete ignorance of his hearers regarding Theosophical teachings on the one hand, and the strangeness of the teachings on the other hand; but what I have said will perhaps give some idea or clue of the meaning of the statements.

Death, even to us men, is indeed no enemy; on the contrary, death

is a friend, it is a helper: speaking poetically but without appealing to poetry as an adventitious help, one may say with perfect accuracy that even today among us men, and the other entities of the beast and vegetable kingdoms, death is the helpmate of life, and inseparable from life. Death in the far distant future, as I have described it on this earth, will be what it then will be because the human race and the planet on which we live, our present material Earth, both will have grown so much more ethereal than now they are that there will be no physical dissolution as we at present understand it — in other words, no laying aside for decay of the physical body; and, much more important, no sudden breaking of the chain or connexion of individual and consecutive consciousness; but there will then be a passing on to something more beautiful. As I have said, there will then be no change of body, but the being in those far future ages which has reached its life-term — and all things which have a beginning come to an end, for such is Nature's universal law — I say that the being which or who has reached its life-term then will vanish or disappear from this plane, but as gently and softly and painlessly as a wraith-mist of fog vanishes in the morning sun, with no diminution of individual consciousness and with no breaking of it.

Why does this method of passing on not happen now? (This is the thought that I said a moment or so ago I would explain.) For the simple reason that we live on a very grossly dense and material sphere, on the lowest of what we call our Planetary Chain, and our bodies, which are the children or offspring of this grossly physical matter, are of necessity correspondingly dense. Otherwise they would not be here as actively manifesting physical entities. Our bodies are not fit for, and therefore cannot enter into, the ethereal inner realms of Nature as these, our bodies, at present are. Nature makes no such leaps. She proceeds step by step in growth, in evolutionary development, and in the refining processes of life, as well as in every other of her operations.

You see therefore that the reason why we human beings of Earth die as we do die, is because we live here in grossly material bodies. That is all there is to it. For these material bodies are obviously mere vitalized organisms, purely composite things therefore, and by nature unfit for unchanging continuation. The energetic bundle — the sheaf of energies which is man — breaks up slowly as to its lower parts after the death of the physical body; yet for the highest part — the core around which this bundle of energies — this sheaf of energies which works in and

through the body and in which full manifestation of this sheaf of component powers we call man is provided — this core of the sheaf, this highest part, withdraws its vitalizing ray from the body at the instant of physical death; and this withdrawn part or core is all the noblest, the highest, the finest, and the best of the man. It is the inspiring and vitalizing 'Monadical Ray,' as we Theosophists say.

May I attempt to explain this a little more in order to make it clearer? I will use an ordinary illustration that probably everyone can understand. In order to furnish ourselves with electrical power or light, we have a central station where the electricity is generated, and it is thence transmitted over wires to outlying districts, and there distributed to the outlying units of consumption. You can use this electricity, and you can cut it off, by pressing a button or by turning a knob, and the current which flowed along the wire becomes respectively usable, or stops, when this simple operation is performed.

Shall we say that instantaneously it is snatched back into the power-station when the current is switched off? Or shall we simply say that the current ceases to flow? It matters not for the moment which figure of speech we use.

Now then, imagine to yourself the Monad, the spiritual essence of us, our Essential Self, which we (following this illustration only as an illustration) may call the spiritual power-station of our being. The Monad is not in the body; does not dwell in the body but overshadows it; and its ray reaches down to the body, which is its ultimate vehicle or carrier. Shall we say that it reaches it along some spiritual or electromagnetic chain of communication, some inward psychic wire or channel? Thus it is that as long as this spiritual electricity — following our figure — is active in the final unit, the process called 'life' continues; but the instant when 'death' ensues, which equivalently is the instant when this Monadical Ray is drawn back to its source, the Monad — as quick as thought, quicker than lightning — then what is called 'death' ensues.

But, Friends, remember that death is liberation; in each case it is an opening of a new door into Nature's invisible chambers. The tired body, the worn heart, the weary brain, now function no more. All the best of the man that was is instantaneously withdrawn from its respective organs of expression in the body and enters into its own unfettered consciousness, experiencing the full realization of all the splendor of

spiritual intuitions and all the grandeur of impersonal intellection, each of these functions being now unfettered and free, in full activity in their own causal realms.

It matters really nothing at all what becomes of the lower part of the man that was. But would you like me to pause on this for a moment in order more fully to state our teachings? There remains behind on earth the physical body — now given over to molecular decomposition — which decays and which is cast off as a worn-out garment: as a man will lay aside a threadbare coat which has served its use. In addition to the body there remains also behind in the ethereal realms, in the realms of ether, what we call the ‘model-body,’ which gave the physical body during physical life its form and shape, corresponding to it molecule for molecule, cell for cell — and for this reason we call this ethereal body the ‘model-body’ or the ‘ether-body.’

This likewise is but an undergarment, as it were, in which the spirit-ray, the spirit-soul, had clothed itself; it decays and goes to pieces and vanishes away in due time, even as did the physical body, which is itself but a composite mechanism, vitalized by the spiritual electricity that I have spoken of as flowing from the overshadowing and irradiating Monad.

“There are no dead,” as our Teacher, Katherine Tingley, has been saying in her lectures in Europe this year. This is perfectly true, and I repeat it to you: There are no dead. The spirit has gone to its own — all that was best in the man, all the real essential self of him — to his core, the divine heart of him.

While man lives in the physical body he is a complete man; he is a complete sheaf, a complete bundle of forces, and then in human life he has a human soul, which is the child or product of heaven and of earth, so to say; to wit, of the Monadic splendor and energy on the one hand, and of the substantial energies of earth on the other hand, combined. But when he dies, these lower portions or energies fall apart, as I have said, while the Monadic Ray has already rejoined its sublime source, the Monad itself. Is there, then, no intermediate part of the man that was, remaining? There is, but you cannot call it a ‘man’; you cannot truly call it a ‘soul.’ These old-fashioned words perhaps will do for popular exposition; but if you want the real teaching, as accurate thinking imbodyed in accurate words, we must be careful in the words that we choose to use in this connexion.

What indeed remains is a composite center — an intermediate center — composed on the lower side of all the man's passions and whims and selfishnesses and hates and lower loves and other similar things. On the higher side this intermediate composite which remains post-mortem is composed of the spiritual radiance of the part which has already gone and which even yet, post-mortem, sheds its radiance upon this intermediate center, thus more or less electrifying it by the spiritual energy of the Monadic Ray that has already sped home to its own realm.

Now, this intermediate nature is obviously not a man. Imagine a man from whom all the best that is in him has gone, has fled, and in whom nothing but the lower passional and emotional and ordinary human parts remain. It is fit neither for 'heaven' (if there were such), nor for 'hell' (if there were such). This intermediate and composite entity, which is more ethereal than the model-body already spoken of, remains, as above described, in the higher atmosphere of the Earth; and the separation of its parts is automatic and follows strictly the same natural laws that were operative when the physical body and the model-body were cast off and began to disintegrate or dissolve into their component elements: the life-atoms belonging to each of the two.

As this separation of the just-mentioned intermediate composite entity takes place, the lower elements, which are the lower life-atoms embodying the passional and emotional energies of the man that was, fall away and return to the mother-fount of matter; and the higher part, the radiation just spoken of, ascends through the spheres to rejoin the spiritual core of which it is the radiance, and which spiritual core or Monadic Ray had joined the Monad at the instant of death.

This ascending radiance is what we Theosophists call the Reincarnating Ego, because in it inheres all the personalized essence of the egoity, the sense of ego-ship, of the man that was. You may ask perhaps why it is that if this Reincarnating Ego contains the essence of the egoity or ego-ship of the man that was, it does not follow the Monadic Ray in the latter's instantaneous reunion at physical death with its source, the Monad, because from what has just been said, you are justified in thinking that this radiance is an actual part of that already ascended Monadic Ray. This question is indeed a pertinent one, and very important, and I will answer it in this fashion, which I hope will be sufficiently clear.

This radiance is, so to say, entangled or involved so greatly with what we may call the aroma of the complete human being that was —

in other words, it is so humanized — that it needs purging of all the lower elements of this humanized center before it is fit to achieve the reunion with its Monadic source. The Monad is a purely spiritual thing without any adulteration of merely human elements; but the Reincarnating Ego, essentially the radiance of the Monad, is the self-conscious egoic center of the man. Thus it is, therefore, that this reunion cannot be immediately achieved, for no human being as yet is so purely spiritual, in other words so definitively his own Spiritual Monad, as to render such reunion possible at the instant of death. Here in these few sentences I beg you to find the explanation, and to develop it for yourself, which you can easily do. I have given the key of the thought, in other words, the reason, and if you are interested you will have no difficulty in unwrapping the full explanation which lies in what has been said. If you will read our Theosophical literature, you will find all this very clearly expressed. My point in bringing it up thus at present is to show you the philosophical and accurate reason for the statement, “There are no dead.”

There are no dead men. If the post-mortem man were dead how could he live, how could he be alive, as is commonly supposed in Occidental countries more or less influenced by the later development of the religion formerly so prevalent there? It is obvious that to speak of a dead man who is still alive is using words in flatly contrasting and contradictory senses.

So then you see that Life is a process, as the word ‘life’ is ordinarily used, as it is used by modern biologists and by modern philosophers. As I have said, we Theosophists have no objection to that use, subject however to the condition which I have already so emphatically stated. Death similarly is a process, as the word is used by modern religionists and philosophers and biologists; and we Theosophists have no objection to that use of this word, provided we clearly understand that such use of the word represents nothing more than a process. But when these two words, ‘life’ and ‘death,’ thus used for processes, are nevertheless taken as counters for supposed radicals, fundamentals, and as being two utterly different things in Nature, it is then that we Theosophists positively refuse to accept and use them as such. For obviously a process is a *process* and not a thing-in-itself.

For instance: Herbert Spencer, often an accurate thinker, utters a profound fallacy when he says that life is “the continuous adjustment

of internal relations to external relations.” He was a great man in his day; and many people will take a resounding sentence of this kind as meaning something very profound. But analyse it. There is no question that there must be an adjustment between energy and environment, or, to use popular language, between soul and environment; but is that LIFE ITSELF? The sentence is descriptive, not explanatory: it is a description of a process and in no sense tells us what life itself is.

On the other hand, let me read to you a quotation from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the article on ‘Life,’ Volume XVI, page 601, from the edition of that work printed in 1911, which article was written by Dr. Peter Chalmers Mitchell, who says:

Until greater knowledge of protoplasm and particularly of proteid has been acquired, there is no scientific room for the suggestion that there is a mysterious factor differentiating living matter from other matter and life from other activities. We have to scale the walls, open the windows, and explore the castle before crying out that it is so marvelous that it must contain ghosts.

Quite so. As a Theosophist I would have no objection whatsoever to this statement. If we are to understand Nature itself and not man’s imaginings about it we should stop thinking in the mental terms of ‘ghosts’ and ‘souls’ and such things as these words are commonly employed to mean, and replace them with actualities and realities. It was this very fact of misusing words due to ignorance of Nature — and also to the growing belief that nowhere could men find any ‘ghost’ or ‘soul,’ so-called, in their studies and researches — that brought on the materialism of European thinking. Instead of having real and fundamental philosophical and scientific conceptions, men then had only theological dogmas of various kinds. I may say in passing that these dogmas themselves have a basis of truth, but what that truth really was had long been lost, so that there remained naught for inquiring minds but certain theological dogmata which a person had to accept.

Please understand that in saying what I have just said, I do not mean that such things as souls and ghosts and wraiths do not exist. On the contrary, such things do exist, but they do not exist as and how they are commonly supposed to exist. That is my point. Theosophy with its universal teachings explains the nature and whereabouts and character of souls and ghosts and wraiths and all such things, as much as it does other actualities of Nature.

So, when the old European ideas of religion more or less fell to pieces, men hunted for truth and naturally they turned to the only place whither they could turn: to Nature, in an attempt to find out something real, some real fact concerning the nature of life. But what could they find? Unguided, untaught — indeed mistaught, misguided, their minds already set and crystallized along certain avenues of thinking — their minds, unknown to themselves, and due to early training and the psychological force of environment, already thus set and crystallized along certain avenues of thinking, misconstrued even the truths, the half-truths, and the quarter-truths that their awakening minds discovered. These truths, and half-truths, and quarter-truths, gave birth in men's minds to various systems of thought which were attempts to explain things.

Thus arose in the aspiring of the human spirit, say a hundred years or more ago, what is called *Vitalism*, which is the teaching that behind or beyond or within the physical and chemical processes in animal- and plant-bodies, there exists something called 'life,' which we know nothing actual about, but which must exist. This 'life' was supposed to be quite different from matter, something essentially different, and as death was supposed to be the withdrawal of this mysterious life from matter, it is obvious that the basic idea of the conception of Vitalism was that the so-called 'life' was entirely immaterial, unsubstantial, in no sense corresponding to, or being, anything that matter is.

Well, the problems that immediately arose from such a theory as this, and which by many eminent minds were considered to be perfectly insoluble, appalled and therefore repelled other thinkers; and in the recoil of these latter from this theory, they became *Mechanists*, who said that there is no such thing as life *per se*; that there is nothing but physical and chemical forces; and that it is the interactions of these forces which produce animal- and plant-life — man being of course included among the animals.

This theory of 'Mechanism' was the dominant scientific belief down to a period which ended, let us say, some ten or a dozen years ago, and is still the belief of no small number of so-called materialists. But as Vitalism had its day, so all the signs are pointing to the fact that Mechanism has had its day.

Let me read to you a quotation from George C. Scott, PH. D., Associate Professor of Biology in the College of the City of New York, taken from a very recent work of his called *The Science of Biology*, pp. 38-9:

Inseparably connected with physical and chemical ideas of protoplasm is the functioning of protoplasm. Inseparably connected with the societies of cells must be an integrative activity of the whole mass as a unit. This organization cannot be dissected; it cannot be seen with the aid of a microscope. It is not material in the ordinary sense of the word. This has led to the development of two general ideas or schools of thought — *Vitalism* and *Mechanism*. The vitalist says that life is more than mere physical and chemical forces and that we have not yet been able to elucidate what life is. The mechanist claims that life-activities are no more or less than exhibitions of known physical and chemical laws. The biological mechanist who confidently asserts that life-processes are merely exhibitions of phenomena, taking place according to known laws of physics and chemistry is open to criticism fully as much as the vitalist. . . . When life-phenomena are really understood it may be that this so-called life-force or 'vital spirits' will be identified as a form of energy.

This last sentence is a near approach to what Theosophy teaches; and this shows you clearly why the Theosophist is really neither a Vitalist nor a Mechanist. On the one hand Vitalism is nearer to the Theosophical ideas, but the Theosophist absolutely rejects the Vitalistic idea that life is something radically different from substance. On the other hand, the Theosophist most decidedly is not a Mechanist, because this hypothesis of Mechanism is merely descriptive and utterly non-explanatory. It describes the process, but explains no origins. Vitalism equally explains the process, but its explanation of the nature of the origin is what the Theosophist rejects.

I now read to you another quotation from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume XXI, page 554, edition of 1911, taken from an article written by Dr. Max Verworn, Professor of Physiology in the University of Bonn, Germany. This eminent writer, with whom I agree still less than with any one whom I have mentioned yet this afternoon, after describing the growth in a general way of the ideas of Vitalism and of the nature of soul and of spirit in European thought from the Greeks down to his own day, goes on to describe the further development of scientific ideas along these lines. He writes:

. . . there emerged once more the tendency to explain vital phenomena by mystical means, finding expression in the *Animism* of Stahl . . . ; and in the second half of the 18th century *Vitalism*, originating in France, began its victorious march throughout the whole scientific world. Again the opinion came to be entertained that the cause of vital phenomena was a mystical power (*force hypermécanique*) — that 'vital force' which, neither physical nor chemical in its nature, was held to be active in living organisms only. Vitalism continued to be the ruling idea in physiology until about the middle of the 19th century . . . by the second half of the 19th century the doctrine of vital force was definitely and finally overthrown to make

way for the triumph of the natural method of explaining vital phenomena. . . . It would, it is true, appear as if in our day, after the lapse of half a century, mystical tendencies were again disposed to crop up in the investigation of life. Here and there is heard once more the watchword of Vitalism.

This gentleman seems to think that fifty years is an enormously long time in human thought, and that because a thing has lasted for fifty years it has proved itself as a truth of Nature and therefore will evidently last for ever! This idea is astounding because in no department of human thinking do changes follow each other with such bewildering rapidity as in science, changes often amounting to diametrical oppositions in thought, as happens and has happened in scientific circles. As I have often before remarked, this in itself is a good thing, because it keeps Science fluid, so to say, and prevents crystallization of scientific ideas. My point, however, is that experience proves a scientific fad or theory to be as transitory and fugitive as fads and theories in any other department of human life. It is unfortunate that this obvious fact is not taken more closely to heart in certain so-called authoritative circles.

Furthermore, the ideas which Dr. Verworn rejects, or rather disapproves of, and with such lofty scientific certainty, which ideas he gathers together under the general name of Vitalism, are ideas which have prevailed for untold periods of time in human thinking, and in all parts of the world. He makes a mistake, however, to group these ancient or archaic conceptions under this name Vitalism, for by Vitalism as conceived in European countries, is meant the existence of a force or an energy or something of the sort radically different from matter or substance, radically another thing, therefore radically different from the process called 'death'; and it is this complete disjunction of life from matter: it is this conception of life as being something fundamentally and scientifically different from substance or matter and therefore from death, which the ancients would have repudiated, and on grounds which furnish the cause why the modern Theosophist repudiates the conception with equal energy.

Furthermore, the ideas of Occidental Vitalism, equally with the ideas of Occidental Mechanism, are in every case contrary to ultra-modern science itself, as I have so often pointed out here in this our Temple of Peace during the course of other lectures. For one of the latest dicta of ultra-modern science is that energy and matter are fundamentally one, and indeed some ultra-modern scientists go so far as to say that

matter itself has no existence *per se*, being but a manifestation or a condensation, or a concretion, if I may so phrase it, of cosmic energy; and this idea is not so widely divergent from the Theosophical teaching as one might think at first glance. In fact, it is almost the same. Were we to change the formulation of the idea and use other words with the same general conception, we should have the Theosophical exposition.

The world is a composite thing, a compounded entity, composed, that is, of two relative elements, Energy-Matter, and neither of these is absolute. Of course in employing these words at present, 'absolute' and 'relative,' I have reference to the ultra-modern doctrine of relativity, with which the Theosophical teachings have much that is akin as regards principles, although our Theosophical expositions may be quite different from the mathematical formulation of relativity such as Dr. Albert Einstein has given to the world.

Furthermore, these two relatives, energy and matter, are not radicals of Nature, absolutely different as between themselves, but are two forms of one fundamental and underlying reality. This is the teaching of Theosophy; and the latest dictum of ultra-modern physics, of ultra-modern chemistry, and of ultra-modern philosophy is, as I have just said, along the same lines, the difference apparently being that ultra-modern science considers energy to be the sole existing representative both of itself and of matter, its child; and the Theosophist is obliged to reject this conception as both inadequate, on the one hand, and descriptive rather than explanatory, on the other hand. Therefore, when we Theosophists say 'energy,' we mean equivalently 'substance'; and when we say 'substance' or 'matter' we mean equivalently 'energy.'

The Theosophist uses these words because they are convenient for use; but the two words which he prefers to use are respectively 'spirit' instead of 'energy,' and 'substance' instead of 'matter.' We do not object to the words 'energy' and 'matter,' but we insist upon these words being used correctly, when they *are* used; and, in the second place, that mere processes of Nature shall not be taken for fundamentals or radicals of Nature. My point is this: that fundamental spirit and substance, or if you will, energy and substance, or if you will again, force and matter, are radically one thing, but in manifestation as they appear to us, are two aspects of the background, which is what we call Reality.

What is this Reality? We Theosophists call it — because we must give it a name — Cosmic Life, that is to say, Life as the thing in itself,

spirit-energy. But here let me enter a caveat. When we say Cosmic Life we do not mean 'God.' We use these terms 'Reality' and 'Cosmic Life' and 'Cosmic Consciousness' merely as counters to express the — to us humans — incomprehensible Background of the Universe, and not as one unitary individual entity or a sort of super-God. Modern science says that this 'thing in itself' is pure energy. Very well, we have no objection to the use of these words. Call it 'energy' instead of 'life' if you like. But if you do, do not limit the conception by old-fashioned ideas of what energy is, or of what matter is. Let the name correspond to the reality. The reality must be all-inclusive, including what is commonly called energy, matter, consciousness, inspiration, intuition, love, hate, everything manifested everywhere, and anything manifested anywhere.

My point is very simply expressed. If we use the ultra-modern word 'energy' as being the so-called reality, we positively repudiate the old-fashioned conception of materialism of a fortuitous or haphazard universe running through time, winding itself up and unwinding itself, without purposive action, and without intelligent causation of any gods or active powers of divine beings. Such a conception of the universe is to the Theosophist a nightmare of a madman. It is the *ne plus ultra* of manufacturing ideas out of one's own imagination, and passing these ideas off on an unsuspecting and more or less credulous world as truths of Nature. No wonder such materialism is dead, and no wonder is it that the Theosophist finds his best refutation of such imaginative proceedings in inextinguishable laughter, as Homer says.

Now then, you see at once from what I have already said, what life and death are when we use these words as signifying natural processes. These processes we see operative around us everywhere. The two work inseparably, hand in hand, as one may say; but the bond of union is unbreakable, for in actual fact we are cheating ourselves if we suppose that life and death are two separate things; they are two sides or two aspects of the same thing, and in many, perhaps most, instances, the vital functions are equally the mortal functions, or functions of the process called death. Every instant of growth is an instant nearer dissolution, and it could not take place without the existent disappearing in order to make place for its immediate successor. The cell dies in order to give room to two new cells, both of the substance of the mother-cell. The germ cannot grow unless the seed die — and the seed is part

of itself; nor can the majestic oak, buffeted and swept by the storms of centuries, grow to maturity unless its mother-acorn give up its life to it; but the child-oak, now become a mother-oak, produces a multitude of other acorns.

There can be no life without death. There can be no death without life. They are two words for the two sides of the same thing, like the obverse and reverse of a coin — the front, so to say, and the back, of the workings of the Cosmic Life; and no one dare say which is the front and which is the back — where life ends and death begins, and *vice versa*; for it is only by a freak of the mind that we can separate the two. The decay and final dissolution of the physical body, making what we call death, is actually as strong an action of vital functions, and is as much life, as is the growth of the microscopic human seed to a six-foot man.

There can be no building of body, no growth, without the breaking away of that which has been outworn and has served its purposes, in order to make place for the newer, and ultimately for the better and grander, for it is 'progress,' as our friend in the audience said a few minutes ago; and this procedure is the unwrapping of succeeding faculties and potencies and powers. In other words, growth is change; growth means evolution. Therefore, change means evolutionary progress, and it is achieved by this alternation or pendulation from pole to pole, from so-called life to so-called death, and from so-called death to so-called life, if we regard life-death as a process, which it is.

But absolutely we must do one thing, and Theosophy has been taking the lead in this: we must free our minds from fear and the so-called terror of death. There is nothing to it. It is a mere boggy of fantasy, and the only reality about it is the natural suffering and pain that the human hearts and minds of the survivors experience when they see some loved one pass on. A moment's reflexion will show us that, while this feeling is natural and in one sense creditable, it nevertheless shows us with equal power the limited vision that we have. Give men light, and in proportion as the light streams into our consciousness do the pangs of sorrow, and the sting of temporary separation from those we love — until the next reincarnation or some succeeding reincarnation — lose all point and effect. Love grows greater because purer and nobler, when illumined by the light of Truth.

Let me go a little farther, if you please. What is matter? It is energy, as I have just said, and tried to explain. But what is it, con-

sidered as one of the two forms or manifestations of the underlying Reality? You know what modern science says: that when energy or force is found existing in action as vibrations of small magnitude but large rate: in other words, when the vibrational cycle is very high, such as is found in electrical and atomic movements, then the energy which is these movements, produces upon us the impression of solidity and substance, which we call 'matter.' I shall illustrate this point in a moment or two.

Please understand that in all these descriptions I am searching for proper words to explain the thought which I have in mind, so as to give the true idea and to mislead no one who may not be accustomed to the ultra-modern findings of science and may think that the words I use embody old-fashioned ideas, theologic or scientific; but this I most certainly do not intend to convey. Let me therefore answer the question: "What is matter?" in this way: Matter is a condensation or concretion of energy or energies working corporately.

The human physical body may serve as an instance. My physical body is a sheaf of energies, therefore it is compound, a composite thing; it is formed of cells, and these cells are composed of molecules, and these molecules are formed of atoms, and these atoms, as you know, are formed of electrons of two kinds, respectively positive and negative charges or points of electricity; and further, the distances in the atom between the electrons or atomic planets and the protons forming the atomic sun are relatively as great as are the distances between the planets of our solar system from their central luminary, the sun, or as the stars are distant from each other in our own Home-Universe, the Milky Way.

Therefore, you see, 'matter' is mostly open spaces. Do you get this idea clearly? Matter is not the gross, heavy, solid, compact, durable thing which it seems to be to our imperfect senses of report. If you had the 'etheric eye,' and could look at me as I am speaking to you here in this Temple, I would be invisible to you, as the body which you now see, and therefore you would see nothing of me except that an occasional electron would flash like a streak of light across your vision. You would see nothing of me but the open space, popularly called 'empty space,' which is the greater volume of the body your physical eyes are now looking at.

As regards this expression, 'empty space,' it is one I emphatically object to, because there is not a pin's point of empty space in the bound-

less Universe. The Universe is an infinite fulness, and not a pin's point of empty space so-called is within it. What we call ether or 'open space' is merely substances and matters of too fine and ethereal and tenuous a nature for our gross physical senses of vision and touch to sense in any way and thus report back to us.

Hence we see what matter is: first, the atomic vibrations of energies as well as the balancing of energies, working; second, in open spaces relatively as vast as those which form the universe around our physical earth. Matter therefore, as is obviously seen, is really an illusion; for first, we do not see it as it is, and not seeing it as it is, we imagine it to be something that it is not.

Take as an instance the constitution of an atom of hydrogen, the simplest atom known to science. The hydrogen atom is composed of two electrons, one positive electron, called the proton, which is the central sun of the atom, and one negative electron, the atomic planet whirling around its central nucleus or proton with vertiginous speed. A quadrillion times — some scientists say more than one quadrillion times — does it circle in its orbit around its atomic sun in the short space of one human second. What is the result of this movement, as we humans would sense that result? Tiny, infinitesimal as this whirling electron is, its speed is so great that, if we had the power to put our finger upon it, or even tried to touch it, we should feel resistance arising from the incredible speed of the whirling of this electron around its central sun, forming as it were a streak of something solid, or a shell which to our gross physical flesh would be sensed as tangible. We should sense it as what we call matter, and yet this matter is but a charge of negative electricity, in other words of energy.

Behind energy we Theosophists say is the Cosmic Life, infinite, boundless, without frontiers, and the carrier and bearer of all the nobler and higher parts of the Cosmic Entity which holds the Cosmic Figure in equilibrium, and which provides for us the so-called 'laws of Nature,' which are the vital functions of this Cosmic Entity: and all these various electrons in the Cosmic equation provide for all entities composing the greater Cosmic Entities as the source of all the individual consciousnesses, the life and substance and energy that they have.

But here I again refer to a warning uttered a few moments ago. This Cosmic Entity is but a generalizing expression, and is not 'God' in the sense in which that word has been understood in Occidental countries.

It is rather the aggregate, the sum-total, the vast ocean composed of all the individual droplets of life, or individual entities, which in their incomprehensible sum or totality make the universe. I do not deny that this aggregate can have an individuality of its own, but even so, as compared with the Infinite Boundless, immense and vast in magnitude as that aggregate is, it is but a speck lost in the Ocean of Infinity, and is only one of countless multitudes, incomputable hosts, of other Cosmic Entities.

Yes, man in his own makeup is but a copy, a little world, a microcosm, of the Great World or Macrocosm. He copies in everything, in his entire constitution, in the minute and in the small, all that the Boundless Universe is in the great. And it can be no other wise, because man is an inseparable part of the Universe.

I repeat this thought in my lectures in this our Temple of Peace as often as I can do so, Sunday after Sunday, because the thought is radical, fundamental, and absolutely necessary to a luminous understanding of our Theosophical doctrines. Our own universe and all other universes, and all the innumerable entities which compose them, are in their turn inseparable parts of the Boundless — copies, so to say, of that Infinite. But here again, when I say 'Infinite,' I use the word merely as a generalizing term, as I do of the Cosmic Entity which I have just spoken of. The fact is that the same rule applies in the great as in the small, and if this thought is clear, as I hope it is, I need say no more about it.

But as regards man, as I have just said, everything that is in the Infinite is in him, latent or manifest; and growth, evolution, progress, is the unrolling, the unwrapping, the outpouring more and more of what is within and still more within, on that endless path leading ever more inwards towards man's inner god, or towards the inner god of any other entity anywhere, no matter what its grade in evolutionary development. Has this path an ending? Nay. There are no ends in very truth; ends and beginnings are dreams of illusion; existence is a continuous stream of life and of consciousness; and even at the relative end of this inner pathway, when the inner god has been reached, this 'ending' is but the beginning, without break, of another pathway along which that inner god itself is advancing higher and higher for ever.

HISTORY IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

H. T. EDGE, M. A., D. LITT.

A PRINCIPAL object of this article is to explain the real attitude of Theosophy towards history. Some people have spoken as though there were two kinds of history, the ordinary kind and the Theosophical kind; or as if there were a sort of occult history, to be tacked on as a supplement to ordinary history. Now there can of course be only one truth about the past story of mankind, though there may be different ideas as to what that story is; and so we may regard both Theosophists and historians as engaged in a common endeavor to interpret that story correctly.

Theosophists can point to new sources of evidence, and speak of hidden libraries and occult teachers; but before doing that, a good deal can be done by examining the credentials of ordinary historians. In other words, we must avoid conceding too much to these historians; we must examine their own position before stating our own. If we fail to do this, we may be bluffed into assuming things that are not proved. If anyone undertakes to criticize the Theosophical view of history from the standpoint of the currently accepted view, it is always well to begin by asking the critic to state his own view; in short, to assume the position of an examiner rather than of an apologist. Before a critic can justifiably call in question the views of a Theosophist, he ought to be sure that his own views are unassailably founded. We may be told that "Theosophy is unhistorical," and that it is inconsistent with the most modern and enlightened views of scholars. This should prompt us to an examination of those views, when we may find that history is by no means an exact science, and that there are many unsolved problems and much conflict of opinion among historians.

Some people seem to think that historians have exhausted such facts as are available; and that, in order to establish Theosophical views, it is necessary to adduce additional facts. But scholars have by no means exhausted the available evidence, for they have not interpreted it aright; and what Theosophy can do is to show them how to interpret better the facts which they have. No science is purely inductive. We may collect facts, but we can infer nothing from them except in the light of some

theory which we have in our mind. Now scholars have for the most part gone to the facts with minds colored by preformed ideas as to the origin and development of the human race, with foreshortened views of chronology, with latent religious prejudices, with a mental outlook more or less unconsciously colored by the influence of the atomo-mechanical physics, and other such peculiarities of nineteenth-century thought. Nothing is more evident than that each new discovery tending to establish a greater antiquity for civilized humanity than it was customary to entertain has been received with reluctance; and that efforts have been made to minimize the value of the evidence or to accommodate it in some way to preformed ideas. But, if we approach history and archaeology with a more open mind, willing to allow that human civilization may be far older than has been thought, it is evident that we shall draw different conclusions from the same facts.

Any historian, whether of annals or of archaeology, is bound to sort out the evidence, the testimony, and the monumental records, according to some plan or other; he cannot present the whole mass in a hotch-potch. Accordingly he records whatever seems to him to be worthy of credence or in accordance with his view of the dignity of history, and leaves the rest unrecorded. From this it is evident that we must already have available a vast mass of evidence in favor of Theosophical views, which has been set aside or overlooked; that what we are pleased to call history is a more or less made-to-order affair; and that, if the historian were ready to give due weight to testimony which he has rejected because it conflicts with his preformed ideas, then the same evidence would give us a very different view of history from what we have had.

And so Theosophy, before making any statements as to new or occult sources of evidence, would prefer to bring the searchlight of its philosophy to bear on the evidence already available.

If we approach the evidence of records, monuments, fossils, etc., with the idea in our mind that humanity is a recent product of the animal kingdom, and that it was preceded by a regular succession of animal types of gradually increasing complexity of organization, we shall naturally wish to make the evidence square with our theory. Undue prominence will therefore be given to facts which support our theory, while those which conflict will be relegated to the background — kept out of sight if possible. It is not needful to suppose dishonesty, as this is an instinctive tendency on man's part, and may be done inadvertently.

But Theosophy has no such view of the course of evolution. It is not on the hunt for some species intermediate between man and the anthropoid ape. The discovery of fossils of highly developed man at a great age, or of vestiges of high civilization in remote antiquity, would not upset any Theosophical ideas but would support them. Accordingly Theosophy is able to estimate the evidence without prejudice. And if it be argued that Theosophists on their side have preformed opinions, this may be conceded; and it remains for the intelligent student to determine whether he prefers the theories of the conventional archaeologist or those of the Theosophists. We are concerned with showing that, given the Theosophical views as to the nature of man, the age of the earth, the plan of evolution, and kindred topics, a far grander and more consistent interpretation of historical evidence can be attained.

The science of history, like other sciences, is a story of theories which are abandoned one after another, as new facts come to light, or new readings of old facts. This continual giving of ground has been uniformly in accord with Theosophical teachings; a fact which can be proved by referring to *The Secret Doctrine*, which was published forty-five years ago, and comparing what is said there about old civilizations with what has been discovered and admitted since. Monumental evidence has in innumerable cases corrected the narratives of historians. Tradition, once scoffed at, is now being more and more recognised as generally right. The process of tradition eliminates errors and conserves the truth; whereas written documents petrify errors. It has been found over and over again that things supposed by historians to be fables and superstitions were true after all; and only lately we read of explorations of the Sibyl's cave at Cumae, which confirm Vergil's account.

The interpretation of historical evidence must be profoundly altered if we are ready to admit that humanity is the oldest stock on earth, instead of being a comparatively recent outgrowth of the animal kingdom. It is with this idea in view that Theosophists approach the study of history. This truth, that the human stock is indeed the oldest, is one which will be confirmed by scientific research in the future; and much has already been done in that direction.

To a Theosophist, history is cyclic — ups and downs, flood-tides and ebbs. Hence the futile attempt to make the evidence conform to a theory of gradual ascent from barbarism is not made; and the actual evidence, which shows that waves of barbarism have been preceded by

waves of high culture, is welcomed as confirming what was already known. If we study history as commonly presented, we find that there is continual giving of ground, a forced yielding up of original theories in favor of newer ones; and that historians are thus, with seeming reluctance, gradually falling into line with Theosophists in the belief that civilization is cyclic and not unilinear. In a word, there is no fixed science of history; but instead it is always changing and growing; a process of forming provisional theories and then abandoning them — abandoning them in favor of those taught by Theosophy. Facts recently given in this magazine prove the incredible skill and accuracy of the masonry-work on the Great Pyramid; and this of course implies a very long course of previous culture which must have existed before the masons were able to reach that height of perfection. How interpret such *facts* in the light of conventional theories? It can be done only by putting still farther back the age at which man is supposed to have evolved from a primitive state; and the difficulty will grow worse as the progress of archaeological discovery goes on. But Theosophy, with its teaching that all growth and evolution proceed in cycles, finds no conflict between its teachings and the facts discovered by archaeology. How then can it be said that Theosophy is unhistorical?

It must always be borne in mind that what is called history or scientific history is a very artificial made-to-order affair. As said above, history cannot be a mere collection of facts, nor can any science be a mere collection of facts; it is an interpretation of facts. Therefore history will vary in accordance with the views of those who interpret the facts. Even the word 'fact' will have a variable meaning, because it will be confined to those things only which the historians decide to accept as facts, and will exclude many which they decide not to regard as facts. Their estimate of a fact is founded on their estimate of credibility; they believe in a certain order of Nature, and hence reject as fables any occurrence which lies outside those laws. It is not by weight of testimony alone that judgment is made; slight testimony will be accepted if it concerns something lying within the bounds of what is regarded as possible or natural; while much stronger testimony, if it is in favor of what is regarded as supernatural, will be rejected. It is evident, then, that what is called history or scientific history will be much colored by preconception, and can to a considerable degree be spoken of as 'made to order.'

It follows also, that if once we admit that certain things, not recognised by orthodox science as within the bounds of possibility, are actually possible, we shall then be able to admit into history many things that have hitherto been rejected. Dr. William Smith, in a History of Greece dating half a century ago, rejects the statement that Milo, the celebrated strong man of Croton, was a vegetarian, because it was thought in Dr. Smith's time that vegetarianism was not consistent with physical strength. But, now that we take a different view, we feel no longer under the necessity of rejecting the statement. Think of the number of accounts of augury and other methods of divination, and of occult phenomena, the appearance of superhuman beings, the existence of Nature-spirits, which have been consigned to the domain of unhistorical romance for no better reason than that the historians did not believe in those things. Yet in recent years we have learned so much more about the possibilities of Nature that we are no longer so cocksure about what is possible and what is not; and we are more willing to modify our own views in accordance with a consensus of testimony, rather than to reject all the testimony because it disagrees with our own views.

Till comparatively recent years historical judgment was warped by the Biblical view of creation as having taken place about six thousand years ago; and it was difficult to square the findings of geology with this. Since science has so largely superseded this scriptural view, concessions have indeed been made to the idea of a greater age for man; but notwithstanding, the mental habit still persists, and science in its turn tends to minimize the evidence pointing to the antiquity of man, and especially to the antiquity of civilization. The Darwinian theory was certainly restricted by this inheritance of theological ideas; and, though it gives man a greater antiquity, it still makes his record utterly insignificant by comparison with the extent of time required for the evolution of the kingdoms of Nature in general.

Now follow the progress of archaeology, and you will find that it has been marked by a continual giving of ground, a continual departure from this belief, in favor of a belief in the greater antiquity of man, and even of the greater antiquity of civilization. Here we have a sufficient answer to the question, which is often propounded: "Where are your evidences of the antiquity of man and of civilization?" The answer is: "The evidence has not been forthcoming because you have not looked for it. On the contrary, you have been trying to evade it. But, once you

begin to look for it, it will come in plenty." And so it will. Almost every day one reads something about the discovery of bones, implements, artifacts, in some old stratum; and with it an obvious reluctance to accept the evidence, a wish to hustle it out of sight, deny it, suppress it. This clinging to old theories and endeavoring to force the facts to fit with them, or refusing to admit the facts, is the very opposite of the true scientific method in history or in anything else. So we have no right to complain of a lack of evidence until we have taken off our blinkers and donned our spectacles. There is abundant evidence in the stratigraphical and palaeontological records, once we apply the right key to them; but so long as we apply the wrong key, we shall be driven to extravagant theories and to distortion of the evidence, in the fruitless attempt to buttress up our wrong ideas.

The idea that the particular brand of culture characteristic of our present civilization represents the unique achievement of mankind, must be given up if we are to attain to a decent perspective and sense of proportion. Our present civilization is a young and recent growth, a local growth — almost parochial, one might say, by comparison with the stretches of time behind it. Its character is peculiar, temporary, and local. We dare not use it as a yardstick to estimate the value of older or alien civilizations. Older races may not have had radios and autos; they may have eaten their soup noisily or gone out without collar and tie. But still they may have been far ahead of us in other respects. Not to labor this point, it is obvious that the records of history can be viewed by each historian from his own particular angle, and widely different results thereby attained. Take for just one small example the very different views now held of the Byzantine Empire, since less prejudiced scholars undertook to revise the highly colored picture presented by Gibbon. Or take the new light thrown on early Grecian and pre-Grecian times by the archaeological discoveries in the Peloponnesus and Crete. In short, we have only to apply to history the genuine scientific method, of unprejudiced scrutiny of the facts, and a fair and logical interpretation of them, in order to find abundant proof of the worthiness of the claims made by Theosophists as to the story of mankind.

THE NEED FOR THEOSOPHY

KENNETH MORRIS, D. LITT.

WHEN we look at the condition of the world today, we see everywhere trouble, sorrow, and disaster. Everybody is aware of it; it pinches all of us somewhere. Nineteen Christian centuries culminated in the Great War, which left the greater part of the world exhausted; and since, the nations have been drawing nearer and nearer to bankruptcy and ruin. It is exceedingly easy to blame somebody else for all this trouble: to say it is the fault of this government or that government; this, that, or the other nation; if we are rich, to say it is the fault of the poor; or, if we are poor, to say it is the fault of the rich. But after all, all this blaming other people leads nowhere at all; it does not begin to help towards remedying things; it would be the part of the wise to stop doing that, and to begin instead to look for the roots of the trouble in the only place where he can find them; and to begin applying the remedies in the only place where he has any chance of applying them.

Now the root of the trouble is, in two words, human selfishness. There are the selfishnesses of nations and the selfishnesses of classes; but these are built up of the selfishnesses of individuals. It means simply that the bulk of mankind in very large degree, and most of mankind in some degree, does not know enough to avoid following that instinct which arises in us, which demands that we should fight for our own hands in one way or another: that we should seek money and success and comfort, or good reputation, or fame, for ourselves. Whereas it is perfectly obvious that if nobody followed that instinct; if all of us worked for all and not for self; desired success for all and not for self; sought the comfort and well-being of all, and not of self; the world would not be the difficult place to live in that it is. If, for instance, the men who built and let or sold houses, built them with the one idea in mind of the comfort and convenience of those who were to live in them, and not the idea of making themselves rich at all costs; if the worker went to his work daily with the one idea that in working he was serving the whole community, and was proud to do his best to make a rich present of his work to the whole world; if the employer did not want to make dividends, but just to do his utmost best for humanity; if the government of every country had the constant aim before them, not of enriching and mak-

ing powerful their own countries, never mind at what expense to other countries, but to benefit the whole of humanity; to be just and helpful to the weak everywhere: we can see, can we not, that the world would not be trouble-laden.

Why, then, do we follow that lower instinct of selfishness, instead of being wise? It is because we are ignorant. Ignorant of the laws of life. We are born into this unhappy world, and just worry along through life as best we can; and because this instinct of selfishness, of self, of self-preservation, of separate selfhood, is so obvious, is so often the first thing that comes up into our minds when we are confronted with any problem, any choice between two courses of action, we follow it without questioning or thinking much; and so the world, which is made up of ourselves and millions of others like us, flows down with the current and comes to disaster; and history is the record of disaster after disaster.

But on the other hand we do find — all of us do know — people who are big and strong enough not to follow this selfish instinct, which shows that it is in human nature to be great and unselfish; therefore, that all human beings might be great and unselfish. And then if we turn to the pages of history, we find that from time to time great men have arisen, who have not only been completely unselfish themselves; who have not only lived entirely for the benefit of humanity, the mainspring of their being a great flame of love for mankind, of compassion; but who have also been concerned to teach mankind wisdom; to tell men how to live.

Think of one of them: the one you know best: the most familiar name to you. By the accounts we have of him, he stood right out from his surroundings; there was a kind of light and splendor about him; people came to him and enrolled themselves among his disciples, asking him to teach them. And he did. His message to the world was, Ye are all members one of another; that is, you can't live for yourselves: the happiness of each one of you depends on the happiness of all; your sense of separate selfhood is a delusion. He did not say, Ye are poor sinful erring creatures, worms and miserable sinners. He did not tell men to abase themselves, *llwch y llawrn*. No, he said, Go thy ways, sin no more; and, Ye are gods, be ye perfect! And speaking of the great and wonderful works that he did, he said, Greater things than these shall ye do.

Ye are Gods, be ye perfect; just think of that! Now, either we are to say that he was, in plain English, a fool, or a liar, or else he meant those words dead seriously; they are true, in spite of all appearances to

the contrary. He said that we human beings with all our manifest imperfections were Gods, each one of us a God; and commanded us to be perfect; a thing he would not have done if it was impossible for us to be perfect. So that evidently he knew a great deal more about us than we do about ourselves; because we in our ignorance, in our worrying along through life without taking much thought for the truths underlying life, imagine ourselves to be essentially imperfect creatures, and think the world can't be made much better than it is, and that it isn't our business to try to make it better. So that he evidently had in mind some facts, some wisdom, which the rest of us have not. Well now, does he ever speak of such a body of wisdom, such a knowledge that he possessed which the majority of mankind does not possess? Indeed, he does; he speaks of "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." He says to his disciples, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; whereas to the multitude it was necessary to speak in parables: that is, to give them hints to indicate to them that there was a knowledge that they might attain if they worked for it. And how is a man to work for that knowledge? Why, he tells us. He says, Whoso doeth the will of the Father, he shall know of the doctrine.

So you see, he speaks of a doctrine, of the mysteries of the kingdom, which can be learnt by doing the will of the Father; which is not so easy that he who runs may read; which must be found out, worked for; in fact, a hidden wisdom; and he gives hints as to what it is when he says such things as Ye are gods; be ye perfect; because that saying is evidently spoken out of a wisdom that is not apparent to the man in the street.

Now if he were the only man of his type that had ever appeared in history, his sayings would not be so significant; though they would be wonderful enough. If he were the only one that had told humanity that by doing the will we should know the doctrine, discover the mysteries of the kingdom, or in other words, learn the secrets of the laws of life; and that doing the will meant, erasing the selfish instinct, living in the knowledge that we are all members one of another: why, we might perhaps take his word for it; but we should be only too likely to say, Oh yes, counsels of perfection; there is no time to go into that in this busy workaday world; I've got my living to make, and must leave all that to the clergy to worry about.

But if we go to history, we find that he was not the only one. I want you to look at a time about between five and six hundred years before the

time of Christ; and note with me what was happening in the world just then. At that time in northern India a young prince, going forth from his palace on some occasion, took note of the fact that there was sorrow in the world; and it worked on his heart until he left his palace for good, and went forth into the world bereft of beauty, throne and crown and the sweetness of his youth, and wandered the world a beggar seeking for the truth that should make men free. You remember that Jesus said that the truth should make men free — another allusion by him to that body of hidden wisdom which is not apparent to the man in the street. And at last he found the truth, this Prince Gautama did, and in his grand compassion went up and down the world preaching it; and men came to him as they did to Jesus afterwards, and became his disciples; and for fifty years he taught them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

And what did he teach? Take your gospels, and pick out of them all the words of Jesus, and you shall know some part of what Jesus' greatest predecessor, the Buddha, taught his disciples; that we are all members one of another; that we are Gods, and must make ourselves perfect; that the sorrow of the world comes from human ignorance and selfishness; that selfishness is the great illusion; that we must eradicate that sense of separate selfhood and live for humanity, so becoming perfect and living in the God-part of our nature, instead of the little selfish part. For fifty years he poured out his sublime compassion, his sublime wisdom, on the world and if you were to read the gospels that tell his story and recount his teachings, you would rejoice and marvel, saying, This is the Christ again; this proves that men can become Christs; that Jesus was not talking nonsense when he bade us become perfect, when he said that in our real inner nature we were gods; because just as Jesus, the Christ, showed us the way to become perfect, so also did Prince Gautama, the Buddha; who also had found his inner self and become the god that Jesus said we all were.

So there were those two, both testifying that there is a hidden wisdom that men may attain to, and that the way to attain it was to do the will of the Father, as Jesus puts it: in other words, to kill out the selfish instinct.

Aye, but that isn't all. While the Buddha was living and teaching in India, and founding his great religion of Buddhism, there were two men living in China of whom I would like to tell you. You must remember China is not a single country like Wales or England, but a continent

like Europe, composed of many countries; and in those days it was not united in a single empire, but the different countries or states had different governments and were often at war with each other like Europeans. In one of those states, called Lu, a young man rose to be what we should call Home Secretary; and he had ideas of his own, which he carried out in such a way that shortly all Lu became quite free from crime. He stamped out crime; and you may think he did it by severity of punishment. But no; he did not believe in punishment at all; he held other views; you shall find them in the first question and answer of the catechism that all children in his religion learn in school: *What is the nature of man?* — *Man is by nature essentially good;* — that is again, he is a god, and must become, must make himself, perfect. So he brought the Kingdom of Lu up to a high state of crimelessness and prosperity; until the ruler turned against him; and he left Lu to wander the world, teaching his disciples. And I love him for the grandeur and simplicity of his teaching, and for the centuries of success it had in the world. For he told men that they must find the god in themselves and be good. He said no word at all about punishment for being wicked; he taught no hell after death; he simply said by finding the god in you, you can influence mankind towards good. For fifty years he wandered through China, teaching his disciples; trying to find a ruler who would listen to him and let him put his teachings into practice in the government of the kingdom; but he was despised and rejected by men, and died broken-hearted, having given to China the same message that the Buddha had given to India, that the Christ was to give to Jerusalem and the West. The centuries went on, and presently China was united under one government; and they sought for a Constitution for the new empire; and where should they find it? Where but in the wisdom of the great Confucius, who taught that love and not force should be the bond that united the empire; and the consequence was that while in the western world empires rose and fell, one kingdom after another battled its way to the top and decayed: China went on down through the centuries.

Now then, just at that time when the Buddha and Confucius were teaching the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, there was another man in India also teaching the same doctrine; the religion that he founded is called Jainism; and there was another man in China teaching it: Lao-Tse: the religion he founded is called Taoism, from the Chinese word Tao, meaning the Path, the Way; as Jesus said, I am the Way, the truth

and the life. And there was a great Teacher in Persia, Zoroaster; and one in Greece, Pythagoras; and far away in the New World there was one, Quetzalcoatl, Emperor of Mexico; and while each and all of them appealed to his own countrymen, differed in his methods according to their peculiar needs; yet all of them taught the same essential truths: that man was by nature essentially divine; that by killing out the selfish instinct, living as members one of another, one might find the God in oneself and become perfect, and come to know the doctrine, the mysteries of the kingdom: that knowledge of the Laws of life, of the truth about the universe and man, which has been called the Secret Doctrine of the Ages. And by being themselves perfect: perfect in their wisdom, strength of character, nobility of life and above all their love and compassion for their fellow-men, they proved to their followers that man can become perfect.

Now isn't it a strange thing that at the same time there should be in the world seven great Teachers all teaching the same great Truths; only two of whom — Confucius and Lao-Tse, who had an historical meeting on one occasion — could ever in the ordinary way of things have heard of any of the others? Doesn't it look like what we in America call a 'put up job'? As if somehow or other there was a Body of Custodians of the Secret Wisdom, who saw then, at that time, a great need for preaching it all over the world; and so sent all those Teachers into the world?

And if it was needed then, how much more is it not needed now? Just knowledge of the laws of life: knowledge that you cannot run a civilization, or a nation, or a family, or a town, or your own life, successfully on the basis of selfishness; knowledge that in spite of appearances, we men and women are gods in our essential nature, and can and must work towards becoming manifestly gods here in this life? Is it not obvious that when there is so much power in the world, so much wealth, so much power to destroy life and make misery for man, there is a tremendous need, greater than ever, for the preaching and teaching of these truths of the Secret Doctrine? To make people understand that there is knowledge attainable, and the way to attain it?

This, then, is what Theosophy is; and this is what the Theosophical Society exists for. Because the Buddha and the other Great Teachers — and there have been many in history besides those I have named — were not strange and isolated phenomena, miraculous births into the world; they were men who had become gods so to say; and such men

exist. Yes, even now. Whatever type of humanity you can find in history, be sure some of that type are still living in the world today. They are the Custodians of the Secret Doctrine; and they are the Guardians and Elder Brothers of mankind. It was they who, in 1875, sent Madame H. P. Blavatsky to found the Theosophical Society in New York; in order that through the teachings of the Theosophical Society the world might be brought to a knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

Now we know that there is that which we cannot see; something beyond what is visible; a life greater than the life of man. Some people say 'God'; and think that by enunciating that one word they have explained everything. But don't you see that when you take a word like that and are satisfied with it, all you have done is to excuse yourself the trouble of looking at things as they are, and thinking. A word, a name, a label, is a very poor substitute for thought; and we cannot afford to be so lazy as to excuse ourselves the trouble of examining things and thinking them out. Do we like to see the world going to rack and ruin? Our husbands, sons, and brothers killed or broken in war; our children underfed, the victims of vice or disease; the lives of our women wasted? Then we must examine life, examine the universe, take thought, search out the truth that shall make us free. We cannot afford to go on just contented with repeating this that or the other word or phrase, and thinking that everything is explained thereby.

Now think: this universe we live in is infinite. Consider the Sun; it is some ninety million miles away from us; its light travels to us in some eight or nine minutes. Light takes that amount of time to travel: I don't attempt to give it to you accurately; it will be sufficient to say it travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second. Now look up, next time you are out under the stars; and think that some of those twinkling points of light that you see are so far away from us that their light, traveling towards us at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, takes hundreds of years to reach us. Supposing some of them went out, died several hundred years ago: we should still be seeing them; we should go on seeing them shining for so many hundred years after they had ceased to shine; because their light takes all that time to reach us. But travel out in thought with me to one of those far stars, and stand with me in thought on one of their planets; and look up with me into the skies from that planet, away from the direction of the Sun, in the opposite direc-

tion to that where rolls this Earth of ours. Some of those stars we see from this remote planet of this remote star are so far away from us, where we are now, that their light has taken thousands of years to reach us. And you might travel out to them in thought, and look still farther; and you would never, never, never come to the end of it; because the universe is infinite; there is no top nor bottom to it, no limits nor boundaries anywhere.

What is going on in this infinite universe of ours? What do we know is going on in it? Well, there is one thing we know, because we are it. Just because each one of us is a living, conscious being, the child and product of the universe: we know that the universe produces, bears fruit of, conscious beings. We know like produces like. If you sow wheat, it is wheat that comes up; as Jesus said, Ye cannot pluck grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. No; the grape-vine, and that only, produces grapes; the fig-tree, and that only, produces figs; only from the thistle can you gather thistle-bloom and thistle-down. So we can say positively that this universe, which bears fruit in conscious beings — and we know that we are conscious beings,— must also be conscious. All this vastness, from here to the farthest stars we see, and from them on for ever and for ever, must be composed of consciousness, of conscious beings. And it is infinite; you could never come to the end of it.

Now what are these conscious beings doing in the universe? What are we doing? Well; if we take thought about it, we know. We are gaining experience. Live and learn, they say; that is, to live means to learn. However slowly we learn, however headstrong and stupid we may be, still we cannot live without learning; and learning means growing. So we may positively say that everywhere throughout the vast universe conscious beings are learning by experience, are growing to something greater than they were before.

That is what is meant by the term Evolution. It does not mean that the great-great-great-great- grandchildren of monkeys ever come to be born men; but it does mean that every conscious being grows, learning by experience, in the course of ages into a greater kind of consciousness than it was before. Apply that to ourselves, and we see that it means whereas now we are but ordinary human beings, we shall in the course of ages grow into something much greater and more beautiful and wise than we are now; all depending on what effort we make to grow.

Now as we know from daily life: some of us make great effort; we cultivate the highest in us and subdue the lower part of ourselves: where-

as some just wallow in the lowest part of their natures. We know which of those two classes will grow the quickest. And since this is so, and has been so presumably ever since man has been man, we can see why humanity is so very unequal as it is: why some men are unselfish and compassionate and wise, and some are brutal and cruel and ignorant. The one class has taken pains to grow; they have believed that it is possible to grow and become perfect (as Jesus said it was); while the other class have taken no trouble at all to grow; they have believed that man is naturally a worm, a miserable sinner; and they have acted as such.

For you see, it is not a matter of living one life and having done with it. If we think things out in this way we must realize that our lives, from our birth to our death, are each only a single day in our existence. We must come back to the old Welsh belief of our forefathers, that we are born again and again on earth, learning a little in each life, growing a little in each life; starting out anew each time with the added wisdom we have gained last time; sometimes rising and sometimes sinking, as in each lifetime we follow mainly our higher or our lower nature; but in the long run rising and rising, growing and growing — conscious beings, the fruit and inhabitants of a conscious universe. It is consciousness that is indestructible; so you see if we take thought, and reason out from what we do know — which is the fact that we exist and are conscious and are growing and learning by experience — we must see that death is nothing to be feared; that it does not put an end to us; that we shall take up the business of life again where we dropped it, and go on making a better and better business of it. Why, our ancestors knew this so well — the ancient Welsh knew it so well — that it was possible to borrow money to be paid back in a future life!

That phrase, “to be paid back in a future life,” suggests another. What is it that causes us to grow, to learn, eventually, even though we are slow and stupid at it? Well, one thing we can say for certain is that the universe is law-governed; that running all through it, through every phase of it, from the life of a solar system to that of an atom, from the life of a star to that of a man, we might come to perceive the operation of a single law. Otherwise it could not hold together: because you can take it as axiomatic that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

The chemist may discover in his laboratory that certain results always happen when two chemical elements are combined in certain proportions; and say that it is a ‘law of Nature.’ And you will correctly

answer him; Yes, I see that it is a law of Nature that a certain effect should always follow certain causes; that is the principle which you have established; whether your particular experiment is to be dignified by the term 'law of Nature' remains to be seen. Then comes the astronomer and tells you that he has discovered a law of Nature: that planets always move round their suns after a certain fashion. You reply to him: Yes, the law that you have established again is that certain causes will always have their appropriate effects. Whether you know all about what causes move the planets to roll around their suns remains to be seen. Then comes another type of scientist, and says, My science shows that action and reaction are always equal and opposite. You answer him, if you are wise: Yes; and now you have enunciated what is really a law of Nature; you have given out a principle which we see at work also in the chemist's experiments and in the astronomer's; when you have said 'action and reaction,' you have said in other words 'cause and effect': the action is the cause; the reaction its equal and opposite effect, part of the same thing. That is not so much a law of Nature, as THE law of Nature, the very basis of all Law.

Now then, if a principle can be established as a law of Nature, whose operation is absolute through the material world and worlds, it must rule also in the spiritual world. The spiritual is as much a part of the universe as the material; and note well that the leading scientific minds of today have abandoned the wretched materialism of last century as an outworn superstition; they now say that the stuff of which the universe is made is thought-stuff, consciousness; which we have seen to be naturally the case. Naturally and obviously; since the one kind of thing we can really know, ourselves, is not matter but consciousness.

Well then, where are the scientists of the spiritual world — the Masters of Spiritual Science? History gives us their names: we referred to them earlier this evening. What had the Nazarene Master of Wisdom to say on this Law of Cause and Effect, of Action and Reaction, which are equal and opposite?

Quite a few things. Judge ye not, for example: and there he has named the cause, the action: that ye be not judged; and there he has named the effect, the reaction. He has told us that we cannot sit in judgment on anyone, to criticize him harshly and adversely, without bringing on ourselves the same, equal and similar harsh condemnation. Blessed are the merciful, he says, naming again the cause or the action;

for they shall obtain mercy — naming the effect, the reaction which is part of the same thing, inevitable in the action. For with whatsoever measure a man shall mete, it shall be meted unto him again; — or in other words action and reaction in the moral or spiritual world are equal and opposite, just as in the physical world; and whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap; or in other words the causes we set in motion by our thoughts and actions, will inevitably, ineluctably, be followed by their exact effects of happiness or of suffering for us.

You see how he insisted on Law, the inescapable action of Law. Each one of us absolutely responsible for all his thoughts and feelings and actions, the consequences of which there is no possible dodging. No imaginable dodging those consequences. Each one the master of his own fate absolutely; not suffering anything but from causes we have ourselves set in motion; never to suffer anything but the exact effects of reactions of causes we have ourselves set in motion.

Now you see, if he was a clear and logical thinker — and until you have studied Theosophy it is impossible for you to know how tremendously clear and logical a thinker he was, how utterly wise — we must see that this old Welsh belief in Reincarnation is implied in his teachings again. None makes our fate but ourselves. But our fate begins to meet us when we are born. Very well then; we made it before we were born; we have lived before. Suffering the results of evil-doing and thinking will at least teach us not to think or do evil. Life is the great School of Experience, in which there are an infinite number of classes; the Law of Cause and Effect, Action and Reaction, is, as Paul neatly put it, the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Or in other words, to that God at the center or root of our being which Jesus referred to when he said, *Ye are Gods*; that God with which he was at one: as he said, *I and my Father are one*.

All the other Great Teachers insisted on the same grand truths. They, too, in varying degree, had united themselves with that inner God-self; and so become perfect. They lived to save mankind, their perfection manifested in the fact that they so loved mankind that they must raise it up, they must spend themselves utterly in the effort to teach mankind divine wisdom, and how to live divinely wisely. And does it not make it certain that such men live now, and have always lived: Masters of Wisdom and Compassion and Peace — the Custodians of the Doctrine, of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, of the Secret Wisdom?

They do exist: there is a body of such men alive in the world today. Although our western civilization has lost sight of them and forgotten them, their existence has never been forgotten in the East, where they are spoken of as Mahâtmans, a word that means simply 'Great Souls.' They are always at work in secret trying to benefit mankind; trying to guard it from falling into evil; periodically they send their messengers to preach the Secret Wisdom among men, to remind men of the great hidden truths of life.

They would have us know that we are not mere bodies with minds in them, but spiritual beings having our roots, so to say, in the very heart of the Universe; or if you like to put it so, in God. You will note that that is a word that I use carefully and seldom, because it has been so much, so long, a mere excuse for not taking the trouble to think; and if the condition of mankind is to be bettered; if our civilization is not to go irretrievably to ruin and decay, we must think, we must find out the truth about our life, and why we are here in this world, and what we ourselves are. Surely you can see what a mess the old methods of thought and belief have landed the world in, and that we need a new inspiration.

Theosophy means Divine Wisdom, the truth about life and the universe; and as the universe is infinite, so must knowledge of it be infinite; and therefore so must Theosophy be infinite. But this I can say: if you study Theosophy, you find in it marvelous new light on all your problems; you find it illuminate every single aspect of life. I have raised but one little corner of the veil, to indicate to you that there are infinite treasures behind, awaiting you if you will bodily raise it for yourselves.

SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

New Discoveries and Theories

C. J. RYAN, M. A.

A STRIKING commentary on the new developments of modern science is found in Dr. Bernhard Bavink's *Anatomy of Modern Science*, just appearing in English after passing through four editions in Germany, where it has made a great hit. Dr. Basink takes a position which we can heartily sympathize with, and some of his points are worth our attention.

For instance, he insists upon the uncertainty of science in regard to

every fundamental principle of Nature. What, he asks, does it really *know* about the relation of mind or soul and body? No theory is conclusive. And why has science persistently closed its eyes to the evidence for the unseen world? Why have not 'spiritual' (presumably 'psychic') phenomena as much right as any other realities to be regarded as a part of legitimate scientific research? To study mere externals is simply to block the road to knowledge. He declares that it is doubtful, even from well-known biological data, that the spiritual is always attached to a brain or nervous system; scientists can give no valid reason why it should be so attached.

Dr. Bavink accentuates the fact that the new conceptions of atomic chemistry and physics, which prove that substance or 'solid matter' in the old sense has no basic reality, have destroyed the logical ground for materialism. The essential character of the new world of modern science is psychical or mental, and the idea that all Nature is the expression of a Universal Mind is becoming more and more probable. Perhaps the poets were intuitively right after all! In this he is getting very near to the Theosophical point of view so constantly reiterated by Dr. de Purucker, that the universe is constituted entirely of *consciousnesses* in various stages of evolution.

In regard to the evolution of Man, Dr. Bavink is certain that there must be some kind of *Descent*, but our knowledge of the origin of the human race is so limited and the causes which brought humanity into being so little known that we must wait for further light before we can make positive decisions. This is excellent, and far more 'scientific' than the strong statements about man's 'ape-ancestry' given by so many of our biologists.

Dr. Bavink shows how often fallacious conclusions have been made in astronomy, even when new facts were on the verge of discovery which entirely negated the so-called 'established order.' He says, correctly, that in spite of the most careful mathematical calculations, we have no real knowledge of the Sun's interior, or of the origin of the nebulae, star-clusters, etc., or even of the existence or *non-existence* of planets beyond our own solar system.

In place of cold, dead, rigid matter we have found a world of 'immaterial entities,' radiations, electrons, neutrons, a constant flux of intense energies, from the smallest particle to the vast aggregations of stars, the galaxies wheeling in ceaseless gyration in the ocean of space — intense

and tremendous activity everywhere. None of this looks like a universe of inert substance vitalized for a while by mechanical causes and running down to final extinction and cold death.

Dr. Bavink emphatically denounces dogmatism in science, especially the attempt to persuade the public that fundamental principles have been ascertained in any direction. How often has that warning been repeated in our Theosophical literature! William Quan Judge once wrote an admirable article showing that Theosophists have no reason to be afraid of the positive assertions of scientists upon subjects in which Theosophy takes a definitely opposite position, and the great discoveries of the last forty years have shown how foolish it would have been to abandon the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom in dread of what the scientific Mrs. Grundy was saying in the nineteenth century. The modern discoveries have moved the scientific center of gravity a long way from its former position and far nearer to that of Theosophy.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SOLAR ENERGIES

It is interesting that such a qualified critic as Dr. Bavink emphasizes the absence of actual knowledge of the sun's interior in contrast to the common belief that science has discovered its temperature and inner atomic processes. Dr. Henry Norris Russell, the distinguished Princeton astronomer, stated at the meeting of the American Association of Science in December that, in regard to the keeping up of the solar energies, opinion was still divided. On one side we have "the building up (creation) of other elements out of hydrogen, the other is mutual annihilation of electrons and protons (the annihilation of 'solid matter'). The second process would liberate more than a hundred times as much heat as the first." He said that some astronomers doubted that there was such heat in the sun or stars as would be produced by the second process, therefore they had to face the difficulties of the creation-theory, which, in spite of the evidence suggesting that a star is creating its own 'coal' as it 'burns,' are almost inexplicable. He thought the newly-discovered neutron might help to throw light on the problem. We have had only a brief report of Dr. Russell's remarks, but hope to quote them more fully when the report is published *verbatim*. It does not look, however, as if *he* thinks we know the real conditions of the sun yet.

In regard to the atmosphere and corona of the sun, Dr. Ross Gunn of the Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, has now published his

paper on the great possibilities of electro-magnetic conditions therein, to which we referred in *THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH*, October, 1932. His argument is highly technical and cannot be reproduced here, but his conclusion is significant:

Our studies of the relations of electricity and magnetism to the properties of the sun's atmosphere have demonstrated that electric and magnetic forces play, perhaps, a major rôle in determining the observed phenomena. While it cannot be said to be proved beyond doubt that electric fields exist in the sun's atmosphere, yet the internal evidence and the interpretation of much data makes the existence of such fields seem probable.

We know, from Dr. Hale's great discovery, that the sun itself is possessed of magnetic poles.

Dr. Gunn also discusses the note of Dr. Menzel (Lick Observatory) that the problems of the sun's atmosphere might be resolved if "we insert a value of 18,000 degrees for the solar temperature." (The present estimate of the solar surface temperature is about 5000 degrees, and to 'insert' 13,000 more does not look like 'real knowledge'!) Dr. Gunn, however, claims that his electro-magnetic theory will leave the sun's temperature at the ordinary estimate, saying:

Thus we are forced by observational data to believe that the mean temperature of the sun does not depart greatly from 5,000 degrees, yet that some auxiliary mechanism is operative in its atmosphere which produces excitation and ionization corresponding to far higher temperatures.

Note carefully, "some auxiliary mechanism," *i. e.*, electro-magnetic energies produce phenomena which would *otherwise look as if produced by enormously greater heat!* May not the greatest part of the excitation be produced by the same auxiliary, and 'intense heat' be not needed to explain the sun's activities, as the Teachers of Theosophy indicate?

While, of course, active processes of *some* kind are proceeding in the sun, until modern thinkers discover the greatest factor of all — that the sun is the seat of a high Intelligence, a *god* — they will wander in the byways of mechanical theories. This may seem to some a 'dangerous doctrine' to advance, and no doubt it should be 'discussed judiciously'; but it is the Theosophical teaching, and there is no getting out of it. Theosophy has still more revolutionary views than that, and some of them are already being more than suspected by scientists to be facts in Nature!

IS SCIENCE 'EXACT'?

IN regard to the so-called "*established* facts of science," and our claim that they are few and mostly incomplete, consider the following thoughtful declaration by one of the most eminent physicists of the day, Dr. William de Sitter, who recently announced, jointly with Professor Einstein, that he had abandoned the theory of the 'curvature of space.' It is quoted from the conclusion of his new book *Kosmos*:

Our conception of the structure of the universe bears all the marks of a transitory structure. It is not possible to predict how long our present views and interpretations will remain unaltered and how soon they will have to be replaced by perhaps very different ones, based on new observational data, and new critical insight in their connexion with other data. . . . By the use of mathematics, that most nearly perfect and most immaterial tool of the human mind, we try to transcend as much as possible the limitations imposed by our finiteness and materiality, and to penetrate ever nearer to the understanding of the mysterious unity of the Kosmos.

In the same work, Dr. de Sitter refers to the "great concern in modern astronomy" in the matter of the extraordinary size of our own galactic system in comparison with that of the others, and uses this as the basis for some warnings to theorizers. This superiority in size was one of the 'established facts' until the last few months, when Dr. Joel Stebbins upset it by his discovery at Mount Wilson Observatory that the size of our stellar universe has been greatly over-estimated, and that it is much nearer the size of its nearest neighbor, the great spiral nebula in Andromeda. Dr. Stebbins is the leading authority on the application of the photo-electric-cell method of measurement of distances, and his observations have been confirmed by independent ones made by Dr. Evan G. Williams of Cambridge University, England. Both astronomers have shown that the accepted estimates of the distance of our galaxy were exaggerated because of former ignorance of an interfering haze — probably a residuum of calcium gas — that is now known to lie between us and the stars in the Milky Way. It is now supposed that our galaxy is about 125,000 light-years in diameter, instead of 250,000 or more.

However, it would be absurd to imagine that the scientific method is a failure because, as de Sitter says, our present views may have to be replaced. It is the only practical safeguard against superstition today, and it is a creditable fact that most scientists, especially perhaps astronomers, are readier than ever to scrap cherished hypotheses when

new facts make them untenable. Our galaxy, though not so large as we supposed, *is* a real community of untold billions of stars, of such dimensions that we cannot picture it in our imagination, though we may compute it approximately in figures. And it is only one of the myriads scattered fairly regularly in the heavens.

In regard also to the general principle of Evolution, so frequently attacked by 'Fundamentalists' on account of the disagreement among biologists as to its exact basis and cause, it is a basic fact in Nature, even though the *mechanistic interpretation* is wrong.

MORE TROUBLE FOR DARWINISM

THE Darwinian interpretation is having a harder time than ever nowadays. Dr. H. Fairfield Osborn, the distinguished biologist and President of the American Museum of Natural History, has lately given it another severe blow by the publication of his researches into the development of the teeth of the Elephant family (Proboscidea). He writes:

Fatal as biomechanical evolution [the name he gives his principle] is to Lamarckism it is still more fatal to Darwin's working hypothesis of adaptations through survival of variations in any degree subject to chance. First, chance is absolutely eliminated, both theoretically and actually, by Proboscidean evolution. . . .

Students who wish to read the technical details of this new movement toward the Theosophical interpretation of evolution will find Dr. Osborn's article in *Science* for December 2, 1932. We can touch on only one specially interesting point. He claims that during the last sixty or more million years the changes in the teeth of the elephant family have arisen from 'the creative potency' of the original germ plasm, not from Darwinian 'accidental variations,' some of which happened to survive because of external conditions. The potentiality of the new characters in the teeth which appear during the ages *was present in the ancestral germ*. That is, these characters were not simply caused by the action of external conditions (the environment) and inherited in the Lamarckian way, but were *unfoldings from within*, and although they may have manifested outwardly in response to demands made on the feeding mechanism by changes in food, etc., they could not have arisen unless there had been the 'creative potency' latent in the 'ancestral germ.'

Dr. Osborn closes his article by warning his colleagues that Biology is at present a totally unco-ordinated science, still in its infancy; and when he speaks of "the orderly creation of something better or more

adaptive," and its "creative origin from the germ plasm" in which the potentiality of evolution lies, he might almost be quoting Dr. de Purucker's words, though he knows nothing of the Monadic entity back of the evolutionary changes. Dr. Osborn says: "the creation of something more adaptive [or 'aristogenesis'] is a totally unexplainable and mysterious process. . . ." While, of course, the actual process is difficult indeed to understand, its principle is not mysterious in the light of Theosophy.

The truth about Evolution as the Theosophist sees it, may be briefly expressed. As a process in Nature it means the urge or drive or impelling energy of multitudes of consciousnesses unfolding or unwrapping or bringing forth their native energies or powers, . . . into kinetic manifestation. . . . To the Theosophist everything that is, as already said, is a phase or an 'event' of an evolving inner entity. In view of the enormous advance along philosophical thinking that modern experimental science has already made in very recent years, to a realization of the fact that back of and behind and above all things, whether considered distributively or collectively, there is an ensouling power, it would seem to be but a matter of time before this conception, new to modern science but older than the enduring hills, shall have completely remodeled the foundations of thought on which scientific thinking of today reposes.— G. DE PURUCKER in 'H. P. Blavatsky: the Mystery,' chapter xiv, published in *THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH*, June, 1930

Dr. Osborn is getting very near the principle of unfoldment by a consciousness of some kind that can respond intelligently when the right time comes.

In a recent lecture before a large group of scientists at the University of California (Los Angeles) Professor J. B. S. Haldane criticized Darwinism in very plain language. He is, of course, an evolutionist, but he claims that 'natural selection' cannot account for man's emergence; and that the accumulation of slow, accidental variations — the gradual inheritance process of Darwin — cannot account for the origin of distinct species. His theory is that evolution proceeds by "jumps," and that each jump is caused by changes in the germ-cells. He believes that at rare intervals "*something interferes*" with the normal action of the chromosomes in the eggs and a new arrangement of the chromosomes brings into action genes which were hitherto quiescent. The minute genes in the chromosomes are thought to be the ultimate 'molecular' particles which carry every quality that appears in the complete plant or animal. For instance, one gene might control the color of the eyes, another the shape of a tooth, etc. The great problem is, What is it that "interferes" with the normal action of the chromosomes and produces

the variations when needed? The finest microscope cannot show that mysterious power. Of course it would never do to suggest 'an ensoul-ing power,' for Biology forbids speculation on such an unorthodox line, but some biologists are getting perilously near the necessity of breaking their own materialistic rules!

One more blow at the anthropoid ancestry of man theory has just been delivered. Gerrit S. Miller, curator of mammals at the Smithsonian Institution, in criticizing the eminent Professor G. Elliot Smith for tracing the descent of man from the great Tertiary apes, claims that large or gigantic races of animals do not evolve a new line of development of equal size. All analogies show the descent of larger animals from smaller ones, and the overgrown kinds do not last for very long periods. Man, therefore, cannot have come from anthropoid apes. Of course, Dr. Miller, as a 'regular' evolutionist believes in the animal-ancestry of man, so he seeks it among the lower, smaller simians. It will be quite a task to find the needed 'missing links' between early man and the small monkeys, if all large anthropoids are ruled out.

The constant criticisms of Darwinism arising in the scientific camp are as interesting to the Theosophical student as the new theories themselves which are invented to meet the new discoveries. When the elder Huxley became satisfied with Darwin's evidence for natural selection his agnostic attitude toward pre-Darwinian theories of evolution changed to belief. It was the specifically Darwinian theory of natural selection from accidental variations as the most plausible explanation of human and other evolution that also convinced the scientific world, but today the *how* of evolution is again an uncertainty. In his opening address to the International Congress of Zoology in 1930, the scientist, Caullery, said, "modern genetical research has so complicated the situation that we need to be far more cautious than ever. A generation ago the problem of evolution seemed much nearer solution than it does now."

The key to the mystery of Evolution is the Involution of Spirit 'downwards' through planes of ever-increasing density, and until modern thought realizes this it will wander through nothing but byways of unsatisfactory speculation. But that means the acceptance of Theosophy!

THE HEATED 'CONTINENT' HIGH ABOVE OUR HEADS

HERE is another surprising advance toward one of the 'unspeakably unscientific' teachings of the Theosophical Masters, yet it is advanced

today without any apology by an eminent and responsible scientist.

When *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* was published a few years ago, one of the most unexpected revelations of adept-knowledge given was that high above the earth there exists a great ceiling or roof of some mysterious substance of a 'magnetic' or 'meteoric' nature from which the earth derives an immense quantity of heat — far more than it gets directly from the sun. It has been known for some time that balloons, after rising to very great heights through an intensely cold region showed a slight *increase* in temperature as they approached the limit to which they could go. Dr. Beno Gutenberg of the California Institute of Technology, mentioned to the American Association of Science in 1931 that he believed the temperature at still greater heights rose to a very high degree. In January of this year he gave a report of his researches on the structure of the stratosphere to the distinguished Astronomy and Physics Club at Pasadena, and made some statements that fully support the astonishing teaching of the Mahâtman K. H. about the upper heated region, a claim that seemed incredible in view of the supposed decrease of temperature in the air as the distance from the earth increases. Dr. Gutenberg, who is a geophysicist and seismologist of international reputation, told the scientists that the earth has a "real warm blanket" of ozone about 40 or 50 miles above the surface, heavier at the poles in winter and lighter in summer; that the temperature of this heavy blanket was about 200 degrees Fahrenheit; and that still higher up the temperature reached 1000 degrees!

In addition to this, he made the extraordinary statement that the hot ozone-blanket seems to ward off or protect us from *meteorites*, for the greater part of them bounce away or *disappear* at the height of about 40 miles, including those dashing toward the earth at 125 miles a second! This is one of the strangest assertions ever made by a serious scientist, and is not easily fitted in with 'established' views of meteorites. Perhaps this is another case when 'established' views are not final, after all!

Let us, however, connect up with the Master's statements about the "magnetic and *meteoric* continent" above our heads, and we may recognise that another rent has been made in the veil that hides deeper mysteries in Nature than we have dreamed. Those Theosophists who, as Mr. Judge said forty years ago, were mortally afraid to offend orthodox science with the dreadfully unorthodox teachings of occult science, would feel rather small today if they could survey the new approaches of mod-

ern thought toward the Ancient Wisdom. For the benefit of readers who have not access to *The Mahatma Letters* we quote a few remarks of the Master about the upper atmosphere:

I wonder how Science has not hitherto understood that every atmospheric change and disturbance was due to the combined magnetism of the two great masses between which our atmosphere is compressed! I call this meteoric dust a 'mass' for it is really one. High above our earth's surface the air is impregnated and space *filled* with magnetic, or meteoric dust, which does not even belong to our solar system. . . . Millions of such meteors and even of the finest particles reach us yearly and daily, and all our temple knives are made of this 'heavenly' iron, which reaches us without any change. . . . Gaseous matter is continually added to our atmosphere from the never ceasing fall of meteoric strongly magnetic matter . . . the ether between the Sun and the meteoric *continent* above our heads. . . .

I was under the impression that science was aware that the glacial periods as well as those periods when temperature is "like that of the carboniferous age"—are due to the decrease and increase or rather to the expansion of our atmosphere, which expansion is itself due to the same meteoric presence? At any rate, we *all know*, that the heat that the earth receives by radiation from the sun is at the utmost *one third* if not less of the amount received by her directly from the meteors,— pp. 161-7

It should not be overlooked that although the sun sends a *radiation* which appears to us as heat, the Master plainly says that the sun that we see (and still less the invisible Sun) contains nothing "like 'gases,' mineral matter, or *fire*, though even we, when treating it in your civilized tongue are compelled to use such expressions as 'vapour' and 'magnetic matter.' " Also, "The Sun is neither a *solid* nor a *liquid* nor yet a gaseous glow; but a gigantic ball of electro-magnetic Forces. . . ." (p. 165)

Before leaving the subject of the hot 'continent' above the earth, said by Dr. Gutenberg to consist largely of ozone, it should be mentioned that Professor Vassily G. Fessenkoff, chief of the Russian Institute of Astro-physics, about five years ago reported that spectroscopic observations of the atmosphere under varying conditions of illumination had shown him that a warm blanket at a temperature of about 85 degrees Fahrenheit envelops our globe 34 miles above its surface. His observations indicated that the temperature falls to about 110 degrees below zero about seven miles up and then slowly rises to the heat mentioned. This would be in harmony with Dr. Gutenberg's discovery.

If it were objected that the intensely cold zone between us and the hot blanket would prevent its radiations reaching us and heating the earth we may point to the probability that the 'ether' or 'space' between

us and the sun is supposed to be intensely cold, and yet the solar radiations which warm the earth's surface pass through it without losing their power.

THE MAGNETIC POLES OF THE EARTH

PROFESSOR T. J. J. SEE of the Naval Observatory, Mare Island, has just announced his claim to have proved that the north magnetic pole travels in a great elliptical path round the North Pole of rotation. This suggestion has been made before by others, but has not been generally approved. Dr. Harlan W. Fisk, of the Carnegie Intitution said in a recent report that "it is altogether probable that the magnetic poles do move," though science has "no satisfactory answer to the question, Why is the earth magnetic, and why does its magnetic field continually change in both direction and intensity?" Professor See calculates that the path traversed by the north magnetic pole is 1700 miles across, the opposite points being in Siberia and north-east America. He also says that the south magnetic pole travels a similar path, though in the opposite direction, and he believes this theory explains many difficulties.

As his statement disagrees with other recent findings in regard to the cause of changes in the magnetic field of the earth, it has been received with considerable opposition. Professor See is well known as a scientist of strongly original views. He gives 540 years as the time taken for one complete round of the magnetic poles.

Let us turn again to *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* and see what is written by the Master K. H. on page 168:

. . . your men of Science . . . are determined to ignore and thus reject the theory suggested to them by Jenkins of the R. A. S. of the existence of strong magnetic poles *above* the surface of the earth. But the theory is the correct one nevertheless, and one of these poles revolves round the north pole in a periodical cycle of several hundred years. . . .

Dr. Harlan Fisk, mentioned above, says that if the magnetic poles were on the surface of the earth we should expect iron to be more strongly attracted as we got nearer the pole, but nothing of the kind happens though an ordinary magnet pulls harder the nearer you approach it. Therefore, he suggests that the magnetic poles "must be very close together and *very near the center of the earth.*" This seems as curious an explanation as the Jenkins theory mentioned approvingly by the Master, and is full of difficulties. If the magnetic poles are so close to the center of the earth, why does not the needle point downwards at the

equatorial regions, attracted by that north or south magnetic pole which happens to be nearest to the needle? There is indeed a tremendous mystery in magnetism, and a careful reading of the Masters' letters proves that magnetism is the key to nearly all physical phenomena on the surface of the earth as well as in the sun. They call magnetism and electricity "the universal Proteus," and make it plain that they have a complete mastery of the subject.

THE 'EXPANDING UNIVERSE'!

PROBABLY the most extraordinary speculation of modern times in science has been the theory of the 'expanding universe,' the evidence for which is so strong that it has compelled Dr. Einstein to abandon his 'curvature of space' except in the neighborhood of immense gravitating bodies, and practically to readmit the old theory that light travels in straight lines. The expanding universe, according to the eminent mathematician, Lemaitre, started from an *infinitesimal point* which contained all the potentialities of the whole! May we not say that science has completely surrendered its former 'common-sense' and 'practical' view of Nature for as *metaphysical* a one as was ever offered by the spiritual philosophies of the Orient? And, although Lemaitre's extreme view may not be fully accepted, the expanding universe principle seems to have come to stay. Dr. H. N. Russell, in *Science*, for January 20, 1933, approves of the idea that a hundred billion years ago (not long in astronomical speculations) "the universe was probably just beginning to expand perceptibly after a *previous eternity of sluggishness*, . . ." and that "if such an epoch of intense cosmic activity occurred in the relatively near past, the stars may be indeed all of the same actual age, and may, with few exceptions, still be almost fresh from the mint — 'in their first innings' as Eddington puts it." He ventures to suggest that some stars — the extremely heavy 'white dwarfs' which weigh tons to the cubic inch — may be survivors of an earlier epoch, "which have come unscathed through the cataclysm"!

Consider this amazing development of modern thought in connexion with the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom, Theosophy, in regard to the greater and lesser manvantaras and pralayas, or periods of manifestation and repose which are fundamental teachings in its magnificent philosophy! Connect the expanding (*and contracting*) universe of modern astronomy with H. P. Blavatsky's Second Fundamental Principle:

The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically “the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing,” called “the manifesting stars,” and the “sparks of Eternity.” . . . “The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.”

— *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 16-17

Would it be too daring to imagine that some of our greatest scientists have ventured to look into the pages of Theosophical books? Or have they been inspired *without consciously knowing it* by the magnificent concepts of the Ancient Wisdom that have been broadcast into the world’s thought-atmosphere by the efforts of the devoted workers in the Theosophical Movement, and above all by those Great Masters of Wisdom who originally started the new era of thought through H. P. Blavatsky, at the critical period in the nineteenth century when the old ideas were breaking up and the time was ripe for a new and higher impulse?

* * * * *

As we go to press a piece of news of such great importance to students of Theosophy has come from England that we feel compelled to place it before our readers without waiting for our next issue. We refer to the definite confirmation of the astonishing discoveries in East Africa of fossils of the *modern type of man*, dating back hundreds of thousands of years before such a possibility has been admitted by science!

EARLY MAN IN AFRICA — A REVOLUTIONARY DISCOVERY

IN THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH for October, 1932 (p. 261), mention was made of the great controversy in scientific circles about a human skeleton of alleged enormous antiquity but of apparently quite modern type, which was discovered by Professor Hans Reck of Berlin in Tanganyika, East Africa. Owing to the difficulty of admitting the possibility, according to the Darwinian hypothesis, of the existence of mankind of a modern type at such a distant epoch — perhaps a million or more years ago — very little was said about it outside professional circles. Anthropologists were much disturbed by Dr. Reck’s claims, and Sir Arthur Keith remarked that:

Whereas the oldest fossil man found in other parts of the world is quite unlike any race now living, the Oldoway man is of modern type. I find it so hard to believe that modern man had come into existence so long ago that I await further evidence before coming to a conclusion.

Other discoveries have lately been made near Oldoway by Dr. L. S.

B. Leakey which have forced the subject to the front, and a great conference of eminent scientists has just been held to settle the disputed points. It was convened by the Royal Anthropological Institute and met on March 18, 1933, at Cambridge, England, under the presidency of Sir A. S. Woodward, F. R. S. Its findings are indeed sensational. They afford most valuable support to the Theosophical teaching of the immense antiquity of intelligent man of similar type to inhabitants of the world today.

It has been generally supposed that the oldest man of modern type, *homo sapiens*, was the 'Grimaldi Man' discovered in the South of France in 1901, a connexion of the Cro-Magnon race. These people did not live very long ago, perhaps 30,000 years or so — not long before the Neolithic or New Stone Age. But ages before the modern-looking Grimaldi or Cro-Magnons, other races existed, such as the Piltdown, the Neanderthal, etc., with skulls "which in a sense may be called human" as Mr. Hopwood of the British Natural History Museum says. Some of these imperfect types go back to the earlier division of the Pleistocene age, which may be a million or more years removed from the present time. But not one of the really ancient fossils, *which have been officially admitted* as genuine, is modern in type, and therefore Darwinians declare that the Piltdown and similar races represent intermediate forms of evolution between the hypothetical ape-ancestor and our noble selves. A few relics of quite modern type are known which have been claimed to be as ancient as the brutal ones, but the scientific world as a whole has repudiated their authenticity and has tried to explain them away by various ingenious methods. These relics include the Calaveras skulls and artifacts in California, the Castenedolo skeletons in Italy, and the *boleadoras* in Argentina. As such things, *in the Darwinian picture of man's evolution*, are "entirely out of place" in such immensely ancient deposits as the Early or Lower Pleistocene or the still earlier Pliocene (to which they have been attributed), anthropologists have regarded them with suspicion and repudiate the strong evidence in their favor.

But now comes the new evidence from East Africa, and no longer can this position be maintained. Dr. Leakey has brought perfectly authentic fossil human skulls from Kanjera, near Oldoway, that carry modern man back to the Middle Pleistocene, and, still more important, a human bone from Kanam which cannot be more recent than the Lower or *oldest* Pleistocene period. And all these are not ape-like at all! How

many hundreds of thousands of years — or millions perhaps — the oldest may be cannot easily be decided, but it is definitely established that they are enormously older than anything hitherto accepted as modern in type. The oldest specimen, the Kanam jaw, was found in association with the teeth of a *Deinotherium*, an extinct animal of the elephant family with great tusks projecting downward from the lower jaw. This beast is usually found in the *Miocene*, two geological periods earlier than the Pleistocene or Ice Age, but the scientists suggest that it may have lingered on to the later date. It would never do to allow modern man in the Miocene!

The Kanam jawbone, though a little thicker than the normal of today, has a characteristically *human* chin, and although the rest of the head-bones have not been found the mandible is of great consequence because it is one of the most important features in the body for the purpose of determining the so-called 'modern type.' The canine teeth are not bestial at all but perfectly normal in size; there is no hint of gorilla tusks such as imaginative artists draw in their pictures of the 'Cave-Man'!

The Kanjera skulls, the only ones found, are very large, being between 200 and 209 millimeters long. According to Dr. Keith, the modern English average length is 190 mm. Stone tools of 'Chellean' type were found with many of the bones. The suggestion that the bones had been introduced in modern times, by burial or otherwise, into the very ancient deposits in which they were found, was proved to be groundless. The Anatomical Committee of the conference was able to report in regard to all the specimens that no important characters incompatible with their inclusion in the type of *homo sapiens* — modern man — were found.

The Conference accepted the reports of its committees and congratulated Dr. Leakey on the exceptional nature of his discoveries, expressing the hope that in view of the importance of the case, he would soon undertake further researches.

These great discoveries of an undeniably modern race in the early Pleistocene will bring up the other neglected or repudiated cases of modern types in equally ancient, or even far older, deposits. No longer can they be regarded as 'impossible,' in spite of the Darwinian objections. It is no wonder that H. P. Blavatsky said that the twentieth century would not be very old before striking discoveries would be made in support of her teachings about man's antiquity!

What was 'modern man' doing all these hundreds of thousands of years unless using his excellent brain in somewhat the same way as a good many of us are doing today? The evidence for lost civilizations such as those of Atlantis and Lemuria is constantly increasing, and Dr. Leakey's discoveries will add greatly to its strength.

KARMAN—RELENTLESS EXECUTIONER OR BENEFICENT FRIEND?

GRACE KNOCHE, M. A.

IF we take up the subject of Karman, and think it out in that spirit of self-forgetfulness and meditation that is the door to real knowledge of whatever kind, we soon perceive that while Karman, strictly speaking, is not a 'law,' it is nevertheless a great repository of law; that it has its maxims and its aphorisms, and that around these cluster vast numbers of human decisions upon experiences and events. Indeed, we might properly call these 'cases' for they all crystallize finally into 'What I decide.' It is these decisions, wrung like blood at times out of crushing heart-experiences, that construe its meaning to us, and illumine it, and make it live and speak in the glory of an innate power. For it is sovereign, is Karman. It is the great unsullied advocate and defender, also, of the sovereignty of the soul. Why should we not examine it in this spirit? The burden of proof is really — we say it in all kindliness — upon the one who demurs.

Perhaps on no single tenet of Theosophy has more been said in Theosophical writings, taken as a whole, than on that of KARMAN. It rises solitary, majestic, regal, in the background of all that the Leaders of the Theosophical Society ever taught, or enjoined, or did. Their writings are not understandable, nor are their lives, if we leave Karman out. But their writings, their teachings, have not been studied as they should be or we should not hear still the puzzled query: Is Karman a relentless executioner, or a beneficent friend?

To answer this question we must first define the term. What is Karman? The word is becoming increasingly familiar. We meet it in novels, in plays, in newspapers, and in magazines. It besprinkles the writings of certain would-be 'philosophers,' of whom the present age has an appalling number, who flourish Theosophical terms regardless of

whether understood or not. Shallow thinkers often define Karman as fatalism, 'kismet,' the doctrine of life as a predestined round; a treadmill with man chained helpless to a task all mapped in advance; a 'whirling wheel of destiny' whose turnings are all stipulated, with man irrevocably bound upon it, now to be lifted up high on it, now to be crushed beneath. The half-informed often take a mechanical view of this teaching, and see in the stock phrase, "Well, it can't be helped; it is my karman!" an excuse for almost any lapse in self-control.

To none of these does Karman appear in a beneficent light. It is the relentless executioner, the ruthless judge, whom they vainly seek to propitiate by tears. Omar's often quoted stanza is typical of this half-view:

The moving finger writes, and having writ
 Moves on, nor all your piety and wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Which is true as far as it goes, but it goes only half way, and the fact that half-views contain so much of truth gives them a certain power that is, unfortunately, destroying. In consequence, the average person, casually familiar with the term but without the light of positive study to guide him, has no clear idea of what Karman is, or what 'law,' if any, it refers to.

In our noblest popular exposition of this basic Theosophical teaching (*v. Book the Eighth in Sir Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia*), we read that

It maketh and unmaketh, mending all;
 What it hath wrought is better than had been;
 Slow grows the splendid pattern that it plans
 Its wistful hands between.

This is its work upon the things ye see:
 The unseen things are more; men's hearts and minds,
 The thoughts of peoples and their ways and wills,
 Those, too, the great Law binds. . . .

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

It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
 Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;

Times are as naught, tomorrow it will judge,
Or after many days. . . .

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

True and beautiful as are these lines, it is nevertheless, speaking strictly, incorrect to refer to Karman as a 'law,' and several passages in the writings of Dr. de Purucker make this clear. To quote from one in his *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*:

There is no 'law' of karman; we repeat, there is no 'law' of karman. . . . The word 'law,' however, is convenient enough *provided we understand what we mean by it*. Perhaps no better word, in our day, could be found for ordinary usage in writing popularly or in conversation. But do not let us make the mistake of taking abstractions for realities. In this study of the marvelous doctrines of our Occultism, we shall never move a step forward towards a proper understanding of Nature, if we do make this mistake. We must wash our minds clean of Occidental scientific and theological miseducation. The so-called 'laws of Nature' and the 'law of Karman' are simply the various workings of consciousnesses in Nature: truly and actually they are the *Habits, habits of beings*. We replace the abstractions of Occidental science and theology with the action and the ineluctable results thereof of consciousnesses and wills in the spheres of being of the Hierarchies of Life. . . . Do we realize that not one single great thinker of the ancients, until the Christian era, ever talked about the 'laws of Nature,' as if these 'laws' were living beings; as if these abstractions were actual entities which did things? Did the 'laws of navigation' ever navigate a ship? Does the 'law of gravity' pull the planets together? Does it unite or pull the atoms together? Nonsense. The word 'law' is simply an abstraction, an expression for the *action of entities in Nature*. (pp. 142-3)

The word *Karman* comes from the Sanskrit verb-root *krî* (more immediately from *kar*, a permutation) which verb-root means *to do*, or *to make*; hence, doing, making, *i. e.*, action. The word is ancient, but we have adopted it perforce, because English does not possess any word or brief term that can convey adequately the meaning necessary to be conveyed, *i. e.*, the intent, rationale, and procedure of that habit of Universal Nature which has so long been neatly pigeon-holed as a 'law.' Without this convenient word we should be driven to employ a sentence, at times a paragraph.

When H. P. Blavatsky began her public work in 1875 with the foundation of the Theosophical Society, the familiar definition of Paul the Apostle: "Whatsoever a man soweth, . . ." equally with the injunction

of his Master, "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, . . ." had lost their significance and their appeal. Modern thinkers had approached an outline-definition of the term in their 'law of ethical causation,' the while Nature in her cyclic march of seedtime and harvest, and the (to the Theosophist) only too conspicuous guideposts along the cyclic path of history were half read where not overlooked. There was nothing to do but throw into the then seething currents of awakening thought once more the old idea, but clothed in *the ancient interpretation*. Perhaps it was just as well that it had to take also the ancient name.

Our understanding of Karman is wonderfully cleared when we study it from the vantage of the Theosophical teaching that life is a 'school of experience.' H. P. Blavatsky refers more than once to the "stern school master, Karmic life," and this is a current figure in all Theosophical writings. But to do this fruitfully we must discard the lower viewpoint *in toto*. At the outset we must postulate Immortality, and Soul. That "the universe exists for the soul's experience and emancipation" is a Theosophical maxim with the weight of antiquity behind it, and part of the mission of Theosophy today is to revive this truth in a world that first killed, and then forgot it.

It is Karman which conditions, compels, and governs the vast progress of the soul through time: out of the 'Father's House,' down through the long pilgrimage in matter, with its obscurations and its pain; then upward and onward, laboriously, often fearfully and blindly, yet ever groping, striving, climbing, now in sorrow, now in joy, until it returns at last to the Mansion of Divinity whence it came — its 'Home.' For life is a journey in quest of knowledge, seeking which the soul is truly like a child at school. Body and brain have but small part in this quest; they are taken up only to be laid down again, endlessly dissolved and then renewed. It is the soul which is the point of departure, the 'pilgrim' and, mystically, the 'path' as well. "Thou art the way and the way-goer!"

When we reflect upon what life consists of, we define it necessarily as a 'school of experience,' a school in which there are many teachers, many classrooms, many degrees and grades; a school through which the candidate will pass just according to the effort he puts forth and the understanding he is willing to bring to bear. Some will not study in any school: they prefer to drowse or play. Naturally, unless they either

wake up and change their methods voluntarily, or are whipped and beaten into line, they never go forward a step. Others forge ahead, working, studying, and aspiring, never content to leave the lesson of the day or hour until they have mastered it. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel, they will not let the angel of duty go until it has left with them its blessing.

In life considered as a school we need no special explanation to perceive why one student passes joyfully and in strength from class to class up the ascending scale, and why another, preferring his ease to his honor, stays perennially in one spot, to reap his harvest of emptiness later in bewilderment, bitterness, and tears. To the latter Karman probably does resemble a relentless executioner. But looking deeper we can see that it is in reality the beneficent teacher and friend, for only under the pressure of its iron whip will the dullard in life's school ever be aroused and the neglected lessons made up. In short, Karman, in the words of some sacred writings far older than the Bible, is "an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly." So doing, it must be the wise and, if need be, the stern disciplinarian, for thus alone can the majority of us be brought to a realization of our lost opportunities and our mistakes, and of the divine power that is in us to choose the better way. Yet who can complain, knowing Karman to be but another word for the decisions of *our very self*? To quote Dr. de Purucker again:

Human karman is born within man himself. We are its creators and generators, and also do we suffer from it or are clarified through it, by our own previous actions. . . . We may say this much: that it is the *will of the spiritual beings who have preceded us in bygone kalpas or great manvantaras, and who now stand as Gods, and whose will and thought direct and protect the mechanism and the type and quality of the universe in which we live.* These great beings were once men in some former great manvantara. It is our destiny ultimately to become like unto them. . . .

Man, as our first great Teacher has set it forth, weaves around himself from birth to death a web of action and of thought — each one of them producing results, some immediately, some later.— *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, p. 130

This is epitomized by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* in a passage too long to quote in full, but a few sentences from it are needed here:

For the only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we, who reward or punish ourselves ac-

ording to whether we work with, through, and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that Harmony depends or — break them.

. . . We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making, and the riddles of life that *we will not* solve, and then accuse the great Sphinx of devouring us. . . .
— I, 143-4

It [Karma] exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is ETERNITY itself. . . . It is not the Wave which drowns a man, but the *personal* action of the wretch, who goes deliberately and places himself under the *impersonal* action of the laws that govern the Ocean's motion. Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects; which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigor. If it happen to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say that it is the bough which broke our arm, or that our own folly has brought us to grief? . . . It has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man; nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who unveils through study and meditation its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life, is working for the good of his fellow-men.— II, 305

Why then, so much mystery? We can understand the workings of Karman, to a degree at least, if we really want to understand. The teachings are understandable and are before us. And those who do study, and thus drag out some of its seeming secrets, are serving their human brothers in a faithful and wonderful way. But the knowledge of the workings of Karman is not to be won if the life goes on just as irresponsibly as ever — and the usual way is to live in much that fashion, sowing any seed that may come to hand, and sowing it anyhow; then weeping in mad rebellion when we find the field overgrown with tares. No one can deny that this is the pattern upon which the average life is cut. The result is that the tossed soul moves from experience to experience, with very few lessons learned at the end of one life, very few right decisions made, very little gained compared with what might have been had the spiritual will been aroused and the soul put in command. What a stupid way to go through a school! Yet it is mankind's way at present in the cosmic 'school of life.' To change it is part of the contract that Theosophy in many ages has undertaken to fulfil.

No, if Karman seems iron-gloved and aloof, deaf to our repinings and regardless of our tears, beneath the harsh exterior — harsh, be it known, only to *law-breakers* — rests a hand as soft as a mother's, as tender as Love itself. If we are inclined to doubt this, let us review, in

absolute honesty, some of the experiences or trials or 'cases' with which the little tribunal of our personal life may have had to do. The more puzzling and complex they are the better. Then let us re-try some of these, so to say, on their merits. If we are honest with ourselves, if we will use only half the acumen belonging to one who possesses a mind to think with, we shall see that Karma is both merciful and just. To many this will be quite a discovery, but it has been known to pioneers since the world first harbored Man. The result of this ancient discovery is crystallized in an Aphorism from the writings of one of the Masters, as applicable now as then:

Karma is both merciful and just. Mercy and Justice are only opposite poles of a single whole; and Mercy without Justice is not possible in the operations of Karma. That which man calls Mercy and Justice is defective, errant, and impure.

— *The Path*, VII, No. 12, March, 1893

Clearly, we must set our own mental house in order if Karma is to seem to us like a beneficent friend. Our nature must become both awakened and alert. We must be teachable, for a change, besides. We must put the soul in place at the very outset of the task as something superior to mind; we must recognise its high prerogative, which is *to use* the mind, to direct it, summon it, judge it, teach and persuade it, discipline and check it, and lead it where the Divinity wants it to go. We must recognise that even over a power so vast and measureless as human thought, the higher parts in man are sovereign, and this by divine right. Then we must arouse the spiritual will, which is something quite different from the ordinary will, for it is a power that "flyeth like light, cuts obstacles like a sharp sword." More than all, perhaps first of all, we have to recognise Brotherhood as a fact in nature, not a theory or a manufactured something that is still waiting to be tested out, but a sublime and proven *fact*.

We are 'our brother's keeper,' and we have duties one to another. As the essence of right action is duty, so the essence of right purpose is love. Life is no picnic-ground or pleasure-yacht wherein we may squander health and time irresponsibly, as whim may direct. Life is a business — one that finds its inception in the soul of beauty, and in the heart of truth, yes, but none the less a business, and a serious one. Life is a mission — just as school-life is in a far more limited degree — and we are here because there is something for us to learn and do. But the soul's great objective is not Latin or logic or a salary or rising fame. Its great

objective is character — in other words, for this is what ‘character’ means in the last analysis — complete emancipation. Its great objective is freedom: freedom from the pull of earthly desires and from the galling chains of ignorance, selfishness, cynicism, and distrust. It is these things that keep it bound and strangled when it should be, and might be, as free as a bird in the ether. It is these chains that Karman is so beneficent to break, and however unpleasant must be necessarily the results flowing from selfishness and ignorance, older than these, superior to these, is the Great Cause within our very selves, whose keynote is justice.

A few do this intuitively — those rare, pure natures of which there are always in the world a few. But most of us have to be shown. We need the help and guidance of those who have traveled the path before. Many of us are weighted down with chains, inner and outer, which are not recognised as such, so closely do they hang, and so starved and deadened is the soul within. So we pass from experience to experience, hugging these chains, until at last even Life’s great patience is exhausted and the heavy hand of Karman deals such a blow that for a moment the inner chains fall from us shattered, and we see things as they are. This happens to many. Those who have passed through some terrible experience with stamina and courage, well know that wonderful moment when the inner chains fall away, light breaks, and they see life in its reality. It lasts only a moment, perhaps, but it comes, and in the glory of it they see themselves at the parting of the ways. Shall they crowd back into the fetters again, and retrace their steps along the same old path, just a part of the multitude and no more? Or shall they dare to enter upon a new path altogether, *free?*

The old appeal of the Master: “Come ye out and be ye separate!” has its commentary here. *We are free to choose.* If we choose selfishly, Karman is indeed a relentless executioner; if we choose to serve the indwelling God, our real and most merciful Self — Karman becomes the beneficent friend. The point is, we *must* choose — and is it not wonderful and beneficent that we have the right to do so? It is the old, old choice of the ages, a power granted to us in Eden when the Light of Mind entered in, a power so vast in its possibilities for evil or for good that the mind totters in contemplation of it.

Assuredly, then, Karman is not fatalism, for at any moment we may choose what path we will; at any moment we may sow what seeds we will, nor will good seed ever be wanting if we know where to go to find it.

The Higher Self is an infinite repository and its vast storehouses cannot be depleted; they never run low. Moreover, man is a Spirit-soul, imperial and the possessor of infinite wealth, supported and protected even in the smallest act of life by Karman, the divine friend that is ever working to secure true justice, true mercy, ever working to restore disturbed equilibrium, and to resolve life's dissonances into harmony.

But we cannot clasp hands with the Great Ones who guide the workings of great Nature unless willing to be honest. We may illustrate this by analysing an experience which is typical. I have some duty to another, perhaps to one who touches my life closely and is much affected by what I say or do,— a child, let us say, or a brother. My failure — such instances are all about us — causes that one to take a cynical view of life, leaves him without a safeguard against selfishness and the pull of appetite, results in sending him out into the world unarmed, unequipped, unready before its battles or its dangers. Slowly the character of that one, instead of being built up in nobility and strength, is undermined. Things go from bad to worse with him; he passes from suffering to suffering, checked and taught here and there by Karman. to be sure, but to little result at first because he has never been given a rational view of what life is, or what it is for. He will recognise, soon or late, that I failed him, and then a sense of injustice will be aroused, perhaps even hatred. And so that soul passes on, through life and out of it, blighted, injured, held back because of what I had failed to be or do.

But by the great procedure of Cause and Effect we are thrown together again in some future life. Why should I not reap sorrow and bitter suffering from that lapse in duty, even though I may not know the exact cause in detail? I may by that time have awakened, but he, perhaps, has not, and so repays my kindness with distrust, my efforts to guide him with contempt. Then, if that innate love of duty which is the very voice of the soul, is not yet aroused in me, my indignation will be added to his hatred, my suspicion to his distrust, wrong to wrong. The result may be many lives of unhappiness, pain, and sin for both of us — all of which need not have been — for Karman and Reincarnation are inextricably bound together; neither can act without the other, and we do well to understand it.

In such a case Karman seems indeed to be the relentless executioner; but see the power of the sovereign soul to change it to a beneficent friend! Let us suppose that I waken to my neglect or wrong, sometime,

somewhere, along the way. Here is a just debt which I acknowledge. I know that I shall have it to pay, with interest. Perhaps I can begin to pay it at once! Or perhaps I cannot, and so must bear the sorrow of it as its fire burns into my soul while I wait. But shall I *merely* wait, or is there something more that I can do? The answer is very simple. I can do what one does who has a future payment to meet in money or anything else. I can work, accumulate, build spiritually, and when time for payment arrives I shall have resources enough to meet that debt, and perhaps something besides. I can use the fallow time to accumulate treasures of character, the 'gifts of the spirit' of which Paul speaks, those infinite resources of wisdom and love for want of which the great mistake was made. The time will come when they will all be needed; if I have them, then I can give them, and shall stand disburdened and free. A debt of a thousand dollars is easily paid by one who has twice that amount in hand, while the very same debt might drive another to bankruptcy and despair. It all depends upon one's resources — and do we stop to think often enough that the most resourceful quantity in the whole wide world is the soul? Karman may bring us sorrow, but it cannot prescribe our life. That is the result of something added to Karman — the awakened will. We are indeed masters of destiny, captains of the ship of life, if we want to be; but in such case we have to bestir ourselves sufficiently to take the helm and keep it.

The 'mechanical view of Karman' has been referred to, and it should have a further word, for it is responsible for an infinite deal of unbrotherliness in both thought and act. It cannot be stated too clearly that there is not one iota of Theosophical teaching to support unbrotherliness or irresponsible unconcern for the suffering or need of another. Yet some there are — how often do we meet them! — who do not grasp the implications of this basic teaching. So thus they reason: I reap what I sow. Very well, then. Since my present comfortable 'karman' is due to seeds I sowed, I may enjoy it as irresponsibly as I please. It is *my* harvest: its seeds were *my* seeds! As to these others who keep injecting themselves and their miseries over the rim of my smug content — let them attend to their own harvests, and keep away from me and mine! What have I to do with them, or with their karman? Am I my brother's keeper? He had his chance, as I had mine, and didn't take it. I don't mean to snarl or be ungenerous, but I really must make him understand!

Or: my present karman is not at all to my liking, but I have made

my bed and will lie in it. I am not asking for help or favors; let others keep off! And so I slump down into such chill and hardness of spirit as makes them quite willing to keep off — and all under the impression that I am a pattern of self-reliance. Pattern of stupidity, rather! pattern of conceit! What a limited view this is, what a denial of Brotherhood, and what an insult to the soul! It is nothing more nor less than an expression of the lower mind, which, as Mr. Judge has written, “is so near the coarse veil of matter that it is partly devil.” It is the ‘heresy of separateness’ of which the old books speak — that supreme heresy of all, that is eating out the heart-life of the world. It rests upon a notion that is the very antithesis of truth, for if we are souls — and how can we doubt it in face of our silent yearnings, our voiceless aspirations? — if we are souls and divine, we are indeed Sons of the Sun, one with the Sun in essence and in our deeper natures pulsing with the same divine stream of spiritual life. We can no more separate ourselves from our brothers, in cynical thought, or from any least happening to them, in selfish thought, than a finger can separate itself from the hand and retain its life. It cannot be done. A man cannot separate his interests or his deeper life from those about him, and not pass to spiritual death.

Nothing was ever more opposed to the teachings of Theosophy than this perverted view, and it is many times exposed by H. P. Blavatsky, who presumably knows the Theosophical teachings on the subject of Karman, since it was she who gave them to us. We might quote liberally, but content ourselves with the following, from an editorial footnote in *The Theosophist*:

Mercy is the key-stone of Theosophy. It was in mercy to degenerating humanity that *Lord Buddha* sacrificed his claim and right to Nirvâna and underwent the painful process of a new birth with its countless risks. It is in mercy that *Christ* and *Krishna*, the divine principles, took birth and suffered to secure salvation to mankind. It is in mercy that the *Dhyân Chohans* guard and guide the destinies of worlds and ages. It is in mercy that the Great Ones, sacrificing everything that is earthly, silently work to save humanity from the miry sloughs of material pride and spiritual ignorance, into which the men now-a-days are being hurled headlong. . . .

— Vol. VIII, pp. 120-1 (Part 2)

To understand the workings of Karman it is not enough to furbish up the mind; we must open a window in the heart. Without this the deeper teachings cannot be comprehended, for they deal with powers and forces and opportunities that act on levels deeper than the mind. Among these is the teaching that we have the power to alter our karman

by a change in our habit of mind. As the ancient saying goes, "The mind is the knot of the heart," and when the knot is untangled, the heart and the life are free. We know that karman, whatever it may be, will change or cease when the causes that produced it are exhausted. But we do not realize at first blush that karman may also be changed by intensity of thought and will. It is something like a fever which in the ordinary course will complete its cycle with great wastage of time, much suffering, and perhaps danger of death. But if the fever be aborted, this loss, delay, and danger are avoided, at least the greater part of it, and the system may be depoisoned, cleared, and restored to health with comparatively little distress. For instance: somebody wrongs me. I fly into a fever about it forthwith. Indeed, with the average person that is generally what happens, so that with the average person the fever runs its course — a course that does not need to be described for it is known to all of us from experience and observation both. But suppose we simply abort that fever, as the spiritual will has always the power to do; suppose we change that set psychology of ours, and realize that even if this be *not* the result of some wrong I did that other, he is still my brother and there is in it some lesson to be learned. Suppose I just love him, no matter *what* he does — and keep on loving! How different it all becomes! A little time will be needed, but before we know it we find that the fever is over, our mental blood rid of its poison. Before we know it this new spiritual health of ours will be working its beneficent contagion upon the one who did us the wrong, and he too gradually shifts out of his too heady, unkind course. Even should he not so change, we have at least not added hurt to insult, wrong to wrong — and isn't that something? We discount the tremendous power of the silent courses of time. Katherine Tingley was not the first of Teachers to declare, "Time and I can accomplish all things." Time *and love* can accomplish all things for the humblest of us.

The soul sends out its challenge, its demand; seeks, asks, knocks. And the challenge is answered; the soul finds what it has sought; the answer comes to the question it has asked; the door is flung open before it — and the man passes upward and on. In the light of this strange fact of chelaship, what becomes of our careless criticisms, flung about hither and yon? Do *we* know whether the brother who so distresses us actually *is* a leper — or may the grim sufferings be merely the cleansing process that will leave him, once it is over, far purer than ourselves? There is many a Lazarus, and he lives in every age. Do *we* know? Do

you know? Truly the Nazarene Teacher gave of the Ancient Wisdom when he said that it were better that a millstone be hung about our necks and we be drowned in the depths of the sea, than that we offend one of these 'little ones' — *little ones*, the ancient name for chelas or disciples of real teachers. But even were we able to pierce the veil and assure our noble selves beyond all possibility of question that our brother *did* make that awful slip in the past, "just as we thought he did," and now is suffering because "it is his karman,"— even then, who are we to stand in judgment? If we must work off a spirit of condemnation, the criminal to begin on is ourself.

Karman! Why wait to understand it? Fortunate indeed are those who penetrate its secret early, for that secret takes the sting out of every disappointing experience. "Man is his own karman." There it is. We may be driven to learn this by the suffering and pain of many lives, or we may learn it now and here by arousing our spiritual will and settling down seriously to the business, the real mission of earth-life. We may march forward like a conqueror if we will. To those who cast their lot in with the soul, Karman is never unkind or tyrannical; it is always the beneficent friend, for their gaze is fixed on far horizons, beyond the petty near. To such as these Karman is not only friend but teacher, guide, refuge, a light leading finally to the goal. Why not, then, wake up and set to work? for Karman works on unceasingly; it does not wait for us. Why oppose or disregard it, when, clasping hands with it as it were a beneficent friend we may move forward in confidence, under the aegis of its protecting love. Greater than all, it will make us the dispenser of a boundless love for those others who so sorely need help. And if we are not here to love and serve each other, then what *are* we here for?

H. P. BLAVATSKY — A SELF-PORTRAIT (Volume I of *The Complete Works of H. P. Blavatsky*)

LEOLINE L. WRIGHT

THE historical interest of this wonderful book will doubtless take the lead — at first, at any rate — with a large majority of Theosophical readers. The complete vindication which it contains of H. P. B.'s attitude towards Spiritualism in those early days will naturally be its special contribution to the present history of the Theosophical Movement.

But in addition to this all-sufficient tribute to the wisdom, the militant justice and magnanimity of the Great Theosophist, what a mine of mystical and intellectual delight the book offers even to the general reader! We find almost in the beginning, for example, a vivid portrait of her personality as she then appeared at forty-three years of age to a group of 'hard-boiled' reporters in the offices of the New York *Daily Graphic*. Though the portrait leaves everything to be desired as to the lineaments of the spiritual Teacher and Adept, as Theosophists prefer first of all to regard her; although it is sketched in somewhat coarse and sensational colors, yet the authentic, fascinating *person*, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, emerges from the words like an evocation. And it is embellished with her own inimitable touches as she chats with her hearers through several sparkling pages about herself, her family, and her travels. Even here, in this journalistically constructed 'interview' the reader who is acquainted with her true history will discern the mystical world-wayfarer who is such a romantic and appealing figure.

And then almost at once the book introduces us to what is certainly the most enthralling of all the aspects of Occultism — Magic! In at least five articles on this subject she opens before us deep vistas into the 'Science of sciences.' It is defined and interpreted with all her own splendor of diction, knowledge, and reminiscence. And we see her as herself an Adept in the Science of the Gods.

Two passages of particular inspiration to students of Occultism may here be given:

. . . the Oriental Rosicrucians* (for such we call them, being denied the right to pronounce their true name), in the serene beatitude of their divine knowledge, are ever ready to help the earnest student struggling 'to become' with practical knowledge, which dissipates, like a heavenly breeze, the blackest clouds of skeptical doubt.

—page 52

Thus magic exists and has ever existed since prehistoric ages. Begun in history with the Samothracian Mysteries, it followed its course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of Christianized Greece; then reappeared for a time again with the Neo-Platonic, Alexandrian school, and passing, by initiation, to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the medieval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and

*It should be noted that H. P. B. uses the word 'Rosicrucians' in its original and esoteric sense, as is shown by her statement, "the last of that Fraternity [the Rosicrucians] having departed in the person of Cagliostro."—p. 49

finally died out in Europe with the Count Saint-Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from the frozen-hearted skepticism in its native country of the East.— pp. 72-3

H. P. B. makes in this connexion an interesting point about the absolute necessity of a Teacher and of definite preparation under his guidance for the mysteries — a statement made in correction of ‘Hiraf,’ a writer whose teachings seem to have argued that an Adept can ‘become’ through his own studies and efforts:

. . . A Rosicrucian had to struggle ALONE, and toil long years to find some of the preliminary secrets — the A B C of the great Cabala — only on account of his ordeal, during which were to be tried all his mental and physical energies. After that, if found worthy, the word ‘Try’ was repeated to him for the last time before the final ceremonial of the ordeal. When the High Priests of the Temple of Osiris, Serapis, and others, brought the neophyte before the dreaded Goddess Isis, the word ‘Try’ was pronounced for the last time; and then, if the neophyte could withstand that final mystery, the most dreaded as well as the most trying of all horrors for him who knew what was in store for him; if he bravely “lifted the veil of Isis,” he became an initiate, and had naught to fear more. He had passed the last ordeal, and no longer dreaded to meet face to face the inhabitants from “over the dark river.”

— pp. 57-8

This volume may be accurately called a cornucopia of gold, pouring out an inexhaustible abundance of information on occult subjects: theurgy; the true Brotherhood of Luxor; death, initiation, and immortality; white, black, and ceremonial magic; the Delphic and Samothracian Mysteries; the Alexandrian School of Initiates and their work — of such absorbing interest to all Theosophists; man’s spiritual body, and innumerable other ‘leads’ for those in the pursuit of occult information.

The historical information here is immense, both of occult history and the history of Occultism. There are copious and suggestive allusions to both familiar and unfamiliar fascinating names, from Pythagoras through Akbar, the Emperor-adept, to Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, Sir Thomas Vaughan, Saint-Germain, and Cagliostro. And what can be more refreshing than H. P. B.’s wit when she employs her consummate skill in the art of *riposte* to insidious newspaper attacks upon Spiritualism or the T. S., or to innuendos upon her own mission as a Theosophist!

But is it not as a spiritual Teacher that H. P. B. shines forth with the greatest luster, even in those first years? Discipleship and the Heart-doctrine, and the need for self-directed evolution (to borrow Katherine Tingley’s superb phrase), were as plainly set forth by her then as in

her later teachings. And there are passages as great as any in *The Secret Doctrine*. The grandeur of her message pulsates through these pages like a diapason, the beat of the Ocean of Eternity within the Spirit of man. Restraint in quotation is difficult, but two out of many such passages must be given:

. . . Theosophy shrinks from brutal materialization; it prefers believing that, from eternity retired within itself, the Spirit of the Deity neither wills nor creates; but that, from the infinite effulgency everywhere going forth from the Great Center, that which produces all visible and invisible things is but a Ray containing in itself the generative and conceptive power which, in its turn, produces that which the Greeks called Macrocosm. . . — p. 297

. . . By Yoga training, the body becomes pure as a crystal casket, the soul purged of all its grossness, and the Spirit which, before the beginning of its course of self-purification and development, was to him but a dream, has now become a reality—the man has become a demi-god.— p. 343

A piece of delightfully unconscious autobiography, this book — a self-portrait indeed! From comment, incident, clean strokes of wit, broad sweeps of exposition and richly colored knowledge, there breathes forth into being at last the figure of one who was a great woman, a magnificent genius, a Teacher and Initiate of deathless Truth.

THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP AND DEATH

IVERSON L. HARRIS

(An address delivered at the English Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, 70 Queen's Gate, London, S. W. 7, Sunday evening, February 19, 1933.)

CAN we have any positive, first-hand knowledge of what happens when sleep overtakes the body and the brain ceases to function as it does normally during waking consciousness? What happens to the Ego — the 'I am I' consciousness — during sleep? Where does it go — if, indeed, it goes anywhere? What is it, or who am I? Am I my body? What is the difference between me awake and me asleep? Do dreams mean anything, or are they merely chaotic hallucinations? What causes them? Why are some beautiful, others ugly, some inspiring, others degrading, some peaceful, others full of terror? Is their interpretation a matter of guess-work, or are they subject to universal laws? Is there anyone capable of unraveling the mysteries of sleep in a manner that

would satisfy fully the exacting canons of strictly scientific research?

And as for death, which is a longer, a more complete, a more perfect, a relatively absolute sleep: in what way does death differ from its brother, sleep? Is the veil of death really an impenetrable one? Has anyone ever been able actually to experience the mysteries of death, regain ordinary human consciousness, retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience, and transmit it to his fellows? Is death now, and is it to remain for ever, the Great Unknown? How, where, and from whom may one obtain teaching that has stood and will stand the test of time and of critical examination, concerning the mysteries of sleep and death?

Answering our last question first, I would say: study the recorded teachings of the greatest Sages and Seers that the world has known, the titan intellects who have had direct vision of truth and have revealed it to mankind for their enlightenment and guidance. Not only have there been such, but the Theosophist declares that there are such even today, of varying degrees of intellectual and spiritual illumination and wisdom.

Among those of past times whom the world in general, and Theosophists in particular, recognise as belonging to the great Hermetic Chain of Teachers, may be mentioned Krishna, the Buddha, and Śankarâ-chârya in India, Lao-Tse and Confucius in China, Jesus the Syrian Sage, Pythagoras, Plato, and Apollonius of Tyana of the classical Greek world, Ammonius Saccas of Alexandria, and H. P. Blavatsky, the Messenger of the nineteenth century.

Is not the basis of our study satisfactory? Does not the authority of the doctrines of Theosophy rest on sure foundations? As Victor Hugo said: "At night I accept the authority of the torches." So now let us answer the other questions propounded. What I shall say is based largely on what I have learned from the oral instruction and the written teaching of Dr. G. de Purucker, who has devoted years of study to the great religious and philosophic literatures of the world, supplemented by his own researches and intuitive perception of occult truths, and guided and inspired, he tells us, by those who have taught him. For a general bird's-eye view of the Theosophic teachings concerning the mysteries of sleep and death given in popular language, attention is called to Dr. de Purucker's two lectures on this topic, Nos. xix and xx of the Second Series of *Questions We All Ask*. Here he reminds us of the saying of the old Greek philosophers, *hupnos kai thanatos adelphoi*: 'sleep and death are brothers'; and he quotes the Swiss mathematician, Leonard Euler:

Sleep furnishes something like an example (prefiguration) of the state of the soul after death, as the union of soul and body is then in a great measure interrupted; yet the soul ceases not from activity, being employed in the production of dreams. These are usually disturbed by the remaining influence which the senses exercise; and we know by experience that the more this influence is suspended, which is the case in profound sleep, the more regular and connected are our dreams. Thus, after death we shall find ourselves in a more perfect state of dreaming which nothing shall be able to decompose. It will consist of representations and reasonings perfectly sustained.

Commenting on the above, Dr. de Purucker says: "An Initiate into the Mysteries could not have written more to the point and with greater effect."

We lay us down to sleep at night in perfect confidence that we are well cared for; and we take it for granted that when the morning comes the thread of consciousness, on which our life is builded, will be picked up again where we left it on retiring. Whither do we go during sleep? We go whither the thoughts and tendencies of our waking hours draw us: not far away from the body or the personality if our consciousness has been largely centered therein during the hours when we were responsible for our thoughts and acts; but ranging the starry spaces and achieving the conquests of the soul, if the tendencies of our thoughts and aspirations are heavenwards and divine. And the same is true at death.

Is not death, equally with sleep, natural and universal? Why then should we fear it? Because, through centuries of wrong thinking, based upon a materialistic and self-centered conception of life, we of the West have almost completely identified ourselves with the bodies in which we live, and with the personality through which we seek to express ourselves. Like the man who builds himself a palace and becomes imprisoned inside his own creation, instead of remaining for ever its master and looking upon his creation with lofty detachment, so do we, after building ourselves a tenement of flesh in order that we may live in it while on our earthly journey, too often look upon the house and self as one, and forget our spiritual dignity as 'the master of our fate, the captain of our soul.'

In his *Intimations of Immortality*, Wordsworth sings:

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.

I take no exception to the conventional use of the word 'God,' even though its connotation is usually one of an anthropomorphic deity, which no Theosophist could accept, as an 'Infinite Person' is a philosophic impossibility, because I have no doubt that in the depths of his poet's soul, Wordsworth's conception of the Infinite, the Unknowable, and the Boundless, far transcended the limitations of a personal God.

I call particular attention to the first line of the stanza: "Our *birth* is but a sleep and a forgetting." Note that he does not say that *death* is a sleep and a forgetting, but that *birth* is such. This is a purely Theosophic and spiritual conception, because in reality birth into physical life for the vast majority of mankind means sleep or temporary death to the spiritual nature. With rare exceptions we cannot enter the gates of incarnation without crossing the waters of Lethe, drinking which we forget the high spiritual estate from which we sprang and towards which we are journeying back again.

We enter through the portals of birth into the dark realms of material existence in order that we may gain the needed experiences and learn the necessary lessons thereof; we pass out through the portals of death into the bright regions of the supernal spirit, there to assimilate those experiences and those lessons in blissful, quiet sleep, unbroken save by bright dreams born of our loftiest hopes and aspirations, our spiritual yearnings and impersonal loves. Both birth and death are portals in the endless corridors of eternal life. In the words of Walt Whitman:

I know I am deathless.

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass, . . .
 And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
 I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait. . . .
 And as to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths.
 (No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)
 Births have brought us richness and variety,
 And other births will bring us richness and variety.

Can we have any positive, first-hand knowledge of what happens when sleep overtakes the body and the brain ceases to function as it does normally during waking consciousness? I believe we can and that each of us does in varying degree, but that our understanding of what hap-

pens, and the vividness of our recollection thereof, depend entirely upon the grade we have reached in our evolution. Probably none but an Initiate can have full first-hand knowledge and relatively complete understanding of what happens when sleep overtakes the body; and Initiates are extremely rare.

What happens to the Ego — the 'I am I' consciousness — during sleep? That depends, as already stated, upon how the Ego — and we here refer to the human Ego, the reincarnating entity — employs its waking consciousness: the thoughts it thinks, the aspirations it cherishes, the motives it entertains, the purposes it has, the emotions it indulges, the deeds it does. Is not this not only reasonable, but self-evident? Is it conceivable, for example, that the Ego of an Einstein, filled during its waking hours with thoughts of cosmic reach as well as with hopes and plans for the betterment of humanity, will, during sleep, go to the same place or state or condition as does the Ego of, let us say, a profiteer planning to foment a war in order to make millions out of the sale of munitions, or as does the Ego of a self-centered nobody, consumed with jealousy, anger, lust, or petty ambition? Of course not. We are told in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, that what becomes of us after death (and therefore in less degree what happens to us during sleep which is an incomplete death), depends very largely upon what we are during our waking consciousness. I can do no better than to quote some of the most illuminating passages from Letters Nos. XXIV B and XXV, in which the Master K. H. replies to questions from Mr. A. P. Sinnett concerning man's state after death, especially while the Ego is in Devachan. In some respects Mr. Sinnett's questions are not unlike those with which we have introduced our subject of discussion; and if we remember that death and sleep are brothers; that sleep is but a little death, and death but a more complete, relatively absolute sleep; and that Devachan is but a dream-state, "only a hundredfold intensified," we shall see that what the Master says about the Devachan applies equally to the state of dreams, only in much less degree:

Every just disembodied *four-fold* entity — whether it died a natural or violent death, from suicide or accident, mentally sane or insane, young or old, good, bad, or indifferent — loses at the instant of death all recollection, it is mentally — *annihilated*; it sleeps its akasic sleep in the Kama-loka.¹ This state lasts from a few hours, (rarely less) days, weeks, months — sometimes to sever-

1. See Addendum: Question 1.

al years. All this according to the entity, to its mental status at the moment of death, to the character of its death, etc. That remembrance will return slowly and gradually toward the end of the gestation (to the entity or Ego), still more slowly but far more imperfectly and *incompletely* to the *shell*, and *fully* to the Ego at the moment of its entrance into the Devachan.² And now the latter being a state determined and brought by its past life, the Ego does not fall headlong but sinks into it gradually and by easy stages. With the first dawn of that state appears that life (or rather *is once more lived over* by the Ego) from its first day of consciousness to its last. From the most important down to the most trifling event, all are marshalled before the spiritual eye of the Ego; only, unlike the events of real life, those of them remain only that are chosen by the new *liver* (pardon the word) clinging to certain scenes and actors, these remain *permanently* — while all the others fade away to disappear for ever, or to return to their creator — *the shell*. Now try to understand this highly important, because so highly just and retributive law, in its effects. Out of the resurrected Past *nothing* remains but what the Ego has felt *spiritually* — that was evolved by and through, and lived over by his spiritual faculties — they be *love* or *hatred*. All that I am now trying to describe is in truth — indescribable. As no two men, not even two photographs of the same person, nor yet two leaves resemble line for line each other, so no two states in Deva-Chan are like. Unless he be an adept, who can realize such a state in his *periodical* Devachan — how can one be expected to form a correct picture of the same? — pp. 186-7

The Devachan *State*, I repeat, can be as little described as explained, by giving a however minute and graphic description of the state of one ego taken at random, as all the human lives collectively could be described by the “Life of Napoleon” or that of any other man. There are millions of various states of happiness and misery, *emotional* states having their source in the *physical* as well as the *spiritual* faculties and senses, and only the latter surviving. An honest labourer will feel differently from an honest *millionaire*. Miss Nightingale’s *state* will differ considerably from that of a young bride who dies before the consummation of what she regards as happiness. The two former love their families; the philanthropist — humanity; the girl centres the whole world in her future husband; the *melomaniac* knows of no *higher* state of bliss and happiness than music — the most divine and *spiritual* of arts. The devachan merges from its highest into its lowest degree — by insensible gradations; while from the last step of *devachan*, the Ego will often find itself in *Avitcha’s* faintest state, which, towards the end of the “spiritual selection” of events may become a *bona fide* “Avitcha.”³ Remember, every feeling is relative. There is neither *good* nor *evil*, *happiness* nor *misery per se*. . . . Search in the depths of your conscience and memory, and try to see what are the scenes that are likely to take their firm hold upon you; when once more in their presence you find yourself *living them over* again; and that, ensnared, you will have forgotten all the rest. . . .

Yes; *Love* and *Hatred* are the only immortal feelings; but the gradations of tones along the seven by seven scales of the whole key-board of life, are num-

2. See Addendum: Question 2.

3. See Addendum: Question 3.

berless.⁴ And, since it is those two feelings — (or, to be correct, shall I risk being misunderstood again and say those two poles of man's "Soul" which is a unity?) — that mould the future state of man, whether for *devachan* or *Avitcha* then the variety of such states must also be inexhaustible.— pp. 187-8

Why should it be supposed that *devachan* is a monotonous condition only because some one moment of earthly sensation is indefinitely perpetuated — stretched, so to say, throughout aeons? It is not, it *cannot* be so. This would be contrary to all analogies and antagonistic to the law of effects under which results are proportioned to antecedent energies. To make it clear you must keep in mind that there are two fields of causal manifestation, to wit: the objective and subjective. So the grosser energies, those which operate in the heavier or denser conditions of matter manifest objectively in physical life, their outcome being the new personality of each birth included within the grand cycle of the evolving individuality. The moral and spiritual activities find their sphere of effects in "devachan." For example: the vices, physical attractions, etc.— say, of a philosopher may result in the birth of a new philosopher, a king, a merchant, a rich Epicurean, or any other personality whose make-up was inevitable from the preponderating proclivities of the being in the next preceding birth. Bacon, for inst: whom a poet called —

"The greatest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind" —

might reappear in his next incarnation as a greedy money-getter, with extraordinary intellectual capacities. But the moral and spiritual qualities of the previous Bacon would also have to find a field in which their energies could expand themselves. Devachan is such field. Hence — all the great plans of moral reform of intellectual and spiritual research into abstract principles of nature, all the divine aspirations, would, in devachan come to fruition, and the abstract entity previously known as the great Chancellor would occupy itself in this inner world of its own preparation, living, if not quite what one would call a *conscious* existence, at least a dream of such realistic vividness that none of the life-realities could ever match it. And this "dream" lasts — until Karma is satisfied in that direction, the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin, and the being moves into the next area of causes. This, it may find in the same world as before, or another, according to his or her stage of progression through the necessary rings and rounds of human development.— pp. 191-2

No; there are no clocks, no timepieces in devachan, my esteemed chela, though the whole Cosmos is a gigantic chronometer in one sense. Nor do we, mortals,— *ici bas même* — take much, if any, cognizance of *time* during periods of happiness and bliss, and find them ever too short; a fact that does not in the least prevent us from enjoying that happiness all the same — when it does come. Have you ever given a thought to this little possibility that, perhaps, it is because their cup of bliss is full to its brim, that the "devachanee" loses "all sense of the lapse of time"; and that it is something that those who land in *Avitchi* do not, though as much as the *devachanee*, the *Avitchee* has no cognizance of time

4. See Addendum: Question 4.

—i. e., of our earthly calculations of periods of time? I may also remind you in this connection that *time is something created entirely by ourselves*; that while one short second of intense agony may appear, even on earth, as an eternity to one man, to another, more fortunate, hours, days, and sometimes whole years may seem to flit like one brief moment; and that finally, of all the sentient and conscious beings on earth, man is the only animal that takes any cognizance of time, although it makes him neither happier nor wiser. . . . Space and time may be — as Kant has it — not the product but the regulators of the sensations, but only so far, as our sensations on *earth* are concerned, not those in devachan. There we do not find the *a priori* ideas of those “space and time” controlling the perceptions of the denizen of devachan in respect to the objects of *his* sense; but, on the contrary, we discover that it is the *devachanee* himself who absolutely creates both and annihilates them at the same time.— pp. 193-4

As physical existence has its cumulative intensity from infancy to prime, and its diminishing energy thenceforward to dotage and death, so the dream-life of devachan is lived correspondentially. Hence you are right in saying that the “Soul” can never awake to its mistake and find itself “cheated by nature” — the more so, as strictly speaking, the whole of the human life and its boasted realities, are no better than such “cheating.” . . . Nature cheats no more the *devachanee* than she does the living, physical man. Nature provides for him far more *real* bliss and happiness *there*, than she does *here*, where all the conditions of evil and chance are against him, and his inherent helplessness — that of a straw violently blown hither and thither by every remorseless wind — has made unalloyed happiness on this earth an utter impossibility for the human being, whatever his chances and condition may be. Rather call this life an ugly, horrid nightmare, and you will be right. To call the devachan existence a “dream” in any other sense but that of a conventional term, well suited to our languages all full of misnomers — is to renounce for ever the knowledge of the esoteric doctrine — the sole custodian of truth. Let me then try once more to explain to you a few of the many states in Devachan and — Avitchi.

As in actual earth-life, so there is for the Ego in devachan — the first flutter of psychic life, the attainment of prime, the gradual exhaustion of force passing into semi-unconsciousness, gradual oblivion and lethargy, total oblivion and — not death but birth: birth into another personality, and the resumption of action which daily begets new congeries of causes, that must be worked out in another term of Devachan, and still another physical rebirth as a new personality. What the lives in *devachan* and upon Earth shall be respectively in each instance is determined by Karma. And this weary round of birth upon birth must be ever and ever run through, until the being reaches the end of the seventh round, or — attains in the interim the wisdom of an Arhat, then that of a Buddha and thus gets relieved for a round or two, — having learned how to burst through the vicious circles — and to pass periodically into the Paranirvana.

But suppose it is not a question of a Bacon, a Goethe, a Shelley, a Howard, but of some hum-drum person, some colourless, flackless personality, who never impinged upon the world enough to make himself felt: what then? Simply that

his devachanic state is as colourless and feeble as was his personality. How could it be otherwise since cause and effect are equal.—pp. 195-6

Yes, certainly there *is* “a change of occupation,” a continual change in Devachan, just as much — and far more — as there is in the life of any man or woman who happens to follow his or *her whole life* one sole occupation whatever it may be; with that difference, that to the *Devachanee* his special occupation is always pleasant and fills *his* life with rapture. Change then there must be, for that dream-life is but the fruition, the harvest-time of those psychic seed-germs dropped from the tree of physical existence in our moments of dreams and hopes, fancy-glimpses of bliss and happiness stifled in an ungrateful social soil, blooming in the rosy dawn of Devachan, and ripening under its ever fructifying sky. No failures *there*, no disappointments! . . . There — all unrealized hopes, aspirations, dreams, become fully realized, and the *dreams* of the objective become the *realities* of the subjective existence. And there behind the curtain of Maya its vapours and deceptive appearances are perceived by the adept, who has learnt the great secret how to penetrate thus deeply into the Arcana of being.—p. 197

Deva Chan is a state, not a locality. Rupa Loka, Arupa-Loka, and Kama-Loka are the three spheres of ascending spirituality in which the several groups of subjective entities find their attractions.⁵ In the Kama-Loka (semi-physical sphere) dwell the shells, the victims and suicides; and this sphere is divided into innumerable regions and sub-regions corresponding to the mental states of the comers at their hour of death. This is the glorious “Summer-land” of the Spiritualists, to whose horizons is limited the vision of their best seers — vision imperfect and deceptive because untrained and non-guided by *Alaya Vinyâna* (hidden knowledge).⁶—p. 198

The stay in Devachan is proportioned to the unfinished psychic impulses originating in earth-life: those persons whose attractions were preponderatingly material will sooner be drawn back into rebirth by the force of *Tanha*.—p. 200

Personality is the synonym for limitation, and the more contracted the person's ideas, the closer will he cling to the lower spheres of being, the longer loiter on the plane of selfish social intercourse. The social status of a being is, of course, a result of Karma; the law being that “like attracts like.” The renascent being is drawn into the gestative current with which the preponderating attractions coming over from the last birth make him assimilate. Thus one who died a ryot may be reborn a king, and the dead sovereign may next see the light in a coolie's tent. This law of attraction asserts itself in a thousand “accidents of birth”—than which there could be no more flagrant misnomer. . . . Nor are your inferences (as regards the well-being and enjoyment of the upper classes being due to a better Karma) quite correct in their general application. They have a eudoemonistic ring about them which is hardly reconcilable with Karmic Law, since those “well-being and enjoyment” are oftener the causes of a new and overloaded Karma than the production or effects of the latter. Even as a “broad rule” poverty and humble condition in life are less a cause of sorrow than wealth and high birth, but of that — later on.”—pp. 200-1

5. See Addendum: Question 5.

6. See Addendum: Question 6.

According to the Christian Scriptures, when Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount, those who heard it knew that they listened to one who 'spoke with authority.' The passages above quoted from the Master K. H. should convince one who reads them, or listens to them with intelligence and sympathy, that they are also the teachings of one who 'spoke with authority.' Did you ever study anywhere such concentrated and illuminating doctrines concerning the mysteries of the after-death state? Almost every sentence, if pondered and analysed, could be used as the text of a lengthy discourse. They are packed full of truths of the utmost, vital importance to every thinking human being.

In the beginning of our study we asked ourselves: Is the veil of death really an impenetrable one? Has anyone ever been able actually to experience the mysteries of death, regain ordinary human consciousness, retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience, and transmit it to his fellows? Above are the answers to these questions in clear-cut, authoritative language. The passages from *The Mahatma Letters* prove to the man of open mind and sympathetic heart that the Master K. H. is telling things about which he is not speculating but which he *knows*. Proof is that which brings conviction to the mind, and the Master's teachings prove conclusively that the veil of death is not an impenetrable one. Moreover, he tells us specifically in two sentences in the above citations that the adept actually does experience the mysteries of death and regain ordinary human consciousness; and proof that he does retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience and transmit it to his fellows is contained in the teachings which we have quoted. The two especially significant passages referred to are:

Unless he be an adept, who can realize such a state in his *periodical* Devachan — how can one be expected to form a correct picture of the same? — p. 187

And there behind the curtain of Maya its vapours and deceptive appearances are perceived by the adept, who has learned the great secret how to penetrate thus deeply into the Arcana of being.— p. 197

For additional teaching concerning the after-death state, attention is called to Dr. de Purucker's two lectures on 'Heavens and Hells in Legend and in Fact,' in *THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH*, January and April, 1933.

Reverting now to some of our questions: Who am I? Am I my body? What is the difference between me awake and me asleep? According to

the teachings of Theosophy I am in my inmost parts a portion of the Infinite, a drop in the great ocean of Cosmic Life, and life, *per se*, is the one factor in Boundless Infinitude (itself made up of countless lives) which for ever *is*: THAT. *Tat twam asi*: That thou art. But this inmost part of me is the 'I am' consciousness, not the 'I am I' consciousness or Ego with which we are most concerned in dealing with the mysteries of sleep and death. Yet this Ego is certainly not the body, however much it may, to its own great sorrow and loss, identify itself with its house of flesh, the body and its all-varying desires. No, the body is but the lowest, the most evanescent and ever-changing part of man — an illusion according to Occult Science, and even according to ultra-modern physical Science mostly made up of holes, when considered from the standpoint of the electrons composing it. This does not mean that the body is without actual existence, but merely that it is not what it appears to be to the deceptive physical senses. No, the body is not the real man; for the real man can control his body, direct it, look upon it as his temple, in which case it tends ever more and more to become a fit vehicle for the Man himself, who is the Hierarch of his little universe, made up of countless millions of infinitesimal lives, to whom he must appear as a veritable divinity.

The difference between a man asleep and a man awake is that during sleep the real man loses the awareness of his body and is free to experience in the subjective worlds of etheric nature whatever he has, during consciousness on the objective, self-conscious plane, earned the right to experience; while during waking hours, unless the body is utterly quieted and silenced by force of will and thought, as in complete concentration or spiritual trance, the Ego identifies itself with the objective world of matter.

This brings us to our questions about dreams: Do dreams mean anything, or are they merely chaotic hallucinations? What causes them? Why are some beautiful, others ugly, some inspiring, others degrading, some peaceful, others full of terror? Is their interpretation a matter of guess-work, or are they subject to universal laws? Is there anyone capable of unraveling the mysteries of sleep in a manner that would satisfy the exacting canons of strictly scientific research?

The citations given from *The Mahatma Letters* contain the answers to these questions also — if not direct answers, then answers by implication. Let us remember that the dream-state is, *mutatis mutandis*, exact-

ly comparable with the devachanic state after death, and that in the subjective world of dreams time and space exist not. With this introduction, and in order that we may better understand both the dream-world of earth-life and the longer dream-state of Devachan, I am going to use an illustration drawn from the every-day experience of millions of people, which, while perhaps not absolutely analogous to the mysteries experienced on the subjective plane of the dream-world, is nevertheless close enough to suggest answers to our questions.

We are taught that the character of our dreams, whether during the short sleep between two days or during the longer sleep between two earth-lives, is dependent in the latter case upon the state of mind at the moment of death, and in the former case upon the state of mind at the moment of the nightly *little* death called sleep. But we must also remember that the state of mind at each of these moments is the resultant of all our thoughts and acts, our aspirations and our emotions, our yearnings and our desires, during the previous day or life, and during all preceding days or lives. So it behooves us to heed the old Pythagorean precept:

Do innocence; take heed before thou actest,
 Nor e'er let soft sleep on thine eyelids steal,
 Until the day's acts thou hast three times scann'd:
 What have I done? What done amiss? What left unwrought?
 Go o'er the whole account, nor aught omit.
 If evil, chide thee; or if good, rejoice.
 This do, this meditate, this ever love,
 And it will lead thee into Wisdom's Path.

Now, as to the character of our dreams and their interpretation: Let us compare the moment of loss of consciousness, in the case of sleep, to the recording microphone of a radio-transmitting instrument, which concentrates all the sounds in the broadcasting station into its small aperture and sends them out over the world, where they may be picked up by any receiving instrument properly attuned to the wave-length of the transmitting instrument. But these sounds which are broadcast, be they harmonious or cacophonous, are only of momentary duration, as are the dreams of ordinary nightly sleep.

Let us compare the moment of death to the needle-point of a phonographic recording instrument. Into that point (marvelous phenomenon, so commonplace that we take it for granted and forget the marvel that

it really is) is concentrated the combined resultant of every note being played by every instrumentalist in, let us say, the London Symphony Orchestra; and the phonographic record thereby made will be played over and over and over again, as long as the owners of the reproducing disk enjoy listening to it. For purposes of illustration we may compare everything that goes from this objective world through the doorway of *sleep* into the land of dreams, to the vibrations that are transmitted through the microphone along the etheric waves to radio-receiving sets attuned to vibrate synchronously with the broadcasting instrument. These vibrations are heard and then are heard no more; but they certainly do not perish, as has lately been demonstrated through a new invention by means of which radio-broadcasts may be preserved and reproduced months or years later.

To continue the illustration: we may compare the net result of the life just lived and synthesized in the state of mind at the moment of *death*, which determines the character of the devachanic dreams to be enjoyed by the Ego, to the point of the needle of the recording phonograph, which synthesizes the sounds produced by the whole of the Symphony Orchestra, and the record thus made is repeated over and over again — in the case of the phonograph as long as its owner cares to wind up the machine; in the case of the dream, until the original spiritual force of the love or hate which gave birth to the dream either of sleep or of the after-death state, has expended itself — until “the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin,” and the soul is reborn for another day in the same body, or another life in a new body.

And now as to the interpretation of these dreams: let us continue our illustration. Let us say that the London Symphony Orchestra broadcasts or records on a phonographic disk some standard work — a Beethoven symphony, Tschaikowsky's ‘1812,’ the Bridal Chorus from ‘Lohengrin,’ or the Overture to ‘William Tell.’ When these are heard by those either listening in over the radio or merely listening to their reproduction from the phonographic record, what will be the various interpretations thereof? The casual hearer will merely say: “Oh, that's nice. It sounds familiar. I must have heard it before.” The music-lover will greet it as an old friend. The student of music will listen even more attentively and may recall having studied the piece and perhaps performed some part of it. The one who has had the privilege of playing in a symphony orchestra himself will eagerly listen for the various move-

ments, will know which instruments are playing the solo and which the accompaniment, whether it is the strings, the brass, the wood-winds, or the traps, which are producing a certain given effect.

Let us take the Overture to 'William Tell' for example. The orchestral player who has long loved and performed this piece will listen to every note of the beautiful 'cello-solo at the beginning, hoping that the performer will end up on the last high harmonic in perfect and even tone before the first rumblings of the storm in the strings is heard at the opening of the next movement — that storm with the rain-drops sounding in the flutes, clarinets, and oboes, breaking shortly into a crashing thunderstorm, with roaring brass and rushing strings and wood-winds, dying down at last with the lovely bird-notes of the flute. Then comes the lilting oboe-solo with sparkling flute-obbligato. Can't you hear it now? And then the stirring fanfare of the trumpets introducing the whirlwind *Finale*. If this piece of music means so much to the mere performer, think what it must mean to the conductor, who hears every note, who knows the score by heart, and can understand and interpret from this little point of the needle every *nuance* and turn conceived by Rossini when he composed this overture.

And this takes us a step farther and leads us directly to the land of dreams and their interpretation. The composer heard this music with his inner ear before it was recorded with clef and staff and notes and later reproduced therefrom by strings and brass and wood-winds. Where did he get it from? He heard it in the inner worlds; and being for the time a fit channel through which the inner realm of harmony and inspiration could manifest itself in this outer world, he revealed to his fellow-men what he, with his inner ear, there perceived.

Now to revert to our world of dreams and their interpretation: to the casual untrained man, his dreams mean absolutely nothing except, perhaps, a warning not to eat so heartily at the evening meal, a reminder to take more physical exercise and indulge in fewer emotional storms, or to live a decent, wholesome, kindly, well-balanced life. But to the student of Occultism his dreams become both an adventure and an initiation, through which he catches glimpses of the inner causal realms and begins to experience at first hand the mysteries of spiritual life when loosened from the bonds of the flesh — partially during sleep, completely after death.

What must not these dreams mean to the Adept who understands

and can interpret what he experiences consciously and periodically during sleep and death? For,

there, behind the curtain of Maya its vapours and deceptive appearances are perceived by the adept, who has learned the great secret how to penetrate thus deeply into the Arcana of being.

He is the Master-Conductor; he knows the score; he is not deceived by the illusions of time or of space; he hears every note of the symphony — it may be, alas, of the cacophony — which life in the invisible worlds reveals. And moreover, like the composer at his highest moment, the Adept, when he chooses to exercise his will to do so, hears the ‘Music of the Spheres,’ reads in the âkâsîc records the great thoughts of the Buddhas of Compassion, the Masters of Wisdom, who have preceded him, and interprets them for his fellow-men in the form of the majestic world-religions, philosophies, and sciences, which spring from their mother — *Theosophia*, the Wisdom of the Gods, *Gupta Vidya*, the Secret Doctrine of the ages.

This may *we* also learn if we will. For, in the words of our Teacher, Dr. de Purucker, in his first lecture on ‘The Mysteries of Sleep and Death:

When a man while alive on earth can ally himself with his own inner god, with the divine entity at the very root of his being, then he dreams no more but becomes divinely self-conscious — becomes god-like in his consciousness; for then his consciousness takes cosmic sweep, expands to embrace the solar system and even beyond; and though living on earth walks among his fellows as a god-man. This not only can be done but has often been done, and done again and again; and the great titanic Seers and intellects: the great spiritual visionaries of the human race, were just such god-men: the Buddha, Śankarâchârya, Jesus the Syrian, Lao-Tse, Krishna, Pythagoras — oh! a host of them — were such god-men; some were greater than others, but all, each one of them, in greater or less degree, had become at one with his own inner god, with what the modern mystical Christian calls his immanent Christ, the Christ dwelling within him: we Theosophists say the inner god. . . . O my Brothers, why not become at one with this divinity within you?

Addendum

In order to make clearer certain of the passages quoted from *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, the following questions were asked of Dr. de Purucker, to which he very kindly dictated answers. The spelling of the original in *The Mahatma Letters* has been followed in the questions.

Question 1 — On page 186 of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, we read:

Every just disembodied *four-fold* entity . . . loses at the instant of death all recollection, it is mentally *annihilated*; it sleeps it's akasic sleep in the Kama-loka.

Please explain the significance of the phrase 'every just disembodied *four-fold* entity.'

Answer by G. de P. — The reader should bear in mind in reading *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* that all answers were given to more or less elementary questions asked by individuals who had virtually no idea whatsoever of the Esoteric Wisdom nor of its intricacies, nor again of the very stringent regulations forbidding the divulging of the ancient teachings except to those who had, at least in some degree, pledged themselves to keep these teachings secret. However, answering this question, the phrase 'every just disembodied *four-fold* entity' refers to the seven-fold constitution of man just after death, who thereafter becomes a four-fold entity, because the physical body, the Linga-śarīra or model-body, and the prânic currents belonging to it, have been shed or cast off. Three of the so-called 'principles' thus being dropped, the entity remaining is obviously a four-fold entity or double duad. But this four-fold entity is all the best part of the man that was — in fact, all of the man except the outermost carapace and its vitality and astral pattern.

Question 2 — On page 187 of *The Mahatma Letters* occurs the following:

That remembrance will return slowly and gradually toward the end of the gestation (to the entity or Ego), still more slowly but far more imperfectly and *incompletely* to the *shell*, and *fully* to the Ego at the moment of its entrance into the Devachan.

What is the meaning of the words 'gestation' and 'shell' in the above passage?

Answer by G. de P. — The 'remembrance' here referred to by the Master K. H. is that panoramic vision or reviewing of the events of the past life which occurs to every normal human being at least twice after death, and in some cases three times; but this is another story. The 'gestation' is a word used in those early days of the Theosophical Society to signify the preliminary preparation of the entity entering into its devachanic condition or state of consciousness; just as the gestation of a child precedes its birth on earth into physical life, so is there a ges-

tation of the devachanic entity before it enters into the devachanic state.

The 'shell' here refers to the kâma-rûpic entity or 'spook' which is cast off at the second death, which second death takes place virtually shortly preceding the entrance of the entity into the devachanic state, and therefore at the end of the gestation-period alluded to. The meaning is that after death the four-fold entity is in a more or less unconscious, semi-conscious, or dreamlike state; and the panoramic vision or remembrance returns slowly to the Ego at the end of the gestation-period, but fully so when the gestation-period is completed and when the entity stands, as it were, on the devachanic threshold. The remembrance returns very imperfectly and incompletely to the kâma-rûpic shell more or less at the time the kâma-rûpic shell is dropped; and this remembrance is incomplete and imperfect, because the shell, being a mere garment, although to a certain extent vitalized and therefore as it were quasi-conscious like the physical body, it obviously can retain no complete or full recollection of all the past life, because it is incapable of retaining the spiritual and noble intellectual vistas of the life just lived. The 'remembrance' is obviously therefore 'imperfect' and 'incomplete.'

Question 3 — On page 188 of *The Mahatma Letters* one reads:

. . . from the last step of *devachan*, the Ego will often find itself in *Avitcha's* faintest state, which, towards the end of the 'spiritual selection' of events may become a *bona fide* "Avitcha."

What is meant here by the 'spiritual selection' of events?

Answer by G. de P. — Before answering the question I must point out that 'Avitcha' is of course a miswriting by the chela-amanuensis for *Avîchi*. The 'spiritual selection' of events is but a phrase, which rather neatly and graphically describes the selecting by the devachanic entity, as it enters into the devachanic state, of all the spiritual and noble intellectual vistas, events, with his emotions and aspirations, of the life just lived. If these vistas and events, etc., are few to *re-collect* or select, the devachanic state is not high and is probably a rûpa-lokic Devachan. Similarly, if these vistas and events are extremely few, then the Devachan is so low or faint that it is practically the same as verging towards the highest part of Avîchi; because the highest part of Kâma-loka blends insensibly into the very lowest conditions or states of the Devachan, while the Kâma-loka's lowest part blends insensibly into the highest conditions of the Avîchi. In other words, there is no solution of conti-

nunity as between any of these three; for both Devachan and Avîchi are states: they blend insensibly into each other.

Question 4 — Again on page 188 of *The Mahatma Letters* one reads:

Yes: *Love* and *Hatred* are the only immortal feelings; but the gradations of tones along the seven by seven scales of the whole key-board of life, are numberless.

What are 'the seven by seven scales' referred to above?

Answer by G. de P. — 'The seven by seven scales' referred to above are the forty-nine steps or degrees on the ladder or scale of consciousness: *i. e.*, of life as experienced in our hierarchy by a conscious or quasi-conscious entity. Consequently, the gradations of tones along the forty-nine scales are virtually innumerable or 'numberless.' We must here understand not only whole tones, to adopt the musical phraseology, but half-tones and even quarter-tones, and perhaps eighth-tones. It is a mistake to suppose that even in the musical diatonic scale the notes are actually distinct, entitative vibrations without intermediate connecting links. The chromatic scale proves this. As a matter of fact any musical scale is only apparent. There is in fact one universal sound divided into seven times seven, or forty-nine, gradations of pitch or scalar differences; but these differences or degrees or steps are more or less illusory and depend upon the receptivity or lack of it of the percipient consciousness.

Question 5 — On page 198 of *The Mahatma Letters* occurs the following:

Deva Chan is a state, not a locality. Rupa Loka, Arupa-Loka, and Kama-Loka are the three spheres of ascending spirituality in which the several groups of subjective entities find their attractions.

Please explain the three words 'Rupa Loka,' 'Arupa-Loka,' and 'Kama-Loka,' and the phrase 'three spheres of ascending spirituality.'

Answer by G. de P. — 'The three spheres of ascending spirituality' are, in their proper order, Kâma-loka, Rûpa-loka, and Arûpa-loka, and are a brief way of expressing the three generalized conditions or states both of matter and of consciousness between the lowest astral and the highest devachanic spheres. Kâma-loka is the lowest; the next higher is the Rûpa-loka; and the highest of these three is the Arûpa-loka. Kâma-loka is the astral world, the world of shells, of cast-off kâma-rûpic entities or spooks; and is itself divided into different steps or stages of

ethereality, ascending from the lowest Kâma-loka or that which is nearest to earth-condition. The Kâma-loka then merges into the Rûpa-loka, a Sanskrit phrase which means 'Form-world'; and the Rûpa-loka is in this connexion the lower part or half, so to speak, of the devachanic sphere of being. The Rûpa-loka in its turn is divided into ascending grades of ethereality, so that the highest of the Rûpa-loka merges insensibly into the lowest of the Arûpa-loka or 'Formless Sphere.' It is through these three 'spheres of *ethereality*' (rather than *spirituality*) that the average excarnate entity passes in his post-mortem adventure, beginning at the moment of death in the lowest part of the Kâma-loka and ending with the highest part of the Devachan. Please recollect very carefully that, although the Kâma-loka, the Rûpa-loka, and the Arûpa-loka may be considered as actual localities or spheres, they are merely so because all the entities inhabiting them must have place or position in space. The Devachan *per se* is a state of consciousness just as the Avîchi is.

Question 6 — At the bottom of page 198 of *The Mahatma Letters*, the words *Alaya Vinyâna* are used in the sense of 'hidden knowledge.' Are they synonymous with Gupta-Vidyâ? And are these last words, in turn, synonymous with the Guhya-Vidyâ which Dr. de Purucker refers to in his *Occult Glossary* (under *Vidyâ*) as 'the Secret Knowledge' or 'the Esoteric Wisdom'?

Answer by G. de P.— *Alaya-Vijñâna* is a Sanskrit compound which indeed can be translated metaphorically as 'hidden knowledge,' but which more comprehensively means 'discernment' (or 'recognition') 'of the imperishable': *i. e.*, of the Kosmic Soul or *Anima Mundi*. It is obvious that when an entity is able to vision the Alaya-Vijñâna it becomes instantly percipient of all the 'hidden knowledge' that the Kosmic Soul is enabled to pour into its more or less limited capacity. Consequently Alaya-Vijñâna is not technically synonymous with Gupta-Vidyâ, because Gupta-Vidyâ, although literally meaning 'hid knowledge' refers rather to the doctrines of the Secret Wisdom today taught in the Esoteric School. Guhya-Vidyâ is synonymous with Gupta-Vidyâ, both signifying 'the Secret Knowledge' or 'the Esoteric Wisdom.'

STUDIES IN ORPHISM*

F. S. DARROW, A. M., PH. D. (Harv.)

I. THE MYTHICAL AND THE HISTORICAL ORPHEUS

(a) THE MYTHICAL ORPHEUS OR THE MAGICAL BARD

H. P. BLAVATSKY, the first of the three Theosophical Leaders, in *Isis Unveiled* says:

The fable of Aristaeus pursuing Eurydice into the woods where a serpent occasions her death is a very plain allegory, which was in part explained in the earliest times. *Aristaeus* is *brutal power*, pursuing *Eurydice, the Esoteric Doctrine* into the woods where the *serpent, emblem of every sun-god* — kills her, i. e., forces truth to become still more esoteric and seek shelter in the Underworld, which is not the hell of our theologians. Moreover, the fable of Orpheus torn to pieces by the Bacchanals is another allegory to show that the gross and popular rites are always more welcome than divine but simple truth.¹

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice has ever been a favorite theme with the greatest poets of ancient and modern times, but its significance has not in general been recognised because most of the extant traditions about Orpheus are mythical, that is, symbolical and allegorical truths, *not* historical facts. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish the historical kernel around which these have been grouped. Orpheus' supreme importance lies not in these legends but in the fact that he was a religious reformer, one of the first to teach to the *historical nations of Europe* the eternal truths regarding the origin of things, the divinity of humanity and the immortality of the soul — the Truths which were dramatically imbodyed in the rites of the Greek Orphic Mysteries.

The myth of Orpheus, the Magical Bard, contains seven symbolical moments: (1) his Divine Birth; (2) his Sacred Quest as the savior of the Argonautic expedition; (3) his Mystic Marriage with Eurydice and his mission as a divine teacher; (4) his First Agony at the first death of Eurydice; (5) his Descent into Hades; (6) his Second and Final Agony at the Second Death of Eurydice, culminating in (7) his Passion.

1. THE DIVINE BIRTH

Orpheus "the far-famed Bard, the father of song sent by Apollo"²

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1. *Isis Unveiled*, II, pp. 129-30.

2. Pindar, iv, *Pythian Ode*, vv. 176-7 (313-5).

was according to tradition born in Thrace on Mount Olympus, which district, according to Strabo, though in his day held by the Macedonians, had formerly belonged to Thrace, "for," he says, "Pieria and Olympus and Pimpleia and Leibethra were of old Thracian mountains and districts, . . . and the Thracians who colonized Boeotia dedicated Helicon to the Muses and also the cave of the Nymphs called Leibethriades."³ Orpheus was the son of the God of Light, the patron of Music, Apollo, and the Muse of Epic Poetry, Calliope. When a mere child he was nearly killed by a venomous snake and was saved only by taking refuge in a nearby sanctuary of Helios. Therefore ever afterwards the Bard annually worshipped the sun on the anniversary of this event.⁴ Orpheus was then presented by his father Apollo with the God's lyre and was given instruction until he had become the most marvelous of musicians, capable of moving by his music not only the gods and men, but also the wild beasts, the trees, and the very rocks of the field.

Orpheus with his lute made trees
 And the mountain-tops that freeze
 Bow themselves when he did sing:
 To his music plants and flowers
 Ever sprung; as sun and showers
 There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play —
 E'en the billows of the sea —
 Hung their heads and then lay by.
 In sweet music is such art,
 Killing care and grief of heart
 Fall asleep or hearing die.⁵

Where stern Olympus stands;
 In the elm woods and the oaken
 There where Orpheus harped of old,
 And the trees awoke and knew him
 And the wild things gathered to him,
 As he sang amid the broken
 Glens his music manifold.⁶

3. Strabo, x, 3 § 722, (Casaubon, 471).

4. The frequency with which the symbolic serpent reappears in the Orphic Myth is significant of the Bard's inner connexion both with Helios and Apollo.

5. Shakespeare, *Henry the Eighth*, iii, 1. 3.

6. Euripides, *Bacchae*, vv. 651 ff. (Murray).

At his sweet strains the rushing stream
 Its uproar stilled, and all its waves
 Paused in forgetfulness of flight;
 And while the waters stayed to hear,
 The tribes far down the Hebrus' stream
 Deemed that the river was no more.
 All wingéd creatures of the wood
 And e'en the woods themselves came near
 To listen; or, if far on high
 Some bird was wheeling through the air
 To that sweet music swift he fell
 On drooping wings. The mountains came:
 Rough Athos with his Centaur herd,
 And Rhodope, its drifted snows
 Loosed by the magic of that song
 Stood by to hear. The dryads left
 The shelter of their oaken trunks
 And gathered round the tuneful bard.
 The beasts came, too, and with them came
 Their lairs: hard by the fearless flocks
 The tawny Afric lion crouched;
 The timid does feared not the wolves;
 And serpents crawled forth to the light,
 Their venom quite forgot.⁷

And the spotted lynxes for joy of the song
 Were as sheep in the fold, and a tawny throng
 Of lions trooped down from Othrys' lawn,
 And her light foot lifting, a dappled fawn
 Left the shade of the high tressed pine,
 And danced for joy to that lyre.⁸

It is thus evident that there is a striking parallelism between this part of the Greek myth and Isaiah's vision of the rule of the Messiah during the millennium:

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the hind; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. . . . And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy *mountain*; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. . . . **Unto** him shall the nations seek and his resting-place shall be glorious.⁹

7. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1033 ff. (Miller).

8. Euripides, *Alcestis*, vv. 579 ff. (Way), spoken of Apollo, the Father, but likewise true of Orpheus, the Son.

9. *Isaiah*, xi, 6-10.

This parallelism was commonly recognised by the early Christians who on many of their sarcophagi placed an exact copy, drawn from Greek art, of the figure of Orpheus taming the beasts by the power of his magical music, and used it to represent the Good Shepherd. Gradually, however, under ecclesiastical influence the wicked wild animals were weeded out until the entire congregation consisted merely of mild and docile sheep. The fact of this borrowing is further significant of the real connexion which exists between Orphism and Christianity. The early Church was correct in thus admitting that the prototype of the mythico-historical figure of Jesus, the Christ, was to be found in the noble and ascetic Orpheus.

2. THE SACRED QUEST: ORPHEUS AS THE SAVIOR OF THE ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION

The Argonauts were able to accomplish their mission successfully only by the help of Orpheus, whose importance in the Saga of the Search for the Golden Fleece is in itself evidence of the notable connexion between Orpheus and Apollo and Helios, for the solar key unlocks many of the mysteries in the story of Jason's Quest.

The Argo could be launched to the accompaniment of Orpheus' lyre, whereupon it glided into the sea of its own accord. The Argonauts themselves were rescued from the seductive pleasures on the Island of Lemnos only by means of the Bard's magical music. The Symplegades, or the Twin Clashing Rocks, which threatened to crush the Argo between them, were stopped in the midst of their wild movement by the same means and forever anchored fast at the mouth of the Bosphorus in the Black Sea, where they have remained to this day. Then, too, the Heroes, when they neared the Flowery Isle of the Sirens, became so entranced that they would have landed on the fatal shore had not Orpheus saved them by striking upon his lyre. Thus all escaped safely, except Butes, who flung himself into the sea and strove to swim to the beach. Nevertheless, by the interposition of Aphrodite even he was ultimately rescued. Also, it was Orpheus who lulled to sleep the Colchian dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece. And finally, when the Argonauts, crowned with success and accompanied by the Princess Medeia, the witch granddaughter of Helios, were returning, they were rescued from utter shipwreck only by the prayer which Orpheus directed to the Mystery-gods

of Samothrace as he played upon the lyre — a myth which may indeed be the prototype or the source of the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee by Jesus.¹⁰

3. THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE WITH EURYDICE; AND ORPHEUS' MISSION AS A DIVINE TEACHER

Hyginus and Apollodorus report that Orpheus was killed by a stroke of lightning while sailing with the Argonauts, but the usual form of the myth declares that after bringing the Heroes safely back to Greece the sacred Bard journeyed to Egypt where he was fully initiated by the hierophants.

His marriage with Eurydice is not a beautiful love-story, although so regarded often by the ancient poets and regularly by the modern, but in the words of H. P. Blavatsky, "a very plain allegory," for it is an almost inevitable characteristic of the God-man of the Mystery-story among all nations to be represented as the Divine Bridegroom. The Sacred Marriage, or rather the two Sacred Marriages, form the intrinsic part of the Mystery-story.

The etymology of the name Eurydice is enlightening. The word means "She of Wide Power, Authority, or Justice," hence, "She who is rich by reason of the right of Succession"; and what is richer in hereditary rights than the "Secret Doctrine," which has been handed down from time immemorial by the "Golden Chain of Succession"? Also it is noteworthy that Orpheus won his bride by the magic power of his music. Hymen, the God of marriage, was invited to bless the nuptials with his presence; but although he attended, the omens were unpropitious, for his torch smoked and brought tears into the eyes of all the guests. It is likewise significant that after his Mystic Marriage Orpheus returned to Pimpleia on Mount Olympus, where he dwelt in a *cave* and devoted the rest of his life to civilizing and helping his savage neighbors by teaching them the Mysteries which thereafter in his honor were called Orphic.

4. THE FIRST AGONY AT THE FIRST DEATH OF EURYDICE

Eurydice (the "Secret Doctrine"), soon after her marriage to Orpheus (the God-man), was seen and pursued by Aristaeus (brutal power), who became enamored of her beauty. Thereupon Eurydice died

¹⁰. *Matthew*, viii, 23-27; *Mark*, iv, 35-41; *Luke*, viii, 22-25.

from a bite upon her foot, inflicted by a poisonous snake (the solar emblem, as noted before). The heartbroken Bard sang his grief to all that breathed the upper air, gods and men alike. "Orpheus made thee (Eurydice), thee, all to himself on a lonely shore, thee at dawn of day, thee at set of sun, his unending song."¹¹

Eurydice, the Thracian dames
Bewailed; Eurydice, the gods,
Who ne'er had wept before; and they
Who with forbidding, awful brows,
In judgment sit and hear the crimes
Long since committed, unconfessed,
They sat and wept Eurydice.¹²

Finally, Orpheus wandered to the assembly of the gods on Mount Olympus and in his endeavor to regain his lost Eurydice, although warned of the perilous nature of the undertaking, obtained permission from Zeus, the Father of Gods and Men, to visit the Lower Regions *alive*.

5. THE DESCENT INTO HADES

The Descent into Hades, like the Mystic Marriage, the Agony, and the Passion, is an integral part of the Mystery-story and will reappear in the Christ-story. Orpheus descended by means of the cave upon the promontory of Taenarus, not far from ancient Sparta, and like those other heroes, Herakles, Theseus, Odysseus, and Aeneas, reached the Underworld alive. He charmed Charon, the aged ferryman of the Styx, and appeased the rage of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Hades, by his music, and finally reached in safety the thrones of Hades, the king of the Lower World, and of Persephone, his queen, to both of whom he sang his petition while he played his magical lyre. The dead wept; Tantalus, in spite of his endlessly unsatisfied thirst, stopped his straining after the ever-retreating water; the vultures ceased to tear and rend the ever-growing liver of Tityus; Ixion's wheel stood still; the Danaïds rested from their everlasting task of filling the leaky jar with the water drawn in a sieve; while Sisyphus sat on his rock to listen. Then for the first time the Furies wept, and Persephone and Hades her husband hastened to grant the poet's prayer by summoning the newly-arrived Eurydice, who came still limping because of her wounded foot. Orpheus

11. Vergil, *Georgics*, iv, vv. 465-6.

12. Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, vv. 578 ff. (Miller).

was permitted to take her back to Earth but on condition that he should not turn around and look at her until they reached the upper air. Mindful of this the Bard led the way, while Eurydice followed. Unhindered they passed through the horrors of Hades while all things held their breath.

When through the doors of Taenarus
 He made his way to the silent land,
 Sounding his mournful lyre the while,
 The glooms of Tartarus were filled
 With his sad song; and the sullen gods
 Of Erebus were moved to tears.
 He feared not the pool of the Stygian stream
 By whose dread wave the heavenly gods
 Make oath unbreakable.
 The whirling rim of the restless wheel
 Stood still, its breathless speed at rest.
 The immortal liver of Tityus
 Grew, undevoured, while at the song
 The spellbound birds forgot their greed.
 Thou, too, didst hear, O boatman grim,
 And thy bark that plies the infernal stream
 With oars all motionless came on.
 Then, first, the hoary Phrygian
 Forgot his thirst, although no more
 The mocking waters fled his lips
 But stood enchanted; now no more
 He reaches hungry hands to grasp
 The luscious fruit.
 When thus through that dark world of souls
 Sweet Orpheus poured such heavenly strains
 That impious rock of Sisyphus
 Was moved to follow him.¹³

They sat and wept Eurydice,
 Until the Lord of Death exclaimed:
 "We grant the prayer. Away to Earth!
 But on this sole condition go:
 Do thou behind thy husband fare!
 And look thou not upon thy wife
 Until the light of day thou see
 And Spartan Taenarus appear."¹⁴

13. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1061 ff.

14. Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, vv. 582 ff.

6. THE SECOND OR FINAL AGONY AT THE SECOND DEATH OF EURYDICE

Then did the goddess of fate
 Renew the exhausted thread of life
 For fair Eurydice. But when,
 Unmindful of the law they gave,
 And scarce believing that his wife
 Was following, the hapless man
 Looked back, he lost his pride of song;
 For she, who to the very verge
 Of life had come again, fell back
 And died again.¹⁵

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes
 Again she falls, again she dies, she dies!

.
 Now under hanging mountains,
 Beside the fall of fountains
 Or where the Hebrus wanders,
 Rolling in meanders,
 All alone
 Unheard, unknown
 He makes his moan.

.
 Now with Furies surrounded,
 Despairing confounded
 He trembles, he glows,
 Amidst Rhodope's snows.¹⁶

Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,
 Eurydice! Eurydice!
 The tremulous leaves repeat to me
 Eurydice! Eurydice!¹⁷

Orpheus tried for a second time to follow Eurydice into the Lower World, but Charon repulsed him and refused him passage. For seven days (a significant number) he remained on the banks of the Styx without food or sleep. Then for seven months Orpheus sat in chilly caverns or under the open sky beside the river Strymon, taking neither food nor drink.

Beneath a rock o'er Strymon's flood on high,
 Seven months, seven long continued months, 'tis said,

15. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1083 ff. (Miller).

16. Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, vi.

17. Lowell, *Eurydice*.

He breathed his sorrows in a desert cave,
And soothed the tiger, moved the oak with song.¹⁸

At the end of the seven months (again the significant number) the Bard withdrew to the higher and more wintry regions of Mounts Rhodope and Haemus so that he might mourn in still greater solitude.

Alone over Hyperborean ice and Tanais the snowy, and fields whose marriage bond with Rhipaeon frost is never severed, he would wander, mourning his lost Eurydice and Hades' cancelled boon.¹⁹

He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,
Blackened with lichens, on an herbless plain.

He does no longer sit upon his throne
Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,
For evergreen and knotted ilexes,
And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
And elms dragging along the twisted vines,
Which drop their berries as they follow fast
And blackthorn bushes with their infant race
Of blushing roseblooms; beeches, to lovers dear,
And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,
As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself
Has sent from her maternal breast a growth
Of starlike flowers and herbs of odor sweet,
To pave the temple that his poesy
Has framed, while near his feet grim lions crouch,
And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.
Even the blind worms seem to hear the sound.
The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;
Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.²⁰

7. THE PASSION

While Orpheus, ever remembering his sorrow, was wandering on Mount Rhodope, it is said a band of Bacchanals, the Bassaridae, frenzied women-worshippers of Dionysus, met the wanderer and asked him to play for them some gay music that they might dance. But when he was unable to please the merry-makers because of his grief, the leader

18. W. S. Landor, *Orpheus and Eurydice in Dry Sticks*.

19. Vergil, *Georgics*, iv, vv. 517-20.

20. Shelley, *Orpheus*.

of the women, enraged at his sad notes, shouted: "See yonder our despiser!" and hurled her javelin, which, however, as soon as it came within the sound of the magical lyre, fell harmless at the Bard's feet. Thereupon the others began to throw stones, which also left him unharmed, until the voice of the lyre was overwhelmed by the uproar, when the maniacs tore him limb from limb and cast his head and his lyre into the river Hebrus down which they floated, ever murmuring sad music to which the shores responded.

See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies;
 Hark! Haemus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries—
 Ah, see, he dies! he dies!
 Yet e'en in death Eurydice he sung.
 Eurydice, still trembled on his tongue,
 Eurydice the woods
 Eurydice the floods,
 Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains sung.²¹

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.²²

The Muses gathered the fragments of the body and buried them in the district of Pieria on Mount Olympus at Leibethra, where ever since, it is said, the nightingale sings more sweetly over the grave than in any other part of Greece. Here too the river Helicon now flows for some distance underground, although legend declares that originally it flowed above ground throughout its entire course. But when the women who slew Orpheus wished to wash off the bloodstains in the Helicon, the river straightway rushed beneath the ground that it might not share in the pollution. Later, at the time of the destruction of Leibethra the urn with the ashes of the Bard and the pillar marking the grave were moved to the neighboring city of Dium. Upon this pillar was inscribed the following epigram; which, it should be noted, records a variant tradition from that described above, inasmuch as Zeus is said to have slain Orpheus by lightning because the Bard, like Prometheus, revealed the Mysteries of the Gods to men.

21. Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, vi.

22. Milton, *Lycidas*, vv. 58 ff.

Here the Bard buried by the Muses lies,
 The Thracian Orpheus of the golden lyre:
 Whom mighty Zeus the Sovereign of the skies
 Removed from earth by his dread lightning's fire.²³

After the murder, Dionysus is said to have metamorphosed the Basaridae into trees.

As the head floated down the stream the dead lips still murmured "Eurydice," and while his soul passed for the second time to Hades to rejoin his Mystic Bride, twice-lost, he incessantly called "Eurydice," until the brooks, the trees, and the fountains he had loved so well, re-echoed the longing cry, repeating it over and over again.

Even, then, while the head, rent from that pale marble neck, was carried floating down Oiafrican Hebrus' flood, Eurydice! the lifeless voice of the cold tongue with latest breath kept calling — Ah! my poor Eurydice! Eurydice! the banks returned all down the stream.²⁴

The head drifted across the Aegean and after a long lapse of time reached the Island of Lesbos, unharmed by the water, still singing and still freshly bleeding. Just as it touched the shore an infuriated serpent (again the solar emblem) strove to insert its fangs, but Phoebus Apollo drove the viper away and turned it into stone with its jaws still gaping. Then, at last, the Bard rejoined his lost Eurydice, at whose side in the Fields of the Blessed he walked, gazing his full without fear of penalty.

The head and the lyre were both preserved in the Island of Lesbos in an oracular hero-shrine within the sacred precinct of Apollo, to which in later times pilgrims flocked even from distant Babylon,— and among those who thus sought the guidance of the dead Prophet was Cyrus the Great. It is also related that Neanthus, son of Pittacus, the Sage-tyrant of Mitylene, because of the many wonders formerly wrought by the magical lyre, was so eager to gain possession of it that he bribed the priest of Apollo. Whereupon the young man with the lyre in his bosom stealthily left the city by night and as soon as he reached the open country began to strike the strings under the belief that he too would be able to move rocks and trees, but he failed so miserably that the dogs of the neighboring villages straightway fell upon him and tore him to pieces. Now, the Lyre, at the intercession of Apollo and the Muses, has been placed among the stars, where it forms the constellation Lyra. Such,

23. Diogenes Laertus, *Proemium*, iv.

24. Vergil, *Georgics*, iv, vv. 523-7.

in outline, is the ancient myth of Orpheus the Magical Bard. It conceals a historical basis to a consideration of which we shall now turn.

(b) THE HISTORICAL ORPHEUS OR THE EARLY RELIGIOUS REFORMER

Of the life of Orpheus, the man, the great religious teacher and reformer, who was born in Thrace, spent most of his life at Pimpleia on Mount Olympus, and lived (perhaps) about 1250 B. C., in contradistinction to the Magical Bard, little is known except possibly his father's name. Diodorus Siculus says:

Charops, grandfather of Orpheus, gave help to the god Dionysus, who in gratitude instructed him in his sacred Mysteries; Charops handed them down to his son Oiagros and Oiagros to his son, Orpheus. Orpheus was a man of natural genius and superlative training, who introduced many changes into the rites of the Mysteries: hence they called the rites which had their origin in Dionysus, Orphic.²⁵

In the *Rhesus* which has come down to us among the plays of Euripides, Orpheus is referred to as a God-man, the Prophet of Dionysus, who

'neath Pangaïos' rock
Dwelt, god-revered by them that knew the Truth.²⁶

And Aristophanes declares:

First Orpheus withheld us from bloodshed impure, and vouchsafed us the *Great Revelation*.²⁷

Strabo adds:

Near the city of Dium is a village called Pimpleia where Orpheus lived. . . . He was a man of magical power in both music and divination and taught the rites of the Mysteries — thereby obtaining many followers and a great influence. . . . Some accepted him willingly but others . . . attacked and slew him.²⁸

It seems certain therefore that Orpheus, poet, philosopher, prophet, musician, and theologian, who came "not to destroy but to fulfil," had that charm which has ever attended the greatest of the religious teachers — the charm which creates devoted followers and disciples; and on the other hand murderous enemies, traitors, and assassins.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the earliest traditions connect Orpheus not with Dionysus but with *Apollo*, although the name of Or-

25. Diodorus Siculus, iii, 65.

26. *Rhesus*, vv. 972-3 (Way).

27. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, v. 1032 (Murray).

28. Strabo, vii, frgs. 17, 18, 19.

pheus is written large upon the mystery-worship of Dionysus. Says Eratosthenes:

Orpheus did not honor Dionysus but considered the Sun to be the greatest of the gods, whom also he called Apollo; and arising during the night, he ascended before dawn the mountain called Pangaon that he might first catch sight of the Sun, therefore Dionysus was enraged and sent the Bassaridae against him, as the poet Aeschylus says²⁹ and they tore him to pieces and scattered his limbs abroad, but the Muses collected them and buried them in the place called Leibethra.³⁰

These statements are highly important although apparently Eratosthenes failed to understand the inner relationship between Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo is the Day-sun, and Dionysus the Spiritual night-sun. The sacred dress worn during the Mysteries is significant of this symbolism, consisting as it does of the crimson robe over which was hung from the right shoulder the sacred fawn-skin, whose spots represent the heavens at night, the moon and the stars, while the third element of the Mystic Dress, the golden belt, symbolizes the rays of the Spiritual Sun. This is proved by the following quotations, which might easily be multiplied. Proclus, the ancient Platonist, says in his Hymn to the Sun: "They celebrate thee (the Sun) as the illustrious parent of Dionysus." And in an Orphic verse occurs the statement that "he is called Dionysus because he *whirls in circular motion* through the *immeasurably extended* heavens," while Macrobius quotes still another verse as follows: "*The Sun whom men call Dionysus.*" Lastly, in the Eumolpic verses we read: "Dionysus with face of flame, glistens like a star with his rays," and in Aristophanes' *Frogs* the chorus of Mystae sing:

Come, arise, from sleep awaking, come the fiery torches shaking,
O Iacchus! O Iacchus!³¹
Morning Star that shinest *nightly*.
Lo, the mead is blazing brightly.³²

In explanation of this night-worship of the Sun, the following words of H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* are very interesting:

Hence we may understand why the sublimer scenes of the Mysteries were always in the night. The life of the interior spirit is the death of the external nature; and

29. Aeschylus, in his lost play, entitled the *Bassaridae*.

30. Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*, xxiv.

31. The Mystery-Title of Dionysus in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

32. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, vv. 340-4 (Rogers).

the night of the physical world denotes the day of the spiritual. Dionysus, the night-sun, is therefore worshipped rather than Helios, orb of day.³³

It is thus evident that Orpheus was a prophet of the Religion of Light, a worshiper of the Spiritual Sun in its twofold aspect of Apollo-Dionysus, reformed the popular orgies held in honor of Dionysus by introducing the Mystery-worship into the earlier rites, and as a result was himself slain by the votaries of the old, popular, degenerated worship, as is established out of the mouth of many witnesses. Later his tomb became a hero-shrine. Thus, it is said by the scholiast to Euripides' *Alcestis*, who quotes the early philosopher Heracleitus as his authority, that "*Orpheus set in order the religion of Dionysus in Thrace on Mount Haemus, where, it is said, are certain writings of his on Tablets.*"³⁴ Therefore, it is probably certain that the Orphic religion of ancient Greece sprang from the blood of a real teacher and reformer, one of the great benefactors of humanity.

Eurydice, the Mystic Bride, is the divine light within. The Muses who gather up the scattered fragments of the Bard's body are the repentant Maenads,³⁵ his former murderers; that is, the worshipers of the older unreformed Dionysiac worship, who subsequent to the Passion were converted to the new teachings. They knew not what they did, when in their state of frenzy. This conversion of Maenad to Muse is exactly parallel to the reform of the wild and unrestrained Bacchic worship into orderly and ascetic Orphism, the transformation of brutality into noble restraint and righteousness under the refining spirit of music and law.

The marvelous myth of the Magical Bard has misled some of the best classical scholars into a denial that Orpheus was a historical figure, a denial which apparently has the support of Aristotle. Such scholars declare that Orpheus was originally an Underworld God, the counterpart of Dionysus.³⁶ This hypothesis, however, fails to account for several features of the myth; it ignores the almost unanimous testimony of antiquity in regard to the historical existence of Orpheus, and does not explain the very significant fact that Orpheus is filled with the spirit of orderliness and grave earnestness, typical of Apollo, but diametrically opposed to the *popular conception* of Dionysus. Historically, then,

33. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 'Before the Veil,' p. xiv.

34. Scholiast to Euripides, *Alcestis*, v. 968.

35. *Vide* the suggestive words of Miss J. E. Harrison in her excellent *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 2nd. Ed., pp. 463-4.

36. E. Maass, *Orpheus*, pp. 127-72.

Orpheus was a mighty religious teacher, mythically a wonder-working musician.³⁷ Orpheus, the man, reformed the common worship of Dionysus by teaching the eternal truths of the inner light, the divinity of humanity, and the immortality of the soul. He was a worshiper of the Spiritual Sun, whose only prayer was that voiced in the beautiful paraphrase of the Gâyatrî:

O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe,
 Thou from Whom all proceed, to Whom all must return,
 Unveil to us the face of the true Spiritual Sun, now hidden by a disk of golden light :
 That we may see the Truth and do our whole duty
 As we journey toward thy Sacred Seat.

Hence his mythical association with both Apollo and Dionysus.

The declaration of Diodorus Siculus that "the whole mythology of Hades" was brought from Egypt into Greece, and that the Mysteries of Osiris are the same as those of Dionysus, and those of Isis the same as those of Demeter,³⁸ when linked with the similar statements of Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris* throws light upon the tradition that Orpheus was initiated by the hierophants in Egypt. In fact there can be no doubt but that the Mystery-god Zagreus is substantially the same as the Egyptian Osiris.

The following words of the ancient Platonist Proclus in his Commentaries on the *Republic* of Plato furnish a suggestive and important key:

Orpheus because of his perfect knowledge is said to have been killed in various ways: for the reason, I believe, that the men of his age understood the Orphic Harmony (that is, the mystical teachings of Orpheus) only *partially*: inasmuch as they were unable to receive a universal and perfect knowledge of it. But the Lesbians best understood his melody, and therefore, perhaps, the head of Orpheus separated from his body is said to have been transported to Lesbos. Fables of this kind, *consequently, are related of Orpheus as well as Dionysus, and because he was the leader in the rites of Dionysus, he is said to have suffered the same fate as his god.*³⁹

This does not imply, I think, that Proclus intended to deny the Passion of Orpheus, as a historical fact, but that he meant to explain the origin of the myth of the Magical Bard, which has arisen from the teachings given by the historical Orpheus in regard to the Mystery-god within. The traditions have clothed the religious reformer with many char-

37. Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 2nd Ed., pp. 454-73.

38. Diodorus Siculus, i, 96.

39. Proclus to Plato's *Republic*, p. 398.

acteristics taken from the Greek story of the Mystic Savior. However, among the later teachers of Orphism there was not a St. Paul to conceive of the idea of identifying the prophet with his prophecy by making the religious teacher himself the incarnation of the God-man savior. Therefore, although a mythical Bard-Orpheus has been created by reflexion from the teachings of the historical Orpheus, the religious reformer, yet the teacher has remained more or less distinct from his teaching; that is, he has never been thoroughly identified with Zagreus, the Mystery-god, whom he preached, although the myth of Orpheus is in itself an adaptation from the Mystery-story.

Orpheus is thrice-crowned victor by his divine music (that is, his mystic teaching): on earth over men, beasts, trees, and rocks; in heaven by obtaining permission from Zeus to descend to Hades alive; and victor in the Lower World by his success in persuading Persephone and Hades to let Eurydice return to earth, if only for a time. His lyre of seven strings with its divine harmony of the human heart made perfect by suffering, embraces all within its universal compass, and though we have forgotten its complete harmony we can still hear fragments of the lost notes; and the impulse transmitted to historical Europe by its ancestor of sacred poetry and of music, its primeval revealer of the eternal truths, may still be felt by those willing to stop and listen.

What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint,
 But more melodious than the murmuring wind
 Which through the columns of the Temple glides?
 It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
 Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
 Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
 The waning sound scattering it like dew
 Upon the startled sense.⁴⁰

The figure of Orpheus, the son of Oiagros, prophet both of Apollo and of Dionysus, will, in the true History of Religion, which remains still to be written, be placed in honored company with Gautama the Buddha and Jesus the Christ.

40. Shelley, *Orpheus*.

‘GHOSTS’ AND ‘OBSESSIONS’

AXEL EMIL GIBSON, M. D.

FROM the standpoint of science nothing really dies. The process called death does not affect man himself, but simply removes him from the instrument, which in the form of a physical body has been offered him as a means of evolutionary service and usefulness while on earth.

The human soul grows in the body like a seed in the soil. And as the seed strikes root and takes expression in leaves, blossom, and fruit, so in a corresponding manner the soul finds field of growth in the midst of human vicissitudes, with opportunities to unfold into beauty and power, followed by its final culmination in character and individual immortality, as the living fruit of triumphant virtues.

But whether the soul is to be picked from the Tree of Life, a ripe, mature fruit, or knocked down to rot on the ground, premature and worthless, depends upon the conditions the individual permits to influence and shape his life while yet alive on earth. For if the great Gardener of Life does not find the fruits worth gathering, they must remain on the ground — a moral contagion and a source of infection to every life within their zone of influence.

Now these ‘windfalls’ from the Tree of Life furnish the major percentage of the ‘spirits’ that visit the séance-room and bring us messages from the ‘world beyond.’ And while we readily accede to the possibility of great and surprising exceptions, yet if we are to judge from the standard of the returning messages, there can be no doubt that the ‘revelations’ so often purporting to come from the souls of departed great men, are the fabrication of astral nondescripts — ‘windfalls’ of the spirit — which from their hiding-places of molecular invisibility play with the curiosity and credulity of ghost-hunting audiences.

Furthermore, by the strength of his affinity, the ‘spirit’ may attach itself to personalities whose dispositions in some way correspond to the nature that made up his own moving interests while concretely alive on earth. He is the same old ‘good timer’ as before his demise, in possession of every faculty and inclination of his earth-life, minus only the physical body — the tool or instrumentality necessary for the operation of his sensuous nerve-life.

Thus we have the ghostly, but perfectly logical, situation of a diseased entity writhing under the tyranny of all his old unconquered passions, yet without the nervous apparatus by which to satisfy the hunger and thirst of his wide-awake and unweakened vices. This necessitates the expediency of some kind of a sensory go-between, a psycho-physiological relay-station in the form of a human organism by which the 'spirit' may find an opportunity to gratify its passional desires and sense-cravings, through the thrills of the nervous excitations of the physically surcharged personality of a professional medium.

It is here that we have a basis for what we so often find referred to in the annals of spiritualism — ancient and modern — as 'obsessions.' In other words, 'obsession' is the effort of a disembodied, earth-bound, and degenerate entity to gratify its own unabated lusts and cravings through the nervously overstrung organization of an impressionable, more or less psychologized, individual.

The opium-dens, gambling-resorts, and spiritualistic séance-rooms are the favored haunts for these invisible ghouls of a degenerate posthumous humanity, as in such places they may easily secure victims for their ghostly sports, at the nerve-racking, life-sapping, reason-beclouding expense of the unfortunate men and women who patronize these places of horror. Through a process of 'psychic wire-tapping' the indulged senses of the obsessed subject will be played upon and made to send thrills of sensuous response into the psychic nature of the obsessing 'spirit.'

On the other hand, as the mere chemistry of death has no power whatever to change the moral foundation of human nature, and turn a long career of vice into the triumph of exalted virtue, it is only logical to surmise that there must be as many liars and blackmailers masquerading on the other side of the great divide as there are on this side, and consequently that it would be very unwise to accept a message from a 'spirit' on no other foundation for its genuineness than the circumstance that the messenger happened to be 'dead.'

And this logic holds equally good if the case is turned around, for if death has no power to transform a scamp into a sage, or a demon into an angel, neither can we concede to it the power to pervert a towering master-mind into the mental and moral status of a poser and ignoramus. Yet, if the messages alleged to have come to 'mediums' from such super-minds as Victor Hugo, Walt Whitman, Channing, Julius Caesar, Henry James, Shakespeare, Ingersoll, Roosevelt, etc., are genuine, there

can be no doubt that evolution in 'spirit-land,' in place of moving onward, moves backward.

If the real facts of this silent, unrecorded drama were known, enacted as it is behind the closed doors of human temptations, struggles, and defeats, our public institutions of education and character-building would be made to change their ethical attitude to the soul-stricken lives that, tossed upon the breakers of their secret passions, are finally overwhelmed by the vampire-forces they themselves conjured forth as harmless toys for their amusement.

The path of the medium, the 'ouija-boards,' hypnotic trance, psychism, etc., is strewn with human wrecks, who in most cases have gone to their graves with their secrets, ignorant themselves as to the real causes for their downfall, and hence unable to send a warning signal to the long line of ill-fated fortune-hunters that follow in their lead. They have failed to recognise that power, to be safe, must spring from life itself, in response to unselfish, duty-governed living. Hence any possession, not based on altruistic service, is a play with uncontrollable, because unearned and undeciphered forces, which like firearms in the hands of reckless children, may deal disaster and death to the curious, amusement-seeking, unthinking crowd.

As a last word it may be said that the way to reach our departed friends should not be to awake them rudely from their well-earned repose, by turning on the psychic alarm-bell of a professional 'medium,' but rather so to live and work, that when the final summons comes we shall be borne by the very forces of our own exalted nature into the zone of beauty, power, and harmony occupied by those with whom we aspire to commune.

CAGLIOSTRO

A Messenger Long Misunderstood

P. A. MALPAS, M. A.

VIII

THE PHYSICIAN OF STRASBOURG

MEANWHILE Cagliostro's enemies had been busy and their activities resulted in some unpleasant situations for those who had spoken of Cagliostro's beneficence toward them. Not many people of position are ready to withstand the social martyrdom of ridicule, and

the constant repetition of vague accusations of scoundrelism against their benefactor sometimes ended in making them believe, against their own knowledge, that 'there was something in it,' exactly as the secret and open accusers intended. Few people realize how much harm can be done to the reputation of a man by making him 'unfashionable.' The fierce fires of unfashionability burn up friendship, gratitude, every noble feeling, in all but the truest hearts, and Cagliostro's enemies knew it. Moreover, professional jealousy plus a loss of income will lead closer to crime than most professional men suppose until put to the test. This weapon was also used with deadly effect against him, but the real enemy kept ever out of sight.

For these reasons the story of Madame Sarrasin is of special interest. Not only have we most complete details of the case, but Jacob Sarrasin himself, the banker of Basle and a man of high standing in the world, stood stoutly by Cagliostro to the last. It was for the purpose of confounding such faithful ones as these that the enemies started their posthumous campaign against Cagliostro's name. It was for this that they made a parade of his *alleged* 'abjuration and repentance.'

We can do no better than give Sarrasin's own account of the matter, as written by him on November 10, 1781, at Strasbourg, in a letter to M. Straub, Director of the Royal Factory of Small Arms in Alsace. Says M. Sarrasin:

You wish me to give you a detailed account of the complicated ills from which the beneficent hand of M. le Comte de Cagliostro has delivered my wife. It is, you say, for the purpose of communicating it to a person of high distinction who desires to be informed on the matter.

I hasten with the greatest willingness to comply with this request, the more so that I have the keenest desire to make the cure public in the interests of humanity: and I doubt not for an instant that the person who wishes to satisfy himself on the point will be glad to aid in having what I am going to tell you inserted in some public newspaper.

I write as a man inexpert in the French language, and with the frankness and simplicity of a Swiss, so you will kindly pardon my style, if it is neither elegant nor flowery, the more so in that it is only a question of facts, in consequence of which truth and precision ought to be the only qualities required in this narrative.

Eight years ago my wife was attacked by a bilious fever, which was the source and beginning of all her ills, for after this period she had stomach troubles; and a jaundice, which she had subsequently, proves that she continued to have bile in the blood. A number of remedies were taken for this complaint without curing it. Little by little there established itself a pain in the right side; she

lost sleep, strength, and her natural heat; there was always a bitter taste in the mouth, and periodical loss of appetite.

It was while in this condition, continually going from bad to worse, that she placed herself in the hands of physicians three years ago. They were physicians of great experience in the art, and they added all the interest of personal friendship to their professional care; but notwithstanding, and in spite of all the consultations which were held in other countries, her various complaints became daily worse and degenerated into a very serious illness.

The pain in the side became very violent; insomnia became so complete that she could not even get an hour's rest; furs and even blankets for the feet became necessary, even in the hottest season; an utter weakness prevented the patient from taking a hundred steps without giving way under the weight of her own body; periodical losses of appetite would not allow her to swallow anything, solid or liquid, for days together; a terrible thirst, which for a fortnight obliged her to drink as much as twenty-eight bottles of water during the day, varied these symptoms, and there followed a weakness which prevented her rising from her bed for nearly two months.

Scarcely was she relieved from this, when violent convulsions with which her son was attacked had such an effect upon her that she herself had very violent attacks. They were so strong that eight people could hardly hold her down in her bed.

These nervous troubles, which tortured her for eighteen months with all possible violence, and which took all forms and all imaginable degrees of severity, constantly alternated with her other maladies, so that she found herself struggling with death regularly, once a month.

Sometimes there were convulsions which so agitated her that she was expected to die at any moment; at other times a loss of appetite of eight to ten days made us tremble for her life. At such times she could swallow only three spoonfuls of water in the twenty-four hours, and that with difficulty.

In all these moments of suffering and agony, the art of the physicians could do nothing for her, and very often palliatives could not even be administered; it was necessary to leave the crises of nature to produce a temporary recovery; but the source of the malady always remained, and also a number of complications which brought back the same diseases in increased degree.

It was while in this condition, worn out with a life of such suffering, that my wife (for whom all the science of the physicians and their consultations could suggest nothing that had not already had an adverse effect) came to Strasbourg to implore the generous help of M. le Comte de Cagliostro. He was kind enough to yield to her entreaties and to undertake a cure which was to cost him so much care and trouble.

My wife arrived here at the end of April and first suffered a loss of appetite of five days, and a very violent nervous attack. M. le Comte succeeded at once in so relieving her that instead of these attacks being repeated at her home for several days, as usual, there was no other attack for the time being; and every

time after that when her hysterical sufferings reappeared there was never more than one attack.

It was the same with the loss of appetite which, in consequence of the care and prescriptions of M. le Comte, never afterwards lasted more than twenty-four hours.

After having thus mastered the disease, the Count, by the superiority of his knowledge and his assiduous and indefatigable care, succeeded in giving back to this sufferer a health which she had forgotten and which she had lost hope of recovering. He began by tranquillizing her nerves in such a way that the severest tests were incapable of upsetting her any longer.

Then he went to work on the other symptoms with a like success, or rather, he attacked the disease at its foundation, so that this lady, who hitherto, one might almost say, had no sleep at all, who even in her best intervals ate only with an extreme abhorrence, who was incapable of walking more than a few steps, who suffered from great cold even in the hottest season, now sleeps her seven or eight hours of uninterrupted slumber, awaits her dinner and supper with impatience, walks for whole hours without tiring, and has rid herself of the warm clothes and furs. In a word, she enjoys the best of health, and remembers her sickness no more, except only to give thanks to God and her benefactor on finding herself delivered from it.

It would be superfluous, Monsieur, to set down in detail all the care and attention given by M. le Comte de Cagliostro. You have seen with your own eyes, like myself, all the trouble which this illustrious friend of humanity puts himself to for the alleviation of the ills of those who suffer, and you know, as I do, that the incense for which so many are greedy, has no attraction for him. To do good for its own sake is his principle, and his heart seeks its reward in its own virtues.

It would be too difficult a matter to express my gratitude. Words fail me to define the sentiments of my heart. Otherwise I should have to tell you of what our dear Count has done to restore my son; and further, of what I personally owe him for my prompt cure from a fever which resulted from the long sufferings of a wife whom I love more than my own existence.

I leave sympathetic souls the pleasure of filling the gaps left here by my pen. Yours, Monsieur, is such a one; you have given proof of it by all the trouble you have taken in helping the Count in the restoration of our well-being. Receive our thanks and the assurances of our friendship, and extend us yours; be assured of the esteem with which I have the honor to be, etc.

— SARRASIN.

Schlosser's confirmation of the Sarrasin case gives other details. To quote:

I can, with full certainty, say that Frau S—— [Sarrasin], whom the Count has completely restored, has to thank him for her life and her complete health. I knew this lady before she thought of giving herself into the care of the Count. I was a witness of the attacks from which she suffered; I have seen her wrapped

in furs in the hottest months of the summer because she could not possibly get warm; she had no sleep and no inclination to eat, and when the crises came, it could be seen plainly enough how shattered was her constitution. I was visiting her at the time when the Count was at work on her cure, in Strasbourg, and she still suffered as though she could not suffer much longer.

When she was cured, she spent several days in my house, and no trace of her former sickness was to be seen; she was as well as myself. I visited her after that at Basle. An attack in connexion with a forthcoming accouchement made me anxious about her; I, who had no reason to trust the remedies of the Count *so confidently*, besought her and her husband to avail themselves of the services of regular physicians. But she took the Count's medicine and in a few hours the attack was over, and she was happily delivered. Since that time she has hardly ever been sick, and it is not yet two months since she was staying in my house, where she was as well, as bright, and as healthy as I am. . . .

The accusation of swindling on the part of the Countess is just as much an invention as what was said of Frau S——. You can certainly say that it is a lie.

Upon another occasion M. Sarrasin relates that Cagliostro, after one treatment, cured his boy, Felix, of a nervous malady which the ordinary physicians failed to relieve. So much for this testimony.

Many things about Cagliostro are indeed paradoxical. Considering that he was a Freemason, we suggest that it was not he who was on trial, but others. If those who are not Masons cannot quite follow the idea we may perhaps use a simile, for a candidate for Masonry is a candidate to learn, not to criticize, just as a university undergraduate is not called upon to judge his professors, but to learn from them. Such is the question as we understand it.

At Strasbourg Cagliostro predicted the death of Maria Theresa, Marie Antoinette's mother, giving the day and the hour. Cardinal de Rohan told Madame d'Oberkirch of the prediction five days before the news arrived.

Laborde, the French Minister of Finance, states that Cagliostro had over 15,000 patients in Strasbourg, only three of that number dying. Many of these had been declared incurable by the 'faculty,' which persecuted him, and his amazing successes where they failed could not but aggravate their bitterness against a physician who never troubled to produce a diploma and yet could teach them their own trade.

Says Mr. Trowbridge:

He would not consent to give any explanation of his method to the doctors and learned academicians, who treated him with contempt born of envy — as the pioneers of science, with rare exceptions, have always been treated.

The remark by the same author that very probably the greater part of his success was due to the confident tone in which he assured his patients of the certainty of their recovery is rather forced when we consider that all the alchemists, the Rosicrucians, and also magicians, have always averred that the success of a magical work largely depends on the confidence the operator has in his powers. So this non-magical explanation is very magical indeed — only that the word and the science of magic are so little understood, even when explained by those who know most about it. Magic is not parlor-conjuring. Emphatically the unpaid-for cures of such a physician as Cagliostro are in many cases real magic in the sense of the alchemists. What could be more magical than preserving life when the best orthodox physicians fail? If magic is used to make money or for any other impure motive, so much the worse for all concerned, but it is magic all the same when the great powers of Nature are called into action by those who can do so consciously, and with definite purpose.

We will take the liberty of quoting Mr. Trowbridge's remarks further, as they show some clear thinking on the part of a non-technical mind, if one may say so, without implying more than the words say. For 'alchemy' was and is really a very serious science, hidden though it may be under a jargon more picturesque and more accurate, if less dry and clumsy, than the technical jargon of, say, modern chemistry and medicine. This writer makes some very shrewd and correct observations, apparently by accident, and then as frequently mingles them with what one day will doubtless be called the "strange unlearned superstitions of the early part of the twentieth century." It must not be forgotten that alchemy is a universal science. And the application of this universal expression to daily life is, "If you really believe you cannot do a thing, you are not likely to succeed." Who doubts it?

Another point too little insisted upon is that the praise of an enemy may be more deadly than his sword. It is remarked that the fulsome praise and ridiculous exaggerations of some have done more to damage Cagliostro's reputation in the opinion of serious people than the bitter denunciation of his enemies. Has it not occurred to many that the enemies of Cagliostro, judging by events, must have possessed a vindictiveness, a power, an intelligence, and an energy almost superhuman? And that many of his friends were his worst enemies while others were mere puppets in their hands? We must look for the traces of an enemy of

extraordinary intelligence in more directions than we ourselves would suppose likely, and it is this subtil ability which has cast over all the life of Cagliostro the trail of the picaresque. A sort of good-natured, condescending toleration of an amusing scoundrel, has, as it was doubtless intended to do, damned Cagliostro more than direct attack could have done. In fact, direct enmity often but justified him the more, throwing his true character into a stronger light.

Says Trowbridge:

Judged by the number and variety of his cures — and it is the only reasonable standard to judge them by — they were to say the least remarkable.

In the present day it is no longer the custom to deride the knowledge of the old alchemists. The world has come to acknowledge that, in spite of the fantastic jargon in which they expressed themselves, they fully understood the uses of plants and minerals of which they composed their drugs. . . . The remedies of a Borri or a Paracelsus are still deserving of respect and still employed. Cagliostro is known to have made a serious study of alchemy, and it is very probable that his magic balsams and powders were prepared after receipts he discovered in old books of alchemy. Perhaps too . . . he made the most of old wives' remedies picked up haphazard in the course of his travels.

Perhaps not. Many of these old wives' remedies result from remembered prescriptions of the alchemical schools, and Cagliostro would have to reject rather than to select, being a man of science. Meanwhile there seems to be very little that is 'haphazard' about practically universal success, even in cases given up by the regular doctors. If a case is quoted where he 'explained' his success as being more by good luck than drugs, that good luck is shown to be the result of shrewd knowledge of the human make-up, and is none the less good medicine.*

*Extract from a review of a new book on Cagliostro *Les Vies du Comte de Cagliostro* ('The Lives of the Count di Cagliostro') by Constantin Photiades, in the *Courrier des États-Unis*, May 1, 1932: The writer after identifying him with the scandalous Balsamo in the usual manner of superficial inquirers into the complex career of Cagliostro, yet finds himself compelled to write the following (translated from the French):

"He [the author of 'The Lives'] has not been able fully to clear up everything in that existence, so thoroughly confused by the one who led it. There are some gaps in the life of Joseph Balsamo between the periods of his birth at Palermo in Sicily on August 8, 1743, and his death in the prison of San Leo on August 6, 1795. Still, we can reconstitute the chief stages."

There are indeed 'some gaps' between the vulgar Sicilian thief and the refined gentleman with "the imperious look of the Occultist" as the reviewer says. If filled

In spite of the care which Cagliostro took not to offend the regular physicians, the situation became impossible for them. Secure in their diplomaed and dogmatic ignorance until his arrival, they enjoyed consideration and that kind of an income which few workers obtain — payment for successes and greater payment for their failures. Now, however, this stranger of unknown origin completely cut the ground from under their feet. Waiting until they had declared their helplessness and the certain loss of a case, he took the matter in hand and often effected a cure in a day. For this he never took a penny, and very often indeed gave money where it was needed. His purse seemed inexhaustible, and he did not limit his ministrations to the physically sick — he cured the politically sick, those in prison for debt, by paying their debts and releasing them. Was there ever such a man?

Strasbourg began to be seriously inconvenienced by the vast number of patients that sought the kindly aid of this Eastern Master-physician, but it was an inconvenience which was easily tolerated considering that it paid well the citizens who supplied the drugs and medical necessities. To them it was a blessing, no less than to the sick of Strasbourg, and especially the military. But the physicians were losing both prestige

up, these 'gaps' might clear up some mysteries. Speaking of Cagliostro's success in Strasbourg, the reviewer says:

"He went to cure the patients condemned by the doctors, to succor the unfortunate, and to capture the best society by his star. Now the high quality of the people whom he conquered and who became his friends is certain. Among them we do not find the Illuminati only, or the weak-willed, or the fantastic.

"At all his stopping-places in the northern or southern capitals of Europe, Cagliostro acquired lasting friends and faithful correspondents, of whom some were famous personages. If the eminent Cardinal de Rohan was perhaps a prince in whom vanity had warped his judgment, a young man like Ramond de Carbonnière, actually given by Rohan to Cagliostro as secretary, was very far indeed from being a mediocrity. It is true that he had worked in alchemy and that he had thus entered the play of mysteries (*le jeu des secrets*) in which Cagliostro was a Master.

"Cagliostro's charities and cures are undeniable. Numerous witnesses relate astonishing cures; he saved from death sufferers from cancers, gangrenes, cholera. What did he give them? For simple cases he must have used fresh aloe, and, for more complicated ones, an ointment with a silver base, and a medicine with a base of gold (which proves that he had recognised the curative effects of colloids). His miracles conferred a supremacy and a rapid popularity in every country through which he passed. He did not care who presented himself before him; he would look closely at the applicant and sometimes turn away with contempt, or interrupt the conversation with a sibylline answer. But he never refused his services to the poor."

and money. This fact it was impossible to evade. Cagliostro must be destroyed.

The case of Catherine Groebel brought matters to a crisis. The wife of a bourgeois (who was also a Mason) she was too poor to afford the expense of a physician without real necessity. She was, however, an expectant mother, and on May 23rd, when serious symptoms developed, she is described as being in a critical condition. A lady who took a kindly interest in the sick woman (one Mme. de la Farge) asked Dr. Ostertag, as one of the most highly reputed accoucheurs of Strasbourg, to see her. Dr. Ostertag stated that the case was highly complicated and the woman's condition extremely dangerous, and that, in fact, it was his belief that the child was dead. Two other physicians and the midwife were present when Dr. Ostertag visited Catherine Groebel and stated as above. He declared, in addition, that the situation might become even more critical, and that an operation might become necessary, in which case they were to send for him, in the meantime keeping a careful watch on the patient. He does not appear to have given any prescription (though later he declared orally that he did so).

Dr. Ostertag visited the patient several times during the next few days, and on May 28th, at 4.00 p. m., he found a sudden turn for the worse. He came at 7.00 p. m., but did not see the patient, merely speaking to the midwife whom he told to call him if anything special occurred.

At 11 a. m. the next day he came and found the parish priest with the patient and in his company, Cagliostro. The name of the priest was M. Zaegelins. Quickly shutting the door, Dr. Ostertag spoke to the midwife (Magdelaine Leidnerin by name) outside the room, and asked her if she had sent for Cagliostro. "No," she replied, "it was M. le Curé who brought him. Cagliostro has not touched her, and has given no prescription. But he gave her six francs." Dr. Ostertag was furious and left the house to return no more.

Cagliostro sent the patient, by the hands of the Curé, a red powder to be given at five o'clock that afternoon in red wine. He gave directions as to diet — wine, and coffee with bread soaked in it, if she felt hungry. This was given at 8.00 p. m. Two hours later the illness resumed its normal course, and within half an hour a child was born with a minimum of pain and almost without delay.

At two o'clock the next day Cagliostro paid a visit and gave a few drops of one of his medicines, after which recovery was rapid and nor-

mal. The priest, Zaegelins, was delighted with the success of his intervention and spread the news of the wonderful cure throughout the parish, omitting none of the details. Dr. Ostertag found it necessary to do something for his damaged reputation; his friends gathered, and once more there were positive enemies and positive friends formed around Cagliostro as a center of precipitation. Rarely indeed could any who had to do with him be neutral or indifferent.

Dr. Ostertag called the midwife and had no great difficulty in getting her to declare just what he wanted, or at least to support all the suppositions that might favor his case, that there was no danger at all, that the case was perfectly normal, that he had *not* thought the child was dead, that he had *not* suggested the possibility of having to use the knife, that, in short, Cagliostro had done nothing right. Given the circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that the woman testified as she did. Not everyone will quarrel with his bread and butter for the sake of a stranger.

Even Cagliostro was constrained to defend himself by making the case as public as possible. With all his selflessness, he could not afford to let public judgment go against him by default; he represented the people, the poor, the necessitous and sick, and if he allowed himself to be calumniated without reply, it was they who suffered. He had nothing to lose that the world considers valuable; indeed a stoppage of his work meant a saving of money for him. The priest, Zaegelins, willingly gave an impartial account of the matter, and this is his declaration:

I the undersigned, Curé of the parish of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, certify that I was called by Catherine Noirot, wife of Nicolas Groebel, bourgeois and Master-Mason of this town, on the 24th of May last, to receive her confession and to give her if required the holy communion, a precaution which M. Ostertag, the doctor and accoucheur of the town, had advised her to take, finding, as the midwife did also, that the patient might have an unfortunate accouchement, as her last had been, being in a state of continual fever with unrelaxing pains; the midwife said even that the accoucheur, as well as she, feared that the child was dead; impelled by feelings of compassion, I spoke of it to M. Milliaut, by way of conversation, and he thought that no remedy could be prescribed, as he had not seen the patient. I went to M. le Comte de Cagliostro, whose sensibility of soul was known to me, as well as the gifts and help he had already lavished upon my parish from the time that he came to live in the town; he promised immediately to comfort her and gave me a medicine which the patient had hardly swallowed when the pains came on. The accoucheur [Dr. Ostertag] having come on the scene, found the condition of the patient so changed that he left the accouchement to the midwife, saying that the child was making a

natural presentation. On the next day, M. le Comte again administered a remedy and the pains came on immediately, but without effect. Finally, on May 30th, he gave her again the first remedy; she was delivered very happily of a boy, so healthy that she did not have him baptized at once — this was done at the church at four o'clock in the afternoon.

In witness of which I have given the present certificate, signed by my hand and sealed with the parish seal. — ZAEGELINS, *Curé*

Dr. Ostertag wrote a long *Mémoire* of fifty-six pages to bolster up his case. If facts were lacking, words were not, and to all intents and purposes this *Mémoire* was a defense of orthodoxy and vested interests against the supposedly new and obviously effective medicine of Cagliostro. In this writing the Doctor declared that Cagliostro had but reaped the fruit of his (Dr. Ostertag's) labors; that his medicines were valueless, and that the priest had failed to observe the facts correctly. A good deal of irritation was felt by the medical faculty because it was not at that time believed that drugs could have such an effect.

The magistrates had given permission to print this tedious *Mémoire* on behalf of Dr. Ostertag, but on due representation the Council of Fifteen gave their decision that the address to them by the Doctor was *calculated to compromise them* and they decreed its suppression.

Some eighteen months later Cagliostro himself says of his sojourn in Strasbourg:

Prince Louis [the Cardinal de Rohan] took me back as far as Saverne, where after many thanks he desired me to call upon him as often as I could. We parted and I returned immediately to Strasbourg, where I resumed my usual occupation. What good I did gave rise to various libels, in which I was styled Antichrist, the Wandering Jew, the man 1400 years old, etc. Unable to bear so much ill-usage, I resolved to leave the place. Several letters which the King's ministers were pleased to write on my account, made me alter my mind. . . . I never solicited those testimonials either directly or indirectly.

These are the letters mentioned. The first is from the Comte de Vergennes, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to M. Gerrard, Pretor of Strasbourg:

Versailles, March 13, 1783.

Comte de Cagliostro, Monsieur, is not personally known to me; but common report, ever since he settled at Strasbourg, is so very much in his favor, that humanity requires he should find there both regard and tranquillity. His being a stranger, and the good which he is said to have done, is a double title which authorizes me to recommend him to you, and to the magistrates over whom you preside. Monsieur de Cagliostro seeks only for peace and security. These are insured to him by the laws of hospitality; and acquainted as I am with your natural disposition, I am fully per-

sueded you will eagerly maintain him in the enjoyment of both, as well as of all other advantages which he may personally deserve.

I have the honor, etc.

— DE VERGENNES.

The Marquis de Mirominil, Keeper of the Seal, writes to M. Gerrard:

Versailles, March 15, 1783.

Sir, The Count de Cagliostro has zealously employed his time since he has settled in Strasbourg, in relieving the poor and necessitous, and to my knowledge, he a foreign gentleman, has in several instances acted with that humanity which makes him worthy of a peculiar protection. I beg you will, as far as it concerns you and the magistrates, whose chief you are, procure him all that support and tranquillity which every stranger ought to enjoy within his Majesty's dominions, especially when he makes himself useful to the nation.

I am, etc.

— MIROMINIL.

The Marquis de Ségur writes to the Marquis de la Salle, March 15, 1783:

The good conduct which I am well assured Count Cagliostro has supported in Strasbourg, the very laudable employ he makes in that city of his knowledge and abilities, and the repeated proofs of his humanity there to individuals laboring under various complaints who had recourse to hm, entitle him, a foreigner, to the protection of the Government. The King charges you to see not only that he be not molested at Strasbourg whenever he sees fit to return to that city, but also that he be treated with the regard which he deserves, for the good which he does to the distressed.

— SÉGUR.

(To be continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

Thoughts on Reading “Adventures in Philosophy and Religion,” by James Bissett Pratt*

H. A. FUSSELL, D. LITT.

THE adventures of the human soul in its search for truth, seeking to express itself, to grow towards ever greater perfection, by the progressive unfoldment of the powers and faculties it feels stirring within itself — the phrase is typical of the longings we feel and of the efforts we put forth to attain a richer, fuller life, and greater knowledge. The general trend of thought today is away from the blank negations of the science and the agnosticism of the last century. We demand something

*The Macmillan Co., St. Martin's Street, London W. C. 2, price 10s. net.

more positive, more inspiring, more satisfying to the 'Pilgrim in Eternity' that each one of us is.

Before turning to the work under review I would mention a book which is attracting much attention, *The Buddha and the Christ*, by Canon Streeter. Canon Streeter does not place the Buddha so high as the Christ,— a liberal *orthodox* Christian can hardly be expected to. He emphasizes contrasts more than resemblances, and fails to grasp the meaning of Karman and Reincarnation, doctrines which were held by many in the early days of Christianity, and are still held by outstanding members of the Church. Notwithstanding these defects, the significance of his book and of other parallels, now being published, between the thinkers and teachers of the past, cannot be denied. The vast world of *non-Christian* thought, with which the narrow Christianity of our forefathers would have nothing to do, is now being opened up to an intelligent public by popular writers as well as by erudite theologians and scholars.

Adventures in Philosophy and Religion belongs to the type of book we are describing. It gives a complete and interesting account of what Mr. Pratt calls 'up-to-date' philosophies. Written in a decidedly humorous vein, the author's aim is yet essentially serious. Mr. Pratt says:

It is my conviction that the rejection of the view which recognises the reality of the psychical and of the self forces upon one an inevitable choice between alternative courses of thought, each of which leads ultimately to illogical and absurd conclusions.

Science and philosophy and religion teach us that Nature is One, animated and propelled by the same indwelling spirit; and that man, as an integral part of universal nature, is in his own spiritual, psychical, and physical structure, a complete exemplification of the structure of the universe; for he is its product, its child.

Unlike Canon Streeter, Mr. Pratt declares:

I believe in the essential spiritual unity underlying Buddhism and Christianity. What is most precious in these two great religions, and what was central in the teachings of Greek philosophy is, I believe, the heritage of the philosophical and religious liberal of our day; and his high task and heavy responsibility is the defense of this noble tradition.

Noble indeed is this, since it constitutes our link with the past and our hope for the future. The union of these three systems of thought and knowledge, which have so much affinity with one another, and have already done so much to shape the destiny of mankind, safeguarded by

the insight into their true meaning that a knowledge of Theosophy gives, may well prove to be the lodestar in the next great period of human history which has already begun in accordance with cyclic law, the alternating rhythms of which constitute the cosmic harmony.

The last two chapters, ‘In a Chinese Temple,’ and ‘Gotama and his Misinterpreters,’ dealing as they do with problems of philosophy and religion which center around the Self and the life of the spirit, are remarkable for their beauty and for the insight into Buddhism as well as into Christianity which Mr. Pratt displays. Of these two exoteric religions, Buddhism is by far the more spiritual and philosophical. All the great religions of the world, Brâhmanism, Zoroastrianism, and the others, have, some more, some less, of the original Esoteric Wisdom which gave birth to them, within the exoteric and established outward form into which each has crystallized, and it is only Theosophy that gives the key to it.

It is a relief to read these two concluding chapters which reveal something of the nature of the *real*, inner man, the diviner side of our being, after having been somewhat bored and, perhaps, ‘amused,’ but not ‘instructed’ by Assistant Professor Neorealist and Dr. Behaviorist, who think they know so much more than the ancients did, who “never understood the importance of the empirical” and “made the facts bend to [their] *a priori* conclusions.”

The names of the disputants indicate the views which they will advance. In the first discussion, the longest in the book, it is impossible not to appreciate the merciless, but always good-humored, probing of the questions asked by Socrates who, true to type, seeks continually to bring his interlocutors to define the terms they use and to state their views more definitely and clearly, whereby he, with his ‘midwifery,’ as he calls it, helps thought to the birth.

What help is it to a man who has found out that the real battle-field, on which he is called to fight, is the thoughts and feelings of men, and that victories are first won in thought, to be told that “mind is only a form of behavior” and that “sensations and images are spread out side by side inside his head,” as Mr. Try-Everything-Once insists they are? He instinctively feels, nay, he knows, that he is essentially divine, that he is the result of what he has thought and done in this and in former lives, and his destiny is in his own hand, so what advantageth it to be told by the Professor that man is “a physico-chemico-physiological-

psychical-social functioning of the original cosmic material"? Will that help him to be the expression of all that is highest in him, and so become the incarnate God that he is?

As for Mr. Pratt's own views (I hope I do not misinterpret them), he undoubtedly believes that the universe must be understood as a whole, an organism, a Cosmos of higher and lower grades of being and consciousness (of what a Theosophist prefers to call 'consciousness-centers'), if any part of it is to be understood at all. He appears to me also to believe that mind (individual minds as well as 'collective mind') is essentially a spiritual-psychical faculty, dual in nature, everywhere and constantly active and productive: the link uniting matter and spirit. Mr. Pratt nowhere even alludes to Theosophy, but it is impossible not to see how Theosophical are the views propounded in the more serious parts of the discussions.

For instance, in closing the first discussion, which is entitled 'The Adventures of Socrates in Wonderland,' Socrates, before returning to the Elysian Fields, whence he has come to learn the views of our modern philosophers, makes many excellent remarks. He says

that to find individuality one does not need to fly to the unimaginable Absolute [note the words 'unimaginable Absolute'] . . . that we are explorers of the Infinite . . . and that no philosophy can long remain credible to man which would destroy man's faith in his own self.

In the second chapter, 'Religion up to Date: or Mr. Layman's Adventures in the New Theology,' the Rev. Only Truechurch is a learned and 'up-to-date' Fundamentalist; then there is Dr. Humanist and Mr. Social Worker, who give their views of what true Christianity should be. Mr. Popular Writer discovers to his amazement, that the Bible "has lots of first-rate stories, and is really of much importance today." One remark by Mr. [very intelligent] Layman I cannot resist quoting:

I don't know much about the Universe but I do know this that it produced me and men like me, that all our human productions, all our human values, all values of every sort, came from it . . . and it seems to me we characterize its processes and purposes better than anything else does.

In these few words we have a consistent philosophy of the Universe and of man in his relations to it; one which Theosophy amply justifies and *proves*, as anyone can see who will read Dr. de Purucker's *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*. This philosophy is the synthesis of religion, philosophy, and science: "the teachings of higher and exalted

beings who watched over the childhood of humanity.” Once men, just like ourselves, in a former great world-period, they may be called “the fine flowers of humanity,” and represent what we, too, may become, if we will learn like them to control, and finally to forget self. For, paradoxical as it may appear, self-forgetfulness, selflessness, is the only way to find THE SELF, our true Self, which *knows* all things, *loves* all things, *is* all things.

I cannot do more than allude to the fourth chapter, ‘In a Chinese Temple: Monk, Missionary, and Promoter.’ The remarks of Mr. Hustler, the Promoter, are not devoid of a grotesque humor that saddens while it diverts. He serves as a foil to the Old Monk, who hopes for a purified Buddhism: for a return of the lofty doctrine of the Mahâyâna, pruned of all the superstitious ideas and practices that have grown up around it and that hide its true nobility and beauty.

and to Mr. Liberalist, a Christian of a very high type, with broad and enlightened views, as his name indicates, and who has much sympathy with a genuine appreciation of the sublime truths contained in all religions.

The concluding chapter, ‘Gotama and his Misinterpreters, and a Long-Lost Buddhist Sutta,’ is the noblest and the most truly spiritual in the book, and contains some very significant statements, to a few of which we call attention:

The Blessed One’s Teaching about the self is profound, deep, and not easily understood. Much has he left undeclared [a manifest intimation that the Buddha *had* an esoteric teaching for his Arhats]. . . . The essence of the Master’s Dhamma is to love, and to pity and sympathize and help. . . . “For nothing else is so essential to the ideal life as impersonal, disinterested love.” . . . “O monks, there must be no limit to your love.”

To sum up: Men are rethinking old thoughts, deeming them to be new. Man is what he loves and desires and thinks about. If he shirks his duties, he loses his greatest opportunities to grow and to progress. All things, men included, derive their real value from the ends they serve. There is but one Truth and one Way. Both point to the supreme fact of spiritual life: that true blessedness consists in complete self-forgetfulness in the service of all that breathes and lives.

Such are some of the lessons contained in *Adventures in Religion and Philosophy*, and they are consonant with the teachings of Theosophy.

The Problem of Lemuria

C. J. RYAN, M. A.

IN the valuable new book of 250 pages, *The Problem of Lemuria*,* the fascinating subject of the submerged 'Atlantis of the Pacific' is treated for the first time seriously and with authority by a competent observer. Mr. Lewis Spence must be congratulated upon the result of his labors, for we are now provided in clear form with a vast array of data in proof of the former existence of a continent or continental islands, and of a civilized race, where now nothing remains but a few scattered islands amid the waste of waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Mr. Spence divides his subject into fourteen chapters, under such topics as the Legend of Lemuria, the Argument from Archaeology, from Myth and Magic, from the testimony of Custom and Art, the evidence of Biology and Geology, the result of the Catastrophe, and the connexion between Lemuria and Atlantis. Good illustrations and maps assist the reader to comprehend the salient points. The author quotes largely from the most reliable authorities, such as Macmillan Brown, Wallace, Geikie, Darwin, Fenollosa, Wegener, Elliot Smith, Scharff, and many others. Probably few students, unless they have read H. P. Blavatsky's works, have realized the strength of the argument in favor of a lost Pacific Continent and of its importance in regard to the right understanding of the history of 'prehistoric' mankind.

In his consideration of the theories offered by various writers in favor of Lemuria, the author respectfully discusses H. P. Blavatsky's statements on the subject and gives some pages of quotations from *The Theosophist* for 1880 and from *The Secret Doctrine*. He introduces them by saying:

Madame Blavatsky, it would be foolish to deny, was a most distinguished student of the arcane, and everything she wrote was characterized, as a general rule, by logic and temperate statement. So much one is bound to admit in homage to a great mind. In her *Isis Unveiled*, she has little to say about Lemuria. It is rather in her *Secret Doctrine*, a work often of surprising insight, that she deals with its problems.— p. 86

He takes exception only to her arguments which are based "solely upon the ancient Indian wisdom-writings" which, he believes, are allego-

**The Problem of Lemuria, the Sunken Continent of the Pacific*, by Lewis Spence. David McKay Co., Philadelphia: Rider & Co., London, price 10s. 6d.

ries that need more critical examination and selection before they can be employed as proof. We cannot be surprised at this guarded attitude, though we know that as she had far more than exoteric allegories to rely upon, a further examination of the position, with the entire content of her argument in mind, adds to the strength of her teaching. Behind H. P. Blavatsky's revelation of the outline of man's pre-history lies the actual knowledge of Initiates who have preserved it quite independent of the purposely-confused records accessible to Orientalists.

Mr. Spence shows excellent judgment in rejecting the wild and distorted reflexions of H. P. Blavatsky's original teachings that various writers have presented of late, and which have done much harm to Theosophy. Some of these he courteously but firmly criticizes. It is rather surprising, however, in view of his care in the selection of information in support of his thesis and of the wide circle of well-informed readers this valuable study is bound to reach, that he should have quoted an amazing story of an alleged community of about six thousand or more refugees from Lemuria said to be still living in California, near Mt. Shasta! They are claimed to be tall, white-robed people possessing airships and employing weird secrets of magic. No one can pass the uncanny protective boundary of their village, in which stands, it is alleged, a magnificent temple of marble and onyx, and at times they produce brilliant displays of 'reddish-green light' on the mountainside and visible from afar, etc.!! All this in our thoroughly-explored State of California! Of course Mr. Spence does not vouch for this queer romance, and, as he asks for some light on the subject from readers in California, we recommend him to consult *The Canadian Theosophist* for March and May, 1932, and to write to the authors of the articles on pages 25, 88, and 91, for further information.

Mr. Spence very properly repudiates the fantastic 'translations' of the Maya scripts offered by Le Plongeon in support of a lost continent, saying: "So far, the Maya script is only decipherable as regards its chronological system, and not at all in respect to any historic matter it may dubiously contain." It is most unfortunate that Le Plongeon, a devoted student of archaeology and a brilliant explorer and discoverer in Mayaland, should have injured the case for lost prehistoric civilizations in the eyes of the scientific world by his wild claims to be able to read the Maya inscriptions.

Returning to serious matters; Mr. Spence's position in regard to

Lemuria (or Gondivana Land as some geologists call it) is that the existing traces of high culture in the Pacific islands are positive proofs of a prehistoric civilized race or races that formerly inhabited great continental masses and archipelagoes which have now almost entirely disappeared. Some or all of these populations may have been white. The evidence is very strong, especially that derived from archaeological remains, which may be summarized as follows: Oceania was inhabited in the so-called Stone Ages, long before the present population of Melanesians and Polynesians entered it, and when continental conditions still prevailed. Monuments are found of a class far beyond the powers of the present inhabitants of the scattered islands, and they exist in areas where subsidence has undoubtedly taken place. Isolated structures and sculptures are found on islands surrounded by other islands which contain nothing of the kind; this fact suggests sacred enclosures on elevated sites on land which is now almost entirely submerged. Good evidence is found of the former existence of three vanished empires in the north-west Pacific, of one in the vicinity of Easter Island, as well as of the probability of others.

Mr. Spence presents a large amount of evidence from monumental remains in behalf of this theory. For instance, there is the extraordinary deserted city of Metalanim in the Caroline Islands with its immense breakwaters of huge basaltic stones. A colossal staircase leads to a courtyard with fallen pillars of great size. Many of the blocks of basalt weigh thirty tons! A local tradition speaks of the 'Kings of the Sun' in connexion with the marvelous prehistoric remains of Metalanim. Easter Island, with which everyone is more or less familiar, is only one of the numerous archaeological mysteries of the Pacific, and Mr. Spence gives a condensed but sufficient account of it as well as of the other unexplained remains of human art and science on which he partially builds his theory. He attaches great importance, also, to the testimony of Tradition which has handed down the story of the former existence and ultimate destruction of a highly civilized race of unknown antiquity.

Careful consideration is given to the systems of writing still preserved in the Pacific area. These are found in Easter Island, and in Oleai in the Carolines. The latter can still be read by a few natives, but the ideographic characters of the Easter Island script are not yet satisfactorily deciphered. Mr. Spence does not refer to the recent discovery by Professor Guillaume de Hevesy of the resemblance between the Easter Island

script and that found on the exquisitely chased seals from the recently discovered cities on the Indus, India, which were destroyed *not less* than B. C. 3000. This extraordinary discovery is important in view of Mr. Spence's argument for Lemuria on the basis of Art, and especially in connexion with tattooing. The tattoo-mark of the frigate-bird is found on both sides of the Pacific, and he shows reason to believe that it is a relic of a widespread symbolism found only in the Pacific, a symbolism that refers to the submersion of the ancient lands. He says:

Professor Fenollosa believed in a particular school of Pacific Art which revealed a unity caused by actual dispersion throughout the whole basin of the Pacific and its adjoining coasts, fixed and traditional, and implying an antiquity of at least 5000 years from the present era. This, of course, posits not only the existence of a very early culture and art in the Pacific basin before the coming of the Polynesians, but an ancient land-connexion between the Oceanic area and Asia. It seems as if tattooing may have had its origin in the Pacific from Lemurian sources, as the Maori myth of its invention in an underworld sphere would seem to imply. . . .

Now, if tattooing spread to Asia from Lemurian sources why should not the Easter Island script have spread as far as India from the same source? It must have gone one way or the other.*

The Theosophical student will naturally ask, How does the presentation of Mr. Spence's case confirm H. P. Blavatsky's teachings about the vanished world-continent and islands to which she gives the name Lemuria, and which, she declares, disappeared in great part many millions of years ago, to be succeeded by another world-wide reconstruction of the Earth and human civilization — Atlantis?

Mr. Spence naturally does not commit himself to dates, but confines his argument to the demonstration of the existence of some great and extensive civilization preceding present conditions, which, he explains, are not very archaic. He shows that well-authenticated modern traditions assert that large territories have been submerged within even a few hundred years. 'Davis Land,' apparently a very large archipelago, was seen in 1687 near Easter Island; nothing but a rocky islet environed by reefs is now visible in that neighborhood; Juan Fernandez in 1576 reported seeing the coast of a great southern continent not very far from Chile; as lately as 1836 an inhabited island south of the Cook group was submerged, etc.

But these changes and many others do not take us back very far,

*See THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH, January, 1933, page 343.

though they testify to the instability of the bed of the Pacific. Mr. Spence's Lemuria goes back at least as far as the Aurignacian period of the Stone Age in Europe (23,000 B. C. according to present estimates, which are considered very conservative by many) and he traces definite connexions between it and his Atlantis. The geological evidence in favor of great continental masses in the Pacific has been greatly strengthened lately by the abandonment of the lunar theory of the origin of the Pacific basin. According to this now exploded idea the Pacific Ocean occupies the hollow left when a great mass of material was whirled off into space to settle down into a globe — the moon!

We heartily welcome this book both for its valuable scientific evidence in favor of the former existence of a Pacific continent and a real civilization thereon, and for the author's clear presentation of the case. As he points out, in order to explain the conditions now existing there — archaeological remains, traditions, art, and the rest — it is absolutely necessary to admit a prehistoric culture of great extent. Quite naturally, he does not venture to extend his vision so far back into the dim reaches of time as H. P. Blavatsky was compelled to do — into the millions of years — for she had access to information not obtainable by ordinary means of research.

During the ages that have passed since the Lemuria of which she speaks, and which was really *another 'world,'* extending far beyond the limits of the Pacific, nearly every record of that condition has perished, and the little that does remain has been overlaid by ages of more recent activities, perhaps by the labor of Mr. Spence's more recent Lemurians. For instance, H. P. B. says that Easter Island has been submerged for a very long time, and only comparatively recently did it reappear above the waters. The wooden tablets, with their inscriptions that resemble the writing on the seals of the newly-discovered cities in India, and many other comparatively modern relics found there, would naturally belong to a far more recent culture, such as Mr. Spence describes. But what about the extraordinary platforms of carefully shaped basalt masonry whose origin and purpose are a mystery? These might remain under water for a million years and be unaffected.

Mr. Spence remarks that it is rather baffling to hear from Madame Blavatsky that Scandinavia formed a part of Lemuria. This would be so, if she had confined her 'Lemuria' to the Pacific, but she only used a convenient scientific term to express the general world-conditions at the

very remote time that she was describing — before the Atlantean world-culture arose. Again, when she spoke of Lemuria as possibly existing before the Tertiary or Cainozoic geological age — supposed, at the time she wrote, to be only a few million years in duration — she expressly says that she was using the language of contemporary science. In recent years the Tertiary has been extended almost indefinitely into the distant past — at least sixty-five or seventy million years — and so her statement does not apply to the time-periods *as reckoned today*. Man, as we know him, has only existed a comparatively few million years. The reader will find H. P. Blavatsky’s explicit statement about geological periods and man’s antiquity in *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume II, page 693.

The evidences for a former great civilization in the Pacific as presented in this book are so interesting that only considerations of space prevent a full treatment with many quotations, but the reader must study them for himself. The book is another sign of the times, pointing to the steady progress of Theosophical ideas in the most intelligent circles.

“The Mysteries of Egypt”*

IN this work the author maintains the reputation of painstaking research and study which his earlier works have justly gained for him. By quoting extensively from the main sources of information relative to the Mysteries in classical literature, and also from modern writers, he has rendered a distinct service to students who may have little opportunity for consulting original sources.

After outlining the subject in an Introductory, followed by two chapters on ‘The Literary Sources,’ the author devotes other chapters to a discussion of the ‘Origin,’ and the ‘Philosophy’ of the Mysteries, ‘Mysteries in Other Lands,’ the ‘Ritual,’ ‘Reconstruction of the Mysteries,’ etc., with a concluding chapter on ‘The Significance of Initiation.’

The author modestly writes in his Preface:

As regards the ultimate secrets of the Mysteries of Egypt, I have naturally been unable to convey more in mere words than my predecessors in the task. . . . Initiation into any of the Mysteries of the Secret Tradition and comprehension of the same are in reality, acts of the spirit, separated by a whole heaven from the crudities of vocal expression.

**The Mysteries of Egypt or the Secret Rites and Traditions of the Nile*, by Lewis Spence. Rider & Co., London.

He realizes the difficulty which confronts anyone who would interpret the Mysteries. He says:

Regarding the philosophy of the Egyptian Mysteries science altogether fails us. . . . The realm of spirit is properly closed to the profane. . . . Nevertheless, it is possible to employ spiritual analogies in spiritual circumstances.—p. 123

We hope, therefore, it will be understood that any comments which we offer are not made in any spirit of disparagement of the excellent work done by the author, but with a desire to help the student still further in his search for more light on the subject. For instance, in seeking to interpret the Mysteries, *it is essential that we understand the meaning given by the Initiates into the Mysteries to the terms used by them.* As a case in point, what did they mean by the ‘gods,’ and by “scientific knowledge of the gods” (p. 153)? We suggest that herein lies one of the keys to a correct valuation and interpretation of the Mysteries.

Again, what the experiences of the neophyte were, during and as resulting from Initiation, we think the author has failed to glimpse, even though some very plain hints are given in some of the references cited by him. The student who desires to interpret these hints and approach more nearly to an understanding of the Mysteries and of Initiation, is recommended to study the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and of the leaders of the Theosophical Society who succeeded her.

It is greatly to be regretted that the author, speaking of Pythagoras, who was an Initiate of the Greater Mysteries, should so fail to understand him and his teachings as to characterize these as “that long-discredited Philosophy of Numbers by which Pythagoras distorted the Eastern wisdom he but partially understood” (Preface, p. 5). Nevertheless, the work is a valuable contribution towards a better understanding of the teachings, and of the high level of moral, intellectual, and spiritual attainment, of the ancient Egyptians. The book is excellently printed and appropriately illustrated.

— J. H. F.