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Theosophy and its Evidences.



BY

ANNIE BESANT.

Fellow of the Theosophical Society.

(EIGHTH THOUSAND).

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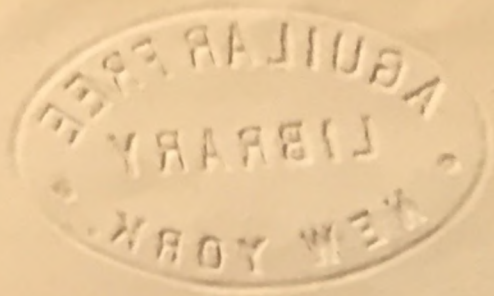
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THEOSOPHY AND ITS EVIDENCES.

NO more difficult work could be proposed, perhaps, to any body of people, than the understanding of Theosophy and the effectual carrying on of its propaganda. Its philosophy is more abstruse than that of Hegel, while it is also far more subtle, and many of its evidences require so much study and self-denial ere they can be estimated, that they will certainly remain hidden from the majority, not because they are in themselves incomprehensible, but because average, easy-going people have not the capacity of working them out. Yet the ethical teachings rest finally on the philosophy, and those who cannot, or will not, study the philosophy are reduced to accepting the ethics by themselves; they can, indeed, be shown to be useful, by that most potent of all arguments, the argument from experience; for they are most effective in promoting morality, *i.e.*, in inducing social happiness. On this utilitarian ground they can be taught, and can there hold their ground against any rivals in the same field. There they can use the conditional, but not the categorical, Imperative; the categorical remains veiled, the ultimate authority can be found only on the metaphysical heights, and those heights can be scaled but by the strenuous efforts of the patient and undaunted student. Each such student can, indeed, bear his testimony to what he has seen and known, but to all, save himself, his evidence remains second-hand. Personally won, it remains a personal possession, priceless indeed to him, but of varying value to those who hear it from him. Not on such evidence can Theosophy base itself in an appeal to the cultivated intelligence of the West, intelligence trained in the sceptical habit, and cautiously guarding itself against

unproven assumptions. Nor let it be forgotten that the West has, in its own eyes, this justification: that it has freed itself from the bondage of superstition, and has won its intellectual victories, by the wise use of scepticism and the prudent suspension of judgment until assertion has been demonstrated by fact.

It is then necessary, if Theosophy is to make its way in the West, and to give to it the much-needed basis of the scientifically spiritual, that Theosophists should present to the indifferent, as to the enquirer, sufficient *prima facie* evidence that it has something valuable to impart, evidence which shall arouse the attention of the one class, and attract the other into the investigation of its claims. The evidence must be such as can be examined at first hand by any person of ordinary intelligence, and it need not seek to establish anything more than that Theosophy is worth studying. Let the study be fairly begun, and the student capable of mastering its initial difficulties, and its acceptance is certain, though the period of that full acceptance will depend on the student's mental characteristics and the type of his intelligence. As Madame Blavatsky says: "Once that the reader has gained a clear comprehension of them [the basic conceptions on which the Secret Doctrine rests], and realised the light which they throw on every problem of life, they will need no further justification in his eyes, because their truth will be to him as evident as the sun in heaven"—("Secret Doctrine," vol. i. p. 20). In order, however, that the study may be begun, this *prima facie* evidence must be given, and these basic conceptions of Theosophy must be roughly outlined. Only when this is done, can anyone decide whether or not it is worth while to enter on the study and the deeper evidences of Theosophy.

The value of this evidence is a point to be decided ere serious study is commenced. Often, in our Lodges, when the members are engaged in a consecutive course of study, a casual visitor, admitted by courtesy, will get up and suddenly ask, "What is the evidence on which Theosophy is based, and of what use is it?" as though

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a passer-by, dropping in and listening to a teacher instructing a mathematical class on the theory of equations, should suddenly challenge him to prove the use of numbers and the rationale of the algebraical signs. In any science, save that of Theosophy, a person who expected a class of students to stop, while the reasons for their study were explained to a stranger who knew nothing of their subject, would be recognised as taking up a foolish and irrational position: but in Theosophy we are always expected to break off our work in order to prove that we are not fools for doing it. And if we show any unwillingness to do this, it is at once taken for granted that our position is unsound, and that we are afraid of investigation. As a matter of fact, we have not time to justify ourselves to each successive visitor who may be led by curiosity to obtain from a member an introduction to our Lodge meetings; and it is the purpose of this paper to present, once for all, some of the evidences which have determined us to seek in Theosophy the light which, elsewhere, we have failed to find.

The word "Theosophy" often leads people wrong at the outset, giving the idea that the "Wisdom-Religion"—as it is sometimes called—postulates a personal, and, therefore, a limited deity. This is not the case. "Divine Wisdom, Theosophia, or wisdom of the Gods, as Theogonia, genealogy of the Gods. The word Theos means a God in the Greek, one of the divine beings, certainly not 'God' in the sense attached in our day to the term. Therefore, it is not 'Wisdom of God,' as translated by some, BUT *Divine power*, such as that possessed by the Gods"—("The Key to Theosophy," p. 1). The name is not ancient, dating only from the third century, being used first by Ammonius Saccas and his school. But the teaching itself dates back many a thousand years, unchanged in its main features, taught to-day in England to truth-seeking students as it was taught when Buddha wandered over Indian plains, or earlier still, when ancient Rishis guided their chelas along the path which leads to Wisdom.

What this teaching is may be briefly outlined: Theosophy regards the Universe as a transitory manifestation of Eternal Existence, the summer-day flower of an eternal unknown Root. That Root is the One Reality, the only Permanent among the myriad and fleeting phenomena which surround us on every hand, and among which we ourselves are numbered. From that Unity proceeds all diversity; into that Unity all diversity again returns. It is manifested in the atom as in the man, in what is spoken of as the non-living as well as in the living. It, "the infinite and eternal Cause—dimly formulated in the 'Unconscious' and 'Unknowable' of current European philosophy—is the rootless root of 'all that was, is, or ever shall be'"—"Secret Doctrine," vol. i. p. 14).

Periodically the aspect of the Eternal Existence that we call Life radiates as source of the manifested Universe, the Universe being but "the variously differentiated aspects" of the One Life. Thus, to the Theosophist, the most differentiated forms are essentially *one*: "matter" and "spirit" are but the two poles of the one magnet, inseparable, not thinkable as existing apart from each other. To use clumsy phraseology, spirit is the One Life in its early manifestations, matter is the One Life solidified: the objective Universe "is, so to say, held in solution in space, to differentiate again and crystallise out anew" during a period of manifestation.

The "spirit," the "divine soul" in man is a spark of the One Life, undifferentiated from its parent Fire, and therefore alike for every human being; it is the fate of this "spark" to win self-consciousness by passing round the cycle of forms, and in man reaching and finally perfecting self-consciousness; the fully human stage once reached, all further progress is a matter of personal endeavour, of conscious co-operation with the spiritual forces in nature: "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 re-incarnations"—("Secret Doc-

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trine," vol. i. p. 17). This "pilgrimage of the Ego" is the central idea, so to speak, of Theosophy: this gaining of self-consciousness is the very object and outcome of the Universe: for this it was manifested, for this it exists, groaning and travailing in pain to perfect and bring forth the self-conscious spirit.

This bald statement must suffice as to the teachings of Theosophy, for it is not the purpose of this paper to expound Theosophical ideas, but to set forth some *prima facie* evidence that Theosophy is worthy attention. Let us then turn to the evidence, and ere dealing with it in detail, let us consider the general nature of the proof that may be fairly demanded by anyone who is willing to study Theosophy, if it can be shown to him that the study is likely to be fruitful.

Evidence must, speaking generally, be congruous with the position which it is sought to demonstrate. The aspect of the subject under consideration must govern the nature of the evidence to be submitted. Problems of physical life must be demonstrated by physical evidence: problems of intellectual life must be demonstrated by intellectual evidence: and if there be the spiritual life which Theosophy posits, it must be demonstrated by spiritual evidence. That the proof must be suited to the subject is taken for granted, save where the spiritual is concerned: to seek to prove to a blind man the existence of colour by holding up coloured objects before his unseeing eyes would be considered absurd; but any suggestion that there may be spiritual eyes which are blinded in some, and that the use of those spiritual eyes may be needed for the discernment of certain classes of verities, is scouted as superstitious or fraudulent. Every psychologist recognises the difference between the Object and the Subject World, and in studying the subjective he knows that it is idle to demand objective proof. The methods suited to the extended world are not suitable to the unextended: and a proof addressed wholly to the reason is none the less cogent because it has neither form nor colour. And, in verity, to the trained intellect the

purely intellectual proof has a certainty higher than that of any which appeals to the senses, because the senses are more easily to be deluded than the intellect, where the latter has been strictly trained and disciplined: so where the spiritual intelligence has been duly evolved and trained, it speaks with a certainty as much above that of the intellect, as the intellect speaks with a certainty above that of the senses: it judges the conclusions of the intellect as the intellect judges those of the senses, and utters the final word on every question presented for adjudication.

The "average man" is apt to regard a physical demonstration as the most convincing that can be given: it appeals to the senses, and "I must believe the evidence of my senses" is a phrase that often drops from the lips of the slightly instructed person. One of the early lessons learned by the student of physiology is that the senses are very easily deceived, and are subject to various illusions and hallucinations. An instructive illustration of this fact was given by the ingenious Americans who saw the famous "basket-trick" performed by a wandering Indian: one of these gentlemen drew what he "saw," while the second photographed the various stages of the scene. The artist's drawing showed the well-known succession of startling events, the camera showed nothing. The senses had been led astray by "glamor," and their testimony was unreliable. Still, for demonstrating physical facts, physical experiments are the most satisfactory, and, with certain precautions, may be taken as trustworthy proof.

But physical phenomena are not relevant as proofs of intellectual and spiritual truths. No physical "miracle" can demonstrate a moral maxim. The doctrine, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," is neither more nor less true because Buddha and Jesus could, or could not, cure certain diseases by means not understood by their followers. The demonstration of a problem in Euclid is in no way assisted by the teacher being able to levitate himself, or to draw

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across the table to his hand without contact a box of mathematical instruments. He might be able to perform these feats, and yet make a blunder in the working out of his demonstration: and he might be totally incapable of such performances, and yet be a competent mathematical teacher. Mathematical and logical proofs need no physical phenomena to accredit them: they stand on their own ground, are tried by their appropriate tests. Many people cannot follow a mathematical proof; it is impertinent to dazzle them into acquiescence by the display of some irrelevant physical ability; if they cannot appreciate the force of the demonstration, they must either suspend their judgment on the conclusion, or accept it at second-hand, *i.e.*, on authority. They will be very foolish if they *deny* the conclusion because the evidence for it is beyond their grasp; but they are perfectly justified in withholding their belief where they cannot understand. If some important line of action depends on their acceptance or rejection of the conclusion, then they must make their own choice between acting on authority or suspending action until able to understand: the responsibility is theirs, and the loss of non-action, if loss follow, is theirs also. The propounder of the proposition may fairly say: "This is true: I cannot make the proof any easier for you than I have done. If you cannot see it, you only can decide whether or not you will act on my assurance of its truth. Such and such consequences will follow your rejection of the conclusion, but I have neither the right nor the power to enforce on you action founded on that which I personally know to be true, but which you do not understand." In Theosophy, the student will often find himself in such a dilemma: he will be left free either to proceed, accepting the authoritative conclusion provisionally or fully as a guide to action, or to decline to proceed, until the steps as well as the conclusion lie plainly before him. He will never find himself driven, but if he always stops until he has personally demonstrated a conclusion, he will often find himself losing what he

might have gained by fearless confidence in teachers oft-times proven.

For, after all, the student of Theosophy is only advised to follow the methods adopted by pupils in every other science. It is not the blind faith of the religionist in propositions that cannot be verified that is asked from the Theosophical student: it is the reasonable trust of a pupil in his master, the temporary acceptance of conclusions, every one of which is to be demonstrated the moment the pupil's progress makes the demonstration intelligible. The study carries the pupil into the physical, the intellectual, the spiritual worlds, and in each the appropriate tests and proofs will be forthcoming: as physical proofs are out of court in the intellectual world, so physical and intellectual proofs are not available in the spiritual. But here again Theosophy demands nothing differing in kind from that which is freely granted to our logicians and mathematicians by the physicists; as the former are unable to grant to the latter experimental physical evidences, so the spiritual adept is unable to grant to the logician and the mathematician proofs couched in their special intellectual forms. Not therefore is his science superstition, nor his knowledge folly; he stands in the realm of the Spiritual, as secure, nay even more secure, than they stand in the realms of the Reason and of the Material. He can justify himself to them in their own worlds, by showing in the Material that he knows more than the physicist of the powers latent in matter, and in the Rational by showing that he knows more than the intellectual giants as to the workings and capacities of the Reason; but in his own sphere he is judged of none; he answers but to his Conscience and his Destiny.

The words "Teachers," "Masters," "Adepts," imply that Theosophy, like all other philosophies and sciences, has its authoritative exponents; these form a Brotherhood, consisting of men and women of various nations, who by patient study and purity of life have acquired exceptional, but wholly natural, powers and

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knowledge. The Hindus speak of them as Mahatmas, literally "Great Souls"—great in their wisdom, great in their powers, great in their self-sacrifice. They are the custodians of a body of doctrine, handed down from generation to generation, increased by the work of each. Into this body of doctrine, this vast collection of cosmological and historical facts, no new statement is allowed entrance until verified by repeated investigations, reiterated experiments by different hands. This forms the "Secret Doctrine," the "Wisdom-Religion," and of this, from time to time, portions have been given out, and have been made the basis of the great philosophies, the great religions of the world. By these we may essay to track our road through history, gaining, as we go, the evidence for the existence of this body of doctrine from ancient down to modern times. We will seek (a) evidence from history; (b) evidence from world-religions; then we will glance at (c) the evidence from experiment; and (d) the evidence from analogy. Thus may we hope to show that Theosophy is worthy the attention of the thoughtful, and so perform the duty placed in our hands.

(a) As to the existence of such a Secret Doctrine, no doubt was felt in the ancient world. What were the famous "Mysteries" whether in India, in Egypt, in Greece, or elsewhere—but the unveiling to the selected few of the doctrines so carefully hidden from the outer world? As said Voltaire: "In the chaos of popular superstitions, there existed an institution which has ever prevented man from falling into absolute barbarity: it was that of the Mysteries". So Dr. Warburton also: "The wisest and best men in the Pagan world are unanimous in this, that the Mysteries were instituted pure, and proposed the noblest ends by the worthiest means". These Mysteries, we learn from Cicero, were open only to the upright and the good: "An Initiate must practise all the virtues in his power: justice, fidelity, liberality, modesty, temperance". Originating in India in pre-Vedic times, the Mysteries were there, as later in more Western lands, reserved as

the reward of virtue and wisdom: "Resignation; the act of rendering good for evil; temperance; probity; chastity; repression of the physical senses; the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; that of the superior soul (spirit); worship of truth; abstinence from anger;" such were the virtues exacted from all candidates for initiation. They are the ten virtues prescribed later in the Institutes of Manu, and "No one who has not practised, during his whole life, the ten virtues which the divine Manu makes incumbent as a duty, can be initiated into the Mysteries of the Council". In Egypt the same strict rules of conduct were inculcated: ere the neophyte could become a "Khristophoros" and receive the sacred cross, the Tau, he must know and observe the rules: "never to desire or seek revenge; to be always ready to help a brother in danger, even to the risk of his own life; to bury every dead body; to honour his parents above all; to respect old age and protect those weaker than himself; ever to bear in mind the hour of death, and that of resurrection in a new and imperishable body". The very names of the great Initiates of Greece are eloquent as to the intellectual and moral heights attained by these mighty men of the elder world: Pythagoras, Thales, Democritus, Euclid, Solon, Plato, Archytas—these, with others like Apollonius of Tyana, Iamblichus, Porphyry, give us some idea of the stature of the Initiate of old.

Now, it is beyond doubt that in ancient time the distinction between exoteric and esoteric teaching was strictly observed. In Buddhism we find the "doctrine of the Eye" and the "doctrine of the Heart," and we read how Gautama, the Buddha, entrusted the secret teaching to his disciple Kasiapa, and how Ananda preached abroad the doctrine of the Eye, while the "Heart" was left in the possession of the Arhats—the Masters of the Hidden Wisdom. Pythagoras divided his students into two classes, for the reception of his exoteric and esoteric doctrines. Ammonius Saccas had his "higher doctrines," and those who received them were bound by oath not to divulge them to the outer

world. The "Book of Initiates of Memphis" and Thales and Pythagoras and Plato at Sais, Lycurgus and the principles of legislation of Greece. In the same tradition, according to Josephus, he passed on the passageway in the celestial Kabbalist Maimonides the Hebrew Solomon find out the truth, ought to take care that all our sagacious the work of the true meaning another, then ought to speak in manner, as I by those who the Old Testament letter, and after the manner I should be given these excellent a of sense was second, and the and the found such trees in believe images, Paul spoke Abrahama

world. The "Books of Thoth," in the keeping of the Initiates of Memphis, were the treasury from which Pythagoras and Plato gathered their intellectual riches, and Thales and Democritus culled their knowledge. At Sais, Lycurgus and Solon were trained in the principles of legislation, going back to their own lands as Initiates, to lay the legislative foundations of ancient Greece. In the Hebrew nation are manifold traces of the same traditional hidden wisdom; Abraham, its founder, was a great astronomer and arithmetician, according to Josephus, who also declares as a reference to him the passage in Berosus about a Chaldean "skilful in the celestial science"; and the great Jewish Kabbalist Maimonides declares that the true meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures is esoteric. "Whoever shall find out the true meaning of the Book of Genesis ought to take care not to divulge it. This is a maxim that all our sages repeat to us, and above all respecting the work of the six days. If a person should discover the true meaning of it by himself, or by the aid of another, then he ought to be silent; or if he speaks, he ought to speak of it but obscurely, in an enigmatical manner, as I do myself, leaving the rest to be guessed by those who can understand me." Origen deals with the Old Testament in similar fashion: "If we hold to the letter, and must understand what is written in the law after the manner of the Jews and common people, then I should blush to confess aloud that it is God who has given these laws; then the laws of man appear more excellent and reasonable." And again: "What man of sense will agree with the statement that the first, second, and third days, in which the evening is named and the morning, were without sun, moon, and stars, and the first day without a heaven. What man is found such an idiot as to suppose that God planted trees in Paradise, like a husbandman. . . . I believe that every man must hold these things for images, under which a hidden sense lies concealed." Paul speaks in like manner, saying of the two sons of Abraham: "which things are an allegory: for these are

the two covenants"; and going on to show that Hagar was Mount Sinai and Sarah "Jerusalem, which is above." The Zohar denounces those who read the sacred writings in their literal sense: "Woe be to the man who says that the Doctrine delivers common stories and daily words. . . . Therefore we must believe that every word of the Doctrine contains in it a loftier sense and a higher meaning. The narratives of the Doctrine are its cloak. The simple look only at the garment, that is, upon the narrative of the Doctrine; more they know not. The instructed, however, see not merely the cloak, but what the cloak covers."

The Essenes who were divided into the "brethren" and the "perfect," only admitted candidates into their order, we learn from Josephus, after a prolonged probation, and then bound the successful neophyte by "tremendous oaths" that he would not (among other things) "discover any of their doctrines to others, no, not though any one should compel him so to do at the hazard of his life." Jesus is said to have reserved his special teaching for his chosen disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables". Paul, who, using a well-known metaphor, calls himself "a wise master builder," says that he and his fellows "speak wisdom among them that are perfect," *i.e.*, that are fully initiated, and describes this wisdom as "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom". Clemens Alexandrinus says that "the mysteries of the faith are not to be divulged to all," and speaks of hiding "in a mystery the wisdom spoken, which the Son of God [the Initiate] taught". Mme. Blavatsky says in "Isis Unveiled": "Among the venerable sect of the Tana'im, or rather the Tananim, the wise men, there were those who taught the secrets practically and initiated some disciples into the grand and final mystery. But the *Mishna Kagiga*, 2nd section, says that the table of contents of the *Mercaba* 'must only be delivered to wise old ones'. The *Gemara* is still more emphatic:

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existence of this body of do fourth century, A.D. The exoteric side of Christianit its continued transmission of secrets of nature—"gr learned men who, by th Churches, were compelle under bushels. But wh hear of "alchemists," "heretics," from whom learning, towards the shall generally find, a connexion with the safety, under the tolera of the Hidden Wisdor of Christian persecu own fury.

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It would be easy to multiply testimonies to the existence of this body of doctrine, at least down to the fourth century, A.D. The triumph of the illiterate exoteric side of Christianity then swamped it, so far as Europe was concerned, and we only catch glimpses of its continued transmission by the occasional divulging of secrets of nature—"great discoveries"—by wise and learned men who, by the ruthless persecution of the Churches, were compelled to hide their lights carefully under bushels. But wherever in the Middle Ages we hear of "alchemists," "magicians," "atheists," "learned heretics," from whom impulses came towards rational learning, towards the investigation of nature, we shall generally find, on enquiry that they have some connexion with the East, whither had retreated for safety, under the tolerant rule of Buddhism, the guardians of the Hidden Wisdom, to be in security until the storm of Christian persecution had exhausted itself by its own fury.

The knowledge of physical nature was indeed part of the instruction received during preparation for the higher initiations. The wonderful astronomical calculations of the Hindus, their zodiacs, their cycles, are matters of common knowledge. In the fifth degree of the Egyptian neophyte, he was instructed in *chemia*, chemistry, including alchemy; in the sixth he was taught astronomy. The knowledge of Pythagoras on the globular form of the earth and on the heliocentric system, was imparted to him during his preparation for full initiation. So were the secrets of alchemy to Democritus of Abdera. Xenophantes thus learned that the moon had no atmosphere save in its profound valleys. The extraordinary life of Apollonius of Tyana—the Pagan Christ as he has been called—is familiar to all students. He also passed through the discipline of the Mysteries, the "supposed journey to India," related by Philostratus, being but an allegorical account of the

neophyte's experience as he treads "the Path". As "Master," he was at once teacher and healer, like others of the Brotherhood, and it is curious to find Justin Martyr, in the second century, asking: "How is it that the talismans of Apollonius have power in certain members of creation? for they prevent, as we see, the fury of the waves, and the violence of the winds, and the attacks of wild beasts; and whilst our Lord's miracles are preserved by tradition alone, those of Apollonius are most numerous, and actually manifested in present facts, so as to lead astray all beholders". A strange testimony from an opponent, although Apollonius worked no "miracles," but only utilised purely natural powers, which he understood, but which were unknown to the people around him. Is it without significance that the disappearance of the Mysteries coincides with the beginning of the intellectual darkness which spread over Europe and deepened into the night of ignorance of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries? Is there nothing strange in the contrast between the literary, scientific, and philosophic eminence of Hindustan, Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and the arid waste of the early Middle Ages? The dead letter triumphed over the living spirit; the crust of dogmatic religion hardened over philosophy and science; the exoteric symbol took the place of the esoteric truth, and the latter—though hidden unregarded, as is its image, the heart in the human body—the very Heart of civilisation and of knowledge, whose unfelt beatings alone circulated the life-blood in the veins of human society, that Heart was paralysed in Europe, and the paralysis spread to every limb of the body politic and social. Yet from time to time a throb was felt: Roger Bacon, the marvellous monk who mastered mathematics and astounded Europe by his chemical discoveries, who made gunpowder and predicted the use of steam as a motor, drew his knowledge from his study of the ancients. Paracelsus came back from his captivity in Tartary a learned physician and "magician," curing, as at Nuremberg, "incurable" cases of elephantiasis,

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laying in Europe the foundations of the practical use of magnetism in curing disease, writing on medicine, botany, anatomy, chemistry, astronomy, as well as on philosophical doctrines and "magic". He was the "discoverer" in Europe of hydrogen, and it is asserted that a knowledge of oxygen is also shown in his writings. Van Helmont, his follower and disciple, is described by Deleuze as creating "epochs in the histories of medicine and physiology"; and indeed from Paracelsus came the great impulse that started medicine, chemistry and the study of electricity and magnetism on the lines along which such triumphs have been won in modern times. Closely interwoven with his wonderfully suggestive theories on these sciences, were his philosophic teachings—teachings which are fundamentally identical with those of Theosophy. His language and his terminology, adapted to the conditions of his times, may often prove misleading and disconcerting; but if his *ideas* are studied, rather than the dialect in which he clothes them, it will be found that he was in possession of true knowledge, and had been instructed by the wise, passing, as Madame Blavatsky says, in "Isis Unveiled," "through the true initiation".

It may be said the proofs of the existence of a great body of philosophic and scientific doctrine in the past, demonstrate nothing as to its existence in the present. That is so; but if it admittedly once existed; if it was taught in schools, held in temples, and handed down for thousands of years from generation to generation of hierophants; if glimpses of its continued existence can be caught in Mediæval Europe; is it likely, is it reasonable to suppose, that it disappeared wholly in the course of a few centuries after enduring through millenniums; that the long succession of faithful men came suddenly to an end, leaving no inheritors; that the vast mass of accumulated knowledge, so loyally guarded, so carefully cherished, suddenly went down into nothingness; all the garnered experience of humanity vanishing like the "baseless vision of a dream"?

It is this body of doctrine that we assert is in the hands of the Masters of Wisdom, heirs of the great Hierophants of the Past, and that we allege is still to be reached by those who are strong enough to take on themselves the old obligation of the Neophyte: TO KNOW; TO DARE; TO WILL; AND TO BE SILENT.

(b) The study of comparative mythology has done much to prove the assertion of the Theosophist, that the great world religions have, as basis, the same occult truths. The Kosmic Trinity, the "Father-Mother-Son," with its correspondence, the human trinity, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, and its reflection on the material plane—so brutalised in the comparatively modern degradations of phallic worship—is the "Church's one foundation," by whatever name the "Church" may be called. As Dr. Hartmann puts it:

"The doctrine of the Trinity is found in all the principal religious systems: in the Christian religion, as Father, Son, and Spirit; among the Hindus as Brahmâ, Vishnu and Siva; the Buddhists [Vedantins, A.B.] call it Mulaprakriti, Prakriti, and Purush; the Persians teach that Ormuzd produced light out of himself by the power of his word. The Egyptians called the first cause Ammon, out of which all things were created by the power of its own will. In Chinese, Kwan-shai-yin is the universally manifested Word, coming from the unmanifested Absolute by the power of its own will, and being identical with the former. The Greeks called it Zeus (Power), Minerva (Wisdom), and Apollo (Beauty). The Germans, Wodan (the Supreme Cause), Thor (Power), and Freia (Beauty). Jehovah and Allah are Trinities of Will, Knowledge, and Power; and even the Materialist believes in Causation, Matter, and Energy."

The subject is too familiar to be enlarged on; it is the stock in trade, these myriad trinities, of every student of religions. Note further how these trinities always spring from ONE, and mystically continue One. The Persian Trinity has as its forerunner Boundless Time-and-Space. The Hindu are but aspects of the supreme Brahma. The Vedantin has Parabrahm, the Absolute, whereof Mulaprakriti is as a veil. The Greeks had Kronos, greater than Zeus. The trinity is ever the creative aspect of the ONE. Even in Christianity, with its uncompromising anthropomorphism,

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the Son is "begotten" by, the Spirit "proceeds" from, the "Father," although outside time and space relations; there is yet a gleam of the idea of the original undifferentiated One.

Again, in all religions "God" incarnates. Theosophy teaches of the "Pilgrim" incarnating throughout countless cycles, the divine entity which is the human Self learning its lessons of experience in the school of the universe. This Self was the Khristos, crucified in matter, and by its voluntary sacrifice redeeming the lower selves from animality, saving such part of the personalities as could assimilate themselves to it, and weaving these into its own immortality. In the Mysteries this pilgrimage was dramatically shown in the person of the neophyte passing his initiations, until at last, stretched cruciform on floor or altar of stone, he lay as dead, to rise as the Hierophant, the Sun-Initiate, the "risen Khristos," or Christ. In many a form this story has been related as religious dogma, but whether Mithra, Krishna, Bacchus, Osiris, Christ, the varying name has been but new label for old truth. Whom they ignorantly worship, him declare we.

The symbols of the creeds are but esoteric glyphs, used in modern times without understanding. The tau, or cross; the waters of baptism; the ringed light round head of saint; the serpent, whether of light or darkness, image of God or devil; the virgin Mother, clothed in the sun and the moon about her feet; the archangels and angels; the recording angels and the book of life. All, all, from the Hidden Wisdom of the Sacred College, legible in their entirety only to the trained eye of the Seer.

Whence all this similarity if there be no identity of origin? Clement Alexandrinus very frankly said of the Eleusinian Mysteries, that "the doctrines there taught contained in them the end of all instructions, as they were taken from Moses and the Prophets". This is instructive, as showing the identity of the Jewish, "Pagan," and Christian Mysteries, though Orientalists will not grant the priority of the Jewish teaching.

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When the Theosophist finds the ancient symbols decorating the sacred places of antagonising modern creeds, each claiming them as exclusively its own, is it wonderful that he sees in all the creeds branches from a common stem, and that stem the truths taught in the Mysteries, known to have been once established and revered in all the countries now possessed by the rival faiths?

(c) The evidence by experiment is chiefly valuable to those who have conducted or seen the experiments, but there is an accumulating mass of this evidence available at second-hand to those who have no opportunity of carrying out direct personal investigations. The power of conveying a thought from one brain to another at a distance, without any of the ordinary means of communication; the obtaining of knowledge by clairvoyance or clairaudience, which knowledge can afterwards be verified; the power of making an object appear and disappear at will, so far as onlookers are concerned; the power of projecting a simulacrum to a distance, being seen and heard by persons there present, and bringing back information which can subsequently be found to be correct; the power of moving articles without contact; of rendering an object immovable; and so on, in well-nigh endless variety. Then, more easily accessible than the above, are the phenomena obtainable by the use of mesmerism and hypnotism, with the separability of consciousness from brain-action, the immense stimulation of mental faculties under conditions that would *a priori* negate any exercise of them, the reducing of brain-activity correlated to the augmenting of psychic activity. Experiments of this sort are useful as helping to establish the independent existence of the Intellectual and Spiritual Self, as an entity joined to, but not the mere outcome of, the physical body. They are useful also as demonstrating that the consciousness of the individual is far wider and fuller than the ordinary consciousness of every-day life, that memory covers a far larger field than the remembered of our usual active mind. But, above all, the result of pursuing this line

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of study, the consideration of these obscure and little understood phenomena, will be a growing desire to find some theory which will draw them into rational relationship with the rest of a universe of law, which will correlate them, and present them as the normal working of natural causes. This great service to the intelligence is done by Theosophy, and, accepted only as a working hypothesis, as a temporary guide in experimentation, it will be found to speedily justify its hypothetical acceptance, and will be seen to be verified by its alignment with facts.

(d) The evidence from analogy needs, of course, to be worked out in detail, step by step, and it is impossible to do more here than hint at the kind of use to which this tool may be put. Let us take as example (i) the sevenfold planes of the universe, and (ii) the doctrine of re-incarnation.

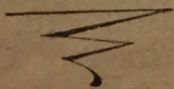
(i) In studying the material world of which we are a part, we find the constant emergence of the number seven: split up a beam of white light, and we find the seven colours of the spectrum; take the musical scale, and we have seven distinct notes in progression, and then the octave; take the periods of gestation, and we find them occupying set numbers of lunar months, *i.e.*, of multiples of seven; take fevers which run a definite course, and we find that course to be a multiple of seven; crises of madness show this recurring seven; the moon marks its changes in sevens, and has served as the basis for our seven-day week; and so I might go on, for a page or two. All these sevenfold periods can scarcely be matters of mere chance, mere coincidence; in a universe of law they are surely likely to be the outcome of some deeply-seated principle in nature; reasoning by analogy, the sevenfold division is likely to exist in the universe as a whole, even as in its parts. Beyond this, for the moment, we may not be able to go, for the bearing out of the analogy by the observation of facts on the cosmic planes is work beyond the facilities of the ordinary man as at present developed; it is claimed that there are men so highly evolved that they

can observe on the higher planes as we on the lower, but we are not now concerned with proofs that can only be obtained by years, nay by lives, of patient endurance and study.

(ii) Once again, in studying the material world, we note the frequent co-relation of the relatively permanent and the transitory. A tree will last for a century, putting forth yearly its crop of leaves, leaves which wither as the finger of autumn touches them; the leaves pass, but the tree endures. So the fern stem or the bulb will send up year by year its seasonal growth of frond or flowers; the seasonal growth perishes with the season, but the plant dies not. Tree and plant live through their periods of manifestation, giving birth to innumerable lives, the outcome of the central individual. So is it, Theosophy teaches, with man. As an individual he endures throughout his period of manifestation, putting forth the leaf-crop of innumerable personalities, which die while he remains. But, it may be said, the *leaves* perish: *they* do not revive when the breath of the spring-tide awakens nature; they are rotting in the ground, and it is their successors, not they, that cover the tree with its glory. So, in very truth, is it with the personalities likewise; they perish, and for them there is no resurrection. But just as the leaves, living their life through spring and summer and autumn, gather from air and draw up from soil substances which they fashion into materials for the growth of the parent-tree from which they spring; and just as these elaborated materials are drawn from them by the parent, and the virtue and the use of them are over ere they are cut off by the keen knife of winter's frost: so does the personality gather knowledge and experience from its contact with the world, and transmute these into forms that can be drawn from it into the individual which endures; so that when the knife of death severs it from the parent trunk, all that it has gathered of true materials for the growth of the Ego shall have passed over into its keeping, each life ere it perishes thus adding its quota of nutriment to the Man who does not die.

In this fashion, continue, gathering catching whispers the truths hidden intended to incite student, to suggest audience for The trines. Science stretched and m through the empty stillness, sound v as if in answer, f the music swell harmony, in rhy comes from the tion-frequency, the note peals and melodious a not in the fault city of the strin human souls dumb as the or silence, and fo empty air. B of the music, chanted tone. given. Let t

In this fashion, did time and space permit, I might continue, gathering hints of the unseen from the seen, catching whispers of the Eternal Mother, musical with the truths hidden beneath her veil. But this paper is intended to incite to study rather than to teach the student, to suggest rather than to convince, to win audience for Theosophy rather than to expound its doctrines. Science tells us how a myriad cords may be stretched and mute, as a note of music comes pulsing through the empty air, making motion where there was stillness, sound where silence reigned. Here and there, as if in answer, from among the many silent, past which the music swells unheeded, will sound out a note in harmony, in rhythm responsive to the master-tone. It comes from those few cords that have the same vibration-frequency, and that are therefore set throbbing as the note peals by them, and give it back in music deep and melodious as its own. That all do not answer lies not in the fault of the note as struck, but in the incapacity of the strings to vibrate in unison. And so among human souls in every generation, many will remain dumb as the organ-note of Theosophy thrills out into the silence, and for them it will die away unheeded into empty air. But one here and there will feel the throb of the music, and give back in clear full resonance the chanted tone. For such the note is sounded, the call is given. Let those who can hear, respond.



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