

Articles from *Theosophy* — April 1896 to October 1897

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THE METAPHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE UNIVERSE — E. T.

Hargrove

Students of Theosophy will always owe a debt of gratitude to the author of *Esoteric Buddhism* for the efforts made therein to at once simplify and elaborate the teaching he received from Masters through H. P. B. But when the time had come to give the *Secret Doctrine* to the world, few will regret that H. P. B. took advantage of the opportunity to correct certain mistakes made in the earlier book. The letters transmitted by H. P. B. to Mr. Sinnett, published in the *Occult World*, clearly show the immense difficulty under which the Masters labored to express their teaching in terms that would be understandable to their recipient. Looking back over that correspondence one cannot help being struck by the nature of the questions addressed to the Masters. The replies given show that these questions were not only almost exclusively scientific, and materialistic at that, but were also such as might have well been addressed by counsel in cross-examination. This does not reflect discredit upon the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, for he took up the legitimate attitude of a man of the world, who knew something about modern science, and whose mind was open to receive truth from any source that lay open to him, so long as he had been introduced to it in a reasonably orthodox manner. Such an attitude, however, sufficiently explains why his conclusions were fallacious on certain important points, based as those conclusions were on insufficient data and dealing as he was with an abstruse and unfamiliar subject. H. P. B. in the *Secret Doctrine* elucidated matters satisfactorily to all concerned, except to the few whose preconceptions debarred them from adopting any other view but that based upon their friend's original misinterpretation.

A more recent contribution in *Lucifer* to the discussion of this matter demonstrates among other things the difficulty some people experience in overcoming a strong leaning towards materialism, for materialism has ample scope for its expression in Theosophy, as well as in orthodox Christianity and more directly in atheism. Such an innate tendency of the mind may be persistently maintained through many outer changes of belief, and at all times and under all conditions may be trusted to degrade and ultimately destroy all that it touches. Applied in this particular instance, it has taken a metaphysical conception such as the septenary constitution of the earth and by meditation has produced seven balls tied together with string, gummed to space, fixed by a hawser to the Absolute, and held in leash by the sun with the help of all-pervading gas, metaphorically if not actually.

It may be well, therefore, to consider H. P. B.'s teaching in regard to the constitution of the earth as given in the *Secret Doctrine*, and to endeavor to obtain some conception of the metaphysical nature of this and every other world in space. Beginning with fundamentals, we have to bear in mind the Unity that underlies all manifestation. Manifested, that Unity can be studied under various aspects, though remaining in Itself unknown. For purposes of preliminary study it is well to take the three aspects — Consciousness, Matter or Substance, and Spirit or Life. Every atom and every universe, every event and person, every object and every subject, can be studied from each of these three standpoints; and while such things in themselves remain the same though expressed in these different terms, it will not be possible to obtain a comprehensive view of any one of them unless all three aspects are recognized and observed. To baldly state that a man has this or the other appearance will convey no true impression of his nature. He must also be described from the standpoints of consciousness and of force. Only then can we form

an estimate of his character. But the real man still remains unseen and unknown. To know and see the reality we must identify ourselves with the reality, must become at one with the Root of all things. That is only possible because of the issuance of all things, man included, from this root Unity, and the consequent tendency of everything to return to its source, much as the waters of a river rushing to the sea return in the form of rain and dew to the mountains whence they came.

This process of emanation may be imagined as taking place from within outwards, and the resulting absorption from without within. Emanation, beginning with the one, becomes the many, and the final result may be described as the differentiation and densification of matter; the differentiation and limitation of consciousness manifesting through this matter; the differentiation and confinement of life or force. Then the reaction takes place and the many re-become the one.

On seven great planes manifestation is said to take place. On the four lower planes form exists; the three higher are formless. On each of these planes consciousness, life and substance are inseparably present. Even on the outermost subdivision of the lowest of these seven planes there is life and consciousness; nor are these distinct from substance, for all are but aspects of the eternal and changeless Unity. On each of the planes consciousness is limited by the substance-vehicle through which it there manifests; and substance varies enormously from its most dense condition to a condition that could only be described as spiritual.

These planes may be diagrammatically represented as seven concrete divisions, but it should be understood that they might equally well be pictured as seven concentric circles, as seven separated globes, or in any other way preferable to each individual. To imagine them as actually distinct divisions would

be to misunderstand the entire philosophy. They interpenetrate each other, overlap, and might be roughly compared to a sponge soaked in water, containing at the same time a considerable quantity of air, all of these being permeated by ether. In this case different states of matter interpenetrate. It is easy to trace different states of consciousness in oneself and to observe that these are not hard and fast divisions but that they merge and overlap, as in the dreaming and waking states.

Everything in nature exists on these seven planes. Man, essentially one, is said to have "seven principles;" he exists in seven states, or on seven planes; he can be studied from seven different standpoints — but these principles are not water-tight compartments. It is, for instance, impossible to say where the physical body ends and the astral body begins. The earth on which man lives is the physical body of a sevenfold being. It has its astral body with various subdivisions acting as vehicles for its life principle, its Kama or force, its mind and the rest. The principles of the earth correspond to those of man, but in the case of the earth these principles are called globes to avoid confusion. They are no more separate as globes, however, than when called principles. What relation, then, does man bear to the different globes or principles of the earth? This brings up the whole question of objectivity and subjectivity, and it is only possible to deal with this in the most summary and cursory manner.

What is now called the physical world is "objective" because man is functioning in and through substance of the plane called physical, for the objectivity of matter depends upon the plane of matter through which consciousness is functioning at the time. If he transfers his consciousness to another plane of matter, as in sleep, physical things cease to be objective (though they may be seen subjectively) and he sees objectively the things of another plane, as, for instance, one of the lower subdivisions of the astral

plane. On coming back to this plane he will not remember such experiences unless his physical brain be sufficiently sensitive and sufficiently steady in certain respects to record these impressions. In the case of seeing a chair or other object, the process from the Theosophical standpoint is familiar enough. Chair does not exist as chair apart from interpreting consciousness, and that is a point of immense importance. Apart from the mind that makes of it "chair," and considering it physically, it is a congeries of molecules in motion, not compact, but vibrating at a great rate and with interspaces as between the planets and stars in space. This vibration is communicated to the nerve ends and, passing along the nerves till it reaches the brain, is transferred by way of the astral body to the inner and real seat of sensation, where vibration takes form and gives rise to an idea in the mind. This idea reacts back to the brain. Thus in every case and on all planes, whether physical or other senses are first impressed, objectivity depends upon mind, the interpreter.

The objective of one plane is the subjective of another. "Ideas" are subjective to man when he is functioning in and through his physical body, but if he transfers his consciousness to the plane of ideas and functions in his mind-body (composed of the same order of substance as that which clothes the ideas), they will be seen objectively by him. That will become his "physical world" for the time being, though conditions of time, space, and so forth, will have entirely altered. On that plane everything on which the mind is turned becomes instantly objective, and a glimmering of this may be seen in the power of the imagination to call up image after image at will, so that in the case of those who have very powerful imaginations a picture is reflected upon the eye from within.

Applying the above to the Earth-chain of Globes, the meaning of the Master's words will become clear when he wrote that the

other six globes are "not in consubstantiality with our earth, and thus pertain to quite another state of consciousness." The substance of which they are composed is on a plane different to our earth plane, and in order to see any one of the other globes objectively we must transfer our consciousness to a vehicle composed of its order of matter. This is further explained by H. P. B. when she says that "when 'other worlds' are mentioned — whether better or worse, more spiritual or still more material, though both invisible — the occultist does not locate *these spheres* either *outside* or *inside* our Earth, as the theologians and the poets do; for their location is nowhere in the space *known* to, and conceived by, the profane. They are, as it were, blended with our world — interpenetrating it and interpenetrated by it." (1) Planets that are seen objectively in the sky are visible for the same reason that the physical bodies of other men are visible to us; they are composed of matter on the same plane as our earth. Mars, Mercury and other visible planets do not belong to the Earth-chain; they are each of them the physical bodies of real "planets," are each of them septenary, are, roughly speaking connected with the earth in somewhat the same way as the different members of a family. But to make the different members of a family the various principles of one entity would certainly not be philosophical, and yet that is practically the interpretation put by the author of *Esoteric Buddhism* upon the teaching in regard to the Earth-chain of Globes.

Until we realize that the mind is the theatre of human evolution, and that the passage of the monads from globe to globe is really a transference of consciousness from plane to plane as it descends into matter and ascends towards spirit, we shall not be able to form a true conception of the Theosophical philosophy, even intellectually. It is in the mind that we live and that we die, that we suffer and enjoy, and it is only with the mind that we can

become conscious of objects on any plane and will finally gain first-hand experience of the Earth's inner being.

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Secret Doctrine*, vol. i, p. 605 (o.e.) The whole of pages 605 and 606 should be read in this connection. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THE VOW OF POVERTY — *Jasper Niemand*

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

— *Matthew, v, 3 and 5.*

When first the disciple is recognized, it is because his heart is vowed to Poverty. This alone constitutes his discipleship.

The mystic Recognition is not had upon outward planes. Persons do not bestow nor receive it. The heart evolves it and the Law accepts it. When the Vow is evolved, a bloom spreads over the sphere; the heart has put forth its vital sap, soon to burgeon into deeds which are its blossoms. This bloom is seen upon interior planes, where the cloud of ever-living witnesses hail the first promise of man's redemption. By this new vesture of the soul the returning prodigal is seen while he is yet far from his Father's house. A toilsome path is still before him, but his face is turned towards his only home. Man has no abiding home in Nature, for there he wanders desolate, in the intimate and dreary companionship of his personal self-consciousness, which is but the dry husk of Life.

Where outward Recognition appears to be, the true is rarely present. The two may go together, for reasons of outer work and service, for the Divine require visible agents among men. Permission may be given to this one or to that to take some pledge which they so persistently offer, self-blinded, self-deceived: such pledges are received at their real value and not at the estimate of would-be disciples. Or the aspirant is permitted to look upon himself in the light of a disciple *so far as he can*. Such offers are accepted, such was received, even though Treachery, Failure and

Ambition are the grim guides of the self-deceived acolyte. The Law of Compassion has written this truth upon every atom in space — that man has a right to all that he can take from the Spirit, and that Those who are One in that Spirit encourage every effort made towards It. Karma, which permitted both the making and hearing of man's demand, judges it by the light which it emits and provides a reply wholly just. External acceptance of service, promise of aid in return for help given others, these cannot commit the Law and are not in themselves the mystic Recognition; they are more often devoid of that enduring base. The disciple is only received upon that plane from which his offer really proceeds, and not upon that from which he thinks it proceeds.

Yet let us not imagine that the Lodge names actual agents, to abandon them, or for temporary purposes. If we judge these agents by our lesser lights we do but confuse ourselves. There will be but one in visible authority at a time — the senior one; the others, if there be others, are his junior brothers acting under him and with him, for such is the evolutionary hierarchy, and Law provides for the orderly reemergence of its servitors. The juniors may fall away, but not the senior, who *is* senior because of this inability. This does not mean that his soul is sinless while still human. It means that, whatever his oscillations, he has evolved in his sphere a "holding centre" from which he cannot break away. He is never more perfect than the age, the nation and, above all, those with whom he works admit of his being. When we are more perfect, then we have more perfect helpers. The helper is always in advance of those he leads; their greater attainment promotes his own. There is no waste of energy in that centre of conservation called the Lodge; this is why the perfect souls dwell not among us. Hence the occult crime of uncovering the fault — if fault there be — of the teacher or agent of this

plane: it is in large part our own, for we have not as yet made it possible for the pure and perfect to dwell among us. We demand the greatest and are not ourselves the least. We judge not as the Perfect Ones judge. What, then, commands recognition? Only the true Vow of Poverty.

What is that Vow? Is it not giving up all for Truth, or for Peace, or for Mercy, as one sees these oneself, and abandoning all other beatitudes for self-indulgence in some favorite forms of virtue. The truth we see is relative; in embracing it we oft embrace some temperamental inclination of our own. Peace may be a false peace and the sword of lawful war the only mercy. Kindness to preferred men and objects is that partiality which a Master has declared to be "one form of black-magic," the magic of self. Humility is the favorite wile of the elemental devil; and outward ambitions, burned away, have root and substance upon interior planes of life — aye, and a firmer grasp there upon the struggling soul. These virtues are still the possessions of the personal self; they constitute those riches of the human mind which inhibit the entrance to the kingdom.

The Vow of Poverty is a power. It is the power to say, at each instant and to the Law: Thy will be done! The power to abandon hopes, fears, plans, codes, thoughts. To see each moment dawn as 'twere the last, yet to live it as though it were eternal. To have no rights, no wrongs, no *mental* possessions. To see all things, even the innermost, appear and disappear as Life now forms and now dissolves. To lay claim to nothing save to patience, and then to abandon that for a supreme content. Careless of self-vindication, careless even of justification for causes or persons with which one is identified; ready to explain one's self; equally ready to remain unexplained. Amid a deep interior peace to arise on outward planes, sword in hand, for the defence of principles and the maintenance of justice to others. Without aggression, to

defend most earnestly; to strike home, when needed, to the heart of hypocrisies and ambitions, waging war with every ally of material darkness, and most of all with one's own material mind; and all these while remote in spirit and calm in soul. On the outer plane there is no real peace, but only a base compromise, with which the flaming Christ-sword is forever at war. Not all who have taken the Vow wear an aspect of external amiability. The mendicant is a stranger to professions of sweetness and light; he neither rejects nor invites sacrifice and pain. He blesses the Law when it gives and when it takes. He takes hold and quits alike indifferently so far as himself is concerned, and for his erring fellows grieves in silence, not with that audible pity which is itself a form of self-complacency. Deep within his soul he has found the Unconscious. He knows that It possesses naught because Itself is all. He strives to merge his personal Consciousness into the Great Deep. His ever-widening mind becomes a breath and embraces the universe; the Vow has borne its harvest when it "inherits the earth," which is the conquest of the personal thought, and at last for him the beatitude is more mystically translated:

"Immortal are the votaries of the Breath: because theirs is the Realm of the Over-World."

Theosophy

H. P. B. WAS NOT DESERTED BY THE MASTERS — *William Q. Judge*

There are certain things connected with the personality of the great leader which have to be referred to and explained every now and again even in a Society whose effort is as much as possible to avoid the discussion of personalities. Sometimes they are disagreeable, especially when, as in the present instance, some other persons have to be brought in. And when the great leader is H. P. Blavatsky, a whole host of principles and postulates as to certain laws of nature cluster around her name. For not only was she one who brought to us from the wiser brothers of the human family a consistent philosophy of the solar system, but in herself she illustrated practically the existence of the supersensuous world and of the powers of the inner and astral man. Hence any theory or assertion touching on her relations with the unseen and with the Masters she spoke for inevitably opens up the discussion of some law or principle. This of course would not be the case if we were dealing with a mere ordinary person.

Many things were said about H. P. B. in her lifetime by those who tried to understand her, some of them being silly and some positively pernicious. The most pernicious was that made by Mr. A. P. Sinnett in London in the lifetime of H. P. B., and before the writing of the *Secret Doctrine*, that she was deserted by the Masters and was the prey of elementals and elemental forces. He was courageous about it, for he said it to her face, just as he had often told her he thought she was a fraud in other directions.

This theory was far-reaching, as can be seen at a glance. For if true, then anything she might say as from the Masters which did

not agree with the opinion of the one addressed could be disposed of as being only the vapping of some elementals. And that very use was made of it. It was not discussed only in the charmed seclusion of the London Lodge, but was talked of by nearly all of the many disciples and would-be disciples crowding around H. P. B. It has left its mark even unto this day. And when the total disagreement arose between H. P. B. and Mr. Sinnett as to the relation of Mars and Mercury to this earth, and as to the metaphysical character of the universe — H. P. B. having produced an explanation from the Master — then the pernicious theory and others like it were brought forward to show she was wrong, did not have word from the Master, and that Mr. Sinnett's narrow and materialistic views of the Master's statement — which had been made before the alleged desertion and elemental possession — were the correct ones. The dispute is imbedded in the *Secret Doctrine*. The whole philosophy hangs upon it. The disagreement came about because Mr. Sinnett held that his view of one of the letters from the Master received in India — through the hand of H. P. B. — was the correct view, whereas she said it was not. He kept rigidly to his position, and she asked the Master for further explanation. When this was received by her and shown to Mr. Sinnett he denied its authenticity, and then the desertion theory would explain the rest. He seemed to forget that she was the channel and he was not.

Although wide publicity was not given to the charge then, it was fully discussed by the many visitors to both camps, and its effect remains to this day among those who of late have turned in private against H. P. B. Among themselves they explain her away very easily, and in public they oppose those who adhere firmly to her memory, her honor, and the truth of her statements about the Masters and their communications to her. They think that by dragging her down to the mediocre level on which they stand

they may pretend to understand her, and look wise as they tell when she was and when she was not obsessed. This effort will, of course, be unsuccessful; and some will think the matter need not be brought forward. There are many reasons why it should be discussed and left no longer as a secret poison: because it leads to a negation of brotherhood; to an upholding of ingratitude, one of the blackest crimes; and, if believed, will inevitably lead to the destruction of the great philosophy broadly outlined by the Masters through H. P. B.

If, as claimed by Mr. Sinnett, H. P. B. was deserted by the Masters after they had used her for many years as their agent and channel of communication, such desertion would be evidence of unimaginable disloyalty on their part, utterly opposed to their principles as stated by themselves. For when the advisability of similar desertion was in Mr. Sinnett's mind many years before, when he did not approve of H. P. B.'s methods of conducting the movement in India, Master K. H. emphatically wrote him that "ingratitude is not among our vices," asking him if he would consider it just, "supposing you were thus to come," as H. P. B. did, and were to "abandon all for the truth; to toil wearily for years up the hard, steep road, not daunted by obstacles, firm under every temptation; were to faithfully keep within your heart the secrets entrusted to you as a trial; had worked with all your energies and unselfishly to spread the truth and provoke men to correct thinking and a correct life — would you consider it just, if, after all your efforts," you were to be treated as you propose Mme. Blavatsky should be treated? But this warning evidently produced only a transient effect, for in a few years' time, as stated, Mr. Sinnett came to the conclusion that his suggestion had been acted upon to an even greater extent than he had originally intended. At first he had only wished that H. P. B. should be put on one side as channel between himself and the Master, leaving a newly

organized T.S. to his own management under those conditions; but he afterwards thought that H. P. B. had been put on one side as a channel of any sort so far as the Masters were concerned. This wholesale later desertion would mean that in the meantime Master K. H. had entirely changed in character and had become capable of gross ingratitude, which is absurd. Masters are above all things loyal to those who serve them and who sacrifice health, position and their entire lives to the work which is the Master's; and H. P. B. did all this and more, as the Master wrote. To take the other view and imagine that after years of such service as is described in the above quotation, H. P. B. was left to be figuratively devoured by elementals, would prove Masters to be merely monsters of selfishness, using a tool not made of iron but of a wonderful human heart and soul, and throwing this tool away without protection the moment they had done with it.

And how about the members and more faithful disciples who were left in ignorance of this alleged desertion? Would it have been loyal to them? They had been taught for years to look with respect upon H. P. B. and the teachings she gave out, and to regard her as the Masters channel. They received no warning that the plan Mr. Sinnett had for so long carried in his mind could possibly be carried out, but on the contrary often received personally from the Masters endorsements of H.P.B's actions and teachings. Those who harbored constant doubts of her veracity were reprov'd; and yet it would seem for no other apparent reason than a necessary correction by her of Mr. Sinnett's wrong interpretation of earlier teachings she was abandoned by her old teachers and friends who had spent years in training her for just this work!

So the whole of this far-fetched supposition is alike contrary to brotherhood and to occultism. It violates every law of true ethics and of the Lodge, and to crown its absurdity would make the

Secret Doctrine in large measure the work of elementals. Deserted before the explanation of Mr. Sinnett's mistakes appeared in that book, H. P. B. was obsessed to some advantage, it may be thought! But in fact a great depth of ignorance is shown by those who assert that she was deserted and who add that elementals controlled her, doing the work for her. They do not know the limitations of the elemental: an elemental can only copy what already exists, cannot originate or invent, can only carry out the exact impulse or order given, which if incomplete will cause the result to be similarly incomplete, and will not start work unless pushed on by a human mind and will. In no case is this elemental supposition tenable.

The ignorance shown on this point is an example of the mental standing of most of H. P. B.'s critics. Materialists in their bias, they were unable to understand her teachings, methods or character, and after badly assimilating and materializing the ideas they got originally from her, they proceeded to apply the result to an explanation of everything about her that they could not understand, as if they were fitting together the wooden blocks of several different puzzles. But if in spite of all reason this view of desertion were to be accepted, it would certainly lead in the end, as I have said, to the destruction of the Theosophical philosophy. Its indirect effect would be as detrimental as the direct effect of degrading the ideal of Masters. This is clearly shown in the *Secret Doctrine*.

After pointing out in her "Introductory" to the *Secret Doctrine* (p. xviii) the preliminary mistake made by the author of *Esoteric Buddhism* in claiming that "two years ago (*i.e.*, 1883) neither I nor any other European living knew the alphabet of the Science, here for the first time put into scientific shape," when as a matter of fact not only H. P. B. had known all that and much more years before, but two other Europeans and an American as well; — she

proceeds to give the Master's own explanation of his earlier letters in regard to the Earth Chain of Globes and the relation of Mars and Mercury thereto, (vol. i, pp. 160-170, o.e.) Mr. Sinnett himself confesses that he had "an untrained mind" in Occultism when he received the letters through H. P. B. on which *Esoteric Buddhism* was based. He had a better knowledge of modern astronomical speculations than of the occult doctrines, and so it was not to be wondered at, as H. P. B. remarks, that he formed a materialistic view of a metaphysical subject. But these are the Master's own words in reply to an application from H. P. B. for an explanation of what she well knew was a mistake on Mr. Sinnett's part — the inclusion of Mars and Mercury as globes of the Earth Chain: "Both (Mars and Mercury) are septenary chains, as independent of the earth's sidereal lords and superiors as you are independent of the principles of Daumling." "Unless less trouble is taken to reconcile the irreconcilable — that is to say, the metaphysical and spiritual sciences with physical or natural philosophy, 'natural' being a synonym to them (men of science) of that matter which falls under the perception of their corporeal senses — no progress can be really achieved. Our Globe, as taught from the first, is at the bottom of the arc of descent, where the matter of our perceptions exhibits itself in its grossest form. Hence it only stands to reason that the globes which overshadow our Earth must be on different and superior planes. In short, as globes, they are in *coadunition but not in consubstantiality with our Earth*, and thus pertain to quite another state of consciousness."

Unless this be accepted as the correct explanation, the entire philosophy becomes materialistic and contradictory, analogy ceases to be of any value, and both the base and superstructure of Theosophy must be swept away as useless rubbish. But there is no fear of this, for the Master's explanation will continue to be

accepted by the large majority of Theosophists.

And as to H. P. B. personally, these words might possibly be remembered with advantage: "Masters say that Nature's laws have set apart woe for those who spit back in the face of their teacher, for those who try to belittle her work and make her out to be part good and part fraud; those who have started on the path through her must not try to belittle her work and aim. They do not ask for slavish idolatry of a person, but loyalty is required. They say that the Ego of that body she uses was and is a great and brave servant of the Lodge, sent to the West for a mission with full knowledge of the insult and obloquy to be surely heaped upon that devoted head; and they add: 'Those who cannot understand her had best not try to explain her; those who do not find themselves strong enough for the task she outlined from the very first had best not attempt it.'"

Theosophy

HISTORICAL EPOCHS IN THEOSOPHY — J. D. Buck

On page 512 of the *Secret Doctrine*, first edition, vol. ii, is found the following footnote: "Says Johannes Trithem, the Abbot of Spanheim, the greatest astrologer and Kabalist of his day: 'The art of divine magic consists in the ability to perceive the essence of things in the light of nature (astral light), and by using the soul-powers of the spirit to produce material things from the unseen universe, and in such operations the Above and the Below must be brought together and made to act harmoniously. The spirit of Nature (astral light) is a unity, creating and forming everything, and acting through the instrumentality of man it may produce wonderful things. Such processes take place according to law. You will learn the law by which these things are accomplished if you learn to know yourself. You will know it by the power of the spirit that is in yourself, and accomplish it by your spirit with the essence that comes out of yourself. If you wish to succeed in such a work you must know how to separate Spirit and Life in Nature and, moreover, to separate the astral soul in yourself, and to make it tangible, and then the substance of the soul will appear visibly and tangibly, rendered objective by the power of the spirit.' (Quoted in Dr. Hartmann's *Paracelsus*.)"

Trithemius was an abbot of the Spanheim Benedictine monks at Wurzburg, in Franconia. This was four hundred years ago, just at the dawn of the sixteenth century. Trithemius was noted far and wide for his great learning, and among the many who sought his instruction were Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa. Another noted scholar and Kabalist at this time was John Reuchlin, the preceptor and friend of Luther. The discovery of America in the West, and the dawn of religious liberty — the Protestant Reformation — in Europe, mark the close of the fifteenth and the

beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

Paracelsus was born in 1493, and was a pupil of Trithemius between his sixteenth and twentieth years; and Cornelius Agrippa — who afterwards wrote a treatise on occultism greatly approved by his former teacher, Trithemius — was his fellow-student. The monasteries were then the seats of learning, and the monks were the learned men of the day, and those who sought learning seldom found it outside the monasteries. That of St. Jacob, with which Trithemius was connected, was one of the most famous. Then, as now, occultism was in the air. It had not yet organized into schools, and it was ridiculed and bitterly opposed by the rank and file of the clergy. It was a formative period. Most students were familiar with the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Martin Luther's first public utterances were a course of lectures on the philosophy of Aristotle. Luther presently took the initiative in reforming religious abuses. In the beginning of the fourteenth century mysticism had been perverted by the emotional Tauler, who packed the churches where he spoke, at times becoming speechless with emotion (as he was already weakened by fasting) in contemplating the Divine Beatitudes, and the reunion of the soul with God. Reuchlin endeavored to disseminate the Kabalistic interpretation of the scriptures, and at least to supplement with reason and intelligence the dawning age of faith. The age was too gross, sensual and benighted, and the proffered knowledge was rejected for the triumph of creed and dogma, and "salvation by faith." The society calling itself "Friends of God" took the purely Theosophical phase of occultism, and the little mystical treatise, *Theologia Germanica*, gave comfort to the emotional and mystical element of society, that looked with repugnance and disgust on the hypocrisy and brutality of both laity and clergy in those days.

On the other hand, ceremonial magic (hatha yoga) carried away the more intellectual but less spiritual students of occultism like

Cornelius Agrippa. True occultism as expounded by Trithemius gained no foothold, and finally became obscured and lost. Something of the true philosophy may be derived from the writings of Paracelsus, yet fragmentary and obscure to the average reader. A far better outline may be found in Browning's poem, *Paracelsus*. The poet's intuition, idealizing the life and aims of the great physician, has portrayed the journey of the soul in quest of the *great secret*, and outlined the process of the higher evolution of man as stated by Trithemius in the quotation at the head of this article.

After four hundred years we are nearing the end of another century, and the close of a great cycle; and the same old truths are again challenging the world. The Theosophical movement has already gained a far greater impetus than at any time for many centuries. To those familiar with the history of past efforts to bring these truths to the world, the opposition encountered is not in the least surprising or discouraging. It has never been otherwise, and will not be for millenniums to come. Humanity is too deeply immersed in matter and too closely wedded to sense to readily seize and firmly hold the truths of the spirit. The strength of the present movement consists in its simple but firm *organization*, and in keeping it free from dogmatism, vapid mysticism (emotionalism) and the occult arts (ceremonial magic): or, in other words, in following the lines laid down by H. P. Blavatsky in the *Key to Theosophy*; and the work of organizing and holding it intact fell upon one man, who has sacrificed fortune, health, and possibly life, to that *one idea*. Under all sorts of specious pleas, others have sought to *disorganize*, and but for the stubborn, sphinx-like resistance of this one man, backed by those who realized the issues and trusted their leader, they might have succeeded. A careful study of the movement of four hundred years ago will make apparent the necessity of organization, and

the wisdom of the course laid down by H. P. B. and persistently followed by Mr. Judge. If we learn why it failed then, we may the better judge how it may succeed now. Personal issues of every name and nature sink into utter insignificance in the face of the great work of holding these truths before the world, so that they cannot again become obscured and lost, and in refraining from obscuring them ourselves. They stand today like a beacon-light in the midst of the angry and contending waves blown into fury by agnosticism, materialism, and the expiring struggles of the age of blind belief which usurped their place four hundred years ago. *The Voice of the Silence*, "dedicated to the few," embodies those golden precepts vaguely and emotionally discerned in the *Theologia Germanica*. Every day adds proof to the wisdom and foresight of the secret doctrine, with its basis so broad and its foundation so deep that the twentieth century will not be able to shake them. In America the movement was never so strong as it is today. *Organize and work*, has been and still is the watchword. Ridicule has changed to interest, and though the great majority may still be indifferent, the organization will hold in spite of all disorganizers, so long as the few real workers hold steadfast to their traditions.

The period of four centuries of darkness and superstition, of persecutions, sorrow and despair, has been a long time for humanity to wait. At no intervening time has the truth been so revealed or gained such a hearing as now. America, then just discovered, could give no home to the Wisdom Religion. It was then a howling wilderness, inhabited only by bands of wild Indians. Now all is changed. Here is the home of the coming race, and bad as may be the outlook, with competition, selfishness and greed everywhere rampant, side-by-side into the coming twentieth century will go these old truths, no more to be obscured or lost unless we relax our work.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at its flood leads on to fortune." There are epochs in history when old traditions are dethroned, superstitions dissipated, and grand opportunities presented to man. If, however, he fails to seize this opportunity, if the consensus of opinion is indifferent or adverse to the opportunity, then a new cycle begins with other factors shaping events, and it has to run through its course. It may be, as in the present instance, centuries before the opportunity will come again. The movement failed in the sixteenth century. People were not ready for it, and the emotionalism of Tauler was supplemented by the ceremonial magic of Cornelius Agrippa, and Theosophy became obscured and lost. Until H. P. Blavatsky had revived the old interest and called attention to former workers and movements, few persons had ever heard of either. The principles involved are eternal, and they concern the higher evolution of man and the advancement of the human race. Each age gathers, uses or garners what it can. The power of an individual or of any civilization to apprehend and use these principles is the measure of its previous evolution, and the capacity for further progress. It is because people do not perceive their transcendent importance that they fail to grasp and use them, or misinterpret, misapply or ridicule them. It is therefore of importance to show how these great truths have been offered to the world again and again; how here, as elsewhere, history repeats itself, and how back of all passing events, changing creeds or vanishing superstitions, these unchanging principles are pushing for recognition, and are discerned by the few who can understand and apply them.

" . . Man is not Man as yet,
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels

The darkness, here and there a towering mind
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows; when the host
Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers — then, not till then,
I say, begins man's general infancy.

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Such men are even now upon the earth,
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,
Who should be saved by them and joined with them." (1)

FOOTNOTE:

1. Browning's *Paracelsus*, pp. 118, 119. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: I — *Basil Crump*

I - INTRODUCTORY

Art has ever been one of the moral teachers of humanity and its highest function is probably the drama as presented to us in this century by Richard Wagner, in whose extraordinary genius we find the most wonderful combination of arts that is known to history. He was a poet, musician and dramatist of the highest order, and in his prose works he bases all his theories on principles which are practically identical with those of Theosophy. His aim was to bring all arts to the service of the drama in order that it might be, like the Greek tragedy, "the noblest expression of the people's consciousness;" and he represents the culmination of an artistic evolution which is easily traced. In *The Caves and Jungles of Hindustan* the mysterious Gulab Sing says that music stands at the head of all the arts and has almost everything to do with the Vedas, the *Sama Veda* consisting entirely of hymns sung at the sacrifices to the gods. Pythagoras brought the art to Greece and Italy, and taught that the Logos was the centre of unity and source of harmony, and that the world was evolved out of chaos by the power of sound or harmony and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion. In Greece, however, there was no musical genius to join hands with such great dramatists as Eschylus and Sophocles, and so Greek tragedy had no more assistance from the divine art than could be provided by the chorus and a few primitive instruments. Like the Hindus they had more notes in the scale than we now have, but their harmony was crude and elementary to a degree. Then came the development of music once again as a separate art, chiefly through the great German composers, beginning with Bach and culminating in Beethoven, who in his

last great symphony felt so imperiously the need of words to fully express the brotherhood that stirred his innermost being that he burst into song with Schiller's words, "Oh, ye millions, I embrace ye! Here's a kiss to all the world!" Music was now a full-fledged entity ready to take her proper place in the drama. The time was ripe; the greatest musical genius of the age had sounded the call, and Richard Wagner came to complete the work by reestablishing the Greek drama with the added power and glory of music. Hard and bitter was the fight with musical and especially operatic conventionality, but the soul that came to the work was that of a hero of old; he wielded Siegfried's weapon, the sword "Needful," which shone through all difficulties. For half a century he fought, says a biographer, "the bitterest opposition that ever obstructed the path of genius," and lived to see the beginning of his triumph. His greatest work, "The Nibelung's Ring," was first performed at Bayreuth in its entirety a few months after the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York.

The study of Wagner's works is rendered comparatively easy owing to his voluminous prose works, in which he describes not only his theories but also his own inner development. The chief theme of his dramas is the working of the two principles in human nature, known as, the Eternal Manly and the Eternal Womanly, or Creation and Redemption. He assigns poetry and music respectively to those two elements, speaking always of the Poet as the "man" who is redeemed from his egotism by the "loving woman," Music. This duality we know to be a truth on the mental plane, and we see it exemplified in Wagner, whose mind shows a remarkable union of the two faculties. Such a union when it embraces all experience produces the Adept, for the Thinker is sexless. First Creation, then Redemption; first the Poem, then the Music: such was Wagner's method of work. Following closely, as he himself says, the guidance of his inner

self, he worked in accordance with natural laws, and herein was the secret of his strength.

He tells us that, having written the poem, the music then sprang naturally from the subject-matter, each mood (*stimmung*) being represented by a definite theme (*leit-motif*). These themes he wove into a harmonious tissue in strictest accordance with the exigencies of the drama, and it therefore forms an essential part of an entirely purposeful whole, and cannot fitly be compared with absolute music. It was the symbolic legend of the Flying Dutchman which aroused Wagner's inner nature and with it the burning desire to work for the elevation of humanity rather than for personal fame. The events of his youth leading up to the point where the figure of the lonely seaman first appealed to him will be traced in the next article. From then onwards he forsook all historical matter and sought only to portray the Tragedy of the Soul by using his marvellous gifts to expound the ancient myths and make them instinct with new life.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that Wagner's dramas, like the *Bhagavad-Gita*, represent the dual, man, Krishna-Arjuna, on the field of battle. This is the more necessary since the conventional and narrow-minded charge Wagner with cloaking immorality under the glamor of his art; also because anything touching the dual nature in man is apt to be confused with the abominable doctrines and practices of the Lake Harris school and a certain class of Spiritualists.

Now Wagner said: "The incomparable thing about the *mythos* is that it is true for all time;" it sprang from a longing in man for "a seizable portrait of things, to know therein his very own essence — the *god-creative* essence." So in his dramas we are lifted out of the rut of petty personalities and made to feel that his characters are primal types in the great world-drama. It is perhaps

something more than chance that he embodied his teachings in seven works, which show a steady advance in occult knowledge as well as a rapidly increasing power over the forces he wielded. He evolved the same philosophical ideas as Schopenhauer before he had read a line of his works, supplying, however, the element of redemption which is lacking in the thought of the great philosopher. Emerson says that "art universally is the spirit creative," and it was this image-making faculty of the mind which Wagner used as poet combined with the intuitional power obtained through the spirit of music which made him an optimistic artist. His contemporary, Schopenhauer, on the other hand used his analytical, reasoning faculties and through the over-development of the lower mind became a pessimist. Certainly no more striking example could be had of the totally opposite conclusions which may be reached from the same basic concepts.

Those in a position to know say that Wagner was a conscious occultist, and certainly he shows in his later works a most remarkable knowledge of the inner workings of the soul and of the forces of nature. He gives a hint or two as to this, speaking of a period of "conscious artistic will" to follow a path he had struck "with unconscious necessity." His was a great task nobly done, and the might of his beneficent influence has yet to be felt in its full strength; for he saw the future and worked for it.

(To be continued)

Theosophy

DEATH OF WILLIAM Q. JUDGE — *J. D. Buck*

The editor of this magazine, President of the Theosophical Societies in America, Europe and Australasia, our trusted teacher and friend, passed away on the 21st of March at about 9 o'clock in the morning. His death was painless and put an end to a long and desperate fight for life, sustained unwavering until recovery was seen to be impossible.

Some people will doubtless repeat the forebodings that followed the death of H. P. B. prophesying the collapse of the Theosophical Society; but the soul and power that she left in the work, and that became increasingly manifest after she had left us, proved that physical presence is not necessary to maintain that real influence which is primarily spiritual and mental. The influence exercised by William Q. Judge was of the same order. The fibres of his being were interwoven with those of the Society. Death cannot destroy that strong pillar of support. He died as he had lived — for the Society; died as he had lived — upright; and though we must regret that such a sacrifice was necessary, the fact remains that it was not thrown away, for the hundreds that loyally remained with him in the hour of the Society's trial and of his greatest fight will remain unshaken as the wedge by him driven far into next century on inner and real planes. The work of the Society and of this magazine will continue as before. The same policy and purpose will be pursued as hitherto. But more than ever will the success of both depend upon individual members throughout the world. Let that be remembered, and William Q. Judge's one hope and ambition will be realized.

NOTICE.

TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA AND ITS FRATERS THROUGHOUT THE

WORLD.

Brothers: — Our leader has disappeared from the field of conflict. With courage undaunted, with will unconquered, with zeal unabated, with devotion undiminished — the vehicle failed. The chariot went to pieces on the field of battle, and the charioteer is lost from the sight of men. William Quan Judge has finished the work given him to do for this generation, and reserving scarcely time from his great work in which to die, has left us only memories, and the record and power of his example. The influence of these has extended around the globe and will help to mould the thought of the coming century. Energy, steadfastness and devotion were the characteristics of his life, while beneath the sometimes stern exterior, impatient at folly and triviality that wasted time and deflected energy from work and duty, there beat a "warm Irish heart" as gentle as a woman's and as tender as a child's. Those who saw him most appreciated him most; those who knew him best loved and trusted him unreservedly. And why all this confidence and love? Simply because he was the soul of devotion; because he utterly sank self, and sacrificed everything to the work he had undertaken: the spread of Truth and the permanency of the T. S. There was an undercurrent in his life like that of the deep sea, and this never ceased its flow or lost its source for an instant. His resources seemed inexhaustible, and his judgment of men and measures wonderfully exact. In ten years of very intimate association I have never once discovered a purpose outside his beloved T. S. Night and day, in sickness and health, racked with pain or in the pleasant hours of social intercourse, you could detect but one only motive and aim; and when the veil of silence fell over his spoken words, his busy pen ignored the pain, and sent scores of messages and words of advice and encouragement all over the world. I never before witnessed such determination to live, such unconsciousness of

possible defeat, such unwillingness to stop work. I tried last December to get him to stop work and use his waning strength to regain health — but in vain. And so he worked on to the last, and only desisted when he could neither walk nor stand; and when from choking cough and weariness he could scarcely lie down or sleep. He was indeed the *Lion-hearted* and worthy successor of his great teacher, H. P. B.

I feel sure that I am but voicing the thought of thousands in this estimate of the character and life-work of our Champion and Leader. The application is plain. His life-work and sacrifice must not be in vain, his example must not be lost. "Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the living nor for the dead." Steadfastness, Devotion and Work! should be our motto, no less than the text and the sermon, on this occasion. "*Deeds, not words, are what we want*" once wrote a Master. Mourning and sorrow may be in all our hearts, and the gentleness and tenderness thus engendered should only enrich and make more fruitful the soil of our own lives, and the blossom and the fruit be for the healing of the nations. The century draws near its close; our Annual Convention is near at hand. Let us show by greater devotion, more courage and a deeper sense of Brotherhood that the sacrifice of our Brother, William Q. Judge, has not been in vain, but that he still lives and works in us; and so there can be no death, but transition only; no destruction, but rejuvenescence, and no defeat to him "who realizes that he is one with the Supreme Spirit."

Theosophy

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT TIME — *C. F. Wright*

There comes to every soul undergoing its tremendous experiences in material life some time or other an awakening. No matter how deeply absorbed in human pursuits or tossed about on the waves of psychism and passion, at length there dawns in it a spiritual consciousness, a god-like memory. It is the early blush of this dawn that the student, coming for the first time in contact with Theosophical literature, perceives; and even though the horizon be heavily clouded with mists, nevertheless there is at such a time an awakening — the sun can never sink back or its light be entirely lost for that incarnation at any rate. Therefore to many the first days of their studentship are remembered with more delight than any which follow. The awakening, the trust, the faith, the renewed sense of immortality, are all cherished far beyond whatever of knowledge may follow. Then, they saw clearly; since then, they have taken to speculation and suspicion, and dimmed their soul's intuitions. How we should like to drink again the deep draughts of spiritual wisdom we imbibed in our early Theosophical days. But we cannot, because we feel dull and despairing, suspicious, jealous and ambitious. We must needs now see the soul with our physical eyes before we will believe in it; reincarnation is relegated to the domain of metaphysical speculation; Berkeley turns out to have said almost everything that Theosophy teaches (and in so much better English!); and Blavatsky's tea-cup phenomena established her as a humorist more than as a philosopher. So we either resign from the T. S., or stay in it to disagree with everybody else's views — just to let the public see how broad our platform is. Or we preach the gloomy side of the whole matter, point out the horrible sufferings of "the candidate," the nightmare condition of the student — and call on

the world to come and do likewise. We have got so far away from our real selves that nothing remains but a shell of unguided mentality.

This condition applies to the whole Society as much as to the units composing it. All spiritual organizations have entered into similar states. At first full of life and light, they gradually sink back to materialism, mentality and darkness. Priestcraft takes the place of Brotherhood, dogmas are exchanged for intuitions, and if such associations stand at all they do so simply as business institutions. This is the present state of the Christian Church. Whereas in the beginning the labors of the Initiates who established it made it a society for the restoration of the lost soul-wisdom of mankind, in the end by innumerable failures it has become a vehicle of materialism and superstition, and whatever inspiration still springs from it is only to be seen as purely ethical in its nature, being without the possibility of awakening the soul. So also with nearly all the past societies that played any part in the great Theosophical Movement.

Our present Society has passed through all these phases. Like the student when he first comes in contact with Theosophical literature, its early days were full of spiritual vigor and power. It was indeed this vigor, precipitated through one strong soul — H. P. B., — that originated the Society, not the Society which awakened it in her. And when this soul passed away that impulse was withdrawn, and the organization must surely have fallen to the state of all ordinary religious institutions, had not another stepped forward to the work. This latter was W. Q. Judge, who saved the Society from the danger of crystalization and carried it through a crisis scarcely paralleled in the history of such organizations.

In some ways Judge did a greater work than Blavatsky. At any

rate he started out far more heavily handicapped than she. H. P. B., like all the other adepts, worked not merely to establish doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, but to inspire the soul and raise it to the point of initiation. If in this it was a necessary part of her work to prepare the intellectual soil, by freeing the mind from ruts and its preconceived materialistic ideas, that did not mean that she lived only to found a school of speculative philosophy. The latter grew in the T. S. as auxiliary to her work; but some found room for nothing else, and forgot entirely the deeper purpose of her life. Consequently, when she passed away, many desired to transform the Society into an intellectual institution, without spiritual daylight, composed of mental grubbers in old philosophies, or vivisectors of the *Secret Doctrine*, and psychical researchers. They had done with belief in Masters and high powers. All this Judge had to combat, and, even if the Society were to be broken to pieces as a result of his actions, to restore at all costs its light. It is therefore little matter of surprise to find him arraigned for trial in London three years later by some of these fanatics, for stating that he had received messages from adepts and was possessed of psychical powers. In July, 1894, the dark powers were arrayed against the light, and temporarily the brightest side won. But the work was not fully accomplished. It was necessary, to save even a remnant of the Society, to separate the soul-learners from the intellectually wise. With all the skill and power at his command Judge carried over to the safe side practically the whole of the American societies at the Boston Convention in April, 1895, and from that date forward — his great work in the Western Hemisphere accomplished — he gradually relinquished his entire hold on the work, living only to see real nuclei for the carrying on of the movement established in Europe and Australasia.

And what is the significance of it all? Simply this, that the

Theosophical movement, since it still lives, through the sacrifice of W. Q. Judge, cannot be destroyed in this century. Its momentum is such that it must be carried forward. As Judge himself said, just before he passed away, "Even if I die, the movement will be all right; it has gone too far now for anything to interfere with it." And the significance of the movement in its present life and vigor is that there are thousands in the world calling for spiritual aid — and that aid cannot be withheld. It should be known by all that in order that a great occultist may die he must have an heir and successor to carry on his occult work. This is a law of nature and of the Lodge. A new centre must have been prepared to act as a vehicle to receive and transmit the life and power that is abandoning its present instrument. Once this preparation is made such an occultist may die; not before. That this was done in the case of W. Q. Judge, I know; for he had fully prepared the Antaskarana, and while the spiritual energy he exercised was at his death distributed among all members and workers, nevertheless his inner powers centred in one.

A new Messenger has come to us, to carry on the work of the spiritual revivifiers. Some have already felt the dawn of the new day, have once again had reawakened within them the freshness and sunshine of the soul. To them the early days of the Society have come again, a new spiritual vigor has been infused into its ranks. "The day-spring from on high," a light from the Lodge, has descended on the movement and the ranks organized by our late chief. Shall not all lend their aid now more than ever!

They crucified Blavatsky; they crucified Judge; who shall say if we can protect from the powers of darkness our latest helper?

THE LESSONS OF A NOBLE LIFE — *Katharine Hillard*

It is always a difficult task to form a just conception of people of our own time, and the task increases in difficulty the nearer we stand to our subject. It is so hard to put aside the personal likes and dislikes, to take into due account the obstacles to a complete success, or the real meaning of a seeming defeat, to be undazzled by a brilliant exterior, or unrepelled by a forbidding one. If we want to realize the height and grandeur of a mountain, we must not sit down at its base; we must go far off across the interval and look at it from a distance if we expect to realize the majesty of its towering peak and the vastness of the dark woods that clothe its sides. And if it be always difficult, in fact almost impossible, to estimate the true proportions of the human soul that has its earthly lot cast side by side with our own, whom we have known for years coming and going about the daily business of life, much like the rest of the world, how altogether impossible is it, when behind this everyday character stands the representative of a great spiritual force, charged with a special work to do among his fellow men. To be intrusted with such a task is a great honor, but rather an overwhelming one, and I must ask your indulgence in advance for the inevitable short-comings that you will find in its execution.

Those of you who have read the recent papers in the *Irish Theosophist* on William Q. Judge, are familiar with the main outlines of his life, and for those who have not had access to one of the best of our magazines, it will be enough to sum up briefly the few facts there are to tell about his outward existence. He was born in Dublin, April 13th, 1851, and at the age of seven, a noteworthy point in a child's life, which should mark the complete union of the mind with the physical body, he had an

illness so severe that he was thought for a few moments to have passed away. Suddenly the pulses throbbed anew in the delicate frame, and the child returned to life, so to speak, with what seemed to those about him a new character, with both artistic and mystical tendencies most strongly marked. His father brought his little family (who were early left motherless) to America in 1864, and settled in New York. William soon began to study law, and having attained his majority, and become a citizen of the United States, he was admitted to the New York bar in May, 1872. Two years later he was married, and for many years worked steadily at his profession, in which he distinguished himself by his thoroughness and unwavering persistence. It was in the practice of his profession that he went to Chagres, where he contracted the terrible malaria that completely undermined his physical constitution, and brought about his early death on the 21st of March, 1896.

That is the brief outline of his *physical* life, seen from the standpoint of the outer world. But those who knew Mr. Judge best, who fought side by side with him in the battle for truth and freedom, know that the inner life, the real life, must be sketched in very different terms. The real history of Theosophy in this last quarter of a century is just beginning to display itself to our startled eyes, and while heretofore we have been working like the weaver of a Gobelin tapestry (who sees only the wrong side of his pattern, with its confused medley of colors) we are now allowed to step to the other side of the loom and realize the wonderful symmetry of the design that existed from the beginning, a design wherein every thread, every stitch had its ordained place, and fell into ordered lines even though we could see nothing but confusion.

Students of Theosophy know that all force, — from the power that holds the sun in its place to that which makes two grains of sand

cohere, — moves in cycles, and that with every final quarter of a century, a new impulse comes from those Elder Brothers of the race who guard our spiritual welfare. In some way mankind has to be shaken out of its torpor, and made ready for a new era of life and wisdom. With us, here in America, the new school of spiritualism, with its rapping and materializing mediums, had begun to rouse the sluggish curiosity of the world, and make men open their eyes to the possibility of things as yet undreamed of, the reality of things untested in any laboratory, unweighed in any balances. Then came the setting of the stage for the new drama. Mme. Blavatsky was ordered in 1874 to go from Europe to an obscure little farmhouse in Vermont, where "spiritual manifestations" so-called, were going on, that she might meet Col. Olcott, who was to serve as an instrument in the cause. Col. Olcott wrote a book upon the incidents occurring in the Eddy homestead, and the book fell into the hands of Mr. Judge, who was seeking for information on what was now beginning to be thought the subject of the day, and he wrote to Col. Olcott, to ask if he knew of a good medium. Col. Olcott replied that he did not but that his friend Mme. Blavatsky was very desirous of making Mr. Judge's acquaintance.

Thus was the first link of the chain forged that bound together so closely three entities seemingly so distinct. The phenomena that were so liberally exhibited at that time, were necessary to rouse curiosity and to tempt investigation. As soon as their purpose was served, they were withdrawn. Very soon after Mr. Judge's first meeting with H. P. B., a few people were assembled at her rooms on the 7th September, 1875, to hear a paper on Egyptian architecture by Mr. Felt. Then and there Mr. Judge was asked by H. P. B. to "found a society" for the study of occultism. Mr. Judge called the few friends present to order, nominated Col. Olcott as permanent chairman, and was himself appointed secretary. The

next evening the same people met again, thirteen names were added to those of the three founders, a committee was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws, and the first regular meeting of the Theosophical Society was held on Oct. 30th, 1875, when its officers were duly elected, and Mott Memorial Hall chosen as its place of meeting. There, on Nov. 17th, 1875, was held what may be called its first official meeting, and that date was afterwards given as that of the founding of the Society, although it was really started with that little gathering in Mme. Blavatsky's rooms on the 7th of September.

In June, 1878, Mr. Cobb, its first recording secretary, went to London to establish the Theosophical Society in Great Britain, and in December of the same year, Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky were appointed to visit India, as a Committee of the T. S., spending two weeks in England on their way thither. Gen. Doubleday was elected president *pro tem.* in Col. Olcott's absence.

The seed had been planted here, and the gardener chosen who should watch over its growth. Under what adverse conditions, it is difficult for those to realize who have come in when the hardest of the work was done. The cutting down of ancient and thorny prejudices, the draining of swamps of indifference and conventionality, the breaking up of the hard clay of ignorance, had to be done by the undaunted courage and perseverance of H. P. B., who suffered all that the pioneers of Truth must always suffer, and nobly was she seconded by W. Q. Judge, who proved himself worthy of the trust confided to him, and under whose fostering care the little band of 16 or 18 had increased in 1895 to *thousands*. And could anything point more clearly to the real value of Mr. Judge's work, and to their appreciation of that work and their confidence in their leader, than the fact that at the crisis of last year, out of several thousand members, only ninety could be found after some six months' search, to sign a memorial

against him? And of this small minority, scarcely half a dozen were active members of the Society.

And Mr. Judge's work, pursued under the most trying complications of physical suffering, was doubly difficult because, with the rush of enthusiasm that marks the neophyte in the search for truth, comes also the risk of exaggeration, of superstition, of a blind worship of and clinging to their leader. With H. P. B.'s departure from this life, those who had loved her were in danger of loving her unwisely, of setting up the personality instead of the teaching as the thing to be held dear, and through that indiscriminate attachment, of making of her sayings a dogmatic creed, and establishing a priesthood and a pope. In their gratitude for freedom they were on the point of forging new fetters for themselves; in their enthusiasm for the new light she had thrown upon life and religion, they were trying to set up a fetish and to pin their faith upon their leader, instead of working out their own salvation. And this excess of zeal the Chief (as we loved to call him) set himself most strenuously to repress. As a good gardener cuts away the rank, luxuriant shoots from his vines, so did he protest constantly and most vehemently against personal worship or dependence, against dogma of any kind, against superstition in any form.

For to the mystical element in the personality of Mr. Judge, was united the shrewdness of the practised lawyer, the organizing faculty of a great leader, and that admirable common sense, which is so *uncommon* a thing with enthusiasts. It was this unusual element of common sense that made him so valuable as the director of an organization embodying necessarily so many conflicting and inharmonious elements, and caused him always to lay so much stress upon the observance of small daily duties, and constantly to repress any tendency to extravagance in the thought or the action of his followers, either towards himself or

others. In his teaching was embodied most emphatically that received by the prophet Ezekiel when the Voice said to him: "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee." It was the upright and self-dependent attitude that the Chief insisted upon, and he emphatically discouraged anything that savored of weakness, of want of self reliance, or of what H. P. B. was so fond of calling "flap-doodle and gush," and he turned a face of stern resistance to those who expected to reach the heights he had climbed by clinging to his garments. But when one came to him who really needed aid, no one could be more ready to stretch out a helping hand, to respond with a bright smile of encouragement, to say just the word that was necessary, and no more.

He was the best of friends, for he held you firmly, yet apart. He realized the beautiful description Emerson gives of the ideal friend, in whom meet the two most essential elements of friendship, tenderness and truth. "I am arrived at last," says Emerson, "in the presence of a man so real and equal . . . that I may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another To a great heart he will still be a stranger in a thousand particulars, that he may come near in the holiest ground."

And upon that "holiest ground" of devotion to the highest aim, of desire alone for the welfare of others, the Chief was always to be approached. And blended with the undaunted courage, the keen insight, the swift judgment, the endless patience, that made his personality so powerful, were the warm affections, the ready wit, the almost boyish gayety that made it so lovable. And by these two chords, reverence and love, he bound together the hearts of his pupils so closely and so firmly that they draw but the nearer to each other, now that his personal presence is no longer with them. The barriers of the physical once broken down, the spiritual energy, the liberated will, set free from their prison have

flown straight to every soul working along the same lines, and filled them not only with strength but with gladness.

If there were one characteristic the Chief possessed in pre-eminence, it was certainly "one-pointedness," the power of fixing every faculty upon the desired goal, that goal for him, being the establishment of the T. S. upon an independent and steadfast footing. With the accomplishment of that object, the work of his life as Wm. Q. Judge was finished, and he gladly passed out of a physical body that only the most unswerving will could have held together for so long. Only those who knew him best, could rightly estimate the enormous amount of work he accomplished under the most unfavorable circumstances. Not only illness, but slander and every evil force continually assailed him, and the quick sensitiveness that made him so ready to respond to affection and sympathy, made treachery, ingratitude, and calumny all the more powerful to wound and oppress.

But all this concerns the personal element only, and in the case of the Chief we had to deal with higher forces. As with H. P. B., one felt in him the presence of a power behind the visible semblance, and became conscious that he was a representative of the Masters, a vehicle for other individualities who made themselves perceptible in various ways. H. P. B. wrote of him that he had been a part of herself and of the Great Lodge "for aeons past," and that he was one of those tried Egos who have been assisted several times to re-incarnate immediately, without passing into the rest of Devachan, that he might, as a well-trained instrument, continue the work of the Lodge among us. Nor will that work cease with the passing away of the Chief we loved and trusted. We love and trust him still and we know that he is with us in a more real sense than when encumbered by the flesh, and where he is, we may be sure he is at work, and for our good. For we know that H. P. B. spoke the truth when she wrote that "pure

divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity. . . . Love beyond the grave has a magic and divine potency which reacts upon the living. Love is a strong shield, and is not limited by space and time." When H. P. B. herself left us the whole Society trembled for a moment under the blow, and then rallied with a firmer front than ever. Each member seemed to feel bound to do all that he or she could, to make up for the loss of our beloved Teacher, and as she herself once said, in the name of the Lodge: "Those who do all that they can, and the best they know how do enough for us."

And when the Chief with whom we were so much more intimate had left us, it seemed for a moment as though we were indeed left desolate. But only for a moment, and then came the reaction. From all over the country have come flocking in not only pledges of renewed devotion to the cause, offers of help and work of every kind, but assurances of the consciousness of the Chief's continued presence with us, and of his relief and happiness at being freed at last from the physical body that had been so long a painful burden.

Before this wave of glad reaction had time to pass away, we received the news that we were indeed not left without a leader but that the Chief himself had named his successor, and had made every arrangement for the continuance of his work on this plane. The name of the person selected was to remain a secret for a year, that the confusion naturally ensuing upon all the new arrangements might have time to subside, and perfect working order be established. In the meantime the whole Society is shaken out of the lethargy of routine, and every one of the members, like the fingers on the hand, feels the throb of energy from the central Heart. With this accession of enthusiasm there is but one danger, that we should be looking continually for signs and portents and that we should "despise the day of small things." Intense

excitement must inevitably be followed by a reaction, and in such periods of mental and spiritual exhaustion will come doubt, distrust, and fear, fear for one's self and for the Society. Then is the time to turn our eyes resolutely upon the pole-star of Duty. The sun has set, the moon has gone, the darkness closes around us, but in the midnight sky still shines that tiny radiance, and guides our footsteps in the right way. In Geo. Herbert's words:

"The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask —
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

One of the Chief's last messages to us said: "They must aim to develop themselves in daily life in small duties." We cannot all wear the conqueror's crown of wild olive or the martyr's palm, but we can all do the small duties of life thoroughly well, and the small duties require the exercise of the same virtues as the great ones. A child does not learn to walk by climbing a mountain, but by taking one step at a time upon a level floor; a bird does not begin to fly by soaring into the heavens, but by short flights from twig to twig.

In a beautiful lecture that our Brother Claude Wright delivered at Chickering Hall a little while ago, he spoke of the spiritual messengers that have come from time to time to enlighten the world. In all countries, in all religions, there have been such messengers, and by them the torch of truth has been carried forward from generation to generation, and so the link that binds us one to another and all to the great Source of Truth has been kept unbroken. If some of our Christian brethren would but read their Bibles with more attention to the spirit than the letter, they would see that Jesus spoke of his repeated incarnations for the service of mankind. In the 10th chapter of the *Gospel of John* he

said to the Pharisees who were questioning him: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This charge have I received from my Father."

And this power belongs to all the Masters of Wisdom, the great souls who come to teach the world. Spiritual Messengers they are indeed, but every one who bears witness to the truth is also a spiritual messenger. We never can afford to turn a deaf ear to the words of any, for we know not from whose lips may fall the word that shall set us free. That was a beautiful story of Rhoecus, who could not recognize in the bee that buzzed about his head the messenger of the Dryad, and so lost her love.

For no matter from whose hand, child or slave, or prince, we take the draught that refreshes us, that person is to us a spiritual messenger. If a primrose by the river's brim could give the poet-soul thoughts too deep for tears, surely we may find on all our paths, ready to serve us if we will, the bearers of the truth. And no matter how insignificant we may be ourselves, we are all spiritual messengers if we but pass on to another the cup that has given us strength.

How often we have drunk of the cup held out to us by the Chief who has just left us, and though we shall receive it no more from the visible messenger, we cannot for a moment doubt that that spiritual energy is still with us to inspire us to more untiring activity, and to minister to us in our need. And one draught of that spiritual wisdom that it was the Chief's privilege to give us, is to be found in the little book so well named, *Letters that have*

Helped Me. "Keep up the aspiration and the search," he says there to a desponding pupil, "but do not maintain the attitude of despair, or the slightest repining. . . . Is not the Self bright, bodiless, and free, — and art thou not That? The daily waking life is but a penance and the trial of the body, so that it too may thereby acquire the right condition. . . . Rise, then, from this despondency and seize the sword of Knowledge. With it, and with Love, the universe is conquerable. . . . In all inner experiences there are tides as in the ocean. . . . Anon the gods descend and then they return to heaven. . . . If we feel that after all we are not yet 'Great Souls' who participate in the totality of those 'Souls who wait upon the Gods,' it need not cast us down; we are waiting our hour in hope. Let us wait patiently, in the silence which follows all effort, knowing that thus Nature works, for in her periods of obscuration she does naught where that obscuration lies, while doubtless she and we, too, are then at work in other spheres."

Theosophy

PAUL THE INITIATE: I — C.

Jesus and Paul are not dead; they are very well alive. —

EMERSON, *Nominalist and Realist*.

Here is a pretty figure of ecclesiastical humor: An edition of the Sacred Books of Jew and Christian was once published in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. The latter, in the reading of the Vulgate, held the centre of the page. The original tongues were on the right hand and the left. "Behold Christ crucified between two thieves!" said the orthodox lovers of the Latin version.

We may fitly apply this figure of pure theology to the works of Paul the Messenger, they are crucified between two thieves. On the left hand the *Acts of the Apostles*, on the right, the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, have stolen away the true understanding of his life and teaching.

The *Acts of the Apostles* has substituted another order, and which is even more important, quite another complexion of events, for the vivid pieces of history and reminiscence that Paul gives in his letters; and this substitution covers the whole period of his life, from the days of his initiation onwards. It is very likely that tradition speaks truth in saying that the anonymous author of the *Acts* and the "well-loved doctor, Loukas (or Loukanos)" [λούκᾶνος], of Paul's letters are the same person; it is quite probable that he tries to record what he heard in conversation with Paul himself. None the less is it quite impossible to reconcile the outward order of events, for example, the visits to Jerusalem, which this anonymous author gives, with the order Paul himself gives; and which is even more striking, the complete difference in color which the great Messenger and his nameless follower give to the same things.

Paul "energizes powers" in his pupils; his anonymous biographer makes him "work miracles among them." Paul is "enlightened" as to some deep problem in spiritual things; his follower, in the *Acts*, makes him "see a bright light" in the sky. Paul hears "words unspeakable"; his biographer immediately proceeds to tell us what they were. Paul is busy with the teaching of the Christos, the Master, the Spirit, "for the Master is the Spirit," to quote his own words; the author of the *Acts* is busy with the thaumaturgic apotheosis of a personal god, and many other things which no man can verify. And so it goes on all through, and through it all the author of the *Acts* sincerely believes that he and Paul are talking the same language, and most honestly seeks to do Paul service.

In just the same way, Paul's teaching is done much wrong by the equally nameless author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Who first suggested that this tract was Paul's, it is difficult to say. Who wrote it, whether Barnabas, or Apollos, the "eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures," it is impossible to tell. But it is now admitted on every hand, even by theologians whose views for the most part are quite mediaeval, that this letter is not Paul's. Now the author of this *Epistle to the Hebrews* is a born theologian; that is to say, he is a worthy man suffering from an enormous excess of discursive reason applied to a series of documents, almost everything important about which is "believed and taken for granted," not "weighed and considered." A great theologian, a man of covenants and testaments, of miracles and dispensations, of apt quotation and skillful arguments, an "eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures," whether Apollos or another: such is the nameless writer to the Hebrews. If Paul himself were no more than this, we should have little enough to say of him.

Well, this eloquent man's theology is, in reality, as different as can be from Paul's teaching; for Paul's teaching is not theology at all,

but the science of real life. Yet the theologian with his texts and arguments, has almost completely succeeded in standing in front of Paul, and concealing Paul from sight, so that his doctrines pass for Paul's; and no place is left in our minds for Paul's real doctrines, for the reason that we think we have them already, whereas, in reality, we have only the doctrines of a nameless theologian, who once upon a time wrote a letter to the Hebrews.

Let us take two striking instances, to show that the pictures which our memories and imaginations hold about Paul are not Paul at all, but one or another of his two anonymous friends and quite involuntary misrepresenters: first, the narrative of Paul's "conversion," as it is called. Now, to begin with, the author of the *Acts* has given us no less than three different accounts of this remarkable event, all rich in thaumaturgic detail and dramatic coloring; but, unhappily, the thaumaturgy of one account is quite irreconcilable with the thaumaturgy of another, in spite of all the kindly efforts of well-meaning scribes to make them as uniform as possible, by transposing events from one account to the other. Then again, if we join all three versions of this event, as they occur in the *Acts*, into a single uniform story, we shall have a complete picture, it is true, but a picture utterly different from the narrative Paul himself has left in one of his letters. Yet everyone's imagination holds to the narrative of the *Acts*, and hardly anyone realizes the fact that we have Paul's own account of this event, in his letter to his pupils in Galatia, and that his version puts a totally different color over the whole matter. Thus Paul is robbed by the friend on his left.

If this is the most striking piece of history connected with Paul, most people will say that his most striking piece of teaching is the famous definition of faith, — "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Yet this definition is not Paul's at all; on the contrary, it was evolved by the "eloquent man, mighty

in the scriptures," who wrote anonymously to the Hebrews. Paul used the same word, *pistis* [πίστις], which is here and elsewhere translated "faith," but he meant by it something entirely different, something not in the least like belief or credulity, something quite definitely recognized in the science of real life, from time immemorial. Thus Paul is misrepresented by the theologian on his right.

Just as is the case with these two striking examples, so is it with the whole popular idea of Paul; the popular mind has added the theology of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which Paul never wrote, to the history in the *Acts*, which Paul everywhere diverges from and contradicts, in spirit even more than in letter; and, having made up this composite picture, the popular mind has called the result Paul, and there the matter ends. Thus, as we say, is Paul robbed by his two friends.

Having pointed this out, we might be well contented to let the matter rest, were it not that theologian and thaumaturgist, having once caught the sage of Tarsus in their toils, have never let him go again, but hold him fast unto this day. We may easily demonstrate this. The pretty piece of theological humor we began by recording, is not yet four hundred years old, and it was only ninety years after its triumphant appearance on the scene that the "authorized version" of the writings, among which Paul's letters are preserved, received its authentication. And these ninety years were not such as to improve the excellent theological spirit which that figure of the "two thieves," applied to the Greek and Hebrew scriptures, so well illustrates.

Quite the contrary, they were ninety years of the fiercest polemic and controversy, of wild strife and hatred of that particular kind called theological; and, after ninety years spent in that way, people were not in quite the right spirit to translate the very

difficult documents which they so boldly took in hand, including the letters of Paul the Initiate, with their teaching of real life, which these good people had no idea of at all. Hence they filled their translations with theology and thaumaturgy, with the result that all their vocabulary, of "testament," "atonement," "justification," "sin," and "righteousness," to say nothing of "predestination," "effectual calling," and "grace," is as misleading as possible, and, to get at Paul's real thought we must get rid of all this, and go back once more to his own words.

This is excellently worth doing, because, as we have said, Paul is an Initiate, an initiate in real life, — the only thing, after all, into which it is seriously worth being initiated. We recognize Paul's title, because he teaches exactly what all the masters of real life have taught; and because he quite evidently teaches it from his own knowledge, having gained that knowledge himself, by his own enlightenment.

For there is this quite peculiar mark of the masters in real life, which distinguishes them completely from the doctors of appearance, — they all teach the same thing, and they have all verified it for themselves, and speak from first-hand knowledge.

Now, this thing they teach is a matter quite simple in itself, but, by reason of the sophistry of our intellects and the futility of our wills, we find the utmost difficulty in learning it, and it is totally misunderstood ninety and nine times for once it is wholly, or even partially learned. Hence no people have been so misrepresented in this world as the masters of real life, who are in the world but not of the world; and it is our bounden duty, as well as to our profit, to clear away this misrepresentation in every case, as far as our knowledge goes.

We see, therefore, how Paul the Initiate comes to be so totally misunderstood; we shall see in the sequel, what he really taught;

what the science of real life, according to his account of it, is; what he meant by those words and thoughts of his which are in general so utterly misrepresented. (*To be concluded*)

Theosophy

THE THREE QUALITIES — *F. Hartmann*

"Goodness," "Desire," and "Ignorance." These are the three qualities which spring from Nature and bind down the eternal embodied soul in the body. — *Bhagavad Gita*.

We daily meet with questions and answers in theosophical literature in which the problems of virtue and morality are discussed from very opposite points of view, resulting in differences of opinion, that could not be reconciled with each other, if it were not for the fact that a thing looks different according to the aspect we take of it, and that therefore of two opposite opinions each may be right in its own way. This goes to show that for the purpose of judging a thing correctly, it would be wise to regard it in all of its aspects and not merely in one or two. Thus, for instance, if it is said that a *yogi* looks with indifference upon the things of this world, one man imagines such a *yogi* sitting with stupid indifference in his den, being entirely ignorant of what is going on in the world and persuading himself that he did not want to know it anyhow. Another fancies such a *yogi* as being a person thinking himself superior to all the world and being so full of self-conceit that he really cares about nothing except his own person. A third one will in his imagination find the *yogi* to be a person who for fear of losing his chances in heaven, will submit to the torture of being extremely lonely in this world and will put up with a great many disagreeable situations, expecting that he will be recompensed for all his pains and worry in the next world.

Now all the speculations about such things could be avoided and the problems made easy if we would always take into consideration the fact that all the modes of thinking and all the

actions of mankind spring, as it is taught in the *Bhagavad Gita*, from one or more of the three great *Gunas* or motives, and that each thought and act receives its character from them. We would then at once see that indifference in regard to the things of this world may spring either from *Sattwa*, "goodness," from *Rajas*, "desire," or from *Tamas*, "darkness" or "ignorance," and that such indifference may be praiseworthy, or ridiculous or foolish, according to the motive from which it springs.

Sattwa has been translated "goodness," which implies unselfishness and the recognition of truth; for without these two qualities nothing is really good. Goodness that springs from stupidity is not to be recommended, nor that which originates in a selfish desire for reward. It would therefore be perhaps better to translate *sattwa* as "wisdom," *i. e.*, the recognition of truth.

Rajas means "passion," desire or greed for something that one wishes to obtain, and is therefore the product of selfishness.

Tamas means "darkness" or "ignorance." A man who does no evil because he does not know how to do it, is not to be admired on that account and deserves no merit. The cause of his inaction is "ignorance," and "ignorance" is not good. The man is good who abstains from doing evil, even when he might thereby profit, or who does good from his love of goodness, or because he recognizes the real nature of evil. If we consider human thoughts, and acts, virtues and vices under these three different aspects, we shall at once see what is to be recommended and what is not, and thus we shall avoid many difficulties that trouble the investigator.

Let us for instance consider one of the greatest motive powers in man, namely, "love," in its threefold aspect.

Tamas refers to the inability to recognize the true, the beautiful and the good. From this springs delusion, perverted judgment and

folly. "Love" that springs from *Tamas* is therefore "love" for something that is unworthy of being loved, or for something detestable, which is mistaken to be good. If for instance, a woman marries a fool because of his bearing the title of a nobleman or on account of his wearing brass buttons on his coat, such a marriage is the result of *Tamas*, because she mistakes the title or the buttons for the man.

"Love" which springs from *Rajas* is that which springs from the desire for possession. It is the self which desires this or that object and the real end of such "love" is the self, although it may be and often is mixed up with a higher kind of "love" having a different motive. Thus, if a man marries a woman "for the sake of obtaining some one to attend to his comfort, it is because he loves his comfort above all, although he may have at the same time a certain amount of unselfish "love" for the woman, and, if he afterwards finds himself disappointed in her, he may know that there was also a good deal of *Tamas* which entered into his "love."

"Love" which springs from *Sattwa*, *i. e.*, from the recognition of truth, is quite a different thing. If nothing else but *Sattwa* enters into it, the matter of possession will not come into consideration at all. Desire springs from the perception of a desirable object; pure "love" is a self-born and self-existent power, needing for its existence no object besides its own self. As the sun would shine, even if there were nothing upon which to shed its light; so spiritual "love" is all sufficient in itself. An object will be required for its outward revelation, but it is the object that requires the influence of "love," and not "love" itself needing an object. "Love" that springs from the realization of truth is identical with self-knowledge, because self-knowledge is supreme wisdom. This self-knowledge requires no other object besides its own self, but that self includes everything in the universe. Thus real "love" is the love of "love" for its own divine self, which embraces everything,

and there is no room in it for the presence of indifference in regard to anything, however small, that has any real existence.

Seen in this light the so-called indifference of the *yogi* spoken of above assumes quite a new aspect. He could not be a *yogi* if he were not penetrated by "love," but his "love" springs from "wisdom" and not from "ignorance" or "greed." Instead of loving nothing or being only in love with himself, he in fact loves everything that has any real existence, and cannot help loving it, because he recognizes the oneness of the eternal reality in all things and therefore the essence of every individual thing as his own Self. The *yogi* is indifferent to nothing except to that which is illusive and has no real existence, and he could not be otherwise than indifferent to that, because he is above it and recognizes its nothingness.

A true occultist is not indifferent to his wife, his family or his people, the human or animal kingdoms, or anything else. He is not a pious crank that sneaks about with mournful looks, whose heart is full of fear for the salvation of his beloved self, his mind full of discontent and his mouth full of sanctimonious unctuousity. He is an upright character, capable of loving objects as much as one about to be married would love his bride. The fire of his "love" is so strong in fact that it not only fills the objects toward which it is directed, but reaches beyond them, embracing heaven and earth, and even extending to the throne of the supreme.

Thus by taking into consideration the three *Gunas* or "qualities" from which all mental states originate, we may examine each virtue and behold it in its three different aspects, a practice which is highly instructive and which everybody may exercise for himself.

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: II — *Basil Crump*

II - THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

It has already been pointed out in the previous article that Wagner's work, like that of all true artists, is in one aspect the expression of his own inner development. It will be well, therefore, in approaching the subject of his first mystical drama, briefly to trace the events of his early life which led up to the point where the mysterious figure of the lonely seaman first presented itself appealingly to his inner gaze. (1)

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born of humble parents, at Leipzig, on May 22d, 1813, and began to sketch out tragedies on the model of the Greeks, at the age of eleven. He also learnt English in order to study Shakespeare, and wrote a grand tragedy which was "almost nothing but a medley of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Two and-forty human beings died in the course of this piece," he remarks, "and I found myself compelled, in its working-out, to call the greater number back as ghosts, since otherwise I should have been short of characters for my last act." A little later he heard Beethoven's music to Goethe's *Egmont* and it made such a profound impression upon him that he promptly determined to become a musician in order to provide his "now completed tragedy with suchlike music." In his sixteenth year he "was on fire with the maddest mysticism" and had visions by day in semi-slumber in which the Keynote, Third, and Dominant of the scale took on living form and revealed to him "their mighty meaning."

At eighteen no one had a better knowledge of Beethoven's works, and such was his application to the study of theory that he soon mastered all the technical difficulties of composition. He married an actress at the age of twenty-six and became shortly afterwards

musical director of the theatre at Riga. During his leisure he began to sketch an opera of the largest dimensions, based on Bulwer Lytton's *Rienzi*, with which he hoped to win fame at Paris. He also about this time came across Heine's version of *The Flying Dutchman*, which at once exercised a weird fascination over him, though not till later did it acquire an insistent force.

Rienzi and the fame it might bring him was the greater attraction and he followed the conventional operatic lines only, striving to outdo in magnificence all that had hitherto been attempted. Yet he felt a genuine sympathy for the Roman Tribune, and there are many fine passages in the work which foreshadow his future genius. When it was nearly finished he set off for Paris by sea and the stormy passage he encountered brought the figure of the Flying Dutchman vividly before his mind once more. "From my own plight," he writes, "he won a psychic force; from the storms, the billows, the sailors' shouts and the rock-bound Northern shore, a physiognomy and color." These impressions receded for a time before the glittering show of Paris, but the refusal of *Rienzi* and the poverty and dejection which followed threw him back on his inner self where the true artist lay hidden. He thus describes the transition period of his career: —

"It was a sorrowful mirth — the mood to which I then was turned; it bore me the long since brooding Flying Dutchman.

"This was the first Folk-poem that forced its way into my heart and called on me as man and artist to point its meaning and mould it in a work of art. From here begins my career as *poet* and my farewell to the mere concoctor of opera-texts.

"My course was new; it was bidden me by my inner mood, and forced upon me by the pressing need to impart this

mood to others. In order to enfranchise myself from within outwards, *i. e.*, to address myself to the understanding of like-feeling men, I was driven to strike out for myself, as artist, a path as yet not pointed me by any outward experience; and that which drives a man hereto is Necessity, deeply felt, incognizable by the practical reason, but overmastering Necessity."

What, then, is this Flying Dutchman? Wagner tells us that in him the "Spirit of the Folk" has effected a blend of the characters of Ulysses and the Wandering Jew, and that they all symbolize the weary Soul tossed hither and thither on the waves of earthly experience. As the embodiment of the "Will to Live" this Dutchman has sworn that he will round the Cape despite a fearful gale, and has thus brought upon himself the Curse that he shall battle with the unresting waves for ever.

The Phantom Ship with blood-red sails may well stand for the body we inhabit on this plane of "illusion" with its propelling forces of desire and passion. But every seven years the wanderer may go ashore and seek redemption from the Curse at the hands of a woman "faithful unto death," — the "Will to Die." Wagner significantly says that it is the "yearning for death that spurs him on to seek this woman" Voyage after voyage in the Phantom Ship; incarnation after incarnation, and the "Will to Live" is nearly exhausted. The Drama opens as the Dutchman draws near for the last time to the haven where he will at length find rest.

The Overture prepares us for what is coming in wondrous and eloquent tone-language. It opens with the Curse *motif*; a bare fifth on the keynote and dominant, accompanied by stormy wind and raging sea which presently die down, and the beautiful *motif* of Redemption steals gently forth, soon to be lost again in the roar of the storm as the listener is prepared for what is to come. The

storm is abating as the Phantom Ship drops her anchor in the Norwegian haven, and the Dutchman steps ashore once more. He has met on the voyage a native skipper, Daland, who, moved by his sad tale and tempted by his wealth, has agreed that his daughter Senta *ein treues Weib* shall become his wife.

This Haven represents the inner shrine of the soul, the quiet spot where alone rest from the storms of life is found. Senta sits at home with her spinning maidens and gazes sadly at the portrait of the Dutchman which hangs on the wall, singing, in the tones of the Curse *motif*, of his unhappy fate; then, as she tells of her desire to save him, the beautiful Redemption *motif* is heard.

Presently her father arrives with his mysterious guest. The meeting is of the deepest significance; they stand gazing at each other transfixed; and here in the very first of his occult dramas Wagner gives us a hint of reincarnation, for the Dutchman breaks the silence with the words:

"Like a faint vision through the dim past stealing,
This maiden's face appears to me;"

And Senta murmurs:

"Dwell I in worlds with wondrous fancies teeming?
Is this a vision of the past?"

Yet even now, on the threshold of union with his higher nature, doubt of its divine power still harasses the earthly wanderer. But the motive is unselfish, for he fears to involve her in his doom. He endeavors to dissuade her, but she is immovable:

"To whom my troth I give unfearing,
I'll true be unto death."

Senta has a lover, Eric, with whom she now has a stormy interview. He represents "selfish desire," and bitterly resents her

attachment to the stranger. The latter, intruding by accident, thinks Senta has betrayed him, and in the despair of doubt he rushes off to the ship, whose sails are already set. But the inner nature is now too strong; Senta follows him, and, in a supreme act of self-sacrifice, throws herself into the sea and breaks the spell.

The power of illusion is conquered; the Phantom Ship sinks with all her crew, and the glorified forms of Vanderdecken and Senta are seen rising from the waves, united in that "mystic death" which is but the birth of the soul into a higher state.

In the closing bars of the music we hear the Curse *motif*, changed by the addition of the major third, into a joyful shout of victory, as the now liberated Soul returns to the state of Unity from which it first emanated.

Such is a very brief epitome of this soul-stirring myth, moulded by a master-hand into a living work of art which must appeal to all.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTE:

1. The quotations which follow are Wagner's own words. — B. C.
([return to text](#))

Theosophy

A WEIRD TALE: I — *William Q. Judge*

PART I (1)

The readers of this magazine have read in its pages, narratives far more curious and taxing to belief than the one I am about to give fragments of. The extraordinary Russian tale of the adept at the rich man's castle when the infant assumed the appearance of an old man will not be forgotten. But the present tale, while not in the writer's opinion containing anything extremely new, differs from many others in that I shall relate some things, I myself saw. At this time too, the relation is not inopportune, and perhaps some things here set down may become, for many, explanations of various curious occurrences during the past five years in India and Europe.

To begin with, this partial story is written in accordance with a direction received from a source which I cannot disobey and in that alone must possess interest, because we are led to speculate why it is needed now.

Nearly all of my friends in India and Europe are aware that I have travelled often to the northern part of the South American continent and also to Mexico. That fact has been indeed noticed in this magazine. One very warm day in July 1881, I was standing at the vestibule of the Church of St. Theresa in the City of Caracas, Venezuela. This town was settled by the Spaniards who invaded Peru and Mexico and contains a Spanish-speaking people. A great crowd of people were at the door and just then a procession emerged with a small boy running ahead and clapping a loud clapper to frighten away the devil. As I noticed this, a voice in English said to me "curious that they have preserved that singular ancient custom." Turning I saw a remarkable looking old man

who smiled peculiarly and said, "Come with me and have a talk." I complied and he soon led me to a house which I had often noticed, over the door being a curious old Spanish tablet devoting the place to the patronage of St. Joseph and Mary. On his invitation I entered and at once saw that here was not an ordinary Caracas house. Instead of lazy dirty Venezuelan servants, there were only clean Hindoos such as I had often seen in the neighbouring English Island of Trinidad; in the place of the disagreeable fumes of garlic and other things usual in the town, there hung in the air the delightful perfumes known only to the Easterns. So I at once concluded that I had come across a delightful adventure.

Seating ourselves in a room hung with tapestry and cooled by waving punkahs that evidently had not been long put up, we engaged in conversation. I tried to find out who this man was, but he evaded me. Although he would not admit or deny knowledge of the Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky or of the Mahatmas, he constantly made such references that I was sure he knew all about them and had approached me at the church designedly. After quite a long talk during which I saw he was watching me and felt the influence of his eye, he said that he had liberty to explain a little as we had become sufficiently acquainted. It was not pleasure nor profit that called him there, but duty alone. I referred to the subterranean passages said to exist in Peru full of treasure and then he said the story was true and his presence there connected with it. Those passages extended up from Peru as far as Caracas where we then were. In Peru they were hidden and obstructed beyond man's power to get them but in this place the entrances were not as well guarded although in 1812 an awful earthquake had levelled much of the town. The Venezuelans were rapacious and these men in India who knew the secret had sent him there to prevent any one

finding the entrances. At certain seasons only there were possibilities of discovery; the seasons over he could depart in security, as until the period came again no one could find the openings without the help and consent of the adepts. Just then a curious bell sound broke on the air and he begged me to remain until he returned as he was called, and then left the room. I waited a long time filled with speculations, and as it was getting late and past dinner hour I was about to leave. Just as I did so a Hindoo servant quickly entered and stood in front of the only door. As he stood there I heard a voice say as if through a long pipe: "Stir not yet." Reseating myself, I saw that on the wall, where I had not before noticed it, hung a curious broad silver plate brightly shining. The hour of the day had come when the sun's light struck this plate and I saw that on it were figures which I could not decipher. Accidentally looking at the opposite wall, I saw that the plate threw a reflection there upon a surface evidently prepared for that purpose and there was reproduced the whole surface of the plate. It was a diagram with compass, sign and curious marks. I went closer to examine, but just at that moment the sun dipped behind the houses and the figures were lost. All I could make out was that the letters looked like exaggerated Tamil or Telugu — perhaps Zend. Another faint bell sounded and the old man returned. He apologized, saying he had been far away, but that we would meet again. I asked where, and he said, "In London." Promising to return I hurried away. Next day I could not find him at all and discovered that there were two houses devoted to Joseph and Mary and I could not tell which I had seen him in. But in each I found Spaniards, Spanish servants and Spanish smells.

In 1884 I went to London and had forgotten the adventure. One day I strolled into an old alley to examine the old Roman wall in the Strand which is said to be 2,000 years old. As I entered and

gazed at the work, I perceived a man of foreign aspect there who looked at me as I entered. I felt as if he knew me or that I had met him, but was utterly unable to be sure. His eyes did not seem to belong to his body and his appearance was at once startling and attractive. He spoke to the attendant, but his voice did not help me. Then the attendant went out and he approaching me, said:

"Have you forgotten the house of Joseph and Mary?"

In a moment I knew the expression that looked out through those windows of the soul, but still this was not the same man. Determined to give him no satisfaction I simply said, "no," and waited.

"Did you succeed in making out the reflection from the silver plate on the wall?" Here was complete identification of place, but not of person.

"Well," I said, "I saw your eyes in Caracas but not 'your body,' He then laughed and said, "I forgot that, I am the same man, but I have borrowed this body for the present and must indeed use it for some time, but I find it pretty hard work to control it. It is not quite to my liking. The expression of my eyes of course you knew, but I lost sight of the fact that you looked at the body with ordinary eyes."

Once more I accompanied him to his residence and when not thinking of his person but only listening with the soul, I forgot the change. Yet it was ever present, and he kindly gave me an account of some things connected with himself, of absorbing interest. He began in this way.

"I was allowing myself to deceive myself, forgetting the Bhagavat Gita where it tells us, that a man is his soul's friend and his soul's enemy, in that retreat in Northern India where I had spent many years. But the chance again arose to retrieve the loss incurred by

that and I was given the choice of assuming this body."

At this point again I heard the signal bell and he again left me. When he returned, he resumed the story.

If I can soon again get the opportunity, I will describe that scene, but for the present must here take a halt.

PART II (2)

There are many who cannot believe that I have been prevented from writing the whole of this tale at once, and they have smiled when they read that I would continue it "if allowed." But all who know me well will feel that there is some truth in my statement. It may interest those who can read between the lines to know that I attempted several times to finish the tale so as to send it all in one batch to the magazine, but always found that at the point where the first chapter ends my eyes would blur, or the notes ready for the work became simply nonsense, or some other difficulty intervened, so that I was never until now able to get any further with it than the last instalment. It is quite evident to me that it will not be finished, although I know quite well what it is that I have to say. This part must, therefore, be the last, as in trying to reach a conclusion much time is wasted in fighting against whatever it is that desires to prevent my going into full details. In order then to be able to get out even so much as this I am compelled to omit many incidents which would perhaps be interesting to several persons; but I shall try to remember particularly and relate what things of a philosophical nature were repeated to me.

As I sat there waiting for the host to come back, I felt the moral influence of another mind, like a cool breeze blowing from a mountain. It was the mind of one who had arrived at least at that point where he desired no other thing than that which Karma

may bring, and, even as that influence crept over me, I began to hear a voice speaking as it were through a pipe the end of which was in my head, but which stretched an immense distance into space (3) making the voice sound faint and far off. It said:

"The man whose passions enter his heart as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts. The man who having abandoned the lusts of the flesh worketh without inordinate desires, unassuming, and free from pride, obtaineth happiness. This is divine dependence. A man being possessed of this confidence in the Supreme goeth not astray: even at the hour of death should he attain it he shall mix with the incorporeal nature of Brahm. He who enjoyeth the *Amreeta* that is left of his offerings obtaineth the eternal spirit of Brahm the Supreme."

The atmosphere of the room seemed to give the memory great retentive power, and when on returning to my room that night I fell upon those sentences in the Bhagavat Gita. I knew that they had come to me from a place or a person for whom I should have respect.

Occupied with such thoughts, I did not notice that my host had returned, and looking up was somewhat startled to see him sitting at the other side of the apartment reading a book. The English clothes were gone and a white Indian dhoti covered him, and I could see that he wore round his body the Brahmanical cord. For some reason or other he had hanging from a chain around his neck an ornament which, if it was not rosicrucian, was certainly ancient.

Then I noticed another change. There seemed to have come in with him, though not by the door, other visitors which were not human. At first I could not see them, though I was aware of their presence, and after a few moments I knew that whatever they

were they rushed hither and thither about the room as if without purpose. They had yet no form. This absorbed me again so that I said nothing and my host was also silent. In a few more moments these rushing visitors had taken from the atmosphere enough material to enable them to become partly visible. Now and then they made a ripple in the air as if they disturbed the medium in which they moved about, just as the fin of a fish troubles the surface of the water. I began to think of the elemental shapes we read of in Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni*, and which have been illustrated in Henry Kunrath's curious book on the Cabala of the Hebrews.

"Well," said my strange friend, "do you see them? You need have no fear, as they are harmless. They do not see you, excepting one that appears to know you. I was called out so as to try if it were possible for you to see them, and am glad that you do."

"And the one that knows me," said I. "Can you identify it in any way?"

"Well," said he, "let us call it *he*. He seems to have seen you — been impressed with your image just as a photograph is on a plate — somewhere or other, and I also see that he is connected with you by a name. Yes, it is —————"

And then he mentioned the name of an alleged elemental or nature spirit which at one time, some years ago, was heard of in New York.

"He is looking at you now, and seems to be seeking something. What did you have or make once that he knew of?"

I then recollected a certain picture, a copy of an Egyptian papyrus of the Hall of Two Truths showing the *trial of the Dead*, and so replied, regretting that I had not got it with me to show my friend. But even as I said that, I saw the very picture lying upon the table.

Where it came from I do not know, as I had no recollection of bringing it with me. However, I asked no questions, and waited, as my host was looking intently at the space above my head.

"Ah, that is what he was looking for, and he seems to be quite pleased," he said, as if I could hear and see just as he did. I knew he referred to the elemental.

In another moment my attention was rivetted on the picture. Its surface bobbed up and down as if waves ran over it, and crackling sounds rose from every part. They grew louder and the motion ceased, while from a certain point arose a thin whitish vapor that wavered unsteadily to and fro. Meanwhile the strange visitors I have mentioned seemed to rush about more in the vicinity of the paper, while now and again one of them took what looked like a flying leap from one end of the room to the other, with a queer faint boom of a metallic character following his rapid motion.

(To be concluded)

FOOTNOTE:

1. Reprinted from The Theosophist, July 1885, Vol. VI, p. 237.

[\(return to text\)](#)

2. Reprinted from The Theosophist, December 1885, Vol. VII, p.

203. [\(return to text\)](#)

3. There are some Theosophists who will recognize this. [\(return to text\)](#)

Theosophy

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL: II — C.

II. (1)

In these studies of Paul the Initiate, we shall try, above all things, to prove every position as we go along; or rather to bring the facts so clearly together that he who reads may instantly prove for himself. Only by a series of complete and perfect demonstrations can a new face be put on these old records, a new insight into them given, by which they may be won from the theologians for Theosophy and Occultism, or, to use a phrase that includes the other two, for real life. Hence we may have to write much, at first sight very like mere repetition of things already familiar; but regard rather the few quite unfamiliar things scattered among them, — they will form the beginnings of a new understanding, which, in the end, will transform the whole aspect of the Initiate Paul, and brush away from his memory the dust and cobwebs of theology. To begin with the Conversion of Paul; we shall translate four narratives of this event, and try to show how one, which is Paul's own, differs wholly in spirit from the other three. Here is what Paul himself says:

I make known to you, brothers, as to the good teaching taught by me, that it is not after man; for I did not receive it from a man, nor was I taught it, but through an unveiling of Iêsous, of the Christos. For you have heard of my former activity in the Ioudaïan polity, that I pursued the chosen assembly of the Eternal to excess, and that I devastated it; and I went forward in the Ioudaïan polity more than many of my age in my nation, being extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. But when the Eternal, who separated me from the womb of my mother, and called me through his

good-will, thought fit to unveil his son in me, that I might bring the teaching of him among the nations, I did not immediately communicate with flesh and blood, nor did I go to Hierosoluma, to those who were messengers before me, but went away to Arabia, and returned to Damaskos.

We need only note here that Paul speaks of what is called his conversion as an unveiling, an unveiling of the son of the Eternal, an unveiling of the Christos in him; the full meaning of this, what it signified to Paul himself, can only be brought out by fully understanding what he meant by the son of the Eternal, the Christos, in this and other letters of his. What he particularly insists on, was that his teaching, his message, his doctrine, had not been received from any man; and, in order to demonstrate the fact that he did not, in particular, receive it from those who were messengers before him, he specifies with great exactness the only occasions on which he could thus have received any teaching from any one. For three years, he says, he saw none of these messengers; then he visited Petros for fifteen days, seeing no one else except Iakôbos, "the brother of the master." Then, after fourteen years, probably including the three already mentioned, he again visited the messengers, of whom he names three, Iakôbos, Kêphas and Iôannês, the second evidently being the same person as Petros. So that, during the first fourteen, perhaps seventeen, years after what is called his conversion, he spent only fifteen days in the company of the former messengers, seeing only two of them even then. The letter to his followers in Galatia, to whom he tells these facts, is of the highest possible literary and historical value. It is the oldest of his uncontested writings, and therefore, almost certainly, the oldest document in the New Testament; the oldest authentic record of Christian origins. It will be important to remember this when considering Paul's relations with the messengers before him. He says here "I

laid before them the teaching which I teach among the nations," while "they did not communicate anything to me." He therefore insists on the independence and independent origin of his teaching; and confirms this by showing that the few days he spent with them, during many years, made it almost impossible that he should have received any detailed communication from them.

To turn now to the secondary accounts of his conversion. They all three occur in an unsigned narrative, which we know as The Acts of the Apostles, or the Doings of the Messengers, the date of which is uncertain. The first account occurs in the ninth chapter:

But Saulos still breathing threats and destruction to the pupils of the master, going to the arch-priest, asked him for letters to Damaskos, to the assemblies, in order that, if he should find any that were of the path, men and women, he might lead them tied to Ierousalêm. And as he was proceeding, he came to approach Damaskos, and suddenly there whirled round him light from the sky; and, falling on the ground, he heard a sound saying to him "Saoul, Saoul, Why do you pursue me" But he said: "Who are you, master?" But the master said: "I am Iesous whom you pursue: [It is difficult for you to kick against the goad" And trembling and astonished he said: "Master, what do you wish me to do?" And the master, to him:] "Rise and go to the city, it will be told you what you must do." And the men that were travelling with him stood dumb, hearing the sound indeed, but seeing nothing. But Saulos rose from the ground, and opening his eyes he saw no one, but leading him by the hand, they led him into Damaskos; and he was three days not seeing, and did not eat or drink.

The passage in brackets, containing the famous words, "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," is omitted in the Revised

Aversion, as being almost certainly a later interpolation, not a part of the original narrative. The story goes on to tell how a certain pupil at Damaskos had a vision, in which the "master" told him to visit Saul; how Ananias was at first unwilling to approach the notorious inquisitor, but finally went; how he laid his hands on Saul; how scales, as it were, fell from Saul's eyes; and how he was baptized. The conclusion is, that Saul, as a result of his vision, began to teach "that Iesous is the son of the Eternal," or, according to other manuscripts, "that the Christos is the son of the Eternal." After noting that, in this account, the Greek manuscripts accepted by the Revisors attribute twenty-four words to the voice from the sky which spoke to Paul, we may turn to the second account, in the twenty-second chapter of the Acts; here the narrative is attributed to Paul himself, and his historian speaks as an actual auditor of Paul's words:

It happened to me when approaching Damaskos, about midday, that suddenly from the sky a great light whirled round me, and I fell on the ground and heard a sound speaking to me: "Saoul, Saoul, why do you pursue me?" and I answered: "Who are you, master?" But he said to me: "I am Iesous the Nazôraian whom you pursue." But those two were with me saw the light, and became afraid. But they did not hear the sound that spoke to me. But I said: "What shall I do, master?" And the master said to me: "Rise and proceed to Damaskos, and there it will be told you about all the things which it is ordained for you to do." And when I could not see, from the shining of the light, led by the hand by those who were with me, I came to Damaskos.

Here, it will be noted, Paul's companions are said to have seen the light but not to have heard the sound, while the preceding account tells us that they heard the sound, but saw nothing. The words attributed to the sound, with the exception of "the

Nazoraian." are substantially the same, as also is the narrative of Ananias' visit to Paul, though nothing is said of Ananias' vision. In the present account, Ananias delivers a Messianic doctrine, identifying Iesous with the expected Saviour of Ioudaiaian aspiration; and it is quite clear that, to the narrator, the thaumaturgic vision and this Messianic doctrine constitute Paul's message and teaching, — all the things which it was ordained for him to do.

To come to the third account, in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts: Paul is again put forward by the speaker as narrating what occurred:

With this purpose proceeding to Damaskos, with power and authority from the arch-priests, in the middle of the day, on the road, I saw, O King, from the sky, above the splendor of the sun, a light resplendent round me and those who were proceeding with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a sound speaking to me and saying in the Hebraid dialect: "Saoul, Saoul, why do you pursue me; it is difficult for you to kick against the goads." But I said: "who are you, master?" And he said: "I am Iesous whom you pursue. But rise up and stand on your feet; for with this purpose I have been seen by you, to employ you as a servant and witness of what you have seen and what I shall be seen by you; choosing you from the people and the nations, to whom now I send you as messenger, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of the Satanias to the Eternal, for them to gain freedom from futilities, and heirship among those consecrated, through aspiration towards me."

Here the twenty-four or twenty-five words first attributed in the Greek to the sound, are expanded to eighty-five. It is further

implied that Paul's companions also saw the great light above the splendor of the sun, and the words translated "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," appear; they were evidently transferred from this account to the first, to make the narrative more complete, in the later manuscripts. In this last account, the teaching which is attributed to Ananias in the second, but not the first, of these three narratives in the Acts, is substantially transferred to the sound or voice of the vision. Here nothing is said of Paul's blindness, of the vision of Ananias, of a second vision of Paul's, of the scales, or of his baptism; his teaching is made the immediate effect of the vision itself. The somewhat large discrepancies in these three accounts are just what one would expect from a fairly good witness, narrating an event from hearsay, at second hand; and it is quite evident that they genuinely represent the belief of the anonymous author, as to what really happened thirty years or more before he wrote; and we may quite readily admit the tradition which sees in this anonymous author Paul's friend, the loved doctor, Loukas or Loukanos, — to give his name the Greek form which it bears in Paul's letters.

The sincerity of these three somewhat discrepant narratives is, we say, quite evident, but not less evident is the wide difference in spiritual tone and quality, from the first account we translated, in Paul's own letter to his followers in Galatia. We need not press the point that what he says, as to "not communicating with flesh and blood," and as to his "going away to Arabia," directly negatives the story of his entering Damaskos, and the visit of Ananias, the scales falling from his eyes, and his baptism. Nor need we say that his particular insistence that he received no message from men further runs counter to the story of Ananias imparting to him his Messianic doctrine. Nor, again, need we refer to the extreme and universally admitted difficulty of

reconciling what he says of his visits to Jerusalem with what the author of the Acts says. What is really important is the difference in spiritual quality of the two narrators. The author of the Acts believes in a great dramatic and thaumaturgic occurrence, with remarkable miraculous accompaniments of somewhat uncertain nature and extent; believes, in fact, in an occurrence which is not travestied, but almost faithfully represented by Ercole di Ferrara's picture, where a colossal figure appears, surrounded by clouds, just above the heads of Paul and his companions, who, as well as their horses, have fallen to the ground, and one of whom is raising his shield to ward off an expected thunderbolt.

There is nothing of all this exoteric thaumaturgic and materialization in Paul's own account in his letter. Here, as always, he speaks of the inner man, teaching a truly esoteric doctrine, — to give the word "esoteric" its best meaning, as "what concerns the inner, esoteric, man," to quote words of Paul's. He simply speaks of an unveiling in himself, not of a light from the sky, surpassing the splendor of the sun.

How deep and universal is the tendency to thaumaturgy which marks his anonymous historian may be shown by a single instance; his words in this same letter: "he who energized powers in you" are transformed into: "he that worketh miracles among you," in the received translations; thus clearly adapting to the purposes of thaumaturgy what Paul as clearly spoke of the inner man. If Paul's latest translators thus misunderstood his plain words, can we wonder that his earliest hearers did the same?

FOOTNOTE:

1. See article, Paul the Initiate, in July number, p. 106. ([return to text](#))

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: III — *Basil Crump*

III TANNHAUSER

The main features of the legend of Tannhauser are to be found in ancient Scandinavian and Teutonic mythology and in the folklore of all the western peoples. It is the story of the soul's journey through the regions of *Tamas* "Ignorance" and *Rajas* "Action" to those of *Satwa* "Truth." In one of the versions the hero is a little shepherd, who is tempted by the elves to enter the summit of a mount called the Nine Hills. There he meets a little girl called Elisabeth, who tells him this is a life of illusion and by whose help they both eventually escape from the power of the elves.

This mount is of course the human body, the "nine-gate city" of our abode, the elves are the elemental forces which chain us to matter, and Elisabeth is the spiritual element within us, through union with which we gain freedom. Elisabeth in Hebrew (Eli-scheba) means "Consecrated to God." In Wagner's drama the mount is the Horsel-berg, where the goddess Venus holds her court amid wild revels. The Minnesinger, Tannhauser, has fallen under her influence and the play begins as he is just awaking from his rosy dream.

The instrumental prelude opens with the Pilgrim's Hymn, a theme said to be founded on an old Gnostic melody and certainly possessing the power and character of a mantram. Its solemn tones are suddenly interrupted by the wild, sensuous strains of the Yenusberg, and the rise of the curtain discloses the interior of the mount.

The desire for Action is stirring in Tannhauser's soul and he cries aloud to Venus:

"My longing yearns for struggle;
I seek not joy nor bliss.
O Goddess, sound my meaning,
I urge from hence to Death."

It is a flash of intuition in which the soul sees that only through the death of the personal self will freedom be gained. In vain Venus strives to detain him; putting forth a powerful aspiration towards his higher nature, he cries,

"My Peace, my Hope, rests in Maria!"

At the name of the Virgin the Venusberg disappears and he finds himself outside the mount in the smiling valley of the Wartburg. He is on earth, the field of action, where he will work out the karma of what he has done.

The third important element in the drama now appears in the person of Wolfram von Eschenbach, a great Minnesinger of the Middle Ages, who wrote much concerning the Holy Grail and its brotherhood of Knights. Here Wolfram is a noble character forming the link between Tannhauser and the saintly Elisabeth. As the latter represents the spiritual soul (*Buddhi*), so he may stand for the higher mind; while Tannhauser is the lower mind entangled in the meshes of material life and partaking still of the nature of Venus (*Kama*).

Wolfram is the first of his fellow-knights to recognize his long lost friend, but Tannhauser's guilty conscience urges him to flee from him until Wolfram utters the words,

"Stay for Elisabeth."

Tannhauser stops instantly with the exclamation,

Elisabeth: O Might of Heaven,
Dost thou recall that name to me?"

It is the soul's recollection of its divine nature, the "lost word," and Tannhauser's one cry now is

"To her! To her!"

The Hall of Song, to which the second act introduces us, forms a fitting contrast to the Venusberg. The dominating influence is that of Elisabeth and Wolfram, and it is therefore the abode of all that is pure and noble in the human heart. Here will be Tannhauser's test; for a Tournament of Song is about to be held and all the bards will have to sing of the nature of Love. Elisabeth is the first to enter and address a joyful greeting to her "beloved hall." Then Wolfram ushers in Tannhauser, himself retiring into the background, while Elisabeth asks the wanderer,

"Where tarried ye so long?"

He answers evasively:

"Far from here.
In wide and distant kingdoms.
Darkest oblivion between today
And yesterday hath fallen."

All presently assemble for the prize-singing and the lot falls to Wolfram to set the keynote. He sings of Love as a pure unselfish devotion to that which is only to be found in the inner shrine of the soul. Applause comes from all save Tannhauser, who rises as if under the influence of some strange magic and seems no longer to be aware of Elisabeth's presence, while a thrill of the Venus music is heard in the orchestra. The fierce energy of his aspiration has quickened all the forces of his being and he sings of the delights of the realm from which he has just escaped, though as yet not naming it. His words create a disturbance which subsides as Wolfram rises and again strikes the true note.

This goads Tannhauser to burst out in open praise of Venus, to the horror of all. The more impetuous of the knights rush forward to kill him, but Elisabeth places herself between him and their swords, claiming her right to intercede for him. For is not her wound the deepest of all? Anger changes to reverence, while in Tannhauser a terrible revulsion takes place and he sees for the first time the karmic result of his sin. An awful moment it is for the soul when, in a flash of introspection, it sees the crucified Christ: yet in such moments is born, as we shall see, the impulse which carries it forward to final victory. That unappeasable longing in Tannhauser, formerly identified with self, has now found its true goal — self-forgetfulness in the interests of another.

A band of pilgrims is setting out for Rome and he may join them and seek pardon from the Pope. All his energy is now put into this penance in order that he may heal the wound he has inflicted.

"Thus resembles he not," writes Wagner, "the other pilgrims who for *their own* salvation's sake have bound upon themselves convenient penance; only to sweeten for her the tears which she sheds over the sinner, seeks he under the most terrible pains the path of his salvation, as this salvation can only consist in the knowledge that those tears of hers for him are wiped away." But the Pope, true representative of the hard spirit of the age, declares that sooner shall his barren staff put forth flower or leaf than Tannhauser be forgiven.

"As he returns from Rome," continues Wagner, "he is now himself the embodiment of abhorrence of a world which, for very reason of the sincerity of his convictions, denies to him the right of existence, and not out of joy or lust seeks he again the Venusberg; but . . . in order to bury himself from the eyes of his 'angel,' to still whose tears the whole world could not offer him the balsam."

But in this darkest hour deliverance is near; the devoted watcher,

Wolfram, is awaiting his return, and to him the pilgrim relates his tale of woe. As he invokes Venus, Wolfram struggles with him, nay even breathes with him the intoxicating vapors which are now surrounding them; and then, as Tannhauser tears himself away, he once again utters the magic name, Elisabeth!

Tannhauser, with the answering cry, Elisabeth! "remains suddenly as though bound to the spot," and at the same moment the funeral hymn of Elisabeth is heard announcing the final offering of the higher self to save the lower. As the procession enters the valley the mists of the Venusberg disappear, morning dawns, and Tannhauser expires on the bier with the holy name of his higher self upon his lips, while the younger pilgrims arrive from Rome bearing the pontiff's staff covered with green leaves. The final victory is won; Spirit has conquered Matter; and as the rising sun throws a flood of light over the scene the noble theme of the pilgrim's hymn rises to the heavens in a mighty shout of joy.

How clearly the poet-musician shows us the full significance of this magnificent finale: "In the mystic knowledge of the power of her death she, dying, sets free the unhappy one. And, likewise dying, Tannhauser thanks her for the gift of this highest favor of love. . . . We hear the jubilant cry of the redeemed Venusberg itself, its song changed into adoration of God. So well and spring all the pulses of life to the Song of Redemption; and both separated elements Spirit and Sense, God and Nature, embrace in the holy uniting kiss of Love."

Of the music there is not space to speak at length. Suffice it to say that the conventional operatic forms which were used to some extent in *The Flying Dutchman*, are here almost entirely laid aside in favor of that complete union of words and music which we find in Wagner from *Lohengrin* onwards. How truly we can feel

with this dauntless Artist when he said, "With this work I penned my death-warrant: before the world of Modern Art I now could hope no more for life." Such is the fate of those who serve the true interests of their fellow-men.

(To be continued)

Theosophy

A WEIRD TALE: II — *William Q. Judge*

PART II - Concluded (1)

Here I must draw the veil unwillingly. Let me violate the unities and the frame of this tale by just putting down a few sentences, leaving it to the imagination to draw inferences.

"Those strange delineations of form? Quite easily. They were seen by the seeresses in the temple, It is quite true that elementals have no form as such . . . But there are undoubtedly types, and [those] Egyptians were not the men to do anything unscientifically . . . There is an occult reason why, although without form, these particular shapes were assumed. And having been once assumed and seen thus by the seer, they always repeated that form to those persons. So the representative of the astral light or of wisdom or the recording angel, is yellow in color, very tall, with a long bill like a stork. Or the one who takes the weight of the soul is always seen with a jackal's head. . . . No, there is no prohibition against telling the occult reason. It is merely this: were it told, only one in a thousand hearers would see any meaning or reason in it. . . . Let your mind reflect also upon the peculiarity that all the judges sitting above there have heads alike, while in color they differ, each one having a feather, the emblem of truth, on his head . . . No, it is not Hindu, and yet it is the same. They used to say, and I think you may find it in one of their books, that 'everything is in the Supreme soul, and the Supreme soul in everything.' (2) So the great truth is one, while it can be seen in a thousand different ways. We [Egyptians] took a certain view and made every symbol consistent and of a class consonant with our view. . . . And just as the Hindus are accused of being idolaters because they have represented Krishna with

eight arms standing on the great elephant, we, who did not picture an eight-armed divinity, are charged with having worshipped jackals, cats and birds . . .

"Yes, it is a pity, but the sand that buries Egypt has not been able to smother the great voice of that sphinx, the *esoteric doctrine*. But not through us except in some such manner as this, now and then. In India the light burns, and in a living people still resides the key — ."

Just then the bobbing of the picture began again and the same whitish column wavered over it. The faint boom of the airy elementals recommenced, and again claimed my attention, and then the picture was still.

I may say that the whole of the conversation has not been given. It is not necessary that it should be. My host had maintained perfect silence all the while, and seemed to await my voice, so I said:

"What could have induced you to leave those peaceful places where true progress may be gained."

"Well," he replied, "very likely they were peaceful, and quite truly progress was possible, but you do not appreciate the dangers also. You have read Zanon, and perhaps have an exaggerated idea of the horrible Dweller of the Threshold, making of her a real person or thing. But the reality is much worse. When you get into what you have called the 'peaceful places,' this power becomes tenfold stronger than it is found to be on the plane in which we now live in London."

"Why, I supposed that there, free from the cankering anxieties of modern life, the neophyte sailed happily on through plain seas to the shores of the fortunate isles."

"Far from that. On that plane it is found that, although from the spiritual sun there falls upon us the benign influence of those great sages who, entering paranirvana, throw off their accumulated goodness for our benefit, the evil influence that is focussed by the dark side of the moon falls as well, and with its power undiminished. The little temptations and difficulties of your life are as nothing compared to that struggle for then it is realized that the self is the enemy of the self, as well as its friend."
(3)

"But," said I, "was the fault committed a great one, that it should condemn you to this task?"

"No, not great as you term it. But quite great enough; and in consequence I had to take my choice. In Caracas you saw me as an illusion of a certain character. There I did what was required, the illusion being perfect except as to the eyes. Now you see another illusion, and yet at the same time a reality such as is connoted by that word when used by modern scientists. It is a body that lives and will die. The Karma is hard perhaps, but I grumble not. But is it not an illusion in every sense when you know that although this body speaks and thinks, still, I the speaker am not visible to you?"

These words are not mine. If some of them seem meaningless or queer to many readers, do not blame the writer. There are those who can understand. There are yet others who have latent thoughts that need but these words to call them into life. I cannot give any greater detail than the above as to himself, because he had reasons for preventing me, although he might perhaps, himself tell more to another.

One curious thing of interest he said, which will furnish some with food for thought. It was when I referred to the use of the body he had, so to say, *borrowed*, that he said:

"Don't you know that many experiments are possible in that way, and that some students are taught peculiarly? I have stood aside from this earthly tabernacle many a time to let in those who, notwithstanding that they operated the machine well enough and made quite a respectable use of it, did not know what they did. They were, if you like, dreaming. While here, in this body, they were essentially it, for the time speaking its words, thinking its thoughts and not able to control it. Not desiring to in fact, because they were completely identified with it. When they waked up in their own apartments either a singular dream whispered a fragmentary song through their brain, or they retained no remembrances; whatever of it. In such a case the body, being really master, might do or say that which I would not — or the occupier, temporarily strong, might say out of real recollection things having relation only to that life of which his hearers would have no knowledge."

Just then some clock struck. The atmosphere seemed to clear itself. A strange and yet not unfamiliar perfume floated through the room, and my host said, "Yes, I will show you a verse some one tells me to show you."

He walked over to the table, took up a queer little book printed in Sanskrit, yellow with age and seeming to have been much used. Opening it he read:

"This supreme spirit and incorruptible Being, even when it is in the body, neither acteth, nor is it affected, because its nature is without beginning and without quality. As the all-moving Akas, or ether, from the minuteness of its parts, passeth everywhere unaffected, even so the Omnipresent spirit remaineth in the body unaffected. As a single sun illumines the whole world, even so doth the spirit enlighten every body. They who, with the eye of wisdom, perceive the

body and the spirit to be thus distinct, and that there is a final release from the animal nature, go to the Supreme." (4)

FOOTNOTES:

1. *Reprinted from the Theosophist for December, 1895. Vol VII, p. 204.* [Note — In the forthcoming issues of THEOSOPHY, it is proposed to reprint various articles by W. Q. Judge which appeared during his life time in other magazines, but which were not published in THE PATH – ED.] ([return to text](#))

2. *Bhagavad Gita.* ([return to text](#))

3. *Bhagavad Gita.* ([return to text](#))

4. *Bhagavad Gita.* See XIII, last verse. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

NATURE'S VEILS — *Jasper Niemand*

It is inevitable that in Nature, which is the veil cast by Spirit over itself, there should be many illusions. Just as in outer Nature the sun is the mist dispeller, so when the spiritual Sun pours its radiance upon the Soul of man, out of that soul-substance, primeval and multiform, germ after germ of ancient thought, deeply hidden under the action of the centuries, is evoked, is evolved, is dispelled. Mist-like they arise one by one, unfolding themselves under the eye of the Soul, a processional of dreams. Now a hope, now a dread; now a memory serene and now a doubt infernal; now a resplendent promise has fulfillment, and now a tireless torment fastens its fangs in the heart. The Soul of man, observant of that nature which has been created only for its purposes, stands like a witness receiving testimony, or like the spectator of a drama framed for its edification. This Nature, which is its material vehicle, its instrument for use in material life, it must know to the very depth and breadth thereof; it must probe, comprehend and take control of it all before it can know itself.

This gradual conquest of matter, or Nature, by the Soul, might be a process as calm as science, as continuous as fate. The sun, its shining unimpeded, would dispel these miasmatic forms and the still deeps of space would lie reflecting that Sun. Nature conquered, the Soul in that purified garment, robed whitely in the "blood" sacrifice of Life, rounds her cyclic period and hies her back to Spirit. This purifying "blood," of which the Scriptures tell us, is that red desire which fills full the heart of man, engorging its free and spiritual action, clogging its ethereal arteries with germs of desire; desire, whose heat inflames, whose astringent self-hood contracts, whose accumulations fester and destroy. As

the human blood has its marvellous play, its swift alterations of form under the microscopic lens, so to the eye of the seer this force of desire blossoms out upon the surface of the mind in form after form, ever changeable, ever varying and elusive, though their stable root is desire. Yet were the witness uninfluenced, the spectator not identified with the spectacle, the lesson were soon learned, the kingdom swift of conquest, the goal secure.

At this point, however, we meet that chief of illusions, that veil of *Maya* nearest *Maya's* self. For there exists in Nature that element of egotism, *Ahankara*, or self-identification, and Nature, casting up this element, identifies herself with the drama and gives a bias for or against the spectacle. The image thus put forward confuses the too attentive Soul. It is as if the moon, reflected upon the waters, were to see that reflection claim to be herself, and were to lend herself to the cheat. The Soul is bewildered by this action of the element of *Ahankara* in Nature, and accepts this reflected image as the true and only Self.

It may be asked, Why is the Soul thus bewildered? Why does not the Soul remain unconcerned? Perhaps the nearest approach to an answer that can be given is this: That by virtue of the attractive power of Nature, the Soul is drawn down along the lines of force to that form of her own projection and transfers her energies to that seductive image instead of lifting Nature to herself. It is the old tale of Narcissus the beautiful, who fell in love with his own face mirrored in the waters of the world, and lay pining with desire by all the streams, neglecting the missions of the gods. So the Soul plunges more and more of herself into Nature under its attraction and impulsion and suffers her own detention there. She sees the action and reaction of her energies on the material plane and amid their convolutions enjoys the fantastic illusion and dreams. The rightful part of the Soul is to raise matter to its own substance and likeness, and this is done

when, feeling the spiritual influx, the Soul guided by that power only, descends into matter as uplifter and redeemer, and not as accomplice. The root of the Soul is Freedom. That Freedom confers a power of choice.

Now the Soul, by virtue of this Freedom, has an instrument which nothing but itself can bend or break. That instrument is the will. Each Soul can defy the attractive power of Nature and all her illusions; the mirage can be dispelled by the will's strong radiance and can defeat the self-identifying element by a constant and unremitting presentation to the mind of the mental image of the one, true Self. The mind resists this; it does not "feel" the truth of this ideal and it rebels. Then those who put their trust in feelings, fail to rise; their self-imposed shackles weigh them down. But those who hold fast to the higher conception regardless of the sense of dullness, the want of feeling, the blank and the silence, or the turmoil of the senses, those come in time to find that the mind has at last turned to a new basis of action whence is liberated a fountain of fresh energy.

A true mental image, endowed with spiritual energy, is a living thing and operates of itself upon submissive and reflective matter. No longer upon the troubled mental waves does the Soul behold a wavering image with a transient life of its own, but in the depths of Nature calmed and stilled she sees her own clear light with the life of the Spirit moving through it, and knowing herself below as above, knowing Nature now as her vehicle and not as her enticer, she evolves that Nature to her own high purposes and to its own highest destiny. And though that Nature falls from her as she re-enters the portals of the Eternal, yet she finds it awaiting her as she re-emerges, her servitor through the evolving ages.

These images before spoken of are veils of *Maya*. And there is

one, more deadly than any other. I would fain speak of it in accents of the heart which might penetrate to the core of every comrade heart that feels the beat of mine. That veil is Doubt. It is the darkest thing that ever crawled forth from matter to spread its slime upon the image of the Soul. It paralyses the will. It destroys the spontaneity of the heart. It raises a wall between us and Masters.

What is this Doubt? At its root it is Vanity, *Maya's* self. The very presence of a doubt shows plainly that I am thinking of myself in a purely personal light. It is a perversion of normal Vanity, by which, after thinking of myself as something fine or great, I fall into self-lamentation and tremble before myself when I find that I am small.

Small, weak, a poor failure in his personal nature every man is when he relies on that alone, and he oscillates between vanity and self-doubt like a pendulum wound up by Time. Self-doubt is the subtlest form of vanity because it is the most deceptive. We say that we are free from vanity at least, because we are so humble, so modest, and we fail to see that self-doubt is but another mode of being occupied with one's self, and a mode in which the vainest man does not outdo us. Dwelling in thought upon the true Self is the only corrective and helper.

Doubt of another is the same thing. It also is doubt of the true Self being all. To think of another as being mere lower human nature and no more; to think that here in my fellow being is no saving soul power which might in an instant descend and snatch him away to a spiritual glory before our dazzled eyes; to refuse to recognize in any man or woman that soundless AUM which abides in every atom and is above and around all, this is to cast a poisoned net upon our fellow combatants struggling in the arena of Life, and drag them to the Earth.

Oh, Arjuna! Thou art immortal. Arise! Take the sword of the will in hand, call up thy fellows on the field of battle and fight on, through Nature to over-Nature; through matter, the hydra headed, to Spirit the one. Why doubtest thou the soul of thy fellow-man? Yet to doubt thine own is no less sin. Both mental acts deny the Self. *Thou art That.*

Every hour that strikes upon the face of Time is the outcome of thy Soul's own law. Why, then, doubt any of these hours? Why not accept them all? Call them good or call them evil, they are the Soul's messengers. They bring new gifts; they take back gifts outworn, gifts no longer pertinent to the purposes of thy Soul. Let them come! Let them go! Release, too, that strong desire-grip of thine on sentient life — and, having relaxed that grip, let thyself go also; move freely up and down the whole of Life, accepting it all as thine own will and law. Then seeing but thyself everywhere, thyself and mind shall merge into that higher Self and doubt shall be no more. "He who sees Ishwara everywhere equally dwelling, he seeth."

In every event of Life there is a moment, brief perhaps as an eye-wink, in which the voice of the Soul is heard. It should be listened for. We hear it speak oftener than we think. When heard we do not always hold fast to it. We suffer mind to arise like a specious pleader presenting its own bias and calling that "the facts of the case." These facts are argued before us, and when we do not accept the bias, as often as not we reach no conclusion and drift upon the current of circumstance, or else the evidence of our senses decides, and we act upon what we call the sound basis of fact and reason, and go sadly hand-in-hand with Nature on the rounds and tasks of slaves. Cast material facts away and bow thyself when the true Judge speaks.

Who art thou, oh Mind, that thou shouldst decide, when thine

office is only to report what thou hast seen in matter under the guidance of thy Soul? Unguided thou hast seen, and given in a false, an incomplete report! the faithless servant, the perjured one, is handed to the executioner, cast into the prison of doubt, harried in a mental hell. Why not ask counsel from the deep inner heart in each event? Why not follow that counsel through every surge of doubt and beat of pain? Only by holding fast to this light can we increase its action. Only by going slow when we do not sense it can we assist the re-emergence of that calm monitor. Is it not heard? Then turn to Duty. Plain, simple Duty is an unerring guide. Is thy word pledged? Redeem it at every cost. Has Life placed thee where thou art? Pay the full debt; thou canst never stand upright until it is discharged.

Just so surely as we accustom ourselves to listen to the debate of the mind, that debate will increase. It is based upon false premises, for the vital question is, not what a man shall do, but how shall he do it: his mental attitude is all. Secure an attitude of trust in the Self, and every act alike is offered upon the altar. One of the finest mental acts I ever witnessed was that of a man of business training, a shrewd, keen observer, whose powerful place in life depended upon his ability to grasp and weigh facts. In a moment when spiritual trust was required, that man was found to cast aside his whole mental equipment and to act from a basis of purest faith.

Such strong Souls are to be saluted of all; they are the vitalizing centres of all great movements; they rally their fellows to them from the ends of the world, for when Soul thus calls to Soul the earth is shaken and gives up her living dead; the skies are riven and the gods come down to dwell with men and teach them.

THE LONELY SENTINEL — *Katharine Hillard*

Once upon a time an army was sent into the field. Far away from any city was its encampment, in the midst of a rolling country, surrounded by high and partly wooded hills. The army was commanded by a general greatly beloved by all the troops, who were always eager to go into service under him.

Some distance from the camp itself, with its long rows of tents, its busy camp-fires, its picketed horses, and its glittering cannon, its noise and bustle of incessant movement, was posted, upon a high point commanding quite an extent of country, a solitary sentinel. He had but to pace up and down his allotted beat, and to demand the password from any who should approach, meantime watching lest anything that threatened danger should be descried upon the long white dusty road that stretched so far into the distance.

There he paced, solitary and silent, hour after hour, and day after day. The sentinels relieved each other only at long intervals, and their tents were apart from the main camp, so that of what went on there even in his hours of rest the sentinel knew but little. From his lofty perch he could see the busy aides-de-camp coming and going, with orders from the commander-in-chief, he could see the forage wagons driving in with their load of provisions, and the mess-cooks stirring up the fires and preparing the soldiers' meals. Once in a while he could descry the figure of the beloved general, as he moved from one part of the camp to another on a tour of inspection, or as he rode towards the city, surrounded by his officers. In the camp, all was busy, active life, each man seemed to have his own special work, and to do it in consort with his fellows, and the lonely sentinel who gazed down upon them

almost fancied he could hear the merry jests that passed from man to man, or the hot discussions on some point of military interest.

But on the hillside, where he paced back and forth, there was a deadly stillness, broken by no human voice. Only the grasshoppers chirred in the short grass, and the birds sang in the woods above, no one came near him, no friend toiled up the hill to talk with him, no enemy approached for him to challenge, and hour after hour, and day after day passed in the same leaden quiet.

At last the lonely sentinel began to murmur, and to say to himself, "Not for this inactive life did I enlist, but for a soldier's duty with my fellow-soldiers; to follow our general into the fight, to storm a fortification, or to capture a battery, not to rot in inglorious ease on the sunny side of a hill. There is nothing here that I can do for my general or my country, this is mere idleness, and I am the most useless member of a useless expedition. Oh, that for once I might go down into the field, and meet the enemy face to face and man to man! No one cares whether I live or die, and as I can do nothing to win fame and honor like my fellows down below there, I had much better die."

But while the lonely sentinel was thus murmuring, the general suddenly rode up softly behind him across the yielding grass, and the startled soldier wheeled quickly with a shamefaced expression, and saluted. The general looked down upon him, as he sat in the saddle, somewhat sadly and held out to him a little red book.

"These are the orders," said the general. "Open the book and read what you see there." The sentinel took the book reverently, for he knew that it came from the commander-in chief; and his heart leaped within him, as he thought, "Now I shall surely have

something given me to do, something that will call out all my powers, and give me a chance to show of what I am made."

He opened the book as he was bidden, and his eyes rested on these words: *It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well.* As he read them his head sank upon his breast, and a flush rose to his cheek, as he felt the keen, quiet gaze of the general resting upon him.

"Open the book and read again," said the general. The sentinel obeyed and read: *For those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness.*

"Art thou satisfied?" asked the general, with a smile, as he took the little book and turned away, and the sentinel answered, as well as his shame would allow: "I am satisfied."

And although he was once more alone, and none of his fellows came near him, and the birds and insects sang on as before, and he had nothing to do save to pace up and down his accustomed path, yet the whole world seemed transfigured in his eyes, his egotism fell from him like a garment and in the depths of his soul resounded evermore the words of that poet made forever lonely by his blindness: *They also serve who only stand and wait.*

Theosophy

OCCULTISM IN THE UPANISHADS — C. J.

"The true desires are overlaid with false; though true, there is a false covering-up of them. For if any one belonging to him is gone, he, while still in the world, cannot reach him to behold him. And those belonging to him who are alive, and those who are gone, and anything else he desires, yet cannot reach, entering there he finds them, for in this world these his true desires are overlaid with false.

"Just as those who know not its place may again and again walk over a hidden treasure of gold and not know it, so these beings, going day by day to the world of the Eternal, know it not, for they are held back by the false." — *Chhandogya Upanishad*, VIII, 3, 1.

Here is a matter that has come home to us all quite recently: "One belonging to us, a friend, a brother, well-loved, is gone," and we are face to face with the old question of death. The answer to the question in the Upanishad is plain enough. We cannot reach our dead friend to behold him, because this true desire of ours is overlaid and covered up with false desires, so that we are like people walking over a hidden treasure of gold, and not seeing it, because it is overlaid with earth.

The heart of the whole matter is here; we cannot enter real life, being already in it we cannot profit by real life, because our souls are so thickly overlaid with false desires that they thwart and blind us to what is very close to us. If we rise for a moment above them, gain a moment's vision of the light of life, we can see the cloud of false desires below us, murky, copper-hued, forbidding. It is what we are pleased to call our personal concerns, our personal well-being; and when we sink down again from the vision of light, we shall be so blinded by these clouds that we shall

believe in nothing else in the universe but them, and begin to justify our love of them to ourselves and everybody else.

Perhaps the keen intent of self-justification will hold our eyes long enough on these clouds for us to see what they are really like. We shall have the entertainment of seeing that what we call our personal well-being, and, even more, what we all supremely long for, the complacency of our personalities, is a bitter and acrid business at best, and not the quite successful festivity in our honour that we should like it to be. Here is the desire of man: to play the king of some fairy tale, not so much flattered as rightfully honoured for the supreme virtues and graces, of body, mind and estate, which he cannot but feel that he possesses, though modestly keeping them in the background of his mind; to receive, not the meaningless adulation, but rather the quite merited applause and appreciation of our good admirers, vassals and courtiers; to have all things go our way, and to feel that our way is supremely well; and to have such delight of sense as we feel is good for every one, for us especially.

See these worthy people all round us trying to grow rich. What motive have they? They cannot, without danger to their comfort, eat more than before, or enjoy more purely physical pleasure than the beggar by the roadside. Their motive is not physical pleasure at all, but the haunting desire to be that king in the fairy-tale. As soon as they get even a little rich, you see the fancy coming out; they want beautiful things, graceful things, things of art and culture, things fit for a prince. Not, indeed, because they find joy in their beauty; for joy in beauty can be exquisitely gratified without lust of possession; there is no tax on rainbows or sunset clouds. Joy in beauty is a true desire, overlaid by the false desire of being admired and looked up to, as the possessor of a beautiful thing; as, even to a little degree, the king in the fairy-tale.

In speaking of this as the desire of man, we do not mean to inculcate only one-half of humanity, or to pretend that the fancy of playing fairytale queen is any less universal. It is wonderful what large doses of vanity go to make the wine of love-making; how big a part the desire of queening it plays in all these pretty dramas of our Arcadian shepherdesses.

A charming play of children would our human life be, were these fairy-tale fancies all of it; but unhappily there is the bitterness and the meanness which we import into the realization of our fancies. It is instructive, not edifying, to watch the mists and dark clouds of resentment that steam up from the marshes of our minds, the moment we begin to feel that the other people are not falling in with our fairy-tale fancy, but are altogether hard-hearted towards our self-admitted merits; it takes a fairly advanced sage to endure being laughed at with equanimity; it takes an adept to really enjoy being ignored.

The play of these vanities of ours is incredibly large; they make up nearly the whole of life in this world of ours; they make the whole atmosphere of life, often lurid and stormy, hiding the mountains and the stars. When our hearts are stripped of vanities, they are bare, indeed.

These and the like are the false desires that overlay our souls and make the whole coloring of our lives, clustering thick round us like discolored, smothering clouds which shut out the real world, and in time persuade us that they themselves are the real world. In lighter moods we are tempted to say that life is a mere farce, a comedy of puppets: in darker hours we call it "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The clouds of false desires dazzle us into levity and futility, till merciful life overtakes us with some event of stunning and

piercing reality, which raises and drives us out of ourselves, and lets us look on the cloud-wreaths of life a little apart, as though viewing not our own life but the life of another. Then we begin to understand what futility is, and what reality. And it is well for us if we can hold to our vision, and bring it back with us to clear away our clouds a little, so that we may see the sunshine. But again and again we shall miss the point of it all, and misname this touch of reality a touch of suffering and sorrow, deeply bewailing the sadness of our lives, and wondering that we could ever have taken interest in the pretty clouds that delighted us before sorrow came. But in truth our sorrow and suffering are as much of cloudland as our pretty vanities were, or even more.

We moan over separation from our friends, whether they are out of reach in this world or passed out of this world altogether. But the truth is, there is no separation. We are immediately together, but I am so busy with my cloudland pictures that I never raise my eyes to see my friend who is quite close to me, whether I speak of him as dead or living. I rise for a while above that thick, whirling globe of clouds that I call my personality, and I see clearly my friend who is gone, and much more that "belongs to me." Yet it is wonderful how many times, after I have quite clearly recognized the futility and vanity of my cloudland, and quite clearly and in set terms stated as much to myself, it is wonderful how many times I shall still be taken in by it; shall take my vanity and its futility seriously. Then I shall begin to lose sight and memory of my vision, and here again it is wonderful how completely the process can go. So that, even though day by day entering the world of the Eternal, even though day by day dwelling in real life, we see and know no more of it than the people in the simile, of the treasure of gold buried under their feet. The strong affirmations of faith and knowledge are rifts in the clouds that blind us; the petty reasonings that try to smother up our faith are

the clouds coming back again into our eyes. Vanity and doubt are the falsest of all the false desires that overlay the true; but they play each other's game. Vanity tells Doubt that to doubt is wise and prudent: Doubt tells Vanity that the cloud-world of its hopes is the only world, and that there is no other to strive for. Thus are our souls blinded, and thus grows the sad comedy of human life.

Theosophy

THE MORAL LAW OF COMPENSATION (1) — *An Ex-Asiatic* (2)

For them shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. *Job, Chap. V., v. 23.*

As a Western Theosophist I would like to present to my Indian brethren a few thoughts upon what I conceive to be the operation of the Law of Compensation in part, or, to put it more clearly, upon the operation of one branch of this law.

It seems undeniable that this law is the most powerful, and the one having the most numerous and complicated ramifications of all the laws with which we have to deal. This it is that makes so difficult for a human spirit the upward progress after which we all are striving, and it is often forced upon me that it is this law which perpetuates the world, with its delusions, its sadness, its illusions, and that if we could but understand it so as to avoid its operation, the *nirvana* for the whole human family would be an accomplished fact.

In a former number a respected brother from Ceylon, speaking with authority, showed us how to answer the question so often asked: "Why do we see a good man eating the bread of poverty, and the wicked dwelling in riches, and why so often is a good man cast down from prosperity to despair, and a wicked man after a period of sorrow and hardship made to experience for the balance of his life nothing but success and prosperity?" He replied that our acts in any one period of existence were like the arrow shot from the bow, acting upon us in the next life and producing our rewards and punishments. So that to accept his explanation — as we must — it is, of course, necessary to believe in reincarnation. As far as he went, he was very satisfactory, but he

did not go into the subject as thoroughly as his great knowledge would permit. It is to be hoped that he will favor us with further essays upon the same subject.

I have not yet seen anywhere stated the *rationale* of the operation of this law — how and why it acts in any particular case.

To say that the reviling of a righteous man will condemn one to the life of a beggar in the next existence is definite enough in statement, but it is put forward without a reason, and unless we accept these teachings blindly we cannot believe such consequences would follow. To appeal to our minds, there should be a reason given, which shall be at once plain and reasonable. There must be some law for this particular case; otherwise, the statement cannot be true. There must occur, from the force of the revilement, the infraction of some natural regulation, the production of some discord in the spiritual world which has for a consequence the punishment by beggary in the succedent existence of the reviler. The only other reason possible of statement is, that it is so ordered. But such a reason is not a reason at all because no Theosophist will believe that any punishment, save that which man himself inflicts, is *ordered*. As this world is a world produced by law, moved by law, and governed by the natural operation of laws which need no one to operate them, but which invariably and unerringly operate themselves, it must follow that any punishment suffered in this way is not suffered through any order, but is suffered because the natural law operates itself. And further, we are compelled to accept this view, because to believe that it was *ordered*, would infer the existence of some particular person, mind, will, or intelligence to *order* it, which for one instant no one will believe, who knows that this world was produced, and is governed, by the operation of number, weight and measure, with harmony over and above all.

So then we should know in what manner the law operates, which condemns the reviler of a righteous man to beggary in his next existence. That knowledge once gained, we may be able to find for ourselves the manner and power of placating as it were this terrible monster of compensation by performing some particular acts which shall in some way be a restoration of the harmony which we have broken, if perchance we have unconsciously or inadvertently committed the sin.

Let us now imagine a boy born of wealthy parents, but not given proper intelligence. He is, in fact, called an idiot. But instead of being a mild idiot, he possesses great malice which manifests itself in his tormenting insects and animals at every opportunity. He lives to be, say, nineteen and has spent his years in the malicious, although idiotic, torment of unintelligent, defenceless animal life. He has thus hindered many a spirit in its upward march, and has beyond doubt inflicted pain and caused a moral discord. This fact of his idiocy is not a restoration of the discord. Every animal that he tortured had its own particular elemental spirit, and so had every flower that he broke in pieces. What did they know of his idiocy, and what did they feel after the torture but revenge. And had they a knowledge of his idiocy, being unreasoning beings, they could not see in it any excuse for his acts. He dies at nineteen, and after the lapse of years is reborn in another nation — perchance another age — into a body possessing more than average intelligence. He is no longer an idiot, but a sensible, active man, who now has a chance to regenerate the spirit given to every man, without the chains of idiocy about it. What is to be the result of the evil deeds of his previous existence? Are they to go unpunished? I think not. But how are they to be punished: and if the compensation comes, in what manner does the law operate upon him? To me there seems to be but one way, that is through the discord produced in the

spirits of those unthinking beings which he had tortured during those nineteen years. But how? In this way. In the agony of their torture these beings turned their eyes upon their torturer, and dying, his spiritual picture through the excess of their pain, together with that pain and the desire for revenge, were photographed, so to speak, upon their spirits — for in no other way could they have a memory of him — and when he became a disembodied spirit they clung to him until he was reincarnated when they were still with him like barnacles on a ship. They can now only see through his eyes, and their revenge consists in precipitating themselves down his glance on any matter he may engage in, thus attaching themselves to it for the purpose of dragging it down to disaster.

This leads to the query of what is meant by these elementals precipitating themselves down his glance. The ancients taught that the astral light — *Akasa* — is projected from the eyes, the thumbs and the palms of the hands. Now as the elementals exist in the astral light, they will be able to see only through those avenues of the human organism which are used by the astral light in traveling from the person. The eyes are the most convenient. So when this person directs his glance on anything or person, the astral light goes out in that glance and through it those elementals see that which he looks upon. And so also, if he should magnetize a person, the elementals will project themselves from his hands and eyes upon the subject magnetized and do it injury.

Well then, our re-incarnated idiot engages in a business which requires his constant surveillance. The elementals go with him and throwing themselves upon everything he directs, cause him continual disaster.

But one by one they are caught up again out of the orbit of

necessity into the orbit of probation in this world, and at last all are gone, whereupon he finds success in all he does and has his chance again to reap eternal life. He finds the realization of the words of Job ([noted at the head of this article: he is in "league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field are at peace with him." These words were penned ages ago by those ancient Egyptians who knew all things. Having walked in the secret paths of wisdom which no fowl knoweth and the vulture's eye hath not seen, they discovered those hidden laws, one within the other like the wheels of Ezekiel, which govern the universe. There is no other reasonable explanation of the passage quoted than the theory faintly outlined in the foregoing poor illustration. And I only offer it as a possible solution or answer to the question as to what is the *rationale* of the operation of the Moral Law of Compensation in that particular case, of which I go so far as to say that I think I know a living illustration. But it will not furnish an answer for the case of the punishment for reviling a righteous man. I would earnestly ask the learned friends of the Editor of the *Theosophist* to give the explanation, and also hint to us how in this existence we may act so as to mitigate the horrors of our punishment and come as near as may be to a league with the stones and the beasts of the field.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Reprinted from the *Theosophist* for October, 1881, Vol. III., p. 15. ([return to text](#))
2. W. Q. Judge, F. T. S. ([return to text](#))

FRAGMENTS: I — *Cavé*

I.

If you have patience and devotion you will understand these things, especially if you think much of them and meditate on them, for you have no conception of the *power of meditation*.

II.

Beware of anger, beware of vanity, beware too of self-depreciation, these are all lions in your path. Live each day, and each moment in the day, by the light within, fixing your gaze upon it with faith and love. When the hours of darkness come and you see it not, wait in patience and contentment, knowing it still burns and that when morning dawns, if your watch has been constant, you will see it burning, perchance more brightly than before. "The darkest hour is before the dawn;" grieve not therefore nor feel one moment's disquietude. Your lamp is lit, tend it faithfully, it matters not that the outer eyes do not behold it. Those who know and love you can always see it, and it may also be shining in some other heart which as yet has no light of its own. * * *

The Lodge waits and watches ever, and ever, ever works — think you not we have patience? — and those who serve us must do the same. You are right, no detail is overlooked. Life is made up of details, each a step in the ladder, therefore who shall dare say they are "small!" * * *

We are closer than you know, and love and thought bring us still nearer.

Kill out doubt which rises within; that is not yourself, *you know!*

The doubt is a *maya*, cast it aside, listen not to its voice which whispers low, working on your lack of self-confidence. Therefore I say have neither vanity nor self-depreciation. If you are the Higher Self, you are all that is great, but since your daily consciousness is far, far below, look at the matter frankly and impartially. * * * Vex yourself not with contradictions. You know that you must stand alone: *stand* therefore! * * *

Keep yourself *high*, and strengthen your faith. * * *

By your own supreme act of faith, you must claim and hold these things.

III.

Let not Humility, that tender presence, become a stumbling block. In so doing you sin against the Higher Self.

IV.

Closer insight gives heavier responsibility — do not forget that, — and a responsibility which affects others more than it does yourself. See to it then that the outer does not obscure the inner, for your lamp must be carried aloft for others to see, or not seeing it, to continually feel. * * *

Do not confuse the outer with the inner therefore. Though the outer be full and rich remember it is so because of the inner *shining through*, and look ever back to that which shines. No sorrow, no disappointment lie there, but a fullness of realization of which you have no conception and a power and strength which shall lift you above these confusions to a sure place of your own. You have been too harsh with your lower nature, that leads to dangerous reactions. Quiet, steady effort is far better, casting aside all thought of results. Treat your mind as a child, lead it firmly but gently and in all ways and at all times strengthen your

faith.

V.

Your instrument must not be like another's instrument — no need to duplicate these. It is your special kind which is needed and wherein you differ from others is not where you fail but where, if perfected, you may do your own special work which they cannot do.

VI.

Through these tears of blood you will learn; through this suffering you will gain the power to aid your fellows. What to you is the approbation or disapprobation of any one? Work and wait on and all will be well.

VII.

Sink into the very depths of your being, you will find all there. He a follower of no man, follow the inner voice.

Theosophy

PAUL'S USE OF DIVINE NAMES — C.

In Paul's own account of the turning point of his life, he speaks of "the unveiling of Iesous, of the Christos," within him. To fully understand the thought in his mind, we must find out more precisely in what sense he used these two names, by examining them in their context throughout his letters. The first discovery we make, on doing this, is very remarkable; it is this: that there is no certainty at all what name he used in any particular passage, the manuscripts, even the oldest, differing widely in the report they give of his words.

The necessity for arriving at some certainty in the matter, arises in this way: if Paul uses the name "Iesous," it is probable that he had in his mind a particular personality, who ultimately came to be conceived as a miraculous incarnation, the centre of a whole system of theological speculation; a largely artificial figure having almost nothing in common with the poet-teacher of the Galilean hills, and in whom we can hardly have any living interest. If, on the other hand, Paul uses words like "Christos" or "Pneuma," the Spirit, or the Self, we at once recognize the same divine power that is the centre and inspiration of all religions: and the accession of living interest to what Paul writes is immediate and immense.

Curiously enough, the doubt as to the use of divine names arises at the very outset, when Paul's Conversion is described for the first time by his miracle-loving friend, the author of the Acts. Some manuscripts, and amongst them those followed by the Authorized Version of 1611, read: "And forthwith he proclaimed the Christos, in the assemblies, as the son of the Eternal;" while others, followed by the recent revised version, read: "And

forthwith in the assemblies he proclaimed Iesous that he is the son of the Eternal." (1)

The same difficulty follows us all through Paul's own letters. We shall cite some of the most remarkable instances, taking the letters in their traditional order, — which is certainly not the order in which they were written.

This very doubt applies to texts which touch on the essentials of dogmatic theology, as in the following verse: "It is the Christos that died, yes, rather, that was raised;" (2) in which some manuscripts insert "Iesous" before Christos, thus making it impossible to say whether we are dealing with the mystic doctrine of the Spirit's descent into matter, or with the dogma of the sacrifice of the second person of the Trinity to appease the wrath of the first. In the verse that follows, "Who shall cut us off from the love of the Eternal?" other manuscripts read "the love of the Christos." A few verses later, we have a similar confusion: some versions reading: "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," while others run thus: "So then faith by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (3) A little further on, there is a fresh variant, where we have a choice between "serving the Lord" and "serving opportunity," (4) and there is the added difficulty that "the Lord" is used as a translation of various terms in quotations from the old Jewish Book of the Law.

Here is another kind of variation: "To this end the Christos died and lived, to be Lord of both the dead and the living," which other manuscripts almost imperceptibly change into a dogma of a single personal resurrection, thus: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived," (5) thus showing a probably quite unconscious tendency to dogmatics and away from mysticism, in the mind of the copyist, who certainly believed that he was simply bringing out more clearly the evident meaning of Paul's

words.

We are quite prepared to expect, therefore, that in such verses as this: "I say unto you that the Christos was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of the Eternal," (6) many manuscripts should take upon themselves to insert "Iesous" before Christos, and our expectations are not disappointed. A further insight into the carelessness of the copyists is given, when we find that "the first fruits of Asia," in some manuscripts, appears as "the first fruits of Achaia" in others. (7) Of the closing section of the epistle to the Romans, it has further been conjectured, with great likelihood, that its real place is at the end of the letter to Ephesus or at any rate a letter to one of the groups of pupils in Asia Minor, since it is in the last degree unlikely that Paul should be personally acquainted with numbers of pupils in Rome, before he had ever been there.

In the epistle which traditionally stands next after that of the Romans, we are again met with a like uncertainty in the use of divine names. Thus we find that "the day of the Lord," in one manuscript, becomes "the day of the Lord Iesous" (8) in another: and again, "Neither let us tempt the Lord," becomes, in other readings, "Let us not tempt the Christos." (9) In the second letter to Corinth, we find a verse of very profound meaning: "Now the Master is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Master is, is freedom," moulded to the uses of dogma thus: "Now the Lord is that Spirit." (10)

In the letter to Ephesus, which many critics, following a very ancient opinion, have thought to be in reality the epistle to the Laodiceans mentioned at the close of the letter to Colossi, there are several doubtful readings of precisely the same nature. For example, while some manuscripts read "the Eternal . . . brought us to life in the Christos," (11) others read "quickened us together

with the Christos," thus making it doubtful whether we are dealing with a mystical or a theological thought. A little later, we have the already familiar change of "partakers of the promise in the Christos," to "partakers of the promise in Christos Iesous." (12)

The letter to Philippi also presents illustrations of the same character; thus we read in some manuscripts, "for the work of the Christos he came near death," and in others "for the work of the Master"; (13) and again we find the better reading "I can do all things through him that strengthens me," changed into: "I can do all things through the Christos that strengthens me."

The letter to Colossi, after which the eloquent little note to Philemon should stand as postscript, contains several cases of the same uncertainty as in the following somewhat extended passage: "Even as the lord forgave you, so also do; and above all things love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body: and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"; (14) of which the following variant is offered by many good manuscripts: "Even as Christ forgave you, so also do: and let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . . Let the word of the Lord dwell in you richly." Yet other manuscripts read: "Let the word of God dwell in you richly."

These are only a few instances out of many, which may be found abundantly, not only in Paul's letters, but also in other parts of the *New Testament*. A very curious instance is in the "general epistle of Jude," immediately following a verse where we have a choice between "our only Master and Lord, Iesous, the Christos" and, "the one ruler, God, and our Master Iesous the Christos." (15) While the majority of manuscripts read "The Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those that did not believe." there also exists the alternative reading: "Iesous,

having saved a people out of the land of Egypt." If we compare with this a verse from the Apocryphal "Wisdom of the Son of Sirach" in which we read "Mighty in wars was Iesous, . . . who became great according to his name, for the salvation of his chosen people; (16) we shall probably be inclined to believe that Jude really wrote Iesous, the Greek form of Joshua, and had in his mind the son of Nun, and not at all the teacher of the New Testament. If this be so, then we see that the copyists were so careless of the identity of divine names that they did not hesitate here to substitute "the Lord" for Iesous, thus unconsciously deifying Joshua, if our conjecture be correct.

As a result of the few instances we have quoted, and many others too numerous for quotation, it becomes clear that, throughout Paul's epistles, the scribes have done their work so carelessly that there is no certainty at all as to what Paul really wrote, whether "Iesous," or "the Master," or "the Christos." Now there is no doubt at all that in the subsequent centuries, there grew up a quite clearly formed dogma of the incarnation of an anthropomorphic God as Iesous, who was further identified with the Messiah of Jewish expectation. So that it would be only natural to expect that copyists of those times, — who had the anthropomorphic idea so firmly fixed in their minds that they had really room for nothing else, — should understand Paul to speak of their anthropomorphic incarnation, whenever he used the words "the Master," or "the Christos;" and that it would seem to them not the least reprehensible, but only quite natural to make what they believed to be his meaning clearer by inserting Iesous in every case.

Now, if we can clearly show that Paul had really in his mind another and more spiritual teaching, in which he spoke, not of a personal deity incarnating, but of the universal spirit entering into mankind, we shall be entitled, in view of the already

demonstrated changes in the texts, to assume that there are many more changes which have left no mark behind them; and we shall consequently be entitled to see in many texts a mystical and universal meaning, even though the manuscripts agree in giving them a theological and particular sense.

Paul, as we shall fully show, was a mystic; his followers, the copyists of his letters, were theologians with no understanding of his mystical teaching. We shall therefore be justified in believing that they read their theology into his mystical words; the more so as we have already proved that the copyists are quite divided among themselves as to what divine name really did occur in numerous passages. Their bias was wholly theological; we shall therefore be justified in believing that, if they were in the habit of making changes, as we now know they were, those changes would tend to be in a personal and theological direction, at the expense of the true mystical and universal meaning of Paul's words.

FOOTNOTES:

1. *Acts*, ix, 20. ([return to text](#))
2. *Romans*, viii, 34. ([return to text](#))
3. *Romans*, x, 17. ([return to text](#))
4. *Romans*, xii, 12. ([return to text](#))
5. *Romans*, xiv, 9. ([return to text](#))
6. *Romans*, xv, 8. ([return to text](#))
7. *Romans*, xiv. 5. ([return to text](#)) '
8. *I Cor.*, v, 5. ([return to text](#))
9. *I Cor.*, x, 9. ([return to text](#))

10. *II Cor.*, iii, 17. ([return to text](#))
 11. *Ephesians*, ii, 5. ([return to text](#))
 12. *Ephesians*, iii, 6. ([return to text](#))
 13. *Philippians*, ii, 30. ([return to text](#))
 14. *Colossians*, iii, 13-16. ([return to text](#))
 15. *Jude*, verse 4. ([return to text](#))
 16. *Sophia Seirax*, 46, 1. ([return to text](#))
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Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: IV — *Basil Crump*

IV. — LOHENGRIN. (1)

In an age when the dread shadows of Doubt and Despair o'erspread the race and the golden flame of Hope is but a glimmering spark in the hearts of men, the drama of Lohengrin stands forth as at once a pathetic and inspiring lesson. As a writer has beautifully expressed it in a few words: "The good angel of the human soul is its ideal; if it is called upon it will come, but if the imprudent Psyche doubts it and its divine message, immediately the angel veils its face and disappears."

The legendary matter out of which Wagner has created his drama is a fascinating study but would need an article by itself to touch even upon its main features. Lohengrin, the Knight of the Swan, is one of the Brotherhood of Knights or Initiates who guard the mystic Cup of the Holy Grail, and ever and anon go forth into the world to protect right and virtue and overcome the powers of evil. This, in the Age of Chivalry, was the symbol of that Brotherhood of Sages who, as Theosophy teaches us, watch over Humanity and send forth their messengers from time to time to keep alive in men the consciousness of their innate divinity. As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness."

The Cup was the sacred receptacle of the Wisdom of the Ages which is to be found within each one of us, and which is represented by the magic cauldron of the Druids, the Eucharistic cup of the Christ, and many a more ancient symbol. The mysterious castle of Monsalvat wherein stood the shining Temple of the Grail, is located by the great Minnesinger Wolfram von

Eschenbach in the mountains in the North of Spain.

The action of the drama is preceded by an instrumental Prelude constructed entirely from the marvellously pathetic and beautiful theme of the Holy Grail, a theme to which the chords of our innermost being vibrate in instant sympathy, making us feel that here indeed is a master mind that knows the secrets of the soul. "An Initiate of Monsalvat," Wagner tells us, "is praying in a high valley on his mountain." To his inner vision appears a celestial band, bearing the Cup of the Holy Grail, and on his bowed head he receives from it "the baptism of fire which consecrates him as Knight. The fiery cloud at once extinguishes its flame" and retires, leaving behind it "the perfume of its aura It has confided to a pure soul the Holy Vessel, source of that Love which had disappeared from earth."

The first scene discloses the plain of the Scheldt in Brabant, where King Henry the "Fowler" is rallying his forces against the threatening enemy. He sits under the tree of judgment to hear a heavy charge brought against Elsa of Brabant by Count Telramund, who accuses her of murdering her little brother. This brother, Gottfried (*lit.* "Peace of God"), is heir to the throne, and he represents Hope in the heart of Elsa who is the Psyche or Human Soul. "Elsa has been in the dark forest with her brother, and at nightfall she comes back without him." Groping in the darkness of Matter she has lost Hope for a time, and the lower forces at once begin to attack her. Telramund, a brave soldier, to whom honor is dear, represents material Force or Impulse. Elsa had refused an alliance with him and he had therefore married Ortrud the sorceress (the Animal Soul) who now uses him as her tool to bring about Elsa's downfall.

Called upon to answer the charge Elsa, the virgin soul, enters in white raiment and tells of the vision which has appeared to her.

"Shining with light, his sword radiant with a thousand fires, a Knight" had come from the heights of heaven to defend her. On him and no other would she now call to champion her cause. The trumpeters sound the challenge, and presently a boat drawn by a swan is seen advancing over the waters, and in it stands a noble Knight in silver armor. He is the "Warrior" of whom we read in *Light on the Path*, the incarnate Son of Mind, of whom Elsa-Psyche is the silver Ray or reflection thrown downward to gain experience in the world of Matter.

Alighting and bidding farewell to the swan (the sacred bird, or Hope under another form) he declares Elsa's innocence and tells her he will fight for her if she will place absolute faith in him and never ask his name or race. The tones in which he asks this vow of Elsa form a theme of deepest import, which is heard afterwards whenever Elsa is in danger from Ortrud's machinations. It may be called the Warning *motif*. Receiving Elsa's promise, the unknown champion declares his love for her, and shows at once his power and mercy by defeating Telramund and sparing his life.

Night has fallen when the second act opens with the lurid and snake-like *motif* of Ortrud followed by the solemn Warning *motif* twice repeated. She and Telramund are engaged in a violent altercation on the steps of the church, while at the back are the lights of the Palace, where rejoicings are going on at the forthcoming union of Elsa and the Knight. Presently Elsa appears on the balcony of the Kemenate and murmurs to the night of her new-found happiness. Now is Ortrud's opportunity: dismissing Telramund, she employs strategy and beginning by exciting Elsa pity for herself and her husband she finally induces her to descend and speak with her below. Once there she instills into Elsa's mind the evil suggestion that, as magic brought her Defender, so also might it take him away. Here is Elsa's test.

Perfect faith is wholly unselfish, but Ortrud's words put fear into her heart; she has not the strength to cast out this seed of Doubt, and while she declares her unshaken faith in her champion she permits her enemy to follow her into the Kemenate.

The next day when the procession is on its way to the church, Ortrud suddenly comes from the rear and bars Elsa's way, claiming the right to precede her. The evil power has been encouraged and, standing on the steps of the church, represents to the very letter the "Dweller on the Threshold." But the King and the Knight now enter, and as the latter advances to lead Elsa into the church the evil shadow is compelled to give way. Yet she makes a second attempt through Telramund, who rushes forward and loudly charges the Knight with gaining his victory by sorcery. But the King and the People of Brabant (who represent the fluctuating emotions) are with the Defender, and the ceremony takes place.

The third Act opens with a joyful musical prelude which merges into the well-known strains of the Bridal Chorus, as the newly-married pair are ushered into the bridal chamber. It is impossible to describe the psychological subtlety of this remarkable scene in detail: suffice it to say that the seed of doubt planted by Ortrud now comes to fruition, and, in the very theme of the Ortrud *motif* she presses the fatal question the while the Warning *motif* strives in vain to tell her of her danger. As she utters it Telramund rushes in with assistants to murder the knight, but is at once stricken dead by his sword. Sadly he orders Elsa's maidens to remove her, and on the following day before King and People he reveals his name and race in a song of wondrous beauty and deep significance.

He tells of the Sanctuary of Monsalvat and its Brotherhood of Knights; how on their missions the power of the Grail is with

them, but if their names are revealed they must lose it or return to the Temple. And then he concludes with these words:

"I will speak because I am ordered. The Grail sent me and I have followed its law. My father Parsifal wears its crown, and Lohengrin its Knight am I."

Then, turning to Elsa, he tells her that if she had trusted him for one short year his name would have been revealed to her and he could have remained to rule over her people. Now he must depart, but in case the Grail permits her brother (Hope) to return, he gives her for him his conquering sword, his horn to call him in time of need, and his ring as a symbol of their essential unity. As he moves towards the boat Ortrud appears and announces with triumph that Gottfried cannot return him as she has changed him by her sorceries into a swan: but Lohengrin concentrates himself by a powerful effort of will, the swan sinks and the missing heir of Brabant appears in its place. The Holy Dove, symbol of the Divine Spirit, floats down and, taking up the golden chain attached to the boat, bears Lohengrin away, while Elsa sinks lifeless in the arms of her brother. Thus, while Elsa has failed to keep up to the level of her original aspiration, she has gained a valuable experience, and Hope, restored to her by the Warrior and armed with his talismans, is not likely to be taken from her in a future incarnation by the lower powers. The link is not broken, she has not really lost her champion, for "when once he has entered thee and become thy Warrior he will never utterly desert thee, and at the day of the great peace he will become one with thee."

FOOTNOTE:

1. I am largely indebted to Mme. de Neufville, President of the Taliesin Lodge, Amsterdam, for this epitome of the drama. — B. C.
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JACOB BOEHME AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1) — *William Q. Judge*

Jacob Boehme (or as some say, Behmen) was a German mystic and spiritualist who began to write in the 17th century. In his works he inserted a picture of an angel blowing a trumpet from which issued these words: "To all Christians, Jews, Turks and Heathens, to all the nations of the earth this trumpet sounds for the last time." In truth it was a curious emblem, but he, the author, was a mystic, and as all experience shows, the path of the mystic is a strange one. It is, as Job says, a path which the "vulture knoweth not." Even as a bird cleaves the eternal ether, so the mystic advances on a path not ordinarily manifest, a way which must be followed with care, because like the Great Light, which flashes forth and leaves only traces when it returns again to its centre, only indications are left for those who come after seeking the same spiritual wisdom. Yet by these "traces," for such they are called in the *Kabbala*, the way can be discerned, and the truth discovered.

Boehme was poor, of common birth, and totally devoid of ordinary education. He was only a shoemaker. Yet from the mind and out of the mouth of this unlettered man came mighty truths.

It would be idle to inquire into the complications of Karma which condemned him to such a life as his appeared to be. It must have been extremely curious, because though he had grasped the truth and was able to appreciate it, yet at the same time he could not give it out in its perfect form. But he performed his work, and there can be no manner of doubt about his succeeding incarnation. As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, he has been already or will shortly be "born into a family of wise devotees";

and thence "he will attain the highest walk."

His life and writings furnish another proof that the great wisdom-religion — the Secret Doctrine — has never been left without a witness. Born a Christian, he nevertheless saw the esoteric truth lying under the moss and crust of centuries, and from the Christian Bible extracted for his purblind fellows those pearls which they refused to accept. But he did not get his knowledge from the Christian Scriptures only. Before his internal eye the panorama of real knowledge passed. His interior vision being open he could see the things he had learned in a former life, and at first not knowing what they were, was stimulated by them to construe his only spiritual books in the esoteric fashion. His brain took cognizance of the Book before him, but his spirit aided by his past, and perchance by the living guardians of the shining lamp of truth, could not but read them aright.

His work was called "The Dawning of the Eternal Day." In this he endeavors to outline the great philosophy. He narrates the circumstances and reasons for the angelic creation, the fall of its three chief hierarchies, and the awful effects that thereupon fell upon Eternal Nature. Mark this, not upon man — for he was not yet — but upon the Eternal Nature, that is BRAHM. Then he says that these effects came about by reason of the *unbalancing* of the *seven equipoised powers* or forces of the Eternal Nature or Brahm. That is to say, that so long as the seven principles of Brahm were in perfect poise, there was no corporeal or manifested universe. So in the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find that Krishna tells Arjuna that "after the lapse of a thousand ages (or Night of Brahm) all objects of developed matter come forth from the non-developed principle. At the approach of that day they emanate spontaneously." — (*Bhagavad-Gita*, Chap. 8.) Such is the teaching of the Secret Doctrine.

And again Boehme shows the duality of the Supreme Soul. For he says in his work "Psychologia Vera cum Supplemento" that these two principles of positive and negative, the *yea* and the *nay* of the outspoken *Supreme One*, together constitute eternal nature, — not the dark world alone, which is termed "the root of nature," — the two being as it were combined in *perfect indissoluble union*.

This is nothing else but Purusha and Prakriti, or taken together, what is referred to in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where it is said: "But there is another invisible, eternal existence, superior to this visible one, which does not perish when all things perish. It is called invisible and indivisible. This is my Supreme Abode."

Clearly the *Supreme Abode* could never be in Purusha alone, nor in Prakriti alone, but in both when *indissolubly united*.

This scheme is adhered to all through this great philosopher's works, no matter whether he is speaking of the great Universe or macrocosm, or of its antitype in man or microcosm. In "De Tribus Principiis" he treats of the three principles or worlds of Nature, describing its eternal birth, its *seven* properties, and the *two* co-eternal principles; and furthermore in "De Triplici Vita Hominis" he gives the three-fold life of man from which the *seven* is again deduced.

In "De Electione Gratia" he goes into a subject that often proves a stumbling block to many, and that is the *inevitableness of evil* as well as of good. From this it is easy to pass to the contemplation of one of the difficult points in occultism as shown in the Secret Doctrine, that nothing is evil, and that even if we admit evil or wickedness in man, it is of the nature of the quality or *guna*, which in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is denominated *Raja* — foulness or bad action. Even this is better than the indifferent action that only leads to death. Even from wickedness may and does come forth spiritual life, but from indifferent action comes only darkness,

and finally death.

Krishna says in *Bhagavad-Gita*, Chap. IV.: "There are three kinds of action; first, that which is of the nature of *Satyam*, or true action; second, that which is of the nature of *Raja*, or bad action; third, that which is of the nature of *Tamas*, or indifferent action." He then says: "Although thou wert the greatest of all offenders, thou shalt be able to cross the gulf of sin in the bark of spiritual wisdom;" and a little farther on, "The ignorant and the man without faith, whose spirit is full of doubt, is lost and cannot enjoy either world." And in another chapter, in describing Himself, he says that he is not only the Buddha, but also is the most evil of mankind or the Asura.

This is one of the most mystical parts of the whole Secret Doctrine. While Boehme has touched on it sufficiently to show that he had a memory of it, he did not go into the most occult details. It has to be remembered that the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and many other books treating on the Secret Doctrine, must be regarded from seven points of view; and that imperfect man is not able to look at it from the centre, which would give the whole seven points at once.

Boehme wrote about thirty different treatises, all of them devoted to great subjects, portions of the Secret Doctrine.

Curiously enough the first treated of the "Dawn of the Eternal Day," and the second was devoted to an elucidation of the "Three Principles of Man." In the latter is really to be found a sevenfold classification similar to that which Mr. Sinnett propounded in *Esoteric Buddhism*.

He held that the greatest obstacle in the path of man is the astral or elementary power, which engenders and sustains this world.

Then he talks of "tinctures," which we may call principles.

According to him, there are two principal ones, the watery and the igneous. These ought to be united in man; and they ardently seek each other continually, in order to be identified with Sophia or Divine Wisdom. Many Theosophists will see in this a clue not only to the two principles — or tinctures — which ought to be united in man, but also to a law which obtains in many of the phenomena of magic. But even if I were able, I should not speak on this more clearly.

For many inquirers the greatest interest in these works will be found in his hypothesis as to the birth of the material Universe. On the evolution of man from spirit into matter he has much more than I could hope to glance at. In nearly all of it he was outlining and illustrating the Secret Doctrine. The books indicated are well worthy of study not only by Western but by Eastern metaphysicians.

Let us add a few sentences to support this hypothesis from Count Saint Martin, who was a devoted student of these works.

"Jacob Boehme took for granted the existence of a Universal Principle; he was persuaded that everything is connected in the immense chain of truths, and that the Eternal Nature reposed on seven principles or bases, which he sometimes calls powers, forms, spiritual wheels, sources, and fountains, and that those seven bases exist also in this disordered material Nature, under constraint. His nomenclature, adopted for these fundamental relations, ran thus: The first *astringency*, the second *gall* or bitterness, the third *anguish*, the fourth *fire*, the fifth *light*, the sixth *sound*, and the seventh he called BEING or the *thing itself*."

The reader may have begun to think the author did not rightly comprehend the first six but his definition of the seventh shows he was right throughout, and we may conclude the real meanings are concealed under these names.

"The third principle, *anguish*, attenuates the *astringent* one, turns it into *water*, and allows a passage to *fire*, which was shut up in the astringent principle."

There are in this many suggestions and a pursuit of them will repay the student.

"Now the Divine Sophia caused a new order to take birth in the centre of our system, and there burned our sun; from that do come forth all kinds of qualities, forms and powers. This centre is the Separator." It is well known that from the sun was taken by the ancients all kinds of power; and if we mistake not, the Hindus claim that when the Fathers entered into Para-Nirvana, their accumulated goodness pours itself out on the world through the "*Door of the Sun*."

The *Bhagavad-Gita* says, that the Lord of all dwells in the region of the heart, and again that this Lord is also the Sun of the world.

"The earth is a condensation of the seven primordial principles, and by the withdrawal of eternal light this became a dark valley." It is taught in the East, that this world is a valley and that we are in it, our bodies reaching to the moon, being condensed to hardness at the point where we are on the earth, thus becoming visible to the eye of man. There is a mystery in this statement, but not such an one as cannot be unraveled.

Boehme proceeds: "When the light mastered the fire at the place of the sun, the terrible shock of the battle engendered an igneous eruption by which there shot forth from the sun a stormy and frightful flash of fire — Mars. Taken captive by light, it assumed a place, and there it struggles furiously, a pricking goad, whose office is to agitate all nature, producing reaction. It is the gall of nature. The gracious, amiable Light, having enchained unerupted Mars, proceeded by its own power to the bottom or end of the

rigidity of Nature, whence, unable to proceed further, it stopped, and became corporeal; remaining there, it warms that place, and although a valet in Nature, it is the source of sweetness and the moderator of Mars.

"Saturn does not originate from the Sun, but was produced from the severe astringent anguish of the whole body of this Universe. Above Jupiter the sun could not mitigate the horror, and out of that arose Saturn, who is the opposite of meekness, and who produces whatever of rigidity there is in creatures, including bones, and what in moral nature corresponds thereto." (This is all the highest astrology, from one who had no knowledge of it.) "As in the Sun is *the heart of life*, so by Saturn commenceth all corporeal nature. Thus in these two resides the power of the whole universal body, and without their power there could be no creation, nor any corporification.

"Venus originates in *effluvia* from the Sun. She lights the unctuousness of the water of the Universe, penetrates hardness, and enkindles love.

"Mercury is the chief worker in the planetary wheel; he is *sound*, and wakes up the germs in everything. His origin, the triumph of Light over Astringency (in which sound was shut up silent), set free the sound by the attenuation of the astringent power."

It is certain that if this peculiar statement regarding Mercury is understood, the student will have gained a high point of knowledge. A seductive bait is here held out to those striving disciples who so earnestly desire to hold converse with the elemental world. But there is no danger, for all the avenues are very secret and only the pure can prevail in the preliminary steps.

Boehme says again: "The Mercury is impregnated and fed

continually by the solar substance; that in it is found the knowledge of what was in the order above, before Light had penetrated to the solar centre."

As to the Moon, it is curious to note that he says, "She was produced from the sun itself, at the time of his becoming material, and that the moon is his spouse." Students of the story of Adam being made to sleep after his creation and before coats of skin were given, when Eve was produced from his side, will find in this a strong hint.

The above is not by any means a complete statement of Boehme's system. In order to do justice to it, a full analysis of all his works should be undertaken. However, it is sufficient if thoughtful minds who have not read Boehme shall turn to him after reading this, or if but one earnest reader of his works, or seeker after wisdom, shall receive even a hint that may lead to a clearing up of doubts, or to the acquisition of one new idea. Count Saint Martin continually read him; and the merest glance at the "Theosophic Correspondence" or "Man — His Nature," etc., or Saint Martin, will show that from that study he learned much. How much more, then, will the Western mind be aided by the light shed on both by the lamp of Theosophical teachings. "Let the desire of the pious be fulfilled."

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Reprinted from the Theosophist for April, 1886, Vol. VII, p. 417.*

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Theosophy

THEOSOPHY IN THE APOCRYPHA: I — *Katharine Hillard*

I. ESDRAS.

The word *Apocrypha* means hidden, or secret, *i. e.*, esoteric, and is applied to fourteen books originally published with the *Old Testament*, but now omitted, as they are not recognized as canonical by the English Church. The Roman Catholic Church admits most of them, the Greek Church admits them all. They are too little studied by theosophists, for they are full of wisdom and beauty, and rightly bear the name of the secret or esoteric teaching, and they need no endorsement of church or state to those who are familiar with them.

The most important, to us at least, are the two books of *Esdras* (identified with Ezra and a continuation of the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* in the *Old Testament*), the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Ecclesiasticus*. From the two latter Dante drank deep draughts of inspiration, and his descriptions of Beatrice are full of quotations from the *Wisdom of Solomon*. I shall not try to unravel the meanings of the seven wonderful visions of Esdras in this brief paper, but only endeavor to point out a few striking instances of the theosophical ideas in these books.

The *Wisdom of Solomon* was said by the Fathers to have been written by Philo, called Judaeus, but this point is much disputed. Philo was a Pythagorean and Platonist, and his teachings were those of Theosophy as to the doctrine of the Absolute; he wrote of the Logos as a synthesis of the creative forces of Nature, and taught the dual nature of man and reincarnation, and his writings are at least in accordance with the books above mentioned, even if he wrote none of them.

The first book of *Esdras* is chiefly historical, like *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, but *Esdras II.* is apocalyptic and full of beautiful and significant passages. Not to mention the vision of Ch. II., the idea of primitive man as an unreasoning animal is distinctly set forth in v. 5 of Ch. III., which says:

"Thou gavest a body unto Adam *without soul*, which was the workmanship of thy hands, and didst breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made living before thee. And unto him thou gavest commandment to *love thy way* [nothing said here of anything more than an observance of natural law], which he transgressed, and immediately thou appointedst death in him and in his generations."

In Ch. IV. we have the beautiful parable of the forests and the sea, and in v. 28-30, comes what might be a description of the *Kali-Yuga*.

"The evil is sown, but the destruction thereof is not yet come. If therefore that which is sown be not turned upside down, and if the place where the evil is sown pass not away, then cannot it come that is sown with good. For the grain of evil seed hath been sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning."

We cannot have reconstruction without destruction, and the nature itself must suffer change before the better harvest can be planted. Here we have clearly suggested too, the dual nature of man, and the doctrine of Karma. Unless the grain be uprooted, the necessary harvest must follow the sowing, and in the first of men was implanted the capacity for sin, as well as the capacity for right-doing.

It would take too long to go through the whole book, but it is an interesting fact that *Esdras* refers to the gradual decrease of stature in the races.

"Ye are of less stature than those that were before you," he says, "and so are they that come after you less than ye." (1) And he refers in Ch. VII. to that primitive state of innocence when "the entrances of the elder world were wide and sure, and brought immortal fruit," but when mankind had fallen into sin, "then were the entrances of this world made narrow, full of sorrow and travail: they are but few and evil, full of perils and very painful."

In the same chapter the prophet refers to the *pralaya* of seven "days":

"And the world shall be turned into the old silence, seven days, like as in the former judgments [indicating former periods of repose]. And after seven days, the world that yet awaketh not, shall be raised up, and that shall die that is corrupt. And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them." So is it said in the *Sacred Slokas*: "The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in *Nirvana*, reemerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action." (2)

Then Esdras, moved by the thought of all the sin and suffering that must be in the world, before the promised glory should return, asks the old question, "Why do we live at all?"

"It had been better not to have given the earth unto Adam, or else when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning."

And the Voice that was like "the sound of many waters," that spoke to him in the visions of the night, answered him with the doctrine of the Cycle of Necessity.

"This is the condition of the battle, which man that is born upon the earth shall fight; that if he be overcome, he shall suffer as thou hast said; but if he get the victory, he shall receive the thing

that I say." "Therefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight," says Krishna.

When Esdras had prepared himself by prayer and fasting for spiritual illumination, a full cup was reached to him, "which was full as it were with water, but the color of it was like fire. And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk of it, my heart uttered understanding, and wisdom grew in my breast, for my spirit strengthened my memory."

Of the two hundred and four books that the five swift scribes wrote at his dictation, he was told to publish the first openly, but to keep the seventy last, "that thou mayst deliver them only to such as be wise among the people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the stream of knowledge."

"I shall light a candle of understanding in thy heart," said the Voice, "which shall not be put out till the things be performed which thou shalt begin to write."

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Esdras II.*, Ch. V., 54-55. *The Wisdom of Solomon*, Ch. XIV., v. 6, speaks of "the old time, when the proud giants perished." ([return to text](#))

2. *Secret Doctrine II.*, 80. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

Send THEOSOPHY IN THE HOME — *Julia W. L. Keightley*

Theosophical principles to be vital, must be lived from within, outwards. They should pass uninterruptedly from the state of intuitive ideas into that of objective activity. Pure intellect, analytical and agnostic in attitude, delays this process. While it searches the content of the heart in the spirit of a customs officer examining suspected luggage, much of the force of that heart's spontaneity is lost. We are dealing with questions of Force, and, from that aspect, intuitive ideas are deadened the moment they are intellectualized.

It imports much for the progress of Humanity that individual men shall at the present juncture learn to *trust* the heart-impulse lying at the back of Nature; that they shall transmute the potency of the Ideal into the Real in action, and so make Theosophy a living power in the Life.

In the daily practice of our philosophy we need a thread of light to guide us to that living heart of Nature whence Life, upspringing, wells forth to animate all lives. Shall this clue be found in the sad and labyrinthine homes of men, too oft abodes of the "living dead"? To live in conditions opposed to the laws of Life evolves activities of that separative order which conserves only to paralyze; which destroys with destruction in view as an end, and not as a means of building afresh. Could we discard the fatal habit of viewing acts and conditions as final and complete in themselves, could we see each interlinked with the whole plan of Nature, we should in that broader aspect regain a sense of proportion, of relativity, of interaction of states of Being, to which the minds of men today are either strangers, or wholly averse.

In respect of the Home, it would appear that the necessary clue

may be found by regarding the Home in its true, its essential light. Life is full of false lights, false reflects from the falser Self; the homes of men are in the main unwisely viewed; they are regarded as centres of self-conservation. To most minds the function of the Home, of the Nation, of all organizations is, primarily, to establish a distinction between the life of that centre and other similar centres; to mark off a portion of Life for individual purposes. This is partially true, this use of centripetal force; but let not the centrifugal be omitted; neglect not the uses of interaction. The Home is a place where are gathered together the results of the personal life, a place where we garner all the accretions of a life pursued for the purposes of self; we maintain there the same unyielding central motives and plans, resisting all that opposes them. Home! It is a Kama-lokic treasury where the personal self takes its ease in a mirror lined domain, seeing on all sides itself in its multitudinous hopes and fears. *My home, my children, my religion, my plans*: So runs our dreary creed. The man or woman who has even changed the personal accent, so that it shall read *my home, my children, my religion*, has taken one step towards the Actual, has glimpsed a possible alteration in the tenor of life. Our homes, that should be causes, are results. Let us make them causal and final.

To do this, to elevate the Home in the scale of Power, we must recognize that it is, in essence, a sphere of action, a centre of Force. It imports much and continuously what forces we originate in our homes. The Home is a sphere of Life, not a centre of static or mechanical Force; it is an atmosphere where divine breaths are playing. All who come to it take from its energies and none can depart without having contributed to them, for each has brought and has taken away Life and the experiences of Life. Each contacts there a certain mode of Force whose impress has made for or against evolution. Every Home has a spirit which it

unconsciously expresses; from this spirit men may learn, whether it be wisdom or foolishness, but that which is helpful alike to the dweller and the stranger within the gates is that spirit of broad tolerance which modern education so often aims to defeat. It is not sufficient that the Home should be hospitable to persons; let it be hospitable to ideas; the angels entertained unawares are not bodies; it is our high privilege to minister there to souls.

Consider with me for a moment that the soul chose its earthly dwelling, its various abodes in matter, whether of the body, the family, the nation, as centres of Life wherein it might best express itself, while evolving and gaining the experience now most needed by it. Yet in the modern Home we have attempted to crystallize the living Life into some form which shall represent the mind of the builder of the Home! When that living Light which evades our classification and mocks our sterilizing plan, pours into our mould of clay and breaks it, what futility of grief or wrath is ours! When some line of Karma is worked out, there comes a precious instant where further growth is possible. In that instant the forces of Life assist the budding soul to cast a husk away; it may, if it will, enter a further stage of unfolding, of development toward a fuller Life. Yet in the very moment when greater freedom becomes possible to the soul, the human mind names these agencies of liberation Death, Loss, Disappointment, Despair, until the shuddering soul — as human beings have been known to do — entreats that it may again feel the safe enfoldment of the prison wall. The Home is maintained as a higher form of limitation, but the aroma of Freedom is lost.

How then to make a Home which shall assist those souls who come to it as to a nucleus of Life, there to learn of the Mighty Teacher? There is no formula for this diviner atmosphere. It is created by the breath of the souls dwelling therein: it is themselves. This question may well be asked and must be often

asked, with intervals of stern endeavor set firmly between each inquiry, before the true Home impulse can be communicated at all: each fresh propulsion of the heart towards this image assists in its evolution, until at last the centre becomes actual because it has been so long and so fervently ideal. Vibrating waves of Thought, pulsing about the image, have urged it on through the ether into the receptive air, have developed it from a thought into an action, from power latent to power alive and current in the world of men.

It thus seems that we must go to the field of Force for our answer, seeing that we deal with Forces, and not with a supposed solid, material fact called Home. The essence of all Energy is that it shall act and react; the moment it had ceased to interact it would have passed out of Being. It is unthinkable that Energy shall cease to be; though man in his folly endeavors to detain it in the cells he so laboriously builds for its occupation; yet in so far as he thinks and observes at all he comes to see that if he would make of his Home a living centre, he must first provide for the free interaction of Life there.

He does this by means of two great occult forces. The first of these is Harmony. Magic word, so oft repeated, so little known! Harmony! By its true use man the slave becomes man the master magician, balancing the Forces of his own existence. It is not to be presented in a nutshell, or to be verbally included between the covers of a book. It is to be sought for, to be lived, to be felt, but not to be described. It is not amiability, nor cheerfulness, nor sentiment, nor sympathy with those whom we can understand to the exclusion of the broad Whole whose sole common experience is Pain. By-products these; partial and temporary adjuncts which disappear in the fiercer throes of Life. Patience perhaps? Patience wears a tinge of sadness; she must merge into Contentment, her higher Self ere she can touch this master-chord of Harmony. In

the *Voice of the Silence* we are told that the real Compassion is Harmony; I seem to descry it as that entire acceptance of the Law, that harmonious adjustment of the mind to the ebb and flow of Life.

The continual alterations in the mode of Life's action which we feel in our lives, are they not really the efforts of the Law to readjust those lives, bringing them into line with the currents of Life in that ether, that atmosphere, that heavenly breath which pours its tidal waves throughout our spheres in continual endeavor to adjust their individual pulsations to the universal action? Did we never think that Life must snatch us from the sands ere It could launch us on the shoreless sea? The evil which is not resisted of the wise is that seeming sorrow which is the breaking up of our hopes and habits under the action of a wider Law. To hold the Home as a place where Life may freely come and go; to teach each heart within that Home to cast itself freely upon Great Nature; to trust Life largely; thus, companions, shall we administer our stewardship faithfully.

From this point of view, the Home serves a universal purpose. Our children are not ours; they are Life's children; their souls sparks of the Mother-Soul, their bodies formed of lives of Mother-Nature. We and they came together, not by chance, but of set purpose. We are here for one another and because of one another, our purpose that of learning more of Life in company. Human Law compels us to feed, clothe and nurse our children; divine Law demands that we do the same by their minds. It is for us to assist these Egos to evolve their powers and train their thoughts. We can help their building of the brain by simple demonstrations of the Unity of all things, of the analogies of Nature. We can show them that every model man ever made has been patterned after some one of her forms, that every thought mind ever thinks takes effect in surrounding Life; we can call the

tides, the winds, the stars in their courses to our aid; no example too high to serve the purpose of the true Home.

Our own relations with our home companions must be our first and continual illustration of these truths. We must look at the essence of things, see them in their wider relations, inform all our dealings with Love, with Compassion, with Harmony; shall we evoke these in other hearts if we have not poured them forth from our own? No; no; our lives alone are teachers and helpers of men: our fine language is nothing. The deed, and not the word, is eloquent.

Toleration is the second necessary Force. It is Harmony expressed in relation to mankind. It opens the mind and sweetens the heart. It enriches the individual life by many an experience not yet its own, for to the tolerant man many puzzles of existence are revealed. In pure practicality this quality is invaluable in every form of civic life. It is the Door of Heaven — that Heaven which is Harmony. A little child comes to its use as readily as the sage — more readily.

If continuously and steadfastly we view thoughts and acts from the standpoint of Force, we see that man evolves given Forces, causing them to play for good or ill in that centre he calls Home. The Home is not a toy we have made for ourselves; it is an offshoot of Karma wherein man meets his just debts and must pay them; not a private speculation for the furtherance of personal aims, but a focus of the Universal and Divine; a point of friction, if you will, between spirit and matter, but the contest is for advancement and not for retrogression of the human soul. Our homes should be so vital to the welfare of the community that each would be missed from its orbit as a planet from its system. It is there, and not elsewhere, that the gods await us. The Soul sheds her mild radiance upon these homes of men and

would claim them for her own; she would use them for the sheltering of egos yet unborn; for the deeper unfolding of our latent powers; as altars of ministrations to the race. Let but the heart of Love govern thee and thy home, and all shall presently be well with thee and with us all.

Theosophy

ON THE FUTURE: A FEW REFLECTIONS (1) — *William Q. Judge*

Although I am an American citizen, the place of my birth was in Ireland, and in what I am about to say I cannot be accused of Columbianism, for no matter how long might be my life, I could never be an American. For that perhaps it is right, since it is compulsory, to wait for some distant incarnation.

Now, either H. P. B. was right or she was wrong in what she says in the *Secret Doctrine* about the future of America. If wrong, then all this may be dismissed as idle speculation. But, if right, then all thoughtful Theosophists must take heed, weigh well, mentally appropriate and always remember what are her words as well as the conclusions to which they lead.

In the first pages of the second volume she speaks of five great continents. *First*, the Imperishable Sacred Land [this is at the North Pole, *W. Q. J.*] *second*, the Hyperborean, now part of it is in Northern Asia; *third*, Lemuria, sunk long ago, but leaving some remains, islands, the points of high mountain ranges; *fourth*, Atlantis, presumably in the Atlantic Ocean, now below the level of the water, but with perhaps Teneriffe and Atlas as reminders; *and fifth*, "was America."

From a survey of the book, digging in notes and culling from the text here and there, the conclusion is irresistible that, although the present America is not the actual Continent as *it is to be*, it is a portion of it; and certainly is now the nursery for the race that will in the future occupy the *sixth* Continent, which for the sixth Great Root-Race will emerge from the waters. Where? Perhaps when the present America has been split up by tremendous cataclysms, leaving here and there large pieces on its western side, it is in the Pacific Ocean that the great mass of the new one

will come up from the long sleep below the sea. Rightly then will the great far western ocean have been named *Pacific*, for that Race will not be given to contest nor hear of wars or rumors of war, since it will be too near the seventh, whose mission it must be to attain to the consummation, to seize and hold the Holy Grail.

Turn to page 444 and onward of the second volume. Read there that the Americans have become in only three hundred years a primary race *pro tem.*, in short, the germs of the sixth sub-race, to blossom in a few more centuries into the pioneers of that one which must succeed to the present European fifth sub-race in all its characteristics. Then after about 25,000 years, which you will note is meant for a great siderial cycle of a little over that length of time, this new race will prepare for the seventh sub-race. Cataclysms will then fall upon you; lands and nations will be swept away, first of all being the European, including the British Isles — if not gone before — and then parts of both North and South America. And how puny, mongrel, indeed, will be the remains of the scientists of today, great masters of microbes now, but then to be looked upon as strange remains of the Nineteenth Century, when, as the people will tell each other then, so many, with Truth before them, laughed at it and stoned its apostles, dancing a fantastic dance meanwhile around the altar of invisible matter.

It seems as if some power, deliberately planning, had selected North and South America for the place where a new primary root-race should be begun. These two continents were evidently the seats of ancient races, and not the habitation of wild undeveloped men. The red man of the Northern one has all the appearance and beliefs of a once great race. He believes in one God and a Devachan of happy hunting after death. Some tribes have diagrams of how the world was formed and peopled, that strangely resemble the Hindu cosmogony, and their folk-lore

bears deep marks of having come down from an older and better time. Following the course of exploration southwards, we find accumulating evidences all the way of a prior civilization now gone with the cyclic wave which brought it up. Central America is crowded with remains in stone and brick; and so on south, still we discover similar proofs. In course of time these continents became what might be called arable land, lying waiting, recuperating, until the European streams of men began to pour upon it. The Spanish overflowed South America and settled California and Mexico; the English, French and Dutch took the North, and later all nations came, so that now in both continents nearly every race is mixed and still mixing. Chinese even have married women of European blood; Hindus are also here; the ancient Parsi race has its representatives; the Spanish mixed with the aborigines, and the slaveholders with the Africans. I doubt not but that some one from every race known to us has been here and has left, within the last two hundred years, some impression through mixture of blood.

But the last remnants of the fifth Continent, America, will not disappear until the new race has been some time born. Then a new Dwelling, the sixth Continent, will have appeared over the waters to receive the youth who will tower above us as we do above the pigmies of Africa. But no America as we now know it will exist. Yet these men must be the descendants of the race that is now rising here. Otherwise our philosophy is all wrong. So then, in America now is forming the new sub-race, and in this land was founded the present Theosophical Society: two matters of great importance. It was to the United States, observe, that the messenger of the Masters came, although Europe was just as accessible for the enterprise set on foot. Later, this messenger went to India and then to Europe, settling down in the British Isles. All of this is of importance in our reflections. For why in

America at first does she begin the movement, and why end her part of it in England? One might be led to ask why was not an effort made at all costs to give the last impulse outwardly in the land of promise where she began the work?

Do not imagine for one moment, O ye English brothers of mine, that London was selected for this because the beauties of your island called her, or for that she had decided at the finish that after all a mistake had been made in not going there first. It was all out of stern necessity, with a wisdom derived from many older heads, having in view the cycles as they sweep resistlessly forward. The point where the great energy is started, the centre of force, is the more important, and not the place at which it is ended. And this remains true, no matter how essential the place of ending may be in the scheme. What, do you suppose India is not as important? And would not that land have offered seemingly a better spot than all for the beginning of the *magnum opus*? Adepts do not make mistakes like that.

America's discovery is ascribed to Christopher Columbus. Although it is doubted, yet no one doubts that the Spanish people did the most at first in peopling it, meanwhile working off some old and making some new Karma, by killing many of the aborigines. Thus it is that doomed people rush on to their doom, even as the troops of insects, animals and men were seen by Arjuna to rush into Krishna's flaming mouths. But later came the sturdy stock from England, who, in the greatest nation, the most enduring on this continent, have left their impress indelibly in the people, in its laws, in its constitution, its customs, its literature and language. Perhaps England and Ireland are the gateways for the Egos who incarnate here in the silent work of making a new race. Maybe there is some significance in the fact that more lines of steamships conveying human freight come to the United States from England, passing Ireland on the way as the last seen land of

the old world, than from anywhere else. The deeds of men, the enterprises of merchants, and the wars of soldiers all follow implicitly a law that is fixed in the stars, and while they copy the past they ever symbolize the future.

Did H. P. B. only joke when she wrote in her book that Ireland is an ancient Atlantean remnant, and England a younger Isle, whose rising from the sea was watched by wise men from Erin's shore? Perhaps the people of that old land may have an important influence in the new race of America. It would appear from comparison that they might have had, and probably will in the future. Perhaps, politically, since many expect social disturbances in America. In such a case any student of character will admit that the Irish, ignorant or not, will stand for law and order — for her sons are not battling here with an ancient foe. Why, too, by strange freak of fate is the great stone of destiny in Westminster Abbey fixed under the coronation chair on which the queen was crowned? Let us also be informed if there be any finger shadow pointing to the future in the fact that England's queen, crowned over that stone, (2) is Empress of India, from which we claim the Aryans came, and where their glorious long-forgotten knowledge is preserved? Her name is Victory. It is the Victory for "the new order of ages"; and that new order began in America, its advent noted and cut on the as yet unused obverse side of the present seal of the United States government. A victory in the union of the Egos from East and West; for England stretches one hand over to the home of the new race, which she can never own, with the other governing India, and completes the circuit. It may be a fleeting picture, perhaps to be wiped out for a while in a stream of blood, but such is the way the cycles roll and how we may learn to read the future. For England's destiny is not complete, nor has the time struck. None of us hug foolish delusions too long, and even if Ireland were once a most sacred place, that is no

reason why we should want to go there. For in America those whose Karma has led them there will work for the same end and brotherhood as others left in India and Europe. The dominant language and style of thought in America is English, albeit transforming itself every day. It is there that silently the work goes on; there European fathers and mothers have gone, establishing currents of attraction that will inevitably and unceasingly draw into reincarnation Egos similar to themselves. And the great forward and backward rush is completed by the retarded Egos as they die out of other nations, coming meanwhile into flesh again among the older races left behind.

At least such seemed the view while the clouds lifted — and then once more there was silence.

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Reprinted from Lucifer, March, 1892, Vol. X, p. 20.* ([return to text](#))

2. It is an interesting fact that in India there is an important ceremony called "mounting the stone." ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THEOSOPHY IN THE APOCRYPHA: II — *Katharine Hillard*

II. — THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

The first verses of the *Wisdom of Solomon* suggest the occult law which teaches the necessity of a proper state of mind in the would-be recipient of divine truth, and shows that of all adverse conditions, the worst is doubt. "Seek the Lord in simplicity (or singleness) of heart," says the writer, "for he showeth himself unto such as do not distrust him." And then, after several chapters that remind one, sometimes of *Proverbs* and sometimes of the Pauline Epistles, King Solomon, the supposed writer, describes how, although of human birth and rearing, he called upon God, and how the spirit of wisdom came to him, and raised him to a higher plane. Having preferred her to sceptres and thrones, he found that all good things follow in her train.

Thus God gave him certain knowledge of the things that are, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements; the beginning, ending, and midst of the times (the law of cycles); the alterations of the turning of the sun, and the change of seasons; the circuits of years, and the positions of stars; the natures of living creatures, and the furies of wild beasts; the violence of winds and the reasonings of men; the diversities of plants, and the virtues of roots; and all such things as are either secret or manifest.

"If a man desire much experience," says Solomon, "wisdom knoweth things of old, and conjectureth what is to come; she knoweth the subtilties of speech, and can expound dark sentences; she foreseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times. Moreover by means of her I shall obtain immortality, and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to

them that come after me."

And lest we should mistake the true nature of this wisdom, and confound her with mere occult knowledge of material things, he gives us that magnificent description of her, as "the worker of all things, present with God when he made the world, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtle spirits. For wisdom is more moving than any motion; she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness. For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness."

"And being but one, she can do all things, and remaining in herself she maketh all things new; and in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it."

This Wisdom is that spiritual faculty which some have called Intuition, and some *Buddhi*, and her light is that spoken of by St. John, that glory which lit up the celestial city, so that there was no need there of the sun, neither of the moon.

It is at the end of the next chapter, the 8th, that Solomon makes such a clear statement, not only of the fact of reincarnation, but of the law which guides it, when he says: "Being good, I came into a body undefiled." He seems to take the idea so much for granted, that he neither explains it nor dwells upon it, but simply mentions it as one would mention any recognized law of nature.

And in chapter 11th he asserts another fact of which no occultist could entertain a doubt: "Thou hast ordered all things in measure

and number and weight." Certainly the Divine Spirit as conceived by this writer was very different from the "jealous God" of the Hebrews, for he goes on to say:

"Thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made; for never wouldst thou have made anything if thou hadst hated it. And how could anything have endured if it had not been thy will, or been preserved, if not called by thee? But thou sparest all: for they are thine, O Lord, *thou lover of souls.*" Surely here we have a foundation-stone for the rule of universal brotherhood.

In the 17th chapter there is a description of the sufferings of the Egyptians from the plague of darkness, which is as superb in its lofty and far-reaching imaginativeness, as the description of Wisdom herself, but it has nothing to do with the present subject, except as it represents the punishment of the guilty as entirely within themselves, and made heavy by their own remorse. "For the whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labor: Over them only was spread an heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them: but yet *were they unto themselves* more grievous than the darkness."

Ecclesiasticus is also called "the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach," and purports to be a collection of wise sayings made by Jesus the father of Sirach and containing also many of his own, which was handed down to the grandson and by him "compiled all orderly into one volume."

Those who wish to study the origin and character of all these books from an historical and critical point of view, will find much to interest them in the articles in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the "Apocrypha," "Esdras," "Ecclesiasticus," etc. These questions I have preferred not to go into here, but simply to quote a few

passages from the text, which are of value as they stand, and appeal to that authority which is not of the scribes.

The book called *Ecclesiasticus* is by no means of as lofty a character as the *Wisdom of Solomon*, it is more like *Proverbs*, and is concerned largely with ordinary ethics, and even drops occasionally into questions of deportment and manners at table. Jesus the son of Sirach says that it also contains "dark sentences and parables," and it certainly contains a caution as to humility in study, that may be useful to us all.

"Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee," says the writer, "neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee, think thereupon," (I omit inserted words) "for they are not needful for thee — the things that are in secret. Be not curious in unnecessary matters; for more things are showed unto thee than men understand."

In these three verses what a sermon is preached to those theosophists who are ever seeking for the mysterious, who are constantly looking for signs and wonders, and yet neglect the study of the simple ethics of life, and the true nature of their own minds! More things are indeed shown unto them than most men understand, and still they put these aside, and strive after marvels.

Humility is one of the essentials in the acquirement of wisdom that are laid down in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and Jesus the son of Sirach says: "Mysteries are revealed unto the meek." And again he warns us of the endless nature of the search after wisdom: "The first man knew her not perfectly, no more shall the last find her out. For her thoughts are more than the sea, and her counsels profounder than the great deep."

Neither should we pay any attention to light and idle dreams, says

this wise man: "Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind." He evidently understood the nature of ordinary dreams, for he compares them to reflections in a mirror, but he was able to distinguish between them and the voice of the Higher Self, for he continues: "If they be not sent from the Most High in thy visitation, set not thy heart upon them, for dreams have deceived many."

One might make many more of these quotations, but the object of this paper was simply to direct attention to the many treasures hidden in these scriptures that are too seldom read, for in very truth, "more things are shown unto men than they understand."

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: V — *Basil Crump*

V. — THE MASTERSINGERS OF NUREMBERG.

Art is the need to create; but in its essence immense and universal, it is impatient of working with lame or tied hands. . . . Art should exhilarate and throw down the walls of circumstance on every side, awakening in the beholder the same sense of universal relation and power which the work evinced in the artist, and its highest effect is to make new artists. — *Emerson*.

It has been well said that the first qualification necessary for discipleship is a sense of humor. It is an attribute of the well balanced mind which recognizes that comedy and tragedy must exist side by side in human life. Those who knew H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge can testify to the merry wit which they possessed and frequently gave vent to. Many sidedness is a mark of true greatness, for it discloses a being growing in the likeness of nature; so that, if Wagner's only comedy were excluded from the list of his Theosophical dramas, it would be doing him a great injustice.

It was in the peaceful evening of his life, when the heat of the battle was over, and that wonderful mystery play, *Parsifal*, was taking shape, that Wagner once said to his friend and biographer, Glasenapp, "You talk too much about my courage; wish me rather *mirthfulness*." And this gladness of heart which carried him through his bitterest trials had its source in his inner knowledge of the real nature of things. He had crossed the dread gulf which stretches between the consciousness of most of us and the shoreless ocean of universal truth, peace, and harmony; but lifted out of Time and Space by the magic of his music we feel and

know that state, and never quite forget it, even in our darkest hours. What we call "self-sacrifice" was to him, as to all great souls, an unspeakable joy — the "joy of imparting," as he called it, the fullest riches of his inner self to "all the world of human beings."

It was during a short health trip after the completion of *Tannhauser*, that the plan for the present comedy was conceived and swiftly sketched. The poem was written in Paris, but the more serious work of *Lohengrin*, the *Ring of the Nibelung*, and *Tristan and Isolde*, intervened, so that the music was not completed until twenty years later.

"As among the Athenians of old a tragedy was followed by a merry satirical piece, there suddenly appeared to me," he writes, "the picture of a comic play, which might suitably serve as a satirical supplement to my 'Battle of the Bards at the Wartburg'" (*Tannhauser*). This sequence was a very natural one, since the Mastersingers were in a sense the successors of the Minnesingers.

The knightly minnesinging, as we have seen in *Tannhauser*, had for its inspiration the noble elements of deep veneration for womanhood (now reappearing in America), a brave and fearless spirit, and the Theosophical teachings brought from the East by the Crusades and which can be traced in a veiled form in many of their songs and poems. But with the decay of the Knightly Orders in the 13th Century the art became lost in the soul of the Folk, where it has always lived and will live; and only its form remained, to be taken up and elaborated in the 15th Century by the craftsmen of the cities, who formed themselves into Guilds of Master-singers and drew up the code of rules and prohibitions called the "Tabulatur."

They had an official "Marker," whose duty it was to mark on a slate the faults of the candidate in his "Trial-Song," and in the

present story he is represented by the comical figure of Beckmesser, the jealous rival of the young knight, Walter. The latter is a descendant of the Minnesinger, who has left his decaying castle to seek his fortunes in Nuremberg. Falling in love with Eva, the beautiful daughter of Mastersinger Pogner (who has declared that he who wins the Master's Prize may seek her hand) he determines to enter for the Singing-Match. His Trial-Song, however, is so free in its style that his claim to compete is disallowed, for Beckmesser takes care to mark all the faults he can against him. But Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet and head of the Guild, has caught the spirit of Walter's song, and devises a scheme to help his cause.

He gets him to sing a song more in accordance with the rules, and writes down the words as he sings them; christening it "The Glorious Morning-Dream's True Story." Beckmesser steals the paper, thinking it is a new song by Sachs which will ensure his success at the contest; Sachs finds him out but lets him keep the poem to sing if he can. When the time arrives he tries to sing it to his own pedantic tune, and makes such an absurd mess of it that he has to retire in discomfiture. Thereupon Sachs declares that the song is all right if sung to a proper tune, and he calls upon a witness to attempt it. Walter advances, and sings it so beautifully that he is rapturously awarded the prize and crowned as Master.

The various humorous episodes which occur in connection with Beckmesser and the sprightly apprentices cannot be entered into here, as there is only space to touch upon the serious moral lesson which Wagner has embodied in his comedy.

Coming to the symbolical meaning of the drama, we can easily perceive in Walter those qualities in man's nature which are in direct touch with the *soul* of things, as apart from their outward form. Thus when questioned at his trial-singing as to where he

had learnt his art, he replies, "Nature," and "Poet-Songs of magic might mysteriously have taught me." And again when he sings the Prize-Song to Sachs, it is of "a wondrous lovely dream" he tells, which came to him in the early morning. At first he hesitates to put into words his vision "for fear it all should fade away," but mark the reply of Sachs:

"My friend this is the poet's work,
To picture and expound his *dream*.
Trust me; the truest fancy of mankind
Is sent to us in dreams by night.
Inspired Art and Poetry
Are nought but picturing of true dreams."

This Hans Sachs is a real character, the most eminent poet of the 16th Century. Wagner tells us that he took him as "the last manifestation of the Art-productive spirit of the Folk," and this explains his instant perception of and sympathy with Walter's genius. In the latter's Trial-Song on the themes of Love and Spring he recognizes the pure creative fire, just as Wolfram did in Tannhauser; in fact the two characters resemble one another very closely in their self-effacing devotion to the higher power.

Eva, daughter of the *goldsmith*, is the pure gold of the higher nature, the spotless Ideal with which Walter aspires to be united. Sachs also is devoted to her, just as Wolfram was to Elisabeth; and, in the closing scene when Walter and Eva lean against him, one on each side, they form a symbolical trinity.

In the Mastersingers and their "Marker" we are face to face with the lower, material aspect of the mind, with its adhesion to form, to the exclusion of the spiritual quality. Beckmesser especially, embodies the intensely critical and analytical tendencies, as well as the petty jealousy and selfishness, which are the chief characteristics of the lower self.

The lesson which we may draw from this union of artist and art-lovers is, that we who are locked up in forms and "moulds of mind" must learn to *use* those forms and not let them fetter the free expression of our higher selves. Wagner has used, for his artistic purpose in this drama, some of the strictest musical forms, but he handles them in such a way as to show his complete mastery of them. His self-imposed fetters are made golden with the light of his genius; especially in the Prize-Song, which is a melody of surpassing beauty.

Walter brought new life and inspiration to the Mastersingers, but he had also something to learn from them. Sachs counsels him to ponder on their rules, in order that they may aid him to bring to fit expression what "with sweetest impulse Love and Spring have planted *unawares*" within his heart. It is through this course that he achieves union with his Ideal, foreseen in the closing lines of his Prize-Song:

Thrice happy day,
To which my poet's trance gave place!
That Paradise of which I dreamed,
In radiance new before my face
Glorified lay.
To point the path the brooklet streamed:
She stood beside me,
Who shall my bride be,
The fairest sight earth e'er gave,
My Muse to whom I bow,
So angel-sweet and grave.
I woo her boldly now,
Before the world remaining,
By might of music gaining
Parnassus and Paradise!

FRAGMENTS: II — *Cavé*

The truest happiness is to be found in the deep *interior* study of the great mysteries of nature and life, seeking thus to find the best manner in which the soul may express itself, and in a constant fulfilment of this manner of expression when found. If they can be taught to see and feel this, and the true meaning of it, the work is done. Labor therefore faithfully to accomplish this in yourself, for we can teach others only what we ourselves know, and this knowledge is one with experience. The divine light burns for all; take your part of it, and illuminating first your own heart the power will then be yours to illumine others. Remember, words are not needed. In the silence these things are done. Those in whose midst you may live, quiet and unknown, will have the radiance cast upon them merely by your presence. It is not what you say and do, but what you *are* that tells, and that will leave its ineffaceable mark upon each character you meet as upon all time. The Soul desires to express itself in its reflection, your life. So live that it may do so. So think and act that you may become a channel for higher things to descend to the lower planes. * * *

II.

Meditate on things you want to know. * * * Seek all knowledge within yourself, do not go without. You understand what is meant by this; not that books should be neglected, but that information obtained from them should be *drawn within*, sifted, tested there. Study all things, in this light and the most physical will at the same time lead to the most spiritual knowledge.

III.

Duty is not an ogre but an angel. How few understand this. Most

confuse it as they do conscience.

IV.

Sorrows, crosses, these are our opportunities could we but see it so. But he is far along who does so see it. He has attained who fully realizes it.

V.

The Lodge force working in a pure devoted heart sets free the soul and lets it speak. The eternal verities resound for ever upon the spiritual planes and when the mind is pure and will hearken, the soul echoes them.

VI.

What of the darkness! What of the light! They are one to those who *see*. How plain these matters are in higher moments, how drearily obscure at other times. This will show you the value of higher moments perhaps, and what those always living in them enjoy.

Be what you love. Strive after what you find beautiful and high and let the rest go. Harmony, sacrifice, devotion, take these for key-notes, express them everywhere and in the highest possible way. The beauty of a life like that, the power of it, who can measure or set bounds to.

VII.

Can you not live so as to feel the great throbbing heart around you, so as to express that feeling in even the smallest detail? Let there be nothing cold or cynical in your view of life. Sense the pathos and the pity of it, trusting that some day to your now darkened eyes the mystery and the pain will be untangled. Feel, feel, with everything that cries, with everything that suffers, and

in even the most broken fragment of a life, find some beauty. Let your own quivering heartstrings teach you the anguish in other hearts and live to ease it. Pain is our best teacher. Do not dread nor flee her therefore, she comes in mercy. Go forth to meet her, trembling perhaps, but reverently, patiently, unflinching; only so can the lesson be learned, and from the dark hours spent with her a light shall arise, showing the way to stumbling feet, giving the power to comfort and console. And in the peace of that your heart shall understand and be satisfied.

VIII.

How much mis-interpretation and mis-understanding there is regarding these things, and by the most enthusiastic, the most devoted souls, whose emotional intensity driving them along, blinds them utterly, and in the *full chase* of new experiences they see not that they are following only their own desires, and again losing the substance for the shadow. It is discouraging, and yet the forces thus generated can be used for higher ends, and the good intention of the deluded one counts for him. But remember, O disciple, that in the silence these things are performed and recognized and in the silence alone. Few indeed understand how complete that silence must be, few save those who have at some time known the peace of it. All *excitement* is *psychic*, and though these whirlwinds of force descend, you must learn to hold yourself still in their midst, feeling neither attraction nor repulsion, else chains are forged to draw you to them. There are some who need this lesson badly, all more or less. * * * The great force acts dually and you must stand *still*, not passive or inactive but unswayed. You must learn to take psychic emotions in hand as well as physical. * * *

Hold your purpose and your ideals clearly and steadily before you. Desiring truth you shall surely have it, intending

righteousness you shall surely so perform though all things seem to conspire against you. In times of confusion and difficulty rest upon that and you may then unshaken see no agreement, no light ahead. * * *

XI.

I measure the height not merely the depth of a soul by its stillness.

Theosophy

CYCLIC IMPRESSION AND RETURN AND OUR EVOLUTION: I (1) —
William Q. Judge

The word cycle is derived from the Greek word *Kuklos*, or a ring. It has been turned in the English language into the word cycle, by the process of saying *Kykle*, and then cycle. The corresponding word in the Sanscrit is *Kalpa*, which has in fact a wider and a deeper meaning; because cycle in English is a word which covers, is used for, and thus somewhat confuses, many cycles. It is used for the small cycles, and the larger cycles, the intermediate cycles and the great ones, whereas the word *Kalpa* means and implies only one cycle of a large size, and the smaller cycles within that are designated by other words.

What is a cycle? It is a circle, a ring. But not properly a ring like a wedding ring, which runs into itself, but more properly like a screw thread, which takes the form of a spiral, and thus beginning at the bottom, turns on itself, and goes up. It is something like the great Horseshoe Curve in the Pennsylvania Railroad. There you go around the curve at the lower end; you go down into the horseshoe, and as you turn the grade rises, so that when you arrive at the opposite side you have gotten no further than the beginning, but you have risen just the distance between the two ends of the grade.

But what do we mean by a cycle in Theosophy, in our own investigations of nature, or man, or civilization, or our own development, our own origin, our own destiny? We mean by a cycle, just what the Egyptians, the Hindoos and the philosophers of the Middle Ages meant by it; that is, that there is a periodical return or cycling back, circling back of something from some place once more. That is why it is called cycle, inasmuch as it

returns upon itself, seemingly; but in the Theosophical doctrine, and in the ancient doctrines, it is always a little higher in the sense of perfection or progress. That is to say, as the Egyptians held, cycles prevail everywhere, things come back again, events return, history comes back, and so in this century we have the saying: "History repeats itself."

But where do Theosophists say that cyclic law prevails? We say that it prevails everywhere. It prevails in every kingdom of nature, in the animal kingdom, the mineral world, the human world; in history, in the sky, on the earth. We say that not only do cycles pertain, and appertain, and obtain in and to the earth and its inhabitants, but also in what the Hindoos call the three kingdoms of the universe, the three worlds; that is, that below us, ourselves, and that above.

Now, if you will turn to Buckle, a great writer of the English school, you will find him saying in one of his standard books, a great book often quoted, that there is no doubt cyclic law prevails in regard to nations, that they have come back apparently the same, only slightly improved or degraded, for there is also a downward cycle included within those that rise; but Buckle did not discover a law. He simply once more stated what the ancients had said over and over again. And it has always seemed to me that if Buckle and other people of that kind would pay a little more attention to the ancients, they would save themselves a great deal of trouble, for he obtained his law by much delving, much painstaking labor, whereas he might have gotten the law if he had consulted the ancients, who always taught that there were cycles, and that there always will be cycles.

Among the ancients they had a great many large and important cycles. In their classification they had a Saros and a Naros, which are not understood today by us. They are known to some extent,

but what exactly they are, we do not know. The Egyptians taught that there was a great sidereal cycle, and that is recognized today, at last; that is the cycle of 25,000 years, the great one caused by the fact that the sun went through the signs of the Zodiac in that length of time. Now, I do not assume that you know nothing about astronomy, but in order to make it clear, it will be better for me to state this over again, just as it is. The sun goes through the signs of the Zodiac from day to day and from year to year, but at the same time, in going through the signs of the Zodiac, he goes back slowly, like the hands of a clock ticking off the time. In going through that period he comes back to the same point again, and retards himself, or goes back; that is called the precession of the equinoxes, and it is so many seconds in such a length of time. Those seconds in the sky turned into time show you that the sun takes 25,000 and odd years to come back to the place from which he started out at any particular time; that is to say, if you imagine that on the first of April, this year, the sun was in such a degree of Aries, one of the signs of the Zodiac, he will not get back to that sign by the precession of the equinoxes until 25,000 years have passed away.

Now, the sun is the centre of our solar system and the earth revolves around it, and as the earth revolves she turns upon her axis. The sun, it is known now by astronomers, as it was known by the ancients (who were ourselves in fact), revolves around a centre. That is, that while we are going around the sun, he is going around some other centre, so that we describe in the sky not a circle around the sun, but a spiral, as we move with the sun around his enormous orbit. Now do you grasp that idea exactly? It is a very important one, for it opens up the subject to a very large extent. There is a star somewhere in the sky, we do not know where — some think it is Alcyone, or some other star, some think it may be a star in the Pleiades, and some others think it is a

star somewhere else — but they know by deduction from the known to the unknown, that the sun is attracted himself by some unknown centre, and that he turns around it in an enormous circle, and as he turns, of course he draws the earth with him. In the course of 25,000 years in going around the signs of the Zodiac, he must take the earth into spaces where it has never yet been, for when he reaches this point in Aries, after 25,000 years, it is only apparently the same point, just as when I came around the curve of the Horseshoe, I started around the first point and went around the curve, came back to the same point, but I was higher up; I was in another position. And so, when the sun gets back again to the point in Aries, where he was on the first of April this year, he will not be in the exact position in the universe of space, but he will be somewhere else, and in his journey of 25,000 years through billions upon billions of miles, he draws the earth into spaces where she never was before, and never will be as that earth again. He must draw her into cosmic spaces where things are different and thus cause changes in the earth itself, for changes in cosmic matter in the atmosphere, in the space where the sun draws the earth, must affect the earth and all its inhabitants. The ancients investigated this subject, and declared long ago this 25,000 years cycle, but it is only just lately, so to speak, that we are beginning to say we have discovered this. We know, as Nineteenth century astronomers, that it is a fact, or that it must be a fact, from deduction, but they knew it was a fact because they had observed it themselves and recorded the observations.

The Egyptians had also the cycle of the Moon, which we know, and they had more cycles of the moon than we have, for the moon not only has her cycle of twenty-eight days, when she changes from full to disappearance, and then again to youth, but she also has a period of return somewhere over fourteen years,

which must itself have its effect upon the earth.

Then they said, also, that the human soul had its cycles, it being 5,000 years. That is, the man died, or the king died, and his body was turned into a mummy in the hope that when, after his five thousand years cycle had elapsed and he came back once more to earth, he would find his mummy there? No; but that no one else should have taken his mummied atoms and made a bad use of them. Mummification is explained by us in another way. Their knowledge of the law of cycles caused them to make the first mummy. They held that a human soul returned; they also held that all atoms are alive, just as we do; that they are sensitive points; that they have intelligence belonging to the plane on which they are, and that the man who misuses atoms of matter, such as you have in your bodies and your brains, must stand the consequences. Consequently, saying that to themselves, they said, "If I die, and leave those atoms, which I have used so well, perhaps some other man will take them and use them badly, so I will preserve them as far as possible until I return, and then by a process destroy the combination of atoms, absorb them into some place, or position, where they might be put to good use." That may seem offensive to some today, but I am merely repeating the theory. I am not saying whether I believe it or not.

The ancient Egyptians who held these theories have disappeared and left nothing behind but the pyramids, the temples of Thebes, the Sphinxes and all the great monuments which are slowly being discovered by us. Where have they gone? Have they come back? Do the Copts now in Egypt represent them? I think not, although heredity is the boasted explanation of everything. The Copts are their descendants? They know nothing, absolutely nothing but a simple language, and they live the life of slaves, and yet they are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians! What has become of them? The ancient Egyptians we think were co-laborers with the

ancient Hindoos, whose cycle remains: that is to say, whose descendants remain, holding the knowledge, in part, of their forefathers, and we find that the Hindoos have held always the same theories as to cycles as the Egyptians held. They divided the ages of the world. They say manifestation begins, and then it lasts for a period called a Kalpa, an enormous number of years; that Kalpa is divided into ages. The small cycle is composed of a large number of years; one will be four thousand, another four hundred thousand, another will be a million, and so on, making a total which we cannot grasp with the mind but which we can write upon the paper.

Now, the idea of cycles came from the Hindoos, through the nations who spread out from there, for it is admitted that the land of Hindustan is the cradle of the race. The Aryan race came down into Christendom, so that we find the Christians, the Romans, the Greeks and all people around that time holding the same theories as to cycles; that is, that cyclic law prevails everywhere. We find it in the ancient mystics, the Christian mystics, the middle age mystics and the mystics of times nearer to ours. If you will read the works of Higgins, who wrote the Anacalypsis, you will find there laborious compilations and investigations on the subject of the cycles. Do they obtain? Is there such a thing as a cycle which affects human destiny?

Coming closer to our own personal life, we can see that cycles do and must prevail, for the sun rises in the morning and goes to the centre of the sky, descends in the west; the next day he does the same thing, and following him, you rise, you come to the highest point of your activity, and you go to sleep. So day follows night and night follows day. Those are cycles, small cycles, but they go to make the greater ones. You were born, at about seven years of age you began to get discretion to some extent. A little longer and you reach manhood, then you begin to fall, and at last you finish

the great day of your life when body dies.

In looking at nature we also find that there are summer and winter, spring and autumn. These are cycles, and every one of them affects the earth, with the human beings upon it.

The esoteric doctrine, the inner doctrine of the old Theosophists and the present day Theosophists, to be found in every old literature and religious book, is that cyclic law is the supreme law governing our evolution; that reincarnation, which we talk so much about, is cyclic law in operation and is supreme. For what is reincarnation but a coming back again to life, just what the ancient Egyptians taught and which we are finding out to be probably true, for in no other way than by this cyclic law of reincarnation can we account for the problems of life that beset us; with this we account for our own character, each one different from the other, and with a force peculiar to each person.

This being the supreme law, we have to consider another one, which is related to it and contained in the title I have adopted. That is the law of the return of impressions. What do we mean by that? I mean, those acts and thoughts performed by a nation — not speaking about the things that affect nature, although it is governed by the same law — constitute an impression. That is to say, your coming to this convention creates in your nature an impression. Your going into the street and seeing a street brawl creates an impression. Your having a quarrel last week and denouncing a man, or with a woman and getting very angry, creates an impression in you, and that impression is as much subject to cyclic law as the moon, and the stars, and the world, and is far more important in respect to your development — your personal development or evolution — than all these other great things, for they affect you in the mass, whereas these little ones affect you in detail.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTE:

1. *This paper was read by Mr. Judge before the Sixth Annual Convention of American Theosophists and afterwards printed, together with the other Convention addresses, in the Appendix to the Convention Report. ([return to text](#))*

[Theosophy](#)

A MYSTICAL POEM — *Vera Johnston*

The following is a free translation of a poem by Derjavin, one of the standard Russian poets. It will be clear to any one who reads it in the right spirit, that the poem was written from a philosophic standpoint very much akin to the cosmogenesis of the "Secret Doctrine." One or two educated Hindoos to whom I happened to mention some passages in it were greatly excited about the poem being pure Vedantism, according to them. Pure Vedanta or not, it will by no means be lost time to compare the thoughts in it with the thoughts in Shankaracharya's *Atma Bodha*, or the Awakening to the Self. The poem bears the title of "God" and was written at the end of the last century, when everybody who was anybody at all in Russia was sure to belong to some Lodge of Free Masons. So it is just possible that the point of view in it is the one of all enlightened Free Masons. And in this case, it shares its origin with the "Secret Doctrine" at least to some extent. But I, for one, would be better pleased to think that the resemblance was simply due to the purity of the author's own spiritual clear-sightedness and independent inspiration. It may interest Theosophists to know that this poem was a great favorite of H. P. B.'s.

Endless in space, living in the eternal motion of Substance,
Thou, who wast before the flight of ages, who art
impersonal in the three persons of Deity. Spirit present
everywhere and indivisible, with no assigned abode and
with no cause, whom none could understand as yet, who
fills, embraces, creates and preserves everything by the
very essence of itself, the One whom we call God.

Though a high intelligence might measure the deep ocean,
and count the sands and the rays of planets, for Thee there

is no number and no measure; even Spirits of Light, born of Thy Radiance, could not conceive of Thy ways; as soon as the thought dares to lift itself to Thee it is doomed to disappear in thy Greatness, like a moment, passing into eternity.

Thou hast called forth from the abysses of eternity the primordial existence of Chaos; and founded in Thyself this eternity born before the ages. Self-born and radiant, Thou art the light whence all light proceeds. Creating everything in one word, expanding in continually renewed creation, Thou hast been, Thou art, Thou shalt be forever.

Thou containest the chain of beings in Thyself, Thou sustainest it and givest it light. Thou makest the beginning harmonious with the end, and givest life through death. Like streaming and whirling sparks, so are the Suns born from Thee. Like crystals of frost sparkling, moving and shining on a clear frosty morning, so are the stars in the abysses below Thee.

The burning millions of stars stream in the immeasurable space, fulfilling Thy laws, and shedding lifegiving rays. But all these burning torches, and the ardent rocks of crystals, and the boiling hosts of golden waves, and the fiery ether and the totality of all possible shining when compared to Thee will be like night before day.

Before Thee our whole system is like a drop before the ocean. Then what is the world to which I belong, and what am I myself? When I have added to all the worlds of the heavenly ocean hundreds of millions of other worlds, the total will be like a speck if I dare to compare it to Thee: and so before Thee I am certainly nothing.

I am nothing! Yet Thou shinest in me with the Greatness of Thine own powers, Thou art mirrored in me, like the great Sun in a tiny drop of water. I am nothing! Yet I feel my own being, I yearn everlastingly to hover in great heights; my soul longs to become Thyself; it penetrates into things, it thinks, it reasons: I am, therefore, Thou art as well.

Thou art! the whole plan of Nature tells me of this, my own heart repeats it to me, and my reason assures me of it: Thou art and I am, no more, a nothing! I am a part of the complete universe, and I dream of having been placed in the exact middle of being, where Thou hast ended creatures of flesh and begun the heavenly spirits, having tied with me the complete chain of beings.

I am the link of the scattered world, I am the culminating point of matter, I am the centre of everything created, I am the initial letter of Deity; with my body I decay in the dust, with my mind I order the thunders, I am a king, I am a slave, I am a worm, I am a God! But wondrous as I am, whence do I come? — I do not know; but through myself I could not be.

I am thy creature, O Creator! I am the work of thy wisdom, O source of life, giver of blessings, soul of my soul and King! The ends of Thy truth necessitated that my immortal being should pass through the abyss of death, that my spirit should clothe itself with mortality, and that through death I should return, O Father, into thy deathlessness.

O, Ineffable and Inconceivable one! I know that the imagination of my soul is powerless to trace thy mere shadow. It is a duty to praise Thee, but what other worship can weak mortals give Thee, but the yearning to raise themselves up to Thee and, with tears of gratitude to lose

themselves in the untold difference between them and
Thee.

Theosophy

CYCLIC IMPRESSION AND RETURN AND OUR EVOLUTION: II —
William Q. Judge

(Continued)

This Theosophical doctrine in respect to cycles, and the evolution of the human race, I think is known to you all, for I am assuming that you are all theosophists.

It is to be described somewhat in this way: Imagine that before this earth came out of the gaseous condition there existed an earth somewhere in space, let us call it the moon, for that is the exact theory. The moon was once a large and vital body full of beings. It lived its life, went through its cycles, and at last having lived its life, after vast ages had passed away, came to the moment when it had to die: that is, the moment came when the beings on that earth had to leave it because its period had elapsed, and then began from that earth the exodus. You can imagine it as a flight of birds migrating. Did you ever see birds migrate? I have seen them migrate in a manner that perhaps not many of you have. In Ireland, and perhaps in England, the swallows migrate in a manner very peculiar.

When I was a boy, I used to go to my uncle's place where there was an old mass of stone ruins at the end of the garden, and by some peculiar combination of circumstances the swallows of the whole neighboring counties collected there. The way they gathered there was this: When the period arrived, you could see them coming in all parts of the sky, and they would settle down and twitter on this pile of stone all day, and fly about. When the evening came — twilight — they rose in a body and formed an enormous circle. It must have been over forty feet in diameter, and that circle of swallows flew around in the sky, around this

tower, around and around for an hour or two, making a loud twittering noise, and that attracted from other places swallows who had probably forgotten the occasion.

They kept that up for several days, until one day the period arrived when they must go, and they went away — some were left behind, some came a little early, and some came too late. Other birds migrate in other ways. And so these human birds migrated from the moon to this spot where the earth began (I don't know where it is — a spot in space) and settled down as living beings, entities, not with bodies, but beings, in that mass of matter, at that point in space, informed it with life, and at last caused this earth to become a ball with beings upon it. And then cycles began to prevail, for the impressions made upon these fathers when they lived in the ancient — mind fails to think how ancient — civilization of the moon, came back again when they got to this earth, and so we find the races of the earth rising up and falling, rising again and falling, rising and falling, and at last coming to what they are now, which is nothing to what they will be, for they go ever higher and higher.

That is the theory, broadly, and in that is included the theory of the races, the great seven races who inhabited the earth successively, the great seven Adams who peopled the earth; and at last when this earth shall come to its time of life, its period, all the beings on it will fly away from it to some other spot in space to evolve new worlds as elder brothers who have done the same thing before in other spaces in nature. We are not doing this blindly. It has been done before by others — no one knows when it began. It had nothing in the way of a beginning, it will have no end, but there are always elder brothers of the race, who live on.

As some have written, we cannot turn back the cycles in their course. The fire of patriotism cannot prevail against the higher

destiny which will plunge a nation into darkness. All we can do is to change it here and there a little. The elder brothers are subject to law, but they have confidence and hope, because that law merely means that they appear to go down, in order to rise again at a greater height. So that we have come up through the cyclic law from the lowest kingdoms of nature. That is, we are connected in an enormous brotherhood, which includes not only the white people of the earth, and the black people of the earth, and the yellow people, but the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom and the unseen elemental kingdom.

You must not be so selfish as to suppose that it includes only men and women. It includes everything, every atom in this solar system. And we come up from lower forms, and are learning how to so mould and fashion, use and abuse, or impress the matter that comes into our charge, into our bodies, our brains and our psychical nature, so that that matter shall be an improvement to be used by the younger brothers who are still below us, perhaps in the stone beneath our feet. I do not mean by that that there is a human being in that stone. I mean that every atom in the stone is not dead matter. There is no dead matter anywhere, but every atom in that stone contains a life, unintelligent, formless, but potential, and at some period in time far beyond our comprehension, all of those atoms in that stone will have been released. The matter itself will have been refined, and at last all in this great cycle of progress will have been brought up the steps of the ladder, in order to let some others lower still in a state we cannot understand come up to them.

That is the real theory. Is that superstition? If you believe the newspapers, that is superstition, for they will twist and turn everything you say. Your enemies will say you said there was a man in that stone, and that you have been a stone. You have not

been a stone, but the great monad, the pilgrim who came from other worlds has been in every stone, has been in every kingdom, and now has reached the state of man, to show whether he is able to continue being a man, or whether he will once more fall back, like the boy at school who will not learn, into the lowest class.

Now then, this law of impressions I have been talking about can be illustrated in this way: If you look at one of these electric lights — take away all the rest, leaving one only, so as to have a better impression — you will find the light makes an image on the retina, and when you shut your eye, this bright filament of light made by a carbon in an incandescent lamp will be seen by you in your eye. You can try it, and see for yourselves. If you keep your eye closed and watch intently, you will see the image come back a certain number of counts, it will stay a certain number of counts, it will go away in the same length of time and come back again, always changing in some respect but always the image of the filament, until at last the time comes when it disappears apparently because other impressions have rubbed it out or covered it over.

That means that there is a return even in the retina of the impression of this filament. After the first time, the color changes each time, and so it keeps coming back at regular intervals, showing that there is a cyclic return of impression in the retina, and if that applies in one place, it applies in every place. And when we look into our moral character we find the same thing, for as we have the tides in the ocean, explained as they say by the moon — which in my opinion does not explain it, but of course, being no scientist, my view is not worth much — so in man we have tides, which are called return of these impressions; that is to say, you do a thing once, there will be a tendency to repeat itself; you do it twice, and it doubles its influence, a greater tendency to do that same thing again. And so on all through our character

shows this constant return of cyclic impression.

We have these impressions from every point in space, every experience we have been through, everything that we can possibly go through at any time, even those things which our forefathers went through. And that is not unjust for this reason, that our forefathers furnished the line of bodily encasement, and we cannot enter that line of bodily encasement unless we are like unto it, and for that reason we must have been at some point in that cycle in that same line or family in the past, so that I must have had a hand in the past in constructing the particular family line in which I now exist, and am myself once more taking up the cyclic impression returning upon me.

Now this has the greatest possible bearing upon our evolution as particular individuals, and that is the only way in which I wish to consider the question of evolution here; not the broad question of the evolution of the universe, but our own evolution, which means our bodily life, as Madame Blavatsky, repeating the ancients, said to us so often, and as we found said by so many of the same school. An opportunity will arise for you to do something; you do not do it; you may not have it again for one hundred years. It is the return before you of some old thing that was good, if it is a good one, along the line of the cycles. You neglect it, as you may, and the same opportunity will return, mind you, but it may not return for many hundred years. It may not return until another life, but it will return under the same law.

Now take another case. I have a friend who is trying to find out all about Theosophy, and about a psychic nature, but I have discovered that he is not paying the slightest attention to this subject of the inevitable return upon himself of these impressions which he creates. I discovered he had periods of depression (and

this will answer for everybody) when he had a despondency that he could not explain. I said to him, you have had the same despondency maybe seven weeks ago, maybe eight weeks ago, maybe five weeks ago. He examined his diary and his recollection, and he found that he had actual recurrences of despondency about the same distance apart. Well, I said, that explains to me how it is coming back. But what am I to do? Do what the old Theosophists taught us; that is, we can only have these good results by producing opposite impressions to bad ones.

So, take this occasion of despondency. What he should have done was, that being the return of an old impression, to have compelled himself to feel joyous, even against his will, and if he could not have done that, then to have tried to feel the joy of others. By doing that, he would have implanted in himself another impression, that is of joy, so that when this thing returned once more, instead of being of the same quality and extension, it would have been changed by the impression of joy or elation and the two things coming together would have counteracted each other, just as two billiard balls coming together tend to counteract each other's movements. This applies to every person who has the blues. This does not apply to me, and I think it must be due to the fact that in some other life I have had the blues. I have other things, but the blues never.

I have friends and acquaintance who have these desponding spells. It is the return of old cyclic impressions, or the cyclic return of impressions. What are you to do? Some people say, I just sit down and let it go; that is to say, you sit there and create it once more. You cannot rub it out if it has been coming, but when it comes start up something else, start up cheerfulness, be good to some one, then try to relieve some other person who is despondent, and you will have started another impression, which will return at the same time. It does not make any difference if

you wait a day or two to do this. The next day, or a few days after will do, for when the old cyclic impression returns, it will have dragged up the new one, because it is related to it by association.

This has a bearing also on the question of the civilization in which we are a point ourselves.

(To be concluded)

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VI-1 — *Basil Crump*

VI. - THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG.

PART I. THE RHINEGOLD.

With the "Rhinégold" I was starting on the new path, where I had first to find the plastic nature-motives which, in ever more individual evolution, were to shape themselves into exponents of the various forms of Passion in the many-membered Action and its characters. The peculiar nature-freshness that seemed to breathe from hence upon me, like the higher mountain air, bore me untired over all the exertions of my work. — *Epilogue to the Ring of the Nibelung.*

The great Nibelungen Myth, as dramatically treated by Wagner, expresses perhaps more than any other of his works the Theosophical teaching that Man is the mirror of the Universe, the microcosm of the macrocosm. It is cosmic, yet human, and it is in its application to present human nature that we will try to analyze it. This gigantic drama occupied Wagner's attention on and off for some twenty years, and consists of four great parts to each of which it will be necessary to devote one of these articles.

The chief powers we see at work in the story are the Human Will represented by the God Wotan or Odin, and the power and knowledge which may be used by the Will for good or evil, symbolized by the Gold. It is really Wotan who is the motive power in all the characters, just as we act in all the departments of our nature whether high or low, selfish or unselfish. As H. P. Blavatsky says in the *Glossary*, the Will, like all the rest, is septenary in its manifestation, thus having a vehicle in each of

the seven human principles. "Emanating from the one, eternal, abstract and purely quiescent Will it . . . runs down the ladder of degrees until the divine Eros becomes, in its lower, animal manifestation, *erotic* desire." It is at this lower end that the action of the *Rhinegold* opens.

Pure and harmless the Gold is resting in the green waters of the Rhine, lit up daily by the golden rays of the sun and guarded by the three Rhine-maidens. But the Will has begun to stir in its lowest form as gross desire and lust for power: the dwarf Alberich crawls up from the red Underworld and learns from the maidens, who repulse his coarse advances, that he who will forswear the divine power of Love (*Eros*) can weld the Gold into a Ring, the symbol of selfish power. With the cry, "Love I forswear forever," Alberich snatches the Gold and disappears with it to his infernal abode, where he welds the Ring and by its aid accumulates a Hoard of Treasure, and employs his brother Mime to forge the Tarnhelm or Helmet of Concealment which enables its owner to change his form or become invisible at will.

In the Overworld Wotan is making the same mistake on a higher plane. He has bargained with the giants Fafnir and Fasolt for the building of a splendid air-castle called Valhalla or the Place of the Chosen Heroes; that state known in Theosophy as Devachan or the "Dwelling of the Gods." The price to be paid is the goddess Freya, who tends the Golden Apples of Youth, which are only another aspect of the power of the Gold. Now Devachan is a state of rest and meditation brought about by a more or less selfish life in matter; for we find that the devoted soul who works always unselfishly for the Race is able to reincarnate and continue working without this rest between each life on earth. The repose of Devachan can be renounced just as can the bliss of Nirvana. So here we see Valhalla being built concurrently with the arousing of selfish desire.

But when the giants demand their reward and Freya is handed over to them, Wotan discovers the fatal mistake he has made, for the Gods no longer have the golden apples and begin to grow old and worn. Clearly Freya must not be lost or else will the divine life be utterly swallowed up in the material. So Loki the Fire-God, who is simply the other face of Wotan (Loki-Odin are two-in-one) goes forth to seek a substitute for Freya, but returns with the news that nowhere can he find anything to equal the worth of woman. On his travels, however, he had heard of the theft of the Gold and suggests that it should be obtained as a ransom for Freya. The Two-in-one, the Will and the Fire-self go down into the red fire of the abode of the Nibelungs and induce Alberich to show them the power of the Tarnhelm by changing himself first into a snake and then into a toad. In the latter form they seize and bind him, for there is always some one form in which we can more easily overcome our lower powers. Deprived of his possessions Alberich utters a curse upon all who shall hereafter possess the Ring, and that curse lies heavily upon us today — the karmic result of having used the divine power for selfish ends.

The giants agree to take in exchange for Freya as much treasure as will, when piled around her, completely hide her from view; but when the Hoard is spent and the Tarnhelm added there is still .a chink left through which an eye of the goddess is visible. For the possessions acquired by the aid of the Ring are not enough to obliterate completely the last spark of spirituality; it needs the Ring itself. Now comes the great trial for Wotan; the giants demand the Ring to fill this last crevice, but the desire for the fatal power has entered Wotan's heart and a fearful struggle goes on within him. Almost has he decided to keep the Ring, when the mysterious figure of Erda, the great Earth-Mother, rises and warns him of the curse attached to it and the approaching doom

of the Gods; so with a mighty effort he tears the Ring from his finger and flings it to the giants. The Will, taking counsel with the Heart of Nature, has stopped short of renouncing utterly the light of spirit for the sake of selfish power, and thus, as we shall see, has made it possible for a way of redemption to be opened up.

No sooner have the giants got the Ring than the curse begins to work; they quarrel over the division of the treasure and Fafnir slays his brother and takes it all for himself. While packing up his gains he throws aside an old sword as useless, little recking of the hidden power it holds. Wotan's glance falls upon it and a grand idea enters his mind: he — the Creative Will (*Kriyasakti*) — will evolve a New Power which shall win back the Gold and restore it to its original element from which it should never have been taken. Meanwhile Donner the Thunder-God dispels with a brilliant flash of lightning the mists which had gathered threateningly around the Gods, and reveals the towers of Valhalla joined to earth by a beautiful rainbow-bridge. Picking up the sword, Wotan greets his new abode and leads the way over the rainbow-bridge while the magnificent Sword-*motif* blazes out like a gleam of promise on a dark and threatening horizon.

Thus closes the Prologue of this great drama. In the second part we shall see how this new power, foreshadowed by the sword-*motif*, is brought into being. One thing remains to be noted, and that is the present fate of the Ring. Wotan, by his act of renunciation, has in reality placed it beyond the reach of further mischief until the coming of that Power which, by self-sacrifice, shall redeem the curse wrought by Alberich. Fafnir retires to a remote cave, changes himself by means of the Tarnhelm into a Dragon, and keeps guard over the treasure. His character has changed, in accordance with the change in Wotan's will, from the builder of Valhalla to the guardian of the Ring and Hoard — the symbolical Dragon of Wisdom who guards the divine power and

knowledge from misuse.

Theosophy

BROTHERHOOD - A FACT IN NATURE — *Archiblad Keightley*

At first sight it would seem that this is not the case. Many people will argue that the "survival of the fittest" and the "struggle for life" are the prevailing laws which guide nature in her evolution. This certainly is so if the view be confined to material evolution only. But when we attempt to take a larger view, and to include with it a deeper view of nature, we find that there is another set of laws which operates. It may be remembered that H. P. Blavatsky wrote some years ago an article on "psychic and noetic action." This has since been republished at Boston in very convenient form. In that article much emphasis is laid on, and large extracts are quoted from, Professor Ladd's "Physiological Psychology." The point being to confirm Professor Ladd's inductive demonstration that there is a Mind-Entity distinct from the physiological entity which he calls "Mind," and that Mind has a nature and laws of its own which are akin to, though distinct from, and superior to, the laws governing the action of the physiological organism.

Into some of these laws which govern the action of the Mind-Entity it will be profitable to enquire. This Entity will be found after reading Professor Ladd's book to correspond very closely with that which Theosophists are accustomed to call the Reincarnating Ego, though of course not in such detailed analysis. It is in the relation of this Entity to physical life that Brotherhood as a fact in nature begins to be demonstrated. Until this Entity manifests its action the laws of the struggle for life and survival of the fittest would indeed seem to be the paramount laws.

Let us take the fact of the death of the body, an event which is common to all nature. At or about the time of the change which

we call death, it is seen that a *something* has disappeared which held it together. A change takes place which at a varying period ends with the dissolution of the bodily frame and ultimately ends with the disassociation of the lower quaternary. Without here trying to enter on details, a holding influence disappears, and the various components sooner or later are resolved into their atoms. Many are accustomed to say that the Mind or Soul is gone. At any rate it (whatever name we give it) is no longer confined so much to the body which it used, and with its disappearance or unrestrained freedom the unity of the body corporate disappears and its component elements fall to pieces. This is true both as regards the individual cell-atoms of the body as a whole, and also as regards the organs which make up that body, and of the organs themselves.

The analogy as regards the single body may be carried further so as to include any association of individual animate beings and it is not necessary to entirely exclude the animal world. As the cells of the human body behave to that body under the action of Mind, so can and ought the individual human units composing various associations, which are formed for the purpose of carrying out obediently the laws of the Soul or Mind. From such considerations as these, which might very widely be extended in particulars, it is easy to see that one of the primary laws of the Soul or Mind in manifested action is Unity. This Unity when translated and in reference to associations of human individuals is expressed by all that can be understood by the word Brotherhood. Consequently I would emphatically state my belief that for those who desire to increasingly manifest the action of the Soul or the highest within them, Brotherhood is a fact in nature.

The analogy may be carried much further and the individual human entities would be found to be the cell atoms of larger and

still larger Entities until the "limits" of the Universe are reached.

Theosophy

CYCLIC IMPRESSION AND RETURN AND OUR EVOLUTION: III —
William Q. Judge

(Concluded)

Who are we? Where are we going? Where have we come from? I told you that the old Egyptians disappeared. If you inquire into Egyptian history, the most interesting because the most obscure, you will find, as the writers say, that the civilization seems to rise to the zenith at once. We do not see when it began. The civilization was so great it must have existed an enormous length of time to get to that height, so that we cannot trace it from its beginning, and it disappears suddenly from the sky; there is nothing of it left but the enormous remains which testify to these great things, for the ancient Egyptians not only made mummies in which they displayed the art of bandaging that we cannot better, but they had put everything to such a degree of specialization that we must conclude they had many centuries of civilization. There was a specialist for one eye and a specialist for the other, a specialist for the eyebrow, and so on. In my poor and humble opinion, we are the Egyptians.

We have come back again, after our five thousand or whatever years' cycle it is, and we have dragged back with us some one called the Semitic race, with which we are connected by some old impression that we cannot get rid of, and so upon us is impinged that very Semitic image. We have drawn back with us, by the inevitable law of association in cyclic return, some race, some personages connected with us by some acts of ours in that great old civilization now disappeared, and we cannot get rid of it; we must raise them up to some other plane as we raise ourselves.

I think in America is the evidence that this old civilization is

coming back, for in the theosophical theory nothing is lost. If we were left to records, buildings and the like, they would soon disappear and nothing could ever be recovered; there never would be any progress. But each individual in the civilization, wherever it may be, puts the record in himself, and when he comes into the favorable circumstances described by Patanjali, an old Hindoo, when he gets the apparatus, he will bring out the old impression. The ancients say each act has a thought under it, and each thought makes a mental impression; and when the apparatus is provided, there will then arise that new condition, in rank, place and endowment.

So we retain in ourselves the impression of all the things that we have done, and when the time comes that we have cycled back, over and over again, through the middle ages perhaps, into England, into Germany, into France, we come at last to an environment such as is provided here, just the thing physically and every other way to enable us to do well, and to enable the others who are coming after us. I can almost see them; they are coming in a little army from the countries of the old world to endeavor to improve this one; for here ages ago there was a civilization also, perhaps we were in it then, perhaps anterior to the ancient Egyptians. It disappeared from here, when we do not know, and it left this land arid for many thousands of years until it was discovered once more by the Europeans. The ancient world, I mean Europe, has been poisoned, the land has been soaked with the emanations, poisoned by the emanations of the people who have lived upon it: the air above it is consequently poisoned by the emanations from the land; but here in America, just the place for the new race, is an arable land which has had time over and over again to destroy the poisons that were planted here ages and ages ago. It gives us a new land, with vibrations in the air that stir up every particle in a man who breathes it, and

thus we find the people coming from the old world seeming to receive through their feet the impressions of an American country. All this bears upon our civilization and race.

We are here a new race in a new cycle, and persons who know say that a cycle is going to end in a few years and a new one begin, and that that ending and beginning will be accompanied by convulsions of society and of nature. We can all almost see it coming. The events are very complete in the sky. You remember Daniel says, "A time, half a time, and a time," and so on, and people in the Christian system have been trying to find out the time when the time began, and that is just the difficulty. We do not know when the time began. And the only person who in all these many years has made a direct statement is Madame Blavatsky, and she said, "A cycle is ending in a few years, you must prepare." So that it was like the old prophets who came to the people and said, "Prepare for a new era of things, get ready for what you have to do." That is just what this civilization is doing. It is the highest, although the crudest, civilization now on the earth. It is the beginning of the great civilization that is to come, when old Europe has been destroyed; when the civilizations of Europe are unable to do any more, then this will be the place where the new great civilization will begin to put out a hand once more to grasp that of the ancient East, who has sat there silently doing nothing all these years, holding in her ancient crypts and libraries and records the philosophy which the world wants, and it is this philosophy and this ethics that the Theosophical Society is trying to give you. It is a philosophy you can understand and practice.

It is well enough to say to a man, Do right, but after a while, in this superstitious era, he will say, Why should I do right, unless I feel like it? When you are showing these laws, that he must come back in his cycle; that he is subject to evolution; that he is a

reincarnated pilgrim soul, then he will see the reason why, and then in order to get him a secure basis, he accepts the philosophy, and that is what the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical movement are trying to do. It was said the other day, in speaking of a subject like this, that the great end and aim is the great renunciation. That is, that after progressing to great heights, which you can only do by unselfishness, at last you say to yourself, "I may take the ease to which I am entitled." For what prevails in one place must prevail in another, and in the course of progress we must come at last to a time when we can take our ease, but if you say to yourself, "I will not take it, but as I know this world and all the people on it are bound to live and last for many thousand years more, and if not helped perhaps might fail, I will not take it but I will stay here and I will suffer, because of having greater knowledge and greater sensitiveness" — this is the great renunciation as theosophy tells us.

I know we do not often talk this way, because many of us think that the people will say to us at once when we talk of the great renunciation, "I don't want it; it is too much trouble." So generally we talk about the fine progress, and how you will at last escape the necessity of reincarnation, and at last escape the necessity of doing this or that and the other, but if you do your duty, you must make up your mind when you reach the height, when you know all, when you participate in the government of the world — not of a town, but the actual government of the world and the people upon it — instead of sleeping away your time, you will stay to help those who are left behind, and that is the great renunciation. That is what is told of Buddha, and of Jesus. Doubtless the whole story about Jesus, which cannot be proved historically to my mind, is based upon the same thing that we call renunciation. He was crucified after two or three years' work. But we say it means that this being divine resolves he will crucify himself in the eyes

of the world, in the eyes of others, so that he can save men. Buddha did the same thing long before Jesus is said to have been born. The story that he made the great renunciation just means that which I have been telling you, instead of escaping from this horrible place, as it seems to us. For this is indeed horrible, as we look at it, surrounded by obstructions, liable to defeat at any moment, liable to wake up in the morning after planning a great reform, and see it dashed to the ground. Instead of escaping all that, he remained in the world and started his doctrine, which he knew at least would be adhered to by some. But this great doctrine of renunciation teaches that instead of working for yourself, you will work to know everything, to do everything in your power for those who may be left behind you, just as Madame Blavatsky says in the *Voice of the Silence*, "Step out of the sunshine into the shade, to make more room for others."

Isn't that better than a heaven which is reached at the price of the damnation of those of your relatives who will not believe a dogma? Is this not a great philosophy and a great religion which includes the salvation and regeneration, the scientific upraising and perfecting of the whole human family, and every particle in the whole universe, instead of imagining that a few miserable beings after seventy years of life shall enter into paradise, and then they look behind to see the torments in hell of those who would not accept a dogma?

What are these other religions compared with that? How any man can continue to believe such an idea as the usual one of damnation for mere unbelief I cannot comprehend. I had rather — if I had to choose — be an idolator of the most pronounced kind, who believed in Indra, and be left with my common reasoning, than believe in such a doctrine as that which permits me to suppose that my brother who does not believe a dogma is sizzling in hell while I, by simply believing, may enjoy myself in

heaven.

Theosophists, if they will learn the doctrine and try to explain it, will reform this world. It will percolate everywhere, infiltrate into every stratum of society and prevent the need of legislation. It will alter the people, whereas you go on legislating and leaving this world's people as they are, and you will have just what happened in France. Capitalists in that day, in the day of the revolution — that is the royalists — oppressed the people. At last the people rose up and philosophers of the day instituted the reign of reason, and out of the reign of reason — mind you they had introduced there a beautiful idea of mankind, that idea struck root in a soil that was not prepared — came the practice of murdering other people by the wholesale until streams of blood ran all over France. So you see if something is not done to raise the people what the result will be. We have seen in Chicago the result of such acts, the mutterings of such a storm if the theosophical philosophy — call it by any other name you like — is not preached and understood. But if these old doctrines are not taught to the race you will have a revolution, and instead of making progress in a steady, normal fashion, you will come up to better things through storm, trouble and sorrow. You will come up, of course, for even out of revolutions and blood there comes progress, but isn't it better to have progress without that? And that is what the theosophical philosophy is intended for. That is why the Mahatmas we were talking about, directing their servant H. P. Blavatsky, as they have directed many before, came out at a time when materialism was fighting religion and was about getting the upper hand, and once more everything moved forward in its cyclic way and these old doctrines were revived under the guidance of the theosophical movement. They are doctrines that explain all problems and in the universal scheme give man a place as a potential god.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC — *E. C. Mayer*

In tracing back the history of music as an art, one is baffled at every step, finding it most difficult to get any definite ideas regarding the nature of ancient music. This arises from the fact that so few works are extant, which deal with this subject.

The ancient civilizations possessed a knowledge of music, architecture and mathematics far superior to ours. We may conclude, therefore, that when the Libraries at Alexandria were destroyed, many valuable treatises on music may have been numbered amongst the works which were either burned or taken away and concealed by the adepts.

Music was so intimately associated with the old mysteries and magic that it would have been extremely dangerous to have left full knowledge of it open to the world, and when darkness settled over the early Christian centuries it veiled the music of the period as well.

It is interesting to note in connection with this fact, that in later years, the first enlightenment regarding music came to the world through the monks. In the fourth century we read of Pope Sylvester of Rome, instituting a singing school. Later on, Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, and Gregory, gave out more information; they constructed the authentic and plagal modes based upon the old Greek system of tetrachords. Coming down to the tenth century we have Guido Arezzo, a Benedictine monk, concerning whose birth and death little is known, who established the system of solmization, Do, Re, Mi, Fa, etc. It is very probable that he derived this from an old tradition, although some historians of music say, the thought came to him while hearing the choir sing a hymn to St. John, the opening lines of the hymn beginning with

the syllables, Do, Re, Mi, etc. He added two more lines to the staves, making these additional lines, color lines, red and yellow.

Since that time music has spread through most of the western races, and improved and enlarged according to the tastes and requirements of the different nationalities.

Although Pythagoras was called the "discoverer of music," records give us very meagre accounts of his teachings; yet, the Egyptians with whom he studied, were said to have possessed a wonderful knowledge of music and harmony, and as music was one of the requirements necessary to enter his school, he, doubtless, gave his pupils deeper instruction in musical philosophy. It is natural to presume that the monks derived their information from the same source that Pythagoras did. They may have given additional facts to the world, purposely from time to time and bit by bit, in order to gradually restore the lost art.

Now at the close of this century, there seems to be a peculiar crisis reached in music, and indeed in all arts, giving rise to a curious waiting, unsatisfied, unrestful feeling. A new cycle is about to dawn, and the old tune and form will soon change and resolve itself into another key, with a different keynote, rhythm and vibration. H. P. B. says in the *Secret Doctrine*, "new manuscripts will be revealed before the closing of the century," and amongst these, we venture to hope, will be some musical treatises.

In examining the music of the early centuries which is accessible, we find that it was devoid of measure, rhythm, and metre. Rhythm is one of the most important adjuncts in musical form; the re-occurrence of accent at certain time periods producing a most powerful effect. The music of that era would sound very crude to our ears, accustomed as we are to metrical law. Rhythm and vibration are so closely allied that one naturally suggests the

other.

It stands to reason that there is a "primary impulse" back of every vibration. Suppose we say that this "primary impulse" is the Sun, wind or air, the mind, or the breath, these furnishing the impulse for all the vibrations of which we are cognizant. The impulse is needed, set in action the will force which causes the friction necessary for the specific rate of vibration. The sun quickening the plant to growth and bloom: the wind sighing over the strings of the Æolian harp producing musical sounds; the breath vibrating over the vocal chords making voice; the mind vivifying the brain into thought and language; all of these natural phenomena come readily within our understanding.

Nature furnishes the poet, artist, or musician with all the materials he needs for the development of his work. In "Caves and Jungles of Hindostan," H. P. B. gives a most beautiful description of a natural acoustic phenomenon which takes place on an island there. She says, "The musician wind, comes here daily to try his art after nightfall especially during the last quarter of the moon." The island is overgrown with tall reeds, and the force of the wind through them brings out musical sounds that resemble now hundreds of Æolian harps and again a full orchestra, producing an indescribably beautiful effect.

The wind or air gives one a very clear idea of an impersonal cosmic force. It would be considered imbecile to seriously blame the wind for the disasters and destruction it causes. If then, we can look upon the law of karma or action, as an abstract law, it simplifies the whole teaching. We get rid of that idea of a personal God chastising or helping his people. The "primary impulse" in the universal mind sets into vibration the whole world plan, even to the tiniest insect or minutest blade of grass. Each form has its distinct rate of vibration which must be conformed to, or failure

results, for, "nature has failures as well as man." Nature requires that all minerals, plants, animals, and men as well as universes conform to the rhythmic impulse back of each form.

Even the elementary student of music knows, that there are certain rules of harmony which must be complied with, or discord follows. This is not from any arbitrary rule of man, but because it is a mathematical law, *i.e.*, certain ratios of vibrations are harmonious and unifying, while others are discordant. This same law works in cycles, all periods of time, the law of karma, also in the fine arts, such as architecture, painting, etc.

The composer knows well that if he wishes to embody his musical thought in a symphony, he must first put the composition into an established key. Then he must adhere to certain laws regarding the melodic succession of chords, well defined time, and rhythm. Deviate from the starting key as much as one may, yet the return movement brings the chords into their original key. Let us take this as an analogy to the manifestation of the universal mind. At the beginning of a manvantara the "primary impulse" existing in the universal mind causes a certain keynote or specific rate of vibration to sound. This vibrates along the sounding board of the cosmos. The world responding to that vibration, starts into existence or form. This manifestation may be very similar to musical form, simple or composite. The word cyclical is sometimes used instead of composite, and is a very good substitute. In the simple form, during the whole period of manifestation, it will never deviate much from the original key, but after a smooth, pleasing melody resolve itself into its closing harmonies.

Composite or cyclical form can be likened to a system of evolution, such as our word *chain* represents. The harmony starts off pure and melodious, gets denser and more discordant at its

middle point of evolution, then begins to work back again to its original harmony. The close is all the more beautiful and restful after the intricate succession of chords. But if, on the contrary, when the world is at its densest point of evolution, the most discordant part of its music, it fails to respond and return to the higher closing impulse, then "tonal chaos," or annihilation, results.

That matter attracts matter when in similar phase or vibration, has been well proved by the formation of sand figures by vibration. "Sympathetic vibration" was the basis of Keeley's experiments and system.

An ancient legend reads, "Apollo was the inventor of music. He raised the walls of the city of Troy by the music of his harp alone." It is said "there was one stone alone upon which Apollo laid down his harp, and this stone by his touch became so melodious that whenever it struck with another stone it also sounded like a harp."

Is there not much in that legend over which students might ponder? It may be that Apollo has again laid down his harp upon a stone, and that this vibration of love, and harmony, which is now sounding through the world is the music from his seven-stringed lyre. Any one of us may become a stone feeling the *sympathetic vibration* from that harp, to sound again in our turn, the wondrous melody. And so, stone after stone becoming attuned, and responding to that vibration, shall raise a wall mightier than that of the ancient city of Troy. This one to last until the manvantaric symphony has become resolved into its closing harmonies.

MESMERISM: I (1) — *William Q. Judge*

This is the name given to an art, or the exhibition of a power to act upon others and the facility to be acted upon, which long antedates the days of Anton Mesmer. Another name for some of its phenomena is Hypnotism, and still another is Magnetism. The last title was given because sometimes the person operated on was seen to follow the hand of the operator, as if drawn like iron filings to a magnet. These are all used today by various operators, but by many different appellations it has been known; fascination is one, and psychologizing is another, but the number of them is so great it is useless to go over the list.

Anton Mesmer, who gave greater publicity in the Western world to the subject than any other person, and whose name is still attached to it, was born in 1734, and some few years before 1783, or about 1775, obtained great prominence in Europe in connection with his experiments and cures; but, as H. P. Blavatsky says in her *Theosophical Glossary*, he was only a rediscoverer. The whole subject had been explored long before his time — indeed many centuries anterior to the rise of civilization in Europe — and all the great fraternities of the East were always in full possession of secrets concerning its practice which remain still unknown. Mesmer came out with his discoveries as agent, in fact — though, perhaps, without disclosing those behind him — of certain brotherhoods to which he belonged. His promulgations were in the last quarter of the century, just as those of the Theosophical Society were begun in 1875, and what he did was all that could be done at that time.

But in 1639, one hundred years before Mesmer, a book was published in Europe upon the use of mesmerism in the cure of

wounds, and bore the title, *The Sympathetical Powder of Edricius Mohynus of Eburo*. These cures, it was said, could be effected at a distance from the wound by reason of the *virtue* or *directive faculty* between that and the wound. This is exactly one of the phases of both hypnotism and mesmerism. And along the same line were the writings of a monk named Aldericus Balk, who said diseases could be similarly cured, in a book concerning the lamp of life in 1611. In these works, of course, there is much superstition, but they treat of mesmerism underneath all the folly.

After the French Academy committee, including Benjamin Franklin, passed sentence on the subject, condemning it in substance, mesmerism fell into disrepute, but was revived in America by many persons who adopted different names for their work and wrote books on it. One of them named Dodds obtained a good deal of celebrity, and was invited during the life of Daniel Webster to lecture on it before a number of United States senators. He called his system "psychology," but it was mesmerism exactly, even to details regarding nerves and the like. And in England also a good deal of attention was given to it by numbers of people who were not of scientific repute. They gave it no better reputation than it had before, and the press and public generally looked on them as charlatans and upon mesmerism as a delusion. Such was the state of things until the researches into what is now known as hypnotism brought that phase of the subject once more forward, and subsequently to 1875 the popular mind gave more and more attention to the possibilities in the fields of clairvoyance, clairaudience, trance, apparitions, and the like. Even physicians and others, who previously scouted all such investigations, began to take them up for consideration, and are still engaged thereon. And it seems quite certain that, by whatever name designated, mesmerism is sure to have more and

more attention paid to it. For it is impossible to proceed very far with hypnotic experiments without meeting mesmeric phenomena, and being compelled, as it were, to proceed with an enquiry into those as well.

The hypnotists unjustifiably claim the merit of discoveries, for even the uneducated so-called charlatans of the above-mentioned periods cited the very fact appropriated by hypnotists, that many persons were normally — for them — in a hypnotized state, or, as they called it, in a psychologized condition, or negative one, and so forth, according to the particular system employed.

In France, Baron Du Potet astonished every one with his feats in mesmerism, bringing about as great changes in subjects as the hypnotizers do now. After a time and after reading old books, he adopted a number of queer symbols that he said had the most extraordinary effect on the subject, and refused to give these out to any except pledged persons. This rule was violated, and his instructions and figures were printed not many years ago for sale with a pretense of secrecy consisting in a lock to the book. I have read these and find they are of no moment at all, having their force simply from the will of the person who uses them. The Baron was a man of very strong natural mesmeric force, and made his subjects do things that few others could bring about. He died without causing the scientific world to pay much attention to the matter.

The great question mooted is whether there is or there is not any actual fluid thrown off by the mesmerizer. Many deny it, and nearly all hypnotizers refuse to admit it. H. P. Blavatsky declares there is such a fluid, and those who can see into the plane to which it belongs assert its existence as a subtle form of matter. This is, I think, true, and is not at all inconsistent with the experiments in hypnotism, for the fluid can have its own

existence at the same time that people may be self-hypnotized by merely inverting their eyes while looking at some bright object. This fluid is composed in part of the astral substance around everyone, and in part of the physical atoms in a finely divided state. By some this astral substance is called *aura*. But that word is indefinite, as there are many sorts of aura and many degrees of its expression. These will not be known, even to Theosophists of the most willing mind, until the race as a whole, has developed up to that point. So the word will remain in use at the present.

This aura, then, is thrown off by the mesmerizer upon his subject, and is received by the latter in a department of his inner constitution, never described by any Western experimenters, because they know nothing of it. It wakes up certain inner and non-physical divisions of the person operated on, causing a change of relation between the various and numerous sheaths surrounding the inner man, and making possible different degrees of intelligence and of clairvoyance and the like. It has no influence whatsoever on the Higher Self, which it is impossible to reach by such means. Many persons are deluded into supposing that the Higher Self is the responder, or that some spirit or what not is present, but it is only one of the many inner persons, so to say, who is talking or rather causing the organs of speech to do their office. And it is just here that the Theosophist and the non-Theosophist are at fault, since the words spoken are sometimes far above the ordinary intelligence or power of the subject in a waking state. I therefore propose to give in the rough the theory of what actually does take place, as has been known for ages to those who see with the inner eye, and as will one day be discovered and admitted by science.

When the hypnotic or mesmerized state is complete — and often when it is partial — there is an immediate paralyzing of the power of the body to throw its impressions, and thus modify the

conceptions of the inner being. In ordinary waking life every one, without being able to disentangle himself, is subject to the impressions from the whole organism; that is to say, every cell in the body, to the most minute, has its own series of impressions and recollections, all of which continue to impinge on the great register, the brain, until the impression remaining in the cell is fully exhausted. And that exhaustion takes a long time. Further, as we are adding continually to them, the period of disappearance of impression is indefinitely postponed. Thus the inner person is not able to make itself felt. But, in the right subject, those bodily impressions are by mesmerism neutralized for the time, and at once another effect follows, which is equivalent to cutting the general off from his army and compelling him to seek other means of expression.

The brain — in cases where the subject talks — is left free sufficiently to permit it to obey the commands of the mesmerizer and compel the organs of speech to respond. So much in general.

(To be continued.)

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Reprinted from Lucifer, Vol. x, p. 197.* ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THE ANCIENT WISDOM OF THE MAORIS — *John St. Clair*

In his reports of the World's parliament of religions at Chicago, Mr. Stead has a fine portrait of Tawhiao the late Maori King, but describes him as an "idol worshipper." Never was man more misunderstood than my sacred old friend Tawhiao, that he should be described as an "idol worshipper." He and his father, the great Potatau Te Wherowhero, before him were born mystics well versed in all the wisdom of the *Wharekura* — the school of initiation to the inner Mysteries. And his son the present King Mahuta Tawhiao, just emerging from "silence" possesses the wisdom of his illustrious ancestors. He looks with indifference, perhaps, with contempt on the slanderers of his father, and no doubt attributes their attitude to ignorance and the baneful influence of the missionary.

According to the Maori legends the ancestors of their race came to New Zealand in seven canoes, between five hundred and one thousand years ago from a mystic land called Hawaiki, which scientists and western scholars try to fit in with Hawaii, one of the Sandwich Islands; but the *Tohunga* or Priest-Initiate, if you can get him to speak, will tell you that it is not so, but that Hawaiki was a large country swallowed up by the ocean long ago. The hidden meaning of references in many of their poems will show this to be the case.

When the Maoris came to these islands it was by direction of Kupe, the immortal, an all powerful *Tohunga*, who saw disaster approaching his race and wished to save all of it that he could. Kupe was a prophet, perhaps an adept; it is clear that he had the power of *Matakite* — clairvoyance — and could see both the past and the future. He also had the power of *Moemoea* — seeing

visions — and could interpret them. He was a *Tohunga Matau*, or adept of the right hand path, as I hope to be able to show.

The Maoris in those days were guided in all they did by their *Tohungas*, who directed the welfare of the people and by powerful *Karakias* — incantations — warded off evil and influenced them for good. *Tohungas* were of two kinds, and the *Tohunga Makutu*, or black magician, by his spells and incantations could strike men dead from a distance. *Makutu* — witchcraft — is still dreaded by the Maoris. It is however of the *Tohunga Matau* and his ancient wisdom that we will first treat. This ancient wisdom is all but extinct, not more than perhaps some half dozen persons really know or retain the ancient lore and they, as born mystics, know well how to keep it concealed from the profane.

With the advent of the Missionary the *Tokungas* declined and retired into obscurity. They lost their power owing to the new teachers' declaring that their old religion was very dreadful and wicked, and that the new gospel was the only way to salvation. The Maoris to use their own expression, became *nui atu to matou raruraru*, i.e., very much confused or perplexed. They lost heart when they saw that the missionary taught one thing and practiced another. And when they found they were losing their lands and contracting intemperance and other European vices, they became downcast and dejected and have passed through many sad experiences during the last fifty years.

The sacred flame of their ancestral wisdom, however, still flickers, carefully guarded by a small handful of trusty *Tohungas* who wait for the dawn of the coming day when they may rekindle the ancient fires for the upliftment of their fallen race. In the hearts of many of the most intelligent of the race is the desire to remember and restore their forgotten religion, though they fear

the ridicule of the European; but if you speak to them in confidence of the wisdom of their ancestors you will note the beam of true gratitude which steals over their countenances in spite of the power they have of hiding their true feelings. This shows that the dawn of a new day is fast approaching; indeed, judging from the interest the average Maori is taking in Theosophy, which he claims as his own ancient birthright, that dawn is now at hand. The justice of the claim is what I propose to show.

If he take his most sacred *Whakapapa* or genealogical tree, known only to the Maori mystic, we find that he begins his ancestry with *Aha* — That or What — or, in other words, the "Absolute" of the *Secret Doctrine*. From this first emanated *Ihu* or the coming forth, the first manifestation, and so on through various mystic generations signifying dawns, days, twilights, nights, — the lesser Cycles, — till we come to *Rangi-Raua-Ko-Papa*, literally, Heaven and Earth, but mystically, the separation of the race into sexes. Wini Kerei Te Whetuiti stated that this was the real hidden meaning and that before the separation of *Rangi* and *Papa* the race was bisexual or rather hermaphrodite. In their sacred *Waiatas*, songs or laments, we have the story of the creation and of the building of the Kosmos told much as it is in the *Secret -Doctrine*. The legend of *Whaitiri*, the lightning, conceals with a thin veil the mysteries of the sacred land at the north pole.

The seven principles of man are known to all despite the confusion which the missionary caused when he called the soul, *Wairuar*, though *Wairua* is only a phantom shadow or ghost, *i.e.*, the astral body. The correct terms for the seven principles as known to the Maoris are 1. *Atua*, pure spirit; 2. *Hine Ngaio*, the higher soul — literally, the hidden, or lost, or concealed woman; 3. *Manawa ora*, the upper, and *Manawa*, the lower, manas. The

above three are immortal. 4. *Hiahia*, desire; 5. *Oranga*, vitality; 6. *Wairua*, the ghost or phantom body, the astral body; 7. *Tinana*, the gross physical body.

With the Maoris the lower four principles are perishable, the second and third are the immortal man and *Atua* is the God or All-Father overshadowing and permeating them all. When a man dies, at first only his *Tinana* or body decays, the other principles slowly depart to the *Te Reinga*, the under world, or temporary abode of Spirits. If the departed can resist the desire for food on his arrival at *Te Reinga* he can return and reoccupy his body or enter a fresh body if there is one available; but if he touches food then death is complete and he remains there until the *Wairua*, or astral, perishes and *Hiahia* and *Oranga* are set free and disperse into the elements. Then the immortal part is free and goes to rest till the time for rebirth arrives and he is born on earth again.

Under the head of *Tangis*, or weeping for the dead, I shall deal with the reason why the Maoris do not bury their dead for many days after death and the reason of their wailing and lamenting as far as can be given out though the whole truth could only be given to E. S. T. members under the pledge of secrecy. To the profane European the incantations and laments are meaningless but to those who know anything of the science of vibration and sound they open up a deep field for investigation. These matters are taught only in the Maori *Wharekura*, or Masonic School, and it is difficult to learn much of them except from their poems and allegories.

A *Tohunga* will not explain any mystic saying, but if one stumbles on the meaning and asks him if that is right he will tell you, and it is in giving him my ideas as a Theosophist of his symbols and mystic poems that I have gained the information which is now committed to paper. The missionary and the orthodox may

dispute some of my renderings of meanings of words such as *Wairua*, or Astral, and say it means the soul but on the authority of several *Tohungas* I can say that I am right and that the missionary was purposely misled in his translation of the Bible. Reincarnation was universally accepted before the advent of the missionary and has a firm hold on the Maori of today as will be shown by ancient and modern *Waiatas*. Karma is also one of their doctrines as it was of the ancient *Tohungas*, the Maori equivalent being *Te Putake me te whakaotinga*, literally, the cause and the effect. There are many instances where chiefs living today claim to be reincarnations of ancestors who have had to come back and be reborn to expiate a wrong done in a past life, but they rarely speak of such things, especially to Europeans as they fear the ridicule of the profane, and to the Maori such things are very *Tapu*, sacred. I hope to show in future papers that the world may yet learn much from the ancient wisdom of the *Tohungas* and that the ancient *Tohunga Matau*, if not an adept, was at least an advanced chela, incarnated to help save his race.

Theosophy

SLEEP AND DEATH — *Vespera Freeman*

In view of the fact that death brings upon man the one insurmountable misery of life, that the fear of death, and the loneliness and loss death brings, overshadow him during every moment of life, that no man can hope to escape himself or to hold back from that dread abyss either his nearest or his dearest, this subject would seem to be one of most vital interest to every one.

That there is an existence after death; that man has a soul and that this soul is immortal, is said to be a general belief in Christian countries; but how superficial a hold such belief has upon the mass of men is clearly demonstrated by their daily life and by their attitude of mind when death approaches either to themselves or friends. The Bishop, when the Captain shouts "The ship must sink, ten seconds more will send our souls to Heaven," cries fervently, "God forbid." And this is but a fair example of the sustaining power which lies in what is called, "belief in future life," and "taking refuge in the Father's heavenly mansions from earthly sorrows." We have needed sorely a belief more deeply rooted in our being — more richly nourished, have needed some more definite picture of the country on the other side — some better assurance of the survival and well-being of those dearer than ourselves who have passed before us into the seeming void and darkness.

For centuries past, in our western world at least, the thought of death as the end of everything desirable, the final limit of all hope, all happiness, possession, high endeavor and achievement — even of LOVE itself, — has lain like a black pall upon our hearts and shut out all the sun. And as though even this were not enough, the customs of the people in their pageantry of woe —

the hearse decked with its sable plumes — the winding funeral train — the yawning grave — the hollow sound of earth falling upon the dead — the weeping — the mourning — the despair — the dread and sombre garments that make show of these — all these have added weight to the depression and confirmed the feeling of death's horror until a fluttering scrap of crape wounds one like a poisoned knife, with all the dread associations it brings up. A man may meet all other sorts and kinds of evil and misfortune — loss and disgrace, hunger, and thirst and cold, and bear them cheerfully or rise above them on the wings of Hope, and still endure, but when death seizes upon one who is life of his life, heart of his inmost heart, the end of things has come for him. He can endure no longer, lacking some certain clue to

"The secrets of the silence, whence all come,
The secrets of the gloom, whereto all go;
The life which lies between, like that arch flung,
From cloud to cloud across the sky, which hath
Mists for its masonry and vapory piers,
Melting to void again, which was so fair."

As with the man, so with humanity; this western world had reached a point where it could endure no longer without more light, more knowledge, that it might firmly rest upon, more hope and better grounded. And, since the foundations of all things are laid in justice, the new light came. Theosophy again began to teach of Reincarnation, of Devachan, Nirvana and the other states into which the Soul may pass when freed from the gross garments it has outworn. Emerson asserts that "The secret of heaven is kept from age to age," that "no imprudent, no sociable Angel ever dropped an early syllable to answer the longing of saints, the fears of mortals," that "we should have listened on our knees to any favorite who by stricter obedience had brought his thoughts into parallelism with the celestial currents and could

hint to human ears the scenery and circumstance of the newly parted soul." Even Emerson, it seems, must sometimes err, for the truth is there are some, who can and *do* tell the "circumstances of the parting soul," and the unhappy, faithless world laughs, when it does not sneer, and very, *very* few "listen upon their knees."

Unfortunately I cannot speak myself from any knowledge of these things and so can only give my idea of what the wise ones teach and a few stray thoughts about it.

There seems to be a very plain analogy between sleep, which men look on as a heavenly benediction, and death which they fear so greatly, and we cannot fail to get some idea of the states that follow upon death from careful study of the states that follow upon sleep, since the one plan, infinitely repeated and expanded seems to suffice for all development.

A man rises in the morning refreshed from sleep to begin a new day's work. He has a certain amount of force to expend and he accomplishes much or little just in proportion to the concentration of that force upon a fixed end or aim. He may exhaust this force with care and slowly, or lavishly and fast but in either case when it is exhausted the man must sleep. Now what sleeps? The body may lie quiet but the natural processes go on, the little lives that *are* the body, keep at their work — the heart pumps, the lungs blow. What makes the difference between sleep and waking? It is that the inner man, the real man in sleep withdraws himself from contact with the physical plane, just as a man tired with the noise and jarring in a workroom retires for peace and rest into an upper chamber. Generally the man withdraws slowly by easy steps, — at first he is so near, a movement or the lightest call will bring him back. On the first step all sorts of scenes and forms and pictures, inconsequent, ridiculous, changing incessantly, present themselves before him

and his brain takes note. He sees monsters and falls from heights, has difficulty with his clothes, still suffers from the infesting cares of day grown to grotesqueness. He withdraws more and the dreams change, grow more distinct, more consequent. He feels less and less the oppression of bodily affairs — his Soul begins to float into a region beyond pain and care. The man has passed into deep sleep and for a time is free, — free within certain limits only, for a shining thread still holds him to his body.

What are the visions that he then beholds — the bliss that permeates his being, — that refreshes — that *renews* him?

He has no definite remembrance of all this when he returns to waking life, because he has to wander back through the chaotic and distracting scenes presented by the changing planes of being he passed through on his way up. And so by the time he has again taken possession of his body nothing remains to him but a vague sense of peace and elevation, and even this wears away as he becomes engrossed in the affairs of waking life.

Day after day this process is repeated until a day comes when the body is exhausted utterly, worn out, useless. The real man withdraws again slowly, gradually, but this time completely. He breaks the shining thread at last, so that no power can bring him back into that body. Then we say the man is dead. This is a mere figure of speech or rather an entire misconception. The man is neither dead nor sleeping nor *away*. He has put off the cramping limitations of the body and has entered into a fuller, freer life. He does not reach the Devachanic state at once because he has to pass through all those planes or states he nightly passed in sleep or at least planes which correspond to these, called in the books the *Kamalokic* planes.

The swiftness of his passing through these planes depends upon the man himself, for he must rid himself, upon the way, of

personal desires and selfish passions before he can pass on to higher, purer states. One can imagine, in some little measure what life would be, had we no body to take care of, and to suffer for and through, no desires in relation to a body to gratify or to hold in check, no earthly cares or fears, or doubts or pains, but were free utterly to revel in the ideal which has become more real to us than anything we know at present. To be at will with all the friends we love, and see them not the poor earth-worn, imperfect, sorrowing beings we know here, but the same selves purified, radiant, blissful, glorified as in our highest idealization we can picture them, — the world about them bathed in beauty, penetrated through with harmony and sweetness and heavenly peace. This is to imagine in a faint and shadowy way the Devachanic state.

Now it may easily be seen that this state must differ for each man. No two heavens can be the same, since no two men are just the same. Of the same essence, they are differently compounded, each has his own path in evolution, each his ideals which he strives to realize in his own way. The Devachan he reaches is his own and changes according to the degree of his progression toward perfection. One must believe that if a man identifies himself with all the outward life of sense and physical enjoyment, has few thoughts or ideals above this plane, his Devachan must differ greatly from the Devachan of one who strives in pain and a divine despair to realize in earthly terms lofty ideals that elude his grasp.

Devachan seems a state of assimilation, a state where all the experiences, the sorrows, the so-called day-dreams of earth life are transmuted into a sort of quintessence or elixir that builds up and strengthens, if not the soul itself, at least the soul's power to express itself which it is ever seeking. If this be so the stay in Devachan must be regulated by the amount of soul food carried

from the prior life. When there is nothing left for assimilation, when the Soul finds nothing more to build its ideations on, then it returns to earth and is re clothed with a body.

And so the time of stay in Devachan must vary according to the man himself. This is a general rule, but it is said there are exceptions, that there are men, highly evolved comparatively speaking, who under the rule would naturally remain for ages in the Devachanic state but who refuse to enter it from love and sorrow for their fellow men on earth, and a desire to help and labor for them.

Just as a mother watching by the bedside of an ailing child, though wearied, will not sleep until the crisis passes and the child is safe; so these men refuse the bliss of Devachan and either are at once reborn in a physical body or remain in touch with earth life in a more ethereal form.

There is another class of men, not quite evolved so far, but of such purity and goodness as would entitle them to Devachanic ages but who do not wish to enter it. They desire immensely to help on the work and labor for the race, but they have not yet gained the power. Such, it is said, are sometimes aided by other and much greater souls, to break from the Devachanic bliss and come again to help mankind. Such aid is regulated by the Karmic law. If we could only put away, just for a moment, the mental blindness that afflicts us, we should see ourselves surrounded by an ocean of compassion in which we truly live and move and have our being.

As we return from Devachan our memory of that state fades or is mingled with impressions from other planes, so that when we find ourselves reborn on earth there is generally little left in our conscious memory but a vague feeling of having lost our hold on something infinitely precious and to be desired — even this little

fades more and more as we grow older and take on more heavily the cares and burdens of earth life again. Emerson says we have a cup of lethe given us to drink at birth, but it seems that we must do it all ourselves, because we might put off the wraps and veils and swaddling clothes, incident to our infancy of mind and gather will and strength to make this round of sleeping, waking, birth, death and Devachan consciously without a break. Children remember much more than we think. A child once said to me, "I think that when we die, we just wake up and find the wrong things here are only a bad dream." He spoke as though from personal experience, and his word had the more weight that he had come from Devachan so recently himself.

Just as the Cycle of Life and Death culminating in Devachan, is greater than the one rounded out with sleep, so the still greater cycle made up of many lives and deaths culminates in the state we call Nirvana. This has been called the "Centre of Celestial Rest."

How shall our thought rise to such conception? How shall words be found fitting to express even what we are able to conceive? And yet at times we *know*, for it is knowledge, that in each one of us is that Nirvanic centre and that it can be reached.

What is it? None can tell. How reach it? One must find his way himself!

From life to life, from Devachan to Devachan, the real man goes on, gaining in power and strength, ever perfecting, breaking through illusions, mind-made, that confine him within certain limits, until his greater evolutionary cycle ends and he has reached the threshold of Nirvana. This state must bear a certain correspondence to the Devachanic one, but while in this the man identifies himself with the Ego of the past life *only* thus limiting his range of consciousness, the man fitted for Nirvana has freed

himself from limitations and illusions. His consciousness has expanded into the Universal Consciousness.

If we cannot picture this state to ourselves in any way or get a hold upon the idea so that it has a meaning for us, we can safely leave it to the future while we grow daily nearer to it, resting with confidence meanwhile upon the certainty that, whatever it may mean, in the Soul's expanding consciousness there must be constant gain not loss.

Always "the greater must include the less." That which we truly love we shall possess in greater and still greater fulness as the Cycles roll — whether it be Love, Beauty, Harmony, or Truth itself, which is all these and more. When we have outgrown these delusions about death and parting, — have learned "to grieve neither for the living nor the dead," we shall have courage to begin our work in earnest. Loving humanity and working for it as we can, a time will come when the walls that, in our unthinking ignorance, appear to separate one man from another, will fall apart, will melt away like sea-born mists.

Our Spiritual perceptions will unfold, we shall begin to hear the echoing Symphony of the World-Soul and to know our part in it.

"The String o'erstretched breaks and Music flies.
The String o'erslack is dumb and Music dies."

But when we have found our true key-note, neither high nor low, and have put ourselves in tune, so that our whole being vibrates in full accord with the Celestial harmonies, then we shall understand all the states after death and,

"Shall pass,
Unto Nirvana where the Silence lives."

THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM: I & II — *Katharine Hillard*

I. — BY DOING SERVICE

In the fourth chapter of the *Gita* after saying that every action without exception is comprehended in spiritual knowledge, Krishna tells Arjuna how to gain this spiritual wisdom. "Seek this wisdom," he says, "by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing this, thou shalt never again fall into error."

We all read this many times, but it will bear more pondering than in the rush of our hasty lives we are apt to bestow upon it. "The way to the blessed life," to use Fichte's phrase, is here most clearly and perfectly set forth, and the steps are fourfold, like the steps of the Self. The first step is that one which is of all the most important, and it is therefore given precedence in the list, for this is not a matter of time and space, but of individual consciousness, and individual necessities. All the steps are necessary to perfect acquirement of the spiritual wisdom, and to some the second lesson may seem to be more easily learned, while others find the last one the least difficult, but to all mankind the first step is most necessary. "By doing service."

Jesus said that by doing the will of the Father, we should know of the doctrine, that is, we should gain a knowledge of the teachings that were given to the disciples, not to the world at large. But there is one thing to be remembered always; that this service is to be rendered in little things, to those nearest us, in all the ordinary duties and ways of life. "Despise not the day of small things," and do not feel that doing service means rushing into the slums of a city, to the neglect of home duties, or girding one's loins for battle

with some distant foe, when the real enemy lurks within. It is so hard to realize that a kind word, a loving glance, may mean the happiness of a whole day to some neglected member of our household, and that the gleam of sunshine that has brightened that life will radiate into other hearts, carrying its blessing with it.

People so often ask: "What can *I* do for Theosophy? I have no talent for speaking or writing, no money to give, no influence to exert; what is there for me to do?" Is there no one that crosses your path for whom you can do little deeds of kindness now and then? An errand done, a book lent, a flower given, a visit paid, a loving word spoken, will often weigh more in the eternal balances than many of what the world calls "heroic deeds." If you are so utterly alone that you have no opportunities for such service (which is hard to believe), then make of your own heart such a source of loving kindness, that your atmosphere will be filled with a sweet and gracious sunshine of good will, in which all who meet you may bask and give thanks. It is impossible, if we have a strong will to do service, that we should not find many opportunities to express it, and they will grow with the exercise of our desire.

Nor should we fail to remember that it is thus we are to *begin* to acquire wisdom. Earnest souls, attracted by the light that suddenly gleams across their path, try to begin at once to grapple with the most difficult problems of philosophy and occult knowledge, and want to know all about the loss of the soul, or the formation of the *mayavi-rupa*, or the characteristics of the Seventh Race, before they have thoroughly mastered the A. B. C. of the matter. "Do the will of the Father, and ye *shall* know of the doctrine," but do not expect to begin at the top of the ladder. Many a would-be nurse, filled with a glorious enthusiasm for the service of suffering humanity, enters the hospital with the idea of rendering distinguished assistance to the doctors from the very

first, and sometimes utterly disgusted, when she finds that for weeks, and perhaps months, she has nothing nobler to do than the scouring of pots and pans, and the washing of floors and clothing.

"By doing service," not necessarily the service we delight in, but often quite the reverse; so that we shrink from the wearisome, the trivial task, and long to do something more worthy of our powers, or what *we think* our powers. For often it is by our own opinion of ourselves that we measure the work we think we are capable of doing, instead of realizing that when we are fit for a greater place, those who know will surely put us there. In the meantime, let us stand in our lot, and do what we can to make it beautiful, and a centre of love and joy for all who come in contact with us. Let us try to be like Lowell's ideal, who

"doeth little kindnesses
That most leave undone or despise;
For naught that sets one heart at peace,
Or giveth happiness or ease,
Is low-esteemed in her eyes."

II. — BY STRONG SEARCH

The second thing necessary to the gaining of spiritual wisdom is *strong search*. This search may be pursued, of course, on both the intellectual and spiritual planes, for man must be made perfect in both ways. Let us take the intellectual first. Certainly strong search on the mental plane does not mean the cursory reading of a few books, or a little scattered and interrupted thought, but an earnest and steadfast pursuit of our aim through months and years, and perhaps, many lives, made up of months and years. Sometimes a student says, "I wish I could find out something definite about the *Elements* (let us say), but their order is so confusing, and I cannot understand the *Secret Doctrine*."

One is tempted to ask, "Did you ever really try?" There are eighty places, at least, in the *Secret Doctrine*, where the word *element* occurs, besides all the separate references to *Fire, Air, Water*, etc. Take up the book and turn it over leaf by leaf, keeping a note-book by you, and whenever you see the word *Element*, make a careful note of volume and page. Then take each of the five elements in turn, and do the same for them. When you have gone through both volumes carefully in that way, turn back to the beginning of the first, and copy out in your note-book every item of information you have found. Then read them over very carefully, and where you think you have found conflicting statements, read the context again, and see if you cannot find, or think out, an explanation of the seeming contradiction. Carry the dark saying about with you in your memory, think of it at intervals during both night and day, and some time or other the solution will surely flash upon you.

When you have collected all these notes, then write a paper on the subject, not necessarily to be read or published, but simply to see how much you can tell another person about what you have learned. For we do not really understand a thing until we can explain it to some one else; and that is why we learn so much by teaching; we are obliged to clarify and formulate our ideas in order to communicate them to others.

Lord Dufferin, who has just retired from active diplomatic service at the age of seventy, has always been known as a remarkably ready and brilliant speaker, perhaps the most admired orator among the English diplomatists. He gained this power by "strong search." When the necessity for his speaking first arose, he would write out his ideas on the subject given him, and having finished his paper, tear it up without re-reading it, and write another. And this process he repeated ten and twelve times for each speech, so

that he not only became thoroughly familiar with his subject, but was saved all danger of hesitation and waiting for a word, because he had formulated his ideas in so many ways that he was sure to remember some one of them. And by dint of this most laborious and tiresome method, Lord Dufferin became the easy, fluent, and brilliant speaker that every one loved to hear.

This is only one example of many that might be cited but it is a recent and a very striking one. For here there was not even some great scientific discovery involved, with its intense interest and possible enormous profit to the discoverer and to the world at large, but the simple acquirement of an individual accomplishment for social purposes. But Lord Dufferin carried out Robert Browning's idea when he said:

"Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will."

Let the search be *strong*, whatever we may be seeking, and then we shall at least not add weakness and vacillation to our other sins.

"The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence," we are told, which is but another way of saying that spiritual wisdom is gained by strong search. But how few of us realize what this means! "The kingdom of heaven is within you," and this strong search is to be pursued upon the inner planes, *spiritual* as well as intellectual.

We must learn to analyze our own nature, to explore its depths and pluck out its hidden sins, to fix the will steadily upon some point that *must* be gained, to concentrate every energy towards that end, to keep up a slow, gradual, never-relaxing push of every faculty in the one direction, day after day and year after year, to strive after the goal by study, by meditation, by aspiration, by the purification of every part of our threefold nature. And this goal is

ever shifted as the runner approaches it, and still before him gleam the gates of gold, and still his eager feet press on.

And surely this consciousness of endless aspiration and attainment was the thought in Walt Whitman's mind when he wrote those magnificent lines:

"This day before dawn I ascended a hill and looked at the crowded heaven,
And I said to my Spirit, *'When we become the enfolders of those orbs,
and the pleasure mid knowledge of everything in them, shall we
be filled and satisfied then?'*
And my Spirit said: *"No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond."*

(To be continued.)

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VI-2 — *Basil Crump*

VI. — THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG. — PART II. THE VALKYRIE.

My *Nibelungen-pocm* . . . shows Nature in her naked truth, with all her innate opposites, whose infinitely varied meetings include the shock of mutual repulsion. . . . The whole course of the poem shows the necessity of recognizing the change, the diversity, the multiplicity, the eternal newness of reality and life, and yielding place to it. Wotan soars to the tragic height of *willing* his own undoing. This is the whole lesson we have to learn from the history of mankind: to *will the inevitable*, and ourselves fulfil it. The creative work of this highest, self-annihilating Will is the final winning of the *fearless*, forever loving man: *Siegfried*. — *Letter to August Roeckel, 1854.*

Since the building of Valhalla Wotan has created, in conjunction with Erda, nine daughters, called Valkyries (*lit.* Choosers of the Slain) virgin war-maidens, whose duty it is to bring the souls of slain heroes to Valhalla and see to their rest and refreshment until they are again ready to enter into flesh and fight another battle in the earthworld. They represent the higher and more spiritual part of the soul which periodically withdraws the lower part from its struggles in material life. And, in connection with what was said about Devachanic rest in the last article, it is worth noting here that the Valkyries also have the power immediately to rejuvenate the slain hero so that he can reincarnate at once without any intervening rest in Valhalla.

Wotan now takes earthly form as Walse, and, working towards the creation of the New Power, he produces in the earthworld the twin Volsungs, Siegmund and Sieglinde. (1) Sad is their lot, for the Curse of Alberich's Ring lies heavily upon them. Strong are they in

their love, and heroic in adversity. Soon they suffer at the hands of those enemies who do Alberich's will. While Siegmund is away with his father their home is sacked, mother slain, and Sieglinde carried off and married by force to the rough warrior Hunding. For the Will in its earliest efforts to embody an unselfish principle finds itself hampered by the consequences of its own previous deeds. The forest dwelling in which the gentler and more spiritual aspect of the soul now lies captive in these coarse material bonds is built round the trunk of a tree, the type of the World's Ash, Yggdrasil, which, springing from the depths of the Underworld, stretches forth its branches into the Heavenworld. Buried in the trunk is the Sword which Wotan has left for the need of his son.

In the opening scene of this drama Siegmund, after many wanderings and fights with his enemies, seeks shelter in Hunding's dwelling exhausted and weaponless, and Sieglinde tends him. Both are unconscious of their kinship, for each believes the other dead; yet they feel a powerful attraction expressed by music of a beauty and purity quite indescribable in mere words. Hunding, presently returning, notes the likeness between them, and especially the "glittering serpent" in the eyes of each. For from these twins will spring the Hero who shall slay the serpent or dragon; and there is an ancient legend that the parents of the great Dragon-Slayers (Initiates) have the likeness of a dragon in or around their eyes.

Discovering from Siegmund's story that he is an enemy, Hunding tells him that for one night the Guest-Rite protects him but on the morrow they will fight. Before retiring Sieglinde tries in vain by signs to show Siegmund the sword in the tree, while in the orchestra the sword-motif is heard for the first time since the conclusion of the *Rhinegold*. The Intuition is trying to bring, to the warrior-soul a knowledge of his hidden power, and at the same time is subduing the lower force. For presently she returns,

saying:

"In deepest sleep lies Hunding:
I mingled a drug with his drink.
To a goodly weapon I'll guide thee.
Ah! if thou couldst but win it!
As greatest of heroes I then might hail thee.'

Then she tells him how at the wedding feast a one-eyed stranger (2) entered and smote it into the tree from which none could draw it. Now she knows that Siegmund is her brother and the one for whom the sword was left. With the exultant cry:

"Nothung! Nothung! name I this sword,"

he wrenches it from the tree and they fly together.

But now Wotan has to deal with his wife Fricka, who represents that adhesion to form and the "established order" which hinders all progress. She it is who seeks to retain Wotan within the selfish walls of Valhalla, and now she demands reparation for the violation of the marriage vow by the Volsungs. Hunding is in pursuit and must be allowed to slay Siegmund in spite of the magic sword. Wotan's position is here terribly dramatic. Despite his endeavors to serve alike the Gods and the new race he is creating he is thwarted at every turn by the Curse laid upon the Ring by Alberich when Wotan-Loki wrenched it from him.

"From the Curse I fled,
But even now the Curse is with me.
What I love I must forsake,
Murder what is dear to me,
Betray him who trusts me."

It seems as if karma will blot out all hope of redemption. He recalls the warning of Erda: "When Love's dark enemy in anger

begetteth a son the end of the gods draws nigh!" This enemy is Alberich, who forswore Love to gain Power, and his evil son is Hagen who executes the final act of the Curse when, in the *Dusk of the Gods*, he stabs Siegfried treacherously in the back.

In a scene of tragic sorrow he tells his favorite Valkyrie, Brynhild, that she must withdraw her protection from Siegmund and allow him to be slain. But behind the expressed *will* which past deeds have shaped she sees with her mother Erda's divine insight the inner *wish* of her father, that from the love and sorrow of the Volsungs may arise the fearless hero who shall unite with her in working out the Curse. So her reply is:

"Thy words can never turn me against the hero
Whom thou hast ever taught me to love."

Exhausted with flight the twins stop to rest in the forest and Sieglinde sinks to sleep tenderly guarded by Siegmund. To him appears Brynhild, her heart heavy with the news she brings him; for only to those destined for Valhalla does she appear. But Siegmund declares he cares nought for the bliss of Valhalla if Sieglinde goes not with him. If he must fall then Nothung shall take both their lives rather than they shall be parted any more. Then Brynhild promises to give him the victory, and he goes forth to meet Hunding.

The combat is the first dreadful conflict between the powers of growth and stagnation; and Brynhild, who, as the Spirit of Love, is on the side of the progressive forces, hovers protectingly over the Volsung. But Wotan, compelled by his oath to Ericka, interferes; on his spear the magic sword is shattered and Siegmund falls. When Wotan drank at the spring of knowledge he broke a branch from Yggdrasil for his all-ruling spear on whose shaft are carved the Runes of Bargain which represent the limits of his power. That the sword is broken thereon shows that Siegmund is not the

free hero whom Wotan yearns to create. "The only one who might dare do what I dare not would be some hero whom I have never stooped to help." But Siegmund, in his death, is victorious over the power which fettered the life of the twins; for, at Wotan's contemptuous words "Go slave! kneel before Ericka!" Hunding falls dead.

Brynhild flies from the scene with the bereaved Sieglinde, and with the help of her sister Valkyries directs her to the wood where the dragon Fafnir guards the Ring and Hoard. There she will be safe, for Wotan has bound himself to hold Fafnir's territory sacred. Giving her the pieces of the sword she tells her the joyful news:

"The highest hero of worlds guard'st thou,
O woman, in sheltering shrine.
His name I give to him now: —
'Siegfried' of gladdening sword!"

Then she turns to face alone the wrath of Wotan, who has pursued her and now pronounces her fate: "Thy punishment hast thou shaped thyself: Valkyrie art thou no more but only a woman of women!" In unprotected sleep he will leave her to be the slave of the first man who finds and wakens her. Brynhild pleads that she only carried out his secret wish. Wotan, while admitting this, replies that he is bound, but that she is free, for by her own act she is severed from him. "*Let thy happy mind hereafter guide thee.*" Although he loves his daughter he is powerless to stay the cycle of the Curse; but her last prayer he is able to grant:

"Fiery flames shall girdle the fell,
With terrible scorchings searing the timid.
He who fears may win not Brynhild;
For one alone freeth the bride,
One freer than I, the God!"

Kissing Brynhild on both eyes he lays her in sleep upon the rock, covering her with helm and shield. Then at his command the flames of Loki surround her, and his last words are:

"He shall never pass through the fire
Who fears my avenging spear."

Thus the Spirit of Love breaks from the thralldom of the Gods, and, acting in defiance of written law and manmade morals, chooses its own heroic destiny, paving the way for its future entry into the hearts of men. But the penalty of freedom has to be paid. Allying herself to the secret law of renunciation, Brynhild loses the laughter-loving bliss of Valhalla and awaits on the threshold of the earth the coming of the hero Siegfried.

FOOTNOTES:

1. These twins are represented in the saga as *one being* in two aspects, and of course are here to be regarded in the same light. Most of the Northern deities have this two-fold aspect representing Nature's "innate opposites."

In this and the two succeeding- articles I have received valuable help from Brother Gordon Rowe, of the Bow Lodge, T.S.E (E).

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2. This, of course, is Wotan, who "gave an eye as his eternal toll" when he drank of the spring of knowledge which welled up under the shadow of Yggdrasil. This eye is regained by Siegfried in the next drama when he slays Fafnir. [\(return to text\)](#)

MERSMERISM: II (1) — *William Q. Judge*

We have now come to another part of the nature of man which is a land unknown to the Western world and its scientists. By mesmerism other organs are set to work disconnected from the body, but which in normal state function with and through the latter. These are not admitted by the world, but they exist, and are as real as the body is — in fact some who know say they are more real and less subject to decay, for they remain almost unchanged from birth to death. These organs have their own currents, circulation if you will, and methods of receiving and storing impressions. They are those which in a second of time seize and keep the faintest trace of any object or word coming before the waking man. They not only keep them but very often give them out, and when the person is mesmerized their exit is untrammelled by the body.

They are divided into many classes and grades, and each one of them has a whole series of ideas and facts peculiar to itself, as well as centres in the etherial body to which they relate. Instead now of the brain's dealing with the sensations of the body, it deals with something quite different, and reports what these inner organs see in any part of space to which they are directed. And in place of your having waked up the Higher Self, you have merely uncovered one of the many sets of impressions and experiences of which the inner man is composed, and who is himself a long distance from the Higher Self. These varied pictures thus seized from every quarter, are normally overborne by the great roar of the physical life, which is the sum total of possible expression of a normal being on the physical plane whereon we move. They show themselves usually only by glimpses when we have sudden ideas or recollections, or in dreams when our sleeping may be

crowded with fancies for which we cannot find a basis in daily life. Yet the basis exists, and is always some one or other of the million small impressions of the day passed unnoticed by the physical brain, but caught unerringly by means of other sensoriums belonging to our astral double. For this astral body, or double, permeates the physical one as color does the bowl of water. And although to the materialistic conceptions of the present day such a misty shadow is not admitted to have parts, powers, and organs, it nevertheless has all of these with a surprising power and grasp. Although perhaps a mist, it can exert under proper conditions a force equal to the viewless wind when it levels to the earth the proud constructions of puny man.

In the astral body, then, is the place to look for the explanation of mesmerism and hypnotism. The Higher Self will explain the flights we seldom make into the realm of spirit, and is the God — the Father — within who guides His children up the long, steep road to perfection. Let not the idea of it be degraded by chaining it to the low floor of mesmeric phenomena, which any healthy man or woman can bring about if they will only try. The grosser the operator the better, for thus there is more of the mesmeric force, and if it be the Higher Self that is affected, then the meaning of it would be that gross matter can with ease affect and deflect the high spirit — and this is against the testimony of the ages.

A Paramahansa of the Himalayas has put in print the following words: "Theosophy is that branch of Masonry which shows the Universe in the form of an *egg*." Putting on one side the germinal spot in the *egg*, we have left five other main divisions: the fluid, the yolk, the skin of the yolk, the inner skin of the shell, and the hard shell. The shell and the inner skin may be taken as one. That leaves us four, corresponding to the old divisions of fire, air, earth and water. Man, roughly speaking, is divided in the same manner,

and from these main divisions spring all his manifold experiences on the outer and the introspective planes. The human structure has its skin, its blood, its earthy matter — called bones for the moment, its flesh, and lastly the great germ which is insulated somewhere in the brain by means of a complete coat of fatty matter.

The skin includes the mucus, all membranes in the body, the arterial coats, and so on. The flesh takes in the nerves, the animal cells so-called, and the muscles. The bones stand alone. The blood has its cells, the corpuscles, and the fluid they float in. The organs, such as the liver, the spleen, the lungs, include skin, blood, and mucus. Each of these divisions and all of their sub-divisions have their own peculiar impressions and recollections, and all, together with the coordinator the brain, make up the man as he is on the visible plane.

These all have to do with the phenomena of mesmerism, although there are those who may not think it possible that mucous membrane or skin can give us any knowledge. But it is nevertheless the fact, for the sensations of every part of the body affect each cognition, and when the experiences of the skin cells, or any other, are most prominent before the brain of the subject, all his reports to the operator will be drawn from that, unknown to both, and put into language for the brain's use so long as the next condition is not reached. This is the Esoteric Doctrine, and will at last be found true. For man is made up of millions of lives, and from these, unable of themselves to act rationally or independently, he gains ideas, and as the master of all puts those ideas, together with others from higher planes, into thought, word, and act. Hence at the very first step in mesmerism this factor has to be remembered, but nowadays people do not know it and cannot recognize its presence, but are carried away by the strangeness of the phenomena.

The very best of subjects are mixed in their reports, because the things they do see are varied and distorted by the several experiences of the parts of their nature I have mentioned, all of which are constantly clamoring for a hearing. And every operator is sure to be misled by them unless he is himself a trained seer.

The next step takes us into the region of the inner man (2), not the spiritual being, but the astral one who is the model on which the outer visible form is built. The inner person is the mediator between mind and matter. Hearing the commands of mind, he causes the physical nerves to act and thus the whole body. All the senses have their seat in this person, and every one of them is a thousandfold more extensive in range than their outer representatives, for those outer eyes and ears, and sense of touch, taste, and smell, are only gross organs which the inner ones use, but which of themselves can do nothing.

This can be seen when we cut off the nerve connection, say from the eye, for then the inner eye cannot connect with physical nature and is unable to see an object placed before the retina, although feeling or hearing may in their way apprehend the object if those are not also cut off.

These inner senses can perceive under certain conditions to any distance regardless of position or obstacle. But they cannot see everything, nor are they always able to properly understand the nature of everything they do see. For sometimes that appears to them with which they are not familiar. And further, they will often report having seen what they are desired by the operator to see, when in fact they are giving unreliable information. For, as the astral senses of any person are the direct inheritance of his own prior incarnations, and are not the product of family heredity, they cannot transcend their own experience, and hence their cognitions are limited by it, no matter how wonderful their

action appears to him who is using only the physical sense-organs. In the ordinary healthy person these astral senses are inextricably linked with the body and limited by the apparatus which it furnishes during the waking state. And only when one falls asleep, or into a mesmerized state, or trance, or under the most severe training, can they act in a somewhat independent manner. This they do in sleep, when they live another life than that compelled by the force and the necessities of the waking organism. And when there is a paralyzation of the body by the mesmeric fluid they can act, because the impressions from the physical cells are inhibited.

The mesmeric fluid brings this paralyzing about by flowing from the operator and creeping steadily over the whole body of the subject, *changing the polarity of the cells in every part* and thus disconnecting the outer from the inner man. As the whole system of physical nerves is sympathetic in all its ramifications, when certain major sets of nerves are affected others by sympathy follow into the same condition. So it often happens with mesmerized subjects that the arms or legs are suddenly paralyzed without being directly operated on, or, as frequently, the sensation due to the fluid is felt first in the fore-arm, although the head was the only place touched.

There are many secrets about this part of the process, but they will not be given out, as it is easy enough for all proper purposes to mesmerize a subject by following what is already publicly known. By means of certain nerve points located near the skin the whole system of nerves may be altered in an instant, even by a slight breath from the mouth at a distance of eight feet from the subject. But modern books do not point this out.

When the paralyzing and change of polarity of the cells are complete the astral man is almost disconnected from the body.

Has he any structure? What mesmerizer knows? How many probably will deny that he has any structure at all? Is he only a mist, an idea? And yet, again, how many subjects are trained so as to be able to analyze their own astral anatomy?

But the structure of the inner astral man is definite and coherent. It cannot be fully dealt with in a magazine article, but may be roughly set forth, leaving readers to fill in the details.

Just as the outer body has a spine which is the column whereon the being sustains itself with the brain at the top, so the astral body has its spine and brain. It is material, for it is made of matter, however finely divided, and is not of the nature of the spirit.

After the maturity of the child before birth this form is fixed, coherent, lasting, undergoing but small alteration from that day until death. And so also as to its brain; that remains unchanged until the body is given up, and does not, like the outer brain, give up cells to be replaced by others from hour to hour. These inner parts are thus more permanent than the outer correspondents to them. Our material organs, bones, and tissues are undergoing change each instant. They are suffering always what the ancients called "the constant momentary dissolution of minor units of matter," and hence within each month there is a perceptible change by way of diminution or accretion. This is not the case with the inner form. It alters only from life to life, being constructed at the time of reincarnation to last for a whole period of existence. For it is the model fixed by the present evolutionary proportions for the outer body. It is the collector, as it were, of the visible atoms which make us as we outwardly appear. So at birth it is potentially of a certain size, and when that limit is reached, it stops the further extension of the body, making possible what are known today as average weights and average sizes. At the same

time the outer body is kept in shape by the inner one until the period of decay. And this decay, followed by death, is not due to bodily disintegration, *per se*, but to the fact that the term of the astral body is reached, when it is no longer able to hold the outer frame intact. Its power to resist the impact and war of the material molecules being exhausted, the sleep of death supervenes.

Now, as in our physical form the brain and spine are the centres for nerves, so in the other there are the nerves which ramify from the inner brain and spine all over the structure. All of these are related to every organ in the outer visible body. They are more in the nature of currents than nerves, as we understand the word, and may be called *astro-nerves*. They move in relation to such great centres in the body outside, as the heart, the pit of the throat, umbilical centre, spleen, and sacral plexus. And here, in passing, it may be asked of the Western mesmerizers what do they know of the use and power, if any, of the umbilical centre? They will probably say it has no use in particular after the accomplishment of birth. But the true science of mesmerism says there is much yet to be learned even on that one point; and there is no scarcity, in the proper quarters, of records as to experiments on, and use of, this centre.

The astro-spinal column has three great nerves of the same sort of matter. They may be called ways or channels, upon and down which the forces play, that enable man inside and outside to stand erect, to move, to feel, and to act. In description they answer exactly to the magnetic fluids, that is, they are respectively positive, negative and neutral, their regular balance being essential to sanity. When the astral spine reaches the inner brain the nerves alter and become more complex, having a final great outlet in the skull. Then, with these two great parts of the inner person are the other manifold sets of nerves of similar

nature related to the various planes of sensation in the visible and invisible world. These all then constitute the personal actor within, and in these is the place to seek for the solution of the problems presented by mesmerism and hypnotism.

Disjoin this being from the outer body with which he is linked and the divorce deprives him of freedom temporarily, making him the slave of the operator. But mesmerizers know very well that the subject can and does often escape from control, puzzling them often, and often giving them fright. This is testified to by all the best writers in the Western schools.

Now this inner man is not by any means omniscient. He has an understanding that is limited by his own experience, as said before. Therefore, error creeps in if we rely on what he says in the mesmeric trance as to anything that requires philosophical knowledge, except with rare cases that are so infrequent as not to need consideration now. For neither the limit of the subject's power to know, nor the effect of the operator on the inner sensoriums described above, is known to operators in general, and especially not by those who do not accept the ancient division of the inner nature of man. The effect of the operator is almost always to color the reports made by the subject.

Take an instance: A. was a mesmerizer of C, a very sensitive woman, who had never made philosophy a study. A. had his mind made up to a certain course of procedure concerning other persons and requiring argument. But before action he consulted the sensitive, having in his possession a letter from X., who is a very definite thinker and very positive; while A., on the other hand, was not definite in idea although a good physical mesmerizer. The result was that the sensitive, after falling into the trance and being asked on the question debated, gave the views of X., whom she had not known, and so strongly that A.

changed his plan although not his conviction, not knowing that it was the influence of the ideas of X. then in his mind, that had deflected the understanding of the sensitive. The thoughts of X., being very sharply cut, were enough to entirely change any previous views the subject had. What reliance, then, can be placed on untrained seers? And all the mesmeric subjects we have are wholly untrained, in the sense that the word bears with the school of ancient mesmerism of which I have been speaking.

The processes used in mesmeric experiment need not be gone into here. There are many books declaring them, but after studying the matter for the past twenty-two years, I do not find that they do other than copy one another, and that the entire set of directions can, for all practical purposes, be written on a single sheet of paper. But there are many other methods of still greater efficiency anciently taught that may be left for another occasion.

FOOTNOTES:

1. *Reprinted from Lucifer, Vol. X, p 197.* ([return to text](#))

2. The phrase "inner man" here refers to the astral or magnetic body. It should be carefully distinguished from the "inner self" or "inner being" referred to by the same writer in his invaluable article on the "Culture of Concentration"; for that inner self is the body of the mind, formless as yet in the large majority of cases, because only to be made definite in form and independently active by means of long continued, one-pointedness of thought. If this article on "Mesmerism" be read in connection with the "Culture of Concentration," and the article in *Five Years of Theosophy* on "The Elixir of Life," an unusual grasp of the subject should be obtained. — Ed. ([return to text](#))

THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM: II & IV — *Katharine Hillard*

III — BY QUESTIONS

At first sight it would seem that this third method of seeking wisdom were superfluous, and might as well have been omitted, for are not "questions" included in the idea of "strong search"? But there is at least one thing suggested in this clause which does not come in the former one, and that is, the help of others and the appeal to "those who know." While doing all we can for the service of our fellows, while seeking with, all our might for the truth, we must put questions, to ourselves, to our brothers, to those wiser than either. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Nor need these questions rise out of that atmosphere of doubt which is so repellent to the bright beams of the sun of truth. What is "a working hypothesis" but a question? What is every experiment in a better way of living but a question? We formulate a theory, for instance, of our relations to our fellow-men, of what is justice, what is true charity, what is mere indulgence in the selfish pleasure we take in giving, irrespective of the real needs of the recipient of our careless bounty. Suddenly a question darts through the mind:

"Am I doing the best thing possible for my brother and for myself? Is it not easier for me to do this thing than to seek some form of help which would give me infinitely more trouble and do him more good? Is there no admixture of self-satisfaction, of vanity, of indolence in what I do? Should I be absolutely and entirely content if no mortal being ever knew or suspected that I did this good thing? Have I not a secret hope lurking at the bottom of my heart that some one will find it out, and that my

merit will be acknowledged?"

Are not these, and many more, questions which might be useful to us in probing our motives while conducting that self-examination which should not be allowed to become morbid, but nevertheless, should be constant and sincere?

We must also question our fellows, for often we shall thus gain help whence we least expect it. Sometimes a student who is still at his alphabet, has nevertheless had a vision of the truth that you who are far beyond him in mere learning, have not yet attained, sometimes he will give you a word he does not fully understand himself, but which will nevertheless, give you the open sesame to the secret doors of wisdom.

Having questioned your own soul, and probed it to the core, having put yourself in the attitude of a learner at the feet of all you meet, for you have no brother so poor but that he may give you something, then come the questions that you wish to ask of "those who know." But they alone can tell when you are ready for the answers. The responses may be slow, but they are sure, and when the time is ripe and your soul ready, they will surely come to you. You may need the courage of the martyr and the patience of the saint before you reach your end, but then their reward shall be yours, when at last you have achieved. Surely knowing this, you can say with Walt Whitman, the most theosophic of poets:

"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.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortised in granite;
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time."

IV — BY HUMILITY

Having sought this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, and by questions, there yet remains the crowning grace, humility. This seems to us at first a very passive thing, and yet it is a power of the soul. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," says the first of the beatitudes. It is not a promise for the future, it is their present possession.

The ordinary idea of humility is a conscious resignation of something to which we consider ourselves entitled, and we take our pride with us to the lower seat in the synagogue which we have selected. The climax of this feeling was in the chieftain's assertion "Where the McGregor sits, is the head of the table." This was the supreme exaltation of the personality, the assertion of its superiority to place by virtue of its own supremacy.

So long as I am conscious of myself as something quite different from my brother, my attitude towards him will be apt to savor of condescension, it is only when all distinction of *me* and *thee* is obliterated, when our spiritual oneness is really recognized, that the perfume of true humility steals from the flower of the soul. And what is this conviction of spiritual unity but "the kingdom of heaven," which is the portion of the "poor in spirit"?

Humility is the fountain-head and source of contentment and serenity. When we have learned to rest in the conviction that we have no rights, and are satisfied to do the duty that lies nearest to our hand, nor long for the more glorious task of another, how peaceful life becomes, and how all its turmoil sinks into nothingness as the angry waves subside beneath a film of oil!

"Be humble, if thou wouldst attain to Wisdom," says the *Voice of the Silence*; "be humbler still when Wisdom thou hast mastered. For great is he who is the slayer of desire. Still greater he in

whom the Self Divine hath slain the very knowledge of desire."

This humility then is not abject self-abasement, but the repose of him who has conquered self, and lives for the good of others. He has learned the great lesson that "the power the disciple shall desire is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men," and whatever trivial duty may come to him to be done, he cheerfully performs it, and by that gracious acceptance "makes the action fine." And who can tell upon how slender a thread hangs the mighty chain of cause and effect that sways his destiny?

The scale of magnitude is not the same to divine eyes as to ours, and when we most feel our littleness we may loom largest to celestial vision. Humility is that trust in wider intelligence, in greater love than ours, that keeps us steadfast in our own place, doing service in the best way that we can, secure that by that course alone, aided by questions and strong search, we shall attain to spiritual wisdom, for the wise, who see the truth, will communicate it unto us, and knowing this, we shall never again fall into error.

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VI-3 — *Basil Crump*

VI. — THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG. PART III. — SIEGFRIED. (1)

After his parting from Brynhild, Wotan truly is nothing but a departed spirit; his highest aim can only be to let things *take their course*, go their own gait, no longer definitely to interfere; for that reason, too, has he become the "Wanderer." Take a good look at him! He resembles *us* to a hair; he is the sum of the Intellect of the Present, whilst Siegfried is the Man of the Future, the man we wish, the man we will, but cannot make, and the man who must create himself through *our annihilation*. — *Letter to August Roedel, 1854.*

In the wood where Sieglinde has taken shelter from Wotan's wrath, Mime, the brother of Alberich, has set himself to watch Fafnir's cave, in the hope of some day obtaining possession of the Ring. He finds Sieglinde and takes her to his cave, for he sees the broken sword and knows of the coming Siegfried. Dying she gives birth to the voting hero, whom Mime carefully rears for his selfish ends, and the boy grows up in close touch with nature.

The drama opens when Siegfried is of full age. Mime is vainly trying to forge a sword, but Siegfried laughingly breaks it every time. In his roamings through the forest the boy has seen the loving care of the birds and beasts for their young, he has seen, too, his own noble form in the shining water, and both these things stand out in sharp contrast to the ugliness and lovelessness of his dwarf companion. He extracts from the unwilling Mime the story of his parentage, the breaking of the sword and the death of his father. Then Siegfried knows that his deliverance is at hand. He commands Mime to reweld the broken sword and leaves him to his hopeless work; hopeless indeed, for the dwarf knows well

that his base powers will never accomplish such a task.

In his despair the Wanderer (Wotan) comes to him and tells him that "he only who ne'er hath learnt to fear may weld Nothung's pieces together." Laughing the Wanderer leaves him and Siegfried returns with the *Lebenslust-motif*, full of the sheer delight of life. Mime craftily tells Siegfried he must learn to fear by facing the dread Fafnir who sleeps in the Cave of Envy. Siegfried agrees and demands his sword. But Mime has to confess that only the fearless can weld it, so Siegfried impatiently sets to work, grinds the pieces to powder, reforges the blade, and proves its worthiness by cleaving the anvil in twain, meanwhile the cunning dwarf brews a poisonous draught which he intends to offer to Siegfried after he has slain the Dragon and secured the Ring.

In this first act we see the Hero's contempt for the mean and crafty powers which seek the Soul's undoing, and how he learns from Mother Nature of that Love which they have cursed. Then he gathers his will (the sword *Nothung*) for the fulfilment of his destiny which as yet he feels rather than understands. Thus we see the import of Wagner's words, that Wotan, as the Wanderer, is a "departed spirit." His will has passed to a new and brighter birth in Siegfried, who has now become the chief actor, and who, *with Brynhild*, will become the Redeemer.

In the second act we find Alberich also watching near the Cave of Envy for the Ring and Hoard that once were his. The Wanderer appears and warns him that his brother Mime is plotting for the gold and that the hero Siegfried will slay Fafnir and obtain it. Then he awakens Fafnir and Alberich attempts to get the Ring by the cunning suggestion that Siegfried covets the Ring alone, and that if Fafnir will give it up to him (Alberich) he may keep the Hoard and live on in peace. But the wary old Dragon will not

listen and Alberich retires baffled.

Siegfried, led by Mime, now approaches the Cave, and the merry notes of his horn soon reawaken Fafnir. After a short contest the Dragon is slain, and tasting by accident some blood which smears his hands, Siegfried immediately *understands* (where before he only felt) Nature's manifold voice. Overhead a wood bird sings to him, "Trust not Mime; hearken not to what he says but to what lies in his heart." So when Mime greets the returning Siegfried with the poisoned cup the latter sees his murderous design: Nothung swings aloft and another of the soul's fetters is cast aside. Thus freed the Soul is ready to press forward to higher deeds. The Dragon of Wisdom has yielded up his power and knowledge to the young warrior-soul, and now the wood bird cries, "Follow me. I can show you a wonderful wife," for Brynhild, the Spirit of Love, has yet to be awakened.

The lesson of this second act is that of the instinctive fulfilment of one's destiny; the first great conquest; the unfolding of the inner vision.

To the first scene of the third act great attention should be paid. The Wanderer has gone to a desolate spot; we hear the solemn, melancholy theme of the "Dusk of the Gods." By the might of his magic the Wanderer evokes Erda (Mother of Wisdom and of Brynhild) from sleep and questions her as to how he may "stay a rolling wheel" — the Curse of the Ring that lies heavy on his heart and binds him to the Law of Necessity. But Erda can tell him nothing, for her power and wisdom have reincarnated in Brynhild just as Wotan's will has in Siegfried. "Brave she is and wondrous wise. Why then wakest thou me instead of asking advice and knowledge of Erda's and Wotan's child?" Thus answered, Wotan condemns Erda to eternal sleep after telling her that "a Hero chosen by me, has won the Nibelungen Ring. Lacking

of envy and joyful in love, on him must Alberich's Curse fall dead, for to him is fear a stranger. The Hero shall win for himself Brynhild, and through their love shall come the world's deliverance."

Siegfried now draws near, led by the wood bird towards the Valkyrie's Rock. He questions the Wanderer about his missing eye and the latter replies, "With the eye that I lack thou seest thyself." This refers to the "Third Eye" or organ of spiritual vision which man lost when he began to work for self instead of for the All. Now it is regained by Siegfried, the purified will, who cares nought for possessions and personal power. Then Wotan tries to rouse fear in him by telling of the terrible flames which surround the Rock.

"Fear the Rock's guardian!
My might it is that holds imprisoned the sleeping maid.
He who wakes her, he who wins her.
Makes me powerless forever!"

But Siegfried answers:

"There where the fire is burning,
To Brynhild must I go!"

Then the Wanderer outstretches his spear,

"If thou fearest not the fire,
My spear still will bar thy way!
My hand still holds the all-mastering shaft.
On which the sword thou swingest once was shattered;
Now again will it break on the eternal spear."

But the spear can no longer prevail against the advancing soul and its re-forged weapon. Nothung severs its shaft, thus shattering forever the old order of things, and Siegfried

laughingly passes on to his bright goal.

Fearlessly he strides through Loki's flames, and with a kiss awakens his spiritual self, the sleeping Brynhild, in whose holy presence he now feels fear for the first time. Hear her words of greeting:

"Didst thou but know how I have ever loved thee!
Thou wert my thought and my care;
Before thy life began I cared for thee.
Thou thyself am I, if thou truly canst love me.
What thou knowest not I know for thee.
Wisdom have I gained but only for love of thee.
From me alone was Wotan's thought ne'er hid;
A thought I never dared to name,
For I reasoned not but only felt.
For it I fought, struggled and strove;
For it defied the God who made it;
For it suffered punishment.
For Wotan's thought it ever was,
That thou and I should love."

Then she senses the terrible Curse of Alberich, and recoils from Siegfried, possessor of the Ring, fearful of joining her lot with his.

"Sad darkness covers my sight;
My eyes grow dim; the light goes out!
Horrors surround me and enter my soul!"

But beyond the dark gate of suffering through which she knows she must pass, she sees the bright promise of the world's deliverance, which can only be attained through this union; so, following the "higher carelessness," she accepts her destiny with the cry,

"Light in Love and Laughter in Death!" (2)

Wagner has said that it is a mistake to intellectually interpret his dramas overmuch. We defer to his opinion. To use his own beautiful words, "Of a verity the poet's greatness is mostly to be measured by what he leaves unsaid, letting us breathe in silence to ourselves the thing unspeakable; the musician it is who brings this untold mystery to clarion tongue, and the impeccable form of his sounding silence is *endless melody*." Yet we cannot refrain from calling attention, at this juncture in the great Tetralogy, to the point which has been reached in the evolution of the soul. The great choice has now to be made, and in the final tragedy of the *Dusk of the Gods* we shall see how this choice is made in the right direction, and the Curse of the Ring is redeemed by Brynhild's final act of renunciation.

FOOTNOTES:

1. "He who through Victory (Sieg.) shall bring Peace (Friede)." — *R. Wagner*. ([return to text](#))
2. The words "Love" and "Laughter" are of course used here in a broad and symbolical sense, the latter signifying the true joy of unselfish effort for the good of humanity. ([return to text](#))

THE SHEATHS OF THE SOUL (1) — *William Q. Judge*

In my last article, "Mesmerism," I arrived at the point where we discover that the inner mortal man has several sheaths through which he obtains touch with Nature, feeling her motions and exhibiting in return his own powers and functions. It is a doctrine as old as any Esoteric School now alive, and far more ancient than the modern scientific academies; an understanding of it is absolutely heedful if we are to gain an adequate comprehension of real Mesmerism.

Instead of looking at the human being as that which we see, it is to be regarded as a being altogether different, functioning and perceiving in a way quite peculiar to itself, and being compelled to translate every outward impression, as well as those coming from within, from one language into another, that is to say, from pictures into words, signs and acts, or *vice versa*. This statement is vague, I admit, yet nevertheless true. The vagueness arises from the difficulties of a language that has as yet dealt but slightly with these subjects, and the development of which has gone on in a civilization wholly materialistic. Man is a Soul, and as such stands among material things. This Soul is not only on its way upward for itself, but is compelled at the same time to draw up, refine, purge and perfect the gross matter — so-called — in which it is compelled to live. For though we call the less fine stages of substance by the name "matter," it is, however, made up of lives which have in them the potentiality of becoming Souls in the enormously distant future; and the Soul being itself a life made up of smaller ones, it is under the brotherly necessity of waiting in the bonds of matter long enough to give the latter the right impetus along the path of perfection.

So, during the long ages that have passed since the present evolution began in this solar system, the Soul has constructed for its own use various sheaths, ranging from very fine ones, near to its own essential being, to those that are more remote, ending with the outer physical one, and that one the most illusionary of them all although appearing from the outside to be the truly real. These sheaths are necessary if the Soul is to know or to act. For it cannot by itself understand Nature at all, but transforms instantly all sensations and ideas by means of the different sheaths, until in the process it has directed the body below, or obtained itself experience above. By this I mean that whatever Soul initiates it has to pass along through the several sheaths, each reporting, as it were, to the one next below it; and in like manner they report from below upward in the case of sensations from natural phenomena and impressions on the outside. In the beginnings of evolution, during all its stages, this took appreciable amounts of solar time, but at this point of the system's march along the line of growth it takes such an infinitesimally short space that we are justified in calling it instantaneous in all cases of normal and well-balanced persons. There are, of course, instances where longer time is used in consequence of the slower action of some one of the sheaths.

The number of sharply-defined sheaths of the Soul is seven, but the sub-differentiations of each raises the apparent number very much higher. Roughly speaking, each one divides itself into seven, and every one in each collection of seven partakes of the nature of its own class. There may, therefore, be said to exist forty-nine sheaths possible of classification.

Physical body may be recognized as one sheath, and the subdivisions in it are such as skin, blood, nerves, bones, flesh, mucous membrane and

Astral body is another, but not so easily recognized by the men of today. It has also its own sub-divisions answering in part to those of the physical body. But being one stage higher than the latter, it includes in one of its own sub-divisions several of those in the body. For instance, the surface sensations of blood, skin, flesh and mucous membrane will be included in a single one of the astral sub-divisions.

And exactly at this point the Esoteric Schools diverge from and appear to contradict modern pathology and physiology. For the modern school admits only the action of nerves along skin and mucous membrane and in flesh, as the receivers and transmitters of sensation. It would appear to be so, but the facts *on the inside* are different, or rather more numerous, leading to additional conclusions. Likewise too we clash with the nineteenth century in the matter of the blood. We say that the blood cells and the fluid they float in receive and transmit sensation.

Each sub-division among the physical sheaths performs not only the duty of receiving and transmitting sensations, but also has the power of retaining a memory of them, which is registered in the appropriate ganglion of the body, and continually, from there, implanted in the corresponding centre of sensation and action in the astral body. At the same time the physical brain has always the power, as is of course a common fact, of collecting all the physical sensations and impressions.

Having laid all this down — without stopping for argument, which would end in nothing without physical demonstrations being added — the next step is this. The lower man who collects, so to say, for the Soul's use, all the experiences below it, can either at will when trained, or involuntarily when forced by processes or accident or abnormal birth, live in the sensations and impressions of one or many of the various sheaths of the physical

or astral body.

If trained, then there will be no delusions, or any temporary delusions will be easily dispersed. If untrained, delusion walks arm in arm with the sensations. If diseased or forced, the outer acts may be correctly performed but the free intelligence is absent, and all the delusions and illusions of hypnotic and mesmeric states show themselves.

If the inner lower man be functioning among the sensations — or planes, if you like — of some astral sense or centre, then clairvoyance or clairaudience comes on, because he is conveying to the brain those impressions derived from similar planes of nature in any direction.

And when to this is added a partial touch of some minor physical sub-divisions of the sheaths, then delusion is made more complete, because the experience of a single set of cells is taken for the whole and reported, by means of the brain, in the language used by a normal being. Indeed so vast are the possible combinations in this department that I have only mentioned a few by the way of illustration.

It is this possibility of the inner lower man's being connected with one or more of the sheaths, and disconnected from all the rest, which has led one of the French schools of hypnotizers to conclude to the effect that every man is a collection of personalities, each complete in itself. The positions laid down above are not destroyed by the fact, as observed at Paris and Nancy, that the subject in hypnotic state No. 2 knows nothing about state No. 1; for each normal person, when acting normally, compounds all the various sets of sensations, experiences and recollections into one whole, the sum total of all, and which is not recognizable as any one of them distinct from the rest.

It must also be remembered that each person has pursued in prior lives this or that course of action, which has trained and developed this or that Soul-sheath. And although at death many of them are dissolved as integral collections, the effect of such development formerly pursued is not lost to the reincarnating being. It is preserved through the mysterious laws that guide the atoms when they assemble for the birth of a new personal house to be occupied by the returning Soul. It is known that the atoms — physical and astral — have gone through every sort of training. When the Soul is reincarnating it attracts to itself those physical and astral atoms which are like unto its old experience as far as possible. It often gets back again some of the identical matter it used in its last life. And if the astral senses have received in the prior existence on earth great attention and development, then there will be born a medium, or a real seer, or sage. Which it will be, depends on the great balancing of forces from the prior life. For instance, one who in another incarnation attended wholly to psychic development without philosophy, or made other errors, will be born, may be, as an irresponsible medium; another, again, of the same class, emerges as a wholly untrustworthy partial clairvoyant, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

A birth in a family of wise devotees and real sages is declared from old time to be very difficult of attainment. This difficulty may be gradually overcome by philosophical study and unselfish effort for others, together with devotion to the Higher Self pursued through many lives. Any other sort of practice leads only to additional bewilderment.

The Soul is bound to the body by a conversion to the corporeal passions; and is again liberated by becoming impassive to the body.

That which Nature binds, Nature also dissolves; and that which

the Soul binds, the Soul likewise dissolves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the Soul, but the Soul binds herself to the body. Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the Soul, but the Soul liberates herself from the body.

Hence there is a two-fold death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the Soul; but the other peculiar to philosophers, in which the Soul is liberated from the body. Nor does the one entirely follow the other.

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Reprinted from* LUCIFER, *Vol. X, p.323.* ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

Health and Disease — A. Keightley

Everybody believes that the meaning of these words is an open secret. Health is the absence of disease, disease is the presence of some other condition, whether due to accident, infectious fever or perverted vital process. But is "everybody" right? Is there nothing hidden? Is the common voice the voice of common sense? The view so taken seems rather a short-sighted one. Of course on a merely material basis the view is not very far out, especially if it be held that "life" is due to the interaction of the various cells and organs of the body. But one of the old philosophers very wisely said that life does not so much consist in living as in being well and we may infer from this and our own experience that any deviation will mean disease.

If we refer to any theosophical book or to eastern and western philosophies we find that in all alike a separate and distinct place is given to a "vital principle." This means that life does not consist in the interaction of cellular particles but that it is in virtue of an *inherent* and not *extraneous* vitality and that these particles themselves have life and form. What their form may be or what is their power or method of cohesion is another matter altogether. The living body has been compared to a sponge floating in an ocean of life. The water of the ocean within and without is continuous and is the universal life principle. But this principle being universal permeates all forms of matter alike, though not equally, and according to this mode of action of the life principle are the bodies classified.

Such may be said to be the simple, natural method. But let us carry the simile of the sponge a little further. While there is an equal interchange of give and take from and to within and

without the sponge — in short while the centripetal and centrifugal forces are balanced, so long everything goes well. Life and healthy life is manifested in the sponge. On the other hand let us suppose that the incoming is greater than the outgoing: the balance is disturbed and life becomes congested within the sponge. The cellular lives take on too great an activity and unless relieved a vibration is communicated to the sponge which may shatter the united body of the sponge to pieces. *Too much* life in a body kills that body just as surely as too little will cause its death.

From another aspect we may regard all things known to us as varying manifestations of force in matter. Science tells us that matter in itself is one and the same and that the difference between bodies as we know them is due to difference in the rate of vibration of the force. Take for instance the different colors of the spectrum. The colors of the objects we see with our eyes depends (a) on the wave lengths of the vibration of the ether (b) on the varying degree in which any matter or form stops and absorbs those wave-lengths and (c) on the retina of the observer being correctly attuned to perceive the wave-lengths allowed to pass and those absorbed by the colored body in question. Another element in the question is whether the etheric light-waves are reflected back from the body observed or transmitted through it, to the retina of the observer.

Such very briefly is the case for sight. Coarser vibrations of the air affect the organs of hearing; still coarser those of touch; similarly in varying degree the organs of smell and taste. But the underlying principle becomes clear. Bodies differ from one another to human perception by reason of the varying rate of vibration of force in and between the particles of matter contained in them.

Let us apply this to our study of "Health and Disease." Without

going into details the anatomist will tell us of a vast complexity of structure, each part of which serves its purpose in the vegetable or animal economy. Each has its own part to play and no organ of different structure can play that part or perform that function. Each different structural type has its own life-vibration and does it well or ill — too much, too little or exactly right in the general run of bodily work.

Now let us resume the analogy of the musical vibration. According to the rate of vibration is the musical note. According to the various notes in relation to each other is harmony or discord produced. Thus taking all the vibrations of the various organs of any animal or vegetable body, there will be what we may call the "chord of the mass." And going further, there will be the harmony and discord of the family or nation of individuals. Thus in the unit human body the due and accurate performance of function of the various organs will constitute health, while failure in anyone function constitutes disease.

But the problem is at once complicated when we commence to study the human constitution. If we regard living bodies as simply so much matter vibrating variously according to its organic structure, the chord of the mass is, though complicated, comparatively simple. As soon as we introduce the question of the astral or etheric body and its vibrations, of the astral plane and its inter-communication and interpenetration with the physical, we are confronted with another class of vibration as much more subtle than the physical as the Roentgen vibrations are more subtle than the waves of sound. But even then when we assume that the astral vibrations may be grouped under one generic head we are confronted with a further and more subtle set belonging to the domain of mind, exemplified in the well known influence of mind over body. Still the principle is the same and we may perhaps justifiably conclude that the great life vibration is one

and the same, operating variously in matter and thereby constituting the various bodies and the grades of matter of which these bodies are formed. "Health" and "Disease" still bear the same relation to each other and to the human constitution — but the sources of health or the seats of disease have been rendered more subtle and complex. They have been rendered much more dynamic than structural. Furthermore, just as we have seen that the physical harmony or discord is subject to the more subtle forces of the astral and mental (for lack of a better word) planes, so we may conclude with Pat-anjali that there are other and more subtle planes and vibrations, for the "mind" is only the internal instrument or organ for the manifestation of more subtle forces.

Such considerations lead us to a more expanded view of "Health and Disease." We can regard "Health" as the perfect and balanced action not only of a physical body but also as the perfect action of astral and mental vibrations manifesting the free and indwelling "spirit." But what of disease? This conversely would be the imperfect action. Apart from this, however, I think that we may regard disease as a perverted vital process. Theoretically, of course, all should be perfect, but as a rule, nay invariably, it is to be seen that individual human units have made their own conditions; have by physical, astral and mental action created such conditions and set up such vibrations that the beneficent force of life is on the one hand either unable to "inform" the various grades of matter, or on the other enters in such quantity as to rend to pieces that form of matter which it enters. In the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine* there is a curious footnote in which H. P. Blavatsky deals with the action of the minute "lives" or units of the animal economy. It is there stated that the life force is manifested at one time for the purpose of construction and that the same force is also used to change or destroy the form which had previously been erected. Thus I take it that the life

force passes into manifestation in its outbreathing; it recedes in its inbreathing, still changing its form; and still pursuing the change of form it undergoes a period of "rest," following in this the analogy of physiological respiration. Then comes a fresh cycle of manifestation.

Thus we can follow the law of cause and effect through various incarnations in reference to "Health and Disease." We may consider, from the point of view of vibration, that all action sets up a vibration which may be in harmony or discord with (a) the existing chord of the mass of that human unit on the physical, astral or mental planes, and (b) the chords of other units in relation with that one, and (c) the dominant note of the universal life force. The result will almost inevitably be a discordant vibration. Such discordant vibration, wherever it act, will as surely produce "disease" either mental, astral or physical, which will *manifest on all the planes* or be stored up as a "mental deposit" or *skandha* to be more easily manifested on another occasion.

This naturally raises the question of the cure of disease and the promotion of health. It would seem easy, perhaps, for the possessors (if there be such) of the "Elixir of Life" to cure all diseases of suffering humanity by a few of their magical drops. But this would be contrary to nature and would be akin to a vicarious atonement if the harmony of health were to be thus produced. Man is his own destroyer, and he must be his own physician. Terrible would be the result of these magic drops: they would kill the body as surely as the strongest prussic acid. To be an "Elixir of Life" the drops must be a concentrated life-force imprisoned in a vehicle. Such a force coming in contact with a body and vibrations not attuned to itself would rend that body asunder and destroy it as a form. Man can do it for himself if he chooses, but must not attempt to shirk the consequences of his

own acts. Having by acts (and the thoughts which preceded them) laid up the mental deposits which will manifest later as discord and disease, how is he to restore harmony within himself and with nature around him: how manifest harmoniously the indwelling life-force?

The answer is tolerably simple. He has to simplify himself. While man continues to occupy himself with a makeshift panorama of his own making he will perpetuate the evil. What man wants is an ideal — an ideal self to which he may cling and of which he can think, and then by gradually raising that ideal he may come to realize his own true healthy self.

In all this I would not be understood as saying that the cure of bodily or astral disease lies in the mind or that the presence of bodily disease is evidence of an unclean or diseased mind. Nor would I wish to argue that to cure disease of the body we are to meet it on the mental plane alone. I say, on the contrary, that nature means us to meet it on all planes alike. Again, when I see a diseased body and the clear spirit shining through ill-health, I rejoice, for I know that the mental deposits have worked down and out and that the karmic deposit is almost done away with. Meet discord with the true weapons and restore the harmony: but do this because it is right according to nature's laws and not because you shall benefit your own poor body. If you use the mental life force for this purpose you will lay up a mental discord, and by injecting too much of this into a form unfit to receive it render that form diseased and insane in every sense of the word.

Therefore, I say: use all things properly according to nature's laws to a lawful end on every plane alike. Regarding all these manifestations as so many different vibrations we shall find that we become more and more impersonal and by becoming so that we shall be better able to sympathize with and thereby help the

suffering.

Consequently the touchstone — the "Elixir of Life" which all alike have it in their power to administer to suffering humanity — one which is without danger to those who receive it — is that loving vibration of the human life-force which we try to express by Brotherhood.

Theosophy

THE GENESIS AND PRE-NATAL LIFE — *Alexander Wilder*

"A Nurture perfectly correct must show itself able to render both bodies and souls most beautiful and good." — Plato.

Plutarch in his curious collection of excerpts, *The Natural Things which the Philosophers take Delight in Studying*, has given us a repertory of most valuable suggestions. It includes a great variety of themes, as for example: Nature itself, First Principles, Elements or Composites, the Kosmos or Universe, Divinity, Matter, Ideas, Causes, Bodies, Molecules, Necessity, Destiny, Fate, the Heavens and Earth with their motions, then the Soul with its activities and qualities, the conditions preceding and incident to mundane life, and finally what we denominate Heredity. For the supposition which many entertain that Philosophy is solely a pursuit of wisdom transcending what may be known of physical facts, and the converse notion that it consists entirely of the knowledge of natural things, are alike erroneous; for it comprises both in their respective spheres.

In his Fifth Book here named our author presents us with the speculations of the Hellenic Sages in respect to our physical nature and its conditions. These related to the laws and circumstances of our transition into the natural life, and the peculiarities of heredity; as for example, why children resembled their parents and progenitors, and why they often differed in temper, character and in other respects.

It is proper to take a full account of this department of the subject. The conditions attending the advent of the physical life are also essentials of the subsequent culture. It gives us confidence, our author declares, to be well born. It is fortunate beyond all power

of estimate to be well fathered and well mothered. The beneficent consequences extend not only through the whole life, but also through the coming ages.

Meanwhile, the children of an unworthy father or mother are blemished at their birth, and likely to be pursued as long as they live by the ignominious fact of their early history. As is the mother, so is her daughter; the fathers eat sour grapes and the teeth of the sons are set on edge. The criminal, the libertine, the persons greedy for selfish ends are never likely to become parents, except of offspring tainted deeply with similar evil propensities. From thorn bushes nobody expects grapes to grow, nor from thistles any fruitage of luscious figs. Much of the insane diathesis, perverted faculty, defective intelligence, imperfect physical sense, stunted or repulsive configuration of body, and vicious proclivity, which we observe in many cases, may be set down as the inheritance from a drunken ancestry. Thus Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher, once reproached a crack-brained and half-witted stripling: "Surely when thy existence began thy father was drunk."

We acknowledge gladly that much, very much, can be accomplished with suitable training and self-discipline to overcome these faults of natural conformation. As the richest soil is unproductive when left without cultivation, and the best beginning suffices but little if not followed by diligent activity, so, on the other hand, the unfortunate sufferers from heredity may correct much of their condition physically and morally by proper effort. Our longest-lived individuals are often those who began with a frail body, and it is recorded of Sokrates that although the wisest of Greeks he had the appearance and natural proclivity of a satyr. Nevertheless, in such cases the drawback continues with them, that they are carrying a heavy weight through their whole term of life, which impedes endeavor on every hand and

generally compels them to remain in a subordinate place in the theatre of active life.

Yet we are able to view the matter on the brighter side. While the evil dispositions of ancestry are said to be transmitted to the children to the third and fourth generation, the virtuous tendencies, the same authority assures us, will continue to the thousandth. Evil is always transitory, but good is perennial. This world is not normally a place for human beings to grow worse in, but to become better and more highly developed. There is a recuperative principle in our nature always operating to repair the mischiefs that have come to us, or which may occur during our varied experiences. With all the plausibility and actual truth that may exist in this dogma of heredity, we see no adequate reason for accepting it as a complete solution of the enigmas. Indeed, it appears to be a kind of stock argument by which to evade rather than to explain embarrassing questions. There may be other causes operative, holier inseminations, if we may so express it, by which pure children are born of ill parentage, as the loveliest water-lilies come from the foulest mud. We may not regard the unborn infant as merely a living mass of flesh and blood, without any moral quality. Such a notion may serve as a *placebo* for the conscience of certain individuals, but it cannot be justly entertained. This matter of the spiritual and moral nature of human beings during what is regarded as the inchoate period of existence, involves deeper problems than are presented by the conditions which are shared in common with the animals. Even at that time there exist the basis and rudiments of the intellectual quality. If therefore, it be true that man does not live by bread alone, but by an energy that is beyond and more life-imparting than bread, it is still more true that the nobler moral and spiritual nature does not proceed solely from the analogous qualities of parents and ancestry, but is likewise from a source infinitely

higher.

Let us, then, bear the fact in mind that the Soul is the veritable self, the ego or individuality. (1) The body, head, brain, any or all of them, may not be accounted in any proper sense as the selfhood. I have often noted in my own vivid consciousness that they were something apart and distinct from me. Their peculiar form and office fit them admirably for my service and convenience. I am certain that I could not do so well with any other, and I would not be at home in another person's body. Yet I could not have had this body of mine so perfectly adapted to me, except I had had some directing agency in its fabrication. The poet Spenser has well explained this:

"For of the soul the body form doth take;
For soul is form, and doth the body make."

It is easy, therefore, to perceive and understand that being thus divine and constructive, the Soul is superior and older than the body. We are not able intelligently' to conceive that it has its first inception with it in the protoplasmic ooze. It can be by no means a fabricated thing, like the objects perceptible to our senses, but must be from its inherent quality now and always of the eternal region. How it was projected into temporal life and conditions, and whether it became personal by such projection, are questions of deep interest to earnest thinkers. Whether, when coming into the circumscribed region of Time there was a former consciousness rendered dormant, as from the fabled drinking of the Lethean draught, is a question in the same category. Perhaps, we sometimes remember.

It may not rationally be pleaded as an objection that this is a concept of too unreal and visionary character to deserve serious consideration. We are what we are by virtue of our interior thought, our will and desires, and our bodily organism is only the

minister to these. Day by day and even moment by moment the particles which make up the body are perishing, and new ones taking their place. Yet during all these changes, the soul and thinking principle remain the same. If, then, our identity and memory continue thus unaffected during these transformations of bodily tissue, it can not be illusive and unreasonable to suppose that they have endured through a succession of ages and changes prior to the present term of corporeal existence.

The transit of the soul from the eternal region to the conditions of corporeal life, is a matter by no means easy to comprehend. The human understanding is somewhat like a vessel, incapable of receiving a truth or concept of superior or equal dimensions to itself. A little perhaps, may be known, but far more is only to be observed, contemplated, and admired. On its superior side the soul is divine; on the other, human and subject to the contingencies of change. Its genesis is not its beginning as a living essence, but its transition, extension or projection into conditional existence. This may be considered as being the result of a predilection, an attraction of spiritual for the phenomenal life.

Plato has given us, in the Tenth Book of the *Republic*, a very significant suggestion in regard to this matter. Eros, of Pamphylia, had fallen in battle, but when laid upon the funeral pyre, twelve days afterward, recovered from his trance. He had been in the world beyond and beheld many wonderful things. Among them was the beginning of a period of life upon the earth, to those of mortal race, the "souls of a day." They were selecting from models the form of life in which they would live upon the earth. Thus, the cause of their respective careers was in their own choice. Those who had lived here very frequently, as if weary of excessive effort or the tedium of monotony, chose a mode of life widely different from what had been lived. To each of these models a

demon or guardian genius belonged, so that every one thus selected his own, and thereby his destiny. They next proceeded to the plain of Lethe, and drank the water from the river of forgetfulness, which no vessel contains. Then falling asleep, they were carried hither and thither, to begin their life in the world. Hence the soul when first united to a mortal body, is without intelligence; but as time passes, every one who receives proper food and education, receives his proper allotment and development.

We for our part are enabled to know this much: that a certain vital quality is conjoined with an albuminous molecule, which immediately thereupon begins to unfold organic structures and afterward continues the process of maturing them into the several parts of the future body. So far the human and animal races are similar, yet in the same thing and beyond, they part and are differenced. While this is going on, the thoughts and emotions of the mother, even to her loves and aversions, are blended with the psychical nature of the developing individual, making him or her different in the future character from what otherwise might have been the case.

By no means, however, does the agency of the father cease with the inception of this process, with the involution or enwombing, which is always before evolution and is its prior cause. The mother having become "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," the child, so far as concerns the exterior selfhood, is not hers alone, but theirs in common. The affection of the father for the mother, or his indifference and aversion will permeate their child's temper and moral qualities. For the father does not cease, during the entire gestative period to do his full share for the weal or woe of the future individual. A man can no more disconnect himself from the life of his progeny than a tree can sever itself from any of its branches. The act by which physical existence

begins, is therefore sacred and sacramental, an allying of human souls in solemn league with the eternal world. To speak of it lightly and with idle ribaldry is really a sacrilege.

During the gestative period the child is receptive to a most extreme degree. We may imagine it to be unconscious, but this is because we do not know. It is certainly sub-conscious, somewhat like the person in the mesmeric trance. "As soon as the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears," says Elizabeth to Mary, "the babe leaped in my womb for joy." We know that every caress of the mother, every harsh word or unkind act, affects the little one in her arms. The milk is a potent agent in forming the character and disposition. The babe after birth is, however, nothing else than the continuation of the babe that was enwombed and fed from the mother's blood. While, therefore, the body of the child is taking form in the body of the mother, almost as part of her, its moral and passional nature is acquiring her characteristics, her modes of thought and feeling, and even her very sentiments. When the little one awakes into the earth-life it has similar likes, tastes, habits and repugnances to those which she had cherished.

Plato gives parentage all the significance of a religious observance. It should be preceded, he declares, by an affectionate devotion of husband and wife to each other. "All persons who share in any work," he remarks, "when they give their minds to themselves and the work, produce the whole beautiful and good; but when they do not give their minds, or possess any, the result is the contrary." This pre-natal period is a time of teaching without text-books, lectures or recitations. The teachers impart their instruction by the medium of will and thought; and the learner is a very apt one. The lessons are generally retained in the internal memory for the lifetime. "The divine principle seated in man, if it obtains the consideration to which it is entitled, from those who bring it into action, will set all things right."

His suggestions were given with a view to the highest perfection, bodily as well as moral and spiritual. He recommended youth on the part of mothers and perfect maturity for men, with prudence in both. Like Hesiod and others he pleaded against an excessive number of children in a family. There should be a son to maintain the "honoring of father and mother, the worship rendered to ancestry, and also to prevent any deficiency of population." This course would enable a proper maintenance and education for every one. But when the necessary conditions do not exist of food, clothing and shelter, the welfare of the home is imperilled, the mental training is sure to be defective and the higher development is almost hopelessly arrested. The community then swarms with unfortunate persons, sickly and debilitated, and with those who on account of their ignorance and inefficiency, are disabled from earning a livelihood.

The antecedent existence of the human soul has been a belief recognized in the older world-religions, and entertained by the pro-founder thinkers in all the historic ages. It pervaded every faith and influenced all forms of thought. The Buddhistic teachers accordingly tell us of a *karma* or innate tendency, the result of our action in former terms of existence. By its operation every thing that is done by us infixes itself in the very elements of our being, thenceforth to influence the motives, conduct and events of our subsequent career, as a destiny that may not be shunned. This influence, they declare, will not cease with a single term in life, but affects the career and fortunes of those which follow. Hence we are what we are in our exterior nature, not from heredity alone, nor from the higher estate of the soul in eternity, but also from the conditions which we ourselves have created. "Rabbi," said the disciples to Jesus, "did this man sin or his parents, that caused him to be born blind?" The moral conditions of the soul are not changed because we are parted from the body.

Whether we are to accomplish a progress of ages in the invisible region, or are embodied anew and born again into the earth-life, they are certain to influence and modify our fortunes. Wisely therefore, may we heed the counsel of the great philosopher: "The most important thing is to become expert and intelligent to distinguish what is the good life and what is the bad, and to choose the best. This will lead the soul to be become more just, and to overcome the evils of heredity, acquired wickedness and other misfortunes, so that the individual will shape his next life and become correspondingly blessed and happy."

Most happy is the child that is ushered into this life with propitious influences to move it onward through its earthly career; yet I will add that such a one will be infinitely more blessed, if as man or woman, the higher knowledge and inspiration shall impel to the overcoming of the abnormal or unholy bias, and ancestral entailment; and so, he or she shall emerge into a higher life, higher thought, higher moral altitude. There are some who do all this; and they are the precious and sacred ones whose presence makes the earth fragrant and renders life richly worth the living.

Let us welcome the new-comer while yet on the way. Let everything pertaining to the Great Mystery of Life be esteemed as venerable and holy. Let us honor even to reverence her to whom the sacred charge has been committed. If the august Son of David, coming into Jerusalem might be greeted with applause and hosannas, then with sentiments equally just and worthy may we hail the approach of the infant man or woman about to become an actor and participant in the experiences of life. For every child comes as a herald from the eternal world, an apostle to save, to ransom and redeem.

FOOTNOTE:

1. The writers of the New Testament have incidentally recognized this fact. In the Synoptic Gospels according to .Mark and Matthew, the question is asked: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and *lose his own soul?*" In the book by Luke, the text reads: "What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and *lose himself?*" Indeed, in most places in the Bible where the term *soul* occurs, the same sense is preserved by substituting the word *self*. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

MYSTICS AND MYSTICISM IN CHRISTIANITY — *J. D. Buck*

It is no part of the purpose of the writer of this paper to give a connected history of mysticism, or to introduce all the writers who in such a history would have to be admitted to consideration. Mysticism is a vague term, and while there is some element common to all genuine mystics, these writers differ very widely in their method of philosophizing, and particularly in the extent in which the emotional element is mingled with their philosophy.

Mysticism is not Theosophy, though there are certain elements common to both, and the two terms have been often applied by different writers to the same individual. No history of either Theosophy or Mysticism would be complete that left out any prominent mystic or theosophist. Neither Mysticism nor Theosophy can be adequately defined in a phrase; neither of these forms of thought readily crystalizes into a creed: either form may, and often has adopted without dissent the Christian creed in vogue at the time, and each has undertaken to give the inner sense, or spiritual meaning of the accepted dogmas.

Mysticism has more often been emotional, than philosophical, and hence is strongly characterized by religious devotion. Tauler was a typical mystic and it is said of him that in his sermons he was often so wrought up by his emotions, and the idea of union with God, that he could no longer speak or stand, and was carried out fainting.

Aspiration differs widely from emotion and yet is equally akin to devotion, and when once centred in the soul is less liable to transitions and oscillations and is nearer related to philosophy. Meditation or contemplation may coexist with either the emotional or aspirational nature, and both mystic and

theosophist recognize the Divine Unity and aim at the union of the human with the divine. If this difference between aspiration and emotion, between the true light and the perturbations produced in the individual by that light, be kept in mind, and the closer consonance of philosophy with aspiration, the relation of Theosophy to Mysticism can be more clearly apprehended. Another point should also be held clearly in view, viz.: the philosophical relation between Faith and Reason; between the existence, immutability, and beneficence of the Divine Life, and the orderly sequence of its manifestation, and apprehension by the mind of man. It is only through the establishment of a perfect equilibrium between faith and reason that the Divine Life and the Divine Wisdom can become manifest in man. Faith without reason becomes fanaticism; reason divorced from faith becomes sordid materialism, and while prating of order and law begets anarchy.

Christian mysticism may be said to date from the first quarter of the ninth century, a.d., though there were Christian mystics from the beginning of the present era. There were the Essenes, the Therapeutae, the Gnostic sects and the Neoplatonists during the early centuries, but with the conquests of Constantine and the Mohammedan these disappeared and western Europe was left in darkness and superstition. The monasteries became almost the only seats of learning, and though in secrecy the spiritually minded among the monks might pore over the philosophy of Plato woe unto him who dared to antagonize the blind superstitious and crass materialism of his fellows or of potentate in church or state.

In the year 824 the Greek Emperor Michael sent as a present to Lewis the Mild the treatise of the supposed Dionysius the Areopagite. This book was translated into Latin by Joannes Scotus. This treatise contained the following sections: "On the

Celestial Monarchy"; "On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy"; "On Divine Names" and "On Mystic Theology." These books were eagerly read by the Western Church, but being without the Pope's sanction; they were soon condemned by Pope Nicholas the First, who ordered that Scotus should be banished from the University of Paris and sent to Rome, instead of which he fled from Paris and subsequently returned to England.

It was this book, says Enfield, which revived the knowledge of Alexandrian Platonism in the West. "Thus," continues Enfield, "philosophical enthusiasm, born in the East, nourished by Plato, educated in Alexandria, matured in Asia, and adopted into the Greek Church, found its way, under the pretext and authority of an apostolic name, into the Western Church."

The history of the Church for the next two or three centuries and its various councils is chiefly interesting from the efforts made to get rid of the influences of the mystical philosophy and the heresies of Origen and Nestorius. Four hundred years after the Greek emperor sent the books of the Areopagite to Lewis the Mild, Thomas Aquinas was born. He was called the "Angelic Doctor," was canonized by Pope John XXII, and it was popularly believed that miracles were wrought at his tomb and that the soul of St. Augustine had reincarnated in him.

Bonaventura was contemporaneous with Thomas Aquinas, and equally famous in his day, being designated as the "Seraphic Doctor." Both of these famous men connected the scholastic philosophy with theology. They considered knowledge the result of supernatural illumination and to be communicated to men through the medium of the holy scriptures. Meditation on the Divine attributes, prayer, and religious devotion were considered as the source of real illumination. They were mystics in the strictest sense, and though Aquinas is better known to modern

times, they both influenced all subsequent religious thought.

Roger Bacon was born in 1214, and was thus seven years older than Bonaventura and ten years the senior of Aquinas. Though a monk, and familiar with the scholastic philosophy, he was less a mystic than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, and stands as a fair example of the difference between Theosophy and Mysticism. He transferred the philosophy of Aristotle to the plane of physical investigation in place of the vagaries of theological speculation, and was far more of a philosopher than a theologian. He made theology subservient to philosophy, instead of the reverse, as with Thomas Aquinas, and united faith with reason to an extent seldom found and never transcended, perhaps, previous to his day, since the beginning of the Christian era. He was undoubtedly the greatest mind of his age, and had much to do with the revival of learning which dates about two centuries after his death, which occurred in 1294 at the age of 80. (There is a discrepancy in dates as given by his biographers.)

From the eighth to the fourteenth century the scholastic philosophy served as the basis of endless theological speculations and with the great mass of ecclesiastics these angry disputes served only to engender hatred and foment strife. The dispute between Calvin and Servetus may serve as an illustration. To differ in intellectual conception of the nature of the trinity from a vindictive and brutal priest in power, was a sufficient ground for ecclesiastical murder; and the history of the "Holy Inquisition" and the list of martyrs is a sufficient commentary. The anathemas of Councils of the Church during the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries a.d., specifying wherein it was a crime to differ from the opinions of those in power, show conclusively how liberty was enchained, spirituality dethroned, progress prevented and power maintained at any cost.

The numberless creeds and sects into which modern Christianity is divided find their roots in these angry disputations of the dark ages, demonstrating beyond all controversy that to repress truth is to break religion into fragments. Nothing but liberty and light can ever unify and perpetuate. To attempt to unify by force is to sow the seed of inevitable dissolution. Modern Christendom is reaping the reward of its follies and crimes.

The theologian differs from the mystic as the doctrine of the head ever differs from the religion of the heart. The former wrangles and grows dangerous over human conceptions of the Divine nature. The latter meditates on the Divine attributes, and seeks to unfold within the soul the Divine Love and the Divine Light. The theologian has often begun as a heresy-hunter and ended as a murderer. The true mystic is the most gentle and compassionate of beings in regard to the failings of others, whether of the head or heart, but is continually bent on purifying his own heart and elevating his own spiritual nature, while a divine compassion governs all his relations to his fellow men. The theological and the mystical natures have often mingled in varying proportion in the same individual.

The philosophical basis of mysticism is the Platonic doctrine of emanation; its method is meditation; and its result is charity and good works, or altruism. The real source of mysticism as found in the Christian church is the philosophy of Plato, fragments of which survived the extinction of the Essenes and the Gnostic sects and were in every age exemplified by the purest and noblest of men. Contemplation and religious devotion, and the resulting degree of spirituality were permitted and encouraged in every age by the church provided the mystic either avoided all theological disputations, or when interrogated answered in the orthodox form. Just as theological disputations have rent the church in pieces, and as she apologizes for, where she can no

longer conceal or deny her ecclesiastical murders; so on the other hand, has she been ready to exalt many a true mystic to the order of saintship. But for these examples of genuine piety regardless of all theological ideas, the church would have nothing with which to face an age of liberation and intelligence but a record of barbarism, and this in the face of the fact that she has often butchered the most saintly of her children!

The beginning of the sixteenth century ushered in a new era of thought and paved the way for all subsequent progress and enlightenment. Luther, Melancthon, Tauler, Erasmus and many lesser lights, broke down the old barriers and destroyed organized abuses. Luther was essentially a reformer, a theologian and a Soldier of the Cross, with little of the mystic in his nature. He was versed in the scholastic philosophy, and was influenced and inspired by Melancthon who was more of a philosopher, by the great scholar and Kabalist, his friend and teacher, John Reuchlin, and by the mystics, Tauler and Erasmus. Bent on reforming abuses Luther gave a practical turn to church affairs and was aided and sustained by the fiery eloquence with which Erasmus denounced the scholastic philosophy, and made intellectual disputation inferior to grace. In seeking through religious emotion, the hearts of his hearers, Tauler exhausted himself, made friends with the masses, and bitter enemies among the priests. To these active agencies in the Church Reformation must be added, Trithemius of St. Jacob and his illustrious pupils, Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa.

Such a coterie of Reformers, Mystics and Occultists can nowhere else be found in history. Had Trithemius, Reuchlin, Paracelsus and Agrippa prevailed, instead of merely influencing events at the time, the world would have been saved four hundred years of blind intellectual belief, the "Triumph of Faith" born of ignorance and superstition. But the world was not ready for such an era of

enlightenment. The Kabbalah was obscured, denied, tabooed, and the literal text of the Pentateuch gained the ascendancy, with the resulting wrangles over Predestination, Free-will, the Trinity, Atonement, etc., etc., to the utter confusion of reason, the darkening of the understanding, and the unbrotherliness of man to man. In other words: faith dethroned reason, and religious fanaticism was the inevitable result.

Christian Mysticism alone remained of the genuine elements of a true religious *renaissance*, and has worked its ethical results just in proportion as theological wrangles have ceased, and humanitarianism has encroached upon the boundaries and prerogatives of ecclesiasticism. The downfall of creeds has been the uplifting of humanity.

It may be denied that there is any relation between mysticism and humanitarianism, and claimed that the former is as vague and uncertain as the latter is practical and beneficent. It is in the motive and method, rather than in the verbiage of mysticism that the key to its influence is to be sought. Meditation with one of sincere motive and a pure heart, striving to put down selfishness, lust, pride and all manner of uncharitableness can give rise to but one result, viz: love to God and love to man. The desire of the heart is the motive power in man, and long ere the Christian dispensation began it had been demonstrated that self-renunciation is the only way to holiness, and that its synonym is Divine Compassion, and its sure fruitage the Universal Brotherhood of man. The very essence of true mysticism is the unification of the whole human race.

Now the philosophy of this Kabbalah, or of Occultism, or of Theosophy differs from Mysticism in this: not in setting the intellect against the heart and placing knowledge above devotion, but in uniting both heart and mind and thus establishing a

perfect equilibrium between faith and reason, and basing both on a complete philosophy of Nature and of Life. Such knowledge was in the possession of Trithemius, Reuchlin, Paracelsus and Agrippa, and not hidden from Luther and his more immediate co-workers. But the age was too dark, the priesthood too corrupt and too much in power, and while gross abuses could be exposed and held up to public scorn and chastizement, new light and real knowledge could not be disseminated, for the power to apprehend, and the willingness to serve them was confined to the very few. Luther wrote an introduction to the "Theologia Germanica," one of the purest and best treatises on mysticism that exists, and there were not wanting fraternities like the "Friends of God," among whom the pure Doctrine of the Heart led to peace and true knowledge. It may thus be seen what an immense influence mysticism has had upon Christianity, all apparent triumphs of dogmatic theology to the contrary notwithstanding. Theosophy is capable of dissipating all the mists of mysticism, of removing all obscurity, and by reconciling faith with reason of restoring the true religion of Jesus, and thus of hastening the time when all nations, kindred and tongues shall acknowledge One Redeemer, viz.: Divine Compassion in the soul of man.

"A new Commandment I give unto you; That ye love one another — as I have loved you."

Theosophy

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT — *E. L. Rexford*

It is one of the barbarisms of the olden times still lingering among the benignities of our struggling civilization. It may well be called "a struggling civilization" inasmuch as the better energies of every age are always set to the task of freeing the life of its people from the irrational burdens imposed by the preceding times. A given code of opinions and usages may embody the moral, legal and religious sense of a given age, but when these opinions and practices are brought forward into a purer light and erect their standards in the midst of the more enlightened humanities they are seen as wretchedly incongruous and they shock the sensibilities of the best life. It is providential possibly that there should be this commingling of the rational and the irrational, the brute and the human.

Every age has had its "barbaric" and its "enlightened," its lower and its higher standards and laws and customs, and it seems to be one of the divine methods for increasing strength that the higher should ever battle with the lower. Life that is too easy is not compact and firmly knit in its sinews. It is opposition, it is the warfare between the old and the new to which the world is indebted for its very life. Some of the Indians of this country accounted for the strength of their chiefs by believing that the soul of every enemy slain passed into the body of the slayer, and hence if a warrior had killed an hundred men the victor had the strength of an hundred men. It was a rude way of expressing a persistent philosophy. Resistance is one of the life processes. If birth were not difficult it would be impossible. The resisting barriers of nature must hold the immature life till the hour of safe deliverance arrives. Mr. Beecher was once asked if he did not think there was a vast amount of chaff in the Bible, and he is

reported to have answered: "Of course there is. But the character and value of chaff are determined by the time of the year." Quite essential to the immature grain, it is useless to the matured result. The shell resists and protects the chick till the chick is strong enough to resist the shell and needs no more protection. Resistance and life are critically balanced against each other in nature, always making their exchanges at the appointed hour and so nature always befits itself and justifies itself. But in our human economies and methods the ancient barriers are frequently allowed to remain far beyond their time, and the withered genius of conservatism is permitted an existence vastly overreaching its legitimate date. The living energies are often burdened and sometimes blighted by the ancient tyrannies, and the inheritance of the larger life is denied its rightful heirs.

I think this is true in the instance of the present and longer continuance of this barbarity of the death penalty for crime. It may have had a moral value in a rude condition, but it stalks forward out of its ancient darkness into the light of this age and appears as one of the crowning horrors of the time. That it does not hold its place as securely as it once did is evident, but it is yet too strongly intrenched in the legal and religious (!) sense of the public to inspire any eager hope of its speedy abandonment. "Society must be protected" is the reasonable demand made by our legislators and the officers intrusted with the administration of the laws, but they have not sufficient faith in the philosophy of clemency to trust the fortunes of society to milder and more humane ways. They are afraid that the ends of justice will not be attained if the death penalty is abolished. The motives of our law-makers are not to be questioned, but I am morally certain that their fears spring from false estimates of the moral elements involved.

There is another class of men who advocate the retention of the

death penalty on the basis of the Bible. They claim that the Bible sanctions and indeed ordains Capital Punishment, and therefore it should be retained. The Bible is claimed to be the word of God in all things and the only authority. So did men in the days of the Anti-Slavery agitation in America advocate the retention of slavery by the authority of the Bible. Clergymen stood in their pulpits and hurled the divine anathemas at the abolitionists, and they built up a breast-work of Bibles around the institution; but in these times they have found different uses for their Bibles and different meanings in them, and not a few of even the conservative clergy are attempting to identify the once "infidel" Lincoln with the churches. The meaning of the Bible changes with the intelligence and the humanity of every age, and there is scarce a barbarism of history that has not had the Bible quoted in its defense by somebody at some time.

In regard to this subject in hand, some observing man in the ancient times seeing that violence naturally begets violence, said that "whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" and gradually, or it may be immediately, the fertile genius of the theologians, claiming to know the Divine mind, erected this observation into a divine command, and today it is one of the holy proof-texts for the law and practice of human execution. But the Bible proves too much in these lists of the death penalty. Under the Jewish code of laws there were *thirty-three* crimes punishable by death. This same Bible sanctioned and prescribed the death penalty for them. Do these biblical defenders of the death penalty wish to go to this limit, and would they have the Bible code enacted in our civil statutes? But why not? If the Bible sanctions the death penalty for thirty-two crimes aside from murder, why should our death-dealing Bible-worshippers select the one crime of murder for the hangman and reject all the others? If the Bible is the word of God, designed as a code of

procedure for all time, why not abide by it and bring back the horrors of its ancient sanctions? No one would venture upon such an experiment, and yet the freedom with the Bible that will reject thirty-two crimes from the clutch of the hangman or the axe of the axeman may reject the *thirty-third* crime from the same murderous hand. The Bible is simply useless in this contention. It is loaded so heavily with this barbaric spirit that it bursts in the hands of those who use it, and it is more dangerous to those who stand behind it than to those at whom it is aimed.

Another class of men in this grim apostleship of death is composed of those who harbor a spirit of revenge, and out of whose hearts sprung the law of "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth." They are men who seem to think of law as an instrument of destruction for the unfortunate classes instead of being an agency for their preservation, their discipline and their ultimate restoration. It is this feeling of revenge, no doubt, that has shaped a considerable part of our legislation as it bears upon the criminal class. Men of this type of advocacy are men who, according to the theory of evolution, have brought with them certain elements of the lower animalism, the tiger element which is inflamed by the sight or smell of blood, and the more blood that is shed shall be to them the signal for the shedding of more blood still. It is wholly irrational and partakes of the brute nature. Many of our legislators need to be reproduced or reincarnated on a higher level. They need to think and discuss and vote in the higher regions of the moral sensibilities. There is not a single ray of intelligence or reason whereby the region where they make their laws, is illuminated.

The researches of such men as O' Sullivan and Spear and Rantoul and Victor Hugo fail to discover a single instance where the executions of men have checked the tendencies to crime. These researches reveal precisely the reverse of this, and show as

plainly that public executions have been the occasions of multiplied crimes. Prison cells out of which men have been led to execution in the morning have been filled at night by men who had committed crimes in the very shadows of the gallows during the fatal day. Public executions instead of restraining crime have stimulated it, or at least public executions have broken down the public regard for the value and inviolability of life, upon which considerations a large part of the safety of life must forever depend.

The argument has been relied upon for years in behalf of this barbarous custom, that a public hanging must exert a salutary restraint, but the abolishing of these public scandals is a virtual surrender of the argument itself. If the old argument of restraint is good, then all the people ought to be urged to witness every execution, but the simple and significant fact is that the better classes of the people shrink from such scenes while the most reckless and lawless people will gather with the greatest eagerness to witness them when permitted. Here is a circumstance that ought to invite our lawmakers to pause and consider. A legal custom that invites the enthusiasm of the worst elements in a community and revolts and horrifies the best element is a custom that ought to be abolished.

When the State is seen to hold life cheap the people will do so too. If the State in its judicial calm can take life, men in their frenzy will take it all the more readily. Judicial murder in the lists of a high civilization will yet be seen, I believe, to be more culpable and less pardonable than murder by the infuriated or crazed individual. A man, under an uncontrollable frenzy of anger takes a life and certainly should be punished; but what shall we say of a state which in its wisest and least excited moods, in its calmest deliberation, proceeds to take the life of a man whose average line of intention may be much farther removed from the

murderous borders than the habitual moods of many others who may never have met with the momentary temptation to violence?

It ought to be a principle in criminal administration that no government should place one of its subjects beyond its power to benefit him if the changed spirit and mood should permit a benefit. Who can doubt that multitudes of men, the moment after committing a murder, would have given the world if they could, to recall the life destroyed and the act that destroyed it? Vast numbers of men have committed crimes who have not been criminal in their common daily moods. By the force of extraordinary influence, acting perhaps but the fatal once in a whole lifetime, they have failed. The statement needs no argument. It is manifestly true. And is it an enlightened policy, is it humane, is it just that a life so failing of its manhood for the moment shall be destroyed by the combined power of a great and enlightened state? It is barbaric to the last limit of its destruction.

The infliction of the death penalty clashes with the humanities of our times. It is an incongruous presence. To add to its incongruity we associate *religion* and religious ceremonies with the gallows and the chair. The "Spiritual advisers" pray and read Scripture with the doomed man — secure his repentance, pronounce him "saved," "a child of grace," prepared to take his seat in paradise and then the signal is given and the "Christian" is sent to heaven with a black cap over his face! This business of hanging Christians is a gruesome one. Either the rope or the Chaplain ought to be abolished. The Chaplain at the gallows is an anomaly. If a man has become a Christian and is prepared for the society of heaven we ought to tolerate him on earth, especially if we have the privilege of keeping him within prison restraints, as in general we ought, no doubt.

The poorest use we can make of a man is to hang him. What have

we done? Have we benefitted the man? So far as we know, not at all. And are we permitted to deal with men with no thought of doing them good? Who gave us that barbaric liberty? Shall a state assume that it may deal with its subjects with no purpose to benefit them? The thought is criminal itself. The murderous class are generally of the ignorant class, of those generally who are physically organized on a low basis. Shall the state execute those whom it has failed to educate? Shall it kill, or restrain? Civilization can have but one answer to this question.

For the crime of murder I would have life imprisonment, except in rare instances, and these modifications should be strongly guarded by judicious pardon boards. I would punish crime without imitating it, and its object should be to establish the people in conditions in which punishment would be unnecessary. Penalties instead of being so many forms of destruction should be so many forms of help. I would seek to abate the unwholesome sympathy of the people, and especially of emotional women, in behalf of the criminal class. I would advise our young women not to be lavish with their bouquets for the criminals. At least this class of men should not be made exceptional favorites. I would advise our States not to make the prison grounds the most beautiful places within their borders as Michigan has done at Ionia. Men should know that crime means solitude and desolation. California at San Quentin has been wise, in placing her criminals on one of the loneliest islands of the sea. No burglar, ravisher or murderer should find that his crimes lead him to a paradise of beauty. Soft sentiments are not fit companions for hardened criminals, but a rugged justice and a severe mercy are the befitting attendants of crime. Men should realize that in the commission of great crimes, they have left the realms of flowers and soft sentimentalism and have arrived in the country of the burning sands and the desolate rigors of a

barren existence, and they should learn that flowers do not grow in that country.

The State however should erect no impossible barriers across the way of their return. Let them come back to the regions of the enlightened and human sentiments if they will. By years of unquestioned evidence let them *prove* their return to the compassionate regions of the human life, where their own spirit shall but increase the volume of the benignities. Then and not till then shall they be wisely crowned, nor even then as heroes, but as returned prodigals. Then may the rings be placed upon their withered fingers, and the sandals on their bleeding feet, and the robes upon their emaciated bodies. Then may the music begin, and the dancing. Not in the far country shall they lie down on beds of roses or wear the robes of an indiscriminating love. They have courted and should wed the genius of the Desolate and should abide in her torture chambers and learn wisdom, and return to find the waiting compassions they once forsook.

There is a barbaric treatment of crime that leads to destruction. This treatment has too long prevailed; there is an enlightened treatment of crime that should lead back to life through its rigorous but merciful severities. I believe it is time for this policy to be inaugurated, time for the retirement of the ancient barbarism and the introduction of a philosophy of criminal procedure that shall take its place with the general civilization we have reached.

Theosophy

FOR EVER FREE (The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom) (1) — Trans. Charles Johnston

Being an Original Translation of *Shankara's Vivekachudamani: The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*, 551 — *Ed.*

THE SERPENT'S SLOUGH

But the body he has left, like the cast-off slough of a snake, remains there, moved hither and thither by every wind of life. As a tree is carried down by a stream, and stranded on every shallow; so is his body carried along to one sensation after another.

Through the mind-pictures built up by works already entered on, the body of him who has reached freedom wanders among sensations, like an animal; but the adept himself dwells in silence, looking on, like the centre of a wheel, having neither doubts nor desires.

He no longer engages his powers in things of sense, nor needs to disengage them; for he stands in the character of observer only. He no longer looks at all to the personal reward of his acts; for his heart is full of exultation, drunk with the abounding essence of bliss.

Leaving the path of things known or unknown, he stands in the Self alone; like a god in presence is this most excellent knower of the Eternal.

Though still in life, yet ever free; his last aim reached; the most excellent knower of the Eternal, when his disguise falls off, becoming the Eternal, enters into the secondless Eternal.

Like a mimic, who has worn the disguises of well-being and ill,

the most excellent knower of the Eternal was Brahma all the time, and no other.

The body of the sage who has become the Eternal, is consumed away, even before it has fallen to the ground — like a fresh leaf withered — by the fire of consciousness.

The sage who stands in the Eternal, the Self of being, ever full of the secondless bliss of the Self, has none of the hopes fitted to time and space that make for the formation of a body of skin, and flesh, subject to dissolution.

Putting off the body is not Freedom, any more than putting away one's staff and waterpot; but getting free from the knots of unwisdom in the heart, — that is Freedom, in very deed. [560.]

Whether its leaf fall in a running river, or on holy ground, prepared for sacred rites, what odds does it make to the tree for good or ill.

Like the loss of a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, is the loss of the body, or powers, or vital breath, or mind; but the Self itself, ever one's own, formed of bliss, is like the tree and stands.

The divine saying declares the Self to be the assemblage of all consciousness; the real is the actor, and they speak only of the destruction of the disguise, — unwisdom.

THE SELF ENDURES.

Indestructible, verily, is the Self, — thus says the scripture of the Self, declaring that it is not destroyed when all its changing vestures are destroyed.

Stones, and trees, grass, and corn, and straw are consumed by fire, but the earth itself remains the same. So the body, powers, life, breath and mind and all things visible, are burned up by the

fire of wisdom, leaving the being of the higher Self alone.

As the darkness, that is its opposite, is melted away in the radiance of the sun, so, indeed, all things visible are melted away in the Eternal.

As, when the jar is broken, the space in it becomes clear space, so, when the disguises melt away, the Eternal stands as the Eternal and the Self.

As milk poured in milk, oil in oil, water in water, becomes perfectly one, so the sage who knows the Self becomes one with the Self.

Thus reaching bodiless purity, mere Being, partless, the being of the Eternal, the sage returns to this world no more.

He whose forms born of unwisdom are burnt up by knowledge of oneness with the everlasting Self, since he has become the Eternal, how could he, being the Eternal, come to birth again?
[570.]

Both bonds and the getting rid of them are works of glamor, and exist not really in the Self; they are like the presence of the imagined serpent, and its vanishing, in the rope which really does not change.

Binding and getting rid of bondage have to be spoken of, because of the existence, and yet the unreality, of enveloping by unwisdom. But there is no enveloping of the Eternal; it is not enveloped because nothing besides the Eternal exists to envelop it.

The binding and the getting rid of bondage are both mirages; the deluded attribute the work of thought to the thing itself; just as they attribute the cloud-born cutting off of vision to the sun; for the unchanging is secondless consciousness, free from every

clinging stain.

The belief that bondage of the Real, is, and the belief that it has ceased, are both mere things of thought; not of the everlasting Real.

Therefore these two, glamor-built, bondage and the getting rid of bonds, exist not in the Real; the partless, changeless, peaceful; the unassailable, stainless; for what building-up could there be in the secondless, supreme reality, any more than in clear space?

There is no limiting, nor letting go, no binding nor gaining of success; there is neither the seeker of Freedom, nor the free: this, verily, is the ultimate truth.

BENEDICTION

This secret of secrets supreme, the perfect attainment, the perfection of the Self, has been shown to thee by me today; making thee as my new born child, freed from the sin of the iron age, all thought of desire gone, making towards Freedom.

Thus hearing the teacher's words and paying him due reverence, he went forth, free from his bondage, with the Master's consent.

And he, the Teacher, his mind bathed in the happy streams of Being, went forth to make the whole world clean, incessantly.

Thus, by this Discourse of Teacher and Pupil, the character of the Self is taught to those seeking Freedom, that they may be born to the joy of awakening.

Therefore let all those who put away and cast aside every sin of thought, who are sated with this world's joys, whose thoughts are full of peace, who delight in words of wisdom, who rule themselves, who long to be free, draw near to this teaching, which is dedicated to them.

To those who, on the road of birth and death, are sore stricken by the heat that the rays of the sun of pain pour down; who wander through this desert-world, in weariness and longing for water; this well-spring of wisdom, close at hand, is pointed out, to bring them joy, — the secondless Eternal. This Teaching of Shankara's, bringing Liberation, wins the victory for them.

Thus is ended THE CREST-JEWEL OF WISDOM, made by the ever-blessed SHANKARA, pupil at the holy feet of GOVINDA his Teacher, the supreme Swan, the Wanderer of the World.

FOOTNOTE:

1. We regret to state that Mr. Charles Johnston's article on "The Essence of the Teaching" which was announced to appear in this issue, was lost in the mail on its way to the printers. We therefore insert an original translation by him, the earlier parts of which have already appeared in *The Oriental Department Papers*, issued by the Theosophical Society in America — Ed. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE: I — *L. G.*

INTRODUCTION

It is by no means either needful or expedient that Theosophy should confine itself to the publication of merely technical matter. To do so would practically limit its sphere of interest and usefulness to the membership of the Society; and as the fundamental and continuing purpose of the organization is the expansion of Theosophic information and teaching to the world at large, as yet ignorant or unheeding of the tenet of Universal Brotherhood, and the Destiny of Man, it has seemed wise to multiply the points of contact, and that endeavor be made to indicate how the forces behind the Theosophical movement work through other agencies as well as those of the declared organization, and thus avail themselves of all favorable means and opportunities to illustrate and forward the liberation and development of Mind and Soul. Furthermore it is of importance to the Society itself that its members keep themselves informed as to the currents and tendencies of thought on other than its own lines; whereby will be gained a keener and broader insight into general progress and a clearer view of the fresh standpoints that constitute at once milestones of attainment and new points of departure.

It is proposed, therefore, under some such caption as the above, to note and comment briefly in each issue on the current developments of scientific and other thought and discovery, and perhaps take occasion from time to time, to indicate how accurately these adapt themselves and fit into the scheme of Theosophic Evolution.

Our readers may profitably cooperate in this by sending

newspaper or other clippings, or calling attention to publications containing recitals of fresh discoveries and developments.

With all the acumen and power of concentrated thought — the enormous industry and persistence in the gathering of data — and the trained imagination and speculation in their interpretation — that have been devoted to the advance of Science, it is not yet accorded to that ever young and vigorous handmaiden of humanity to know the inner essence of things.

Science is essentially materialistic; not necessarily in purpose, but in method. It has perforce to study phenomena, and seeks to gain from them a knowledge of the general principles and laws underlying, controlling and correlating them. It accepts no teaching or statement that is not susceptible of verification by its own means and appliances; refuses aid from metaphysics; and denies all authority save its own. And rightfully so. As the universe is man's heritage, he must learn to know it, and the laws that regulate it. The planes of power and potency are many, and all cannot be studied at once. It is needful that the physical plane have its elucidation in a material age, since to neglect it is to postpone the open opportunity. To conquer a continent, the forests must be levelled and the prairie ploughed. To each man his day and his work; and it is incumbent upon him to set himself to the task at his hand, and within the scope of his ability to execute. Happy he who has the higher insight and can work on loftier planes with more searching implements. Let him likewise take care that his gift be not neglected, but in any case, disparagement or scorn of his more humbly endowed brother may not lie in his thought or word. Instrumentalities must always be of all grades. All are co-workers in humanity's common vineyard, and every useful endeavor tends to the common weal.

The labor of one, if in the direction of breaking, mellowing, fertilizing, or preparing the ground for seed time and harvest, should command the respect and sympathy of all, as all shall be the gainers thereby.

Let, therefore, the microscopist, the botanist, the geologist, do their appointed work, and be not accounted myopic because their vision is limited. The chemist, the astronomer, and the physicist have likewise their tasks, and their duty is to fulfill them, and explore the hidden or distant realms of nature within the scope of their appliances.

The biologist, physiologist, archaeologist, psychologist, are all doing useful and necessary work, as well as the sincere students of Ethics, of Social Science, and of Theology, whether their endeavors turn toward one side or the other of the numerous questions causing controversy. In particular should those who devote themselves to humanitarian work, be it ideal or practical, whether for the temporal relief of individuals, or the amelioration of social and industrial conditions, have the benefit of a cordial sympathy and if need be, of active cooperation of word and hand in their endeavors.

Behind all these diversities of effort, tending toward the liberation of humanity from wearisome burdens and mental fetters, lie the beneficent forces of which they are but the outcome and exponents; and in the eternal conflict between the powers of light and darkness, harmony and discord, life and death, among the clamor of tongues and the jarring of selfish antagonisms, the "ear that hears" may, even now, detect the fine strain of melody that traverses it all, and is but the prelude to the more resounding and triumphant outburst with which the future is already thrilling.

It is the function of the Theosophical Society, by all means in its

power, to further whatever makes for progress, and all unselfish effort is in this direction. The Theosophic teaching cannot be forced on people, and they must be led by personal sympathy and inducement to the acquisition of that knowledge of cosmic evolution and man's place in nature, of which Theosophy is the custodian, and without which the discordant and discouraging existing conditions are quite impossible of comprehension.

Let it be recognized, then, that all who are doing sincere and useful work, in the interest of humanity, are in fact Theosophists, and entitled to our encouragement and support.

Among all those who are laboring in the scientific field, it might be supposed that the students of Psychology should be more nearly in touch with Theosophy than others. Their task is to investigate the facts of consciousness, and in consciousness are concealed at once the essence of what is and the history of creation; phenomena the most obvious, and mysteries the most profound. In that field lie perception, sensation, emotion, thought, feeling, springs of action the most potent, and forces that form the individual and create and destroy races.

But, lacking the key to the labyrinth, the investigators wander. Lost in its complexity though persistent in seeking the way out; vibrating between the two extremes of a crass "materiality" on the one hand, that denies the existence of anything save matter in infinite diversity of form and manifestation, and the vapory "spirituality" that recognizes no being and declares existence dependent merely on subconscious imaginings; weary of the fruitless search for some limiting process or law, which naturally could not be found, since in fact it does not exist; the later Psychology steers between the two, and seeks to establish itself on some safe middle ground by emulating the laboratory methods of

the chemist and physicist, and formulating its work under diverse names. Witness the formidable list: Ethnology, Philology, Law, Sociology, History, Archaeology, Epistemology; Æsthetics, Pedagogics, Anatomy, Zoology, Physiology, Psychiatry, Pathology, Telepathy. It is evident the list could be indefinitely extended so long as words held out or could be invented. It is an ancient resource of science, when at a loss to know the nature of things, to give them names, and thus acquire a seeming familiarity with them, by which means learned addresses may be made and prolonged discussions conducted. But with better knowledge comes again the inevitable, because fundamental, reduction of complexity to simplicity, and the common origin of manifestations gains in certainty and obviousness. So will it be with Psychology when the light shall break upon it. Meanwhile it refuses to go behind the returns of its own material investigations and the phenomenal facts that present themselves for inquiry. Two sides to these facts are recognized — the outer and the inner, the real essence of which is neither known nor studied. The relations between the two, merely, are the subject of inquiry, and which perchance is the cause of the other. At present the droll result of the most advanced thought on the subject is, that we are pleased because we laugh and are grieved because our tears flow. Also that the old notion of five senses is obsolete — we have likewise the "hot and cold" sense, the "pain and pleasure" sense, and the "pressure" sense, the "hunger and thirst" sense, "love and anger" sense. Senses of "time" and "distance," etc., do not yet seem to be included, although they have apparently been developed. It is also certain that there are special sets of nerves for the conveyance of sensations of cold and heat, and it is now under investigation if we have a double set in addition for pain and pleasure. This seems almost childish trifling, but is put forth by earnest and determined men, and merely proves what we know already, that in the absence of a rudder the best-equipped and

best-manned ship must of necessity make a long and devious passage to its port.

SPIRIT AND MATTER

Spirit is the great life on which matter rests, as does the rocky world on the free and fluid ether; whenever we can break our limitations we find ourselves on that marvellous shore where Wordsworth once saw the gleam of the gold.
— *Through the Gates of Gold.*

Theosophy

The Essence of the Teaching (Vakya Sudha) — trans. Charles Johnston

Being an Original Translation from the Sanskrit work, entitled *Vakya Sudha*, or *Bala Bodhani*, ascribed to Shankara Acharya.

SEER AND SEEN

The form is seen, the eye is seer; the mind is both seen and seer. The changing moods of mind are seen, but the witnessing Self, the seer, is never seen.

The eye, remaining one, beholds varying forms; as, blue and yellow, coarse and fine, short and long; and differences such as these. The mind, remaining one, forms definite intentions, even while the character of the eye varies, as in blindness, dullness, or keen-sightedness; and this holds also of hearing and touch.

The conscious Self, remaining one, shines on all the moods of mind: on desire, determination, doubt, faith, unfaith, firmness and the lack of it, shame, insight, fear, and such as these.

This conscious Self rises not, nor has its setting, nor does it come to wax or wane; unhelped, it shines itself, and illumines others also. [5.]

THE PERSONAL IDEA.

This illumining comes when the ray of consciousness enters the thinking mind; and the thinking mind itself is of twofold nature. The one part of it is the personal idea; the other part is mental action.

The ray of consciousness and the personal idea are blended together, like the heat and the hot iron ball. As the personal idea

identifies itself with the body, it brings that also a sense of consciousness.

The personal idea is blended with the ray of consciousness, the body, and the witnessing Self, respectively, — through the action of innate necessity, of works, and of delusion.

Since the two are bound up together, the innate blending of the personal idea with the ray of consciousness never ceases; but its blending with the body ceases, when the works wear out; and with the witnessing Self, through illumination.

When the personal idea melts away in deep sleep, the body also loses its sense of consciousness. The personal idea is only half expanded in dream, while in waking it is complete. [10.]

The power of mental action, when the ray of consciousness has entered into union with it, builds up mind-images in the dream-state; and external objects, in the waking state.

The personal form, thus brought into being by the personal idea and mental action, is of itself quite lifeless. It appears in the three modes of consciousness; it is born, and so also dies.

THE POWERS OF GLAMOR.

For the world-glamor has two powers, — extension and limitation, or enveloping. The power of extension brings into manifestation the whole world, from the personal form to the universal cosmos.

This manifesting is an attributing of name and form to the Reality — which is Being, Consciousness, Bliss, the Eternal; it is like foam on the water.

The inner division between the seer and the seen, and the outer division between the Eternal and the world, are concealed by the

other power, limitation; and this also is the cause of the cycle of birth and death. [15.]

The light of the witnessing Self is united with the personal form; from this entering in of the ray of consciousness arises the habitual life, — the ordinary self.

The isolated existence of the ordinary self is attributed to the witnessing Self, and appears to belong to it; but when the power of limitation is destroyed, and the difference appears, the sense of isolation in the Self vanishes away.

It is the same power which conceals the difference between the Eternal and the visible world; and, by its power, the Eternal appears subject to change.

But when this power of limitation is destroyed, the difference between the Eternal and the visible world becomes clear; change belongs to the visible world, and by no means to the Eternal.

The five elements of existence are these: being, shining, enjoying, form and name; the three first belong to the nature of the Eternal; the last two, to the nature of the visible world. [20.]

In the elements, — ether, air, fire, water, earth; in creatures, — gods, animals, and men, Being, Consciousness, Bliss are undivided; the division is only of name and form.

SIX STEPS OF SOUL VISION.

Therefore setting aside this division through name and form, and concentrating himself on Being, Consciousness, Bliss, which are undivided, let him follow after soul-vision perpetually, first inwardly in the heart, and then in outward things also.

Soul-vision is either fluctuating or unwavering; this is its twofold division in the heart. Fluctuating soul-vision is again twofold: it

may consist either in things seen or heard.

This is the fluctuating soul-vision which consists in things seen: a meditating on consciousness as being merely the witness of the desires and passions that fill the mind.

This is the fluctuating soul-vision which consists in things heard: the constant thought that "I am the self, which is unattached, Being, Consciousness, Bliss, self-shining, secondless." [25.]

The forgetting of all images and words, through entering into the bliss of direct experience, — this is unwavering soul-vision, like a lamp set in a windless place.

Then, corresponding to the first, there is the soul-vision which strips off name and form from the element of pure Being, in everything whatever; now accomplished outwardly, as it was before, in the heart.

And, corresponding to the second is the soul-vision which consists in the unbroken thought, that the Real is a single undivided Essence, whose character is Being, Consciousness, Bliss.

Corresponding to the former third, is that steady being, is the tasting of this Essence for oneself. Let him fill the time by following out these, the six stages of soul-vision.

When the false conceit, that the body is the Self, falls away; when the Self supreme is known; then, whithersoever the mind is directed, there will the powers of soul-vision arise. [30.]

The knot of the heart is loosed; all doubts are cut; all bondage to works wither away, — when That is known, which is the first and the last.

THE THREE SELVES.

The individual self appears in three degrees: as a limitation of the

Self; as a ray of the conscious Self; and, thirdly, as the self imagined in dreams. The first alone is real.

For the limitation in the individual self is a mere imagination; and that which is supposed to be limited is the Reality. The idea of isolation in the individual self is only an error; but its identity with the Eternal is its real nature.

And that song they sang of " That thou art" is for the first of these three selves alone; it only is one with the perfect Eternal, not the other selves.

The power of world-glamor, existing in the Eternal, has two-potencies: extension and limitation. Through the power of limitation, Glamor hides the undivided nature of the Eternal, and so builds up the images of the individual self and the world. [35.]

The individual self which comes into being when the ray of consciousness enters the thinking mind, is the self that gains experience and performs works. The whole world, with all its elements and beings, is the object of its experience.

These two, the individual self and its world, were before time began; they last till Freedom comes, making up our habitual life. Hence they are called the habitual self and world.

In this ray of consciousness, the dream-power exists, with its-two potencies of extension and limitation. Through the power of limitation, it hides the former self and world, and so builds up a new self and a new world.

As this new self and world are real only so long as their appearance lasts, they are called the imaginary self and the imaginary world. For, when one has awakened from the dream, the dream existence never comes back again.

The imaginary self believes its imaginary world to be real; but the

habitual self knows that world to be only mythical, as also is the imaginary self.

The habitual self looks on its habitual world as real; but the real Self knows that the habitual world is only mythical, as also is the habitual self.

The real Self knows its real oneness with the Eternal; it sees nothing but the Eternal, yet sees that what seemed the unreal is also the Self.

FREEDOM AND FINAL PEACE

As the sweetness, the flowing, and the coldness, that are the characteristics of the water, reappear in the wave, and so in the foam that crests the wave;

So, verily, the Being, Consciousness, and Bliss, of the witnessing Self enter into the habitual self that is bound up with it; and, by the door of the habitual self, enter into the imaginary self also.

But when the foam melts away, its flowing, sweetness, coldness, all sink back into the wave; and when the wave itself comes to rest, they sink back to the sea.

When the imaginary self melts away, its Being, Consciousness, Bliss sink back into the habitual self; and, when the habitual self comes to rest, they return to the Self supreme, the witness of all.

THE TEACHINGS OF SHANKARA

Tradition, our best guide in many of the dark problems of India's past, attributes the admirable philosophical work we have just translated to Shankara Acharya, the greatest name in the history of Indian philosophy, and one of the greatest masters of pure thought the world has ever seen.

Shankara, again according to the tradition of the East, lived and taught some two thousand years ago, founding three colleges of Sanskrit learning and philosophy, the most important being at Shringeri, in southern India. He wrote Commentaries on the older Vedanta books, and many original works of great excellence, of which this is reckoned to be one.

Like all Shankara's separate works, *The Essence of the Teaching* is complete in itself, containing a survey of the whole of life, from a single standpoint; in the present case, from the point of view of pure intellect.

The moral problem before us, is the liberation of our souls from the idea of personality; and the opening of the door to the life of the universal Self, which will enter our hearts, and rule them, once the personal idea is put out of the way. And there is no more potent weapon for combating the personal idea than the clear and lucid understanding that what we call our personality is, in reality, only one of many pictures in the mind, a picture of the body, held before our consciousness, viewed by it, and therefore external to it. If the personality is a picture in the field of consciousness, it cannot be consciousness itself; cannot be our real self; but must necessarily be unreal and transient.

We are the ray of consciousness, and not the image of the body which it lights up, and which, thus lit up, we call our personality. And here we come to one point of the highest interest, in the present work: its central ideas anticipate, almost in the same words, the most original teachings of German philosophy — the only representative of pure thought, in the modern world. Hence a right understanding of it will bridge over one of the chasms between the East and the West, the remote past and the life of to-day; thus showing, once more, that the mind of man is everywhere the same; that there is but one Soul making itself

manifest throughout all history.

It may be enough, here, to point out that German philosophy, — the teaching of Kant, as developed by Schopenhauer, — regards each individual as a manifestation of the universal Will, a ray of that Will, fallen into manifestation, under the influence of the tendency called the will-towards-life.

This individualized ray of the universal Will, falling into the intellect, becomes thereby subject to the powers which make for manifestation, and which Kant analysed as Causality, Time, and Space. For Kant has shown, with admirable cogency and lucidity, that these so solid-seeming realities are not real at all, but were forms of our thought; mere figments of our intellects. What we call manifestation, Schopenhauer calls representation; and he has very fully developed the idea of the Universe as the resultant of the universal Will, manifested through these three forms of representation, — Causality, Time, and Space.

Now it is quite clear that he calls Universal Will what Shankara, following the Upanishads, calls the Eternal; and that the forms of Representation of Schopenhauer's system, correspond to the World-glamor, or Maya, of Indian thought. And it is further clear that the will-toward-life, or desire for sensuous existence, of the one system, is very close to the personal idea, or egotism, of the other.

Whoever is acquainted with the two systems, can point out a further series of analogies; we shall content ourselves with alluding to one. Schopenhauer taught that our salvation lies in denying the personal and selfish will-toward-life, within ourselves, and allowing the Universal Will to supersede it; — the very teaching which lies at the heart of Indian thought: the supersession of the individual self by the Self universal, the Self of all beings.

To turn now from the purely intellectual, to the moral side of the matter. If we consider it well, and watch the working of the powers of life we find within us, we shall see that all our misery and futility come from this very source, the personal idea, — the vanity and selfishness of our own personalities, coming into strife with the equally vain and selfish personalities of others.

There is not an evil that cannot be traced to this fertile source. Sensuality, for example, with all its attendant crime and pain, is built on two forces, both springing from the personal idea: first, the desire for the stimulus of strong sensation, to keep the sense of the separate, isolated self keen and vivid; and then the vanity and foolish admiration of our personal selves, as possessors of such abundant means of gratification. Another evil, the lust of possessions, is of the same brood; and, curiously enough, the root of it is — fear; the cowering fear of the personal self, before the menacing forces of the world; the desperate, and, — infallible accompaniment of cowardice, — remorselessly cruel determination to build up a triple rampart of possessions between the personality and the mutability of things. The whole cause of the race for wealth, the cursed hunger of gold, is a fearful and poltroon longing for security, protection for the personal self; which, indeed, as a mere web of dreams and fancies, is in very bad need of protection.

The last evil, ambition, which is only vanity grown up, is so manifestly of the same color with the others that no special indication of the fact is needed. Thus we see what an immense part of human life, and that, the most futile and pitiable part of it, is built up on so slight a foundation: the wholly mythical personality, the web of dreams, the mere image of a body", itself unreal, which has usurped a sort of sovereignty over all the powers of our walls and minds.

The whole problem for us is this, and it is one that recurs in every moment of life: to disperse this web of dreams which we call our personality, and so to let the pure and universal Will pour into our hearts, to follow out its own excellent purposes, and manifest its own beneficent powers. And thus we shall, for"-the first time, enter into our inheritance; no longer as shadowy and malevolent sprites, raging between earth and heaven, a sorrow to the angels, a mockery to the fiends; but rather as undivided parts of the great soul of humanity; of that universal Self, whose own nature is perfect Being, perfect Consciousness, perfect Bliss.

Theosophy

THEOSOPHY GENERALLY STATED (1) — *William Q. Judge*

The claim is made that an impartial study of history, religion and literature will show the existence from ancient times of a great body of philosophical, scientific and ethical doctrine forming the basis and origin of all similar thought in modern systems. It is at once religious and scientific, asserting that religion and science should never be separated. It puts forward sublime religious and ideal teachings, but at the same time shows that all of them can be demonstrated to reason, and that authority other than that has no place, thus preventing the hypocrisy which arises from asserting dogmas on authority which no one can show as resting on reason. This ancient body of doctrine is known as the "Wisdom Religion," and was always taught by adepts or initiates therein who preserve it through all time. Hence, and from other doctrines demonstrated, it is shown that man, being spirit and immortal, is able to perpetuate his real life and consciousness, and has done so during all time in the persons of those higher flowers of the human race who are members of an ancient and high brotherhood who concern themselves with the soul development of man, held by them to include every process of evolution on all planes. The initiates, being bound by the law of evolution, must work with humanity as its development permits. Therefore from time to time they give out again and again the same doctrine which from time to time grows obscured in various nations and places. This is the wisdom religion, and they are the keepers of it. At times they come to nations as great teachers and "saviours," who only re-promulgate the old truths and system of ethics. This, therefore, holds that humanity is capable of infinite perfection both in time and quality, the saviours and adepts being held up as examples of that possibility.

From this living and presently acting body of perfected men, H. P. Blavatsky declared she received the impulse to once more bring forward the old ideas, and from them also received several keys to ancient and modern doctrines that had been lost during modern struggles toward civilization, and also that she was furnished by them with some doctrines really ancient but entirely new to the present day in any exoteric shape. These she wrote among the other keys furnished by her to her fellow members and the world at large. Added, then, to the testimony through all time found in records of all nations, we have this modern explicit assertion that the ancient learned and humanitarian body of adepts still exists on this earth and takes an interest in the development of the race.

Theosophy postulates an eternal principle called the Unknown, which can never be cognized except through its manifestations. This eternal principle is in and is every thing and being; it periodically and eternally manifests itself and recedes again from manifestation. In this ebb and flow evolution proceeds and itself is the progress of the manifestation. The perceived universe is the manifestation of this Unknown, including spirit and matter, for Theosophy holds that those are but the two opposite poles of the one unknown principle. They coexist, are not separate nor separable from each other, or, as the Hindu scriptures say, there is no particle of matter without spirit, and no particle of spirit without matter. In manifesting itself the spirit-matter differentiates on seven planes, each more dense on the way down to the plane of our senses than its predecessor, the substance in all being the same, only differing in degree. Therefore from this view the whole universe is alive, not one atom of it being in any sense dead. It is also conscious and intelligent, its consciousness and intelligence being present on all planes though obscured on this one. On this plane of ours the spirit focalizes itself in all

human beings who choose to permit it to do so, and the refusal to permit it is the cause of ignorance, of sin, of all sorrow and suffering. In all ages some have come to this high state, have grown to be as gods, are partakers actively in the work of nature, and go on from century to century widening their consciousness and increasing the scope of their government in nature. This is the destiny of all beings, and hence at the outset Theosophy postulates this perfectibility of the race, removes the idea of innate unregenerable wickedness, and offers a purpose and an aim for life which is consonant with the longings of the soul and with its real nature, tending at the same time to destroy pessimism with its companion, despair.

In Theosophy the world is held to be the product of the evolution of the principle spoken of, from the very lowest first forms of life, guided as it proceeded by intelligent perfected beings from other and older evolutions, and compounded also of the egos or individual spirits for and by whom it emanates. Hence man, as we know him, is held to be a conscious spirit, the flower of evolution, with other and lower classes of egos below him in the lower kingdoms, all however coming up and destined one day to be on the same human stage as we now are, we then being higher still. Man's consciousness being thus more perfect is able to pass from one to another of the planes of differentiation mentioned. If he mistakes any one of them for the reality that he is in his essence, he is deluded; the object of evolution then is to give him complete self-consciousness so that he may go on to higher stages in the progress of the universe. His evolution after coming on the human stage is for the getting of experience, and in order to so raise up and purify the various planes of matter with which he has to do, that the voice of the spirit may be fully heard and comprehended. He is a religious being because he is a spirit encased in matter, which is in turn itself spiritual in essence.

Being a spirit he requires vehicles with which to come in touch with all the planes of nature included in evolution, and it is these vehicles that make of him an intricate, composite being, liable to error, but at the same time able to rise above all delusions and conquer the highest place. He is in miniature the universe, for he is a spirit, manifesting himself to himself by means of seven differentiations. Therefore is he known in Theosophy as a sevenfold being. The Christian division of body, soul, and spirit is accurate so far as it goes, but will not answer to the problems of life and nature, unless, as is not the case, those three divisions are each held to be composed of others, which would raise the possible total to seven. The spirit stands alone at the top, next comes the spiritual soul or Buddhi as it is called in Sanskrit. This partakes more of the spirit than any below it, and is connected with Manas or mind, these three being the real trinity of man, the imperishable part, the real thinking entity living on the earth in the other and denser vehicles of its evolution. Below in order of quality is the plane of the desires and passions shared with the animal kingdom, unintelligent, and the producer of ignorance flowing from delusion. It is distinct from the will and judgment, and must therefore be given its own place. On this plane is gross life, manifesting, not as spirit from which it derives its essence, but as energy and motion on this plane. It being common to the whole objective plane and being everywhere, is also to be classed by itself, the portion used by man being given up at the death of the body. Then last, before the objective body, is the model or double of the outer physical case. This double is the astral body belonging to the astral plane of matter, not so dense as physical molecules, but more tenuous and much stronger, as well as lasting. It is the original of the body permitting the physical molecules to arrange and show themselves thereon, allowing them to go and come from day to day as they are known to do, yet ever retaining the fixed shape and contour given by the astral

double within. These lower four principles or sheaths are the transitory perishable part of man, not himself, but in every sense the instrument he uses, given up at the hour of death like an old garment, and rebuilt out of the general reservoir at every new birth. The trinity is the real man, the thinker, the individuality that passes from house to house, gaining experience at each rebirth, while it suffers and enjoys according to its deeds — it is the one central man, the living spirit-soul.

Now this spiritual man, having always existed, being intimately concerned in evolution, dominated by the law of cause and effect, because in himself he is that very law, showing moreover on this plane varieties of force of character, capacity, and opportunity, his very presence must be explained, while the differences noted have to be accounted for. The doctrine of reincarnation does all this. It means that man as a thinker, composed of soul, mind and spirit, occupies body after body, in life after life, on the earth which is the scene of his evolution, and where he must, under the very laws of his being, complete that evolution, once it has been begun. In any one life he is known to others as a personality, but in the whole stretch of eternity he is one individual, feeling in himself an identity not dependent on name, form, or recollection.

This doctrine is the very base of Theosophy, for it explains life and nature. It is one aspect of evolution, for as it is reembodiment in meaning, and as evolution could not go on without reembodiment, it is evolution itself, as applied to the human soul. But it is also a doctrine believed in at the time given to Jesus and taught in the early ages of Christianity, being now as much necessary to that religion as it is to any other to explain texts, to reconcile the justice of God with the rough and merciless aspect of nature and life to most mortals, and to throw a light perceptible by reason on all the problems that vex us in our journey through this world. The vast, and under any other

doctrine unjust, difference between the savage and the civilized man as to both capacity, character, and opportunity can be understood only through this doctrine, and coming to our own stratum the differences of the same kind may only thus be explained. It vindicates Nature and God, and removes from religion the blot thrown by men who have postulated creeds which paint the creator as a demon. Each man's life and character are the outcome of his previous lives and thoughts. Each is his own judge, his own executioner, for it is his own hand that forges the weapon which works for his punishment, and each by his own life reaches reward, rises to heights of knowledge and power for the good of all who may be left behind him. Nothing is left to chance, favor, or partiality, but all is under the governance of law. Man is a thinker, and by his thoughts he makes the causes for woe or bliss; for his thoughts produce his acts. He is the centre for any disturbance of the universal harmony, and to him as the centre, the disturbance must return so as to bring about equilibrium, for nature always works towards harmony. Man is always carrying on a series of thoughts, which extend back to the remote past, continually making action and reaction. He is thus responsible for all his thoughts and acts, and in that his complete responsibility is established; his own spirit is the essence of this law and provides forever compensation for every disturbance and adjustment for all effects. This is the law of Karma or justice, sometimes called the ethical law of causation. It is not foreign to the Christian scriptures, for both Jesus and St. Paul clearly enunciated it. Jesus said we should be judged as we gave judgment and should receive the measure meted to others. St. Paul said: "Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap." And that sowing and reaping can only be possible under the doctrines of Karma and reincarnation.

But what of death and after? Is heaven a place or is it not? Theosophy teaches, as may be found in all sacred books, that after death, the soul reaps a rest. This is from its own nature. It is a thinker, and cannot during life fulfill and carry out all nor even a small part of the myriads of thoughts entertained. Hence when at death it casts off the body and the astral body, and is released from the passions and desires, its natural forces have immediate sway and it thinks its thoughts out on the soul plane, clothed in a finer body suitable to that existence. This is called Devachan. It is the very state that has brought about the descriptions of heaven common to all religions, but this doctrine is very clearly put in the Buddhist and Hindu religions. It is a time of rest, because the physical body being absent the consciousness is not in the completer touch with visible nature which is possible on the material plane. But it is a real existence, and no more illusionary than earth life; it is where the essence of the thoughts of life that were as high as character permitted, expands and is garnered by the soul and mind. When the force of these thoughts is fully exhausted the soul is drawn back once more to earth, to that environment which is sufficiently like unto itself to give it the proper further evolution. This alternation from state to state goes on until the being rises from repeated experiences above ignorance, and realizes in itself the actual unity of all spiritual beings. Then it passes on to higher and greater steps on the evolutionary road.

No new ethics are presented by Theosophy, as it is held that right ethics are forever the same. But in the doctrines of Theosophy are to be found the philosophical and reasonable basis for ethics and the natural enforcement of them in practice. Universal brotherhood is that which will result in doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, and in your loving your neighbor as yourself — declared as right by all teachers in the great

religions of the world.

FOOTNOTE:

1. From the Official Report, World's Parliament of Religions.
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Theosophy

WHY I BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION (1) — *J. D. Buck*

Man may be studied from two aspects. First: as a bundle of organs, tissues, cells, molecules, and atoms; in short, as an aggregate of elements and functions. Second: as an individual whole, in which all elements are, in an orderly sequence, subordinate to the Individual. In perfect health the individual not only dominates the elements, but is practically unconscious of their existence. When the organs and functions are out of order the individual is hampered in his manifestations, but he practically remains the same.

The body is thus the *chariot*; the vital energies the *horses*; and the Individual, the Thinker, the Ego, is the *driver*. These are the logical deductions from all the facts and phenomena of human existence, and warranted by every known law of physics and physiology, and volumes might be cited in their support.

The next point in our study of man will be to determine the relations of the Thinker or Ego to the organs, or body as a whole, (a) Has the *driver* any existence independent of, or separate from the *chariot*? (b) Are the two separable? (c) Does the driver build the chariot, or (d) does the chariot build (create) the driver, or (e) does something else create both?

The separability of the body from its animating intelligence is the common phenomenon of death, with the visible remainder, the body, and its final dissolution or decomposition. If the animating Ego still exists it is invisible to ordinary vision, and it ceases to manifest on the physical plane. The chariot remains, but driver and horses disappear. Separation has taken place. It being abundantly proven that under certain circumstances, separation between Ego and body takes place, the next question is, does

separation either in whole or partially take place under any other circumstances?

In answer to this question stand all the phenomena of syncope, catalepsy, trance, and the higher subjective phenomena of hypnotism; proving beyond all possible denial that partial separation, and sometimes *almost* as complete as at death, does take place. Beyond all these incidental and often, apparently, accidental separations between thinker and vehicle, stands the psychological science of the East, the science of Yoga, which is supported by all the empirical evidence, known in the West, including the whole record of hypnotism, mesmerism, etc., etc. The "projection of the double," *i. e.*, the appearance of the individual at places distant from where the body is known to be, gives evidence at this point of the separability of the Ego and its physical body.

Returning now to the more complete separation of Ego and vehicle as it occurs at death, we have abundance of evidence that what is invisible to ordinary vision, is visible to the clairvoyant. I have had the process of separation described and the invisible residuum fully defined by one whom I knew to be entirely ignorant of the science and philosophy involved, and such evidence is fully corroborated by thousands of witnesses in all times.

By the foregoing line of evidence I find the conclusion inevitable that man, as we find him, is an *ego*, inhabiting, and manifesting through a physical body, dependent upon that body for manifestation on the physical plane, and with the *strong probability* that the Ego both antedates and survives the physical body. In other words: there is overwhelming evidence of *Incarnation*.

From the nature of man and the fact of incarnation, we come to

consider the question of Reincarnation. All religions, all mythology and all traditions even of the most barbarous and primitive people assume the immortality of the soul, and while this fact does not amount to proof, it does create a strong probability in its favor. Such an instinct or intuition, universally held, must of itself have had a sufficient cause. If, however, (d) is true, and the chariot builds the driver; if the body creates the soul; if the Individual, the Thinker, the Ego, is the fortuitous result of an aggregation of atoms and molecules, or of the association of organs and functions, then, I hold, that with the dissolution of the atoms and molecules of the body, and the disappearance of vital movements and final dissociation of organs and functions, no Ego or soul survives. That which begins in time, ends in time. The question of immortality is, therefore, completely involved in the question of Reincarnation. If the Individual does not antedate, and in some way help to create the body, I hold that there is neither evidence, philosophy, nor probability that it survives it.

The next line of evidence is found in the theory of Evolution. If man lives but once upon this earth in a physical body, not only is there no evidence or hope of immortality, but, so far as the whole human race is concerned, no evolution possible. The increment supposed to be carried forward by heredity, generation after generation. and the potential yet unconscious evolution of all progenitors, is completely annulled by the law of cycles, and the descent again to barbarism, and the final disappearance of all previous civilized races. In other words, the law of evolution is met by the facts of atavism and the equally universal law of degeneracy, so far as physical life is concerned.

If, therefore, man lives but once upon this earth, Creation is without motive, evolution a farce, and immortality impossible.

By accepting the theory of Reincarnation every paradox

disappears, and every difficulty is at an end. The perfection of man stands revealed as the purpose of his creation; and evolution, through repeated incarnations, is the orderly process by which such perfection is attained, while the persistence of the Ego constitutes the immortality of the soul.

These, in brief, are the considerations that lead me to believe in Reincarnation as a logical necessity, based on all facts in human experience, fortified by all we know of the science of man and the philosophy of evolution. Outside of all such evidence, stand certain empirical facts in individual experience, viz., a large number of individuals, both children and adults, who seem to remember previous lives. It may readily be granted, that outside such individuals and in the absence of other, and corroborative evidence, such cases, for the mass of humanity who have no such recollection of previous existence, do not constitute proof of Reincarnation. They are charged to imagination, self-deception and the like. In the cases occurring spontaneously in young children, which cases are many and rapidly on the increase, imagination must be innate, as these children often horrify their orthodox parents by their recitals.

On the other hand, taken in conjunction with the consideration previously noted, we must I think add empirical proof to reason, logical necessity and probability, in favor of the theory of Reincarnation.

In conclusion, I hold that there is no Universal Law generally admitted by science that is supported by more evidence than this Law of periodical embodiment and disembodiment of the Ego in a physical vehicle. Not a single fact or probability stands recorded against it. All the evidence we have is in favor of it. I hold, therefore, that the theory of Reincarnation merges, by *sufficient evidence*, into a Universal Law of Nature; the most beneficent of

all human conceptions; the most valuable of all scientific discoveries; the most comprehensive of all philosophical deductions.

FOOTNOTE:

1. The first of a series of articles under this heading to be contributed by well-known exponents of Theosophy. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THE TEACHINGS OF PLATO — *Alexander Wilder*

"Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and starry-paven home
Floatest thou?
'I am the image of great Plato's spirit
Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit
His corpse below."

"Out of Plato" says Ralph Waldo Emerson "come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought." All else seems ephemeral, perishing with the day. The science and mechanic arts of the present time, which are prosecuted with so much assiduity, are superficial and short-lived. When Doctor James Simpson succeeded his distinguished uncle at the University of Edinburgh, he directed the librarian to remove the text-books which were more than ten years old, as obsolete. The skilled inventions and processes in mechanism have hardly a longer duration. Those which were exhibited at the first World's Fair in 1851 are now generally gone out of use, and those displayed at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876 are fast giving place to newer ones that serve the purposes better. All the science which is comprised within the purview of the senses, is in like manner, unstable and subject to transmutation. What appears today to be fundamental fact is very certain to be found, tomorrow, to be dependent upon something beyond. It is like the rustic's hypothesis that the earth stands upon a rock, and that upon another rock, and so on; there being rocks all the way down. But Philosophy, penetrating to the profounder truth and including the Over-Knowledge in its field, never grows old, never becomes out of date, but abides through the ages in perennial freshness.

The style and even the tenor of the *Dialogues* have been criticised, either from misapprehension of their purport or from a desire to disparage Plato himself. There is a vanity for being regarded as original, or as first to open the way into a new field of thought and investigation, which is sometimes as deep-seated as a cancer and about as difficult to eradicate. From this, however, Plato was entirely free. His personality is everywhere; veiled by his philosophy.

At the time when Plato flourished, the Grecian world had undergone great revolutions. The former times had passed away. Herakles and Theseus, the heroes of the Myths, were said to have vanquished the manslaying monsters of the worship of Hippa and Poseidon, or in other words supplanting the Pelasgian period by the Hellenic and Ionian. The arcane rites of Demeter had been softened and made to represent a drama of soul-history. The Tragedians had also modified and popularized the worship of Dionysos at the Theatre-Temple of Athens. Philosophy, first appearing in Ionia had come forth into bolder view, and planted itself upon the firm foundation of psychologic truth. Plato succeeded to all, to the Synthetists of the Mysteries, the Dramatists of the Stage, to Sokrates and those who had been philosophers before him.

Great as he was, he was the outcome of the best thought of his time. In a certain sense there has been no new religion. Every world-faith has come from older ones as the result of new inspiration, and Philosophy has its source in religious veneration. Plato himself recognized the archaic Wisdom-Religion as "the most unalloyed form of worship, to the Philosophy of which, in primitive ages, Zoroaster made many additions drawn from the Mysteries of the Chaldeans." When the Persian influence extended into Asia Minor, there sprung up philosophers in Ionia and Greece. The further progress of the religion of Mazda was

arrested at Salamis, but the evangel of the Pure Thought, Pure Word, and Pure Deed was destined to permeate the Western World during the succeeding ages. Plato gave voice to it, and we find the marrow of the Oriental Wisdom in his dialectic. He seems to have joined the occult lore of the East, the conceptions of other teachers, and the under-meaning of the arcane rites, the physical and metaphysical learning of India and Asia, and wrought the whole into forms adapted to European comprehension.

His leading discourses, those which are most certainly genuine, are characterized by the inductive method. He displays a multitude of particulars for the purpose of inferring a general truth. He does not endeavor so much to implant his own conviction as to enable the hearer and reader to attain one intelligently, for themselves. He is in quest of principles, and leading the argument to that goal. Some of the *Dialogues* are described as after the manner of the Bacchic dithyrambic, spoken or chanted at the Theatre; others are transcripts of Philosophic conversations. Plato was not so much teaching as showing others how to learn.

His aim was to set forth the nature of man and the end of his being. The great questions of who, whence and whither, comprise what he endeavored to illustrate. Instead of dogmatic affirmation, the arbitrary *ipse dixit* of Pythagoras and his oath of secrecy, we have a friend, one like ourselves, familiarly and patiently leading us on to investigation as though we were doing it of our own accord. Arrogance and pedantic assumption were out of place in the Akademe.

The whole Platonic teaching is based upon the concept of Absolute Goodness. Plato was vividly conscious of the immense profundity of the subject. "To discover the Creator and Father of this universe, as well as his operation, is indeed difficult; and

when discovered it is impossible to reveal him." In him Truth, Justice and the Beautiful are eternally one. Hence the idea of the Good is the highest branch of study.

There is a criterion by which to know the truth, and Plato sought it out. The perceptions of sense fail utterly to furnish it. The law of right for example, is not the law of the strongest, but what is always expedient for the strongest. The criterion is therefore no less than the conceptions innate in every human soul. These relate to that which is true, because it is ever-abiding. What is true is always right — right and therefore supreme: eternal and therefore always good. In its inmost essence it is Being itself; in its form by which we are able to contemplate it, it is justice and virtue in the concepts of essence, power and energy.

These concepts are in every human soul and determine all forms of our thought. We encounter them in our most common experiences and recognize them as universal principles, infinite and absolute. However latent and dormant they may seem, they are ready to be aroused, and they enable us to distinguish spontaneously the wrong from the right. They are memories, we are assured, that belong to our inmost being, and to the eternal world. They accompanied the soul into this region of time, of ever-becoming and of sense. The soul, therefore, or rather its inmost spirit or intellect, (1) is of and from eternity. It is not so much an inhabitant of the world of nature as a sojourner from the eternal region. Its trend and ulterior destination are accordingly toward the beginning from which it originally set out.

The Vision of Eros in the tenth book of the *Republic* suggests the archaic conception generally entertained that human beings dying from the earth are presently born into new forms of existence, till the three Weird Sisters shall have finished their task and the circle of Necessity is completed. The events of each

succeeding term of life take a direction from what has occurred before. Much may be imputed to heredity, but not all. This is implied in the question of the disciples to Jesus: "Which sinned, this person or his parents, that he should be born blind." We all are conscious of some occurrence or experience that seems to pertain to a former term of life. It appears to us as if we had witnessed scenes before, which must be some recollection, except it be a remembrance inherited from ancestors, or some spiritual essence has transferred it as from a *camera obscura* into our consciousness. We may account it certain, at any rate, that we are inhabitants of eternity, and of that eternity Time is as a colonial possession and distinct allotment.

Every thing pertaining to this world of time and sense, is constantly changing, and whatever it discloses to us is illusive. The laws and reasons of things must be found out elsewhere. We must search in the world which is beyond appearances, beyond sensation and its illusions. There are in all minds certain qualities or principles which underlie our faculty of knowing. These principles are older than experience, for they govern it; and while they combine more or less with our observations, they are superior and universal, and they are apprehended by us as infinite and absolute. They are our memories of the life of the eternal world, and it is the province of the philosophic discipline to call them into activity as the ideals of goodness and truth and beauty, and thus awaken the soul to the cognizing of God.

This doctrine of ideas or idealities lies at the foundation of the Platonic teachings. It assumes first of all, the presence and operation of the Supreme Intelligence, an essence which transcends and contains the principles of goodness, truth, and order. Every form or ideal, every relation and every principle of right must be ever present to the Divine Thought. Creation in all its details is necessarily the image and manifestation of these

ideas. "That which imparts truth to knowable things," says Plato, "that which gives to the knower the power of knowing the truth, is the Idea of the Good, and you are to conceive of this as the Source of knowledge and truth."

A cognition of the phenomena of the universe may not be considered as a real knowing. We must perceive that which is stable and unchanging, — *that which really is*. It is not enough to be able to regard what is beautiful and contemplate right conduct. The philosopher, the lover of wisdom, looks beyond these to the Actual Beauty, — to righteousness itself. This is the *episteme* of Plato, the superior, transcendent knowing. This knowledge is actual participating in the eternal principles themselves — the possessing of them as elements of our own being.

Upon this, Plato bases the doctrine of our immortality. These principles, the ideals of truth, beauty and goodness are eternal, and those who possess them are ever-living. The learning of them is simply the bringing of them into conscious remembrance. (2)

In regard to Evil, Plato did not consider it as inherent in human nature. "Nobody is willingly evil," he declares; "but when any one does evil it is only as the imagined means to some good end. But in the nature of things, there must always be a something contrary to good. It cannot have its seat with the gods, being utterly opposed to them, and so of necessity hovers round this finite mortal nature, and this region of time and ever-changing. Wherefore," he declares, "we ought to fly hence." He does not mean that we ought to hasten to die, for he taught that nobody could escape from evil or eliminate it from himself by dying. This flight is effected by resembling God as much as is possible; "and this resemblance consists in becoming just and holy through wisdom." There is no divine anger or favor to be propitiated;

nothing else than a becoming like the One, absolutely good.

When Eutyphron explained that whatever is pleasing to the gods is holy, and that that which is hateful to them is impious, Sokrates appealed to the statements of the Poets, that there were angry differences between the gods, so that the things and persons that were acceptable to some of them were hateful to the others. Everything holy and sacred must also be just. Thus he suggested a criterion to determine the matter, to which every god in the Pantheon must be subject. They were subordinate beings, and as is elsewhere taught, are younger than the Demiurgus.

No survey of the teachings of the Akademe, though only intended to be partial, will be satisfactory which omits a mention of the Platonic Love. Yet it is essential to regard the subject philosophically. For various reasons our philosopher speaks much in metaphor, and they who construe his language in literal senses will often err. His *Banquet* is a symposium of thought, and in no proper sense a drinking bout. He is always moral, and when in his discourse he begins familiarly with things as they existed around him, it was with a direct purpose to lead up to what they are when absolutely right. Love, therefore, which is recognized as a complacency and attraction between human beings, he declares to be unprolific of higher intellect. It is his aim to exalt it to an aspiration for the higher and better. The mania or inspiration of Love is the greatest of Heaven's blessings, he declares, and it is given for the sake of producing the greatest blessedness. "What is Love?" asked Sokrates of the God-honored Mantineke. "He is a great daemon," she replies, "and, like all daemons, is intermediate between Divinity and mortal. He interprets between gods and men, conveying to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods. He is the mediator who spans the chasm that divides them; in him all is bound together and through him the arts of the prophet and priest, their

sacrifices and initiations and charms, and all prophecy and incantation find their way. For God mingles not with men, but through Love all the intercourse and speech of God with men, whether awake or asleep, is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual; all other wisdom, such as that of arts or handicrafts, is mean and vulgar. Now these spiritual essences or intermediaries are many and diverse, and one of them is Love."

It is manifest then, that Plato emulates no mere physical attraction, no passionless friendship, but an ardent, amorous quest of the Soul for the Good and the True. It surpasses the former as the sky exceeds the earth. Plato describes it in glowing terms: "We, having been initiated and admitted to the beatific vision, journeyed with the chorus of heaven; beholding ravishing beauties ineffable and possessing transcendent knowledge; for we were freed from the contamination of that earth to which we are bound here, as an oyster to his shell."

In short, goodness was the foundation of his ethics, and a divine intuition the core of all his doctrines.

When, however, we seek after detail and formula for a religious or philosophic system, Plato fails us. Herein each must minister to himself. The Akademe comprised method rather than system; how to know the truth, what fields to explore, what tortuous paths and pitfalls to shun. Every one is left free in heart and mind to deduce his own conclusions. It is the Truth, and not Plato or any other teacher, that makes us free. And we are free only in so far as we perceive the Supernal Beauty and apprehend the Good.

FOOTNOTE:

1. Plato taught that the amative or passionate soul was not immortal. ([return to text](#))

2. Professor Cocker has given a classification of the Platonic Scheme of Ideas, of which this is an abridgment.

I. *The Idea of Absolute Truth*. This is developed in the human intelligence in its relation with the phenomenal world, as 1, the Idea of Substance; 2, the Idea of Cause; 3, the Idea of Identity; 4, the Idea of Unity; 5, the Idea of the Infinite.

II. *The Idea of Absolute Beauty* or Excellence. This is developed in the human intelligence in its relation to the organic world, as 1, the Idea of Proportion or Symmetry; 2, the Idea of Determinate Form; 3, the Idea of Rhythm; 4, the Idea of Fitness or Adaptation; 5, the Idea of Perfection.

III. *The Idea of Absolute Good* — the first cause or reason of all existence, the sun of the invisible world that pours upon all things the revealing light of truth. This idea is developed in the human intelligence in its relation to the world of moral order, as 1, the Idea of Wisdom or Prudence; 2, the Idea of Courage or Fortitude; 3, the Idea of Self-Control or Temperance; 4, the Idea of Justice. Under the head of justice is included equity, veracity, faithfulness, usefulness, benevolence and holiness. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

PRINCIPLE OR SENTIMENT? — *J. W. L. Keightley*

The sentiment of Brotherhood is one thing; the principle of Brotherhood is another. The one is a phase of emotion; the other is a fact throughout Nature. The principle is a constructive force in action; the sentiment, inadequate, partial and restricted, weakens, hence destroys. Unless we are able to discriminate between them in our daily lives, we shall risk to tear down where we would build; more, we shall risk many a benign possibility of the future, for is not this the supreme cyclic moment wherein, as in some titanic laboratory, the elements of future attainment are brought together? The principle will combine where the sentiment would scatter them.

By the principle of Brotherhood is meant the building power, the unifying force. It constructs by means of the harmony of contraries. Compassion is its name of names, its law of laws, and not its attribute. In that this principle flows forth to all from Nature's inmost heart, harmonizing all to one consenting whole, the infinite mercy of its action stands revealed. We come to understand why a teacher, speaking for his entire fraternity, said to a would-be pupil that it is their business to humanize their nature with compassion.

In the harmony which exists between apparent contraries lies a wise and simple teaching. Forms may differ, formulae may diverge, but let the chord of the mass be identical; let the same binding vibration exist; let the mental tendency or the spiritual gravitation be similar, and we shall find a central harmony and likeness in the most dissimilar appearances. The principle of Brotherhood will then have ample expression. Chemical relations at the one pole of Being and the relations of human minds at the

other pole, alike serve to illustrate this broad fact. All at once we see that Brotherhood lies, not in the divergences, not in the differences, but in the identity of a central truth, a common factor in whose presence those differences are minor, are without essential meaning. In the presence, as it were, of a divine unity, these temporary divergences are without force and weight. Thus compassion, in the presence of the spiritual identity of all Being, overlooks the clouds obscuring our sun-natures, and has but a single, universal care; that care, to assist the sun of the Self to shine forth.

This "spiritual identity of all Being" is another way of phrasing Universal Brotherhood. By the use of the word "spiritual" we transfer the conception to the plane of force *per se*. If we are to establish a clear distinction between the principle and the mere sentiment, some practical, working definition of the principle must be found; and it must hold good in every department of life. From the world of the mineral to the world of mind we must be able to identify it at every step. It is then evident that this principle can only be expressed in terms of force, for only through the media of underlying forces can all the planes of life be said to intercommunicate. The principle we seek is then readily found, for:

That which in the mineral kingdom is the binding force holding the molecules together around a common centre:

That which in the world of bodies is the equilibrating force, maintaining or preserving their interaction during "life," and after "death" coordinating the separating atoms to larger processes of life-action, returning each constituent of matter, of force or of substance to the cosmic storehouse whence it was drawn:

That which in the world of human action finds expression in the

social, the communal, the cooperative, the conservative and preservative instincts, however misused:

That which in the world of thought becomes visible as the intuition of an immortal essence and of the identity of all souls with the Over Soul:

These are all varying modes of one binding force, of one underlying unit of consciousness, seeking with never dying compassion to harmonize all these world-wide differences with itself — the Self. Everywhere to assist this ultimate expression is the work of the true Brotherhood.

The conception of unity in diversity lies at the root of the human mind. Warped and selfish instincts distort its features. Noble lives are those whose clear vision has seen that we must work for the good of the whole if we would advance the race, that we must continually bind, harmonize, equalize and equilibrate, often attaining some united result by means of the interaction of contraries, rounding each orbit to a central aim. They have seen that the tangent is unproductive. True, the master-builders have pulled down in order to build, but what have they demolished? Forms, creeds, habits of thought, erroneous ideas. Never persons; individuals never. Their use of force is necessarily impersonal, working as they do with Nature, and not against her. When men have hardened the living truth into a dogma, by the very laws of life that truth which is alive and vital must presently find another vehicle of expression, expanding with the expanding mind of man. Then the master-builders, arriving one by one along the centuries, attack these old devitalized forms, as the air attacks cast-off bodies exposed to its action; as the earth, the water, and the fire do. Imitating this natural action of the elements, the servants of Nature assist the disintegration of each rejected chrysalis of thought, aiding that thought — the escaping life itself

— to soar where once it crept. Teaching and living the law of individual responsibility and freedom of choice, they have applied themselves only to the dispersion of false ideals; they have not attacked persons, but have left these to the law. For the Wise know well that man is not homogeneous, and, meeting the divine in each with the divine, they have endeavored to humanize the bestial with compassion, and failing, have veiled their eyes awhile. Their hearts they veil never.

When we thus attain to the idea of the impersonal nature of force, we begin to understand why it has been said; (a) That the true disciple must feel himself to be but a force in nature and "work on with her"; and (b) That the first exercise of the selfish (or "black") magician is to hypnotize individuals. On the one hand, impersonality; on the other hand, personality carried to its highest degree. On the right, an endeavor to assist the central perfection of Nature: on the left an effort to centre Nature around one's self.

The law of cycles has its inevitable sweep and sway. With that the master builder works and must work, though nations fall. There are cataclysms he cannot avert, convulsions which he cannot impede but which he may shorten by hastening and intensifying their action. In truth he knows — and the knowledge averts sorrow — he knows that only outer forms can fail. The land may sink beneath the seas, bodies may disperse to the elements; but the national spirit lives and re-incarnates, the national mind finds its outlet and manifestation in lands remote, emerging from the waves, in bodies more adapted to the continuous *mental* development of the human soul.

It remains for us to establish some touchstone whereby we may know the absence of this impersonal spiritual force from our lives, or its presence in them. This touchstone is found in the

tendency of a person, an act or a thought. Our judgment will not be infallible, but the constant effort to make it by this larger light, clarifies the mental vision. A teacher is quoted as having said: "Judge the act, but not the actor." Is not this but another way of expressing the idea that we should observe the separative tendency of others and of ourselves, while presuming to judge and condemn no fellow being?

We have all of us seen persons whose main trend is towards unity, harmony. Not all their acts have borne an impress so divine. Yet their tendency is constructive. Whether in secluded homes they create an atmosphere of tranquillity and duty; whether they flash through the world clearing, as by the action of light, a way for truth and justice, they are ever units of the binding force, sharers of Nature's action. They have abandoned self. This is true of the simplest home maker as of the great patriots and reformers. The test of either is the question: Did they build or did they destroy? But no surface judgment must be brought to bear. Napoleon warred, but to raise the model of a wider freedom; to open out, amid prejudice and privilege, a broader path for human thought and human endeavor; his victories were eloquent for peace. Grant battled, but it was to bind his divided nation together in a more liberal and more lasting union. Before the profound mystery of human progress we are forced to admit that a just judgment of mankind is rarely possible to us: we know not what star has overshadowed the agents of destiny.

Once again, we have all of us met persons whose tendency is distinctly separative. Home, creeds, parties, movements, they struggle for supremacy of action in one or all of these and rend all alike. The sphere of destruction is theirs. They combine, only to explode. What they cannot break down, they condemn. The more inoperative their condemnation, the more insistent it becomes,

until the moral sense is blunted and they condemn upon hearsay only; they have lost sight of that basic rule of the truth lover, never to make a statement of fact except upon their own personal knowledge. They lead, only by the power of their personality; when this wanes, they are but names and ghosts. It must ever be so. Whenever the human mind has sown the giant weed of self, cultivating that under the sounding titles of genius or talent, power or charm; whenever the individual force is used for personal ambition and not in the all-embracing ends of Nature's harmonious plan; whenever the individual arrays the Personal Idea against the Ideal Nature; then Nature herself provides the antidote, the force reacts, the individual loses power and minds enslaved are all at once set free.

How then shall we know when this separative force is set in action, whether by another or by ourself? Can we not see when a person is attacked and when a principle? Can we not discern that action which aggrandizes a personality from that which upholds an ideal? Do we not know when the divine in man is encouraged and when the personality is praised? When the lower nature is bidden to look upward in hope, and when disdain and self-righteousness strike it lower still? Ah, yes! We are not so much at ease in our restricted mental atmosphere that we feel no exhilaration from a purer air.

Coming now to the question of the principle of Brotherhood and the mere sentiment thereof, I would point out that the sentiment may exist as a parasitic growth upon the true principle, threatening to stifle that in its false embrace. Sentimentality never discriminates. It advocates a "mush of concession." It rejoices in the exercise of emotion; loves to "feel good" to "feel kind"; to lisp the sugared phrase, the honeyed hope. It never knew that in Justice dwells a higher Brotherhood. Music, light, the enthusiasm of the crowd or of the personal mood are its

stimulants. It delights in fictions, as a false peace, an impossible equality. It pays no heed to spiritual harmony; has no respect for the fitness of things: ignores the laws of force; violates the underlying spirit of persons and acts; has no care but for its own expansion, no aim but to bubble and spill. Better than the vast diapason of Nature it loves the tinkle of its own slender tune. It must see itself in evidence and in its own way does quite as much harm as the combative use of the separative force. Why? Because it is, in fact, one mode of that same force. It seeks — what does it seek? Self-gratification, self-exhibition, the generous pose before its own mental mirror. It hesitates not to tread where angels fear to trespass, but goes giddily about its self-assumed task of uniting spiritual dissimilars, heedless what delicate balance of force it disturbs. Its vanity would seek to bind peace and war together; to merge, as only the ONE can do, the two poles of life into the circle, and because its passing sensations can bestow an emotional fraternity upon the most divergent acts or personalities, it fancies it has equalized all. This maudlin streak manifests in most of us and its test is the same as the test of a more spartan virtue. The sentiment of Brotherhood attaches to persons. It views a man as a simple unit, not as a congeries of forces, praises him as if his light were single and white. A principle is too cold and abstract a thing to kindle this facile flame. And that is our fault. When we have made the principle warm and vital with our abounding love, our daily heart-living of it, then, and then only can we complain if it draws not the love of others as a star attracts a star.

Whenever an act or a thought threatens the unity of that sacred cause to which we are pledged, it becomes our duty to suppress these in ourselves as to refrain from supporting them in others. For, I repeat, we cannot act alone; each must be wise for the rest. Moments will come when we must fulfil that other duty of pointing out the disruptive tendency of some proposed action.

Then go forward in God's name. Do not fear to offend sentiment; fear only to be unjust. Having done our duty, we may leave that to the law while with our fellows we work on at other tasks.

Remember that many an impulse apparently amiable has its root in self-esteem. The wish to ease a personal friend at any cost can do as much harm to the spiritual unity of our movement as hatred and malice can do: partiality is a separative agent and hath its back-stroke. There are times when it were better to follow our comrades in a mistake, giving up our own view with the larger aim of preserving harmony, for in such case those who guide the movement can use this harmonious force for great ends and can at the same time re-adjust the mistaken action. It were a far more difficult task to readjust those who quarrel in the cause of peace. Forces are forces, they are not to be gainsaid, not all the "sweetness and light" that sentiment ever uttered can abate one atom of their power, once we have evolved them. It is from our motives that they have birth and color; guard vigilantly the fountain of force in the heart.

Nor shall we fear to be loyal to our leaders, past and present. Smile the critics down; tell them we praise, not the leaders, but their work. Are they not embodied principles? When loyal expression is a force of far-reaching power in the grasp of the masters of forces, shall we withhold that aid? I trow we will not withhold it. Our Society was never so large, so vigorous, so united and harmonious as it is today, and the force which it represents is the outcome of the lives of our leaders; their vital power, their constructive energy. That we praise, that ancient building spirit, we, followers of that through many times and lands. Shall we not trustingly follow still, being ware of our own personal tendency, distrusting mere sentiment and, looking higher, looking deeper, discern in justice, in calmness, in patience and in compassion that universal principle which is the only true Brotherhood because it

looks only at the spiritual identity? Let us make no pact with the spirit of disruption, for we are the trustees of the future, a far-reaching spiritual responsibility is ours.

Theosophy

THE INNER MAN — *Zeta*

The centres of action in the inner man have always been a profound mystery to many students. This inner man in one of its aspects might be called the body of the mind. It may be well to point out that it is contrary to reason to conceive of the mind acting directly upon the physical nervous system; there must be some medium of action, some etheric body, composed of so subtle an order of matter that while able to affect the gross body it can yet be directly affected by the forces of the mind or Ego. I must, however, for the purposes of this article, take it for granted that this inner man exists, referring my readers to *The Ocean of Theosophy*, *Septenary Man*, and other similar works for arguments and evidences concerning its existence and nature. I must also take it for granted that this inner man has certain well defined centres of action.

These centres of action are intimately related to the *Tattvas* — sometimes defined as "subtle elements" — and are constructed by the Ego in order to relate itself to these forces, which in their totality constitute the manifested Cosmos. They may be thought of as telegraph stations, from which the Ego receives intelligence from without and within and governs itself accordingly. Those impressions coming from without constitute the Senses, with which all are familiar. Those coming from within constitute the "finer forces of nature," which it is so important that the student should learn to recognize and control.

Take for example the Desire centre, represented, let us say, by the Sacral plexus (physically), and radiating thence to all portions of the body, but having its greatest affinities, or effects, in the stomach and liver. It is a real thing, having its physical

representation in the body, and its definite function and office. It relates the Ego to the Desire Principle in nature, or places him *en rapport*, or in actual contact, with all "desiring" entities. Just so much of this universal desire as is capable of finding expression through his organism will be developed within him and manifested by him. This will be a purely automatic effect following upon the arousing to activity of this centre. It follows just as certainly as the electric current does upon completing the electrical circuit. He who arouses this centre receives the forces flowing from all desiring entities whose desires are upon the particular plane to which he descends.

This constitutes one of the finer forces of nature, and indicates its mode of action. And these forces are terrific in their potencies. Take the man who begins, let us say, a trivial dispute with another. His vanity is touched by opposition; he becomes angry, and so opens communication with the destructive auger of all the entities within the hierarchy to which he thus relates himself. Though normally he would be utterly incapable of such a deed, this force overwhelms him, and he stains his soul with murder in consequence.

Nothing can come out of nothing. The forces functioning through the desire centre of such a man are just as real, and more powerful, than is the energy exhibited in the explosion of dynamite. They have for the time entirely dominated all other centres, have made it impossible for them to act. The Ego itself is not responsible for the mad deed which followed upon the arousing of the centre, although it must suffer the inevitable consequences. Its connection with the deed lies in the fact that it has failed in preventing the original calling into activity of the centre.

And once the automatic action of these centres is fully recognized,

and man has so far at least learned to "know himself," the responsibility increases a hundred fold. The student must learn to look upon his body as he would upon a partially tamed animal which must be kept under strict control, the slightest relaxation of which is fraught with danger. When anger is felt approaching, the thought should be made to arise by the patient association of ideas that a mechanical portion of his physical mechanism is being aroused into undue activity, and he should dissociate himself from it, and control it as dispassionately and as deliberately as he would a restive horse which threatened to "bolt."

These centres, in a similar manner, relate the Ego to the entire Cosmos. Communication may be had with the highest principles in nature just as surely as with desire-filled entities. The Ego has ever the choice as to what portions of its complex machinery it will utilize. The thinking centre acts equally automatically, once aroused into activity. The brain is just as much a mechanical mechanism for a definite purpose as is the heart. The brain-mind is only a superior kind of tool which the Ego uses, and it may be overwhelmed by the finer forces with which it places itself *en rapport*, just as completely, although not in the same manner, as the desire centre is when murder is committed. Thought must be controlled even more sternly than desire; its force is more subtle, its evil effects not so immediately apparent. In ordinary dreams we see its automatic action fully demonstrated. Let each student beware, then, how he relates his thinking centre with the vibrations flowing from similar centres. Many an honest student of life has descended into the slough of materialism because he invited the united forces of all the materialistic minds of his age. The finer force so evoked was overwhelming, and as real as dynamite.

Let each student, therefore, habitually think of himself as apart

from all these centres. He is the Mystery-Ego, the Ray of the Infinite, who relates himself to his Cosmos with these divinely complex centres which constitute his real body. All are his servants; none are himself. All are to be utilized; but all are to be controlled.

They must be made servants; must not be permitted to usurp the function of Master. Without the desire centre the Ego would be cut off from all knowledge of desire in himself or others, and, how, then, could he develop compassion? It is the same with all these centres. They have not been idly or uselessly constructed. All are divine, and all necessary to complete the divine harmony of perfected being.

Let them be studied; let the student learn to recognize them, and their modes of action, their location as centres, their automatic nature, and he will find them as an open door upon the threshold of the Temple wherein the Mysteries of Being are enacted.

Theosophy

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE: II — *L. G.*

The address to the Society for Psychical Research by its President, Professor William Crookes, F.R.S., in January last, is a notable paper, that will doubtless fail — as usual — to attract from the scientific world the attention it deserves. Professor Crookes has had his experiences in this respect, and has not been cowed by them, while admitting that his individual ardor in disclosing results, may have suffered abatement. A zealous and indefatigable student, an open and sincere mind, and a courageous soul, — the world of science is indebted to him for numerous discoveries of importance in realms that he was almost the first to explore. The demonstration of the fourth or "radiant" condition of matter and the conduct of atoms in a vacuum are among his achievements, and it is, in fact, to the so-called Crookes' tube that the latest disclosure, of the nature and effect of the Rontgen rays are due. His recognized standing in the scientific world, however, did not prevent his being hounded by ridicule and persecution, and his sanity even being challenged when twenty years ago, he ventured to investigate the extraordinary phenomena illustrated by Home, the American medium, and had the nerve to publish the results of his investigations, as conscientious and accurate as any he ever made, indicating the existence of natural laws with which the world is not yet acquainted. Crookes' experience ran parallel with that of the German physicist Zollner, who pursued a similar line of enquiry, and as a reward for his courage and fidelity to truth, was finally driven into a madhouse by the vituperations of his colleagues. Professor Crookes in his address does not hesitate to declare that Psychical Science seems to him "at least as important as any other science whatever," and the "embryo of what in time may

dominate the whole world of thought." He states his conviction that no one can possibly declare what does *not* exist in the universe or even what is *not* going on about us every day. He therefore deprecates all dogmatism, confesses ignorance, and abides in the cheerful hope and expectation of new and interesting discoveries. We know little or nothing of the conditions that will invest us after death, — or so much of us as shall survive that event, — but it is in the highest degree improbable that spiritual existences are subject to so material a law as gravitation, or that materiality, form, and space are other than temporary conditions of our present existence.

Intelligence, thought and will, of which we may conceive our posthumous constitution to consist, must be untrammelled by space or gravitation, and yet it is difficult to imagine them independent of form and matter. What then must be the constitution of matter that it shall serve its purpose to form at once the solid rock ribs of the earth, and the ethereal moulding of spiritual substance. With Faraday, Crookes considers that the atom must be conceived not as a hard, irreducible, infinitesimal mass, but as a "centre of power," and that "shape" is merely a function of the disposition and relative intensity of the forces.

"This view of the constitution of matter would seem to involve necessarily the conclusion that matter fills all space. ... In that view, matter is not merely mutually penetrable, but each atom extends, so to say, throughout the whole of the solar system — yet always retaining its own centre of force." (Faraday "On the Nature of Matter.") Professor Crookes therefore pictures what he conceives as the constitution of spiritual beings as follows: "Centres of intellect, will, energy and power each mutually penetrable, whilst at the same time permeating what we call space; but each centre retaining its own individuality, persistence of self, and memory. Whether these intelligent centres of the

various spiritual forces which in their aggregate go to make up man's character or Karma, are also associated in any way with the forms of energy which, centred, form the material atom — whether these spiritual entities are material, not in the crude gross sense of Lucretius, but material as sublimated through the piercing intellect of Faraday, is one of those mysteries which to us mortals will perhaps ever remain an unsolved problem."

To this the transcriber may be permitted to add that to the earnest and intuitional student of the *Secret Doctrine*, the mysteries so clearly stated will be resolved into logical and comprehensive facts, and cease to present themselves as discouraging and impossible problems.

The succeeding three or four pages of the address are devoted to pointing out what would be the effect of shrinking man to microscopic dimensions, or enlarging him to those of a colossus. In the former case he would probably find the common laws of nature, as we understand them, quite incomprehensible, since molecular physics would compel his attention and dominate his world. For example, capillarity opposing its action to that of gravity as water rises in a thread or tube; the surface tension of liquids controlling their fluidity, as in a dewdrop; metal bars floating on water, as a sewing needle will do. The study of molar physics, or even chemistry, as we understand them, would be beyond his ken. On the other hand, the colossus would fail to observe the minor natural phenomena — and granite would be as chalk. All his actions involving immense momentum and friction would develop heat, and from this he would imagine most substances to be inconveniently hot-tempered and combustible. These illustrations are given to show how completely we are creatures of our environment and how readily hallucinations and erroneous conclusions can be compelled by it. The suggestion is logically inevitable, that our own boasted knowledge must be

largely based upon subjective conditions, and may be as fanciful in fact as the perceptions and convictions of a homunculus. In further evidence of the subjectivity that controls us, Professor Crookes quotes from Professor James, of Harvard, who shows the extraordinary variation in apparent sequence of phenomena that would ensue if our "time scale" or sense of duration were altered. The aspect of nature would be quite changed. We can now take cognizance of, say, ten separate events in a second. To increase the number, makes them indistinguishable. Suppose, as is likely, the period of our lifetime to be capable only of a certain number of impressions, and that we could perceive so many as 10,000 in a second. We should then endure less than a month and individually learn nothing of the changes of the seasons. A day would be two years long and the sun seem almost at a standstill in the heavens. Reverse the hypothesis and imagine our possible perception of events to be but one thousandth of what it is, and our lives consequently be correspondingly extended. The sequence of events as we see them now would be inconceivably rapid. Moving bodies, a District Messenger for example, from swiftness of motion, would become invisible, and the sun a whirling meteor running its course from sunrise to sunset in the equivalent of 43 seconds. The growth of mushrooms would seem instantaneous and plants to rise and fall like fountains. The universe would be completely changed for us, and yet there is reason to believe that there are forms of life for whom existence is quite comparable to either of those imagined for man.

It is the subject of Telepathy however, viz.: the transmission of thought impressions directly from one mind to another, without the intermediation of the recognized organs of sense, that most strongly engages Professor Crookes' attention and is the basis of the most interesting part of his discourse. Noting the reluctance of science to entertain this concept and the aversion and neglect

with which, the accumulated evidence of its actuality is treated, and considering how impressions may be conveyed, he takes as a starting point a table of vibrations in successive steps beginning with 2 per second and doubling at each step.

Between the 5th and 15th steps, viz.: from 32 to 32,000 vibrations per second, lies the range of sound audible to the human ear, conveyed by the air. Between the 15th and 35th steps, viz.: from 32,000 to a third of a billion vibrations is the region of the electric rays, the medium being the ether. Between the 35th and 45th steps, we are ignorant of the functions of these vibrations. From the 45th to the 50th — with vibrations from 35 billions to 1875 billions per second, we have the range of the heat and light rays — with red at 450 and violet at 750 billions, a narrow margin of visibility. Beyond this is a region unknown and almost unexplored, and the vibrations of the Rontgen rays may perhaps be found between the 58th and 61st steps, viz.: from a fourth of a trillion to 10 times that number per second. The known areas leave great gaps among them, and as the phenomena of the universe are presumably continuous, we are confronted at once with the narrow limitations of our perceptions and knowledge.

As the vibrations increase in frequency, their functions are modified, until at the 62d step, nearly 5 trillions per second, the rays cease to be refracted, reflected, or polarized, and traverse dense bodies as through they were transparent.

It is in these regions that Professor Crookes discerns the practicability of direct transmission of thought.

"It seems to me that in these rays we may have a possible mode of transmitting intelligence, which, with a few reasonable postulates, may supply a key to much that is obscure in psychical research. Let it be assumed that these rays, or rays even of higher frequency, can pass into the brain and act on some nervous

centre there. Let it be conceived that the brain contains a centre which uses these rays, as the vocal cords use sound vibrations (both being under the command of intelligence), and sends them out with the velocity of light, to impinge upon the receiving ganglion of another brain. In this way some, at least, of the phenomena of telepathy, and the transmission of intelligence from one sensitive to another through long distances, seem to come within the domain of law, and can be grasped. A sensitive may be one who possesses the telepathic or receiving ganglion in an advanced state of development, or by constant practice is rendered more sensitive to these high-frequency waves. Experience seems to show that the receiving and the transmitting ganglia are not equally developed; one may be active, while the other like the pineal eye in man, may be only vestigial. By such a hypothesis no physical laws are violated, neither is it necessary to invoke what is commonly called the supernatural."

The obvious objection to this searching supposition is that the mental forces conveying the message would affect all sensitives within their reach and be subject to the law of expansion, and therefore become ineffective at great distances. The reply is also obvious that in the conditions assumed, we are, as with the Rontgen rays, no longer dealing with the common limitations of matter or the narrow concepts of space and time. Nor is it inconceivable that by the exercise of concentrated thought and will, the message can be determined in its direction as a telegraphic signal by its wire, and be delivered at its destination without loss of energy from distance, friction or other physical material sources of impediment or diminution. Intelligence and will here come into play, and these mystic forces are outside the law of conservation and loss of energy as understood by physicists.

It is surprising that the subject of telepathy should be so carefully

avoided by scientific investigators and associations, because the overwhelming advantages were it practicable of so direct and swift a means of communication are obvious, and because the evidences of its practicability are of almost daily occurrence. It is not in the least unusual that an attentive listener interested in the sequence of thought conveyed by the speaker is able to divine the conclusion of a sentence or the outcome of the communication. This is in fact a rather common occurrence. It is a parlor game also, to make a blindfolded person discover an object, secretly hidden during his absence, by the concentrated thought and directive mental impulse of those who are cognizant of the hiding place.

It is evident that even now very many people possess the faculties, both of transmission and perception, and that many more might presently acquire them; but it is also probable that the world at large is not yet prepared to use such a formidable power with prudence or advantage to others. The temptations to misuse it, as in the case of hypnotism, would be too great, perhaps, for average humanity to resist, and the evil-disposed would be the first to avail themselves of the power to control others for their own benefit, or for purposes not beneficial to humanity.

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VI-4a — *Basil Crump*

VI. — THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG.

PART IV. — THE DUSK OF THE GODS.

Moreover, the power that works for evil, the real bane of (*i.e.*, that poisons) Love, condenses itself into the *Gold* robbed from Nature and misused, the Nibelung's Ring. The Curse that cleaves thereto is not dispelled ere it is given again to Nature, the Gold plunged back into the Rhine. . . . All is *experience*. Nor is Siegfried, taken alone (the male alone), the perfect Man: only with Brynhild becomes he the redeemer. *One* cannot do all; it needs the plural; and the suffering, self-offering woman becomes at last the true, the open-eyed redemptrix: for Love, in truth, is the "Eternal Womanly" itself. . . . However, to summarize the thing, I ask you: Can you figure to yourself a *moral action* otherwise than under the idea of *Renunciation*? And what is the highest holiness, *i.e.*, complete Redemption, but the adoption of this principle for every action of our lives? — *Letter to August Roedel*.

SIEGFRIED'S Death, as this, the last and most tragic section of the great Tetralogy, was originally called, was really the first part of the story which Wagner cast into dramatic form. But he saw in working it out that its deeply stirring interest and enormous import needed a setting forth of earlier causes in order to make the meaning clear. Thus it came about that, working backwards, the poet-musician unfolded the tale to the point where we see in the theft of Alberich, the cause of Siegfried's death at the hand of the Nibelung's son Hagen. Let us not lose sight of the elements of the "Eternal Manly" (Will, Force and Intellect) and the "Eternal Womanly," (Endurance, Love and Intuition) which one sees embodied again and again in the characters of these four dramas until they find their noblest expression in the union of Siegfried and Brynhild — a union which (as Brynhild foresaw) means death to them both, but in that death, VICTORY and REDEMPTION



RICHARD WAGNER

(We are indebted to the Musical Courier, New York, for this excellent portrait.)

The Dusk of the Gods is ushered in by the sorrowful song of the three Norns (Goddesses of Fate and Daughters of Erda), as they weave the Cord of Fate and tell the story of the past on the Valkyrie's Rock. In the background is the yellow glow of the fire.

The first Norn tells of the World's Ash Tree on whose verdant branches they once weaved the Cord of Fate. From its roots there welled forth a stream of purest knowledge.

A fearless god
Sought to drink of the fount,
Giving up an eye (1)
To buy the ineffable boon.

Then from the Ash-Tree, Wotan broke off a branch to serve as the shaft of his all-ruling spear. The Tree, thus wounded, withered and died; the Fount of Knowledge ceased to flow.

Dark with sorrow
Waked then my song.
I weave again
At the World's Ash Tree no more,
So must the Fir Tree
Find me support for the Cord.

Then the second Norn relates how Wotan carved on his spear the Runes of Bargain, and the fearless

Hero he had created cut it in twain. How he then summoned his heroes to fell the Ash Tree and gather the wood into faggots. Now, sings the third Norn, he sits in Valhalla, surrounded by gods and heroes, with the faggots piled around its walls. When the wood takes fire, then will begin the dusk of the gods. By the power of his spear he chained the Fire God to the Valkyrie's Rock. One day he will thrust the splintered spear shaft into Loke's smouldering breast, and cast the burning brand into the heap which surrounds Valhalla.

The night is waning and the Cord gets tangled and frayed, as the Norns tell of Alberich's theft and his awful Curse. Suddenly it breaks, and tying the pieces round their bodies they disappear, crying:

Here ends all our wisdom!
The world knows
Our wise words no more.
Away! To Mother! Away!

As the dawn appears, Siegfried and Brynhild enter from the Cave. He is in full armor and she leads her horse Grane, saying, "What worth were my love for thee if I sent thee not forth to shape fresh deeds? *Only the fear that thou hast not won enough of my worth* makes me hesitate." Then, as if sensing the future, she utters these solemn and beautiful words:

Think of the oaths which unite us,
Think of the faith we bear,
Think of the love we feel;
Then will Brynhild always burn
In thy heart as a holy thing.

As token of this love Siegfried gives her the Ring — that dread symbol of selfish power which still holds Alberich's Curse. In return she gives him her horse, Grane, who is fearless as Siegfried himself. Now he recognizes that it is from her he gets his power and virtue:

Thy noble steed bestriding
And with thy sheltering shield,
Now Siegfried am I no more:
I am but as Brynhild's arm!

Whilst Brynhild's parting words remind him of their essential unity:

So art thou Siegfried and Brynhild. —

O ye holy powers above us
Watch o'er this devoted pair!
Though apart, who can divide us?
Though divided, we are one!

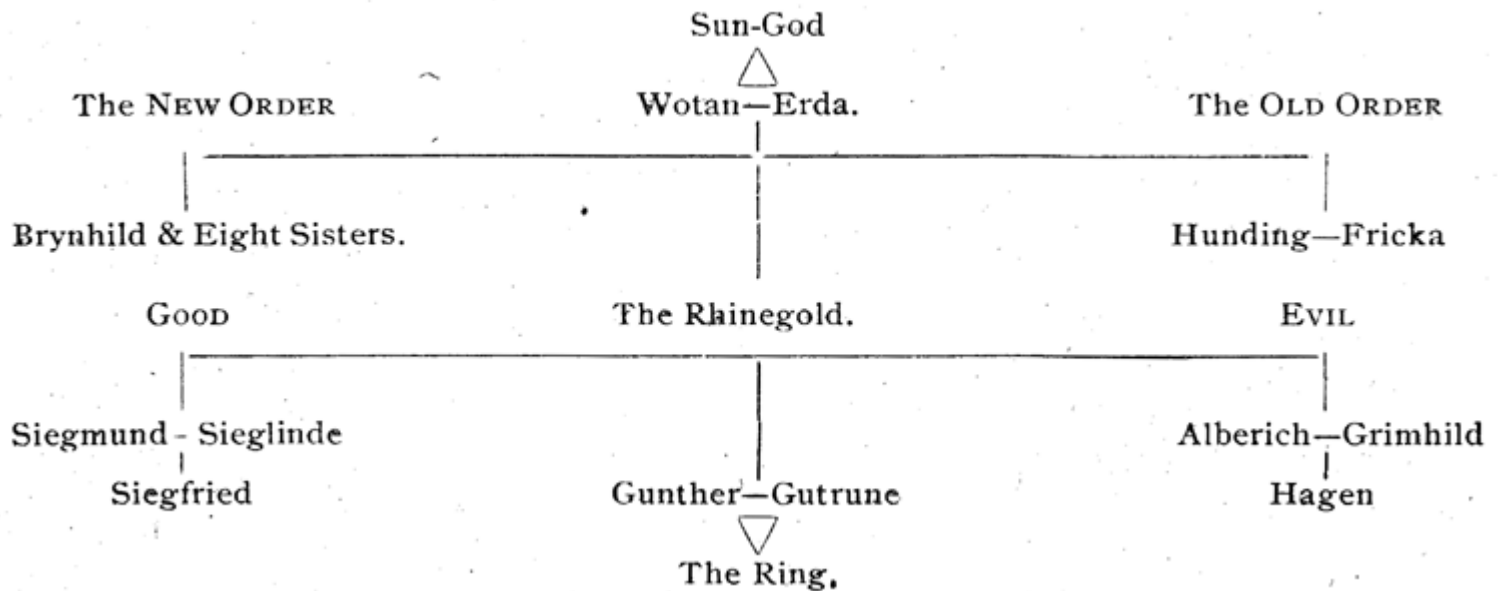
Can we not hear those beautiful lines from the *Dream of Ravan* —

Before all time — beyond — beside,
Thou rememberest her eternally,
For she is thy spirit's primeval bride,
The complement of thy unity,
Joined or dissevered, averted or fond,
'Twixt her and thee an eternal bond
Exists, which tho' ye were to seek,
Ye cannot ever, ever break —
A bond from which there is no freeing,
Since the typhal spirit never
From its antitype can sever,
She is a portion of thy being
To all eternity.

Let the mind go back over this beautiful story of our forefathers which Wagner devoted the flower of his life-energy to forcing into the hearts of a cold, unbrotherly generation — the story of the loving care and protection of Brynhild for Siegfried, even before he came into objective being, and of her sacrifice of godhood in order to become united with him, teach him her wisdom, and so produce "The perfect Man, the Man-God, who is higher than the Angels." It is the self-sacrificing love of the "Inner God" for its Human Reflection, here throwing a beautiful and ennobling light on the higher and more real aspects of human relationship.

To the soul, newly united to its divine nature, there now comes a final trial, and his safety will depend on his keeping the remembrance of that divinity within his heart. Here it is that we shall see the last terrible result of the Nibelung's Curse. In order to understand clearly the complicated action which follows it will be well to roughly indicate the grouping of the good and evil forces as the various

embodiments of the Will and Intellect of Wotan and the Wisdom and Love of Erda. The diagram must therefore not be taken in the ordinary sense of a genealogical tree.



With the parting of Siegfried and Brynhild the Epilogue closes and we are introduced to the Hall of the Gibichungs on the banks of the Rhine, where Hagen, the anger-begotten son of "Love's dark enemy," is plotting to get the Ring from Siegfried. His tools are the Gibichungs, Gunther and his sister Gutrune. It is interesting to note that they are the half-blood relations of Hagen, and they stand midway between the good and evil forces as shown in the foregoing diagram. To the vain and ambitious Gunther the evil half-brother holds out the prospect of winning more power and wisdom by wedding the maiden who dwells on the fire-girt rock. But only Siegfried, greatest of heroes, can pass through the fire; how then can Gunther win her? Hagen forthwith unfolds his crafty plan: Gunther shall give Siegfried a drink which shall cause him to forget Brynhild and fall in love with Gutrune. While they plot Siegfried's horn is heard on the Rhine and he enters in search of Gunther. The Drink of Forgetfulness is offered to him by Gutrune, and, accepting it, he immediately falls in love with her. Turning to Gunther he asks if he is married; Gunther replies that he is not and that he wishes to espouse Brynhild. Siegfried, at the mention of that name, shows that the Drink of Forgetfulness has done its double work and he has lost all memory of his holy love. Not only so, but he now enters into the rite of Blood-Brotherhood with Gunther, and undertakes with the aid of the Farnhelm or Helmet of Concealment to take Gunther's form and win Brynhild for him. We may here quote Wagner's comment on this, and the closely allied drama of *Tristan and Isolde* which he wrote during the greater

labors of the Ring. "Both Siegfried and Tristan, in bondage to an illusion (2) which makes this deed of theirs unfree, woo for another their own eternally predestined bride, and in the false relation hence arising find their doom."

Meanwhile Brynhild is visited by her sister-Valkyrie, Valtranta, who in agitated and sorrowful tones tells her how Wotan sits silent and grave in Valhalla's halls, and has sent forth his two ravens to bring him tidings of the end:

Unto his breast
Weeping I pressed me;
His brooding then broke; —
And his thoughts turned, Brynhild, to thee!
Deep sighs he uttered,
Closed his eyelids,
As he were dreaming,
And uttered these words:
"The day the Rhine's three daughters
Gain by surrender from her the Ring
From the Curse's load
Released are gods and men!"

But merely to preserve the old order of things — the pomp and selfish rest of Valhalla and the gods — Brynhild will not renounce the Ring, and sends Valtranta away in despair. Wagner's explanation to his friend, August Roeckel, who could not fathom his deep meaning, throws the necessary light on this:

"Let me say a further word about Brynhild. Her, also, you misjudge, when you call her refusal to make away the Ring to Wotan hard and perverse. Have you not seen how Brynhild cut herself from Wotan and all the gods for sake of *Love*, because — where Wotan harbored plans — she simply loved? After Siegfried fully woke her, she has had no other knowledge saving that of Love. Now — since Siegfried sped from her — the symbol of this Love is — the *Ring*. When Wotan demands it of her, nothing rises to her mind but the cause of her severance from Wotan (because she dealt from Love); and only one thing knows she still, that she has renounced all godhood for Love's sake. But she knows that Love is the only godlike thing; so, let Valhalla's splendor go to ground, the Ring — her love — she will not yield. I ask you: How pitifully mean and miserly were she, if she refused to give up the Ring because she had heard (mayhap

through Siegfried) of its magic and its golden might? Is *that* what you seriously would attribute to this glorious woman? If, however, you shudder to think of her seeing in that *Cursed Ring* the symbol of true Love, you will feel precisely what I meant you to, and will recognize the power of the Nibelung's Curse at its most fearful, its most tragic height: then will you fully comprehend the necessity of the whole last drama, *Siegfried's Death*. That is what we still had to witness, to fully realize the evil of the Gold."

Here we can plainly see that the Curse is now blinding even Brynhild, and she fails to see that Love, renounced by Alberich in the lowest depths to gain selfish power, must now be renounced by her in its highest form *as a persona/ possession* if the Curse is to be redeemed. It is the terrible results which follow this last and highest form of Desire that force Brynhild to realize the necessity for executing Wotan's last wish. For be it remembered that, in Wagner's own words, "Wotan soars to the tragic height of willing his own undoing."

Now comes the most awful scene in this dark tragedy. Brynhild hears the notes of Siegfried's horn and eagerly awaits his coming, when lo! to her astonishment and terror a strange form appears through the fire, announces himself as Gunther, and claims her as wife. In vain she holds up the ring to protect herself; he wrests from her the treasured love-token and takes her to the real Gunther, who waits without. "Why does Brynhild so speedily submit to the disguised Siegfried?" continues Wagner in his letter. "Just because he had torn from her the *Ring*, in which alone she treasured up her strength. The terror, the demoniacal, of the whole scene has entirely escaped you. Through the flames foredoomed for Siegfried alone to pass, the fire which experience has shown that he alone *could* pass, there strides to her — with small ado — an 'other.' The ground reels beneath Brynhild's feet, the world is out of joint; in a terrible struggle she is overpowered, she is 'forsaken by God.' Moreover it is *Siegfried*, in reality, whom (unconsciously — but all the more bewilderingly) despite his mask, she — almost — recognizes by his flashing eye. (You feel it, here passes something quite '*unspeakable*,' and therefore you are very wrong to call me to account for it in speech!)"

Once more we return to the banks of the Rhine. It is still night, and Alberich, ever on the watch to regain his lost booty, is holding conclave with his son. The pale moonlight dimly reveals the evil pair:

Yet potent hatred
I planted, Hagen,
In thee, my avenger: —
To win me the Ring,

Thou'ltt vanquish Volsung and Wotan.

Swear to me, Hagen, my son?

Hagen gives the required oath. The rising sun reveals Siegfried returning alone from the Valkyrie's Rock. Questioned by Hagen and Gutrune, he relates the horrible night's work and how he brought Brynhild to the real Gunther:

When shore was near,
Flash! — in shape
Reversed were Gunther and I.
Then by the helmet's virtue,
Wishing I hither flew.
By hast'ning wind impelled,
The pair up the river come.

The two falsely-matched couples meet. Brynhild, with terror and amaze, recognizes Siegfried. Almost fainting she falls into the unconscious hero's arms, murmuring, "Siegfried — knows me not!" Mark the growing horror of this intensely dramatic crisis; for, as Siegfried points to her supposed husband Gunther, in a flash she sees the Ring on his finger. Starting forward, "with fearful impetuosity," she exclaims: "Ha! That Ring upon his hand! His —? Siegfried —?" Struggling to repress the storm of emotion which rises within her, she imperiously demands of Gunther an explanation. But Gunther, puzzled, knows nothing of it. Then, turning frantically on Siegfried, she accuses him of the heartless theft, denied in all unconsciousness by the hero, who, under the spell of the magic drink, remembers naught after winning it from the Dragon. This last fearful plot of the dark powers blinds even Brynhild's sight. She does not see that Siegfried unconsciously deceived her, and calls on the Gods to avenge the wrong:

Holy Gods!
Ye heavenly guardians!
Was this indeed
Your whispered will?
Grief do ye give
Such as none ever grasped.
Shape me a shame
No mortal has share?

Vouchsafe revenge then
Like none ever viewed, —
Rouse me to wrath
Such as none can arrest!
Here let Brynhild's
Heart straight be broken
If he who wronged her
May but be wrecked.

Straightway she declares that Siegfried is her true husband, and he is accused of breaking his oath of Blood-Brotherhood with Gunther. On the spear-point offered by the plotter Hagen he swears:

Where steel e'er can strike me;
Strike thou at me:
Where'er death can be dealt me
Deal it to me,
If she really is wronged —
If I have injured my friend.
And on this fateful point Brynhild also swears:
I sanctify thy strength
To his destruction!
And I bless thy blade, withal,
That it may blight him;
For broken are all of his oaths,
And perjured now doth he prove.

Horrible is the delusion which besets this hapless pair. Brynhild dimly feels it, and, as Siegfried and Guttrune depart, she murmurs in bewilderment:

What infernal craft
Can here be hidden?
.....
What can all my runes do
Against this riddle?

Now the arch-plotter Hagen, watching his opportunity, learns from her that she had made Siegfried invulnerable except in his back, since she well knew that he would never turn it to an enemy. "There," says Hagen, "shall he be speared." Thus is the plot completed for the Hero's death.

To be continued.)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Remember that this eye (the eye of spiritual vision) was afterwards regained by Siegfried when he had slain the Dragon. (See note to *Siegfried*, ante. p. 56.) ([return to text](#))
2. The illusion of matter, here represented by the Gibichungs, Hagen and the Curse of the Ring. In *Tristan* it is represented by King Mark for whom Tristan woos Isolde. ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA: I — *Franz Hartman*

I. UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

The first and main object of the Theosophical Society and the one to which the other two objects are only subsidiary, is the formation of a nucleus for the practical carrying out of the idea of universal brotherhood, irrespective of any dogma, creed, religious belief or opinion whatsoever; and the only thing which the Theosophical Society as such demands of its members, is that each shall grant to the opinion of others the same amount of tolerance that he claims for his own. However opinions may differ in regard to different subjects, and however much the members may discuss these differences of opinion and try to convince each other of what each believes to be true, or to demolish erroneous theories, there ought to be amongst them that harmony of soul-union, which springs from the recognition of the one certain fact that we are all manifestations of the one great divine spirit, in whom we all dwell and live and have our being and who lives and dwells and strives for manifestation in us.

Owing to the many misconceptions existing within and without the ranks of the Theosophical Society in regard to its nature and object, this non-dogmatic and unsectarian character of the Society can hardly be asserted and insisted on with sufficient emphasis. The idea of a society having no dogma and no creed is too grand to be grasped by the average mind accustomed to see itself surrounded by innumerable circles, each of which has a certain accepted thought, but no real self-knowledge for its centre. The idea of universal brotherhood is no theory, it springs from no

inferential knowledge based upon appearances; it arises from the recognition of the truth, that God is one in all, and this recognition is not a theory worked out by the brain, but a self-evident truth, clear to the soul in which it has become manifest. It is not a matter of mere belief or philosophical speculation, but a matter of understanding; it is not an idea to be invented, but an eternal truth which is to be grasped, and which must be felt by the heart before it can be realized by the brain. There is nothing in the constitution of the Theosophical Society which requires us to believe in any particular doctrine or in the infallibility of any person; nothing is asked of any member except tolerance. He who is tolerant is loyal to the constitution of the Society and loyal to the principle upon which that Society rests; he who is intolerant is not loyal to that principle and acts against the object of the Society, and cannot be a true member of it, even if he were to be regarded by the public as necessary to its existence.

The Society has no adopted belief, nor can it ever have one without deserting its character as a theosophical society and taking a place among the many sects and societies crystallized around this or that theory or opinion. Even if some such theory were believed in by all the members, it could not become a dogma of the Society without destroying its character. If for instance the doctrine of Reincarnation — of the truth of which I am myself convinced — were to be adopted as a dogma of the Society, it would become a Society of Reincarnationists, drawing a dividing line between itself and those who did not believe in that dogma, and thus separating itself from that part of the great universal brotherhood of humanity. The word *Theosophia* means divine wisdom or the wisdom of the gods; but divine wisdom is not made up of opinions and theories, it is the recognition of absolute truth, independent of any proofs or inferences, it is soul-knowledge illumined by the higher understanding; it is

enlightenment and manifests itself first of all as what is called "common sense." To those who have no wisdom the meaning of wisdom cannot be made comprehensible; those who possess it, require no further explanation of it.

According to this definition of terms, a "Theosophist" would mean a man in possession of divine wisdom. If taken in that sense, I am not presumptuous enough to claim to be a Theosophist, neither do I consider the Theosophical Society to be composed of people in possession of divine wisdom. In fact we are not a society of Theosophists, which would mean sages and saints or adepts, but merely a Theosophical Society; that is to say a society of people striving after higher knowledge or enlightenment, in the same sense as a Philosophical Society would not necessarily have to be a society composed of full-fledged philosophers.

But if a "Theosophist" means a person striving after wisdom, everybody who seeks for enlightenment is a Theosophist, whether or not he belongs to any society. In fact there are probably only a few people in the world who are not seeking or who do not believe they are seeking for light, and in this sense the whole world is striving after Theosophy. The teacher who educates the children, the preacher who presents to his congregation religious truths in a form which they are able to understand, the scientist who makes an invention that benefits mankind, and really everybody who does something useful for humanity works for Theosophy and is carrying out the dictates of wisdom. Only those who wish for the aggrandizement of self, those who work for their personal ambition, or to put themselves in possession of riches, or to outshine the rest, are the anti-Theosophists and anti-Christ, because they work for the illusion of self and that self is the devil, the enemy of love and truth. An ignorant servant girl who sweeps the steps, so that visitors may find them clean, is a far greater Theosophist than the greatest

theologian or scientist, having his brain full of theories regarding the mysteries of divinity and having no love or truth or goodness within his heart. If everybody were to know the principle upon which the Theosophical Society is based, and if the members would act according to it, there is probably not a single honest and unselfish person in the world who would not hasten to join the Society.

The attainment of wisdom means the attainment of internal development; not only intellectual and moral, but above all spiritual development. In a perfect man or woman all of his or her principles or qualities are developed in the right direction. For the purpose of becoming a prize-fighter the muscles of the body must become well developed; for the purpose of becoming a good intellectual reasoner, the intellectual faculties and reasoning powers must be developed; for the purpose of attaining divine wisdom, the spiritual and divine powers of man must become unfolded by the influence of the light of divine wisdom.

All book learning, all dogmatic belief or all the theories in the world taken together, do not constitute wisdom; nevertheless we do not object to intellectual research nor to belief in dogmas. Everything is good in its place. Grass is good for the cow and meat for the lion. We do not ask anybody to give up his or her religious belief and to become converted to Theosophy: the blind cannot be converted to seeing the light. We only advise everyone to seek for the truth within his or her own religion; and if they have found it, they will have outgrown the narrow boundaries of their system and opened their eyes to the perception of principles. We do not ask the lame to throw away the crutches by which they are enabled to walk; we only try to instruct them how to walk without crutches, and when they accomplish it, they will want these crutches no more. We cannot overcome error by ignoring it, we cannot conquer ignorance by itself, we cannot become

victorious by avoiding battle; but we should not be satisfied with our errors and narrow views; we should make room for more light.

Absolute truth is one and universal; it cannot be divided and the mind of no mortal man can grasp it as a whole. There is no bottle big enough to contain the whole ocean. But the more a man outgrows the narrow conception of self and the more his mind expands, the nearer does he come to the truth and the more will the light of truth become manifest in him; while on the other hand the more the light of truth becomes manifest in him, the more will it expand his soul and illuminate his mind, and, by helping him to outgrow the delusion of self, bring him nearer to the recognition of absolute truth, nearer to God. The great sun of divine wisdom shines into the little world, called "man," and the more the light of that sun is received by that little world, the more will the light therein grow and expand, and the two lights will thus be brought nearer to each other, until both lights blend into one. When the soul of man, the reflection of the light of divine wisdom, becomes one with the Oversoul, both will be as one. Then will the wisdom of God be the wisdom of man; there will be no extinction of individuality, but the individual soul of man will have become so great as to embrace the whole, and God and Man will be no longer separate, but one.

There is nothing in our way to the attainment of wisdom, except the love of self, and the love of self can be conquered only through unselfish acts. It is of little use to dream and talk about universal brotherhood and tolerance, if we do not practise it. An ideal will remain forever only an unattained ideal, unless we realize it by practice. When the ideal is once realized, it ceases to be a mere ideal for us and becomes a reality, and only when we begin to realize a thing can we come into possession of real knowledge in regard to it. Thus the theory must lead to the

practice and without the practice the theory alone is of little value. If we practise the dictates of Universal Brotherhood, we will gradually grow up to the understanding of it and we will finally see in every being not only our brother and sister, but our own real self, which is God in All, though appearing in innumerable forms of manifestation. And having once attained through the expanding power of love that greatness of soul which constitutes the real Theosophist, there will be room for the manifestation of the light of divine wisdom, and as we enter into the wisdom of the gods, the wisdom of the gods will be our own.

(To be continued.)

Theosophy

**BUDDHA'S RENUNCIATION: I (Ashvaghosha's Buddha-Charita) —
trans. Charles Johnston**

Being an Original Translation from the Sanskrit of
Ashvaghosha's Buddha-Charita.

It is not quite certain when the poem, from which is taken this story of The Great Renunciation, was written; but we shall go near the truth if we say it dates from about two thousand years ago. So famous was this life of the Redeemer of Asia, and so great was the honor in which its author was held, that, when the Good Law passed beyond the barrier of the Snowy Mountains that hem in India like a wall, this book, carried with them by the Buddha's followers, was translated into the tongues of northern lands, and versions of it, in both Chinese and Tibetan, are well known at the present day. These versions were made when Buddha's doctrine first penetrated to the north, and from them, more than from any other book, the ideal of Buddha, as it lives among the disciples beyond the Himalayas, was formed and confirmed.

The manuscripts of this life of Buddha, which have been brought to the west, are copies of a single original, preserved in the library at Khatmandu, the capital of Nepal; and from the same place came our earliest knowledge of Buddha's teaching, and our earliest copies of Buddhist books. Looking back to our first acquaintance with Buddhism, and calling to mind the numberless books that have been written of recent years concerning Buddha's doctrine, we cannot refrain from marvelling at the persistence with which a teaching so simple and so full of light has been so grievously misunderstood. The truth seems to be that our linguists are no philosophers, and that our philosophers are no linguists; and so, between them, they have done the doctrine

of the Buddha much wrong, painting it either as a pessimism so dreary and full of gloom that we are forced to wonder whether it was worth the prince's while to leave the pleasures of his palace, even though they had begun to taste bitter-sweet in his mouth, in order to discover so lugubrious an evangel; or giving us instead, as his authentic doctrine, a nihilism so complete that it could never have brought hope or light to the most miserable wretch that breathed, and from which even its expounders turn away repelled. In short, to hear his western prophets, the Buddha's mission was a ghastly failure, his glad tidings were something darker than our darkest fears, his gospel of hope, a confession of utter hopelessness, his renunciation made in vain.

But it is very certain that to no such doctrine as this would half the world have gladly turned, nor, in all the long years of his ministry, could one, bringing only such a message, have raised hope in a single sorrowing human heart, much less drawn after him those countless followers, the story of whose glad conversion is told in the annals of his faith.

To rid ourselves of these nightmare views of Buddhism, there is nothing like the teachings of Buddha himself, and the study of the books that have inspired his followers for twenty centuries. And in doing this, we shall be well-advised to turn first to this old Life of Buddha, written, as we have said, some two thousand years ago. Of all our western books on Buddhism, none has even rivalled the success of *The Light of Asia*, and this because the teaching put forth in it does really speak of hope and healing; does really appeal to the heart of man, as, the old traditions tell us, the spoken words of Buddha had appealed, when he first delivered his great Message, two and a half milleniums ago. The life of Buddha, one chapter of which we here translate, offers numberless most interesting points of comparison with *The Light of Asia*, and it is no disparagement of the modern poet, if we

award the palm to the more ancient, as having a deeper grasp of the great Teacher's thought, a more philosophic insight, and, withal, a richer and more abundant wealth of poetry, finer beauty of imagery, and a purer and robuster style. How easy, for instance, it would have been, for a lesser poet, to have fallen into faults of corruption in that last, splendidly colored scene of Buddha's revulsion from the pleasures of life, and the supreme temptation of sensuous things. But the best comment on the poem is the poem itself.

THE GREAT RENUNCIATION.

So he, the Shaky a sovereign's son, unenslaved by things of sense, even those that are full of allurements, did not delight in them nor find contentment in his heart, like a lion pierced by a poisoned arrow. And, once on a time, with a following of the sons of the courtiers, most skillful, and of his companions eloquent, led by the desire to see the forest, and seeking pleasure there, he set forth with the permission of the King. He was mounted on his steed, Kanthaka, decked with a bridle of new gold, with tinkling bells, and adorned with waving yak-tails, set in fair gold, as the moon might mount a comet. And led by the charm of the forest, he wandered on to the border of the wood, desiring to behold the beauty of the earth. And he beheld the fruitful earth being ploughed, as the path of the share divided the soil like the waves of the sea; and he saw also how, when the grassy sods were cut and thrown aside by the plough, the numberless lives of minute creatures were scattered and slain. Viewing the earth thus, he greatly grieved, as for the death of his own kin. Watching the men who were ploughing also, and how they were stained and parched by the sun and the wind and the dust, and seeing the draught oxen galled by the burden of the yoke, he, noblest of all, was full of pity. Thereupon, dismounting from his horse's back, he wandered slowly away, penetrated by grief; thinking on the birth

and the passing away of the world. "Pitiful, indeed, is this!" he said, oppressed by sadness. Desiring, therefore, loneliness in his spirit, he sent back his friends that would have followed him, and sat down in a solitary place at the root of a rose-apple tree, heavily laden with luscious leaves; and he rested there on the earth, carpeted with grass and flowers, enameled as with precious stones.

And meditating there on the coming into being, and the passing away again of the world, he sought for a firm pathway for his mind; and when he had reached a firm resting-place for his mind, the desire for things of sense, and all longing towards them, suddenly left him. He reached the first meditation, discernment with clear reason, full of peace, and of nature altogether free from fault. And reaching this, he passed on to the soul-vision born of discernment, which is happy with supreme delight; and he went forward in thought from this to the path of the world, understanding it perfectly.

"Pitiful is it, in truth, that man born thus, to sickness, to waste away, to perish, the life-sap sinking out of him, should despise another, oppressed by old age, full of sickness or stricken with death, blinded by desire; but if I also, being such as they, should despise another, then that were against the nature of my being. Nor may such a thing as this be possible for me, who know the higher law."

As he thus spoke, beholding the world's dark shadows, sickness and age and misfortune, in the full activity of his life and youth and force, the joy in them that had filled his heart, faded suddenly away. Nor was he thereby overcome with astonishment, nor did remorse overtake him, nor did he fall into doubt, nor into faintness and oblivion. Nor was his mind inflamed by the allurements of desire, nor did he hate or despise anyone. So this

wisdom grew in him, free from every stain and pure, in him mighty-souled.

Then, unbeheld of other men, one drew near to him, in the garment of a wanderer; and that son of the king of the people questioned him, speaking thus:

"Say what man thou art!" thus he commanded him. And he made answer:

"Thou leader of the herd of men, I am a wanderer, oppressed by the fear of birth and death, a pilgrim seeking after liberation; I wander forth seeking to be free, in this world whose very nature it is to fade; and so I seek a blessed resting-place, unfading. No more akin to other men, I am equal-minded, turned back from sin and rage after things of sense. I rest wherever it may chance, at the root of a tree, or in some desert dwelling; or among the mountains, or in the forest. So I move through the world, without lust of possession, without hope or fear, a pilgrim to the highest goal."

And as the king's son thus beheld him, speaking these things he ascended again into heaven, for he was indeed a dweller of the celestials, who had taken that form to rouse the prince to memory, seeing that his thought was deeper than his mien. And when he had passed away through the air, like a bird of the air, he, the best of men was astonished, and marveled greatly. Then understanding what should be, he prepared his soul for the battle, knowing well the law. So king over his senses, like the king of the gods, he mounted his steed most excellent.

Turning back his steed, that looked towards his followers, and thinking on the pleasant forest, he found no delight in the city, free from desire for it, as the king of the elephants enters the circle of the yard from the forest-land.

"Happy and blessed is that woman whose husband is even such as thou art, large-eyed one!" thus spoke the king's daughter, seeing him enter the long pathway to the palace; and he, whose voice was like the sound of the wind, heard this; he found therein great joy. Hearing that word of hers, of "happiness," he set his mind on the way to supreme liberation. So the prince, whose body was like the pinnacle of a mount of gold, whose arm was in strength like an elephant, whose voice was as the deep voice of the wind, whose eye was keen as a bull, entered the dwelling, the desire of the imperishable law born within him, his face radiant as the moon, and lion-like in valor. Advancing, stately like the king of the forest, he approached the king of the people, who was sitting there, in the midst of the host of his counsellors, as the mind-born son of the Creator might draw near to the king of heaven, naming in the midst of the powers of the breath. And making obeisance to him, with palms joined, he thus addressed him:

"O sovereign of the people, grant me this request! I would set forth a pilgrim, seeking for liberation, for certain is the dissolution of mankind here below." The king, hearing this speech of his, shivered, as shivers a tree when an elephant strikes it. And clasping those two hands of his, lotus-like, he spoke to him this word, his voice choked with tears:

"Put away from thee, beloved, this mind of thine, for the time is not yet come for thee to enter on the pilgrimage of the law. In the first age of life, when the mind is still unstable, they say it is a grievous fault to enter thus on the path of the law. For the heart of a young man, whose appetites are yet eager for the things of sense, infirm in the keeping of vows, and who cannot remain steadily determined, the mind of him, still without wisdom, wanders from the forest to the things of unwisdom. But mine, O lover of the law, is it now to seek the law instead of thee, giving

up all my wealth to thy desire. O thou of certain valor, this law of thine would become great lawlessness, if thou turnest back from thy master. Therefore putting away this determination of thine, be thou devoted yet for a while to the duties of a householder. And after thou hast enjoyed the pleasures of manhood, thou wilt find truer delight in the forest and forgetfulness of the world."

Hearing this word of the king's he made answer in a voice modulated and low:

"If thou wilt become my surety in four things, king, then will I not seek the forest and renunciation: that this life of mine shall not turn toward death; that sickness shall never steal upon my health; that old-age shall not cast down the glory of my youth; and that calamity shall not rob me of my prosperity."

The king of the Shakyas made answer to his son, thus putting upon him such a heavy quest:

"Abandon thou this mind of thine, set upon going forth, and this plan of thine, worthy of ridicule, and full of wilfulness."

And so he, who was the lord of the world, spoke thus to his lord:

"If thou doest not as I have said, then is my course not to be hindered. For he who would escape from a dwelling that is being consumed by fierce flames, cannot be kept back. And as in the world separation is certain, but not in the Law; then better separation lest death carry me away, powerless to resist, with my mission unfulfilled, my peace unwon."

The king of the land, hearing this speech of his son, eager to set out on the search for freedom, thinking: "he shall not go!" set a strong guard upon him, and most excellent allurements. And he, escorted by the ministers, as was fitting, with much honor and obeisance as the scripture teaches, thus forbidden by his father to

depart, returned to his dwelling, greatly grieved. There he was waited on by fair women, their faces kissed by trembling earrings, their breasts rising and falling in gentle breathing, their eyes furtive, like the eyes of a fawn in the forest. And he, shining like a golden mountain, stirring the hearts of those fair-formed ones with passion, held captive their ears by the sweetness of his voice, their bodies by the gentleness of his touch, their eyes by his beauty, and their very hearts by his many graces. Then when the day was gone, lighting up the palace by his beauty like the sun, he slew the darkness by the shining of his presence, as when the day-star rises on the peak of the holy mountain. When the lamp was lit that sparkled with gold, and was filled with the excellent scent of the black aloe, he rested on his golden couch, very beautiful, whose divisions were splendid with diamonds. And then, in the gloom of evening, those fair women drew round him most fair, with sweet-sounding instruments, as they might draw near to Indra, king of the gods. Or as, on the crest of the Himalaya, on the snowy summit, the singers of the celestials might gather round the wealth-god's son; yet he found no joy in them, nor any delight at all.

For of him, the blessed one, the desire of renunciation, for the joy of the supreme goal, was the cause that he found no delight in them. Then, through the power of the gods that watch over holiness, suddenly a deep sleep fell upon them, woven of enchantments, and, as it came upon them, they were entranced, and the power of motion left their limbs. And one of them lay there, sleeping, her cheek resting on her tender hand; letting fall her lute, well-loved, and decked with foil of gold, as though in anger; and so it lay, beside her body. And another of them gleamed there, the flute clasped in her hands, the white robe fallen from her breast, as she lay; and her hands were like two lotuses, joined by a straight line of dark-bodied bees, and her

breast was like a river, fringed with the white water's foam. And another of them slept there, her two arms tender, like the new buds of the lotus, with bracelets interlinked of gleaming gold, her arms wound round her tabor, as though it were her wellbeloved. Others decked with adornments of new gold, and robed in robes of the topaz color, lay helpless there, in that enchanted sleep, like the branches of the forest tree, that the elephants have broken. And another lay there, leaning on the lattice, her body resting on her bended arm, and gleamed there, bright with pendant pearls, stooping like the curve of an arch in the palace. So the lotus-face of another, adorned with a necklet of gems, and scented with sandal, was bent forward, and shone like the curve of a lotus-stem in the river, where the birds sport in the water. And others lay, as the enchanted sleep had come upon them, with bosoms pendant, in attitudes of little grace; and they gleamed there, linking each other in the meshes of their arms, the golden circlets heavy upon them. One of them had sunk to sleep, her arms woven round her lute of seven strings; as though it were her well-beloved companion; and she stirred the lute, tremulous in her hands, and her face with its golden earrings gleamed. Another damsel lay there, caressing her drum, that had slipped from the curve of her arm, holding it on her knees, like the head of a lover, wearied with the subtle sweetness of her allurements. Another fair one shone not, even though her eyes were large, and her brows were beautiful: for her eyes were closed like the lotus-blooms, their petals all crushed together, when the sun has set. So another, her hair all falling in loosened tresses, her robe and adornments fallen in disorder, lay there, the jewels of her necklet all dishevelled, prone like a tree uprooted by an elephant. And others, powerless in that trance, no longer kept the bounds of grace, even though they were of well-ordered minds, and endowed with every bodily beauty; for they reclined there, breathing deep and yawning openly, their arms tossed about, as

they lay. Others, their gems and garments fallen from them, the folds of their robes all tumbled, without consciousness, with wide eyes staring and unmoved, shone not in beauty, lying there, bereft of will. The veils had fallen from their faces, their bodies were crowded together, their wide-open lips were wet, their garments fallen in disarray. And another, as though wine had overcome her, lay there, her form all changed, and powerless.

And he, the prince, of fascinating beauty, rested there, quite otherwise, full of seemliness and becoming grace, and bore his form like a lake, when the wind not even stirs the lotuses on its waters. And seeing them lying there, their forms all changed, powerless in their young beauty, even though they had every charm of body, and shone in their endowments, the heart of the prince was repelled within him;

"Unholy and unseemly, in this world of men, are the charms of these enchanting women; and a man becomes impassioned of a woman's beauty, deceived by her fair robes and adornments. If a man should consider the nature of women, thus overcome, and changed by sleep, it is certain that his passion would grow no longer, but he falls into passion, his will overcome by their allurements."

So to him, thus beholding them, the desire of renunciation came suddenly there, in the night. And he straightway perceived that the door was set wide open by the gods. So he went forth, descending from the roof of the palace, his mind turned in repulsion from those fair women, lying there in sleep; and so, all fear laid aside, he crossed the first courtyard of the house, and went forth; and awaking the keeper of his steed, the swift Chhandaka, he thus addressed him:

"Bring hither quickly my steed, Kanthaka, for the desire has come upon me to go forth to seek immortality. And as this happiness is

born in my heart today, and as this mission of mine is fixed irrevocably, so I have now a lord, even in the wilderness, and the goal that I have longed for, is surely before my face. For, as these youthful beauties, putting away all shame and sense of reverence, fell into this trance, before my eyes, and as the doors were opened of their own accord, so it is certain that the hour is come for me to go forth after that which no sickness overtakes."

Obedient then to his master's command, even though he saw that this was the matter of the king's decree, as though moved in mind by the will of another, he set his thoughts to the bringing of the swift-going steed. So he led up that most excellent horse to his master with the golden bridle fitted in its mouth, and its back scarce touched by the light-lying bed — the horse endowed with force and excellence and swift speed, and beautiful with long tail, short ears curved back and breast and sides. And he, strong breasted, mounting it, and soothing it with his lotus-hand, quieted it with his voice as sweet as honey, as though he were getting ready to enter the midst of the army:

"Many are the foes that are turned back in the battle, by the king mounted on thee, and, as I am to seek supreme immortality, so acquit thyself, my steed most excellent! For very easy to find, in truth, are companions, when happiness is sought in things of sense, and when wealth is abundant. But hard to find are companions, for a man who has fallen into misfortune, or who has taken his refuge in the higher law. And they who were my companions in the darkness, in the law, when I take refuge in the law, the truth comes to my heart within me, that they also certainly have their part therein. So understanding this, my search after the law, and knowing that my purpose is set for the weal of the world, do thou, my excellent steed, strive well with thy speed and valor, for thine own welfare, and the world's welfare too."

Thus addressing that best of steeds, as though he were instructing a well-loved companion, he, best of men, longing to go forth to the forest, mounted his white horse, as the sun mounts an autumn cloud lighting up the darkness of the way, and full of beauty.

Then the excellent steed neighed not lest the rest might hear him. And the sound of his neighing restrained and all in silence he set forth, with hurrying and uncertain footsteps. And as he went the gnomes, that are the courtiers of the treasure-god, bending their bodies before him, strewed lotuses in the way, their arms decked with golden bracelets, lotus-like; and with their hands held up the hoofs of him, going timidly. And as the king's son went, the gateways of the city, whose doors were held by heavy bars, such as could not be lightly lifted away, even by elephants, opened before him, noiselessly, of their own accord. So the prince left behind him his father, well-disposed towards him, his child, his beloved people, and his unequalled fortune, firm in mind, and looking not behind him; thus he departed from his father's city. Then viewing the city, with eyes like full-blown lotus-flowers, he sounded the lion note:

"Until I shall have beheld the further shore of birth and death. I shall return no more to Kapilavastu."

Hearing this word of his, the gnomes that wait on the wealth-god rejoiced, and the hosts of the gods, glad at heart, wished him well, in the task he had undertaken. And in their bodies of flame others of the dwellers of the celestials, seeing that what he had undertaken was very hard to accomplish, made a brightness on the midnight path, as when the footsteps of the moon break through the openings of the clouds. And the good steed, swift as the swift steeds of the gods, went forward, as though moved of an inward power, covering many a long league, until the red dawn barred the sky with gold.

WHY I BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION — E. A. Neresheimer

Life's problems: "Why, How, Whence?" easily arise in one's mind when it but slightly deviates from the dreamy groove in which most of us pass our days.

Nature sometimes gently nudges us at the point of waking from this slumber, and invitingly coaxes, "Come, look at me, lay me bare"; but no, the dreamer goes on dreaming, till he finds himself rudely shocked by pain.

Exoteric creeds with the crude promise of Heaven and the dread of Hell give no help in the solution of these problems to the aspiring soul; nor are the philosophical systems of this cold age calculated to aid much in the construction of a satisfactory doctrine of life and death. No light anywhere, in spite of all the pretence to show us the way out of the darkness. After vain search in the field of other men's thoughts, one hesitatingly turns to his own, almost despairing that there too he shall meet with no better success. But once he is forced by vexatious experiences to take a deep plunge into the inner sanctuary of his own nature, he at last finds there a chord that vibrates in unison with all else; and here must be the clue to the mystery.

Then wells up a deep sympathy for our suffering fellow-man, and there arises a burning desire to know why is all this misery, why and where am I, and what is my connection with the world around me? In a Universe so well regulated, so orderly, so beautiful and just, can it be that man alone is singled out to shift for himself, that he is separate from the rest, and does not share in the harmonious procession of things and events? *Never!*

What a relief then in this dreary desolation to hear for the first

time in so many words of the ancient doctrine of "Rebirth, Continuity of Existence."

Every person is a born metaphysician, no matter how lowly his station. Each one constructs his own philosophy, in spite of religious views, preconceived notions, heredity or education; each one for himself records and assimilates his experience and out of it hews a system peculiar to himself, a thread on which he spins and builds all through his life. He may be soaked with belief in some particular system, and march through one life after another perfectly content to depend on the thoughts of others, till at last experience comes which drives him inward, and then he shall hear of the truth, and hearing it, shall understand.

I had marched through life for many weary years looking at the sights and panorama of the world, casting enquiring glances at Religion, Philosophy, Materialism, Spiritualism, in the hope of finding my own experiences interpreted; but without success.

In early youth, before receiving my education, I dreamt continuous dreams of standing before audiences of the highest culture, addressing them on subjects of deep significance, founded on the spiritual unity of the Universe, with a clearness of perception that baffled reflection in the waking state.

Several years later, when engaging in philosophical discussion, I advanced these ideas with positiveness and conviction, though they were foreign to my general trend of thought and education. All through life I have been conscious that what knowledge I possess has only in part been acquired during the present life, and my reflections on these subjects were not connected in the least with the experiences of my youth: they were distinct and bore the aspect of continuity with the past.

The temptation to assert these convictions became a source of

embarrassment, because they were not the result of education consciously checked at every step and detail, as I had been brought up to believe was necessary.

The various aspects of human life presented themselves to my view, but with no concurrent explanation: belief in immortality and universal justice were innate and supreme.

Queries presented themselves: "Can the apparent injustice of the suffering of deserving individuals, or the ease and affluence of the undeserving be explained? What of the method of Evolution? How is it applied to human nature?"

The Esoteric Philosophy alone is consistent in its answer; it alone gives a true philosophy of life.

Underlying its various doctrines is one fundamental proposition, namely the existence of one eternal immutable principle: hence the essential Unity of all life and being. This eternal principle is in everything, and everything is of it. Manifestation of Life takes place as a result of differentiation in this Unity: the purpose of differentiation is evolution, and the end of evolution is the return or involution of all manifestation to its source and original unity.

Differentiation and return to Unity take place in accordance with the law of periodicity, the law of Evolution and Involution, representing a great Cycle. This is repeated by and is analogous to all other minor cycles observable everywhere in nature; ebb and flow, life and death, waking and sleeping, outbreathing and inbreathing, summer and winter, day and night, etc., following one another in unerring succession. All are manifestations of the same principle and the same law governs them also. If this be applied to ourselves, it gives a meaning and an aim to human life and a logical basis for a belief in Evolution.

What evolves is the Soul, the Thinker, not only the body: the latter

is merely the vehicle or temporary garment which belongs to a kingdom of its own. Reincarnation makes the evolution of the soul possible. At death, a cycle closes for the purpose of allowing the soul to assimilate the experiences of the life just past, and when the term of rest is ended, the soul will come out of that state and clothe itself with a new body. In the same way the Thinker lives through minor cycles of day's and years in each life, being perfectly conscious of the continuity of consciousness, in spite of the change, waste and decay of the body.

Life corresponds to Day and to the waking state, and Death to Night and Sleep: they alternate and each follows the other.

Theosophy

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE: III — *L. G.*

The subject of Thought Transference as considered from the point of view of Professor Crookes, was set forth in the last number of *THEOSOPHY*; whose readers are likely to concur in the belief that the development of latent mental and psychic forces in the higher realms of nature, will ultimately and perhaps with the rapid progress being made in these directions, at no excessively distant date, result in the practical exercise by those whose faculties and training qualify them for the task, of the more occult powers involved. Already has it by mechanical means been made possible to communicate freely and inaudibly through space, — in other words, to telegraph to isolated points, for example, an island or light house, without the aid of wire connections, and even to swiftly moving points, such as a railway train under way; furthermore, photographs, impressed upon the sensitive plate by the power of thought alone, with recognizable images of the thought objects, have been produced and their authenticity verified.

These marvels may be referred to more fully later, but before leaving the specific subject of Thought-Transference, that is, the transmission of mental concepts, directly from mind to mind, by the aid of will power, our readers will be interested in the following extract from that weird narrative, "Etidorhpa," — a recent product of mystic science, purporting to be a recital of actual experiences. A highly developed and peculiarly constructed inhabitant of the inner world is instructing a mortal of the ordinary type whose mind and passing phases of thought, his guide and counselor has no difficulty in reading as from an open book.

"Have you not sometimes felt that in yourself there may exist undeveloped senses that await an awakening touch to open to you a new world? This unconscious perception of other planes, a beyond or betwixt that is neither mental nor material, belongs to humanity in general, and is made evident from the insatiable desire of men to pry into phenomena, latent or recondite, that offer no apparent return to humanity. This desire has given men the knowledge they now possess of the sciences: — sciences yet in their infancy. Study in this direction is at present altogether of the material plane; but in time to come men will gain control of outlying senses which will enable them to step from the seen into the consideration of matter or force that is now subtle and evasive, and this must be accomplished by means of the latent faculties that I have indicated. There will be an unconscious development of new mind-forces in the student of nature as the rudiments of these so-called sciences are elaborated.

Step by step, as the ages pass, the faculties of men under progressive series of evolutions will imperceptibly pass into higher phases, until that which is even now possible with some individuals of the purified esoteric school, but which would seem miraculous if practised openly at this day, will prove feasible to humanity generally and be found in exact accord with natural laws. The conversational method of men whereby communion between human beings is carried on by disturbing the air by means of vocal organs so as to produce mechanical pulsations of that medium, is crude in the extreme. Mind craves to meet mind, but cannot yet thrust matter aside, and in order to communicate one with another, the impression one mind wishes to convey must be first made on the brain matter that accompanies it, which in turn influences the organs of speech, inducing a disturbance of the air by the motions of the vocal organs, which by undulations that reach to another being, act on his ear, and

secondarily on the earthly matter of his brain; and, finally, by this roundabout course, impress the second being's mind. In this transmission of motions there is great waste of energy and loss of time, but such methods are a necessity of the present slow, much obstructed method of communication. There is in cultivated man an innate craving for something more facile, and often a partly-developed conception, spectral and vague, appears, and the being feels that there may be for mortals a richer, brighter life, a higher earthly existence that science does not now indicate. Such intimation of a deeper play of faculties is now most vivid with men during the loss of conscious mental self as experienced in dreams, which as yet man cannot grasp, and which fade as he awakens. As mental sciences are developed, investigators will find that the medium known as air is unnecessary as a means of conveying mind concepts from one person to another; that material sounds and word pulsations are cumbersome; that thought force may be used to accomplish more than speech can do, and that physical exertions, as exemplified in motion of matter such as I have described, will be unnecessary for mental communication. As door after door in these directions shall open before men, mystery after mystery will be disclosed, and vanish as mysteries to stand forth as simple facts. Phenomena that are impossible and unrevealed to the scientist of today will be familiar to the coming multitude, and at last, as by degrees clearer knowledge is evolved, the vocal language of men will disappear, and humanity, regardless of nationality, will in silence converse eloquently in mind language. That which is now esoteric will become exoteric.

"Then mind will meet mind, as my mind now impinges on your own, and in reply to your unuttered question regarding my apparently unaccountable powers of perception, I say they are perfectly natural; but while I can read your thoughts I must use

my voice to impress your mind, because you cannot reciprocate. You will know more of this, however, at a future day. At present you are interested mainly in the affairs of life as you know them, and cannot enter into these higher spheres."

This semi-mystical communication presents a remarkable concurrence with the purely scientific speculations by Professor Crookes, who must have credit, as having indicated with comparative distinctness those regions of the higher natural for us — and the ratio of vibrations peculiar thereto, — within which the phenomena of thought-transference may be investigated, where their practical development may in time be effected.

It is to be noted, however, that we are already making use, unconsciously in general, of occult forces of this degree; and that the use of mechanical means is in no wise necessarily incident thereto.

MENTAL OR PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHS

The so-called "Spirit" photographs, which showed in the background of the sitter other faces more or less distinct, some of them apparently recognizable, were long a puzzle and a derision; the former to those who had satisfied themselves that the pictures were genuine and not artificially produced, but who could make no guess as to the cause of their appearance — the latter to those who, unable to explain them, refused credence and asserted their fraudulent origin, this view being seemingly the more plausible, as it was possible to produce somewhat similar effects by the aid of mechanical artifice. So long as the view was advanced that the strange faces were those of "Spirits" enabled to appear through the intervention of a "medium" present at the sitting — the photographs would naturally be classed with other "spiritualistic" phenomena, and be likewise subject to acceptance or incredulity — according to the mental attitude of the individual whose

judgment was appealed to.

It is at once the strength and weakness of science — that it refuses credence or even investigation — otherwise than through instrumentalities of its own devising and subject to tests and conditions which it arbitrarily and often ignorantly imposes. And thereby in fact sometimes defeats its own purpose — since the more obscure causes of phenomena are destroyed or impaired by the very method employed to investigate them. But occasionally a devotee of science, bolder than others, or perhaps impatient of his self-imposed limitations, branches out into wider fields and has the courage to announce his results.

This has recently been done by Dr. Baraduc, resident in Paris, who has found means to produce visible results on sensitive plates by the use of mental forces, and has submitted the photographs to the Paris Societe de Medecine. In his own case he fixed his mind intently upon a child in whom he was interested, endeavoring to visualize the face with the utmost possible distinctness. The result was the vague but unmistakable picture of an infant's face. He also took a photograph of the mind of a "medium," and the plate showed the portrait of a dark faced man with heavy black beard and sombre eyes, and the head shrouded with a turban. The medium declared the picture that of his "guide," and it was evident that a vivid personation was present in the aura of the medium.

In a still more remarkable experiment, two friends who had likewise been investigating the fascinating subject, went to bed a hundred miles apart, one having a fresh sensitive plate under his pillow, while the other lay awake and willed as persistently and strenuously as possible, that his photograph should appear on the plate over which his friend was sleeping. The statement is made that the experiment was quite successful. Still more obscure

results were sought, viz., the photographing of an abstract thought or concept unaided by the visualization of a face. The difficulty in such a case is manifestly that of concentrating and focussing the thought, since time is needed to effect the chemical changes involved, and any wandering or loss of distinctness in the mental operation confuses the record. Nevertheless the experiments were multiplied until it became evident that the mental force was capable of affecting the plate sensibly and with a measure of characterization that it was believed in the end would render the images susceptible of recognition and interpretation.

Theosophy

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VI-4b — *Basil Crump*

VI. — THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG.

PART IV. — THE DUSK OF THE GODS (*continued*).

Pure, and with the tender yearning of peace, sounds out to us the cry of Nature, fearless hopeful, and world-redeeming. The soul of mankind, united by this cry, becomes conscious through it of its high office of the redemption of the whole of Nature, that had suffered together with it; it soars from the abyss of appearances, and, freed from the terrible Category of Cause and Effect, the restless Will feels itself bound by itself alone, by itself set free. — Wagner's "*Religion and Art*"

These beautiful words give us the keynote to the tragic ending of this drama. The Will which we saw self-bound in Wotan is self-liberated in the death of Siegfried, and the renunciation and self-immolation of the glorious Valkyrie Brynhild.

This third and last act opens on the banks of the Rhine, where the three Rhinemaidens are singing:

Fair Sun-God,
Send to us the hero
Who again our gold will give us!

Presently Siegfried appears on the heights above in full armor, and the maidens ask him to give them the Ring, warning him of the Curse it holds:

Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried!
Sorrow waits thee, we know.
To nought but ill

Thou wardest the Ring.
It was wrought from gold
That in Rhine once glowed: —
He who shaped it with labor
And lost it in shame,
Laid a curse on it,
To cause that to
All time its possessor
Should be slain.
Nought but this stream
Breaketh the spell!

But Siegfried, the fearless, is contemptuous of danger to himself.
What he would freely relinquish for love he keeps when
threatened by fear:

For limbs and life
— Should without love
They be fettered
In fear's strong bonds, —
My limbs and my life
See! — so
Freely I'd fling away!

So saying, he picks up a clod of earth and flings it over his
shoulder. Now, the Rhine maidens know that it remains for the
"suffering, self-offering," Brynliild to perform this final and alone-
redeeming act of renunciation; and so swimming away from the
hero, they sing:

Farewell. Siegfried!
A stately woman
To day your hoop will inherit.
Our bidding better she'll do.



SO ART THOU SIEGFRIED AND BRYNHILD
Prelude

Designed for THEOSOPHY by R. W. Machell. *The original drawing has been presented by the artist to Mrs. K. A. Tingley.*

Here we may pause again to quote Wagner's comment (from the letter to Roeckel) on this incident. "However, my hero is not to give the impression of an entirely unconscious being. In Siegfried, I have rather sought to portray the completest man I could conceive, whose highest utterance of consciousness always takes

the form of most immediate life and action. How immensely high I rate this consciousness, *that well nigh never may be spoken out*, you will gather from the scene between Siegfried and the Rhine daughters: here we find Siegfried's knowledge infinite, for he knows the highest, that death is better than a life of dread; he, too, knows the power of the ring, but regards it not, as he has something better to do; he keeps it merely as a token — that he has not learnt to fear."

Hunting horns are now heard in the valley, and Siegfried is rejoined by the rest of the hunting party, including Gunther and Hagen. While preparations are being made for a meal Siegfried recounts his meeting with the Rhine maidens; and, as he tells of their warning that he shall die ere wane of day, Gunther starts and looks gloomily at Hagen, for he has no heart for the dark plot that is now to be put into execution. While the drinking-horns are passed around Siegfried begins to tell some of his past deeds: how he forged the sword, "Nothung," slew the Dragon and gained the Hoard, Tarnhelm and Ring: how, tasting the Dragon's blood, his inner hearing was opened and the woodbird told him of Mime's murderous intent:

With death-dealing drink
He drew to my side,
Pale and stammering,
He showed his vile purpose:
"Nothung" settled the scamp.

But at this point his memory failed him until Hagen squeezes the juice of an herb into his horn and the remembrance of the winning of Brynhild comes back to him. As he concludes the narrative Wotan's two ravens rise from a hush, circle over his head and fly away across the Rhine. At Hagen's question, "Canst read the speech of those ravens aright?" Siegfried starts up to look

after them, turning his back on his unsuspected enemy, who immediately thrusts the fateful spear-point into the only vulnerable part of the hero's body. With the one word "Retribution," the murderer turns coolly away and disappears over the hills, while Gunther kneels in anguish by the dying hero's side. Now in his last moments the remembrance of his holy love comes back to him and he dies with Brynhild's name upon his lips:

Brynhilde!
Heavenly bride!
Look up!
Open thine eyelids!
Thrice blessed ending —
Thrill that dismays not —!
Brynhild beckons to me! —

Then to the solemn strains of the most beautiful and impressive Death March that was ever written, the body is borne away to the Hall of the Gibichungs.

There, while Gutrune weeps over the corpse, Gunther and Hagen fight for the possession of the Ring. Hagen slays Gunther and attempts to seize the Ring: but the dead hand raises itself threateningly, and as all fall back in terror, Brynhild is seen approaching with solemn and stately mien. Turning to Gutrune, who accuses her of bringing about the disaster, she tells her the truth: "The oath of our union was sworn, ere Siegfried thy face had seen!" Then the hapless Gutrune realizes that she has been the unconscious agent of a base plot, and cries out in despair:

Accursed Hagen!
Woe's me! Woe's me!
Thou gavest the hateful philtre
To make her husband play false!

Brynhild, who has stood alone in silent contemplation of Siegfried's body, first convulsed with horror and then overpowered with grief, now turns with solemn exultation to the attendants and directs the building of a huge funeral pyre on which she also will find her flaming end. Her vision, too, is now clear, for the power of the Curse is at length spent; the dread cycle of evil is at an end, and to her father in Valhalla she announces the approach of the reign of peace:

All things, all things,
All know I now:
All at once is made clear!
Even thy ravens
I hear rustling;
To tell the longed-for tidings,
Let them return to their home.
Rest thee! Rest thee, O God!

Signing to the men to place the body on the pyre she removes the Ring and places it on her own finger while she addresses the expectant Rhinemaidens:

What ye would gain
I give to you;
Out from my ashes
Take it for ever!
The red flame that burneth me
Cleanseth the Ring from its Curse.
Ye in the Rhine
Melt it away
And merely preserve
The metal bright
Whose theft has thrown you in grief.

Taking a huge firebrand from one of the attendants she continues:

Fly home, ye ravens!
Tell it in Valhalla
What here on the Rhine ye have heard!
To Brynhilde's rock
Go round about.
Yet Loki burns there:
Valhall' bid him revisit!
Draweth near in gloom
The Dusk of the Gods.
Thus, casting my torch,
I kindle Valhalla's tow'rs.

As she thrusts the brand into the pyre the two ravens again fly up from the river bank and disappear. Leaping upon Grane, Brynhild rides at one bound into the midst of the pyre and is instantly enveloped in a sea of flame. Suddenly it falls together, leaving a mass of smoke which forms a cloud bank on the horizon. The Rhine swells up and sweeps over the fire. The Rhine maidens are seen swimming close to the embers, and Hagen, plunging madly forward in a last despairing effort to gain the Ring, is drawn by them beneath its waves, while one of them joyously holds the recovered prize aloft. As the Rhine waters subside, a bright glow breaks through the cloud bank, revealing Valhalla with its gods and heroes enveloped in Loki's fiery embrace.

More than once Wagner wrote and altered Brynhild's parting words, finally leaving the music alone to express that which he felt to be unspeakable. Yet, as the music cannot be given here, it may be well to give these words in the form in which they were finally discarded by him:

Know ye whither I fare?
From home-of-wishes speed I hence;
Home-of-dreams I flee for ever;
The open door of change eternal
I shut behind me:
To wishless, dreamless, holiest country,
To the goal of world-wandering,
Redeemed from re-birth,
The witting one goes.
Blest end of all that's endless,
Know ye how it I won?
Deepest woe of sorrowing
Love set open my eyes:
End saw I the world.

On such words as these no possible comment can be made; they indicate a state of consciousness which must be felt rather than understood, and hence the poet-composer knew that music alone could bring it home to the intuition.

The psychological process by which he arrived at the final setting of the end of this great masterpiece is deeply interesting and throws a most important light upon his whole life-work and Schopenhauer's influence thereon. He lays it bare with wonderful selflessness and unerring self-criticism in the letter to Roeckel already quoted from:

"Seldom, perhaps, have a man's ideas and intuitions been at such marvellous variance as mine; for I must confess that only lately have I learnt truly to understand my own artworks, and that by aid of another man, who has supplied with ideas in perfect concord with my intuitions, and thus enabled me to read those Art works with my Reason too. The period since which I have wrought from my inner intuition began with the *Flying*

Dutchman; Tannhauser and Lohengrin followed, and if any poetic principle is expressed in them it is the high tragedy of Renunciation, of well-motived, at last imperative and alone-redeeming Denial of the Will. It is this deep trait that gave my poetry, my music, the consecration without which they could never have possessed any truly stirring power they now may exercise.

"But nothing is more surprising than the fact that all my speculative thoughts, addressed to the mastery of an understanding of Life, were plodding in a diametrically opposite direction to the intuition lying at the bottom of those works. Whilst as artist my intuition was so certain and peremptory that all my fashionings were governed by it, as philosopher I sought to provide myself with an entirely opposite explanation of the world; an explanation held upright by main force, but constantly thrown down again, to my own surprise, by my instinctive, artistic intuition. My most startling experience, in this connection, I made at last with my *Nibelungen*-poem: I framed it at a time when my conscious ideas had simply built a Hellenistic-optimistic world, whose realization I deemed quite possible if only human beings *would*; as to the problem why they *wouldn't*, I tried to evade it pretty artfully. I remember that in this deliberate sense I carved the individuality of my Siegfried, with the intention of creating a sorrowless being; still more plainly did I believe I was expressing myself in my presentation of the whole *Nibelungen*-myth, with its exposure of the first wrong-doing, from which a whole world of wrong arises and goes to ground for sake of teaching us to recognize the wrong, to root it up, and finally to found a right world in its stead.

"Now I scarcely remarked that, with the carrying out, ay, at bottom with the very drafting of my plan, I was unconsciously following an altogether different, far deeper intuition; that in lieu

of painting one phase of the world's evolution I had seen the essence of the world itself, in all conceivable phases, and recognized its nullity: whence of course, as I remained true to my intuition and not to my ideas, something quite other came to light than I had proposed. Yet I remember that I closed my work by forcing my Aim for once — though only once — to direct utterance, in the sententious parting words addressed by Brynhild to those around her; words which brand all ownership as despicable and point to Love as solitary blessing, (1) without (alas!) their speaker having really plumbed the nature of this "love" herself, — for in course of the myth we have always seen it enter as a devastator. So blind was I made in this one passage by interposition of my deliberate aim. Well, strange to say, that passage kept on torturing me; and indeed it needed a great subversion of my formulas of thought, such as was brought about at last by Schopenhauer, to bare to me the reason of my torment and supply me with the fitting keystone to my poem; which keystone consists in a candid recognition of the true state of things, without the smallest endeavor to preach a moral."

Nothing could reveal more clearly than the above extract how faithful Wagner was to his "inner self," and it further shows how one great mind may help another, thus pointing the way to that *union of arts, sciences, religions, and philosophies* which Wagner's many-sided genius foreshadows, and which it is the aim of the Theosophical Movement to bring about.

In the fiery end of the "Ring" drama we see an old order of things with all its evils and limitations purged away in the fire of the higher nature — the purified Will — and, from the ashes of that funeral pyre, to the vision of the inner eye there rises phoenix-like a glorious new form, bright promise of a grander destiny for the soul of man.

Following our Tone-Poet's own lines we have shown the application of this majestic myth to the consciousness of each one of us; but as Wagner himself says, it also compasses "the whole relations of a world, and it is in this latter sense that some beautiful remarks by a fellow Theosophist, (2) working in the same field, will make a fitting conclusion to this interpretation:

"Thus through Siegfried, the offspring of the God-created Volsungs, — through Siegfried, the peerless Hero and Knight whose very name signifies "Peace through Victory," is the cycle of the Curse accomplished and the World delivered and set free. But the price of that Deliverance is death: the price of that sojourn upon earth of Wotan-Erda as Siegfried-Brynhild is disaster and temporary blindness with all the sorrow that that blindness entailed. Let none think, however, that the lot of such an hero was the lot of one who in any wise failed, neither that his effort was tentative or partial; it was not so. The Ring dramas set forth the beginnings of Heroic life on this planet. In those stormy times when the inhabitants of the three worlds (Vallhalla, Riesenheim, Nibelheim) knew each other and warred against each other, the selfless hero Siegfried-Brynhild accomplished a redemption which would illumine the earth for all time: through that Hero spoke the "Great Sacrifice" the Lord Compassion; but ages were required for the work which he did to fully show itself on this earth. And since that first great Hero the pages of history, remembered and unremembered, are filled with the lives of similar but lesser Heroes. The lot of each was death and the reviling of the multitude whom they benefited; and until the cycle of this Dark Age of "Necessity" has run its course it will continue to be so. But though the cycle be heavy and the suffering hours leaden-winged, we are yet assured that for the World there comes Peace through Victory."

FOOTNOTES:

1. These words were; "Blessed in weal or woe, let Love reign alone!" They were changed afterwards to the lines above quoted. ([return to text](#))

2. Mr. A. Gordon Rowe of the Bow Branch, T. S. E. (Eng.) ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

**BUDDHA'S RENUNCIATION: II (Ashvaghosha's *Buddha-Charita*) —
trans. *Charles Johnston***

Being an original translation from the Sanskrit of
Ashvaghosha's Buddha-Charita.

II

IN THE FOREST

Thereupon, when the sun had risen, the shining eye of the world, that lord of men, came to the place of the hermitage of Bhrigu's son. And he beheld the deer there resting in quiet trust, and the birds of the air, that had come there to dwell.

And seeing it, his heart grew light, as one who had gained what he sought. He descended from his horse's back, to put an end to their wandering, and to show respect for their devotion, and his own kinship of spirit with them. And dismounting, he stroked his steed, as who should say that all is well; then he spoke to Chandaka, his attendant, full of kindness and with gentle tenderness in his eyes:

"Good friend, as thou hast followed this sun-swift steed of mine, thou hast shown thy love toward me, and thine own strength and speed. For though my thoughts are wholly full of other things, yet thou hast held me in thy heart. For thy love for thy master is not less than thy power to serve him. For there are those that love not, though they have the power to serve; and there are those, full of love, who yet avail nothing. But one who is full of love, with power to serve as well — such a one as thee, — is hard to find, through all the world. Therefore my heart is gladdened by this most excellent deed of thine; for thy love for me is manifest, even though thou seest that I have turned my face back from all

rewards. For many a man will set his face towards one who may reward him, but even one's own kin will become as strangers to him who has fallen in fortune. A son is held dear, that the family may not fail from the land; a father is served because he is the giver of food; the world is kind to us, through hope of favors; there is no unselfishness without its cause. But why need I speak all this to thee? For a word suffices to say that thou hast done what was dear to my heart. Return, therefore, taking my horse with thee."

Speaking thus, the strong armed hero, wishing to show him gentle courtesy, taking off his princely ornaments, gave them to sorrow-stricken Chandaka. And holding the shining jewel that was set as a lamp in his diadem he stood there speaking words like these, like Mount Mandara, when the sun rests on its peak.

"Taking this jewel, my Chanda, bear it to the King, saluting him with lowly reverence. Speak to him, that his sorrow may cease, while yet he loses not his trust in me. Say that I have come to this forest of holy hermits, to make an end of old age and death; yet not through any lust of paradise, nor through lack of heart's love, nor through resentment. Let him not, therefore, deign to grieve over me, who have set forth on such a quest as this. For even had I remained beside him, our union could never have lasted throughout all time. For separation is as fixed as fate, therefore I have set my heart wholly. For a man must be divided again and again, even from his own kinsmen and friends. Therefore let him not deign to grieve for me, set forth to make an end of grief. One may rightly grieve for those whose hearts are set on desires that must bring grief; but this determination of mine is fixed and sure, as of those who went before me in the path. Nor let him that shall inherit from me grieve, that I have entered on the path; for there are those that, at a man's surcease, shall inherit his riches, but throughout the whole earth those who shall inherit his part in the

law are few, or none. And even should my father say that this going-forth of mine is untimely, let him know that no hour is untimely for the law, since life is unstable as water. Therefore even today I must seek the better part, and thus is my firm determination. For who can hold his faith in life, while death stands there, as our enemy. Speak thus, and other words like these, good friend, to my lord the King; and do thy endeavor that even his memory of me may fade. Thou shalt even tell him all of me that is evil, for love ceases from the sense of evil, and when love ceases, there is no more grief."

And hearing him speak thus, good Chanda, altogether broken down with grief, made answer to him with palms humbly joined, and his speech was heavy with tears:

"My heart sinks within me, lord, at this mind of thine, that brings such sorrow to thy friends, — sinks like an elephant in the morass of some great river. And who would not succumb to sorrow, knowing this fixed purpose of thine, — even if his heart were iron; how, then, if it be full of love?

"And how shall it be with my lord's tender body, worthy to rest delicately in a palace, — how shall it be with the hard earth of this penitential forest, and the coarse fibres of kusha grass that cover it? And truly when I first heard of thy resolve, and brought thy horse, I did it through some power above my own, and fate indeed compelled me to it. And how could I, knowing thy resolve, of my own free will bring back thy horse, Kapilavastu's grief?" Deign not, mighty armed one, to leave thy lord the King, devoted to his son, well-loved, and old, — as an unbeliever might desert the holy law. Deign not to leave thy second mother, — she who is worn out with caring for thee; my lord, forget her not, as one who, ingrate, forgets a benefit. And thy fair princess with her infant son, with all her virtues, bringing glory to her house, and

heartily vowed to her lord, abandon her not, as some craven heart abandons fortune won.

"And even if thy mind is fixed to leave thy kin, to leave thy kingdom, oh, my lord, desert not me, for my goings are before thy feet. I cannot go back again to the city, for my heart is all on fire; I cannot leave thee in the forest, as Sumitra left the son of Raghu's race. For what will the King say, if I return to the city without thee? And what shall I say to the dwellers in thy palace, — I who should be a bringer of good tidings? And again thou sayest I should speak ill of thee, in the presence of my lord the King; but what evil can I speak of one who is a very saint for sinlessness? And even if, with heart full of shame, with tongue cleaving to my mouth's roof, I should bring myself to speak that evil — who would credit it? Only he who would speak of the moon's beams as fierce, and who would believe that, spoken, — only such a one would speak evil of thee; only such would believe it, spoken. And thou who art ever compassionate, whose heart is ever full of gentle pity, — is it well for thee to desert thy friends? Turn back, then, and have pity on me."

And when he heard these words of Chandaka's and saw his utter sorrow, the best of those who speak made answer, self-possessed, and very firm.

"Give up this grieving, Chanda, for thy separation from me; for change is inevitable for those who are possessed of bodies, in their various births. And even if, through natural love, I should not leave my kin to seek for freedom, Death will certainly tear us asunder from each other, helpless to resist. And she who bore me, full of bitter thirst and pain, where am I, in regard to her, my mother, who suffered for me fruitlessly? For as birds come together to a tree to roost, and separate again in the morn, not less certain is it that the coining together of all beings must end in

separation. And as clouds, meeting together, drift away again, so I deem the meetings and partings of living men to be also. And as all this world is subject to separation, how then may we say that we possess a union that is but a dream. For as even trees lose the inborn greenness of their leaves, how should there not be separation of those who are already divided from each other. Since this is so, give over grieving, my good friend, and go; or if love altogether overcomes thee, then go, and again return. Say to the people of Kapilavastu, who are full of loyalty to me, that they shall cease from their love of me, and that they shall hearken to my firm determination. 'Either he will come again quickly, having made an end of age and death, or, failing of his aim, and all hope, he shall go to his destruction.'

Hearing him speak thus, the best of steeds, Kanthaka, licked the prince's feet with his tongue, and let hot tears fall. And the prince stroked him with his gentle hand, bearing the swastika mark in the palm, with the circle in its midst; and stroking him, spoke to him as to a friend.

"Shed no more tears, my Kanthaka, for thou art already known for a noble steed; for what thou hast now done will quickly bear its fruit."

Then firmly taking the keen sword, set with gems, from the hand of Chandaka, and drawing from its scabbard the blade decked with inlaid gold, as who should draw a serpent from his lair, raising it, he cut off his diadem and his long hair, dark as the petal of the blue lotus; he cast it, with its muslin folds undone, to the empty air, as a swan going forth on a lake; and, behold, the celestial dwellers plucked it up, longing to pay it reverence, with great honor. And the hosts of heaven-dwellers worshipped it, ascending thus to the sky, with signal worship.

And putting off that robe of his, bright with all adornments, and

the kingly splendor from his head, and seeing his muslin headdress floating away, like a golden swan, that sage desired a forest garment. Thereupon, a hunter of wild beasts in form, one of the heaven-dwellers of perfect purity appeared there, close at hand, wearing a garment of dull red, and the Shakya prince addressed him thus:

"Auspicious is this dull red robe of thine, like the robe of a devotee: but thy injurious bow becomes thee not. Therefore, good friend, if thou settest no special treasure by it, give this garment to me, and take thou mine."

And the hunter spoke:

"O thou fulfiller of desires, this garment has fulfilled my desires, since giving them confidence through it, I have slain the deer; but if it has any worth for thee, who art like a king of the gods, accept it from me, and give me that white robe of thine."

With much delight, then, he took the forest garment, and put off his own white linen robe, and the hunter, taking to him his divine form again, ascended to the celestials, bearing the white robe with him.

Thereupon the prince, and the groom also, fell into a great wonder, as he departed thus; and they quickly showed reverence to him who had worn the forest garment. Then dismissing the tear-stained Chanda, he of the mighty heart, whose glory was hid in the dull red robe of the hunter, went forth thither, where the hermitage was, like a mighty mountain, wrapped in the red clouds of evening.

And as his master, spurning his splendid kingdom, went forth to the forest of penances, in a faded robe, Chaudaka tossed his arms in the air, and, weeping bitterly, threw himself on the ground. And looking after him, he again cried out aloud, wrapping his

arms about the good steed Kanthaka. And hopelessly lamenting again and again, his body went to the city, but his heart remained behind.

And awhile he was lost in thought, and awhile he cried aloud; and again he stumbled in the pathway, and again he fell. And so going and tormented by the might of his love, he did many strange things as he went his way.

Thus dismissing wet-eyed, weeping Chanda, and entering the forest according to his desire, with his purpose gained, his splendor set aside, he entered the hermitage like the home of perfection. The prince, walking, like the lion, king over the beasts of the forest, entered the dwelling of the deer, himself gentle as a deer. And though he had cast away his splendor, he yet held the eyes of all by the splendor of his beauty.

And those who had come in chariots, with their wives, stopped their steeds in delight and watched him, in form like the king of the gods, their heads bent lowly towards him in reverence. And the men of priestly birth who had gone forth for fuel, coming with the kindling wood, or flowers, or the sacred kusha grass in their hands, even though they had gone through many disciplines, and had learned to rule their thoughts, were overcome with the desire to look at him, and did not go on to their dwellings.

And the peacocks cried out shrilly in their joy, as if they had seen a dark-blue rain cloud coming. And leaving the luscious grass, the deer stood there large-eyed, their heads turned towards him, and those who kept the deer. And seeing the kingly descendant of the children of the sun, flaming there like the sun uprisen, the cows, though they had been milked already, so great was their delight, gave milk again as a holy oblation.

"This is one of the eight Gods of the breath, or haply of the twin physicians of the celestials"; thus resounded the voices of the saints, full of wonderment. For he shone like the form of the king of the gods, like a second refuge of the moving and unmoving world, and lit up the whole forest, as though the sun had come there for his good pleasure.

Thereupon saluted and greeted with all courtesy by those dwellers in the hermitage, he saluted them in return, according to the gentle law, his voice like the voice of a water-bearing cloud in the season of the rains. And accompanied by those pious folk who were full of longing for paradise, he, who longed for freedom only, went onward into the hermitage, to behold their various penances. And he, noble-hearted, beheld there the varied forms of penances of those who were fulfilling penances in that forest of penances. And to one of those men of penances, who was walking beside him, desiring to know how the matter stood, he spoke these words:

"This is the first time that I come to this hermitage, and therefore I know not the rule of the law. Therefore let thy worthiness deign to declare to me what your fixed purpose is, and to what end?"

Thereupon the practiser of penances made answer to that bull of the Shakyas, a very bull in valor; telling him the whole matter step by step, and the way of penances, and the fruit of the way. How some lived on wild food, coming from the river, and leaves and water, and fruit and roots; how this was the life of the saints, and how some of them lived apart, and others ceased from penances. How others live like the birds of the air, on the grain they pick up; and others like the deer, on the green herbs of the earth. And how others, as if turned into ant hills, live on air, with the snakes. How others live on what they wring forth effortfully from the rocks, and others on grain that their own teeth have

ground. And some, after cooking for others, eat of the remnants themselves, if any be left. Others, with hair knotted and wet with water, twice offer the sacred fire, with chanted hymns. Some dwell plunged in the water, like fish, till the tortoises scratch their bodies.

And, by such penances as these that fill their time, they seek the heavenly world; and by yet others, the world of mortal men. By a painful way they seek happiness; for pain, they say, is the root of the law.

Hearing this story told, and the word of the man of penances, that son of the King of men was not greatly delighted with them, even though he knew not yet the perfect truth; he spoke, therefore, this thought that had come into his heart:

"Many a penance here is hard enough and painful enough, yet heaven is set as the reward of penance. Yet heaven and all the worlds are doomed to change; of little worth, in sooth, is the toil of all these hermitages. And they who, abandoning fortune and friends and wealth, perform this penitential law for the sake of heaven, they indeed, after all their sacrifices, desire to go to a second penitential forest, and a greater. And he who, led on by desire, seeks for another existence, through penances and torturing of his body, he, indeed, altogether failing to understand the turning circle of birth, grievously follows after grief. All men fear death for ever, yet they effortfully strive for a new life; when that new life is come, death follows certain with it; and sunk there verily, they are slaves to fear. Some enter upon pains for this world's sake, and some for the sake of heaven undergo much toil. In the search for happiness, this world of men is pitiful, indeed, in its hopes, fails of its end, and falls into helplessness. Not indeed is that effort to be despised, which, giving up the less, follows after the better; wise men should strive strongly for that which, done

once, is not to do again.

"But if pain of the body is virtue in the world, then bodily happiness is vice. Yet by virtue they hope to gain this happiness in another world; therefore vice is the fruit of virtue.

"Since the body moves, or ceases to move, through the power of the mind, the right way is to control the mind, for without thought, the body is like a log of wood.

"If holiness is to be gained by purity of food, then the deer also attain to holiness. And the wealthy are therefore wealthy through fortune's fault, since such are the fruits of wealth.

"And if, in sorrow, attachment to it is a cause of holiness, why should there not be the same attachment to joy? If the rule is that there should be no attachment in happiness, should there not also be unattachment in pain?

"And there are those who go to holy shrines to bathe in the waters and wash away their sins; yet their satisfaction of heart is indeed empty, for water cannot wash away sin.

"That water is holy where the righteous dwell; therefore righteousness is the true place of pilgrimage, and water without doubt is only water."

Thus he spoke, with wisdom and eloquence, until the Sun went down; and then he entered the wood, whose trees were stained with the smoke of sacrifices, though the penances were now ceased. And the evening oblation was offered on the kindled fire, by the men of piety, after they had anointed themselves.

WHY I BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION — *Jerome A. Anderson*

The need of the world today is for higher ideals. Wealth, and the power which wealth brings; fame, and the adulation which fawns upon it; ease, and the sensuous delights which accompany it — these are the things upon which the heart of humanity is set. They are its ideals; that for which it longs, fights, murders, and despoils its slain.

These ideals are the legitimate offspring of the one-life theory which prevails throughout Christendom today. If man lives upon earth but once; if his eternal destiny after this fleeting experience depends wholly upon his acceptance or non-acceptance of certain dogmas concerning a personal God, and a personal Savior who suffers vicariously beforehand for all the sins which he chooses to commit; if the acceptance or non-acceptance of these dogmas is in no way affected by the pursuit or attainment of wealth, fame, or ease; if the millionaire usurer and profit-monger can rely upon the vicarious atonement of Christ with quite as much or more assurance than the hod-carrier (can he not be princely in his gifts to the church, especially when he dies and has no further use for his wealth?), then the concerns of this life, its strivings and warrings, are wholly removed from all connection with or influence upon a future life. Spiritual becomes entirely divorced from temporal success, and the one may be pursued quite independently of the other.

The chief dogma of modern Christendom is that of the Vicarious Atonement of Christ, and the effect of this teaching has molded and directed Western civilization to a degree but seldom realized. It is this dogma which has brought about that paralyzing separation of the ideals of this life from those of that which is to

come. Nowhere is its benumbing influence more apparent than in the attitude of churchianity itself towards religion. A small portion of one day in each week is set apart as sufficient for religious purposes. Certain formulas are repeated, creeds recited (especially, *credo quia impossibile est!*), spiritual heretics (those whose "doxy" is not our "doxy") denounced, and the remaining six days devoted to the acquisition of the desirable things of material life with all the greater zest because of the pleasing consciousness of having disposed of spiritual matters, for a week at least, very effectively. And, if this dogma be true, one day in the week is certainly ample time in which to "repent" of one's sins, and take all the advantage of the vicarious atonement necessary to insure one's soul against the dangers of retributive punishment.

More than this: it is quite philosophical not to divert present energies from the attainment of success in this life, but to put off the acceptance of vicarious atonement until approaching death makes it timely, and immediately profitable. In other words, good "business" judgment is brought to bear here as elsewhere, and from the business standpoint most men look upon the dogma — practically, if not theoretically — while the church can offer no better logical reason for doing otherwise than the mere uncertainty of physical existence.

Having, then, been taught this view (ignorantly or intentionally matters little), it would have been strange if mankind had not sought after material success. Under it the present mad race for wealth or glory is perfectly legitimate. Greed for material prosperity has caused the legalizing of our present social and economic system, in which, of necessity, each man's hand is an Ishmael's, and raised against every other man. Legalized wrongs are the cause of much of human suffering. A large portion of the remainder is due to vicious habits (drunkenness, for example),

which the churches — while they condemn — do not control for the reason that they neither have nor teach any conception of the effects of such habits upon continuous, progressive existence. Dealing with them from their one-life standpoint, they assure (for example) the drunkard that if he does not reform he will go to hell for all eternity, and that if he does reform — *and accepts their dogmas* — he will go to an equally eternal heaven. But both heaven and hell are very vague to him who, under the influence of his intellectual and religious environment, has divorced spiritual from material things. The one is unrelated to the other by any demonstration of the relation of cause and effect, and so he quite logically seeks to enjoy this life and takes his chances for any other. And, according to the teaching of the Churches, his chances are about as good as those of any one; he can repent quite as sincerely, and be forgiven just as effectually.

This is not to assert that the churches do not teach high ideals ethically. But their ethics and their dogmas are mismated, for the latter rest neither upon ethics nor philosophy. Even the memory of that time has been lost, when the Gentile Adept declared: "For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, *we are of all men most miserable.*" Both the ancient and modern church have removed the occasion for this plaint most completely. Papal palaces, princely hierophants, pious millionaires — all proclaim to the common mob: "Go thou, and do likewise!"

Reincarnation and vicarious atonement are deadly foes; one of the twain must disappear; there is no room for both. If the dogmas of the church be true, if man, encompassed as he is by doubts and ignorance, and assigned an appallingly short time in which to study either himself or nature, is to be "saved," then vicarious atonement is an absolute necessity. But to be logical or just (to say nothing of mercy), *all* must be saved; there must be no picking or choosing among souls existing under such dreadful

conditions. The fatal objection apparent in the want of opportunity which but one brief life offers, especially in the case of children, has been partially recognized by the church, and it teaches (with the exception of those branches who believe in foreordination) that children who die young go to heaven whether they have accepted the vicarious atonement or not. No logical reason can be shown for this, however, except the whim of the Almighty. Such children *might* have sinned if they had had the opportunity, and surely all excepting those of Christian parentage would have indignantly rejected vicarious atonement had they reached maturer years. Yet this dogma supposes all children to be alike saved who die before forming an opinion as to its merits, while their Mohammedan, Buddhist, Brahmanical, Confucian, or other "heathen," parents go to eternal torment for not accepting it, although of necessity many of them never heard of it — unless by chance, and then as something absurd or abominable. To save the child under these conditions, while condemning the parent, is a "grace" of God which is strained to the point of puerile absurdity.

But reincarnation removes all necessity for this most unphilosophical perversion of a divine truth. (For the vicarious atonement of the man Jesus is but a distorted image of that divine compassion which causes entities high in the scale of evolution to descend among those lower, in order to assist such to take a step onward in the weary cycle of necessity. It is reducing to a single man, and to one brief instant of time, that which takes place eternally; that "crucifixion" which is daily and hourly being enacted wherever a human soul is incarnated in an animal body. And although compassion be the motive, and unmerited suffering the result, vicarious atonement is now a misnomer, whatever the term may once have connoted, for the soul thus voluntarily crucified upon the "tree" of material existence, is rewarded and

its suffering compensated by the resulting wisdom which follows upon the new experiences.) Reincarnation enlarges the horizon of life infinitely.

It completely reverses our ideals of the things which seem most desirable; it restores the lost harmony between material and spiritual existence.

To one who would find an ethical solution for the puzzling problems of existence, reincarnation is an absolute necessity. When one looks around, and sees the chaos of injustice which this world apparently is, its unanswerable logic comes like a healing balm to the troubled soul. One sees two children, born of the same parentage, the one dies in an hour; the other lives three-score and ten. The one, because of the vicarious atonement, goes direct to a heaven, which it has not by act or thought deserved; the other struggles along some three-score years and ten, amid an environment which makes the acceptance of this dogma impossible, and goes to undeserved eternal torment. "Can the God who permits this, be just?" he asks the church. "God's ways are not our ways," is the only reply vouchsafed. One sees two souls born of different parents; this the heir to untold wealth which under the one-life theory it could not have deserved; that born of diseased, vicious parentage, in the slums of our great cities, and foredoomed to a life of shame and torture, which it also could not have deserved, and with the certainty of eternal punishment at the end, because Christian dogmas to such an one seem a repulsive mockery. "Why did God *send* an innocent soul to such awful parentage: — one, oftentimes, where no form or even thought of marriage had occurred?" again queries the compassionate doubter. "Neither soul had done anything to deserve its fate; both are newly created by God; is God, then, just?" "God's ways are not our ways," is the shibboleth of the church. One sees souls plunging into hell every moment of time

for failure to accept it who have *never heard of the vicarious atonement*. "How can this be just?" he asks. "In ages past their forefathers *probably* had it preached to them, and refused to accept it," replies the Apologist for God. One sees a soul who refused, or, perhaps, only neglected to embrace the vicarious atonement, suddenly die with some trifling sin unforgiven. "Gone to his eternal punishment," comments the Church. "But how can a just God punish one *eternally* for such a trivial offence?" demands the Doubter. "Every sin, however trivial, against an *infinite* God is an infinite offence, deserving of infinite punishment," replies the Church, feeling within its heart that the answer is highly philosophical, and that God ought really to be proud of such able defenders.

But the Doubter turns away — sick at heart until he reflects that re-incarnation, under the law of cause and effect, resolves all his doubts, and removes all stain of cruelty or injustice from the entire universe. The child who dies at birth is paying a debt due to some violation of law in a past life, and goes not to an eternal heaven, but returns almost at once to earth to take up that work in another body which the death of this prevented. Chaotic, indeed, would be an universe where a life of one minute's duration would satisfy all material requirements necessary as a prelude to an eternal spiritual life. If children really went to heaven merely because of the accident of a premature death, the tenderest mercy a parent could show a child would be to slay it before it had ever sinned, and so ensure its everlasting happiness.

And the soul who struggled wearily through a long life, but who was overborne, perhaps by early education or environment, and whom therefore the church sends to an everlasting torment, reincarnation restores to earth; affords another and still other lives in which to struggle upward — in fact, infinite opportunity is given so long as even the faintest onward effort is maintained.

The child born heir to untold wealth comes to that which it has itself earned. Wealth and therefore ease it has, but the struggle with its lower sensuous desires is increased a thousand-fold because of unlimited opportunity for their gratification. It is almost certain to form habits, and to give its character a trend, which will cause it bitter suffering either in this or its next life. The transient enjoyment of wealth is no compensation for that hardening and strengthening of the animal nature which will cost so stern and painful an effort to overcome.

The child born of the slums comes also to *its* own. Perhaps being born heir to wealth in its last life may have laid the train which has exploded in such a mine of woe in this. Who can tell? Who is strong enough to *use* large wealth in this selfish civilization, and not abuse it? Few, few indeed. At any rate, reincarnation shows the method by means of which evil births may be deserved, and, indeed, the only ones possible for these sin-stained egos. For in such a birth there is no revenge — no cruelty, no injustice. The law says to the soul, "You have transgressed; this is your punishment: it is not eternal; it is in exact accord with your deserts. Live it out; live it down; it is not the will of your Father in heaven that any should perish!"

But why multiply examples? *No* birth can meet a returning soul which it has not earned; there is no life, however overborne by horrible suffering or hideous crime, which is not the exact and just recompense for deeds done in this or some other body; there is no death, however peaceful or appalling, which has not been justly deserved by the soul itself, or comes to it because of family, racial, or national deeds, in which it took an active part, and for which it therefore justly suffers. There is no medley or succession of acts so complex, nor no sins so dire, that the infinitely wise law of cause and effect cannot adjust their exact recompense. For this

law is but the eternally present expression of the divine Will. It affords also a basis for a just and compassionate philosophy of life without going to the length of supposing an infinite, eternal effect to follow an insignificant, finite cause — which is the absurd position into which their dogmas have forced Christian theologians. The soul is the arbiter of its own destiny; it is a portion of deity itself. Under the impersonal action of the divine Will, as expressed in the law of cause and effect, it is forever fashioning its own fate, whether for weal or for woe.

It must not be understood, however, from the foregoing, that everything which happens to the soul during life, or even the inevitable time and manner of its death, are the results of causes set up in former lives alone. This would be to bind man in the straight-jacket of predestination, which is just the error into which the fore-ordinationists have fallen. There are *new* causes set up at every step of the soul's pathway, to be adjusted by the divine law in this or some future life. The soul is eternally free to choose, and must therefore be eternally able to set up new causes, whether for good or ill.

Reincarnation and vicarious atonement are also irreconcilable foes, because the latter supposes man to be by nature vile, the former, godlike. The one views him as an humble, cringing sycophant upon divine favor, the other makes him himself divine. And herein is the true root of the evil which the dogma of vicarious atonement has brought upon the race. If man is by nature vile, if he has no inherent right to eternal life and eternal progress, if he is lost — a child of Satan and of evil — except he is forgiven by a God whom he must thereafter spend eternity in praising for this act, then is there no incentive for brotherhood upon earth at all. "Make *your* peace with God; see that *your* calling and election are sure," says the church, "and all will be well with you." They do not perceive that by teaching that man is

vile, and by nature evil, they are offering a logical precedent for man to treat his fellow men with that harshness and contumely which his base, evil nature warrants. God looks upon him as evil, and punishes him cruelly; that which God does man may surely do — is not this logical?

But reincarnation, carrying as a corollary the fact that man is himself divine, is a most cogent reason for the practice of brotherhood. For when men shall have recognized this divinity within themselves, they can no longer be cruel or indifferent to each other. They will then no more blaspheme the divine in their fellow men than they now will their highest conceptions of deity. "God dwells in my brother, how dare I wrong him?" "The flame of divinity burns low in my fallen sister; I must help her to fan it into a brighter glow___" these will be the thoughts of those who are now, it may be, so cold-hearted. No longer will man look upon humanity as so many men, but as so many manifestations of the divine; no longer as so many enemies to be slain, but as so many brothers to be beloved and assisted.

So, with ideals worthy of his godlike destiny, man may face that destiny fearlessly. Reincarnation widens his horizon infinitely; removes the arena of life far above this passionate warring and striving of material existence. Recognizing its holy truths, wealth becomes a thing to be despised; fame, a child's plaything; earthly honor, an empty bubble. To live to benefit mankind will become his highest ideal; to sink self in that great SELF which thrills throughout the entire universe, his one aspiration. So, working on with and helping nature, passing cheerfully and contentedly through the portals of life and death, embracing the infinite opportunities afforded him by means of reincarnation, man will at length evolve the potential divinity within himself into an active potency. And by the purification born of his struggles against his lower nature, he will one day realize the meaning of

the saying of the Nazarene, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." For he himself will have rebecome God.

Theosophy

THE TEACHINGS OF PLOTINOS — *Alexander Wilder*

Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa, described Plotinos as "Plato risen from the dead." The singular probity of his character, his profound knowledge, his intuitive perception which often seemed like omniscience, his ecstatic vision of Divinity, joined with extraordinary sagacity in worldly matters, seemed to warrant such a declaration. The little that is known of his personal history has been given by his more distinguished disciple, Porphyry, who considered him divinely inspired.

The Platonic philosophy had been preserved by the Older Akademe approximating somewhat toward the Pythagorean principles and then returning to the doctrines of the great philosopher. There were also other schools, more or less amplifying his teachings all the way down to the close of the Macedonian period. The establishment of the famous Museum and Library at Alexandria was the occasion for a new departure. The representatives of every school of thought were invited thither, Wise Men of the Far East, together with the Sages of the regions then known as the West. There had occurred a great upheaval in philosophic and religious thought, which added importance to the undertaking. Asoka, a Piyadarsi of India, having abandoned Jainism for Buddhism, had engaged in the most extensive work of propaganda ever known, and sent eighty thousand missionaries, Southward, Eastward, Northward, and even to the Greek-speaking countries. The Jews had their Temple in Egypt, erected by their legitimate High Priest, and not inferior to the sanctuary at Jerusalem, or its rival on Mount Gerizim. There were also Therapeutic, and sects of philosophy not necessary to enumerate. All were welcomed by the Ptolemies to

the Lecture-Rooms at their capital, and their books were eagerly procured for the Great Library. There was also a purpose to surpass the similar enterprise then in active operation at Pergamos.

Under these auspices there was developed a disposition to reconcile the conflicting sentiments, and harmonize as far as might be, the several schools of belief. As the Platonic philosophy was most complete of all and included the higher speculation, metaphysical and ethical idealism, it was best suited for the foundation of an eclectic effort. Contiguity with the East and the general adoption of the occult Mithraic Rites over the Roman world operated powerfully to mitigate the hostilities incident to the various national and tribal religions. There arose at one time and another men of ability to prepare the way for a harmony of philosophic systems. Phila, Appolonios of Tyana, Alexander the Aphrodisian and others may be named in the number.

Ammonios Sakkas of Alexandria, however is generally accredited as the first teacher of what is distinctly recognized as Neo-Platonism. Like other great leaders, little is recorded of him personally. An Indian orator once addressed a missionary: "The Great Spirit speaks: we hear his voice in the winds, in the rustling of the trees, and the purling of the streams of water; but he does not write!" The great teachers seem to have been equally silent with pen and stylus. Konfusi, Gautama, Zoroaster, Sokrates, Jesus are known only through their professed disciples. It was more common to publish recondite doctrines under another name as Hermes Trismegistos, to which we may add the Sokrates of Plato's Dialogues, Zarathustra of the Vendidad, Dionysios the Areopagite, Christian Rosenkreutz, and others with which we are more familiar. The entire dogmas of Pythagoras were inculcated with the prefix of "Ipse dixit"; and Plato it was affirmed, taught a doctrine orally which his disciples promulgated in like manner,

but which was not preserved in writing.

Ammonios Sakkas taught at Alexaudreia in the earlier years of the Third Century of the present era. It was his belief that true doctrines were contained in every faith and philosophic system, and he proposed to winnow them out for an Eclectic Scheme. The name selected for himself and followers was that of *Philaletheans*, or lovers of the truth. A Zoroastrian tendency may be perceived; the Eranian doctrines were designated as truth; all divergent systems, as "the Lie." He had a select body of disciples whom he obligated to secrecy, considering that the "Wisdom of the Ancients" was too holy to be confided to profane persons. This obligation, however, was set aside by Hercunius after his death.

Plotinos, however, became the representative and chief apostle of the new Eclectic Philosophy. He was a native of Lykopolis or Siut in Upper Egypt, and was born in the year 205. He became a student at Alexaudreia in 233, but was about to leave in disappointment when he was introduced by a friend to Ammonios Sakkas. He at once in a transport devoted himself to the new philosophy, remaining with the school eleven years. At this time the amiable youth Gordian (Marcus Antonious Pius Gordianus) had become Emperor, and now set out on an expedition into the Parthian dominions. Plotinos accompanied the army with the purpose "to study the philosophy of the Parthians and the Wisdom particularly cultivated by the Indian Sages." His expectation, however, was not realized, the Emperor being assassinated by a rival.

He now came to Rome, where he engaged zealously in his esoteric studies. It was his aim to restore the philosophy of Plato in its essential character, and in short to live the life of the disembodied while yet in the body, as is set forth in the *Phado*. He had many disciples, many of them senators, physicians, and others of

philosophic tastes. Among them was Porphyrios, a native of Tyre, who at his request afterward edited and revised his work. Though he lived a celibate and carefully abstained from public affairs, he was often made a trustee and guardian of orphan children, particularly fatherless girls, and their estates, and also an arbiter of disputes, and he always discharged these trusts with absolute fidelity. The Roman Emperor Gallienus, who greatly admired him, bestowed upon him a deserted city in Campania, to which was given the name of Platonopolis, and he made an endeavor to establish there a Platonic Politeia, but without success. The courtiers hindered his efforts.

In many respects he resembled the Yogis of India. He was ascetic in his habits, abstaining from animal food, and he is described as "ashamed that his soul was in a body." He would not let his picture be painted, or tell the name of his parents or the race to which he belonged, or even discourse about his native country. Though often dyspeptic and subject to colic, he refused medical treatment, as unfit for a man of adult years. He never bathed, but made daily use of massage. A pestilence raged at Rome with such violence that five thousand persons are said to have perished in a single day. Plotinos was one of the victims. His servants had died from the epidemic, leaving none to care for him, and he suffered terribly. His voice was lost, his eyes blinded, and offensive ulcers covered him to his hands and even his feet. He lingered in this condition till the year 270. In this condition he was carried to Campania, where friends ministered to him. Here he was visited by Eustochius from Putechi. "I have expected you," said the dying man. "I am now endeavoring that my divine part may return to that divine essence that pervades the universe." He was sixty-four years old at the time of his death.

The veneration which the disciples of Plotinos entertained for him was almost a worship. He was reputed to possess

superhuman powers. Those who became familiar with him, like those associating with Sokrates, passed thenceforward a better life. A lady named Khion with her daughters living in his house, lost a valuable necklace, and Plotinos, looking among the servants, picked out the thief. Polemo, a young man of his acquaintance, was told that he would have a loose life, and die early. Porphyry himself construed too literally the notion of hating the body, and was contemplating suicide. Plotinos perceived this, and pronouncing it the effect of disease, sent him to Sicily, where he recovered, but never saw his preceptor again.

An Egyptian priest at Rome employed a theurgic test in order to discover the guardian demon of Plotinos. It was done in the temple of Isis, but one of the higher order appeared. "Thou hast a God for a guardian," he declared. On another occasion, one Olympius attempted to bring upon him by magic art the baneful influence of the stars, but the malignant defluxion was reflected upon himself. This endeavor was several times repeated, but always with a similar result. The soul of Plotinos repelled every evil assault. It was "always tending to Divinity" says Porphyry.

The oracle was consulted, and described him as blessed of the Muses and possessing endless bliss. "By the assistance of this Divine Light," says Porphyry, "he had frequently raised himself by his conceptions to the First God who is beyond, and by employing for this purpose the Paths narrated by Plato in *The Banquet* there appeared to him the Supreme Divinity who has neither any form nor ideal, but is established above mind and everything spiritual — to whom also, I, Porphyry, say that I was approached and was united when I was sixty-eight years of age. . . . The gods frequently directed him into the right path by benignantly extending to him abundant rays of divine light: so that he may be said to have composed his works from the contemplation and intuition of Divinity."

Plotinos did not readily compose books. Not till Porphyry became his disciple did he begin, and he gave his compositions to Porphyry to revise. He prepared some fifty-four treatises which were comprehended in the six *Enneads* of nine parts each. We may surmise his estimate of his redactor by his praise of a poem, *The Sacred Marriage*, composed by the latter. "You have thus yourself at the same time a poet, a philosopher, and an hierophant."

It was the purpose of Plotinos to combine and systematize the various religious and philosophic theories, by exalting them to the higher concept. He taught the fact of three hypastases or foundation principles — the Absolute Good, Mind and Soul. "For," says Taylor, "according to Plato, the Good is superessential; Intellect is an impartible, immovable essence, and Soul is a self-motive essence, and subsists as a medium between Intellect and the nature which is distributed about bodies."

The Divine Being is accordingly designated by Plotinos, "The Good," "The One," "The First," "The First Cause." In essence he is absolutely one and unchangeable; but plurality and changeableness pertain to his workings. He is the Light shining into the darkness or chaos. The first sphere of his activity is Mind or Intellect, in which he differentiates himself into consciousness and its objects. In this Mind are the Ideas or idealities, which are at once the archetypes and moving forces of the universe. From it all things proceed.

Thus, the Divine Spirit is the self-active, creating principle, and from spirit all matter is derived. The world and the universe are the product of spirit: as also Paul declared: "All things are out from God."

The most immediate product of Spirit, as Plotinos taught, is Soul,

which in its turn shapes matter into corporeal conditions. Receiving from the Spirit the world of Ideas and the image or archetype, it forms and fashions the world of Sense.

All existence, therefore, is an emanation and projection from the Divine One — not in time, however, but in Eternity. There is also, he inculcated, a returning impulse, attracting all again to the centre and source. Hence he made less account of external knowledges, but regarded the real truth as to be apprehended by an immediate divine illumination. He held revelation to be a perception which the individual attains, by coming in touch with the Deity. This is Ecstasy — an absence and separation of the spirit or superior intellect from the sensation and consciousness of the body and from the external memory, being rapt in contemplation of the Absolute Good.

Sokrates himself was frequently in this enthusiastic condition. Alkibiades describes him in the *Banquet* as one day during the Athenian expedition to Potides, standing by himself in contemplation, from early dawn till mid-day and on through the night till next morning, when he performed an invocation to the Sun and went away. Xenokrates was also thus absent from the body. Paul describes a similar rapture when he was himself in the third heaven or paradise hearing things unspeakable. In the initiations at the ancient mysteries, particularly at Eleusinia, it was attempted to produce or develop an analogous condition.

Sokrates in the *Phado* describes the philosophic soul as retiring within itself, pushing aside the body as far as possible, having no communication with it, and so aiming at the discovery of that which is. Plothios also teaches that the wise one cognizes the ideal of the Divine Good within him by withdrawing into the Sanctuary of his own soul. Others seek to realize it, as in the Theurgic Rites, by laborious effort of an external character. The true aim is to

concentrate and simplify. Instead of going out into the manifold, the true way is to forsake it for the One, and so to float upward toward the Divine fountain of being which flows in each of us.

He declares we cannot attain to this knowing of the Infinite by the exercising of the reasoning faculty. It is the province of that faculty to distinguish and define; and the Infinite may not be thus brought within limitations. Only by a faculty superior to the understanding can we apprehend the Infinite; and this may be done by entering into a state in which the individual is no longer his finite self, and in which the Divine Essence is communicated to him. This is Ecstasy — the liberating of the mind from the finite consciousness. Like can only apprehend like; thus ceasing to be finite we become one with the Infinite. In the reducing of the Soul to this simple condition, its divine essence, this union or identity is realized.

The mind is thus illumined with divine light. The person cannot tell whence it comes or whither it goes. (1) It is he, rather, who approaches to it or withdraws. One must not pursue it, but abide waiting for it patiently, as if looking for the sun to rise above the ocean. The soul, blind to all beside, gazes intently on the ideal vision of the Beautiful, and is glorified as it contemplates it.

This condition, Plotinos says, is not one that endures permanently. Our common human nature is not sufficient for it. It may be enjoyed now and then. All that tends to purify the mind will assist in the attainment, and facilitate the approach and recurring of these felicitous experiences.

There are different paths to the Sublime Height. Every one may take the one that is best suited to him. There is the love of beauty and excellence which inspires the poet; the devotion to the Supreme One and the pursuit of the Superior Knowledge which impel the philosopher; the piety and love which characterize the

ardent soul. These are so many paths conducting to the heights above the actual and the particular; and then we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out as from the deeps of the soul.

It will be perceived that Plotinos extends human consciousness from the physical and psychic, of which we all know, to a supra-consciousness or apperception in which the higher intellect or spirit is brought into communion with its like, and to the realization of being one with Divinity itself. This is the acme of Neo-Platonism. The Mysticism of later centuries which Dionysius, Eckart, Boehmen and Molinos inculcated, and which Sa'adi and others diffused in the Moslem body, took from this an inspiration. The Apostle Paul himself recognized the doctrine. He describes the entirety of man as "spirit and soul and body," and "delights in the law of God after the inner man." He also treats of the "psychic man" that does not receive the things of the spirit, and "one that is spirited, who knoweth the All, but is not himself known by any."

Iamblichos of Coelosyria mingled with these doctrines a Theurgic Initiation after the manner of the Egyptian priests and Theosophers and was followed by Proklos and others. But in its simplicity as taught by Plotinos and Porphyry, there were no such secret observances, but only a general conforming to the customs instituted for the general public. It was enough for the philosopher to contemplate excellence and by a pure and true life realize it in himself. Such are they of whom the world is not worthy.

FOOTNOTE:

1. Jesus says to Nicodemus: "The pneuma or spirit moves whither it will, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit." ([return to text](#))

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS: VII-1 — *Basil Crump*

VII. TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.

For *this* is the essence of true Religion: that, away from the cheating show of the daytime world, it shines in the night of man's inmost heart, with a light quite other than the world-sun's light, and visible nowhence save from out that depth. — Wagner's "*State and Religion*."

Under the leaf of many a Fable lies
The Truth for those who look for it; of this
If thou wouldst look behind and find the Fruit,
(To which the Wiser hand hath found his way)
Have thy desire — No Tale of ME and THEE,
Though I and THOU be its Interpreters.
— *Salaman and Absal* of Jamal

The real meaning of this noble and deeply touching drama has been so misunderstood by those who have not had the opportunity or inclination to study the poem and its author's prose works that it will be necessary at the outset to show how mystical that meaning is. The long quotation in our last article on the *Ring* revealed Wagner's intuitive perception, from the first, of the great principle of Renunciation — the Stilling of Desire, and his realization of its logical necessity by the aid of Schopenhauer's clear-cut thought.

Towards the close of 1854, when that great philosopher first began to claim his attention, Wagner writes to Liszt:

His chief idea, the final negation of the desire of life, is terribly serious but it shows the only salvation possible. To me of course that thought was not new, and, indeed, it can be conceived by no one for whom it did not pre-exist; but this philosopher was the first to place it clearly before me.

Two years later the subject is mentioned again and a quotation from a letter will serve to show how all these works grew out of one another and were intimately connected in their inner meaning in Wagner's mind. We have shown in the previous article how he connected Siegfried and Tristan, in their "bondage to an illusion." Now he refers to an idea for a Buddhist drama, which later developed into *Parsifal*:

I have again two splendid subjects which I must execute. *Tristan and Isolde* you know, and after that *Der Sieg* (Victory), the most sacred, the most perfect salvation. . . To me it is most clear and definite, but not as yet fit for communication to others. Moreover you must first have digested my *Tristan*, especially its third act, with the black flag and the white. Then first will my *Sieger* become a little more intelligible to you.

It may be mentioned here that Tristan is one of the Knights connected with the Celtic versions of the Parsifal and Holy Grail legends.

Of *Die Sieger* (The Victors) the sketch alone remains and I shall refer to it more fully when I deal with *Parsifal*. For the present I shall have enough to do to clearly indicate the "inner soul-motives" which connect *Tristan* with the earlier dramas and to clear this singularly pure love-allegory from the vulgar charges of immorality and sensuality which have been brought against it. In his fine essay *Zukunft's music* (Music of the Future) which belongs to his later and more deeply mystical period, Wagner traces the Thread-Soul which governed the development of his dramas from the *Flying Dutchman* up to *Tristan and Isolde*. Pointing to the lesson of the terrible power of Doubt embodied in *Lohengrin* he goes on to say:

I, too, felt driven to this "Whence and Wherefore?" and for long it banned me from the magic of my art. But my time of penance taught me to overcome the question. All doubt at last was taken from me when I gave myself up to the *Tristan*. Here, in perfect trustfulness, I plunged into the inner depths of soul-events, and from the inmost centre of the world I fearlessly built up its outer form. . . Life and

death, the whole import and existence of the outer world, here hang on nothing but the inner movements of the soul. The whole affecting Action comes about for reason only that the inmost soul demands it, and steps to light with the very shape foretokened in the inner shrine.

In the face of such words as these there is only one possible light in which to regard this drama; and yet there is some excuse for those who cannot see its inner meaning, since the writings of Tennyson, Malory and others on this same subject all lean more or less to the gross and sensual. It has remained for Wagner's deeper insight to grasp the true meaning of the myth and mould it in a drama of unique beauty.

The fundamental motive of the drama is the struggle with the desire of life, alluded to above by Wagner, which finds a wonderful expression in the opening phrase of the Prelude. This deeply pathetic theme permeates in many forms the whole of the marvellous musical creation, to be merged at last into the final tender strains of Isolde's Death Song. It is composed of two parts: the first, grief-laden and resigned, being associated with Tristan, and the second, representing the upward tending nature of Isolde and her deep yearning to draw Tristan after her:



The first act opens at a point in the story where Tristan "in bondage to an illusion which makes this deed of his unfree, woos for another (King Marke) his own eternally predestined bride" and is bringing her by ship from Ireland to Cornwall. Isolde is seen in a curtained-off space with her handmaid Braugaene. From above comes the voice of a young sailor, reminding one of the Steersman in the *Flying Dutchman*:

Westward

Sweeps the eye;
Eastward
Glides the ship.
Homeward blows the fresh wind now;
My Irish maid, where tarriest thou?
Is it the wind that moans and wails,
Or thy sigh's breath that fills my sails?
Sighs the wind so wild!
Sigh, ah sigh, my child!
Erin's maid,
Thou wild winsome maid!

Isolde starts up out of her deep dejection asking who mocks her; and then learning that they near the land she bursts out in a wild aside:

Degenerate race,
Unworthy your fathers!
Oh, mother, to whom
Hast thou given the power
To rule the sea and the storm?
Famed is now
Thy sorcery's art,
That yield's but balsam draughts!
Awake once more, brave power, for me!
Arise from my bosom, where thou hast hidden!
Hear now my *will*, ye craven winds.

For Isolde, as may have been guessed by now, represents the "Mysteries," or the inner concealed powers of the soul. She is Princess of Ireland, the laud of the mysteries, even at the present day, and we see that her mother is skilled in magic arts. Even the scene on the ship is symbolical: Isolde in her pavilion shut off from the glare of Day and from its champion Tristan, who is revealed when the curtains are thrown aside by Braugaene, gazing thoughtfully out to sea with his faithful henchman Kurvenal at his feet.

Mark Isolde's words as her eyes find him:

Destined for me! — lost to me! —
Fair and strong, brave and base! —
Death-devoted *head!*
Death-devoted *heart!*

How clear to the mystic are these words I have italicized! The "head" is Tristan, the "heart" is Isolde; and the whole drama is the story of the great struggle between these two elements — Intellect and Intuition — and their final union.

Tristan is the nephew of King Marke, of Cornwall, and he had freed that country from paying tribute to Ireland by slaying the Irish champion Morold, who was betrothed to Isolde. Wounded himself he went disguised as a minstrel and with name reversed as "Tantris" to seek healing through Isolde's far-famed magic skill. But in the head of Morold, sent scornfully as "tribute," Isolde had found a splinter of steel which she fitted to a gap in Tristan's sword and so penetrated his disguise. Then she raised the sword in vengeance; but, as she now recounts to Braugaeue:

From his sick bed
He turned his *look*
Not on the sword,
Not on my hand, —
He *looked into my eyes;*
His anguish wrung my heart,
The sword fell from my grasp —
The wound which Morold made
I healed, that, whole and strong,
Tristan might go his way
And no more vex my sight.

What means all this? Tristan has made his first attempt to penetrate the inner mysteries of his nature; he has conquered their guardian (Morold)

and come face to face with the Queen of the Night herself; she knows him beneath his disguise and in that "look" he turns upon her she recognizes his dawning consciousness of the inner life and knows that she is his "eternally predestined bride." We now hear a new pair of motives; the first, rising heroically, represents Tristan's powerful aspiration towards Isolde, while the second is associated with the "look" he casts upon her:



But Tristan, like Siegfried, does not seize his first opportunity to retain his inner vision, but must needs pass through the narrow gate of suffering ere he learns his real duty. Deceived by that subtle foe of the aspirant, the idea of sacrifice for the fancied good of another, he rejects the intuition which draws him to Isolde and inwardly resolves that he will offer this rare jewel to his uncle King Marke. He argues to himself that he is less fit and worthy than his chief and elder: and so, looking too much on the outer aspect of things, he falls again under the illusion of "the cheating show of the day-tide world" in which Marke wholly dwells. For the good old King is "asleep inside," although upright, pure and noble, and this is just the difference between the two men. Thus Tristan, as we shall see, wrongs not only Isolde and himself, but also the simple soul to whom he offers an alliance which he would never have accepted had he known the hidden truth.

Tristan's action has in reality amounted to a profanation of the Mysteries; for the aspirant who approaches that inner realm has to "learn the lesson of *silence*" and Wagner has made this clear enough here for those who are not wilfully blind. Listen to Isolde's words to Braugaene:

How loudly Tristan there proclaimed
What I had held so fast locked up
Her name who *in silence* gave him life,
In silence screened him from foes' revenge,
And how her secret shelter had saved him
He openly published to all the world.

Tristan's reflections are gloomy indeed, as he guides the ship to King Marke's land. He is beginning to awake to the consequences of his false humility, and, as the mystic fire burns ever yet more fiercely within him, he places a stern guard on himself in loyalty to his chief. To Isolde's message bidding him to her presence, he replies that he must not leave his post at the helm. "How could he guide the ship safe to King Marke's land?"

But for the soul once awakened, be it ever so little, to its inner Self, there is no return, and no rest till the consummation is reached. The tie has been made and cannot be broken; Isolde will claim her own in death if need be. Braugaene, thinking she is distraught at the prospect of a loveless union with Marke, gently reminds her of a love-draught which her mother's magic art and foresight had provided to ensure her daughter's happiness: but Isolde had "graven deep a sign" on another phial in the casket — the *death-draught*, and it is this that she now commands the horror-stricken Braugaene to prepare, while she sends a second and peremptory summons to Tristan.

As the hero, in obedience, now enters we hear his motive again combined with two of the love-motives in a stern and simple form as if to accentuate the iron control he has set upon his inner feelings. To Isolde's question he answers that "custom" kept him afar from her whom he was bringing as bride-elect to his King. But Isolde knows naught of worldly conventionality. "For fear of *what?*" she asks guilelessly; and Tristan can only answer, "Ask the Custom." Then she tells him that a blood-debt lies between them (the death of Morold) for which atonement must be made. Tristan answers that the truce was sworn "in *open field*," and Isolde's reply is full of inner meaning:

It was not there I held Tantris hidden,
Not there that Tristan fell before me.
There he stood glorious, bright and strong;
But what he swore I did not swear;
I had learned the lesson of silence.

And she goes on to say how at his look she let fall the avenging sword and now they must drink atonement. She signs to Braugaene for the draught and at the same moment sailors' shouts are heard. Tristan asks, "Where are we?" and Isolde with the death-resolve in her heart answers with double meaning:

Near the *goal*.
Tristan, is peace to be made?
What hast thou to say to me?

His reply is equally significant:

The Queen herself of Silence
Lays on my lips a seal.

He too has now "learned the lesson of silence" and gladly takes the proffered cup which shall release him from his misery:

Heart's deceit! foreboding dreams!
Endless mourning's only balm,
Oblivion's kindly draught,
I drink thee without fear!

But ere he can drain the goblet Isolde snatches it and drinks the rest. And now, at the gate of death, which for them means freedom from the pain and illusion of separateness, they have no further need of concealment. Openly and truly they stand face to face, all barriers cast aside, and the music tells us that Tristan's vision is once more unclouded, for we hear the "Look-motive" loudly sounded. Then follows one of those wonderful passages where speech is silent and the music all-eloquent, telling us of the lofty

death-defiance in their hearts changing to the glow of the mystic love-fire. Believing themselves already in another world they embrace and "remain lost in mutual contemplation," unheedful of their arrival and the coming of Marke. Then it all breaks in upon them and they learn with horror that Braugaene, in foolish compassion, has changed the death-draught for that of love, and thus — acting as the agent of that Law which demands expiation — condemns Tristan to a further sojourn in the world of illusion. Isolde is there too, but only figuratively, for her real nature is of the Mysteries and her manifestation is in so far a revelation of those Mysteries. She is throughout the seeress and prophetess. The draught whether of death or love, is also only a dramatic symbol of what must be inevitable between these two.

Thus the first act closes as they are violently torn asunder by the sudden inrush of the Day; while amid the shouts of the sailors, the blare of trumpets and the bustle of the landing, the sad cry of the "yeaning-motive" again reaches our ears as the curtain quickly falls.

(To be continued.)

Theosophy

THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA: II — *Franz Hartmann*

II. THE THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS.

The "Theosophical Society" as such has no doctrines or dogmas to which anybody is asked to subscribe, it asks for no belief in any authority except in the self-recognition of truth, and it leaves it free to every member to believe what he pleases and to grasp as much truth as he can without pinning his faith to anybody's credibility or respectability. Those who can read the mysteries of nature in the light of divine wisdom require no other teacher; wisdom itself is the teacher who teaches those who are wise. Wisdom is the true understanding arising from self-thought in the minds of those whose souls have risen above the narrow horizon created by selfishness and become lighted up by the power of unselfish love to the region of true spirituality, where is to be found the direct perception of absolute truth. The "Theosophical Society" has no Holy Ghost in its possession to distribute or deal out to the curious; no man can impart to another the true understanding; he can only aid others in overcoming their errors which stand in the way of perceiving the truth. Only when the light of truth becomes manifest in the soul, will the true understanding arise which illuminates the mind with real self-knowledge. Thus after Gautama Siddhartha had become a "Buddha," which means an "enlightened one," he said: "This knowledge of truth was not among the doctrines handed down to me, nor was it told to me by another; but within myself arose the light; within myself the eye of the understanding was opened; within myself the truth revealed itself."

A person in whom, through the recognition of principle, the true

understanding has arisen, is, according to the degree of his enlightenment, called an Initiate, an Illuminate, a Theosopher, an Adept, or even a Buddha. An Adept is merely a person whose terrestrial nature has become adapted to serve as an instrument for the manifestation of the light of wisdom that comes to him directly from his Higher Self through the power of intuition, and which is a reflection of the light of the sun of divine wisdom itself. Thus the Christian mystic, Thomas a Kempis, says: "Blessed is he whom wisdom teaches, not by means of perishing forms and symbols, but by the light of wisdom itself."

There are perhaps only few people known in this present age of Kali Yuga, in whom the light of Theosophy has become manifested to such a degree that they are no longer in need of books or instruction for overcoming their errors; but there have been at all times persons in possession of a high degree of real self-knowledge, and such have been the great souls or "mahatmas" (from *maha*-great and *atman*-soul, the great reformers and especially the founders of the great religious systems of the world. They have all perceived the one absolute and eternal truth; for absolute truth is one, and not composed of opinions; and they have described it under certain forms, symbols and allegories; differing from each other not in essence, but in modes of expression. They differ in the use of symbols, because a language and symbol has to be adapted to the understanding of those who are to be taught. Thus, for instance, in certain tropical countries in which apples do not grow, the fruit which Eve is said to have taken from the forbidden tree and presented to Adam, is taught to have been not an apple, but a *banana*. In reality it was no such fruit at all, but the fruit of *Karma*; that is to say, the knowledge which they had to gain by the experience of good and evil that arose from their actions.

The doctrines which have thus been taught by some of the world's

greatest sages, seers, and prophets, such as Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, Pythagoras and many other greater or lesser lights, are not the "accepted doctrines" of the "Theosophical Society"; for that society has no dogmas; but there are some members of the Theosophical Society in America and in other countries, who make it their business to study these teachings in the sacred books and religious systems of the East and West, and they give the outcome of their researches to the world, not as a matter to be blindly accepted and believed in by their followers, but as food for thought and as a guide for the direction of those who wish to follow the true path that leads to self-knowledge.

I am asked: "what is Self-knowledge? what is Wisdom?" To those who do not possess it it cannot be explained, and those who are in possession of it will need no explanation. Those who cannot feel the principle of truth cannot grasp it; a principle must become manifested within our own self before we can realize its true nature. Those who are blind to principles cannot see it and they clamor for proofs; those who see the principle of Truth require no other proof than its presence. When Christ stood before Pilate and was asked to show the truth, he was silent; for what other answer could the truth give to the intellect, if it stands before our eyes and we cannot perceive it? Those who cannot see principle cannot know the truth; their knowledge is not their own, but that of another, they must stick to blind belief in authorities and need the crutches of dogmatism. They are insatiable in their demands for information for the purpose of having their scientific curiosity gratified; but that information does them no good, for it only increases their inability to think for themselves.

It is said that a certain gentleman living on an island known by its being shrouded in fogs for the greater part of the year was once visited by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost found the walls of the chamber in which that man lived papered with notes of the Bank

of England, and the man himself wore a moneybag in place of a heart, and upon the sanctuary there was an idol called Tweedledee, which that man worshipped and in which he placed his faith. Thereupon the Holy Ghost tried to persuade that man, that he should not be satisfied with a blind belief in Tweedledee, but that he should try to awaken his own understanding. But the man could not see the point. "Is not Mr. Tweedledee a reliable person, well known for his veracity?" he asked. "Undoubtedly he is," answered the Holy Ghost; "but his knowledge is his own and your faith in what he says is merely a second-hand opinion. You ought to learn to rely upon your own perception of truth." "O, I see!" exclaimed the man, "I am not going to believe in Tweedledee any more." And calling for his servant, he said: "John! take away Tweedledee and bring in Tweedledum."

Thus no change of belief or opinion constitutes real knowledge, which can only be obtained by the self-recognition of truth. Self-knowledge can only be obtained by the finding of one's own real Self, the Self of all beings, God in the soul, the Christ or the truth. The finding of one's own soul and not the worship of authorities or of persons apart from the principle which they are to represent, constitutes theosophy or the true understanding.

The symbols and parables in which religious truths are represented are called "secret," not because they ought not to be told to any ignoramus except to a few favored ones, but because their meaning ought to be found out by every student by means of his own intuition; for it is only in this way that the power of intuition or spiritual understanding becomes strong by practice.

But it is not in this way that self-knowledge is attained. There is a spiritual realm higher than the merely intellectual realm; there is a knowledge resulting from the direct perception of truth which is far superior to the knowledge gained from drawing inferences

and logical deductions from certain premises. In Sanscrit this kind of spiritual knowledge is called "*jnana*" the ancient Greeks called it "*gnosis*" or "*theosophia*," or "the hidden wisdom of God," and as such it is used by the apostle Paul in the Greek version of the "New Testament" (1); the English language has no other word for it except "Self-knowledge," and of that only very few people know the meaning. As the physical senses are needed for the purpose of perceiving physical things, and as the intellectual faculties are required for the purpose of collecting and combining ideas, so the powers of the spirit are needed for the perception of spiritual things, such as the principles of truth, justice, goodness, beauty, etc.; and as the intellect is sharpened by practice, so the spiritual perception becomes awakened and strengthened by the use of the power of intuition, which is the action of the higher mind upon the lower principles in the constitution of man; for we ought to remember that even if the brain evolves thoughts, it does not manufacture ideas. Ideas exist in the mind or are reflected therein, and the mind uses the brain as its instrument for the purpose of forming these ideas into thoughts. Our mind is far greater than our body; it is not enclosed in it, nor in its totality incarnated therein; it overshadows the body. The greater the mind the more it will be capable of grasping a grand idea, while narrow minds hold only small thoughts; but when it comes to grasping universal principles, that cannot be brought down into the realm of a superficial and narrow science, the mind must expand and grow up to that realm of spiritual truth, and the higher the soul rises to eternal truth, the nearer does it come to the eternal Reality, the nearer to God. Intuition is the light that shines from above into the darkness of the mortal personality and "the darkness comprehendeth it not." It is the path of light which we should travel, guided by the light of divine wisdom or "Theosophy."

When a child is born in this world it attains consciousness; it opens its eyes and perceives the objects by which it is surrounded, and as it grows up, it begins to understand what they are. Thus it is with the process of spiritual regeneration. First comes spiritual consciousness, next the perception of spiritual truths, and, finally, the full realization of them by means of the spiritual understanding. Thus is attained that self-knowledge or Theosophy, which cannot be obtained by mere book learning or by the gratification of an idle curiosity, but by the growth, expansion and unfoldment of the soul through the power of unselfish love and the illumination of the mind by the light of divine wisdom itself. Each thing can have real self-knowledge only of that which belongs to itself. If we wish to obtain divine knowledge, we must let the spark of divinity that lies dormant within our soul become awakened in our own consciousness; if we wish to know divine wisdom, that wisdom must become a living power in our soul and be our guide in all our thoughts and actions; for only that which we realize by our works can become a reality to us. Without will and action even the most desired ideal remains forever a mere fancy or a product of our imagination.

This whole visible world is merely a collection of symbols, representing relative truths. We shall see the truths in them, when the recognition of principles has become a power within ourselves. Those who do not perceive principles see only the external forms in which these principles manifest themselves; they see in a man only the body, which is the house inhabited by the real man, and they see in a religious parable only the apparently historical part. The majority of the pious do not even know, and sometimes refuse to believe, that these allegories have an internal meaning. To them all these nuts are hollow and they do not attempt to crack them.

Now if we are to know the truth within a symbol, it is first of all necessary that we should know that the symbol has a meaning, and the next thing is that we should desire to know it. If we have not sufficient intuition to know what is inside of an orange, we will have to make a cut into the peel to find out the contents. There are many people so much in love with the external teachings of their religious books, which they take in an entirely materialistic sense, that if anyone makes a hole into the shell so that they may see the contents, they become very angry and their anger makes them blind. Nevertheless it may be well to examine a few such allegories and expose their inner meaning, only to show that there is an inner meaning to them, so that an inducement may arise for the application of self-thought.

The history of the world shows that the greatest misfortunes have arisen from a merely external and superficial interpretation of sacred texts. It is not the truth, but the misunderstanding of it, that causes misery in this world. If the Hindus had correctly interpreted their religious books, there would have been no widows burned alive with the bodies of their dead husbands and no crushing of men and women under the wheels of the cars of the Juggernath. If there had been a true understanding, the Indians would have sacrificed their own evil desires to their God, instead of tearing the palpitating hearts out of the breasts of captured enemies; the Crusaders of the Middle Ages would have sought the "holy land" within their own souls, instead of carrying murder and rapine into Palestine; there would have been no religious wars, no torture of heretics, no inquisition and burning of human beings at a stake. The idea of a hell with burning sulphur and pitch would not have driven people to insanity and suicide, if they had known that *Sulphur* is the symbol for energy, in the same sense as *Salt* is the symbol for substance and *Mercury* for consciousness; so that a person full of burning desires is in a

state of hell of his own creation; while *pitch* is an appropriate symbol for all of our material tendencies, that stick to the soul and drag it down into matter.

Ignorance is the most expensive thing in the world; it costs a great deal of experience to overcome it, and this is only gained by suffering. It cannot be conquered by ignoring it, if it is not already conquered by the perception of truth. We ourselves have to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and to descend into hell, so that we may ascend to heaven. We have to become incarnated in matter, so that we may become victorious over our own material self and arise as self-conscious spiritual beings to the kingdom of wisdom. This is represented in the symbol of the Christian Cross; for the perpendicular bar represents the descent of spirit into matter and the ascent of man (*Manas*) into the spiritual kingdom; while the horizontal bar represents the kingdom of matter and material desire. The figure on the cross represents man being nailed to this material world of suffering; his body is immersed in matter, his head, that is to say his understanding, rises up into the kingdom of light.

The Lotus flower represents nearly the same thing. It is a water-plant. Its roots are clinging to the dirt, its stem floats in the water, representing the Astral plane; its flower swims on the top and unfolds itself under the influence of sunlight and air. Thus the soul of man is to unfold itself under the sunlight of divine wisdom, if it is to attain *theosophia*; all the study of religions and symbols is only a means to that end.

(To be continued.)

FOOTNOTE:

1. See Bible, I. Cor., ii. 7. ([return to text](#))

THEOSOPHY AND THE POETS: DANTE — *Katharine Hillard*

I. — DANTE.

When one is asked to write a series of articles on the Theosophy to be found in the writings of the greatest poets of the world, a certain dilemma immediately presents itself. Either we mean by Theosophy its purely mystical and moral teachings, the ideas of spiritual unity, of universal brotherhood, of absolute justice, of unselfishness and devotion to others, — in which case we are at once told by the critics that "these doctrines belong to all religions worthy of the name, and they cannot rightly be labeled *Theosophy*," — or else we mean such special tenets as the doctrines of reincarnation and karma, of the astral body and the sevenfold nature of man, and, at least under these headings, we find little or nothing upon these subjects in the poets.

But there are few dilemmas that are absolutely insurmountable, and the way out of this one is to look at the spirit rather than the letter. "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

In the first place, then, we should answer our critics by saying that Theosophy does not claim to be a new religion with an imposing body of new doctrines, but simply, and in its widest sense, to be what Lowell has called it when he speaks of Dante's Beatrice as "personifying that *Theosophy* which enables man to see God and to be mystically united with Him even in the flesh." In this sense the word is used by all writers upon mysticism, and it is, of course, especially in this sense that we find Theosophy in the greatest of our poets from Dante down to Walt Whitman. And in the second place, in its more distinctive and narrower sense, it is the claim of Theosophy to demonstrate the original unity of all religions, and to show that "the Divine Wisdom" was the same in

all ages, and in all parts of the world. The higher our mount of vision, the less difference will appear between the summits of the little hills far below us; the eye takes in great masses, not petty details, and the higher the genius of the poet, the more clearly he sees the important things of the soul, and the nearer he will be to the uplifted minds of all ages. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." You cannot help that simple statement by any attempt at amplification or adornment; there is the greatest of all mysteries, the goal of spiritual life stated in a few short words, — but you can write volumes about the ceremonials of the church.

In Prof. Norton's essay upon the *New Life* of Dante, he has spoken of the great Italian as essentially a mystic, and says that "his mind was of a quality which led him to unite learning with poetry in a manner peculiar to himself. . . . Dante, partaking to the full in the eager spirit of his times, sharing all the ardor of the pursuit of knowledge, and with a spiritual insight which led him into regions of mystery where no others ventured, naturally associated the knowledge which opened the way for him with the poetic imagination which cast light upon it." This is a very significant remark, and coupled with Lowell's saying that Dante was "the first great poet who ever made a poem wholly out of himself, . . . the first keel that ever ventured into the silent sea of human consciousness to find a new world of poetry," will give an invaluable clue to Dante's double nature.



In the same essay from which I have just quoted (v. *Among My Books*, J. R. Lowell, *2d Series*), Lowell says: "It is not impossible that Dante, whose love of knowledge was all-embracing, may have got some hint of the doctrine of the Oriental Sufis. With them the first and lowest of the steps that lead upward to perfection is the Law, a strict observance of which is all that is expected of the ordinary man. But the Sufi puts himself under the guidance of some holy man (Virgil in the *Inferno*), whose teaching he receives implicitly, and so arrives at the second step, which is the Path (*Purgatorio*) by which he reaches a point where he is freed from all outward ceremonials and observances, and has risen from an outward to a spiritual worship. The third step is

Knowledge (*Paradiso*), endowed by which with supernatural insight, he becomes like the angels about the throne, and has but one farther step to take before he reaches the goal and becomes one with God. The analogies of this system with Dante's are obvious and striking," even more so, says Mr. Lowell, when Virgil bids him farewell, telling him that the inward light is now to be his law.

The fact is that Dante's meanings were manifold. He says himself that all writings may be read and ought to be explained in four principal senses: The literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the mystical, and the last "is when a book is spiritually expounded." This is to him always the most important, and therefore we may feel sure that the more spiritual our interpretation, the closer it will come to Dante's real meaning.

Of Dante's works the principal ones are the *Divine Comedy*, the *Banquet*, and the *New Life*. These, taken in inverse order, form a trilogy, descriptive of the history of a human soul, the poet's own inner experience. The story of the three, very briefly summed up is this: That from Dante's early boyhood (the *New Life* begins with his ninth year) he had felt a strong love for the contemplative life (or study of Divine Wisdom); that amid the distractions of the active life of his maturer years, the pursuits of the world, the cares of the state and the family, the duties of the soldier, the studies of the artist and the scientist (for Dante was all these), the heavenly Beatrice, the "giver of blessings," the Divine beatitude, passed away from him. Then came the consolations of scholastic philosophy, with its false images of good, in whose attractions his whole soul was for a time absorbed, until at last the vision of the higher life as he had seen it when a boy, came back to him, and he returned to the love of Divine Wisdom, who revealed to him first her eyes (or intellectual truth), and then her *smile* (spiritual intuition), "through which the inner light of Wisdom shines as

without any veil." These distinctions correspond very closely to the *eye* and the *heart* doctrine as described in the *Voice of the Silence*.

For any details as to Dante's idea of Beatrice, as developed through these three books, I must refer you to the original text or to the translations of the *Divine Comedy* by Longfellow, of the *New Life* by Chas. Elliot Norton, and to my own translation of the *Banquet*, because it is the only one. The general idea of Beatrice as representing the *Gnosis* was embodied in an article published elsewhere.

Here I have only space to set forth a few of Dante's ideas on subjects more particularly treated by theosophical writers. One of these is the contemplative, as distinguished from the active life, and this is a topic he loved to dwell upon. In the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says that in this world there are two modes of devotion: that of those who follow speculation, which is the exercise of the reason in contemplation, and that of devotion in the performance of action. Dante says the same thing, and in almost the same words. The angel at the sepulchre (he tells us in the *Banquet*, IV. 22), says to those who have wandered from the true way — that is, to all who have sought for happiness in the *active* life — that it is not there, but it goeth before them into *speculation*, or the *contemplative* life. And this use of the intellect in speculation (by which Dante means not an intellectual exercise, but the absorption of the soul in the contemplation of the Divine), he tells us is the highest Good beyond which there is nothing to aspire to. This he dwells upon again and again, notably in the 27th Canto of the *Purgatory*, where Rachel and Leah are used as the types of the contemplative and active life. The union of the soul with God, Dante says, is like the partaking of the stars in the nature of the sun. And the nobler the soul the more does it retain of this divine effluence. This union may take place before

death, but only in souls perfectly endowed by nature. And some are of the opinion, says Unite, that if "all the powers of earth and heaven should cooperate in the production of a soul according to their most favorable disposition, the Deity would descend upon that soul in such fulness that it would be almost another God incarnate." For Dante believed in the influence of the constellations and in the complex nature of man, which he says is threefold, and consists of the *vegetative*, the *sensitive*, and the *intellectual* natures, while in the *Purgatory* he is careful to explain that these are not three separate entities, but divisions of one being, the *vegetative* answering to the "kama-prana," the *sensitive* to "kama-manas," and the *intellectual* to "manas" and "buddhi," for Dante makes a careful distinction between the powers of the highest part of the soul which he calls *Mind*.

Dante's description of the embodiment of the soul, as given in the *Banquet*, (Bk. IV, 21) and in the *Comedy* (Purg. 25), is wonderfully like the hints given in the *Secret Doctrine*. We read in the latter (Vol. I, 223-4), that "Wiessman shows one infinitesimal cell determining alone and unaided . . . the correct image of the future man in its physical, mental, and psychic characteristics. Complete this physical plasm . . . with the spiritual plasm, so to say, . . . and you have the secret. This inner soul of the physical cell — this 'spiritual plasm' that dominates the germinal plasm — is the Key that must open one day the gates of the *terra incognita* of the Biologist." (Vol. I, 219.)

In the passages of his works above-mentioned, Dante described the germ-cell (1) as carrying with it the virtue (or powers) of the generating soul, and that of the heaven, (or stars) then in the ascendant, united to its own potentialities, and those of the mother. The life within it is at first that of the plant, (the vegetative soul) with this difference "this still goes on, the other has attained," (Purg. 25, 54) that is, the plant, unlike the soul, is

incapable of further development. Then the embryo becomes like the sea-anemone, that moves and feels, and the sensitive soul develops, and the latent potencies of the germ begin to show themselves in the development of the organs of sense and of action. As soon as the brain has sufficiently developed, says Dante, the divine spark settles there, and the intellectual soul draws all the faculties into itself, and makes of them one being.

"So the sun's heat turns itself into wine,
United to the sap within the vine."

(— *Purg.* 25, 77.)

And when death frees the soul, it leaves the body with its senses mute, but with the spiritual faculties, the memory, the intellect, the will, more active than before. By its own impulse it takes its destined course, and as the air filled with rain shows itself bright with the reflected colors of the rainbow, so the soul, by virtue of its formative power, makes to itself an aerial body, the shadow and resemblance of itself. And like the sparks that follow all the changes of the fire, says Dante, with another beautiful simile, so this new form follows the changes of the spirit, and shows forth all its emotions and desires, and therefore it is called "the shadow." (This Dante is said to have got from Origen.) And it is these "shades" which he meets in *Purgatory*, answering to the "kama-loka" of Theosophy.

But it is only in one sense that Dante's other world is that beyond the gates of death, because as Lowell has pointed out, it is in its first conception "the Spiritual World, whereof we become denizens by birth and citizens by adoption." Dante believed with St. Paul that to be carnally minded is death. In the *Inferno* (3,64) he speaks of "these miscreants who never were alive," and in the *Banquet* he says that "to live with man is to use reason, and he is dead who does not make himself a disciple, who does not follow

the Master. . . . For taking away the highest power of the soul, the reason, there remains no longer a man, but a thing with a sensitive soul only, that is, a brute" (*Banquet*, IV. 7). So at the entrance of the *Inferno*, Virgil tells Dante that he will there behold

— "the people dolorous,
Who have foregone the good of intellect,"

which is "the Truth, in which all intellects find rest" (*Paradiso*, 28, 108). He speaks more than once of the "second death," and in a manner that has puzzled the commentators. In the first canto of the *Inferno* we have mentioned

— "The ancient spirits disconsolate,
Who cry out each one for the *second death*;
And thou shalt see too, those who are content
Within the fire, for they still hope to come
Whene'er it may be, to the blessed ones."

I think myself that Dante here refers to the old Platonic idea of the second death that separates the soul from the spirit, roughly speaking, or as the Theosophist would say, sets free the immortal Ego from the degraded lower personality, with its sin-laden memory. These "ancient spirits disconsolate" suffering in "kama-loka" the torture that their own wickedness has brought upon them, cry out for the death of the animal soul, that the Divine Self within them may cease to suffer. Those spirits whose better nature still bids them hope that their sins are not too great to be purged by the fire, are content to endure its purifying pangs. I think this explanation more in the line of Dante's thought than that of Lowell, who believes the first death to be that of reputation, the second that of the body.

But Lowell is quite right in saying elsewhere that "the stern Dante thinks none beyond hope save those who are dead in sin, and

have made evil their good. . . . But Dante is no harsher than experience, which always exacts the utmost farthing, no more inexorable than conscience, which never forgives nor forgets." He believed above all things in the freedom of the will, that man is given his choice between good and evil, and must take the consequences of the choice he makes. His idea of punishment was always that which the sin to be punished would naturally bring about, and the guilty soul had always the chance of expiating its guilt, and once more winging its way upwards. And just inside the gates of hell he placed those ignoble souls that were neither good nor bad, but lived solely for themselves.

"These had not even any hope of death,
And their blind life is so debased and low,
They envious are of every other fate.
The world has kept no memory of them;
Mercifulness and justice both disdain them;
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass."

Dante was of the same mind as Browning, who considered that the weakness which interfered with the execution of an evil purpose only added to the debasement of the soul. To live to themselves alone was the sin of these men, and there is a beautiful passage in the *Banquet* where Dante says that one should give his help to another without waiting to be asked, as the rose gives forth her fragrance not only to him who seeks it, but to all who come near her.

Mr. Lowell says that Dante was so impartial that the Romanist can prove his soundness in doctrine, and the anti-Romanist can claim him as the first Protestant, while the Mazzinist and the Imperialist can alike quote him for their purpose. And he even calls Christ "the supreme Love," and uses the names "God" and "Jupiter" and "Jehovah" as equivalents. Outwardly at least he held

to all the doctrines of the Roman church of his time, but he certainly believed in the unity of the human race, and their conception of the Divine under different names. The man who boasted that he made "a party of his own," in politics, was capable of a like independence in religion, and Dante's association with the Templars had undoubtedly taught him how to see beneath the letter of the creed the spirit of a universal truth. He who could soar through all the sevenfold spheres and returning, see this globe,

"Such that I smiled at its ignoble semblance,"

was not a soul to be confined within the limits of any church. He had the spiritual intuition that enabled him to discern the truth, and the intellectual subtlety that helped him to clothe it in a guise that might escape the condemnation of the Church. He says at the end of his first *Canzone* in the *Banquet*, what might be said of nearly all his writings;

"Canzone mine, I fear that few they are
Who all thy meaning deep will understand,
So dark and difficult thy speech to them.
Wherefore if peradventure thou shalt go
To such as seem not to perceive thy worth,
I pray thee then take comfort to thyself,
And say to them, my new and dear delight,
'Behold at least, how very fair I am!'"

It would take volumes to expound the *beauty* of his poems, and whole libraries of his commentators' efforts to explain their "dark and difficult meaning" have been in vain. For they have fixed their eyes too often on the letter, and have failed to realize that the poet had risen to those spiritual heights where the little differences of creed sank into nothingness, and where all around him rose the white and shining summits of the eternal Truth, "the

Love that moves the sun and all the stars."

FOOTNOTE:

1. Of course he does not use this term, but the scriptural expression, *the seed*, which he calls "the most perfect part of the blood." ([return to text](#))

Theosophy

WHY I BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION — G. Hijo

When the editor of THEOSOPHY asked me to write a four-page article on "Why I believe in Reincarnation," I replied that I had always believed in it from the time I first heard of the teaching. He answered: "Then tell them that. It will be different from what others say," and as the requests of the editor of THEOSOPHY are always binding on dutiful theosophists, I find myself under engagement to extend the above statement over four pages of this magazine.

It was while I was at college, a good many years ago. I was interested in pretty much everything under the sun, and I fear in a good many things that normally take place under the moon, and when a friend told me of a new book he had just read and which taught a new philosophy, I purchased and eagerly read it. It dealt with the subject of Theosophy. I believed it all at once, the doctrine of reincarnation included, and I remember that I read that book night and day until I not only had finished it but was familiar with every teaching it contained. A few days before this, while the book was being studied by this same friend and before I had heard of it, a party of our friends was discussing things in general and nothing in particular when this friend advanced some of the theories he had just read about in the book. Among them was the teaching of reincarnation, viz., that the human ego or soul is repeatedly born into human bodies on this planet, say once every thousand or fifteen hundred years, in order to acquire the experience and knowledge necessary to enable it to lead a higher life. To my surprise at the end of the evening I found that I had been arguing in favor of reincarnation and other doctrines as set forth in this book. Of course I only knew very vaguely what I had been talking about and it was not until several days later that

I found all these novel and most interesting ideas set forth at length in the work in question. It was apparently as clear a case of talking about things learned in some previous life as I have ever heard of and this in itself was to me no small proof of the truth of the special theory in question.

When I say that I believed in the theory of reincarnation from the first hearing of it, I do not mean that my brain immediately accepted the belief. On the contrary, it was only after the most vigorous protests against my gullibility, the citing of all the scientific and philosophic authorities with which it was familiar, that my poor brain became convinced that I was in earnest and gave up the fight. Of course there are other theories advanced by Theosophy which are much more difficult of ready credence than the theory of reincarnation, and it was against these that my brain began its attacks. For example, no one will ever know what protests and ingenious arguments it brought forward to prove that I was a first class idiot to believe in adepts, for my brain did not mince matters nor epithets when discussing these things with me.

When we did finally get through the rougher places and down to a discussion of reincarnation it was suggested to me that this was a very uncomfortable belief, that it would logically entail a giving up of much that I was attached to, that more particularly those things done under the auspices of the moon would be the first to go by the board and that altogether life would be hardly worth living if the responsibility for one's acts were to be so absolutely believed in. Hell was bad enough but here you had something much more definite than hell as a deterrent, something about which there was nothing vague or doubtful but which once accepted meant logically that anyone would be a fool if he continued to do otherwise than as he knew he should. I replied as best I could, that the disagreeableness of a doctrine unfortunately

did not militate against its truth; that life at the present time and under the present conditions wasn't quite an unbroken procession of joys; and that if the teaching were really true, contention was futile, and the only thing to do was to conform to it whether you liked it or not; and that further it would probably be a good thing if you did have to stop many things that were now found so pleasant.

The brain immediately replied that that was all very well but that I had no proof that the thing was true and that until I did get some proofs it was silly to tie myself up to so disconcerting and uncomfortable a belief. And then it ingeniously suggested that some of the adepts whom I also believed in, should undertake to dispel all doubts by some interesting and magical performance. This was a double-edged thrust, for it cast a reflection also on one of the harder beliefs that we had already tussled over. I replied that that sort of talk was childish, that it was not argument, that proofs were the *ignis fatuus* or fool's gold of the modern educated man, that there were lots of things we believed that had never been proved to us, and that in any case there were other ways of finding out things than to have them physically demonstrated to one's brain. I added that I hadn't much respect for my brain anyhow, and then launched into a dissertation on the reasons why reincarnation must be true.

I said that no other explanation of the apparent injustice of life was possible; that in a world where everything orderly seemed to be done by process of law, it was irrational to suppose that the highest of all created beings were alone neglected and left to blind chance or to the more terrible caprice of an anthropomorphic Deity. We saw around us every day sons of the same mother, one endowed with beauty, talent, a quick apprehension and a serviceable brain, while the other might be a dwarf or cripple, a congenital idiot or a hopeless dullard, or

moral pervert with no chance in the struggle for existence in competition with his more fortunate brother. Worse than this we saw multitudes of children born into an ignorant, poverty stricken or criminal environment that made right living a practical impossibility, while others and the fewer in number, born perhaps at the same moment were from birth surrounded by every safeguard and advantage that wealth and education could furnish; and according to the orthodox teaching we were expected to believe that all this was right while we were given no sufficient reason for thinking so.

I asked my brain how he would like to have been born in a New York slum, and that if he had been whether the theory of reincarnation might not have been some comfort to him, since it would have carried with it an assurance that his being there was the inevitable result of past actions and that getting away was sure to follow proper actions in this life.

The brain replied that that might or might not be so, but why if he had lived before didn't he remember something about it? I had him there, for I told him promptly that *he* hadn't lived before and that if he went on in the way he was at present he wouldn't live again; and I asked him how he could expect to remember something he had had nothing to do with. I told him also that he was simply a part of me for this one life, a sort of tool or instrument with which I had been furnished to enable me to express myself properly on the physical plane. This sobered him a little but he had nerve enough left to ask me if I myself remembered my past lives, and if so why I had never told him anything about them. I said that it was none of his business what I did or did not remember, but in any event it would be very injudicious for him to know anything about it as he would be sure to make foolish use of the information. Then he asked me why, if I knew all about such things, I had had to wait until I read them in

a book to learn them. He thought this was a particularly clever question but I informed him that as he was the instrument I used at that present time the knowledge that I could give him was in great degree limited to what he already had some experience of, and that further if he were less obstinate it would be to the great advantage of us both, as then we could both get much more information on all such topics. I tried to explain that I really did know all about all these things but that the knowledge was of no use to me or to anyone else until I could express it on the physical plane and to do that I must have his help, and that until he could see his way clear to believe not only this particular doctrine but also in the realities of the soul-life generally, we could be of very little use to each other. I pointed out that we had much knowledge and experience not acquired in this life; that we knew things we had never studied and could do things we had never been taught. Heredity and instinct would explain some of this natural wisdom, but there were large portions of it necessarily outside the operations of these great laws.

I also explained that so far as this particular teaching was concerned it was already believed in by three quarters of the human race, and that even if he were not prepared to give it absolute credence, should he accept it as a working hypothesis it would be of considerable assistance to me in formulating a coherent philosophy of life. After fully realizing that according to the teaching he would have no immortality unless he did accept it we compromised the matter in that way, and for some years he accepted the belief provisionally until he could see what would turn up.

Sooner or later, I now forget just when, the inherent truthfulness of the theory had its effect, and this, combined with the influence of living in an atmosphere of people all of whom believed in themselves, quite convinced him. From that he went on to

become an enthusiastic advocate of the doctrine. It is an occult truism that as soon as you cease to care for a thing you will get it and as soon as you no longer need proof of the truth of a teaching you will have that in many and various ways. So in the course of time when there were no longer any doubts in the brain, even shadowy little doubts that do not come to the surface, then and then only did the no longer needed proof come.

Theosophy