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THE THEOSOPHIST

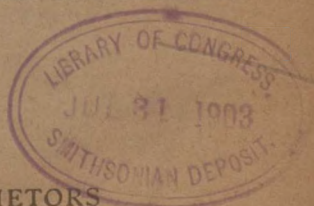
A MAGAZINE OF

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[Founded October, 1879.]

CONDUCTED BY H. S. OLCOTT.

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AT THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY'S HEAD-QUARTERS, ADYAR.

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The *Theosophist* will appear each month, and will contain not less than 64 pages of reading matter. It is now in its 24th year of publication. The Magazine is offered as a vehicle for the dissemination of facts and opinions connected with the Asiatic religions, philosophies and sciences; contributions on all of which subjects will be gladly received. All literary communications should be addressed to the Editor, Adyar, Madras, and should be written on one side of the paper only. Rejected MSS. are not returned.

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THE THEOSOPHIST.

(FOUNDED IN 1879.)

VOL. XXIV., NO. 10. JULY 1903.

“THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.”

[*Family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares.*]

OLD DIARY LEAVES.*

FIFTH SERIES, CHAPTER XV.

(Year 1894.)

A PARAGRAPH in the October “London Letter” in the *Theosophist* about the completion of Mr. Stead’s first volume of *Borderland*, reminds me to put on record my sense of appreciation of the substantial service rendered to psychical science by that quarterly publication. It certainly was one of the most important agencies for the dissemination of correct ideas as to the interrelation between this world and the frontiers of the next. It covered a field not previously occupied, one on which the students of physical and those of transcendental science could meet and co-operate. In his forecast for the second year of his magazine, Mr. Stead, in rebuke of those who showed more zeal than care in pushing on research into the higher planes of consciousness said :

“Borderland is not to be surveyed and mapped out in a year, and students must not be in too great a hurry.” His main conclusion as to the results of the first year’s work is that “whatever else may be dubious it is becoming tolerably clear that the new faith will have the persistence of the individual after death as its chief corner-stone, and a demonstration of the almost undreamed of potentiality of the complex congeries of personalities that make up our Ego, as its chief contribution to human thought.” It occurred to me when compiling the present chapter that it would be instructive to look up the first volume of *Borderland* (year 1894) and see

* Four volumes, in series of thirty chapters, tracing the history of the Theosophical Society from its beginnings at New York, have appeared in the *Theosophist*, and two of the volumes are available in book form. Prices : Vol. I., cloth, illustrated, Rs. 3-12-0, or paper, Rs. 2-8-0. Vol. II., beautifully illustrated with views of the headquarters, Adyar ; cloth, Rs. 5 ; paper, Rs. 3-8-0. Apply to the Manager *Theosophist* or to any Theosophical book agency throughout the world.

what was the drift of public opinion about this class of research at the time when Mr. Stead drew it out by his prospectus of July, 1893. It was sent to a large number of prelates, men of science and other persons of distinction. The instructive fact was elicited that the religious leaders of the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations, who had the greatest reason to collate all possible proofs of the survival of man after death, and should have, more enthusiastically than others, welcomed the advent of the phenomena of Spiritualism, Clairvoyance, thought-projection and transference, Hypnotism, and the whole range of phenomena associated with the experiments of magic, of both colours—since the teachings of the churches would thus find experimental corroboration—for the most part expressed their strong disapproval, even their scorn for such studies. Nothing could have been more disdainful than the tone of the Archbishop of Canterbury—not to Mr. Stead, for he disdained a reply—but to a mutual lady friend, to whom, at her request, he wrote his opinion. Other bishops and clergy regarded all such phenomena as the work of the devil; the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham wrote that, “no one holding the Catholic faith can doubt that the attempt you propose to make is grievously unlawful, and fatally dangerous to souls. The intelligence which uses your hand (Mr. Stead was then very successfully experimenting with automatic writing), and of which you are not conscious, is no other than the Devil, and if you continue such unlawful intercourse with the unseen you will necessarily be misled to your ruin by the enemy of God, the murderer of souls and a liar from the beginning.” Father Clarke, S.J., has views equally reactionary as to these researches. He says: “we expose ourselves thereby to be tricked and made fools of by beings of a superior nature to ourselves, and our bitterest enemies. Under the tempting bribe of a revealed knowledge of our condition after death, we are liable to be cajoled by spirits whose one object is to deceive us, and, *sub specie boni*, to divert our minds from Truth and from God.” What nonsensical chatter, what a mumbling of the shrunken spectres of mediæval monkish teaching! But, on the other hand, Mr. Stead got encouraging replies from some clerics and many laymen, professors and others. Mr. Balfour, now Prime Minister of Great Britain, replies that: “If, as I do not doubt, the intention and effect of this undertaking will be to promote a strictly scientific investigation into this subject, it cannot be otherwise than useful. You will, of course, be overwhelmed with unverified stories and vague surmises, but these you will doubtless be able rigidly to exclude from your pages.” Another and greater statesman than he, and his predestined successor in the Premiership, now Viceroy of India and Baron Curzon of Kedleston, but then plain Mr. G. Curzon, M.P., displays that same brave declaration of opinion and capacity for grasping special fields of knowledge, that have been so con-

spicuously shown since his coming to India. He writes to Mr. Stead :

"I entirely sympathise with your projected publication of a quarterly review dedicated to the examination of so-called spiritual or supernatural phenomena. The existence and reality of such phenomena appear to me to be as amply demonstrated by reliable evidence as are many of the axioms of exact science ; and if your magazine can succeed in displaying, analysing, correlating, and popularising this evidence, you will perform a great public service by carrying conviction home to the public mind.

You may also be able, by slow degrees, to dissipate some of the suspicion in which the area of Borderland is enveloped, arising from the peculiar and unsatisfactory conditions under which many of the phenomena take place. I allude to—

- (1) Their capricious, irregular, and fortuitous manifestation.
- (2) The apparently imbecile character of many of the so-called spiritual communications.
- (3) The unscientific nature of the media of communication commonly employed.
- (4) The general impression that such studies have an unsettling and mischievous effect, and can only be pursued at the cost of peace of mind, sometimes of bodily health also.

Your review will also be useful in facilitating that co-operation with others in which many inquirers would like to take part, without the preliminary difficulties now attendant upon any such action."

Some of the replies, as for example, from Prof. Ray Lankester ; Prof. Fitzgerald, Trinity College, Dublin ; and others, were bitter, scornful, and sometimes insolent, but as futile as had been those of their colleagues of previous generation in checking research. Spiritualism, Hypnotism, Astrology—yes, even that—have gone on with ever increasing power and expansion, while as to Theosophy, so far from its having been checked, the number of our Branches since the date of Mr. Stead's Circular has doubled, having been at the close of 1893, in number 352, and at the close of last year, 714 ! It is a pity that Mr. Stead's other imperative public engagements should have forced him to abandon the publication of *Borderland* after issuing only four volumes, and having made it one of the most widely circulated quarterlies in the world.

With the lapse of time the popular conceptions about Madame Blavatsky are undergoing that slow but sure change which marks the universal law ; the stories to her discredit are being forgotten, the recollection of her personality is being thinned to a shadow, and little by little there is rising in its place, and showing bright against the screen of the past, the luminous figure of the sage who taught us and the guide who showed us the path upward and encouraged us to break through the obstacles that lay across its mouth. In an article on "Colonel Olcott's Madame Blavatsky," in his *Borderland* for October, 1894, the epoch of which we are writing, Mr. Stead, with clear insight and almost prophetic forecast of the results of her work, says things so notable that I feel I shall be conferring pleasure

upon my readers in quoting him at some length. None of H.P.B.'s intimate friends will approve of the coarse terms in which she is spoken of as to her personality, but we may forgive much to a man who, without being a theosophist or her declared follower, has so magnanimously analysed the causes and growth of her influence. He says:

"In this sketch I have no intention of reviving the controversy about the sliding panel and the Coulombs. If everything be true that Dr. Hodgson and the Psychical Research Society say about her, it only heightens the mystery, and adds to the marvel of the influence which Madame Blavatsky undoubtedly has exercised, and is exercising, at the present moment. For the most irate of the sceptics cannot deny, and will not dispute, the fact that the Theosophical Society exists, that it is far and away the most influential of all the associations which have endeavoured to popularise occultism, and that its influence is, at the present time, felt far and wide in many lands, and in many churches. The number of pledged theosophists may be few, although it is probably greater than most people imagine. But the Theosophical ideas are subtly penetrating the minds of multitudes who know nothing about Theosophy, and are profoundly ignorant of all the controversies which have raged round Madame Blavatsky.

This is eminently the case with the doctrine of reincarnation, and with the altered estimate which the average man is beginning to form of the mystic teachers and seers of India. Reincarnation may or may not be true. Whether true or false, it has, until the last decade, been almost unthinkable by the average Western. This is no longer the case. Multitudes who still reject it as unproved have learned to recognize its value as a hypothesis explaining many of the mysteries of human life. A few admit that there is nothing in reincarnation antagonistic to the doctrine of Christ, and that it is quite possible to hold firmly all the great verities of the Christian revelation, without rejecting the belief that the life of the individual, upon which judgment will be passed at the Great Assize, is not necessarily confined to the acts done between the cradle and the grave, but may be an existence of which such a period is but one chapter in the book of life. Altogether apart from the question of the actual truth of the doctrine, it is indisputable that the sympathetic recognition of the possibility of reincarnation has widened the range of popular thought, and infused into religious speculation some much-needed charity. And this, which is unquestionably a great achievement, will ever be associated with the name of Madame Blavatsky.

Still more remarkable has been the success with which this remarkable woman has succeeded in driving into the somewhat wooden head of the Anglo-Saxon, the conviction—long ago arrived at by a select circle of students and Orientalists, of whom Prof. Max Müller may be said to be the most distinguished living representative—that the East is, in matters of religious and metaphysical speculation, at least entitled to claim as much respect as the West. That indeed is stating it very mildly. 'The snub-nosed Saxons,' as Disraeli used to love to describe the race which made him Prime Minister, are learning somewhat of humil-

ity and self-abasement before the races whom, by use of material force, they have reduced to vassalage.

Down to quite recent times the average idea of the average Englishman—notwithstanding all the books of all our pandits—has been that the Hindus were benighted and ignorant pagans, whom it was charity to subdue, and a Christian duty to attempt to convert. To-day, even the man in the street has some faint glimmerings of the truth that these Asiatics whom he despises are, in some respects, able to give him points, and still leave him far behind. The Eastern sage who told Professor Hensholdt that the West studied the stomach, whereas the East studied the soul, expressed strongly a truth which our people are only beginning to assimilate. We are learning at last to respect the Asiatics, and in many things to sit at their feet. And in this great transformation, Madame Blavatsky again figures as the leading thaumaturgist. She and those whom she trained have bridged the chasm between the materialism of the West and the occultism and metaphysics of the East. They have extended the pale of human brotherhood, and have compelled us to think at least of a conception of an all-embracing religion, with wider bases than those of which the reunionists of Christendom have hitherto dreamed.

These two achievements, even if they stood alone, would have made Madame Blavatsky notable among the leaders and moulders of the thought of this generation. But they did not stand alone. Perhaps even more important was the impetus which she gave to the revival of the doctrine of the continuity of existence beyond the grave, and the Divine justice which enforces the law of moral responsibility, unthwarted and uninterrupted by death. In an age when materialism has entrenched itself in the churches, she made men realize that the things which are seen are but temporal and evanescent, and that it is the things which are unseen which alone are eternal. 'The future life,' which had become a mere phrase to many, has acquired a fresh and awful significance; and the essential spirituality of man has been asserted with no uncertain sound in the midst of a carnal and material civilization. Nor must it be forgotten in the midst of the clash of polemical strife that, despite all ridicule and misrepresentation and abuse, Madame Blavatsky, by her unswerving and passionate assertion of the reality and continuity of her communications from the Mahatmas, has revived the almost extinct belief of Christendom in the constant presence and active intervention of guardian angels and saints in the affairs of men.

If Madame Blavatsky has done all this, it is surely beside the mark to consider that her claim to be considered one of the greatest Borderlanders of our time is not to be ignored even if it can be proved that, on various occasions, she lied like Sapphira, cursed like a trooper, and lived like Messalina. We might as well refuse to recognise what the Psalms have done for mankind, because of David's treacherous murder of Uriah, or insist upon ignoring the influence of Constantine upon Christendom, because of the scandalous record of that Imperial criminal. These moral blots and blemishes—many of which her most devoted followers admit—were limitations to her influence. They were in an ethical sense what her ugliness was in another sphere. Few people realize how much Madame Blavatsky was handicapped by her singular lack of beauty. A beautiful woman

finds her good looks a veritable John the Baptist for her Gospel. The mere spell of her beauty makes the crooked places straight, and levels the obstacles which would otherwise impede her progress. But Madame Blavatsky had neither form nor comeliness. She had no complexion, no figure, and no grace. She was almost disgustingly fat, and almost repulsively hideous. From another point of view she was equally unfortunate. Jeanne D'Arc and St. Teresa, two other Borderlanders in our gallery, achieved their triumphs in their own country, and both were the incarnation of the national and religious spirit of their time. It was far otherwise with H.P.B. If there is one nation that is popularly believed to be antipathetic to the English-speaking race, it is that to which she belonged. If there is any section of our Imperial realm where Russophobia exists in its most virulent form, it is in Anglo-India. But it was precisely there where Madame Blavatsky began her active apostolate of Theosophy. That with all these disadvantages she achieved so much, is a fact which should never be lost sight of in attempting to estimate her place in the Gallery of Borderlanders.

Those who, after duly considering what Madame Blavatsky accomplished, still cling to the belief that they have 'demolished the whole fraud,' by their conclusive demonstrations of the sliding panel at Adyar, brought to light by the Coulombs, are welcome to their conclusion. For us, and for most men, Carlyle's terse and weighty words in reference to the complacent stupidity, which for centuries dealt in similar fashion with the Apostle of Arabia, suffice as a warning."

On the 12th of November arrived at Bombay that great scholar and renowned publicist, Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, the acknowledged author of that German policy of colonial expansion which Prince Bismarck fashioned out of his writings. Since 1884 he had been associated with us in our work in Germany and was now coming to India to perfect his knowledge of Hindu philosophy by getting it at first hand from the pandits themselves. He was received on landing at Bombay, at my request, by our local Branch, garlanded on board the steamer and taken to the Lodge room. A few days later he arrived at Adyar and was warmly welcomed by all the residents. Meanwhile Mr. Bertram Keightley had left for a tour in Southern India.

The Executive Notice of 7th of October, notifying the Society of the expulsion of Alberto Sarak, *alias* Das, *alias* Martinez, *alias* Count, *alias* Dr., *alias* General Inspector and General Delegate of the Supreme Esoteric Council of Thibet, was circulated to the General Secretaries at this time. It was worded as follows :

"The Society is notified that Señor Alberto Das, formerly of Spain, and subsequently of Buenos Aires, Republic of Argentina, South America, has been expelled from membership ; his two diplomas, the second of which he obtained under an *alias*, are hereby cancelled ; and the charter granted him for the organization of the Luz Branch T.S., at Buenos Aires, has been rescinded, and a new charter issued to Señores D. Federico Fernandez, D. Alejandro Sorondo, and their associates."

Of course I have mentioned this person at various times and I only recur to the subject now so that his theosophical history may be taken into our permanent record. It is almost beyond belief to what lengths credulity will carry persons who have an insatiate hankering for all that is mystical, without the counterpoise of sound common sense. At this very time of writing, I am about to report to the Indian Police the case of a confidence man who has been making money out of dupes by pretending to sell them mysterious medicines and other secrets, and affixing our title of F. T. S. after his name.

By the Overland Mail which reached me on the 20th November, I got news that Mr. Old had published in the *Westminster Gazette*, eight chapters of a series in which the entire private papers of the Judge case were included. This is one of the disagreeable incidents in T. S. history which I would have been glad to pass by without notice; things have so entirely changed since then that Mr. Old, after having brought all this trouble upon us and withdrawn from membership, is now figuring again as a contributor to the *Theosophical Review*. But if I were to pick out only pleasant incidents and omit the others, my present work would never be regarded, as it now must be, as an absolutely veracious and impartial narrative of events. The papers in question were the various briefs of evidence and original documents which were to have been laid before the Judicial Committee if the Judge case had gone to trial; since it did not, then, clearly, these documents should never have been published, but have been laid by in our archives as historical data. I had given them into the custody of Mr. Old—then resident at Adyar—and for the preparation of copies: they were mine and no one's else until I chose to publish them if I ever should. Mr. Old had not the shadow of a right to either print them himself or give them over to a third party for publication without my written consent. On the 27th September he notified me that being "unable to accept the official statement with regard to the enquiries held upon the charges preferred against the Vice-President of the T. S.," he resigned the offices of Treasurer and Recording Secretary. So far, so good; but his dissatisfaction did not constitute him the appellate authority to set aside the findings of the Judicial Committee, nor give him the right to put our private papers into the hands of one of the most unsympathetic and caustic literary experts on the London press. This mistake of his he, himself, regretted when he found what use was made of the documents, but too late, for the merciless articles of the *Westminster Gazette* circulated throughout the whole English-speaking world and caused us all much sorrow. So far as appears at this distance of time, not the least good was effected; on the contrary the articles embittered the feelings of the Judge party and doubtless hastened the taking of the fatal step of Secession by Mr. Judge and his followers.

Mr. Sven Ryden, a Swedish member of the Golden Gate Lodge, who had been acting as Treasurer and Recording Secretary, with great acceptability, finding it necessary to return to San Francisco, was relieved of his offices from the 12th of October, and left India, carrying with him our best wishes. Mr. T. Vijiaraghava Charlu was appointed to act in his place.

As the Indian National Congress had arranged to hold its Annual Meeting at Madras this year on the same days as our Convention, and as many of our friends were members of both bodies, a timely circular was issued asking that all who were likely to attend our meeting as delegates or visitors should notify us in advance so that the necessary preparations might be made. Only those who have been here on such an occasion can form an idea of what it means to find lodging and food for 250 to 300 delegates and as many more visitors, to everybody's satisfaction. Our quiet home is then the scene of the busiest activity,

H. S. OLCOTT,

A CYCLICAL RETROSPECT.

[Concluded from p. 556.]

WHEN tyranny and corruption, both lay and ecclesiastical, had in one form or another begun to do their best in strangling and silencing the occult aspirants, and thus endeavouring to extinguish the light of the East, and, in one of their hydra-headed manifestations, had received throughout the orient so rude a check at the hands of the Saracenic power, their evil energies were turned more towards the West. And in the barbarism then existing throughout Europe, they found for a time a congenial soil for that expansion which they had lost eastwards of Rome. Accordingly we find that, in the countries where the Arabic power did not reach, but where, by that time, the Christian propaganda had found a more or less ready acceptance—as in France and the more northern countries of Europe, as well as its original centre in Italy—ecclesiasticism had taken a firm hold; and all the worst phases of its dominion, to which the Arabs had elsewhere put an end, exhibited themselves in full force. That the Moslems were the enemies of the religion ascribed to Jesus Christ was quite enough to condemn all that they did, or all the things to which they might become addicted, so that priests denounced them as infidels and atheists, the servants of Satan, and charged them with every enormity. The oriental practices of magic and sorcery were pointed to as sufficient justification for this; and in their blind prejudice, the ecclesiastics included all scientific attainment which came from Eastern sources under the same denomination, condemning the Arabic medicine as magical, and generally execrating everything which came from such sources. But there were, to the honour of Europe in those dark ages, some few notable excep-

tions ; and those who dared seek to know those things which the Church banned were in the habit of resorting to Cordova, Seville, Salamanca, and other centres of Mahomedan learning, for instruction.

These latter were the true sources of all the real learning which began gradually to be disseminated over Europe about a thousand years ago ; for the colleges of those countries where Christianity ruled, had produced, up to that date, little else but heaps of barren and worthless doctrinal controversies, and religious tracts and treatises. So long as Europe received no scientific light from the East, just so long it remained in the darkness of barbarism ; devoid of the power to raise itself from the slough of ignorance and degradation into which it had sunk—or rather, from which it had made no attempt to rise. The Church held the reins of power and did nothing to abate the miseries of the land, beyond doling out charities and pretending to cure diseases by aid of sham miracles, and the spurious relics which had elsewhere proved so powerless against the emissaries of the prophet of Mecca.

When intellectual learning, apart from occultism as such, first began to obtain a foothold in Europe, it met with very great difficulties. Not only was there no public to give it support, and little protection afforded to it by the higher classes, but owing to the causes already referred to, it was too often looked upon with suspicion (as Theosophy is now) as an Eastern and Pagan product, and one little likely to afford profit to those who might foster it. Unless its operator could turn tons of lead into similar quantities of golden coin, or predict satisfactory futures to men and monarchs ; unless it could help to make the poor more poor and wretched, and the rich more tyrannical and oppressive ; or, failing one or both of these, unless it could be made the means of concocting subtle poisons to strike down such as might prove obstacles in the path of ambition, or in furtherance of some other crafty and diabolical scheme, Europe wanted none of it. She would have welcomed with avidity the man who offered her a panacea against old age, a recipe which should produce untold millions in gold, an elixir like the fabled Orvietan or Venice Treacle, which was to be an antidote to every poison, or the means of turning an adversary's sword against himself ; and her sons laboured hard in their selfish search after these things. But for the man who would show her the distances of the stars, or the real dimensions of the earth ; or who should explain why the comets she so much feared returned in their seasons ; for him who endeavoured to ameliorate the miseries of the poor, or to curb the excesses of the rich, for that sort of man Europe cared not the value of her least coin ; but she would speedily have made an end of him if he had appeared without the church's sanction, or the means of forcing an audience.

But knowledge, apart from that portion of it which could haply

be made available for religious purposes of the sort in vogue, met with still greater difficulties in Europe than the general indifference; for as already said, it met with the determined hostility of the Church. For everything which tended to make people think for themselves, and so might eventually lead to the exposure of the shams and pretences, the errors and nonsense, which passed under the name of religion, was a direct menace to the Church's ascendancy. She had declared that the earth stood still in space, and did not revolve either about its own centre or any other; but science already contained facts and suggestions directly contrary to this. The Church declared the Earth was flat, and denied the existence of the antipodes; but science maintained that it was globular, and proved the fact, and in the meantime many another such contradiction arose. Now as the Church claimed to be infallible, she could by no means tolerate contradiction; and whoever brought forward scientific data calculated to expose the ignorance of the Church, she endeavoured immediately to destroy, and in the cruelest manner she could devise.

But above all things the Church abhorred anything in the shape of magical studies or mystic learning, as these trespassed at once on what was regarded as her own special domain, claiming, as she undoubtedly did, to possess the entirety of available knowledge as to the things of any other world than this. Whatever might tend to throw additional light upon the spiritual world or the things relating to it, or those faculties in mankind by which they might cognise other planes of consciousness than the five senses as usually known, became abominable, and worse than heretical, in the eyes of the priest of the current orthodoxy. But all this implacable animosity was perhaps, not quite without some show of justification. For as, owing to the prevailing state of things, true occultism had withdrawn to its impenetrable secrecy, the opposition of the Church and of society as then constituted was not without a show of reason in its behalf. As already said, the memory of the existence of some sort of occult powers never quite dies out; although in a debased state of society the practice of them may take fantastic or objectionable forms. And in the mediæval period of European history, morality and civilisation were at so low an ebb that they could scarcely be worse; so that whatever relics of mystic science were left, were almost sure to be turned to base uses of an essentially selfish or wicked character.

Accordingly, nearly all we find at that time in the way of occultism was of the worst sort, and had the basest motives in view. It was a time of universal corruption and ignorance, when every man's hand was against his neighbour, and no one could call his soul his own. Human life was of no value, liberty of conscience or action was a thing unheard of. Those who might seek to discover new fields in science had to pursue their researches in secret; for if discovered, a speedy death was too often their portion.

But no tyranny, however organised, can exist forever. To suppose it were so, would be to infer that the Law of Progress which is inherent in man and Nature could be stayed by human means. But this is as little true as it would be to suppose that the courses of the planets could be stayed or turned backward, even for a single day—no matter how many fables we may find on such matters in the Bible or elsewhere. When the vast stream of human entities began the long course of their descent into matter, in order that the experiences of that state might be added to those of every other which they might pass through, there had been set in motion a current more resistless than the tides; and one which, like the stately march of the celestial bodies, is unalterable by man; it has moved onward in silent majesty for myriads of ages, as it must do forever. To resist it is to court destruction; for though we may succeed in covering up the signs of its progress for a little while, and in so doing inflict misery upon thousands and entail corresponding karmic punishment upon ourselves, yet in the long run the irresistible stream will sweep aside the puny bounds we may attempt to impose upon it. To it no man can say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

Not for long, therefore, could ecclesiasticism maintain its ascendancy over mankind, and thereby cause the fount of knowledge—the perennial stream of progress—to vomit forth blood and folly. The same power which, in the lands of the Orient, had spoken through the mouth of the Camel-Driver of Medina, and made use of the doctrine of the Unity of God as a means to crush the religious, political, and moral corruption and general rottenness of the old world, began in Europe to manifest itself under the garb of the Protestant Reformation. And that, in its turn, was chiefly the cover to political and social reform, expressing itself in the only manner which was suited to the cyclic period through which Europe was then passing.

Beginning, then, with the twelfth century of the Christian era, we find that the crystallized stagnation of the centuries which intervened between it and the last expiring efforts of Greek science, began to give way in all directions; and the intellectual impulse which had been checked by the moral and religious opiate laid upon it a thousand years previously was bursting forth with renewed energy, and with a force which all the organised terrors and cruelties of the dark ages could neither stem nor abate. For that imperious longing of the mind to recover the knowledge of Nature which is a part of its heritage, will never be long delayed or hampered by superstitious shackles or priestly anathemas. At this point it seems to have been (or during the centuries immediately following), if we may venture to speculate upon the reincarnation of those who had died in the Mediterranean lands, that the Carthaginian Hanno, reappearing as Columbus, again renewed that westward voyage which in a previous life he had failed to complete, at the time when his ships had been stopped by the obstruction of the "weedy sea." Those who had

scanned the heavens in Old Chaldea and Egypt during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, returned to complete their labours under the guise, perhaps, of Newton, Flamsteed, Halley, and their followers; while the artists of old Greece, such as Zeuxis, Apelles, and their pupils, doubtless returned as Raphael, Titian, or others of the Renaissance period, and, being true to the impressions of their earlier lives, began again to paint pictures embodying the scenery and the incidents of Greece and of the East, as we may to this day see in the fashion they originated of painting all their figures in Old Greek costumes, and filling their ideal landscapes with Greek temples, Thessalian shepherds, and all the other paraphernalia proper to a time some 1500 or 2000 years before. The Spartan mobs who had drenched Syracuse in blood when they drove out their tyrants, once more reappeared, this time to re-enact their tragedies in those of the French Revolution; while the armies who had followed Alexander and others once more retraced their steps under Napoleon, or fought against him under Wellington—as they may have done under the leaders of the Persian hosts—but this time with characteristically different results.

With all these egos there must also have come back the materialists, the satirists, and others who had been the leaders in the philosophic world of Greece and Rome after the age of intellectual pursuits had there set in; and these were the scientists of the later time, and the men like Voltaire, Paine, and their followers. See them, even until quite recent years, trying to reduce all the phenomena of life and nature to mere mechanical effects; and condemning all occultism, as before they had cast ridicule upon the impostures of the heathen shrines and the Pagan diviners and augurs. During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries the pursuit of science became universal; and the division between its exoteric forms and the esotericism of the occult arts became more and more defined. As the division became wider, so the contempt and aversion of the intellectual scientists of the lower mind became greater and more emphasised towards all the relics of the science of the Higher Self, which as a body of knowledge had been lost so many centuries before. They wrote clever books in which they attempted to explain the trickery of the Pagan temples and the early churches, by attributing to the priests a familiarity with certain chemical, optical and mechanical discoveries only brought to light some two centuries back, and pointed, in triumphant proof of their explanations, to the Egyptian statue of the Vocal Memnon, or to the Pompeian Temple of Isis with its acoustical tubes and mechanism, and in one fell swoop, mastered as they were and still are by that intense dislike of all they cannot understand and explain, which is so prominent a feature of the egotistic pride of intellect, they condemned with derision every trace of the occultism which alone could

give the keys to their own discoveries, and point out the true philosophy which lay behind.

As to the churches, they had long condemned everything occult; but the feeling which prompted this, though proceeding through a widely different channel, had much the same origin as that which causes men of science to take a similar course. Shorn, as the Churches in no long time became, of every power by which they had sought to stamp out science, both exoteric and esoteric, and whereby they had sought to compel at the least an outward show of belief in their absurdities, they have eagerly grasped at the attempted explanations science has offered of the phenomena of occultism, and made themselves still more ridiculous in seeking to turn the very things which have helped in exploding their own power, into leaden swords of ignorance with which to defend themselves against modern Theosophy in its many forms. In so acting, they are blindly attempting to cut away their own foundation; for as they have so widely departed from it by degrading and materialising its meaning and practice, the force which destroys them is generated within themselves, and no one but themselves need trouble at the result—that which is contrary to true knowledge, will sooner or later disappear.

While the revival of science and art, and the multiplication of religious sects was thus actively in progress during the last four or five centuries, it must not be supposed that occultism of both the right and left-hand paths did not also experience a similar activity. For when true occultism was dying out of the ancient temples, the Christian religion was taking its place, and itself falling into the grosser phase—when the philosophers, more than half knowing there had been a lost knowledge of some sort, were endeavouring to rebuild it intellectually according to their own crude ideas, there were also others who, seeing the outward impostures of the Pagan religions, the gross superstition of the early Christian ignorance, and the materialistic negation and general contradictoriness of the early philosophers, held aloof from them all; and in secret they sought to restore what their intuition told them were the disused and latent faculties of the mind upon which the occult arts seemed to depend for their success. These observers were most likely those who, seeking the true initiation at a time when the last occult cycle had been drawing to a close, had not the time to reach far into that knowledge before the chance passed by; but who, in preparation for the next cycle of activity, had pursued the Path as far as their then remaining opportunities permitted. And during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries especially, we find what seem to be these same people at work once more upon the plane of this physical life.

For in those days there suddenly appeared several great minds illumined with the Light of the East, which they called Theosophy.

And though they may have understood well enough the value of physical science as then known, and were by no means ignorant of religious principles, yet they were not exactly the followers either of the science of their day, nor yet to any very great extent of its religious ideas. They tried to point out that the true course lay in a sort of middle path ; and they laboured to show that the pursuit of occultism did not merely mean the practice of the occult arts, nor had necessarily any base or selfish purpose in view—very far from it. They tried to prove that occultism lay at the root of all religions and of all science ; but in so corrupt and material an age their efforts were but little better than vain, because they were premature.

At that time physical science had made such great triumphs that its advocates began to look upon it as the be-all and the end-all of human attainment ; and as usually happens in such cases, they became utterly intolerant of anything else which might assume to be in possession of some little light on the obscurities of Nature and the destinies of man ; and as occultism or Theosophy advanced such ideas, they unhesitatingly condemned it and all who followed it. As for the churches, no sort of liberality or tolerance was to be looked for from them ; for they held that all was the work of an evil power which did not emanate from themselves ; and they were far too appropriately occupied in anathematising and persecuting each other, to give much thought to anything less than a stoppage of their revenues, an absurd dispute about transubstantiation, or something equally useless to the world and themselves. And the public in general, if we except certain superstitious ideas which they had received from old times, relating to what was called witchcraft and sorcery, took no interest in anything but the difficulties attendant upon their daily life in times of such turmoil ; these were still dominated by the clergy, and had not yet learned to think for themselves.

But at this point we may fitly close our retrospect of the past ages that are fled, and come down to our own day, when the world at large has either learned better than slavishly to bow down before the *dicta* of the churches, or has become indifferent to them. In our day science has reached such a large measure of perfection, that for the many who look not critically at its latest developments, there seems little hope outside of its negation, of any continuance of life or consciousness after the death of the physical body, or as to the possibility of any powers in man other than those already common to the five senses. In the wide spread of education these things have been spread broadcast ; and if there ever was a time when all thought of occultism ought to have disappeared, it was during the years previous to the last decade that we might most fitly have predicated it. But the fact, never to be lost sight of, that mystic ideas and pursuits cannot be eradicated from the human mind, has never been more forcibly exemplified than in our own day. Amid all the brilliant triumphs of science, and besides all the pretended certainties as to no life beyond the present, there stalks

this mystic spectre from the times of long ago ; and instead of finding occultism dead and gone, we find it more than ever alive—more than ever in evidence. Our science and religion would stamp it out if they could, and have tried every weapon in their efforts to do so ; but having failed ignominiously, now try to ignore it altogether. But the last few years have abounded in occult experiences, thoughts, and practices, to such an extent that even science and the churches cannot afford altogether to ignore it as they wish, but have reluctantly to turn some small share of their august attention thereto ; and one by one have to admit its leading points and sanction a belief in their reality.

Arrived at this time, we stand at the turning-point of a great cycle ; yet it is one which is relatively small as compared with some which are known to occultists. But in the shorter cycles which parcel out the career of humanity, things correspond to a certain extent with their appearances in the longer periods. What it may take mankind as a whole, many millions of years to go through on the larger scale, it may take single nations or family groups either thousands or hundreds of years to accomplish individually. Hence the diversity of their progress, and the differences we perceive in the degrees of civilisation attained ; as well as the wide discrepancies between individuals. As we know from physiological evidence, the human being in its initial stages goes through a representation of all the forms the monad has occupied in its various stages of existence in ages past ; although what has in reality taken millions of years for the race at large, is gone through by the human embryo in a few short months. Even so do we find things in their psychological aspect ; for the mental progress of individuals and of nations is similar, in their respective cycles, to that of the race. It has its waves of advance and recession—its periods of illumination and of obscurity in various directions—exactly as the great waves of the ocean have their smaller wavelets, both on their crests and in their depressions. The hidden forces which are the cause of both are continually present, and periodically they burst forth into more or less marked effect, according to the laws by which they are guided, and the corresponding periods of their activity.

It is for these reasons we have taken such a long glance backward, and traced the several developments forward, during more than twenty centuries. In the third century before the Christian era there began a celebrated cycle which, in the present time, comes to an end. It appears to be one which is peculiarly associated with the evolution of the mind, and more especially of the powers latent in man. The obscure faculties which began to go so much out of use about the third century before Christ, and which are so much the province of the occultist and the student of mystic lore, are to-day returning into more prominent use ; and it is to this fact we are mainly to attribute the abnormal prominence of the mystic element

in the trend of the public mind. This seems more particularly evidenced at the present time, because the effort of former students, who carried on their studies during the first six centuries of this cycle, and then came to a more or less abrupt close, appear now again to be manifested; for the 1500 years or so which have elapsed since the stoppage of those efforts, make the average which is now exoterically assigned as the period when the people whose respective careers then closed will reincarnate.

It is chiefly owing to these returns, and the coincidence of this with the closing in of the greater cycle, which has enabled the Masters of occultism to give out a certain portion of that relatively obscure knowledge which they have in their keeping; and which portion is far more significant and deeper than at first sight it may appear to the more superficial examiner. And thus we may perceive that the charges of selfishness which have been brought against them by the unthinking are altogether baseless—the Masters cannot give out more than the world can take for the time-being, nor at any time other than the period when the public mind is open to its reception. For similar reasons they have to withdraw into obscurity, and to hide their treasures of occult literature and knowledge, at all other times; for otherwise both they and it might long since have been destroyed. Therefore it is not they who have wilfully concealed the occult knowledge generally, but we who in our ignorance have made them do so; only by the means they have used could it have been preserved for us; and it is in order to such preservation, and to lead the way to all who are in earnest to follow that Path which leads into the arcana of the Ancient Wisdom, that the Masters exist upon this plane at all. At the present time they can give to us a certain portion of that which is in store for us; were they to give more, we could not assimilate it, or should in our ignorance misapply it, and then they would stand accountable to the karmic law for everything in the mistakes and calamities which might happen to our race through such premature unfolding; which would only thwart their work and not forward it.

From the review we have taken of past times it will be seen that at no period, during two thousand years past, was there as favourable a state of things in which to make known what is now being given out, as in the present day. But about 300 years since, the occult day began to dawn; and its manifestations became more and more marked during the last quarter of each century as it arrived; and such will be the case, to a greater or less extent, perhaps for another 500 years hence; by which time our race will have received all it is capable of assimilating until the next return of the great cycle brings about a condition of things which shall permit a further reception of Light from the East such as now constitutes the Sun of Theosophy and of every system of occultism, of religion, and of science, which does not minister solely to the selfish

instincts of man. Therefore, instead of repining that more is not given to us now, it is our plain duty to make the most of that which we already have ; and if we do so, it will be found that the means placed within our reach lead to vastly more than our few short years of physical life will allow us to acquire ; and that in the meanwhile there will be no time for idle contentions. The latter lead only to more confusion and to further division, to loss of time and waste of energy, and allow opportunity for all those hindrances to advance which we have seen in operation during the period covered by our Cyclical Retrospect.

SAMUEL STUART.

BODY AND CHARACTER.

PART II.

SO many considerations seem to press upon us on taking up the subject of the indication of character by the body, that it will be profitable, to some, to pursue the matter a little further. In what has been said so far no reference has been made to heredity, and to touch this part of the subject at all it will be best to go back and trace the history of what has become, by repeated incarnations, an individuality. These incarnations go right back to the animal kingdom, for there is a point where animal consciousness quits forever that kingdom and gets promotion, as it were, in the human. From the moment this boundary line is stepped over there commences that responsibility which from henceforth must belong to every unit. At first of course it was very slight, yet still it was there and always had a tendency to grow, and with this increasing responsibility, from the moment that it commences, there begins the formation of what we may really consider the body proper of the man—considered as a spiritual and lasting factor in evolution as an individual—and this is what we know as the Karana S'arira, or Causal body. Now whatever is done as time goes on, and the incarnations follow each other, in the way of forming the character, is done by each life working into the Causal body something of itself, of the result of its experiences. At first the Causal body will be quite indiscernible at all, but with each life it will grow, and the degree of development of the Causal will be a measure of the development of the man. Now after this lapse of many ages of time covering perhaps hundreds of lives for each individual, characters will, although still very partially formed, have already taken certain very decided lines, so that any very competent observer will be able to detect the strong and weak places of each, and indeed the various qualities will already be so marked that the people themselves while in the earthly body will be able with tolerable accuracy to detect character in each other. But if we were to follow the lines of incarnation of any small

group of individuals all meeting together by the association of the family life we should by no means find that all of a like degree of progress came together by that means. I have no intention of making any observation on the complications of heredity, I only want to establish the main principle that the character goes to the body, not that the body brings on to the field a certain character. If there be no character ready to take up a certain body, then there is for the moment, I take it, no need for that body, and it dies ; and this to my mind explains the enigma of infantile and pre-natal death of the body ; always allowing, of course for the intentional lesson which may be contained in this, for members of that family in which these deaths occur. Of course we shall be told that in the slums of our great cities where such deaths most frequently occur, there is no idea of any lesson being gleaned from such an event, the early death being a subject of self-congratulation in parents of this debased type. I cannot however see it in that way, and rather hold that no parents however debased, be they Chinese or Patagonian, ever destroy life without some effect being sown for the future, however minute may be the seeds, within the soul of the consciousness that is the factor in forming character.

That a certain young life therefore grows up successfully out of childhood, into manhood and old age, is evidence along these lines, that an already established individuality has been able to take up again his own particular line of growth where he left off when last in physical life, by taking up that particular body. And of course, the mother and father being themselves people of already settled character, will, if they provided a hundred infant bodies, produce them all of a certain stamp, within certain limits, the range of which is itself a subject of wonderful mystery. At any rate it will be the rule that Egos requiring, say, a body in order to follow development of high intellectual faculties, and those seeking the satisfaction of mere brutal instincts, would hardly meet in the same family ; there will be exceptions which form the mystery surrounding the subject ; but the rule will be that like will link with like.

That however the limits within which this rule works is very wide is not only well known, but easily understandable if we look widely enough at the multiplex nature of the task to be carried out in the development of the *whole* of the human family, and not merely a favoured portion of it. For not only have the more advanced ones who have begun to find some mystery in life, to be provided with environments furnishing events which will appeal to them all round, but they have themselves to form part of the environment of those who think about the mystery of life not at all. The philanthropist has to be thrown forward into the company of the indigent, the improvident and the selfish. The Howards and Barnardos have to rub shoulders with Bill Sykes and Little Joe ; neither can do quite well at present without the other, Indeed all along these

lines of thought it is ever profitable, to reflect on the wonderful wisdom displayed in the arrangement of our social surroundings *as we find them*, ugly as certain phases of them appear to us, when we consider the lesson we are, unconsciously for the most part, teaching each other. That there should be at one end of London, say at Westminster, a busy throng of thoughtful men forming a congenial sphere of life for a strong and great character like W. E. Gladstone, and at the other end of it another equally busy throng, a hive of energy, such as Billingsgate or Ratcliffe highway, forming a fit surrounding for souls desiring to rush out into the coarsest physical contacts, appears on the surface a reflection on our national character, and to bar the way to accomplishment of the perfect national life. When however we get below the surface, and put national history in its place as a chapter only of the history of humanity, we see how indispensable is the presence of both classes to the growth of each.

And I take it this necessity for contact and contrast obtains more or less throughout all the three worlds in and out of which man has to pass ceaselessly until he accomplishes Nirvâna. For although a great deal of the Devachanic plane is closed out from the presence of the backward Ego, who on earth would seek out such a place as Billingsgate, yet, seeing that the earthly experiences just closed, form the basis of what transpires in Devachan for the soul of the philosopher or saint, such advanced souls will necessarily themselves bring into the circumference of their place of rest and happiness, the presence of those whom they have worked for during all the past life, and around whom the energy of their thoughts and pity of their hearts has been entwined. What will heaven be to Barnardo without crowds of the familiar faces of his waifs and strays, no longer in want, but utterly reclaimed, yet still offering a contrast between his own existence and consciousness and theirs. For me there is no greater truth made manifest on earth than that the soul of man is made to grow by contact and contrast with the souls of other men.

So grows by degrees and so improves the type of the everlasting body of man, that permanent instrument which gleans all that is worth gleaming from every life, takes up the golden thread from each and works it into its own imperishable texture, and it is only so that body and character are together built up. To be able to judge correctly what the character of a man was, up to date, we should have to study this permanent body in order to see that character expressed essentially. Knowledge would doubtless be required to distinguish the qualities of a mystic, like Pythagoras or Plotinus, from a world conqueror like Cæsar or Alexander, but greatness would be stamped upon each, marking them off from the mass around them, and having regard to the karma of each, they would be drawn, on incarnation, towards bodies that to some extent

expressed their characters. The soul of Napoleon could not be contained by the body that would exactly express the quiet contemplative mind of the Indian Yogî. It is impossible to think that Nature ever makes such blunders as this. It is true that we sometimes find great souls in bodies which appear to contradict their character, but it is only a surface contradiction ; it is impossible that in its essence and true character the body of the nobleman can be anything else than noble. To take an illustration from English literature ; no author we have has paid greater attention to these seeming contradictions between body and character than Thackeray, and he puts what all must feel to be one of the noblest if not the very best of all his characters, Colonel Dobbin, into an indifferent type of body, large, angular, awkward, yet clay which we feel to be noble clay.

Now as we in earthly life are in error in taking the body of the man for the man himself, so in the other two of the three worlds the tendency to do this may also there obtain. Yet must we try and realise that this is error, the body in each condition of life—here on earth, in Kama-Loka, or again in heaven—being merely the expression of the man as best obtainable considering the surroundings made necessary by karma. Let us consider this a little, as really the crux of the whole matter. When the serious business of another life for any one of us is determined upon, regard is had, not to our making the most magnificent display of some characteristic in which we shine, nor a general exhibition of the extent of development all round, which we have accomplished, but rather to securing for us a sphere of life where some chance may be given us of making good some defect in the character, that is, of making some further progress towards the goal of evolution. Also in the birth of any already great soul, a genius, likely to be of great value to the people he comes amongst, no doubt his value in the national life will be counted upon, and his influence upon the mass must be reckoned with, but justice has to be done first of all to the man himself, and if the necessities of his particular line of development at the moment demand a temporary suspension of any opportunity of putting forth the peculiar strength of his genius, that strength will for the time be suppressed in any direction where we should be able to recognise it, and would be directed towards the object of some necessity of personal conquest where you and I could never look for it at all. There can be no question but that Lord Bacon was a rare genius, yet with so grave a defect in his moral nature as to make it certain that he will have to work hard at it to obliterate it—and we may be certain he'll do it. Are we to think that this will be worked out and made good only in the exalted positions of national life ? It is more probable that some obscure sphere will be chosen where the lesson will be closely pressed home upon him, in a body adapted to the lower work the man will

then have to do. At that time the casual observer might suppose that body a base one, but *that* it could not be ; the genius exalts it, though for a time its chief qualities are concealed.

Realising along these lines the impossibility of anything of value in the way of character ever being really lost to humanity, we should cease to distress ourselves over those cases where we see genius apparently wasted through the struggle with some moral blemish. Our newspapers in recording the passing away of any life that has left a great mark in the history of literature, politics, or social advancement, speak often as though the power that resided in the genius had ceased to exist, that the only residue, beyond the results of its work, was the legacy of its example. The establishment of some belief in the everlasting body of each and every man will make all this impossible. To me Theosophy stamps itself as essentially the Gospel of Hope, by reason of this fact of the persistence of every quality once won, and its preservation for all time, not only for the individual himself, but for the race of humanity at large. If Mozart should have in his next life to follow the plough, or any menial calling, for a living, his genius being only hinted at by little flashes of its colour here and there, I can no longer be distressed at this, I shall rest content that all is well. In that case it is true that we have lost to us for the time, some splendid talent for making first class music, but I shall have to think that in numberless other cases suppressions of a like character are going on which will one day be removed, and the true value of the man better burst forth, and have besides the moral contentment that justice is being done to the soul of a genius which, from some necessity unknown to me, is thus circumscribed to be made stronger and richer by its new experience. Music alone will not teach Mozart all he has to learn. That the great Law decrees these suppressions of genius and of talents of all kinds, the circle of observation of each one of us will afford us ample proof. Let each look around amongst those he meets and he will not have far to seek for instances of people showing qualities far ahead of the position they are called upon to fill ; indeed the majority need to look no further than themselves, for I take it that there are events in our lives which make us feel we have tapped for just a moment some well of quality within, that far transcends the general outer presentation of ourselves to those about us. We are each of us greater than we think. Yet this is no cause for self-congratulation, but only for rejoicing at the wisdom and economy of God, as well as being proof of His benevolence.

We have therefore this explanation before us when we consider the relations between the permanent spiritual body of man, and this temporary lower instrument, and get to understand the spirit of the principle laid down in the evolution of life and form and to realise that the form, though always essentially in harmony with the life using it, will only express in the case of humanity a certain limited

portion of the character. I say in the case of humanity because the lower forms of life are decidedly more fully expressed by what we see of them. I will not say that some of the more nearly individualised animals do not hold qualities which are concealed from view, but for the most part the body does express the character of the animal very closely. The patience and endurance of a horse are housed in a body adapted to their being made use of in the service of the world; the stealthiness, the treachery and cruelty of the cat tribe are well expressed in the limber, elastic frames they have; the elasticity suggesting the character of the snake, the beauty and soft touch of their skins expressing their susceptibility to every caress from those whose presence is a pleasure to them. All animal nature right through is more expressive of the whole nature than is man, and the nearer we come to individuality or manhood, the more begins to be concealed, till in the highest domestic animals suppressed character is often very marked. An elephant possessed of a bad temper has been known in a fit of rage to kill his mahout, and on realising what he had done, to give way to the deepest anguish and sorrow for the act. The possibility of the animal acting in this way lies in the possession of a quality concealed and stored in some centre which is the storehouse of the animal's incipient individual character, that which in the man is the Causal body. Mr. Sinnett, in the "Growth of the Soul," speaks very clearly of the first faint beginnings of the Karana S'arira, making it quite plain that at first many lives will have to be lived before any perceptible formation of it is begun; therefore the presence of the centre and storehouse of what character there is will be just as much a mystery as that of the noblest animal about to cross the boundary into humanity. Probably the antiquity of the forces that go to form the bed-rock formation of character is so enormous that there always will be mystery surrounding it, but as experience is gathered in the human kingdom, more and more light is thrown upon character by the growth of the Causal body.

The power to detect the varieties of character by observation of the appearances the Causal body may make to the beholder, will be a gradual product of evolution, just as our present power to detect expressions in the physical body. In the eye, the features, and the gestures, we at once are able to see as much and sometimes more of the inner meaning and motive of the man, than by the spoken word or the deliberate act. In many ways there are subtle betrayals of ourselves, of our weaknesses and of our strengths, by that complicated instrument the physical body. Is not that faculty a wonderful power which enables us instantly to detect by the changes of expression in eye, mouth, or other facial feature, the emotions and thoughts which cause them? Yet it has become a commonplace and ceases to excite astonishment: so, as the time goes on, will man acquire the power of interpreting the expressions of the higher

vehicles. And as we find immense variety of character here, so shall we hereafter come to see the still wider range of character in the Causal body, and to be able to interpret by its changes the thoughts of the moment as well as determine by its outlines and colours the place which it holds in evolution.

W. G. JOHN.

MR. LEADBEATER'S AMERICAN LECTURES.

THE NATURE OF THEOSOPHICAL EVIDENCE.

WHEN Theosophy is first presented to a man, he is often much attracted by it, but at the same time somewhat startled at the boldness and definiteness of its assertions, and he naturally asks us by what evidence we have been so strongly convinced of these truths, and how it is possible for him to obtain a similar conviction. I wish to try in this lecture to answer that question, and perhaps, if you will pardon me for introducing for a few minutes a somewhat personal element, I can hardly begin better than by telling you exactly how I myself reached that conviction, for it seems to me that the experience of a man who has sought the truth with some measure of success along certain lines can hardly fail to be of some interest and some use to others who are studying along similar lines.

At the time when Theosophical truth first came in my way, I was a clergyman of the Church of England, and I might be one still if I had not begun to think about certain things of which it is not well to think if one wishes to remain orthodox. I had, as part of my duties, to prepare young men for what is called confirmation, and sometimes these young men would have doubts to be solved and questions to ask, based usually upon the works of Thomas Paine or Bradlaugh. I was always able to answer these enquiries to the satisfaction of the questioners, but not entirely to my own satisfaction, for when I thought critically over some of the arguments which I found myself using—the stock arguments which are always used—I was forced to admit that they were not such as I should have accepted in connection with any other subject. I felt that if some one came to me and offered me for any ordinary historical event the evidence that is put forward for the gospel story, I should instantly reject it as utterly insufficient. But since the whole theory of eternal salvation appeared to be based upon this alleged history, this uncertainty seemed to be a serious matter, for it left me with the uncomfortable feeling that I might be teaching that which was not true. The only thing to do was evidently to study the matter more deeply, and to see what the wise men of the church had said on these points. The result was very disappointing, for they have said practically nothing—nothing, that is, of any value to the enquirer. There is a great deal of vigorous assertion, and much denunciation of the wickedness of those who dare to doubt; but there is nothing what-

ever that would be accepted as evidence or argument in any other connection. Nothing is said that really meets any one of the difficulties, and when a man's attention and critical faculty are once aroused, he sees at once that the whole scheme as proposed for his acceptance by orthodoxy is an unreasonable one, and that no shred of evidence is producible in its favour. All alleged proofs break in his hands when he subjects them to more than superficial examination, and he finds that there is no certainty for anything anywhere. This is a terrible thing for a man to discover with regard to the religion in which he has been brought up; he feels as though all his convictions had been torn up by the roots, and nothing was left to him.

Personally I was not in so bad a position as many men when this came to me, because previous to this I had investigated spiritualism, and therefore I *knew* that some things were true. Still, looked at in the cold, calm light of reason, the story of the creation, of the insensate anger of the Creator and of the alleged necessity of salvation from His fury by the extraordinary expedient of a vicarious atonement, all looked strange and unreasonable when divested of the sanctity of the dim religious light of the time-honoured custom; and so this fantastic jumble of fragments of a faith forgotten left me, as it has left so many others, without any real satisfaction.

Just at this time—by chance, as it seemed, except that I believe there is no such thing as chance—I met with a book by Mr. Sinnett called "The Occult World," and found in it suggestions of a magnificent scheme of philosophy which at once attracted my attention and aroused my deepest interest. It was more fully explained in a second book, "Esoteric Buddhism," and as soon as I read it I noticed several points in which it completely differed from anything which had been offered to me so far. I was acquainted so far with two theories, the materialistic idea that everything is ruled by blind chance, and the orthodox theory that men are placed in happiness or misery, in civilization or savagery, in criminal surroundings or in respectability, simply according to Divine caprice. Both of these were eminently unsatisfactory, for neither of them seemed in the least reasonable, and there were many phenomena that they entirely failed to explain. The caprice theory has been so thoroughly disposed of by the writings of Colonel Ingersoll and others that I need hardly point out the manifold objections to it; the materialistic system I knew to be defective, because I had myself seen many phenomena for which it failed to account. Here was a third hypothesis which certainly had immense advantages, for it explained all the difficulties as to which the others had failed; it really did account rationally for the conditions which we see around us, it gave an intelligible scheme of development which included the past, present and future of man, and at the same time it agreed with the general trend of scientific thought. Here for the first time I encountered a

reasonable philosophy, according to which it was possible to believe that God was all-powerful and all-loving without having to shut my eyes to all the facts of life.

Naturally I seized upon this theory at once, since it seemed so obviously the best of the three, and proceeded to enquire further. I found my way to Mr. Sinnett, by whom I was received with the ever-ready courtesy and affectionate interest which all his friends know so well, and through him I was enabled to join the Theosophical Society. There was very little theosophical literature then; in those earlier days we had not all the manuals with their detailed explanations which make the study so much easier for you now; and besides the two books which I have already mentioned, we had only "Isis Unveiled" and "The Perfect Way." We asked how this knowledge had come to the West, and heard that it was through Madame Blavatsky from some great Oriental teachers. We found that the Indian philosophy was far in advance of any that we had previously known; far in advance of anything that orthodoxy gives us now, though not of the true early Christian teachings, as contained in the writings of the great Gnostic Doctors. But the ignorant majority in the early Church cast out these great Gnostics, and since then they have left their religion without anything to offer to the thinking man. Every religion ought to be able to meet the needs of all classes, the poor and ignorant on the one hand, and the cultured and philosophically-minded on the other. You will find that every religion has applied itself to meet these two classes, and has had its plain ethical teaching for those who could understand nothing more, but has always been prepared to supplement that by metaphysical instruction for those who were capable of looking deeper into the heart of things. Christianity was in no way behind the other religions in this respect originally, for it had its secret teaching for those who had proved themselves worthy of it, but in these degenerate days the Church has largely forgotten its birthright. I shall have to speak of this in detail later, in another of this series of lectures.

Madame Blavatsky told us that there had always been a body of men who knew the great truths of Nature, and were therefore in a position to teach others. She said that, so far from these truths being new, they were old as the world itself. Was there more that we could learn? Perhaps; for these great Masters of Wisdom sometimes took pupils, and any man whose life was devoted to the service of humanity might hope some day to be accepted as one of those. As to this, Madame Blavatsky could promise us nothing, for the matter remained entirely in the hands of the Masters themselves; but men had been accepted, and therefore there was always hope for others who are willing to take the trouble to fit themselves for higher development. I felt that a commonplace man like myself could hardly dare to hope for such honour in

this incarnation ; but in the meantime there was plenty to study, and at least I could work for this cause which seemed to me so far greater than any other that I had yet seen. So I gave up my position in the Church, and went out to India with Madame Blavatsky, to work in the office of the Society at the Headquarters. I expected nothing but this opportunity to work for the cause, and I had no idea at that time that any further advancement was possible for me in this life. In India it was my privilege to meet some of the great Teachers, and from them and from their pupils I learnt very much more than I had known before, and began to gain a fuller grasp of the system. Presently I received hints as to how to raise the consciousness to higher planes. I had had no expectation of this, as I had supposed that one needed to be born with special faculties in order to attain success along that line ; but I was told that such powers were latent in every human being, and that if I worked at them with sufficient energy I might develop them. Naturally I took the hint, went to work at once, and in process of time found that all that had been told me was true—that it was possible to develop astral and mental sight, and by their means to verify at once the principal teachings of Theosophy. Any one who is willing to work at it as I worked, may come to know, as I know, that the planes of Nature are definite facts ; he may know the truth of the teaching as to states after death, for he will see and speak to the so-called dead, and meet them on their own plane ; and it is far more satisfactory for him thus to rise to their level than to drag them down again to his own by materialization. He may know the great facts of reincarnation, for he may learn to look back on his own past lives, spread before him as the pages of a book. He may verify for himself, without a shadow of doubt, the action of the mighty laws of evolution and of divine justice. All these things I know for myself by personal observation, and so may any of you if you are willing to take the trouble and to tread the Path. I do not say that you will find it easy ; I do not say that it can be done quickly ; but I do say that many have done it, and that every man has the powers latent within him and may succeed if he will.

You will say that in thinking I know these things I may be hallucinated. Now of course theoretically that may be true ; I may be hallucinated at this moment when I think that I am addressing you, and you may also be under the influence of hallucination when you think that you are listening to me ; indeed, some philosophers argue that we are all hallucinations ourselves ; but if we really exist, if I am speaking and you are listening, then it is also true that I have seen these things and know them. I have seen them not once, but hundreds of times ; they are daily facts in my experience. To many of us these other planes are as well-known as the streets of your city are to you, and we can no more doubt them than you can doubt the existence of the town in which you live. If Theosophy be

an illusion, it is one which has been shared by some of the greatest minds of the world, by such men as Buddha, S'ankarâchârya, Pythagoras. It would be rather a serious assumption to accuse all these of hallucination. For myself I am fully satisfied upon this point ; but I quite recognize that though I have proved these things to my own satisfaction, my mere assertion is not in any way a proof to you. Yet it is a piece of evidence, of which you should take account along with other evidence.

There are many who are deeply interested in the study of Theosophy for whom a visit to India would be an impossibility ; and besides, it is obvious that a man might spend a lifetime in India without necessarily encountering the same experiences which came to me. So it is natural for men to ask what proof there is available for them short of this direct personal experience of which I have spoken. I myself believe that short of experience there is no direct proof of such matters as these, but assuredly there is very much evidence. These things may be known just as exactly and definitely as we know the majority of facts in science, in which we all believe without question. On this subject I should advise every student to read carefully Mr. Fullerton's most admirable pamphlet on "The proofs of Theosophy," and follow closely the unanswerable arguments by which he shows that the proof of any proposition must be congruous with the nature of the proposition, and that consequently the final proof of the deepest of the theosophical doctrines must always lie in the experience of the evolved soul. Yet though in the ultimate this must always be so, there is still a great deal of confirmatory evidence to be had, as I hope presently to show.

Those who, ignoring the law of congruity, persist in demanding for psychological problems and theories a demonstration along mathematical lines, or a proof on the physical plane which they can hold in their hands, would do well to consider upon what evidence they hold their own inherited convictions, if they are not afraid to face the question. When we come to ask for proofs of the orthodox theory of life, where are they ? There are simply none, and as a general rule no one professing that faith even pretends that there are, but simply remarks that it is wicked to ask for them, and that doubt is a temptation of the devil ! The practice of orthodoxy has been always to condemn reason, and to endeavour to force men to adopt its conclusions, recognizing no way but its own, and no possibility that it may be mistaken, or that any one else can ever have known anything. I do not in the least wish to hurt the feelings of any loyal believer, but what I am saying here is simply indisputable, and has been confirmed over and over again in the history of the Christian churches. This theology is based upon a book which is obviously self-contradictory and is known by every scholar to be incorrect ; indeed, in many cases one might suppose

that its professors had taken for their motto the celebrated saying of one of them, "Credo quia impossibile"—I believe it *because* it is impossible! It asserts so many things that it does not know, and so many things that cannot possibly be known, and would moreover be of no conceivable importance to any human being even if they could be known. But on the really important questions which vitally affect every one of us no shred of evidence is ever offered. Not one preacher in all this great city will tell you that he himself has been to heaven or to hell, and knows of his own knowledge that such places exist as he describes them. He will say simply, "The Church teaches this," or, "it is written thus in the Bible." I venture to say that this is no sufficient evidence upon which to pin a faith which, they tell us, is to settle the question of our eternal salvation; that seems somewhat too important a matter to rest upon so insecure a foundation. In Theosophy we at least preach to you nothing that we do not ourselves know to be true by direct personal observation.

But does theology at least account reasonably for everything that happens? Has it a clear, rational answer to offer to the questions which arise in every thinking mind with regard to the problems of life? On the contrary, it does not even attempt to suggest an answer; it can only say that this is God's will, and that man must submit without daring to enquire why. If we can get no more information than that, we are indeed in a perilous condition. The materialistic hypothesis gives us, if possible, even less satisfaction, for it also attempts no explanation, but cynically refers us to a law of chances; but at least it adjures us to live well, not for the sake of any future gain to ourselves, but in order to benefit the race—which is a noble and unselfish idea.

Theosophy asks no blind faith from any one, but simply offers for consideration a theory which is reasonable in itself, and does account for the facts which we see around us. It is based not only on the tradition and teaching of many ages, but also on the reports of those who definitely state that they know certain things for themselves. Which of these three theories will you accept? Obviously the rational answer is that we should provisionally accept the most reasonable, use it as a working hypothesis, and begin to look round for confirmations of it. If we do so, we shall be surprised to see how these confirmations appear on every hand.

There are many occurrences, commonly regarded as mysterious, which the other systems find themselves compelled either to ignore or to deny; Theosophy welcomes these, as it does all other facts, finds a place for them in its system, and accounts for them in a rational manner. Among these are the facts of spiritualism, of apparitions and doubles, of mesmerism and telepathy. Materialism, being unable to explain these, takes refuge in denial of their existence—which is both disingenuous and foolish. A man may possi-

bly not think it worth his while to examine these facts : but if he will not take that trouble, he has no right to assert that those who do examine, and testify to the reality of the occurrences, are either mistaken or fraudulent. Such an attitude resembles that credited to the ostrich, who is said to hide his head in the sand when danger is near, thinking that when he can no longer see it, it must have ceased to exist. As Mr. Stead remarks in the preface to his " Real Ghost Stories : " all honest enquirers *know* that these things happen, though they may have a hundred different theories to account for them.

The Christian theory has little to say about these facts. Sometimes it also denies them ; sometimes it admits them, but attributes them to the devil, as it has always attributed everything which it could not understand. In any of the older countries where Christianity has long existed, we find that all the marvels of Nature are almost invariably ascribed to diabolical influence. The circular bed of a prehistoric lake in Hampshire is called the " Devil's Punchbowl ; " certain isolated spears of rock in Yorkshire are known as the " Devil's Arrows ; " the truncated root of a certain species of scabious is called by the peasantry " devil's-bit ; " and so in many other cases. Mediæval ignorance is in many ways still rampant among us, and the silly old parrot-cry of " the devil " is still raised in the twentieth century. But since we are speaking of proof, what proof is there of the existence of this same devil of which they talk so glibly ? Who has ever seen him ? But orthodoxy does not like to be asked for proofs.

Again, if we tell you that direct proof of many of these facts is obtainable only by personal experience, we are saying no more than is true with regard to scientific matters. In nearly all that we believe along such lines, we have not made the experiments for ourselves, but we are relying on the testimony of experts ; and it is inevitable that it should be so, for life is not long enough to allow every man to become a specialist along all possible lines. We cannot all experiment for ourselves, but we accept the deductions of those who have made the experiments, when they are in accordance with the general principles of evolution and in harmony with such facts as we already know. This is all that any one is asked to do with regard to Theosophy.

What facts are there then which bear out its teachings as being true ? There are very many. Perhaps we may usefully divide its doctrines into two parts for the purpose of such examination, and consider them separately. We may think of its scheme of philosophy, and for the moment leave all its more practical side out of our consideration. Then it is clear that this philosophy must be judged as are other philosophies, and that for much of it nothing like direct or physical proof can be expected. We do not expect to demonstrate philosophy on a slate, like a problem in arithmetic ; we judge it by

its inherent probability, and by the degree in which it gives a rational explanation of known conditions; and when tested by these criteria, it must certainly be admitted by any unprejudiced person that Theosophy far out-distances its competitors. Consider its presentation of the glorious scheme of evolution under an inexorable law of divine justice, its teaching that what we commonly call the life of man is only one day of a larger life, and that that larger life in turn is part of a coherent whole, which is ever moving onward and upward towards its appointed end. Surely that is grander than the thought of a blind chance which whirls us all to nothingness, or of a plan of "salvation" which fails so miserably that nine-tenths of the human race are hurled into endless perdition! Now among those who are rather afraid of psychology, or at any rate prefer not to investigate it, there may yet be many minds willing to accept and consider such a system of philosophy as this. In that case by all means let them take it, and leave the rest of our doctrines until their interest in them is awakened. Remember always that we have no creed in Theosophy to which every student is expected to subscribe; we ask no one to believe anything, but simply offer a system for his study; and it is of course open to him to take up one part of this and put aside the rest.

There are those who accept our system of psychology without special investigation, on the same grounds as the philosophy, because it is the simplest explanation of recorded facts, and of the many unclassified phenomena which are so constantly happening. But there are others who desire to investigate for themselves, and very reasonably. How can they do this? They may approach the matter as I did myself, by examining direct evidence, and trying to see for themselves as far as possible. They may visit spiritualistic seances, they may write to or interview those people who are known to have had extraordinary experiences in connection with the unseen world. Or, if they are not willing to give this much time and trouble, they may read the literature of both spiritualism and apparitions—and there is an enormous literature of both subjects—and thus obtain the evidence of their fellow-men at second-hand, precisely as we do with other sciences. To study geography it is not necessary to visit in person all the countries of which we hear, though no doubt it would be interesting to do so; most of us are quite willing to read and accept what others have written who have visited them. Perhaps we hardly realize how entirely we are in the habit of accepting the testimony of others about things which we suppose that we know. A ready instance of this is the question of the rotation of the earth. We should most of us say that we knew this to be a fact, but in truth all the evidence presented to our senses is absolutely opposed to the theory. Here we are, sitting or standing on the earth, and it seems evident to us that it is absolutely at rest; indeed, "terra firma" is with us a very synonym of stability.

The sun and the stars seem to move round us, and the natural conclusion would be that they do really move. So we do not know that the earth moves; we only believe it, unless we happen to have seen certain experiments. There is the Foucault pendulum experiment, and another with the gyroscope; a man who has seen those *knows* that the earth rotates, because he has seen two experiments which could not have resulted as they did on any other hypothesis; but the rest of us are simply believing. So in daily life there are many things which we say we know, which in reality we only believe. There are far more witnesses to the reality and existence of the astral plane than there are to the existence of the island of Spitzbergen, or of the pygmy race which Stanley found in Central Africa. Remember how Du Chaillu had seen and described this pygmy race a quarter of a century before Stanley, and how every one ridiculed his story as a mere traveller's tale; and yet it was perfectly true. No one was obliged to go to Central Africa to see those pygmies; but unless they were willing to do so, they had no right to disbelieve Du Chaillu, who *had* been—or rather, their own private opinion was entirely their own business, but they had no right to accuse Du Chaillu of falsehood, when they had taken no steps themselves to discover the truth. So with regard to Theosophy, we do not press those to investigate its assertions who feel no interest in them; but we do say that they should neither on the one hand deny their truth without enquiring into them, nor on the other hand demand with regard to them a type of proof which they do not expect in connection with any similar subject of study.

It constantly happens to us to find unexpected corroborations turning up, of statements made years ago by Madame Blavatsky, and at the time ridiculed as unscientific. The same thing is true with regard to the later investigations. Take for one example the case of the two planets beyond the orbit of Neptune, which are mentioned by Mr. Sinnett in his book, "The growth of the Soul," published six or seven years ago. No one outside of the band of occult students suspected their existence at that time, but in the *Times*, of September 15th, 1902, it is mentioned that Professor Forbes has pointed out that there are two cometary groups which indicate the existence of two planets beyond Neptune. This is a small point, but it is suggestive, and it is only a specimen of many others. Again, there was the question of the rotation of Venus. When I was at school we were taught that Venus had a day and night very similar to that of the earth, but later astronomical research seemed to show that it kept one face always turned towards the sun, just as the moon does with regard to the earth. This would make it practically uninhabitable for beings at all like ourselves, and therefore seemed to contradict our knowledge that it was inhabited by an advanced evolution. Recently, however, Sir Robert Ball stated that the latest observations confirmed the original idea that

Venus revolved as we do, so once more the occult explanation was shown to be the true one.

Science generally is undoubtedly growing gradually towards the theosophical theories. Notice these extracts from an address recently delivered by Sir Oliver Lodge at Birmingham:—"The fact that we should not have any definite knowledge of the sun if the sky had always been cloudy, Sir Oliver used as a parable to indicate that there may be other existences in the universe which we might see if our senses were keener and nothing obscured our vision. What we saw and knew was in all probability a minute fraction of what there was to know and see. Wherever life was possible there we found it; might not life be possible in planets upon which we had no direct evidence of the existence of life? Some people thought that science negated the possibility of there being existences and agencies higher than man. As far as he had understood science, it had no business to negative anything of the kind. When a man did not know, he had no right to make an assertion either in the positive or the negative. How life originated on the earth was an entire mystery to science at present, but he did not think it would always remain a mystery. The process of evolution was not one that excluded or negated the idea of divine activity. It was, he ventured to say, a revelation to us of the manner of Divine activity. How could order come out of chaos without some guiding intelligence? With regard to the method of Divine working, they must infer that He always worked in the same way—by agents, by a gradual process and not by occasional direct personal intervention. We did not suppose that at any stage the process of evolution was different from what it was now. Thus they were interested in watching Divine activity, and they should not look for it in the past alone, but be guided by what they could ascertain in the present. What he wished them to realize was that they were an intelligent, helpful and active part of the cosmic scheme. They were among the agents of the Creator, and could make themselves more useful by co-operation—by helping one another. While on this training ground they should realize the privilege of existence. In the midst of so much suffering it was a pity if they could not be kind to each other." So you see how much there is in the very latest scientific pronouncements which is quite in harmony with theosophical teaching.

It might seem that after all, for the majority of our students, who do not yet see psychically for themselves, the Theosophical teachings must rest upon faith, just as orthodox doctrines do. There is a sense in which that is true, but the kind of faith is so different that no comparison can be made. If our students, or some of them, accept as true certain things which they have not seen, their faith is not blind, but based on reason. It is not founded merely on a scripture—though if you want scriptures, we have them

to support our views, and they are scriptures older far than those of the Jews : Vedas and Upanishads, coming to us down the stream of time from a nation which was at the height of civilization when the Jews were yet an obscure and undeveloped Arab tribe. But it is not on these alone that our faith is based, but on the knowledge and teaching of great Adepts of the present day—men who are almost more than men in the splendour of their power and their wisdom ; teachers well and personally known to many of our members. In addition to all this we have the direct investigations pursued by some of our European members, all confirming at every point this grand Theosophical System.

Yet the reason for the strong conviction of our members is not the weight of testimony, important though that may be, but the fact that the system is in itself so inherently rational and satisfactory. The best hypothesis holds the field in all scientific study until a better one is found ; and it is from that point of view that we feel our faith to be impregnable. Show us a better and more reasonable doctrine, and we all stand ready to accept it ; but we have little expectation that it will be offered to us, for we have studied many faiths, and know of what nature most of them are. Instead of finding difficulties arising, the more we think and the more we study, the more corroborations we find for our own ideas. In this country especially, where so many are already developing psychic faculties to a greater or less extent, it should not be hard to meet with these corroborations. Many of you must have had experiences outside the mere physical, and many more must know of friends or relations who have had such experiences. Theosophy can explain these to you, and can give you a rational account of their place in Nature : can you find any other explanation which is better or clearer ?

Take up this study then, not on blind faith—for blind faith has done enough harm in the world already—but for enquiry ; if you are not satisfied, there is no harm done, while if you are satisfied, much good may come to you thereby, as it has come to the rest of us. The best way of all to see whether this thing is so, is to act as if it were true ; live the life which it teaches, and note its effects. Try the thought-control which it recommends, and see whether you are the better or the worse for it. Try to realize the unity and brotherhood which it teaches, and to show the unselfishness which it exacts ; and then see for yourself whether this is an improvement upon other modes of living or not. It still remains true now, as in days of old, that “ they that do the will of the Father that is in heaven, they shall know of the doctrine, whether it be true.” The surest way to find the truth is to live the life ; try the unselfishness and the watchful helpfulness, and see whether here is not an opening into new fields of happiness and usefulness. From that go on gradually to other parts of the teaching, and you will find evidence enough. Think what the world would be if all held these

doctrines of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man ; would it be better, or would it be worse if all mankind held unity as a fact, and unselfishness as a duty ? As yet we are only at the beginning of this mightiest of studies ; yet we say to you with utmost confidence, come and join us in our study, and to you also will come the peace and confidence that has come to us, so that through your study of Theosophy your lives shall become happier to yourselves and more useful to your fellow-men.

C. W. LEADBEATER,

THEOSOPHICAL GLEANINGS FROM NON-THEOSOPHICAL FIELDS.

“TRUTH will out,” is a trite saying. When we find the same kind of statements made in different parts of the globe and by different people almost at the same time we naturally come to the conclusion that these statements must be founded on facts ; that there must be some truth in them. Now in perusing the present day literature, chiefly magazines, which apparently have nothing to do with Theosophy, we cannot help being struck by the number of allusions made to, what we might be inclined to call, theosophical teachings. This plainly shows us that there is a good deal of well prepared soil in which the seeds of those teachings would readily spring up, if they were scattered at the right time and in the proper manner. It is very often only the outward garb, the wording, which makes identical beliefs or teachings appear entirely different, while the underlying truth is one and the same. Many people would object to read an article simply because it was under the heading of “Theosophy,” for there are still many persons, whom one would expect to know better, who think that Theosophy is some new system which aims at the overthrow of religion and science. “Ninety-nine men out of every hundred believe that Madame Blavatsky invented Theosophy.....Theosophy, in popular parlance, has come to be synonymous with imposture ; Theosophists are looked at askance, because they are generally suspected of being charlatans.” “Theosophy” (by F. C. O. Beaman, I.C.S., *East and West*, p. 297, March, 1903, Bombay).

If we compare the following “gleanings from non-theosophical fields” with *our* teachings we cannot fail to see that it is only the name that divides them while the idea is the same. In the March number of *Mind* (the leading exponent of the New Thought, issued in New York), there are, in an article entitled, “What is Religion ?” (by Frank D. Mitchell), some paragraphs that might almost be called a definition of the three objects of the T. S., only in many more words. “Just as there are many different races and classes of men, on different planes of development, yet all moving upward along the same path to the same ultimate destiny, so there

are many religions, all of them forms of the one Universal Religion, and all tending, slowly but surely, toward it as an ultimate and perfect ideal. The problem of true religion, then, is the problem of the perfect man—the goal of evolution, and only when approached from this standpoint can it be rightly understood.” (p. 440).

“The first and most important of the many influences at work in this direction (the working towards perfection) is the improvement in social relations, particularly within the family. A freer intercourse between man and man must lead us, first to a more intimate knowledge of one another, and then to a truer realization of the vital and practical meaning of human brotherhood and of the literal oneness of the human race. This, with the strengthening of family ties already referred to, will tend to make the force of *love* paramount in social relations, instead of subordinate, as it is to-day. A constantly broadening religion of Man will lead to a knowledge of God’s oneness with man, and man’s oneness with God—in other words, of the immanence of God

“A second influence in the same direction is the slow yieldings of the barriers of sectarianism, not only between the different branches of the Christian Church, but between orthodox Christianity and various Eastern religions. Already the study of comparative religion has broadened our views not a little; and some day we shall realise that the ‘benighted heathen’ have much to teach us, and can supplement our religious and even our scientific views in not a few particulars

“Again, the spread of science is contributing constantly to a more correct and adequate view of the Cosmos, and indirectly of its relation to God.” (p. 442).

Professor G. T. Ladd, LL.D., writes: “The spirit of morality and religion, as conceived and realised by the great teachers and their faithful followers, is essentially the spirit of kindness, goodwill, and fraternal love. To *this* spirit it is expressly forbidden to set limitations of colour, race, external circumstance, or temporal relation.” (“The present Moral and Religious Crisis,” *East and West*, April 1903, p. 399.) This sounds very much like the first object of the Theosophical Society; so does the statement: “There is perhaps a common ground upon which all types, mental diversities, nations, peoples and tongues can meet; it is the duty of those who love their fellow men and desire the welfare of the race, to find that ground of union.” (“Unity and Diversity” in *Bibby’s Quarterly*, a Journal of Country and Home Life, Liverpool, Christmas Number, 1902, p. 88.)

About the relationship of Science and Religion, F. D. Mitchell in the before-mentioned article expresses himself in the following words: “So far from being foes, true science and true religion are inseparable friends, for neither can exist without the other. The passing of this old ‘conflict’ between science and religion, or rather

between scientists and theologians, is, to all those who have at heart the welfare of humanity, one of the most hopeful signs of the times."

By the side of these two sentences we may well place a few lines from Mrs. Besant's "Evolution of Life and Form," to show the identity of the views. "Now, in the olden times, in those times to which in this land our thought turns back most fondly with reverence and with pride, in those times, here, as in every other ancient land, Religion and Science were wedded together, there was no discord between the intelligence and the spirit." (p. 3.) "Religion reveals the spirit, the spiritual truth which is one, Intelligence studies that truth in its manifold manifestations, and its work. Science, studying the phenomena which are images or aspects of the Divine, is the handmaid, is the sister of Religion, and between them discord is unnatural and fatal to progress." (p. 4.)

"Karma" and "Reincarnation" have formed the subject of many a lecture at many a branch meeting of the T. S.; it may therefore not be amiss to quote a few paragraphs from an essay (the whole of which might fitly have a place in the pages of *The Theosophist*.) by Grace Lee Orr; "The Law of Cause and Effect." (*Mind*, March, 1903.)

"Few people realize the deep meaning underlying the words *cause* and *effect*, using them in general to apply to the material plane alone, and little thinking that they represent, not only the law that controls the planets, but the law that takes into account each act and thought of our daily lives. The average mortal is too prone to separate the material from the spiritual, the visible from the invisible world, and it is as a reminder that the universe is a perfect Whole, and that a law upon one plane is a law upon all planes, that this article is written.

"No one needs to be told of the operation of cause and effect in the material world, for the law is visible all about us. We see it working in all Nature, from the destruction or growth of a continent down to the destruction or growth of a molecule. We see it in the rise and fall of nations, and, coming down to individuals, we see it exemplified in the working of our physical bodies. We know that if we abuse our bodies Nature will make us suffer, for she is a strict disciplinarian and accounts with her must always be settled. Now, let us consider that *Nature* is but another term for *law*, and that this law holds good upon all planes of the Universe, acting no less powerfully upon the invisible than upon the visible planes; for the entire Universe is one great Whole, of which we see but one part—the material; but behind all manifestation, and throbbing and pulsating in all, is the great Spirit of things, the One Reality, the Absolute." (p. 453.)

"Realising ourselves to be a part of this great Spirit—a drop as it were, in the ocean of Divinity—we see at once that we also must come under the sway of this mighty law of cause and

effect ; and, knowing this, let us, instead of pitting our puny strength against it, strive to recognize and work in harmony with it and thus attain to perfect peace. The Lord of this mortal frame is something more than a mass of matter, tainted with the animal instincts and desires of hundreds of generations. It is the conscious ego, the immortal spirit, which directs, controls, and moulds the physical body, the instrument through which it gains experience in matter. And, this being the case, every act we perform and every *thought* we send out are bound to react at some time upon us. A cause once set up, the effect is bound to be reached, just as a pendulum swung to one side will swing equally far in the opposite direction. Nature works for a balance—an equilibrium." (p. 454.)

....." We, the real sons of God, have always lived, gaining experience in many lives and putting off and taking on body after body, as we need them. Each succeeding life is the outcome, the summing up as it were, of all the lives gone before, and our future lives will be the exact results of our present acts and *thoughts*. Thus the great law of cause and effect is carried out on all planes, and rebirth, or reincarnation, is simply its process. Our present is but the definite result of our own past actions, and our future is in our own hands. Once a cause is set in motion on *any* plane, the effect is bound to follow, as does the night the day ; and it may be to-morrow and it may be a thousand years hence, but some day we will reap what we have sown. Let us be careful, therefore, how we sow the wind, lest we reap the whirlwind." (pp. 454 and 455.)

....." Neither Christianity nor materialism can explain in any reasonable way the differences between people in character and environment. "Heredity," you say? If *it* were the law controlling these things, then the children of the same parents ought to be alike, especially in the case of twins. Heredity deals only with the personal, physical man, with his tastes and tendencies. The *real* man, the *ego*, is something apart from all this—using his surroundings simply as a means to an end and accountable to himself alone. The law of cause and effect, together with the process of reincarnation, explains, as nothing else can, the differences in character and environment, not only of individuals but of races and nations, and their rise and fall. It places the evolution of man upon a logical basis, not only in the past but in the future ; and, by demonstrating that man is alone responsible for what he is, it places his destiny in his own hands and sheds a new light upon the Teacher's words: "The kingdom of heaven is within you." (p. 456.)

In "Dignity of Work" (by Mr. J. O. S. B., *Bibby's Quarterly*, Liverpool, Christmas Number, 1902, p. 98) we read : "Just as the master spinner in the factory arranges his machines so that a fault or carelessness—say a broken thread which has carelessly escaped attention and which may spoil a hundred yards of cloth—is traced back to the weaver, whose wages are lowered ; so in the factory of the universe

there is mechanism, still more cunning and infinitely more certain in its operation, which brings home to every man his faults, and be he never so dexterous, his carelessness will appear in the web and be brought home to him in a practical way when the pay-day comes round.

“ But this law happily operates with a like certainty in the direction of reward, and whatever we sow of diligence or thrift or thoughtfulness for others, we reap later on, with unerring certainty, an exactly corresponding crop.

“ If this view of work be a true one—and each reader must judge for himself—it will be seen how ignoble and puny are all efforts to wrong our fellows; constituted as the universe is, only the veriest ignorance would seek to take advantage of any one, for good Mother Nature is very precise, and never by any chance overlooks a fault.

“ It follows from all this that a man's true interest lies in cooperating with nature by purifying and uplifting the *motives* (italics ours) which actuate his activities ;.....only when a high level of unselfish aim is achieved is the best type of character developed....

“ But if the present life be regarded as a page in the volume of the true life, the emphasis we might put on all this receives a tremendous endorsement; for the strengthened character and increased aptitudes and abilities resulting from work carefully done become in reality our truest and only permanent wealth; it represents so much gain to the stock of aptitudes and capacities which we brought into this present life; and we carry this increased wealth away with us when we die.”

The following sentences are the expression of Eugene del Mar:

“ Each must gain freedom for himself; no one may attain it vicariously.....

“ Temporary pains and burdens lose their sting and are even gratefully accepted, as one absorbs the eternal truths they serve to exemplify and body forth. A new light reaches one when he knows that what he receives is exactly what he is entitled to. The interrelation of cause and effect becomes luminous to him. One's sympathy broadens and deepens so as to become all-inclusive, and a bond of love unites him with all mankind and with all life.” (“The Attainment of Freedom,” *Mind*, February 1903, p. 327.)

Regarding rebirth an orthodox clergyman writes: “ Is it then harder to believe that we should be born again *after* we have lived than that we should be born when we have not lived? The profoundest mystery is the first birth, in which we all believe.” (“The next step in Evolution,” by Isaac K. Funk, D.D., LL.D., New York.)

The spiritualists are beginning to view this subject favourably, as is seen by the following paragraphs taken from the leading edi-

torial in the "Banner of Light" (March 14, 1903)—written by Wm. Brunton—on "Reincarnation" (which is all good).

"And then it makes death no more than a sleep to us, and a re-clothing of our lives when the new morning comes. And our friendships are ours through these changes, and the ones we love we learn to love the better and sweeter, and so enter into celestial devotions, which are revealments of the justice of the schooling, however severe and hard it may have been.

"As a new view of life, reincarnation has its interest. As a warning against the pomps and vanities of a wicked world, it is one of the most impressive teachers. As a guide to right doing with all its rewards, it has the beacon splendor the sailor hails in darkness for the guiding of his ship. As a destroyer of the fear of death, it is like the coming of morning to drive the beasts of prey to their hiding. I see in this thought, help and inspiration for a full and noble life of manhood. To me it is not a dogma but a suggestion of beauty and blessing and hope!"

"The Secret Doctrine" teaches:

"The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation, or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic Law, during the whole term. In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (Divine Soul) can have an independent conscious existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth Principle—or the Over-Soul—has (*a*) passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and (*b*) acquired individuality, first by natural impulse and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts, checked by its Karma, thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest Archangel (Dhyâni-Buddha). The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric Philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations. This is why the Hindus say that the Universe is Brahman and Brahmâ, for Brahman is in every atom of the universe, the six Principles in Nature being all the outcome—the variously differentiated aspects—of the Seventh and One, the only Reality in the Universe whether cosmic or micro-cosmic; and also why the permutations, psychic, spiritual and physical, on the plane of manifestation and form, of the Sixth (Brahmâ the vehicle of Brahman) are viewed by metaphysical antiphrasis as illusive and mâyâvic. For although the root of every atom individually and of every form collectively, is that Seventh Principle or the One Reality, still, in its manifested phenomenal and temporary appearance, it is no better than an evan-

escent illusion of our senses." (S. D., Vol. I., pp. 45-46, 3rd revised edition.)

"Esoteric Philosophy teaches that everything lives and is conscious, but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings. Life we look upon as the One Form of Existence, manifesting in what is called Matter; or what, incorrectly separating them, we name Spirit, Soul and Matter in man. Matter is the Vehicle for the manifestation of Soul on this plane of existence, and Soul is the Vehicle on a higher plane for the manifestation of Spirit, and these three are a Trinity synthesized by Life, which pervades them all. The idea of Universal Life is one of those ancient conceptions which are returning to the human mind in this century, as a consequence of its liberation from anthropomorphic Theology." (S.D., Vol. I., pp. 79-80.)

Now we have before us "*The Harbinger of Light*," (Melbourne, March 1, 1903) and from "*Spirit, Soul and Body*," by Magnetism, we will quote a few paragraphs for comparison.

"When the early Christians were dividing the human being as above, they must have been aware that there is a difference between Spirit and Soul. Such knowledge seems to have been entirely lost to-day. Most Spiritualists use the two words interchangeably; even standard writers do not seem to have a clear idea where the difference exists.....

".....It seems to be a rule that every lower world must sustain a higher world, and in turn the lower is drawn upwards by the higher one. Here we have an action and reaction that is beneficent to both. The mineral world sustains the vegetable world; the vegetable draws its sustenance out of it, and the mineral uses the vegetable as a means by which it moves upward, the vegetable world in turn supports the animal and human, and through this the physical as well as Soul forces are more vitalised, *i.e.*, progress. The physical world as a whole supports the Soul world (in this essay a clear distinction is made between Soul and Spirit), the latter using the former as a means or instrument of its progression or evolution. The scientists have taken great pains to show that man, so far as his physical body is concerned, was evolved out of the animal world; 'from mud to man.' A moment's reflection for those who admit the existence of the Soul will convince them that, when the body of man was thus evolved, the Soul and Soul forces were evolved by the self-same process. The body without a Soul would be dead, and would quickly be re-absorbed by mother Earth.....It is only through its Soul that a body is animated and receives its quickening impulse that will lead to progression or evolution; the soul is using the body for that purpose..... 'No matter what colour his skin is, no matter on what continent he was born, all men are equals; all men are brethren. Some man's Soul might be more violent, more daring, more enterprising; another one's more gentle, and submissive; but

so far as they have evolved their Spirit out of Soul forces all men are equal.'

"Man is more than an animal; he has a Soul and a Spirit.

"Above I pointed out the evolution of the Soul, the evolving of Spirit out of Matter. This process must of necessity have been preceded by involution, the involving of Spirit into Matter. The two stand to each other as action and reaction. That the Soul throughout its existence in the animal, vegetable and mineral world had spiritual essences within itself, is proved by the fact that without it, it could not progress, it could not improve, it could not evolve.....Without the Soul the Spirit of man cannot animate the physical nor Soul-body, the Soul forming, so to say, the medium. The Spirit forming a spark of the Infinite, is always pure and undefiled, never participates in the wrong-doings of man; even in the lowest and vilest of men, his Spirit is pure and undefiled; it is the still small voice within that always counsels towards goodness, purity and charity. It is always the Soul with its animal passions that is the wrong-doer.

"The Spirit of man once, far back into eternity, was a spark of the Infinite, and by virtue of this, possesses all the attributes in an infinitely small degree (which) divinity has in an infinitely large degree, and having now in man a soul and body of its own, with individual consciousness, is often called a Microcosm, a world on a small scale, in distinction from God, the Macrocosm. By virtue of this, the Spirit of man has all powers, knows all things in an infinitely small degree, but is not conscious of it. This means to say that man has the ability to learn all things, and to do all things. Instinct is for the Soul, what intuition is for the Spirit. This getting conscious of what the Spirit knows deep down within, this externalizing of its faculties, is the aim of the Spirit, and seems to be the grand aim of creation. 'That every atom shall attain unto the consciousness of the whole.' Man's Spirit has for all times existed in the past, and will exist for all times in the future; being always pure and undefiled, it has always done the will of the Father. But in the past it has done so without knowing it; without having any individual consciousness it partook of the consciousness of the whole. With man a turning point has set in, it is the first time the Spirit gets consciousness of its own, gets individualized, and henceforth during all eternity is doing the will of the Father in a conscious way, knowing why and wherefore. But the Spirit cannot do this without the help of its Soul, and the Soul in turn cannot exist without its body; it is only through the Soul and the senses, which are very material indeed, that the Spirit can come into contact with Matter. On the material plane it is our five physical senses that give consciousness to the Spirit; on the Soul plane it is the soul senses, clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc., that give consciousness. We see the necessity of harmonious

interdependence of all three factors, Spirit, Soul, and Body. . . .
 . . . "The Spirit, always pure, gives the aspiration; the Soul, more or less willing to give the conditions under which the aspirations may be realized, rises in just due proportion to its willingness, its obedience. No doubt in the higher world, when the conditions are more favourable for the Soul, the time will come when the desires of the Soul are identical with those of the Spirit. Then and only then the immortality, the conscious continuous existence of the trinity, Spirit, Soul and Body, and their harmonial relations, are assured."

Elsewhere we read: "However imperfect our physical organism may be, *spirit* will manifest in some way when the soul and mental faculties respond to the call. Spirit operates through the mind, and that entity conceives an idea that can be conveyed to the world only through material channels. Spirit, Soul, and Body are interdependent, and so closely are they allied that all manifestations exist in, with, through and by, this co-ordination." ("The Ideal as a Dynamic Force," by Agnes Proctor. *Mind*, February 1903).

CAROLINE KOFEL.

[To be concluded.]

"LIGHT ON THE PATH."

FROM NOTES ON STUDIES.

[Continued from p. 436.]

"Steadily as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger."

This "light" is from the spiritual self which illumines the soul—it is the radiance streaming down from the "dim star" that grows brighter with each incarnation. The spiritual self is that which survives life in the "complex separated self" and is beyond individuality. It grows by our holiest thoughts and aspirations, by self-sacrificing endeavor, and boundless love for universal life. We may be aware of its increasing strength in the course of one incarnation after the training of discipleship has been undertaken and systematic effort toward self-development is in full working order. Ordinarily spiritual evolution is very slow, as there is so little material stored up that can be used in its building.

"Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way."

The expansion and illumination of the spiritual self is so evident to the disciple as not to admit of doubt. What he knows he knows truly. It is the permanent reality in process of realization and taking the place of transient illusions which are presented to the consciousness on the lower planes. By this ever growing reality he is able to separate the real from the unreal, to distinguish self from the not-self. He will feel the "way" growing ever stronger and clearer within him—the blissful certainty that the right thing has been chosen without prejudice or partiality, since either quality

suggests animosity against an opposite choice. An even balance has been struck for right and the future is regarded with calm expectancy and willingness to take whatever comes with patient submission to the law.

"And when you have found the end, its light will suddenly become the infinite light."

It is said the past, present and future are the eternal. Now, if this be true then the beginning and the end of the way is right here; we may go from earth to heaven and not move out of our tracks. The infinite light has always been shedding its rays upon us, our inability to see does not prove it to be elsewhere on some distant height, yet it seemed so on entering the way. The light was also within us but we needed wisdom to make it answer to the vibration of the light without. At the end of the way the light within and the light without become blended into one, universal, infinite eternal.

"Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm—not till then."

A pure spotless soul is the flower that blooms in the mental world and showers its fragrance down to the very earth. It is the splendid production of many incarnations, the result of countless experiences, the pure white blossom springing out of the crucible of time.

It is strange how man grows and thrives under the storm and stress of adversity! From the cradle to the grave there is one continuous struggle to attain something that lies just beyond. The more opposition a man finds the more he desires to win and in conquering the small obstacles he becomes strong enough to face larger ones. Yet through it all he seldom loses heart:—the body may fall but the soul clings to its purpose only to renew the battle in another incarnation.

"It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts."

The ego, like the plant, is brought down from its native home on the higher planes and placed in foreign soil to which it has to adapt itself by slow degrees. The elements play upon it, night and day alternately bring darkness and light; heat and cold, rain and wind beat upon it and although often borne to the earth by overwhelming circumstances, it yet makes some progress. The sun shines upon it, beautiful days of comfort and repose bring rest and hope and strength, the process of growth and expansion takes place and the tiny sprout gradually evolves to its full stature of usefulness with all its innate powers and faculties expanded in the vigor of perfect manhood.

RE'SUME'.

The present evolution of the Monads called "divine fragments" is confined to the physical, astral and mental worlds through which the life currents play, sending the consciousness round and round like a wheel. This is not an exact statement either, because when the physical body dies, the consciousness retreats to the astral world for a length of time, and then retreats once more to the lower mental plane and again to the higher mental for its heavenly rest. When that is over it comes forth to the physical world gathering as it comes, the corresponding bodies of the mental and astral worlds. When intelligent selection is added to natural progression the evolution of a soul is greatly quickened especially if guided by the desire for wisdom and spiritual power. During the periodic seasons of discipline in the lower worlds the soul is subject to divers experiences,—it learns the lessons of life from every point of view, continually rising in the grade of evolution.

"But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted—not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience—not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher self, can the bloom open."

The personality is like a lump of clay out of which is to be moulded the figure of a man. The whole mass is subject to change under the skillful fingers of the artist,—it is reshaped and added to or taken from ; as it assumes form and grace and beauty it seems to grow, to expand and almost speak like the ideal it represents. But this miracle is wrought from the outside while in the living man he has the advantage of being able to aid his development from within. The forces of nature try him by every conceivable fashion and stimulate the latent powers to awaken into activity. At this awakening the personality is made to gradually feel an iron hand of restraint, it is curbed, thwarted, encouraged and rebuked by turns, until it acknowledges a master in the Higher Self.

"Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain, when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action."

The calm that comes to the purged and chastened soul is not because the storm of life has ceased but that it no longer is moved by what goes on outside. The winds may blow and thunder roll but the lofty spirit is not shaken or attracted from its steadfast purpose. The inner consciousness is raised to higher levels, the mind is set upon more lasting and permanent conditions, the functions of the body are automatic, and the whole being of the disciple is vibrating to higher, richer tones. Then nature performs one of its swift and wondrous miracles—it transforms the channel of the

senses as by a single stroke, it breaks the bonds of the flesh and lo ! the gates to the unseen are made to open.

"Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit."

Yet this calm is but the culmination of a long preparatory course in life's school of experience, it is the interval of repose, the quiet moment before the crowning act of discipleship. Every act and thought of the past has led up to this, it has been the end and aim of existence as a probationer. There is naught that can disturb or trouble the blessed calm that succeeds the possession of knowledge, the greatest sorrow is known as a transient ordeal, the greatest joy a temporary reprieve, neither phase of life has power to deceive and the soul stands forth ready to receive its spiritual baptism.

"And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found."

The soul now steps over the threshold of a new experience—of conscious recognition from higher powers—of an unfoldment of the spiritual man to intimate relation with the master of its own plane. The opening and closing of the first door of knowledge may be brief but its memory is lasting, leaving the conviction of certainty to what had before been accepted in intuitive faith and hope. The loving faithful heart has had no need of proof, it has not asked for any premature testimony of what it believed was true, but has waited patiently for this blessed hour of confirmation with all the trustfulness of perfect devotion.

"Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak—it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance ; it is the flower of the soul that has opened."

Who can describe the indescribable, or put into words that which has never been spoken ? The plane of the Self is so widely different from anything known in terrestrial life that to attempt to depict the subtle conditions of spirituality is like trying to analyze a summer breeze or the radiance of a moonbeam—both are common enough to us but how much do we know of them ? We cannot hope to reach understanding of that which we have not experienced except by analogy ; even when told the details by one who has had this privilege it is still beyond our grasp and wholly unthinkable. Yet it is well to be assured such prospects are in store for us, that this glorious future awaits us when we have in our turn made ourselves ready for the divine outpouring of knowledge.

RE'SUME'.

There is a vast difference between the great masses of the people who are being swept onward in the course of natural evolution and those who have stepped out from the rank and file with the intention of placing themselves under systematic training for discipleship and

thus add intelligent selection of forces to the building of the spiritual man. What makes the difference? The exceptional cases are those whose souls have responded more quickly to the powers that have forced them onward and upward. There must be pioneers in every field, strong characters to lead the van of progress who have ripened for the work and are ready to assume heavier burdens. By self-generated effort, by adapting themselves to existing conditions, they have unconsciously taken advantage of the storm and wind and sun and have suddenly emerged to clearer understanding of what was wanted of them. The "messenger" comes and in obedience to the voice of the silence they join the number of the "chosen."

GERTRUDE B. GREWE.

[To be concluded.]

AVATĀRAS.

IN the articles on Avatāras, which have appeared in the Theosophist, for May and June, this subject has been further discussed. Mr. Sūtariya, after all his discussion, states on page 559 that, "the Vishnu, Srī Krishna of this Solar system, and the Vishnu, the Supreme, should not be confounded, *though they are different phases of the same.*" This statement clearly recognizes the Mahā-Vishnu who is God, ever-existent, and self-existent (which is the fundamental doctrine of all Theists, and of Theosophists as well; Cf. "God exists, and He is good, &c."—the first Great Truth—*Vide* p. 16, Leadbeater's "Outline of Theosophy"). That Krishna is an Avatāra of Vishnu, we all admit; and if this is what is meant by the *different phases of the same, i.e.,* Krishna is Vishnu incarnate, no one will impugn the statement; but to make Krishna an *evolute*—which the terms Avatāra (*descent*) and Incarnation (*assuming flesh*) do not mean—is not to understand the mystery of the Avatāras at all.

2. To interpret *Bahūni janmāni—i.e., many births* (of Gītā, IV. 5) as meaning, for Krishna also, births such as *we* have in our course of evolution, is to make a statement entirely opposed and repugnant to the spirit of such Upanishad passages as *Ajāya Māno Bahudhā Vijāyate* (quoted by me in my previous article), which means "He is *unborn*, and yet is *born*," *i.e.,* the ever-existent Lord deigns to *descend* (Avatār) and *take on* manship (Incarnation); and entirely opposed too, to all the Purānic and other assertions of Mahā Vishnu having been invoked by the Devas, and His *descending* to us as *man. Birth*, hence, in the case of Krishna, means *appearance*, not birth as *we* are born in the course of evolution.

3. The Christians understand much better our Doctrine of Avatāras and do not show that confusion with which we are all so strenuously endeavouring to veil the Theme. Even the Editor of the *Epiphany*, so recently as Saturday, May 2, 1903, wrote thus:—

"We are of course thankful that the idea of Incarnation affords a point of contact between the Hindu and Christian religions. It is due to the Hindu conception of Avatâras that the Hindu does not, like the Mussulman, repudiate at once the very possibility of God having come down amongst men." *God come down amongst men*, is an Avatâr ; otherwise if Krishna is a mere outcome of evolution, like any of us, he is no more an *Avatâr* in the real sense of this word. For then we cannot look upon him as anything better than ourselves. He is no more the

" True Image of the Vishnu, whether throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light,
Conceiving, or remote from heav'n enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form."

If He is divine still for any reason, He is but as divine as any of us are ; for are we not all sons of God as well as Krishna ? Satan argued thus, addressing Jesus :—

" In what degree or meaning art thou called
The son of God, which bears no single sense ?
The son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am ; relation stands ;
All men are sons of God ! * * * * "

Even Satan however acknowledged Jesus as something better than a mere son of God, for he continues :—

" * * * * * Yet thee I thought
In some respect *far higher* so declared."

Krishna is thus declared to us by the Vedas and the Purânas (and all Hindu conscience must subscribe to this) as not mere man as man *evolved*, but as God Himself *involved* as man.

4. If Krishna be only the Systemic Logos and He can appear on *earth*, a small point in that system, why is it inconceivable that the Primeval Vishnu Himself, the Universal Lord, appears as the Systemic Logos, who again on earth appears ? Where is the difficulty in understanding the *third down-pouring* from the Mahâparanirvânic plane of the Theosophists ? It is a *down-pouring* or *descent* that *Avatâra* means ; not *ascent* or evolution. Krishna is not *evolutive*, but the *Evolvent*.

5. If the fact of this *descent* and *enshrinement in human form* be still not understood, then Lord Krishna is perfectly justified in complaining of Himself in the Gitâ as *not understood*. For He says :—" They fail to understand My Divinity inasmuch as I choose to appear in a fleshly tabernacle. The ignorant do so err, and it is a reproach to my Divinity. " [IX. 11].

6. That Krishna is Lord *unmanifest* who became *manifest* for purposes of salvation is again clear from Gitâ IX. 4 [Mayâ tatam, etc.], where He says : " By Me, the *Unmanifest*, all this *Cosmos* is *pervaded*." The terms : *Unmanifest*, all, *Cosmos*, *pervaded*, are un-

mistakable signs to show that Krishna cannot be confined to a mere systemic Logos. If the *hypostatic* principle, as so often insisted upon by me, is well understood, then all difficulties of the Infinite appearing as the *finite* disappear. Otherwise we may go on without end, lowering Krishna to our level, and lower and lower still.

7. In a previous article on this subject, which I wrote, I invited the attention of our readers to the term "Sarva," *i.e.*, "Thou art *the All*," used by Arjuna to Krishna, meaning thus that Krishna was no other than the *All-God*. Read also the Chapter on the Cosmic Manifestation of Krishna (Chapter XI. called the *Viśva Rūpa-Adhyāya*). Can *all* mean only a Solar System and no more? But then what would *many suns* mean?

8. I invite our readers to another passage also, *viz.*, the last verse of Chapter V. of the *Gītā*, where Krishna applies to Himself the epithet:—"Sarva-loka-Maheṣvaram." This paraphrased means:—"I am I'svara," Ruler; not that alone, "I am Maheṣvara," Great Ruler; not that alone, "I am loka-Maheṣvara—The Great Ruler of world-system;" not that alone, "I am Sarva-loka-Maheṣvara," The Over-Lord of *all Systems* of worlds." Shall we still persist in confining Krishna to a small Solar System?

9. Also dwell on three more expressions used in Verse 3, Chap. X., which, being translated means, "He who understands me as (1) Unborn or *birthless*; as (2) *Beginningless*, as (3) The Great or *Over-Lord* of *Systems* of worlds." All these three epithets, clearly define Krishna as the Primeval self-existent God. The *Bahūni janmāni* of Verse V. 5, should therefore not be understood as meaning *births* for Krishna such as *we* have in the swing of evolution. For he is not only (1) *Birthless*, but (2) *Beginningless*, and (3) is the *Universal Lord*. [Yo mām ajam anādincha vetti loka-maheṣvaram].

10. If then our Hindu brethren still persist in declaring against Krishna as the Universal God, they declare against their own Grand Doctrine of Descents of God (*Avatāras*) or Incarnations (*Assuming flesh*), and confound even the Christian Missionary who understands the doctrine much better; for example, the *Epiphany* quoted in para. 3, *supra*.

11. To persist in so declaring, is moreover dangerous inasmuch as it will make Krishna a mere *Karma-bound* creature as any of us are; and this will further lead to Atheism, for there is nothing to prevent our totally denying an *un-Karma-bound* God or *Free God*, to whom bound creatures as we are can look up to for our deliverance from all bonds!

12. The Doctrine of *Avatāras* or the Mystery of *Avatāras*, consists in God having hypostatic states such as *Para*, *Vyūha*, *Vibhava*, etc. [See our "Bhagavad-Gītā," "Divine Wisdom of Drāviḍa Saints"]

and "Holy Lives of the Azhvârs"]. This is briefly expressed by Krishna in verse IV. 5 [Ajopi, etc.] :—

"Though I am *Unborn*, Everlasting, * and Lord of beings, I appear encased in My own matter, and am born by My *own will*."

This is another evidence that Krishna's births are not *Karmic* births, because He is born "by *His own free will*."

And in verse IX. 11 [*Avajânanti* etc.] He says :—

"Not knowing my transcendental (divine=Param Bhâvam) nature, only *veiled* in man-form," etc. And Râmânuja clearly says in his Proem to Gîtâ [See pp. 8 and 9 of our Translation] :—

"But He, being the vast Ocean of Mercy and Condescension,..... *willed to assume* (Material) forms similar to those of His creatures, *without abandoning His own essential divine nature*, and repeatedly made *descents* (Avatâr)."

This Mystery is well explained by even a Christian Divine thus :—
"He came down from Heaven.' When we say so, we simply mean this, that His eternal and unchangeable nature, without undergoing any change whatever in itself, manifested itself in human form. We have lost the knowledge of God. We can no more gaze upon His ineffable brightness than we can look upon the noon-day sun. Then God in His boundless mercy shaded His brightness in the clouds of human nature—veiled His face, so that through the veil of human flesh, human deeds, and human words, we might look upon God and live."

"O Love, how deep ! how broad ! how high ;
It fills the heart with ecstasy,
That God the Transcendent, should take
Our mortal form for mortals' sake !"

13. As to the series of Vaikunṭhas or Heavens, dilated on in the Mahâ-Nârâyanaḥpanishat, it has nothing to do with *evolution*. For evolution concerns only the *rûpa* or *form-universe*, whereas the Vaikunṭhas, or as the very term implies *that which never alters*, concerns the *arûpa* or the *formless universe*. The series of Vaikunṭhas and the Vishnus resident therein are all on the *immaterial* planes above the astral, the Devachânic, and Buddhistic planes of the Theosophist. Vaikunṭha is the same as Parama-pada or Para-vyôma or Paramâkâṣa or *that above which there is none other*. The series thus represent the sum of blissful experiences to which the liberated soul becomes heir, after completing his round of evolution. But if Vaikunṭhas belong to the plane of evolution, then they are no more *immaterial*.

14. The Vishṇus or Mahâ Vishnus or Nârâyanas seated in these series of Vaikunṭhas are therefore to be understood as hypothetically related to each other. In other words the lower Vishnus (so to say) are of the same *essence* as the highest Vishnu and are to

* Vide page 507, "Secret Doctrine" Vol. II. 1893, where H. P. B. writes thus (and this must quiet even Theosophists whose hearts are troubled about the Avatâras) :—"And at the end of the Kali, our present age, Vishnu, or 'The Everlasting King' will appear as Kalki, &c." So that it is Vishnu, who is Krishna, Vishnu, the Everlasting, who appears whenever necessary.

one another Avatârs or *descents* in the descending scale, so that Lord Krishna is the same as the highest Mahâ-Vishnu or Nârâyana, only *manifesting* himself to us on earth vested in human form ; in other words *involving* Himself of His own *free* accord (for *evolving* means Karma-*impelled*).

15. Vaikunṭha or the spiritual or immaterial universe, is not spatial, but is everywhere. It is the "Throughth" Universe. The Avatâr is the *inmost essential spirit* of this universe *manifesting* (therefore not *evolving*) itself in the material words of concentric or spiral rings (so to say), in a more intensified, condensed and effective form (like dispersed rays concentrated by a glass) for purposes of salvation or lifting up. The Avatâra or the Saviour is thus a *lifter*, not the *lifted up*.

16. It is therefore to worse confound confusion, to draw *evolutional* deductions from the Mahâ-Nârâyanôpanishat, which has no concern with anything like that of Darwin's theory of evolution. Links of evolution are much more missing between *evolution* and *Avatâra* than the missing link between man and monkey.

17. The Avatâra is thus a *procession*, * so to say, from the spiritual centre to the several circumferences of circles representing several states of manifestation. *Procession*, is thus exactly the reverse of Evolution. If the term Involution is properly understood, *i.e.*, as meaning the *Essence* of *involving* itself in envelopes or *incarnating* itself, it is the opposite of Evolution ; *i.e.*, it is the *Avatâra*.

18. If this fails to produce conviction against the travesties of sense in which the doctrine of Avatâras continues to be treated by our Indian writers, it is hopeless to argue any further ; as when writers presume to oppose their own wits against the declarations of the Vedas, and their wise interpreters such as Râmânujâ and Sankara, it is time that Vedas and those Sages be no more recognized by them as Revelational authority. Without recognizing this authority, even the Christian Missionary recognizes our Doctrine of Avatâras really as it is ! But we benighted Hindus signally fail to clearly understand our own Mysteries of Religion, while yet professing to believe Revelations and their Genuine Interpreters !

A. GOVINDA' CHA'RYA.

* Any Christian Divine will give the technical sense of this word.

Theosophy in all Lands.

EUROPE.

LONDON, May 29, 1903.

London is assuming the wonted air of gaiety which is proper to it at this season of the year, and the activities of the T. S. pursue their usual course as far as circumstances permit. But circumstances, in the shape of Mrs. Besant's absence in India, have a depressing effect on the season's lecture list, there being no Queen's Hall lectures to draw big crowds, or afternoon addresses to pack the Headquarter's Lecture Hall. Mr. Keightley has continued his series of Monday afternoons on the study of Human Personality, according to Myers, and the ordinary meetings have been held.

The Vahan announces various arrangements for the forthcoming Convention on July 4th and 5th, when there is every hope that Colonel Olcott will be with us and preside over what promises to be an important discussion on questions of finance and representation. Coincidentally with the Convention of the British Section will be the First Annual Meeting of the Federation of European Sections. We hope to welcome many representatives from the various European countries, and addresses will be given by the representatives of Sections at a meeting on Saturday, July 4th.

The Northern Federation of T. S. Lodges held its quarterly gathering last week under the presidency of Mr. Keightley, who is now visiting all the Lodges in the North and will not be in town again for a fortnight.

Mr. Sinnett has just issued a London Lodge Transaction dealing with the constitution of the earth, which will probably give rise to much discussion, as it puts forward some startling theories with regard to "this solid globe," as poets and scientists have alike regarded it. Mr. Sinnett claims very satisfactory "authority" for his source of information, which of course is occult and not based on physical investigation, and one rather wonders whether polar expeditions will ever settle, on physical grounds, part of the vexed problems with which the transaction deals. Oddly enough, *Science Siftings* for this week, in describing the preparations which a French Canadian—Le Roy Pelletier—is said to be making to *walk* to the North Pole, refers to the "absurd belief in a great opening at the pole, a hollow chamber connecting with the centre of the earth." Source of the belief, or by whom held, is not stated. But it isn't only theosophical literature that is responsible for startling statements about the make-up of the world on which we creep about. Only a week ago the aforesaid paper printed the statement on the authority of a French Astronomer, the Abbe Moreux, that the earth is really a four-sided pyramid! The base is the North Pole, the apex the South Pole, and the great ocean beds represent the sides of which the mountain chains running North and South form the angles. Then the

flat-earth people are still with us, so there are theories enough and to spare for anybody who doesn't want to believe what he was taught at school. Meanwhile Bhumi sails through space and apparently pays little heed to the opinions of the pigmies who scratch about on his surface, as little as the ox in the fable to the fly on his horn, notwithstanding that Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace has recently been reassuring—on scientific authority too!—the anthropocentric philosophers who had begun to take a more modest view of the importance of HUMANITY—in capital letters—and has been informing us that there is every reason to believe that we are indeed “a chosen people,” the very efflorescence of the universe, and reside, at or near its central point, the only place at which such an evolutionary product as our magnificent selves could be supposed to function on! One feels inclined to say with Bobbie Burns:—

“Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us.”

And the worst of it is that when some of us *do* see ourselves as others see us, *i.e.*, from a different plane of consciousness, we don't all see alike, so the contradictions are legion and we are thrown back—as is right and proper for us—on experience, and told to use our common sense—if we've got any.

A. B. C.

Reviews.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EARTH.*

The present work is of a very unique character, for it deals with subjects that have not hitherto been discussed, to any great extent, either by occultists or by scientists. Whatever there has been written by the latter has been only in the form of speculation. Mr. Sinnett claims that the information which he gives us in the pamphlet under mention was given to him in a manner to satisfy him of its truth: for the general student of Theosophy to be able to fully accept it, he must develop the higher faculties; but one can take the statements as working hypotheses, as the bases for further investigation, and it is for this purpose that Mr. Sinnett has placed the information before us. The question of the constitution of the earth has always been of great interest. The old theory was that the earth had a solid crust, of a very inconsiderable depth compared to the diameter of the whole and that the whole interior was a mass of molten rock. Later experiments of sorts have led to the conclusion that such could not be the case, for the earth could not then withstand the attraction of the moon, etc. Mr. Sinnett, after recalling to the reader's mind the occult theories in regard to the planetary chains, and referring particularly to that which preceded ours, the moon chain, shows that within the orbit of a planet, there must be masses of meteoric matter floating about in streams; and that this matter is far in excess of what will be required for the building of any one planet. “This is available for the construction of a new planet when

* London Lodge Transaction No. 38, by A. P. Sinnett. London, The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1903. Price 14 annas.

required, the old one having by that time completed its life-bearing period and being ready to surrender its volatile ingredients to its successor."

"The clashing together of meteor streams in space has been thought of as a condition sufficient to account for the sudden appearance of a new star in a distant constellation. That meteor streams are flowing about through the system to which we belong, is plainly evidenced by meteoric displays, often arising from what is probably a mere touch with the outskirts of some such stream. It is easy to understand that when a new planet is required the full force of some considerable stream is directed against a corresponding mass of planetary matter in the orbit of the occurrence, and the heat so engendered would resolve the matter of the clashing streams into a planetary nebula. Its condensation as time went on would provide the nucleus of a new planet." This was the way our earth was begun, and this "nucleus," according to the theory which Mr. Sinnet advances, was a very small part of the planet which was to be. After a considerable time had elapsed "another clash of meteoric streams surrounded the young Earth with a huge envelope of fresh nebulous matter. This in its turn cooled, but a stratum of gaseous matter is left between the center and its enclosing ring. Again and again is this process repeated until there are six concentric globes about the original nucleus, and between each is a stratum of the gaseous matter which formed at the time of each new deposition of matter. After the outer globe had cooled sufficiently, there was a fresh deposit of matter which consisted of the two outer layers of the moon, and this latter formed the matter in which the vegetable life was to be begun on the new planet. Other matters are discussed into which one cannot go in detail. There is an excellent diagram attached to the booklet. X.

L' ISLA'MISME

ET SON ENSEIGNEMENT ESOTERIQUE.

BY AN F. T. S.

This work shows that the writer has made himself thoroughly familiar with all the details of his subject and whatever bears upon it. In the first chapter he treats of Islâm as compared with other religions; Arabia before the advent of the Prophet, General Idolatry, Mahomed: The Revelation, the Jewish and the Christian world; Mahomed's mission, his preaching, persecution, the Hegira, the holy war, nobleness of the Prophet's character, his death. The second chapter presents us with: The profession of faith, The unity of God, His Majesty, The secret virtue of His Name, Belief in the Apostle, Prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage, Mecca and the "Kaabah." The successors of the Prophet, schism, *Sonnites* and *Schiites*; The Imâmat; The twelve Imâms, Exotericism and Esotericism, the *Gefr*, the *Matlhi*, Sufism and Muslim Theosophy, form the themes of chapter third. In the fourth we are made acquainted with the Korân, its different names, Jewish and Christian sources, its subdivisions, the occult power of its verses and the esoteric teachings of the book. Chapter five brings before us: The Muslim mystical cosmography, angels, genii, pre-Adamic races, Adam, his fall and its symbol, The book of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus and

evangelical Islâm. Reincarnation, Karma, punishments and rewards are in the next chapter shown to have their place in the teachings of the Korân, while the last chapter speaks of the true Muslim secret societies, Pantheism, the five-fold cosmic division, the septenary one of man, the soul and union. The author regrets that he received Mrs. Besant's "The Religious Problem in India" only after having finished his work. He feels however that he cannot do better than to quote her final words of the lecture on Islâm (p. 40), in the Appendix to his book, which latter is well worth a careful perusal.

C. K.

"THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION AND
RE-INCARNATION."

BY NASARVANJI FRAMJI BILIMORIA.

In these few pages we have a collection of passages from the old Persian works relating to reincarnation, such as the "Desâtir, Jâm-e-Kaikhushru," "Jindeh-rod," "Zur-e-Bâstân," supported by "The Chaldean Oracles" and other Greek works. The orthodox Parsis consider the Avesta and the Pahlavi works only as Zarathushtrian, and the Persian works are considered as those of the Sufis. Mr. Bilimoria's argument is that the above books written in old Persian, though they have a colouring of Sufism, are either translations or commentaries of Zend books, in support of which he cites a long passage from the preface of "The Kheshtâb," another Theosophical work in old Persian. These books are often quoted in support of their teaching by the modern Dasturs, as if the books belong to Zoroastrianism. Moreover, it is shown from the same preface that there existed many mystic Orders in Persia in ancient times, and as the source of Sufism is now carried to a pre-Mahommedan period, it may be probable that Sufism sprang from ancient Magianism. Thus there seems to be a connecting link between modern orthodox Zoroastrianism, which has no re-birth doctrine to teach, and the mystic Orders of Persia, which emphatically teach this most soul-satisfying doctrine.

N. P. M.

MYSTERIEN, SYMBOLE AND MAGISCH WIRKENDE KRAFTE.

BY FRANZ HARTMANN.

In the 250 pages of this book the Author presents in very pleasant and clear language a great amount of useful information, touching on a variety of subjects of a theosophical and metaphysical nature. The reader must, however, through the title, not be led into thinking that in a mysterious way he can, as if by magic, acquire some great powers or forces. The writer, on the contrary, shows in the 12 chapters of the work before us that it is only by continuous, persevering labour that any real progress is made. The title of the chapters may indicate the nature of the teaching that is offered: I. The Inner Life. II. Self-knowledge. III. The Way. IV. Symbols. V. God and Nature. VI. Macrocosm and Microcosm. VII. Spirit, Soul and Form. VIII. "I." IX. The Word. X. The A B C of the Inner Life or the Teaching of the Alphabet of the Soul. XI. Mantrams--The Power of Prayer. XII. Theosophy.

The different symbols which illustrate the book are carefully explained. A great many references are made to texts in the Bible to show the identity of the teachings. The significance of the letters of the alphabet (Chap. IX "The Word") as taken partly from J. Boehme, is very interesting, also the information about "thinking letters (of the alphabet) with the feet."

In one point the author seems to be ill-informed, *i.e.*, when he writes (p. 248) that the Society founded by Madame Blavatsky, after her death went to pieces. According to last year's report the Theosophical Society, of which she was one of the founders, counted 10 Sections, with 714 Branches and a membership of almost 10,000.

We however agree with the following concluding words of his: "The true theosophical union will therefore always be a.....spiritual communion. It is the communion of the spirit of those who have awakened to the inner life. It needs no external appearances, but it does infinitely more in silence than can be done through noise and clamour; for the kingdom of God enters not with drums and trumpets into the heart of man, but in quiet and peace. This kingdom is the temple of wisdom in the human heart and in the centre of the worlds; into it every one is received without further ceremony, when he is ripe for it. In it all find themselves together in the end."

C. K.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the 19th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (1897-98), consisting of two large volumes, copiously illustrated, and of Bulletin No. 27, of the Publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology, which treats of the subject of Tsimshian Texts.

A LECTURE ON MIND-CURE.*

Our thanks are due to the Theosophical Publishing Society, London, for a neatly printed pamphlet of twenty-four pages, containing one of Mr. Leadbeater's Chicago lectures, on "The Rationale of Telepathy and Mind-cure." The various phases of mental healing, in connection with thought-transference are set forth in the lecturer's lucid and logical style. Those interested in these subjects can find in the author's brief exposition of them in the light of Theosophy, more food for thought than in some more wordy treatises which aim to elucidate these themes

MAGAZINES.

The Theosophical Review for June, opens with an article on "Vicarious Suffering," by Powis Hault, in which the writer says that "the seeming logical inconsistency of the two doctrines of Karma and Vicarious Atonement arises out of the tacit assumption that the individual man is a separable and separated unit, and that an imaginary line might be drawn round his Karma, cutting it off from that of the rest of the world." This is, of course a false assumption, and must be cast aside in order to arrive at the truth. Further on he says: "But it

* Price sixpence.

comes within our experience that man does show mercy to his fellow-man without any violation of the principle of justice. By the assumption that the penalty of our evil-doing is a fixed and unalterable quantity, we refuse to allow the Elder Brothers of the race that prerogative which we ourselves exercise."

"Notes on Vicarious Suffering in China," by C. S. M., state that "it is a common practice in that mysterious land for a child to offer its life to the gods in the place of a parent who is supposed to be marked for death." Sometimes the statement is made in writing "and presented to the god with appropriate offerings and worship;" and sometimes a verbal statement is offered. Mrs. Weller's article on "A Modern Mystic: George Macdonald," is concluded, and shows the subject of the paper to have had many clear views of spiritual truth. Michael Wood contributes another unique and impressive story, entitled, "The Willow Weaver." George W. Allen has a short article on "The Philosophy of Tri-unity." "Man's Deeper Self," by Bertram Keightley, is written in continuation of his very able review of Mr. Frederick Myers' notable work, "Human Personality and its survival of Bodily Death," which is doing so much toward revolutionising public opinion on that most interesting subject. Wm. C. Ward concluded his valuable article on "The Neo-Platonists." Mrs. Besant's article, "Some Karmic Problems," is both instructive and suggestive. Referring to the way in which a man who can recall the events of his previous life may neutralise some evil Karma that awaits him, she says:

"For he can send against the completed thought a new current of thought of the opposite character, and destroy the evil ere opportunity has manifested the thought as act. In this way also, where the act is connected with a person, an ancient enemy, the enemy may be turned into a friend by sending to him streams of goodwill ere the meeting on earth takes place, and the old hatred seeking revenge may be made love seeking to bless.

"The great Teachers of the world, knowing this possibility, have ever inculcated universal love and goodwill, and by obedience to Them a man may transform an ancient foe into a friend, even though he wots not of his existence. For, taking it for granted that in his past he has generated some Karma of hatred, he may daily send out a wave of goodwill to all that lives, so that his love, outspreading in all directions, may quench any fires of hatred still fed by long-past wrongs."

Considering further the nature of Karma, she says:

"No action that we can do is wholly good. All actions generate mixed Karma, because, being done in an imperfect world, the best must cause some friction, and we can only strive to choose the lines of work in which the good most preponderates. We must study the law in order that we may understand its workings, and then in all our activities seek the balance of good, cheerfully bearing the inevitable evil which must accompany all the good we do."

The leading features of *May Theosophy in Australasia* are, first, a stirring and powerful appeal "to the members of the Australasian Section T.S.," for earnest and united effort "for the strengthening and upbuilding, the purifying and the harmonising of this Society, not for its own sake, but in order that it might be made a more perfect and efficient instrument for the helping of the world." Mr. Leadbeater's "address to the Sixteenth Annual Convention of American Theosophists," and an interesting paper on "Etheric Possibilities" are the other noteworthy articles.

The May number of the *Revue Theosophique* presents a very interesting table of contents to its readers. The original essays are the continuation of Dr. Pascal's admirable essay and a further portion of Mr. Revel's "Mystic Silence." There are also, an article by Mr. Leadbeater and the usual instalments of questions and answers, reviews, notes on the movement and the monthly portion of the translation of the "Secret Doctrine."

Theosophia for May opens with an editorial on the beginning of the twelfth year of its existence. There follow translations of two short essays by H. P. B., further portions of Mr. Leadbeater's "Clairvoyance" and the "Kamic-Elemental," "Mary Worship," by C. J. Schuver, "Jesus," by J. B. Wilson, a translation of Michael Wood's story, "The Preacher," and the usual smaller items of interest. Our Dutch brothers are to be congratulated on the excellence of their work and we wish them every success in the future.

Sophia. The May number continues the translation of Mrs. Besant's "Esoteric Christianity" and has several original essays. We note the departure for South America, on the 5th May, for an indefinite period, of the old and valued friend of the President-Founder and earnest worker for the cause of Theosophy, Senor Melian. We feel sure that he will be very much missed by his colleagues in Spain, and we trust that he may be able to aid the work of the T. S. as much in the new field as he has in the old.

Teosofisk Tidskrift. The May issue is chiefly occupied by portions of the translations of Miss Edger's "Obstacle to Spiritual Progress" and of Mrs. Besant's "Individuality." There are notes on the movement and reviews.

Acknowledged with thanks: *The Vahan, Light, Theosophic Messenger, Harbinger of Light, Review of Reviews, The Arena, Mind, Phrenological Journal, Banner of Light, Health, The Prasnottara, Central Hindu College Magazine, Maha-Bodhi Journal, Indian Review, Indian Journal of Education, Christian College Magazine, Pra-Buddha Bharata, Suvasini (Canarese), Theosophisch Wegweiser, The Lotus Journal.*

CUTTINGS AND COMMENTS.

"Thoughts, like the pollen of flowers, leave one brain and fasten to another."

Modern Science at the threshold of the Gupta Vidya. In her convincing and exquisite phenomenon of focusing the particles of a heavy gold ring in the head of a rose that Colonel Olcott held in his hand (*Vide "Old Diary Leaves," Vol. I*), without crushing or abrading a single petal of the flower, H. P. B. proved that the matter of an ore can present the condition of weight without the usual concomitant of bulk. We now have it proved by the most eminent men of science that there can be heat without fire. The following extract from the (London) *Daily Telegraph* of March 28th last, gives the astonishing details of the chemical demonstration:

Nothing more astounding has probably ever been chronicled in the marvels of science than that which within the last few days has been

reported to the French Academy of Sciences by M. P. Currie and M. A. Laborde. It comes also as the culminating fact of a series of marvels. Four and twenty years ago Sir W. Crookes published some remarkable researches on "Molecular Physics in High Vacua." These besides other remarkable results led him to the invention of an optical apparatus known as Crookes's tube, which has proved one of the most fruitful instruments of investigation ever devised. In the hands of Professor Röntgen it disclosed the X-rays. This great discovery showed up the whole subject of obscure radiations, and M. Becquerel discovered that there existed in nature bodies capable of giving off continuous emanations, without any stimulus of heat or electricity. In rapid succession there were discovered uranium, polonium, and actinium, possessing this new property. But these were all surpassed by a new element which, after wonderful research, was extracted by M. and Madame Currie from the mineral, pitchblende. This, which they named radium, possesses the quality of throwing off spontaneously a stream of particles so minute that it has been computed no sensible loss would be discernible after millions of years. Chemists and physicists were compelled to admit that here was matter smaller than the atom. Professor J. J. Thomson has calculated that one of these corpuscles is probably not more than one seven-hundredth part of the dimensions of an atom of hydrogen, hitherto firmly believed to be the smallest thing in the universe.

Stupendous as were these results, they have been thrown into the shade by the latest report. M. Currie and Laborde now announce that radium possesses the power of maintaining its own temperature 27 deg. above surrounding objects; that any quantity of this mysterious element will develop sufficient heat in an hour to melt its own weight of ice; and, further, that a pound and a half of the salt would yield in an hour as much heat as the burning of a cubic foot of hydrogen gas. The old and false theory of spontaneous combustion pales its ineffectual fires before such a statement, for here is nearly illimitable heat without combustion. At first sight this looks like perpetual motion, a contradiction of the law of the conservation of energy, which is impossible. But whence comes the heat? Sir William Crookes falls back, by way of hypothesis, on a famous suggestion of the late Clerk Maxwell, to whose immortal work every year seems to add greater value. Maxwell suggested that an imaginary "Demon" might sort the moving atoms of a gas in such a manner as practically to suspend the conservation law. Crookes suggests that "the atomic structure of these radio-active bodies may be such as to enable them to throw off the slow-moving molecules of the air, with little loss of energy, while arresting the quick-moving missiles, and so gaining energy." A particle of the air travels sixty or seventy miles a second; a radium corpuscle 186,000 miles per second. If one can conceive that radium sustains a bombardment of the quick, while only throwing off the slower, particles, one can vaguely see how its temperature may be raised.

Last week Sir William Crookes submitted a report to the Royal Society on some recent experiments of his own by which these strange emanations were made visible by being directed on chemical screens. By using radium nitrate a phosphorescence was made visible to the naked eye. "On bringing the radium nearer the screen," he writes, "the scintillations became more numerous and brighter, until when close to it the flashes follow each other so quickly that the surface looks like a turbulent luminous sea." "It seems probable," he says, "that in these phenomena we are witnessing the bombardment of the screen by electrons (radiant matter, satellites, corpuscles, or, whatever they are, acting like material masses) hurled off by radium with a velocity of the order of that of light." What the radiations themselves are that produce these effects is a cardinal mystery. In part they are certainly electric, and Sir William suggests that they are composed of an atomic nucleus linked to an electron or elementary atom of electricity.

Some time ago Professor Sir W. Ramsay, the discoverer of argon, said: "Whatever the true explanation of these mysteries, it cannot be

denied that they form the beginning of what may and almost certainly will affect the material future of the human race." At present, to extract a pound of radium costs more than to manufacture artificial diamonds; but some day, when its production is cheaper, there may be found in the new element a source of power. As we know it now, it is a difficult and dangerous subject to deal with. M. Currie says he would be afraid to enter a room containing a pound of radium, as he believes it would be death to go near it. A glass tube holding a few grains of radium salts, and carried in the waistcoat pocket, gave rise to painful sores; and besides, the radiations powerfully and injuriously affect the nerves. In brief, we are on the threshold of a momentous problem, possibly of vital interest to the future of mankind.

* * *

A still more recent announcement than the foregoing has been made, *viz.*, that light is emitted by the human body. Not spiritual, not transcendental, but physical; perhaps the same as that given off by the firefly and the glow-worm, perhaps the very odyle of Von Reichenbach, so insultingly mocked at by Dubois-Reymond the French Chemist. Says the *Daily Telegraph*:

Professor Arthur W. Goodspeed, of the University of Pennsylvania, has discovered a hitherto unknown ray which, emanating from the human body, is strong enough to make a photograph. Röntgen ray photos, which ordinarily require an exposure of half an hour, can be taken in five minutes with the application of the new principle.

This discovery was communicated to the American Philosophical Society on Friday night, when photographs taken by the light from a hand were exhibited. Professor Goodspeed explained the discovery as follows:—

All matter absorbs radio-active energy in waves of varying lengths and gives off the same energy in waves of changed length. The energy thus transformed is a characteristic of the matter that gives it forth. The human body gives out rays with comparative freedom and force.

After this, what will the skeptics have to say about the human luminous aura which has so long been a subject for their jests? The Theosophist whose reading keeps him abreast of the progress of modern physical discovery, must indeed be dull if he cannot see how complete and unquestionable is the vindication of the teaching of the Sages of Old, and their modern disciples.

* * *

In the May issue of *The Vâhan*, A. A. W. offers some very helpful thoughts on Free-will—in reply to a question by H. V. S.—which we take the liberty of quoting hereunder:

Our querist has hold of the right idea, that man's free-will must somehow or other, be God's free-will to be possible at all. His difficulty lies here—that he has not made his own the Theosophical doctrine of the double mind: the Buddhi-Manas, whereby the higher powers communicate with him, and the Kâma-Manas whereby the attractions of the physical world play upon him. It is a fundamental defect of the older presentation of the doctrine of the Seven Principles, that it takes no account of this division, the most important of all. The physical body, the desire body which feels the impression made on the physical senses by the objects around it, and the Kâma-Manas—the portion of the true Mind which is put down into these lower vehicles to gain experience by them, which thinks and reasons over the perceptions given it, form together a whole, as to which the word "free-will" is altogether inappropriate.

If you go no further than this (and modern psychology goes no further than this) there can be no such thing as free-will. An action of this determined by anything but motives ultimately of the physical plane is impossible; for Kâma-Manas *knows* nothing but what the senses give it.

But, to the Theosophist, all this is not the Man at all. It is only so to speak, a reflection of the real Monad, A'tma-Buddhi and the Higher Manas, whereby the spark of what the querist would call God is individualised—one man separated (for the time) from his fellows. And the lower self which is incapable of free-will is only the true man's means of learning from the world and of acting upon it. Now this Higher Man is free in the fullest sense—the attractions of the physical world have for him no meaning whatever—he does not need to *resist* them; for him they have no existence. He knows only the needs of the true soul; and when he succeeds in impressing His will on the lower self, this is quite regardless of this lower self's pleasure or pain.

The point of this view is that we no longer regard free-will as an innate power or a "gift" received from outside. It has to be *developed*, life after life, by the continued efforts of the Higher Ego to rule the lower. As Mr. Leadbeater very rightly says, the majority of mankind have as yet developed almost no will at all.

A good example was given in a question in THE VA'HAN a few months back, where the querist described himself as having been driven, as it seemed to him by a force outside himself, to save the life of a person he particularly hated, and who fully reciprocated the feeling. I then replied to him that that action, which seemed to him against his will, was very probably the only time in his life he had ever exercised his *real* will at all.

H. V. S. will accordingly find that we Theosophists do *not* meet him with the assertion that man *has* free-will. On the contrary, I would say that this is the goal of his evolution. His will *becomes* free in proportion as he succeeds in making his lower mind and body obedient to the Higher Ego which transmits to him the Divine Will; entirely regardless of the "motives" with which modern science concerns itself. And when this freedom—from the wants and desires of his lower self—is complete, his reunion with God is accomplished, and his long pilgrimage ended. Of the bearing of this doctrine on theology, this is not the place to speak; we will only fully agree with the querist that free-will in the common sense *would* place man outside God, which is impossible. But when our will is finally one with God's will we shall then, and only then, realise fully that "His service is perfect freedom."

* * *

In Dr. Carr's "Medical Talk" we find the following valuable suggestions in regard to mental and moral hygiene:—

Hygienic Importance of Mental States. The physical body is greatly dependent upon the moral and mental faculties as to health. It makes little difference what your chronic ailment is. If you get right mentally and morally you have done a thousand times more than all the doctors put together can do.

Do you hate any one? Have you a grudge against any one? Are you harbouring revenge or malice toward any one?

No matter what the provocation may have been to cause you to have these feelings against any one, you can never get well as long you allow them to remain,

As long as there is any one in this world whom you wish ill, you will try in vain to find a cure for your physical ailment. Your hatred operates as a perpetual waste of vitality. It weakens the sources of vital energy and deranges the nutritive processes.

Are you jealous of any one? Have you allowed jealousy in any form to creep into your life?

If so neither wholesome food, nor proper exercise, nor the closest observances of hygienic rules will make good your loss. Jealousy saps the vitality faster than an ulcer. It eats into the very core of life like a malignant cancer.

You have got to have a house-cleaning inside of you. You have got to get rid of malice and hatred and revenge before you can get well. Even though you have some incurable organic disease, getting rid of these things will do wonders toward improving you.

We clip the following from the *Indian Mirror*, and *Pasteur Institutes and Hydrophobia*. In connection with it we beg to call the reader's attention to Surgeon-General Thornton's review of "The First Annual Report of the Indian Pasteur Institute" (at Kasauli), which appeared in June Theosophist (See p. 565):

"The revelations made from time to time of the failure of the Pasteur treatment at the Paris and Kasauli Institutes, of patients suffering, or supposed to be suffering, from hydrophobia, have spread suspicion everywhere. Recently a man went to the Kasauli Institute for treatment, and was sent home as cured. A short while after, he displayed all the symptoms of acute hydrophobia, and died in great agony. Again, the inoculation against plague has been discredited in consequence of a whole village in the Punjab losing its population which had been subjected to inoculation. And a further discredit will be attached to inoculation by the published reports of one or two cases in which bacteriologists, who have been preparing plague inoculation serum, have in the process caught the disease, and died of it. And yet these abominations are perpetrated in the name of science and humanity, and actively encouraged by Government."

The Editor of *The Hindu* offers the subjoined remarks on the same subject:

The Pasteur treatment at Kasauli does not always result in the recovery of the patient. We have before now recorded cases in which the treatment was followed by death; and yet another instance is now reported. Three men were bitten by a mad jackal near Kareli station on the G. I. P. Railway last December, and were promptly sent off to Kasauli. One of the three developed symptoms of hydrophobia on the 9th April, and died 4 days later. The *Pioneer*, which is a supporter of the Kasauli Institute, says that "No educated person claims absolute infallibility for the Pasteur system in all cases." But in the absence of such absolute infallibility there is no justification for maintaining the Institute, since indigenous treatment has been found to produce the same results; that is, a good many recover while some die. Men who were bitten by mad dogs have been saved by the Buisson vapour bath treatment as well.

* * *

Mr. Baulding's Address before the London Spiritualist Alliance.

Mr. J. W. Baulding made some very good points in his address at St. James' Hall, on the evening of April 16th, the first portion of which is published in *London Light* of May 2nd, from which we quote the subjoined paragraphs:—

A *Spiritist* may not be a *Spiritualist* and a *Spiritualist* may not be a *Spiritist*. A *Spiritist* is a man who believes in Spirit existence and Spirit manifestation; a

Spiritualist is a man who lives a spiritual life, though he may have no knowledge or experience of spirits out of the body. Hence a man may be a Spiritist, and yet be a bad man, a false man, a perfect demon of a man; and the spirits he deals with may be like himself—bad spirits, wicked spirits, demons of darkness, and not angels of light. And another man may be a Spiritualist, a good man, a true man, a perfect angel of a man, and yet may know nothing of good spirits, true spirits, angelic spirits, although, attracted by his goodness, they may be all about him, and continually ministering to his spiritual life.

* *

*Thought-
flashings.*

Referring to his being at times conscious of the presence of his departed mother, Mr. Baulding offers the following suggestions concerning "Spirit communications":—

Occasionally I have been told that when I called for her she was not *locally* near: but the desire for her presence, the loving thought of her, has flashed to her spirit at whatever remote distance she may have been, and brought her with the rapidity of light to my side. I used to doubt this instantaneous effect of my prayer or wish, but the marvel of Marconi's telegraphy has seemed to illustrate and even confirm my belief. Those wireless messages are almost akin to spirit communications. Flashing through the ether over three thousand miles of pathless sea, they seem to suggest that spirit communication is only a parallel to this marvellous process, and that the transmitter in my mind and the receiver in my mother's are illustrated by those finely-attuned instruments whereby the world is made a whispering gallery, and continents separated by solitary oceans become one by the sympathy of soul with soul. The conviction, therefore, is always strong, and the feeling sweet beyond the power of words, that there are currents of thought and emotion continually passing between me and the unseen; that the cloud which gathers and hovers about me is charged with spiritual electricity; that the lightnings of this subtle and mysterious force are perpetually flashing down in sympathetic influence; that in a higher sense than Byron meant,

"The sparkle in the eye is caught
From heaven and lighted with electric thought,"

and that in a spiritual and blessed sense I am never uninfluenced, and never alone, because these waves of spiritual power are continually playing round my mind and heart, and these unseen witnesses are always at my side.

When I mentioned this idea once to a friend of mine he replied, "What an awful thought! Never to be alone! Never to be by yourself! Never to have any privacy! Always to be watched by an invisible eye!" But I do not share his opinion: Why should we mind being always inspected if we are true men and are living honest and transparent lives? I did not know that *good* men objected to the Inspector. I always thought it was the thief that feared the Policeman; that the watchman was rather a comfort than otherwise to the honest man, because he not only watches for him and over him, but against the prowler who might do him wrong. Why should I want to be so private unless I am meditating evil, or doing it? Why should I object to my beloved dead going with me everywhere, noting everything I do, hearing everything I say, and even writing it down in some immortal book? On the contrary, if I am really sincere in wishing to be good always, and to do good everywhere, I shall welcome the companionship of the good spirits, who will certainly approve and as certainly assist.

* *

Mr. Boulding makes some excellent remarks
Worldliness. on "heavily weighted souls," which he supplements
 by the following original poem of his, on "World-
 liness:—"

The world and the *unworldly* soul
 Together often sit:
 And he who nearest is, is oft
 The *farthest* off from It.

I've seen the great and mighty walk
 Heaven high, the earth above:
 But they oft love the world the most
 Who have the *least to love*

I've seen the coroneted *head*
 With reverence bending *low*:
 And *servng* men and maids behind,
 As proud as Satan go.

The Earl is simple as a child:
 But John!—upon my word
 Did he not overact the part
 You'd think he was '*my lord*.'

More oft with pence than fortunes staked,
 Hell plays for souls of men;
 Why, Judas sold the Lord of all
 For only three pounds ten.

There are who, in the purple born,
 The pomps of power despise;
 While Mary from her new stuff-gown
 Can scarcely lift her eyes.

I have seen men of brilliant minds
 Modest in deed and speech:
 But brainless little nobodies
 Like peacocks strut and screech.

And some there be of vast estate
 Whose hearts are pure and whole:
 While others in an acre-plot
 Have buried all their soul.

So worldliness lies not in things,
 But only in the heart:
 Who lightly holds them, rich or poor,
 Hath chosen the better part.

* *

The Editor of the *Indian Mirror* after referring
Brahmin (see issue of June 10th) to the District Conference at
Exclusive- Chingleput, near Conjeeveram, then about to take place,
ness. says:—

"Conjeeveram was lately the scene of a number of
 torch-light dacoities of such a daring character that the
 people of the adjoining villages have been seized with a wild panic,
 and have deserted their houses, leaving them under lock and key. How
 such dacoities can occur under British rule well-nigh passeth our
 understanding. But we do not at all wonder at the sufferings of Con-
 jeeveram and the neighbouring villages, for we read that there are
 Brahmin Streets and non-Brahmin Streets in some of these villages—
 that is, streets reserved exclusively for the use of Brahmins, and others
 for that of non-Brahmins—in order to meet the exigencies of caste
 prejudice which is very strong in some parts of Southern India. What
 could be a greater reproach to the boasted enlightenment of the Hindu

community than that streets should be reserved exclusively for the use of Brahmins, and that no Pariahs should be allowed to desecrate these streets with the contaminating touch of their feet! Such people, in our opinion, richly deserve to suffer—the great Ruler of the Universe can never look upon their conduct with anything but the severest displeasure. Though a District Conference is about to assemble near Conjeeveram, we see that no steps have been taken by that Conference to eradicate such huge social evils.”

* * *

In the *Indian Mirror* we find the following good suggestion :

White Lotus Day. “We see, that the White Lotus Day was celebrated throughout India with deeds of charity, and a special feature was the feeding of the poor. This was especially the case in South India where, in the aggregate, many thousands of the poor were fed, and had otherwise their wants looked after. In one single place, it is reported, as many as ten thousand poor had their wants attended to. This is one way of keeping Madame Blavatsky’s memory green. Might we suggest yet another? Suppose as little as a pice is set apart for every single man or woman or child, treated to the banquet at every centre of theosophical activity, would not the White Lotus Day prove a blessing to Theosophists, but say in ten years form a fund large enough to found orphanages in different parts of the country. We think that our suggestion is practical, and as time flows, more good can be done to deserving poor by means of such orphanages than by one sumptuous meal once in twelve months. We hope these lines will catch the eye of the Head-quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar in Madras and at Kashi (Benares).”

We would esteem it a favour if our friend, the Editor of the *Indian Mirror*, would elaborate his idea.

*A New
Buddhist
Temple at
Colombo.*

* * *

Miss A. C. Albers contributes to the *Indian Mirror* an account of the opening of the Maitriya Temple at Colombo on April 25th. We quote the following opening paragraphs :—

For some years past, there has been existing in that city a school conducted so far only on a small scale, in which Buddhist monks receive the advantage of English education. Thanks to the ardent endeavours of its promoters, this work has been gradually growing until it has now resulted in the erection of a magnificent building fitted up after the model of the modern houses of worship of the Christians. A large and well-lighted structure, provided with comfortable benches, a pulpit from which the speaker delivers his address, these are some of the main features of this new Temple, somewhat of a contrast perhaps, with the old style, but a happy sign of the fact that the promulgators of the faith are prepared to go abreast with the times, and not to be left dreaming as the wheel of evolution rolls slowly on.

Considerable opposition was raised in the beginning, by the more orthodox faction, on the grounds that a Buddhist shrine may not be entered with shoes on, and that sitting on benches on the part of the congregation is an act of disrespect to the Sangha. But the sound argument of the leaders—men of advanced thought and education—that manners will change in accordance with an inevitable law, and customs of a thousand years ago apply no more to day, finally won the victory.

The Hall was beautifully decorated with ‘lotus entwined garlands’ and festoons. The leading priests of the Island were present, including His Reverence the High Priest Sumangala, and an able address was delivered by Bhikku Ananda Maitriya. This indicates progress.