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# STUDIES IN THEOSOPHY:

HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL.

A Manual for the People.

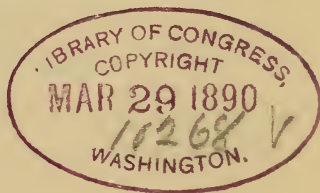
BY

W. J. COLVILLE,

AUTHOR OF "SPIRITUAL THERAPEUTICS," ETC.

"There is no Religion higher than Truth."

— *Motto of the Theosophical Society.*



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## PREFACE.



IN presenting to the world a popular treatise on Theosophy, the author, who is in some respects merely an amanuensis and in others a compiler, desires to offer to the reading public, in portable form and at moderate price, a work which shall, in spite of many obvious limitations, possess the following advantages :—

1st. Lucidity of statement, conciseness of style, and freedom from all unnecessary use of technical or foreign terms.

2d. A systematic and orderly review of the Theosophic teachings of many of the world's greatest teachers of ancient and modern times, and notably an impartial presentation of the views of great bodies of religionists and philosophers whose theories have frequently been misstated or criticised in an unfriendly spirit.

3d. A practical digest of the teachings of Universal Theosophy and an application of these to the great industrial, social, and religious problems of the present day.

4th. Practical advice and direction to students seeking to translate theory into practice, and express in some measure, in their own lives, the truth so easily and frequently stated orally and on paper.

5th. Reviews of current Theosophical and kindred literature in the form of short sketches or digests of the contents of such publications, designed for the two-fold purpose of calling attention to increasing interest in such works, through extending a knowledge of them, and to help busy people who have little opportunity for extensive reading to get as much information as possible during their limited periods of leisure.

The following essays and reviews have been prepared amid a multiplicity of other engagements; no claim is made for perfection of literary style nor for exhaustiveness in treatment. Such a book as the one now offered, many people have long felt to be in demand; and in response to numerous and urgent requests it has now been compiled and thrown upon the sea of public approval or criticism, to meet whatever fate may be its destiny. As an evidence of the interest taken in it prior to publication, it need only be stated that considerably more than 1000 copies were ordered and paid for before the manuscript was placed in the publishers' hands; by this means the entire cost of production was defrayed in advance by the concerted action of confiding subscribers. All who thus secured its production and freedom from liability received their copies before the book was placed in the general market. A second edition from electroplates is now being prepared, which will be offered to the world at large, at \$1.50 per copy, post free, or 6s. in England. As soon as the demand warrants the issue of a very large edition, thereby greatly reducing the cost per copy, the price will be permanently fixed at \$1.00 in America, 4s. in England and



the Colonies, thereby placing it at half the usual price for a book of similar size and style in the hands of all interested. Hoping it may do somebody some good, it is trustingly committed to the world by the compiler,

W. J. COLVILLE.

N. B. The twenty-four lectures which constitute a considerable portion of this book were originally delivered inspirationally by W. J. Colville to classes in San Francisco and other cities. As a great desire was expressed by numerous persons who attended them, for their publication, reports were taken from time to time, which were subsequently revised and altered whenever necessary to adapt them for permanent reading.



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## LECTURE I.

### THEOSOPHY: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

AT a time when Theosophy is being most absurdly identified in the public mind with a special idea of Hinduism, it seems the plain duty of those who know better, to speak out boldly and with no uncertainty of tone in explanatory defence of the great movement known as Theosophical, now inviting the world to a fuller understanding, than has heretofore been practical, of the various outward forms and systems in which the one essential truth of religion has manifested its spirit through the ages. To those of our readers who have not made etymology a study, we would particularly emphasize the right use of the word *religion*, which means union, righteousness, co-operation, and a great deal more which is thoroughly practical, and indeed essential to human welfare.

Free religion may be said to mean religion untrammelled by creeds and dogmas, which, in the very nature of things, are not susceptible of absolute, or indeed sufficient verification to commend them as certainties to an intelligent mind. Matthew Arnold, one of the greatest literary lights of the present century, was never tired of enforcing his favorite proposition, that religion really means righteousness; and that, as this is

so, it behooves all men who have an eye to the general welfare of humanity, to hold together as much as possible in support of all institutions which are on the side of the higher nature of man. Arnold, being an Englishman, and a patriotic Englishman, naturally felt a warm affection for English institutions, and thus worked diligently in the interests of the Established Church; though in many if not all his essays he has put a construction upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and the object and meaning of church ordinances, entirely at variance with popular tradition.

We mention Arnold, as he is a well-known author, deservedly respected by reason of his general fairness, breadth, and liberality (though, unfortunately, he is neither fair, broad, nor liberal in his summary dismissal of Spiritualism), only as an example of the tone adopted toward religion by men of culture, who in a great general way are disposed to treat all matters without prejudice or undue bias. Those who oppose religion violently are almost invariably destitute of any approach to genuine culture; or, if literary and scholarly, they are so violently led by passion or strong feeling as to become victims of emotion rather than calm deliberators in the open court of general appeal. For bigots and partisans we do not attempt to write, nor are we anxious to address them or converse with them at any time on subjects of moment to humanity, for the simple reason that they are determined to see only one side of any question. Such people may be fervidly religious or flagrantly irreligious, in the popular acceptance of those words; but in either case prejudice blinds them;

they are convinced that all truth is in some one narrow system of their own ; and while they prate of science, they are hopeless sophists or sciolists, undertaking most irrationally to force upon the world one system of thought only, and that system one so exclusive as to condemn probably ninety-nine per cent of the human family either to the hell of orthodoxy or the society of fools and knaves which constitutes the *Tartarus* of the heterodox.

Now for any one to come to the study of Theosophy pre-determined to prove one system of religion all right and other systems all wrong, is for him to so disqualify himself for the task before him as to make his study useless. We therefore appeal only to the fair-minded and liberal, and these we address with the certain conviction that they will not object to the motto, "There is no religion higher than truth." But what is Truth? Pilate is not dead yet; his modern representatives are still asking the same old question, and, unfortunately, those of Pilate's ilk (or perhaps fortunately) may go on asking it as long as they are of the mental fibre of Pilate, to the end of any number of ages or worlds, and still receive no answer from those who have the knowledge of truth within them.

This statement may seem confounding to many, but those whom it is likely to confound have not studied the Pilate nature, which is by no means an attractive or lovely one. Pilate is not even an honest curiosity-seeker; he is not simply inquisitive; surely he is a traitor to conviction, a spurner of divine voices, an open disregarder of heavenly messages; in a word, a

selfish, scheming, hypocritical demagogue, who puts his private interest before all justice, and willingly condemns the innocent to death, so that he may curry favor with the rulers of the earth. His own wife points out to him the danger and iniquity of his way. His conscience indorses all she says to him, but he seeks to evade conscience by washing his hands, and after deliberately grieving the Spirit, impertinently sneers forth the question, which from his lips is an audacious insult, "What is Truth?"

Those who would receive reply to this all-important query must not think that truth can be had for the asking, by those who if they got it would only trample on it, or at best pervert it to their selfish and ungodly ends. Truth is a prize to be won only by those who seek it with a view to use it wisely when they have procured it, and we therefore unhesitatingly conclude and announce that truth never will become public property or be anything like universally dispersed, till the great masses of mankind are desirous of laying aside selfishness, and ceasing from competition, learn to co-operate for each other's good in all things. Theosophy, which simply means divine wisdom, inculcates one dogma, and that is, **THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAN**. No one can be admitted into the Theosophical Society who does not profess this one great article of faith. All other points are secondary; this alone is fundamental and essential. Now that Edward Bellamy's glorious book, "Looking Backward," is circulating by thousands and tens of thousands of copies, and clubs are forming everywhere for the dis-



semination of co-operative ideas and the practicalization of co-operative principles, the time is fully ripe for a clear, concise statement of Theosophical teachings.

In this series of lectures or articles we propose for the special assistance of busy people who have little time to read large and numerous works on the subject, to present as well as we can, in brief abstract, an epitome of the teachings of the world's renowned sages, ancient and modern; and at the same time pay merited tribute to many lesser lights, less well-known names who have identified or are still identifying themselves with the onward march of progress. The constitution of the Theosophical Society recommends that truth shall be allowed to dawn gradually upon the race. It discourages all ambitious attempts at proselyting, and affirms, with regard to those who are satisfied with their present religious convictions, that they are probably partaking of the aliment best adapted to their immediate needs. But who can fail to meet with more or less of that increasingly vast army of eagerly inquiring souls who are not content with what they receive, either through the channel of popular religion or scientific agnosticism? This multitude must be fed, or they will perish. They are the hungry and thirsty ones who cry loudly, incessantly, for living bread and water, and to disregard their cry or tell them to be content with what cannot satisfy their appetite for truth, is cruel and culpable.

It is stated in many quarters that there are mystic brotherhoods in the East and also in Europe, composed of men who have gained wondrous insight into the laws and forces of the universe, but that these Mahatmas, as

they are often styled, are unwilling to reveal their knowledge to the multitude. We doubt very much if the latter portion of that statement is correct; we would rather institute a parallel by way of explanation. A professor of mathematics, for example, knows exactly how to solve many very difficult problems pertaining to the higher mathematics. Some schoolboys not yet fully conversant with simple fractions urge him to tell them how to solve one of the most difficult problems known to mathematical science. What reply must he make to their request? Two, and only two, courses are open to him. He can refuse to comply with it, and thereby enkindle their ire; or he can waste time by working it all out on a blackboard under their very eyes, they, meanwhile, stolidly gazing with open-mouthed curiosity, but failing utterly to comprehend the demonstration. To refuse their request is economical; to grant it is wasteful of time and energy. If he choose the former and not the latter course, he should give them his reason for refusal, by informing them that they need to go through a course of preparatory training, which he has been through already, before they can comprehend the solution. Then, when they are ready to enter his class, he will gladly instruct them.

It is with the Mahatmas, as it is with the higher intelligences, familiar by name at least to all Spiritualists; angels from celestial heights of attainment do not make a noise moving furniture from place to place, or alphabetically spelling out messages through a table or talking-board, nor do they respond to mercenary and trivial inquiries regarding business and the details of

earthly affairs in general. Some answer we do get to all the questions we propound. Some force does manifest itself, no matter in what spirit or with what intent we singly inquire or gather together; but is it rational to presume, is it not rather the height of folly to imagine, that trivial minds with trivial ends in view can summon the brightest intellects in the universe to chatter platitudes with them; and is it not an impudent blasphemy to imagine that souls interested in the welfare of all humanity on the highest spiritual plane, will dance attendance on the would-be gambler in stocks or purchaser of a prize-winning lottery ticket? Yet such are the stupid puerilities manifested by some people calling themselves Spiritualists from day to day, that we hardly wonder at the ill odor Spiritualism is in, in some communities where these abound or shove themselves to the front as organizers and dictators. Such men as the justly revered Prof. Henry Kiddle of New York and other estimable Spiritualists have happily been as severe as reason demands in denunciation of such idiocy.

Theosophy and Spiritualism are essentially one and inseparable, and as to Christian Science and all allied systems of thought and practice, they are but sectional extensions of one and the same root idea. Our object is to overcome the sectarian spirit in our students, and we know that whenever a university is in operation which can meet the real demands of the age for spiritual and moral enlightenments, no such hair-splitting as now prevails will be permissible or possible. But, say many of our questioners and correspondents, Spiritual-

ists believe in many spirits, Christian Science acknowledges but one Spirit; Theosophy teaches final extinction of individuality, while Spiritualism insists upon its endless perpetuation: how can you in the face of these glaring contradictions declare that the three systems are essentially one?

Our unequivocal and decidedly undismayed answer to all these queries and questioners is, that the questioners in the case take a painfully superficial view of the subjects on which they express views or seek enlightenment. Apparent contradictions may not be in the least contradictory, or even paradoxical, when looked at more closely and examined more searchingly; and in the case before us we see no obstacle in the way of a perfect reconciliation of these at first sight diametrically opposite statements. The declaration, *there is but one Spirit*, does not at all imply that the individuality or, at least, the identity (a better and higher word) of each Spiritual entity is not eternal. One spirit, one life, one substance, one nature, and only one, means that there are not two or more essential constitutions of things, that all heterogeneity is reducible to homogeneity, and thus all human beings are brothers and sisters in the fullest meaning of those familiar words. Universal brotherhood, which is the basis of Theosophy and without which the very attempt to practise "*Christian Science Mind Healing*" is farcical, can be logically deduced and scientifically demonstrated, if we can prove that we are all of one spirit, essence, or nature; a statement only tantamount to the declaration, "All men are born free and equal," or to such a saying as

“You are as good as I am, and I am as good as you are.” A common base on which all nature rests declares all men brothers, all women sisters; it denies away, *i.e.* effectually removes, vanquishes, overcomes, hostility between man and man, nation and nation; it strips us of false pride and causes us to think of ourselves no more highly and no more lowly than we ought to think, by disposing us to an equal regard one for another.

Again we reiterate our primal conclusion: the base of Theosophy is brotherhood, and only brotherhood. It may use the three immortal watchwords of freedom, liberty, equality, fraternity, and give to them an extended meaning which politics can never grasp. In the next place we shall do well to consider that there is not a scrap of evidence that extinction of the lower selfhood ever signified loss of identity to any profound or penetrative mind. A belief in the ultimate suspension of individual consciousness is a vulgar conceit of the ignorant with no more justification in the Vedas than in the New Testament, both of which compilations or literatures have much to say of two selves, — one, the (lower) mortal, the other (higher), immortal. Both agree that we lose the lower in the higher, or we are warned there is at least a temporal if not an eternal danger of our losing the higher through an over-cultivation and exercise of the lower. Now Theosophy, or Divine Wisdom, whose ways are the only paths of pleasantness and peace in the true sense, says before all else that we should cultivate the divine principle of our humanity: to do this successfully many teachers

have insisted we must wage strenuous and incessant warfare against the lower appetites. The most enlightened teachers in their most luminous moods have, however, always insisted upon the culture of the higher principle, saying and thinking but very little of the lower, and it is at this point that Theosophy introduces to us a true basis and right method of education. Dr. J. R. Buchanan, a renowned anthropologist, now resident in Boston, in his admirable work "The New Education," very wisely places the higher education, *i.e.* moral and spiritual culture, in the front rank, giving a secondary place to what is simply educational and mechanical. Herbert Spencer assigns to the higher faculties about equal prominence. Both these able and distinguished men therefore testify to the necessity for cultivating the interior or sublimer nature as the paramount duty of man.

Now it is quite possible to use such words or terms as self-sacrifice, abnegation, surrender, denial, mortification, etc., far too often. The painful insistence with which many people of the best intentions dwell upon these gloomy terms, makes us long to give them Watts' exquisite and truthful couplet, —

" Religion never was designed  
To make our pleasures less," —

as a formula for daily and thrice daily use; and to those who incline too strongly to certain ritualistic observances of the ancient Yoga type, other equally well-known and valuable words of the same author may be aptly applied.

“For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.”

No tendency can be sadder, no sophistry more specious and dangerous, than such teaching as throws the mind in upon itself, to brood over its own weaknesses and taint.

Children are far too frequently brought up in idleness, and thus led into temptation by their parents and teachers, instead of from evil, by reason of the dark and hateful pessimism which teaches so much concerning original sin and the innate wickedness of human nature, that the very effort to stifle error and resist the devil gives power to the lowest impulses. The history of religious fanaticism furnishes abundant illustration of this ever-recurring fact in human experience. Many and many have been the men and women who have sought refuge from the devil (their own lower nature and what it attracts and affiliates with) in some monastery or convent, and there they have had a far harder fight with the adversary than they would have had, had they remained outside the bars and done their work in the world. Some verses from Keble's "Christian Year," exactly apply to such erroneous judgments. That healthy, vigorous English churchman sings:—

“We need not bid for convent cell  
Our kindred and our homes farewell,  
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high  
For mortal man beneath the sky.  
The common round, the trivial task,  
Will furnish all we need to ask, —  
Room to deny ourselves; a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.”

But it may be urged in reply to this summarizing, Keble was speaking for the rule, not for the exception, and we who seek special communion with the divine in sacred solitude are part of the exception to the general rule. If Keble marks out the way of the commandments for the many, is there not a way of counsels also for the few, of which he says nothing? The reply to this kind of reasoning is, that the very people who are most unusually anxious to escape the ordinary path of duty are those who are afraid of its difficulties and temptations, and whose motive in seeking out a special road is that they may escape ordinary trials. These are least of all prepared to tread a higher, steeper, more difficult way. They are like the boys who want the higher mathematics before they have mastered simple fractions. There is a motive, but only one, which can make a career of extraordinary isolation safe for any one, and that motive is the highest conceivable one by which any human being can be actuated, viz., a supreme desire to be of the greatest possible service to others, quite regardless of any happiness or profit which may accrue to oneself by acting thus unselfishly. Persons engaged in spiritual healing, who are more than usually disinterested in the performance of their work, understand, no doubt, what we mean by going out of the world for the purpose of working most efficiently for it and in it. Such persons can safely trust themselves out of the beaten track where the throng travels, but for the bulk of mankind "Go home" is a more applicable gospel saying than "Forsake all and follow me," though the spirit of the two is identical.



Theosophy, as a practical guide of life, a universal religion, is utterly non-partisan and non-sectarian; towering above Paine's immortal words, "The world is my country," it places the motto of the Home College of Spiritual Science in San Francisco, "The Universe is our Home." In that sentence the idea of universal brotherhood is accurately stated.

## LECTURE II.

THE TEACHINGS OF THEOSOPHY, AS PROMULGATED  
BY THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, CONSIDERED IN A  
REVIEW OF A WIDELY CIRCULATING PAMPHLET.

IN our first article of this series we made no effort to do more than simply and briefly present, as tersely as possible, what we understand Theosophy to be and not to be; and while no society is in the least responsible for anything we write or say, our utterances being entirely untrammelled and in no sense *ex officio*, we still desire to pay to the Theosophical Society a proper tribute of polite recognition. By such recognition we neither pledge ourselves or others to an indorsement of the theories entertained in the documents we refer to. All our aim is to let our readers know for themselves just what the Theosophical Society is publishing, so that when statements of an injurious and misleading character are made the answer may be at once forthcoming. No society is infallible, and to expect infallibility at the hands of the members of any organization is preposterous; and, moreover, what is most important for all to realize is, that truth is its own exponent and defendant. Weak and bitter censuring of individuals is as ridiculous as profane, and only when the public mind is superior to being moved by base insinuations

or open accusations against individuals, will ideas have a chance to present themselves and be fairly discussed in open court. Personalities will not enter into this work, — at all events no offensive personalities will be permitted; and though in our journal, *The Problem of Life*, we may sometimes be compelled to answer attacks made by individuals upon individuals, our answering policy will be to present ideas and statements for what they are worth, without regarding the source whence they emanated, which frequently, in the case of the noblest things ever written, is historically ambiguous.

Our present effort is an attempt to review, and expound to some extent, a circular issued some time ago for the purpose of assimilating the popular mind with some of the most generally accepted conclusions of Theosophists. It is entitled, “An Epitome of Theosophy.” As we cannot condense or abbreviate its statements without beclouding some of the ideas, we herewith present the distinctly doctrinal portion of it to our readers, feeling certain it will instruct and interest all of them: —

Theosophy, the Wisdom-Religion, has existed from immemorial time. It offers us a theory of nature and of life which is founded upon knowledge acquired by the Sages of the past, more especially those of the East; and its higher students claim that this knowledge is not something imagined or inferred, but that it is seen and known by those who are willing to comply with the conditions. Some of its fundamental propositions are: —

1. That the spirit in man is the only real and permanent part of his being; the rest of his nature being variously compounded, and decay being incident to all composite things, everything in man but his spirit is impermanent.

Further, that the universe being one thing and not diverse, and everything within it being connected with the whole and with every other, of which upon the upper plane above referred to there is a perfect knowledge, no act or thought occurs without each portion of the great whole perceiving and noting it. Hence all are inseparably bound together by the tie of Brotherhood.

2. That below the spirit and above the intellect is a plane of consciousness in which experiences are noted, commonly called man's "spiritual nature"; this is as susceptible of culture as his body or his intellect.
3. That this spiritual culture is only attainable as the grosser interests, passions, and demands of the flesh are subordinated to the interests, aspirations, and needs of the higher nature; and that this is a matter of both system and established law.
4. That men thus systematically trained attain to clear insight into the immaterial, spiritual world, their interior faculties apprehending Truth as immediately and readily as physical faculties grasp the things of sense, or mental faculties those of reason; and hence that their testimony to such Truth is as trustworthy as is that of scientists or philosophers to truth in their respective fields.
5. That in the course of this spiritual training such men acquire perception of and control over various forces in Nature unknown to others, and thus are able to perform works usually called "miraculous," though really but the result of larger knowledge of natural law.
6. That their testimony as to super-sensuous truth, verified by their possession of such powers, challenges candid examination from every religious mind.

Turning now to the system expounded by these Sages, we find as its main points :—

1. An account of cosmogony, the past and future of this earth and other planets, the evolution of life through mineral, vegetable, animal, and human forms.

2. That the affairs of this world and its people are subject to cyclic laws, and that during any one cycle the rate or quality of progress appertaining to a different cycle is not possible.
3. The existence of a universally diffused and highly ethereal medium, called the "Astral Light" or "Akasa," which is the repository of all past, present, and future events, and which records the effects of spiritual causes and of all acts and thoughts from the direction of either spirit or matter. It may be called the Book of the Recording Angel.
4. The origin, history, development, and destiny of mankind.

Upon the subject of *Man* it teaches:—

1. That each spirit is a manifestation of the One Spirit, and thus a part of all. It passes through a series of experiences in incarnation, and is destined to ultimate reunion with the Divine.
2. That this incarnation is not single but repeated, each individuality becoming re-embodied during numerous existences in successive races and planets, and accumulating the experiences of each incarnation towards its perfection.
3. That between adjacent incarnations, after grosser elements are first purged away, comes a period of comparative rest and refreshment, the spirit being therein prepared for its next advent into material life.
4. That the nature of each incarnation depends upon the merit and demerit of the previous life or lives, upon the way in which the man has lived and *thought*; and that this law is inflexible and wholly just.
5. That "Karma,"—a term signifying two things, the law of ethical causation (Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap), and the balance or excess of merit or demerit in any individual, determines also the main experiences of joy and sorrow in each incarnation, so that what men call "luck" is in reality "desert,"—desert acquired in past existence.
6. That the process of evolution up to reunion with the Divine, contemplates successive elevations from rank to rank of

power and usefulness, the most exalted beings still in the flesh being known as Sages, Rishis, Brothers, Masters, their great function being the preservation at all times, and, when cyclic laws permit, the extension, of spiritual knowledge and influence among humanity.

7. That when union with the Divine is effected, all the events and experiences of each incarnation are known.

As to the *process* of spiritual development it teaches :—

1. That the essence of the process lies in the securing of supremacy to the highest, the spiritual, element of man's nature.
2. That this is obtained along four lines, among others, —
  - (a) The eradication of selfishness in all forms, and the cultivation of broad, generous sympathy in and effort for the good of others.
  - (b) The cultivation of the inner, spiritual man by meditation, communion with the Divine, and exercise.
  - (c) The control of fleshly appetites and desires, all lower, material interests being deliberately subordinated to the behests of the spirit.
  - (d) The careful performance of every duty belonging to one's station in life, without desire for reward, leaving results to Divine law.
3. That while the above is incumbent on and practicable by all religiously disposed men, a yet higher plane of spiritual attainment is conditioned upon a specific course of training, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, by which the internal faculties are first aroused and then developed.
4. That an extension of this process is reached in Adeptship, an exalted stage, attained by laborious self-discipline and hardship, protracted through possibly many incarnations, and with many degrees of initiation and preferment, beyond which are yet other stages ever approaching the Divine.

As to the *rationale* of spiritual development it asserts :—

1. That the process is entirely *within* the individual himself, the motive, the effort, the result being distinctly personal.

2. That, however personal and interior, this process is not unaided, being possible, in fact, only through close communion with the Supreme Source of all strength.

As to the *degree* of advancement in incarnations it holds :—

1. That even a mere intellectual acquaintance with Theosophic truth has great value in fitting the individual for a step upwards in his next earth-life, as it gives an impulse in that direction.
2. That still more is gained by a career of duty, piety, and beneficence.
3. That a still greater advance is attained by the attentive and devoted use of the means to spiritual culture heretofore stated.

It may be added that Theosophy is the only system of religion and philosophy which gives satisfactory explanation of such problems as these :—

1. The object, use, and inhabitation of other planets than this earth.
2. The geological cataclysms of earth; the frequent absence of intermediate types in its fauna; the occurrence of architectural and other relics of races now lost, and as to which ordinary science has nothing but vain conjecture; the nature of extinct civilizations and the causes of their extinction; the persistence of savagery and the unequal development of existing civilization; the differences, physical and internal, between the various races of men; the line of future development.
3. The contrasts and unisons of the world's faiths, and the common foundation underlying them all.
4. The existence of evil, of suffering, and of sorrow, — a hopeless puzzle to the mere philanthropist or theologian.
5. The inequalities in social condition and privilege; the sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty, intelligence and stupidity, culture and ignorance, virtue and vileness; the appearance of men of genius in families destitute of it, as well as other facts in conflict with the law of heredity; the

- frequent cases of unfitness of environment around individuals, so sore as to embitter disposition, hamper aspiration, and paralyze endeavor; the violent antithesis between character and condition; the occurrence of accident, misfortune, and untimely death; — all of them problems solvable only by either the conventional theory of Divine caprice or the Theosophic doctrines of Karma and Re-incarnation.
6. The possession by individuals of psychic powers, — clairvoyance, clair audience, etc., as well as the phenomena of psychometry and statuvolism.
  7. The true nature of genuine phenomena in Spiritualism, and the proper antidote to superstition and to exaggerated expectation.
  8. The failure of conventional religions to greatly extend their areas, reform abuses, reorganize society, expand the idea of brotherhood, abate discontent, diminish crime, and elevate humanity; and an apparent inadequacy to realize in individual lives the ideal they professedly uphold.

The above is a sketch of the main features of Theosophy, the Wisdom-Religion. Its details are to be found in the rapidly growing literature upon the subject.

The Theosophical Society is an association formed in 1875 with three aims, — to be the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood; to promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences; to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man. ADHESION TO THE FIRST ONLY IS A PREREQUISITE TO MEMBERSHIP, THE OTHERS BEING OPTIONAL. The Society represents no particular creed, is entirely unsectarian, and includes professors of all faiths, only exacting from each member that toleration of the beliefs of others which he desires them to exhibit towards his own.

After reading this somewhat elaborate enumeration of commonly accepted beliefs among Theosophists, the liberal-minded reader must be refreshed and delighted with the closing extract we have given, and especially



with the clause we have italicized ; for, did the Theosophical Society demand adhesion to all the points of the circular, it would necessarily bar out many of the very most desirable persons who might otherwise seek admission to it. We must never forget that between the one essential dogma of *universal brotherhood*, and the almost innumerable tentative hypotheses put forward in the circular, there is no necessary ground of common consent. For example, we can hardly see how any Nationalist, or indeed any person admiring the views put forward by Edward Bellamy in "Looking Backward," can possibly dissent from the obligatory article in the creed of Theosophy. We can at the same time most fully sympathize with dissenters from much that is contained in the middle of the circular ; but on critical examination we are likely to discover that our only valid objection to some points in the circular is that they are not sufficiently demonstrated by human experience ; that they are speculative rather than practical, or that we do not fully understand them.

At the outset of this "Epitome" we are told that Theosophy or Wisdom-Religion is of unknown age, and that it offers us a theory of life founded upon knowledge acquired by ancient sages of the Orient. This claim should certainly be substantiated before any one is expected to indorse it, and it will be our object in this volume to consult the records of the ancient East, to discover what grounds we have for admitting Oriental religions to the category of repositories of divine wisdom.

First and foremost, in all our researches we must ever place Man himself. Anthropology is the king of sciences if theology is their queen; and so inseparably united are anthropology and theology that the one is practically impossible without the other. In some of his sermons Henry Ward Beecher has said that in his opinion the creeds of Christendom began at the wrong end; they should have commenced with man and worked up to God; instead of that they began with God and worked down to man. When Beecher made such statements his temper of thought was distinctly Aryan, and in a sense therefore anti-Semitic; while the creed-makers were intensely Semitic and thus in a sense anti-Aryan, though Semiticism is not necessarily opposed to Aryanism, or *vice versa*.

The Aryan race contemplates the external universe, and, finding nature, seeks to discover God through nature; the Semitic peoples, on the contrary, apprehend Deity first of all and then account for the objective universe by a system of outward reasoning. We find to-day in the Western world a large preponderance of the Aryan type and habit, which is exactly the type and habit of physical scientists and agnostic philosophers, also of every professed Spiritualist who requires external phenomena to convince him, and rests his assurance of immortality on visual and aural demonstrations of psychic power. But it may readily be asked if the Aryan method is from without to within, while the Semitic is from within to without, how can a Theosophical society ever be Aryan? The answer is simply to this effect: the very persons who most need to study

literature and to investigate singular phenomena are of the Aryan type; the truly developed Semitic is intuitive, not rationalistic, and being satisfied to the point of positive and full conviction through the agency of inward testimony, needs no external help such as reading and phenomena supply. Both types can make good Theosophists, but they rarely coalesce in outward methods and seldom work very well together.

Theosophical literature is necessarily largely of an argumentative character, as the great bulk of readers the world over is composed of people who rely more on intellect than intuition. The most intuitive are rarely book-worms. In ancient days, in Israel, when there was "open vision," when prophets were abundant, and the gift of seership carefully nurtured in the young, very little value, comparatively speaking, was placed on sacred manuscripts or the written law. When Solomon's Temple was in all its splendor and the Hebrew faith shone at its brightest, the people depended upon the living voice of the prophet far more than on the records of a more spiritual age; for in the days of spiritual dispensation the oracle was alive and accessible. After a time, largely through the materiality of the affections of the people, prophets became fewer, the voice of the living spirit waxed fainter and ever fainter, till after a while not only the *Torah*, or written law, but the *Talmud* *Midrash* and a host of other rabbinical commentaries which exalted the Levitical to the level of the Mosaic law, were venerated by the multitude almost as highly as the Decalogue; until after a while the law and the testimony were looked to as final authorities from whose

decision there must be no appeal. Then began the age of spiritual decadence for the Hebrew race, and the substitution of books for living inspiration. Precisely the same error has been fallen into by the Hindu race, who from being at one time the most enlightened among all the people on the earth, have become in many respects painfully degraded, though the author of this volume distinctly refuses credence to the sensational and exaggerated accounts of Hindoo degradation, gotten up by sensationalists with a view to exalting the Christian religion and Western institutions at the expense of justice to India and her native population.

But to return to prophecy and writings. Prophecy is incapable of long continuance when prophets are persecuted persistently by people who will not hear the message they have to deliver; *i.e.* prophecy in public soon ceases. While the race of prophets never becomes extinct, when these illumined ones are driven from the surface of society through the belligerent force of brutal and determined persecution, they betake themselves to solitudes where they still carry on a work for humanity. The nature of such work ought to be appreciated by all Spiritualists, Mental Healers, and those in general who attribute a potency to silent, invisible forces not credited to such forces by the unspiritual, material mind, which laughs at everything not evident to physical sense. Whenever a period of re-awakened interest in spiritual truth invites the prophetic mind to emerge from privacy, and proclaim openly the knowledge long concealed, we hear of a revival of all kinds of psychic gifts; and while at such periods a good deal of impurity

comes to the surface, this passes off as scum from the mind of society, while beneath this external rubbish is discovered genuine knowledge and love of truth.

The Israelites and the Aryans have alike, through long periods of outward darkness, never lost sight of the lamp of divine wisdom burning within, though this pure and holy light has been for long periods almost entirely concealed from the masses. In this brighter and freer age the flames are beginning to leap high once more upon the altars of humanity, and the new order will not be fully inaugurated without severe conflict with the "powers of darkness." The light now breaking is clearly destined to illumine a large portion of the earth within the next few years, so as to completely change the social and religious aspects of affairs in the now advancing regions of the earth, while to those portions of the world not prepared for the full blaze of this re-illumination a certain measure of light will also be accorded, sufficient at least to greatly ameliorate the condition of the teeming multitudes now subject to tyrannical misrule. Theosophy strikes out for vital and permanent reform by laying the axe at the root of the tree to be destroyed, instead of lopping off the withering branches, or here and there cutting off a vigorous limb. The affections of humanity must be appealed to, or there can be no reformation which will endure. The history of every great and successful movement clearly demonstrates this proposition. When Luther and his coadjutors effected a complete change in the attitude of a large part of Europe to the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, the great

success of their work depended upon the readiness of the popular mind to accept the proposed changes in ecclesiastical polity, as well as to accept many modifications of doctrine. The Reformation was rendered possible only through the disaffection previously in the minds of the people toward the established religious hierarchy; and this disaffection was brought about through the ambitious worldliness of the Church officials themselves. Had popes, cardinals, prelates, and all under them fulfilled the spiritual law, and concerned themselves with the peaceful establishment and maintenance of a heavenly kingdom on earth, there could have been no butchery in the name of religion. To justify persecution is insane; to attribute it to religious conviction is a great mistake. Persecutors are at the start ambitious individuals thirsting for material dominion, and, moreover, persons who will not hesitate, under pressure of seeming necessity, to use religion as a cloak for licentiousness.

Religion to-day is again under a cloud all over the world, entirely owing to the prelatical ambition which has been substituted for the meek and gentle temper of all the world's greatest seers and sages. To contrast Jesus with Gautama is but to compare two great human ideals and find them one; for deep in the heart of humanity a deep and tender love of sweet and gentle righteousness is ever to be found. Now this sweet gentleness which shines so conspicuously in the highest human ideals, is by no means the accompaniment of meek submissiveness to error. No man can be so brave as a true gentleman; but the difference between the

gentleman and the boor is properly the difference between *homo* and *vir*, the former term standing in old Latin for an ordinary animal-fighting man, the latter for a superior being in whom the distinctively super-animal dispositions of manhood are in the ascendancy. Bulwer Lytton, in his truly theosophical romance, "The Coming Race," aptly styles the marvellous people whom he describes *Vril-Ya*, while the *vril* they gather from all nature and control perfectly is the universal ether, *akasa*, or astral force so often spoken of by students of the occult sciences. This subtle, all-pervading force is amenable to the control of a high order of intelligence only, and while universally present in nature, cannot be manipulated and utilized except by persons in whom the lower principle (*homo*) is subservient to the higher principle (*vir*). Thus, while a man who has cultivated nothing but his animal nature (*anima bruta*) is simply a biped in human shape, and quite at the mercy of savage creatures and the elements, one who has unfolded to some degree his intellectual or human self, which makes him man instead of brute, though possessed thereby of ability beyond the savage, is still quite without the superlative power of those in whom the spiritual soul (*anima divina*) is liberated and expressed. Such words as *virile* and *virility* are shamefully misapplied in popular usage, as they clearly spring from the root word *vir*, which the Latins never used except in connection with quite super-animal, and properly with super-intellectual attainments. Man, to be able to control any element outside his own personality, must first have brought that element into obedience

to its rightful superior, within the economy of his own nature. This open secret, as it may be termed, considering it is a secret from the multitude, and yet free to all who are desirous of learning how to live truly and healthily, will explain the just cause of relative successes and failures in all pursuits and enterprises where something more than animal vigor and ordinary intelligence are needed to produce results.

Theosophical teachings are ignorantly scorned by many people who are every day of their existence confronted with difficult problems Theosophy alone can solve. We can only pity and seek to enlighten, if but a little, those prejudiced ones among Spiritualists and Mental Healers alike, who are subject to every kind of difficulty and unpleasant experience through lack of a better comprehension of the forces they are trying to govern, but which in their present state of incapable ignorance are governing them and often making sport of them most mercilessly. As much is constantly being said and written concerning astral force, astral light, astral bodies, etc., let us go to our Greek lexicons for a definition of the word *astral*, before endeavoring to use it. *Astron* means a star, and from *astron*, *astral* is clearly derived. Now the word *astral*, which means pertaining to the stars, starry, and starlike, may be properly applied to that force, substance, ether, body light, etc., of which stars are formed, and also to whatever is inter-stellar, or between stars, and to that which shines like a star. *Astral* is, then, a very wide word. First, it designates the inner substance of the planet and the inner body of man. In expression we may



speak of three elements,—spirit, force, and matter: the astral realm is the realm of force, which exists between spirit and matter and is the bond uniting them. But at this point we are sure to be asked if we are not retracting many statements in “Spiritual Therapeutics” and other of our works, wherein we declare, that essentially all is spirit, and therefore there is nothing but spirit in the permanent life of man? We contend that as the greater can always contain the less, while the less cannot possibly hold the greater, spirit can include force, and force can include matter. Matter is but an emanation of force, a temporary solidification of force, and not the whole of force at any time; and this statement is, we contend, acceptable to chemistry which teaches by experiment that all of matter is resolvable into ether, while all of ether cannot be converted into solids or fluids. Spirit is the cause of all things, and itself the primal and ultimate *No Thing* of the Mystics, yet is beyond all things, and is the cause of all. Force is its earlier manifestation, matter being its ultimated expression.

Now as man has always conceived of an inner and an outer body, a body of force and a body of matter, he has instinctively felt that the force body could travel from star to star, while the material body is confined to the earth, held by the force of gravity. All spiritual manifestations of a phenomenal order are simply exhibitions of force triumphing over matter, and may be produced through the agency of adepts or magicians (great or wise people is the true meaning of magicians) either in or out of their earthly expression. The mistake

made by uncultured Spiritualists is, that they do not recognize the power of the adept as identical with that of the human entity disrobed of mortal form; but so far from genuine Spiritualism and Theosophy conflicting at this point, they perfectly agree, as Spiritualism teaches most emphatically that there is no sudden removal from a state of moral and mental impotency on earth, to all-powerfulness in the state immediately following bodily dissolution. The only reasons we can assign for the stupid opposition to Theosophy shown by many seemingly zealous Spiritualists, are, that they have not fully outgrown the dogmas of the churches they often berate, or they are quite ignorant of the real teaching of Theosophy, which is that the higher principle in man must control the lower, or he cannot be a wonder-worker on this side of the grave or the other; growth alone determining and regulating his measure of power. A very vulgar error is that the invisible world has some stated geographical situation; the truth is that it is everywhere, interpenetrating every particle of seemingly inert matter. A. J. Davis, in his "Stellar Key to the Summer Land," and similar works, undertaking to locate heavens, may be correct in some sense, though such works are apt to mislead the reader who carries to them a mind filled with theories of locality. All outward conditions are expressions of interior states; as a man thinketh so will he come to appear, gradually if not instantly, and surely all students of antenatal causes for afflictions, etc., must get their eyes open to the fact that mental conditions clearly produce bodily results.

Throughout the entire universe every outward globe or physical expression of an unseen force is a result of some psychical wave of action, unknown save to students of the occult (hidden or invisible) forces of nature. Occult or astral force is of all conceivable grades of refinement and density, and offers precisely the same resistance to what is commonly called the spiritual body that matter offers to the physical organism. Theosophy teaches us that as we, through purer and higher modes of thought and action, outgrow our animal propensities, being no longer governed by the lower grades of invisible forces, we shall be able to control them, and thus at length be able to demonstrate our complete victory over all material surroundings. The most exciting portions of the book of Daniel, so eagerly devoured by children, are profound occult narratives, and even if taken literally are neither ridiculous nor improbable, as man can fully overcome the ferocity of the beast and even the action of fire. Eventually, through unfolding of the higher principle within us, all things shall appear possible which are utterly impossible to our animal, and also to our simply intellectual, soul. Try to consider the astral world simply as the inner world, "the soul of things" approached through psychometry, and the difficulty will soon vanish when we find the psychic realm everywhere, and learn that dominion over lower grades of force and complete conquest over matter is a result attainable only as we persistently develop our higher, and through so doing subordinate our lower, nature.

## LECTURE III.

### THE WORK AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND ITS BRANCHES.

(An address intended for delivery on the occasion of a General Conference, slightly altered in form to adapt it to this volume.)

EVERY lover of Theosophy, or the Wisdom-Religion of mankind, must hail with delight every indication of unity among seekers after truth, and feel deep regret at whatever is calculated to divide into groups and factions, antagonistic the one to the other, those who are striving to leave this world a little brighter than they found it. In view of this, does it not behoove us to contend most earnestly for the grand, solid basis of our sublime universal religion, and leave as subject for speculative inquiry only those moot questions and contested doctrines over which so many honest, good-meaning people stumble and fall? Re-incarnation, for instance, is a teaching which many earnest minds find very difficult to accept. *Devachan*, as ordinarily explained or not explained, is another serious obstacle; while *astral bodies*, shells, the reliquæ of the departed, etc., as instrumental in the production of alleged spiritual manifestations, are again other matters calculated to divide rather than unite seekers after truth.

Now Theosophy is founded on a recognition of eternal and essential justice supreme in the universe. The great value of the ethics of Theosophy consists in the fact that they do most emphatically present the idea of infinite, undeviating justice to the mind, and whatever may be said to the contrary by its opponents, this much-vexed question of repeated embodiments harmonizes exactly with absolute uncompromising equity. But is it the dogma of embodiments or the principle of equity for which we should most zealously contend? Is it not quite thinkable that many persons, while acknowledging the existence and claim of equity, do not see the necessity of re-incarnation to indicate and illustrate supreme justice? If they can, or if they feel they can, account for the manifold inequalities of this present state without having recourse to the hypothesis of successive embodiments, are we not unwise if we lay over-much stress on that hypothesis?

We are never forgetful of the fact that brotherhood is the only crucial test of Theosophy; still there are sometimes persons in the theosophical camp who make re-embodiment too prominent. This charge may with all kindness of advisory suggestion be preferred perhaps against Mrs. Sinnett's generally excellent work, "The Purpose of Theosophy," and other publications of similar import by different authors. Let all vexed problems be submitted for thoughtful consideration to the public mind; and even though the Oriental Scriptures and the Masters do appear to teach certain things very plainly in the letter of their instructions, are we always right in feeling sure that we are not sometimes

unwittingly substituting *exotericism* for *esotericism* in our deductions and avowals, in this connection? (*vide* the introductory chapter of Madame Blavatsky's grandest and most recent work, "The Secret Doctrine," wherein she convicts Mr. Sinnett of falling into some error of this kind, though with the best possible intentions, in his much valued work, "Esoteric Buddhism"). Some deliverances of Theosophists in the past have been too acrid, many have been far too dogmatic. As we all learn by experience, let us not regret the past, but strive to profit by the lessons we may learn from its imperfections, and for the future let us cling more to essentials and divide less on speculative matters.

Another very important question is the avoidance of personal squabbles and the disagreeable canvassing of private reputations. In the case of the late controversy over the authorship of "Light on the Path," a great deal of most unseemly strife has been ventilated in public print. Recriminations and counter-recriminations cannot thus see the light without imposing on the Theosophical movement an onus of ugliness it has no right or reason to carry. Reprehensible in the extreme as the conduct of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of Chicago has been in connection with this and kindred subjects, we cannot honestly say that *The Path* or even *Lucifer* or *The Theosophist* have been quite free from deserved criticism in this respect. What the earnest truth-seeker needs is not a recital of how, why, when, and where parties fall out and call each other hard names; but a cautious yet frank presentation, and as far as possible elucidation, of great spiritual and

psychical problems demanding solution at the hands of all who are earnestly seeking aid to walk in the path of genuine spiritual development and higher mental and physical culture. The great need of the present day, as it appears to us at least, is not wordy discussion over obscure mysteries, but practical co-operation to the end of establishing the reign of righteousness on earth.

Sometimes we think the sure though apparently dilatory outworking of the law of *Karma* is too much, because too blindly, insisted on. We hear very frequently, indeed, that so-and-so cannot come into the light, cannot be healed, etc., by reason of his or her *Karma*, accumulated in previous existences. Without questioning there being such *Karma*, and without denying it is a hindrance in many instances, we would still most particularly urge the object of disciplinary embodiment, which is surely to vanquish and overcome, not to yield or submit to, refractory *Karma*. *Karma* is a persistent force in constant operation. Every thought, word, and deed makes or unmakes *Karma*; but as it is a question of the strength of the effort put forward, not the length of time consumed in putting forward such effort, which determines its effectiveness, we cannot be too urgent in assuring all who are in any measure desirous of attaining a higher station, that though they cannot skip any of the rounds in the ladder of Progression, they can accelerate their transit over them. The practical questions of the day cannot be settled on a physical basis; they must be dealt with spiritually, or (satisfactorily) not at all.

The special object, then, of organization with theosophical intent should be to place before the inquiring public the tenets of Theosophy in as simple and practical a manner as possible. This is, happily, now being done, to some extent at least, by the many excellent and well-attended open meetings of the various lodges in the different cities where such lodges have been established. The membership in these lodges is constantly increasing, and the influx of new members is most encouraging, as they are chiefly persons of high mental attainments and noble moral aspirations. We could easily congratulate the Theosophical Society at large on what it has already accomplished in the right direction, and when we point out where the blunders have been made, it is only with a view to their future avoidance and present rectification as far as possible. The Theosophical Publication Society has issued many excellent pamphlets at a very moderate price, but to some of them at least two exceptions may be taken. Some are so extremely transcendental, that, while of interest and value to scholars, they are quite beyond the comprehension of the very persons whom literary efforts of a missionary character are specially intended to reach. This is, however, our minor objection; our major criticism we reserve for those publications and utterances which deal less fairly with Christianity than with Buddhism. Now we know that as soon as Christian people begin to look into Theosophy they are apt to feel justly offended at a manifest partiality for Buddha and relative disparagement of Christ. This attitude may be natural to persons who have become



disgusted with the superficiality and hypocrisy, alas! so prevalent in Christendom, and who, in the first flush of their ardor at sight of the excellences in Hinduism, hasten to pay their tribute to the latter and expose the fallacies of the former. Such precipitation is, however, exceedingly unwise, as it does not bear the impress of profound research or sober judgment, and inevitably gives occasion for attack on Oriental religions of the most spiteful and damaging kind. It is the purpose of Theosophy to show the truth in all religions, not to hold up one religion as so very much truer than all beside it; to prove how, in remote lands and distant ages widely separated by space and time, the same pearl of measureless price has been discovered by untiring travellers toward the goal of perfection. Lady Caithness, in "The Mystery of the Ages," has contributed to this benign accomplishment in a queenly manner: would that other authors had been equally happy in elucidating the theme! That very valuable author, Franz Hartmann, in his "Jehoshua, the Prophet of Nazareth," has said very much that is true and beautiful concerning the character and life of the great adept whom all Christendom reveres, as a unique master in wisdom; but he has, in our judgment, marred and enfeebled a portion of his treatise by putting a very low construction on the cursing of the barren fig-tree, the driving of money-changers from the temple, and other similar incidents in the life of Jesus as recorded by the Evangelists, when a much higher interpretation of these incidents would have been far more esoteric, profitable, and therefore theosophical. Whenever Gautama,

the saintly hero, whom Edwin Arnold so beautifully styles "The Light of Asia," is alluded to, no such aspersions are cast as are frequently cast on Jesus; and why is it, if not because a certain poetical glamour is thrown over Buddhism and all pertaining to it in the minds of Mr. Hartmann and other authors who adopt the style he uses, while these persons are by no means so friendly to Christianity? While very much of Gerald Massey's writing is painfully harsh and external, he, notwithstanding his violent prejudice against the Christian religion, makes many excellent points when in his review of "The Historical Jesus and the Gnostic Christ," he endeavors to refine away all personal ideas of the *logos*, making the essential Christ the highest element in man, and in no sense an outward historical personage.

The personal controversies over which so much blood was spilled in the Middle Ages, and which are the cause of so much waste of nervous force as well as ink and paper to-day, are but bubbles on the surface of thought. It is clearly impossible to either verify or disprove a literal history of a personal Christ or Buddha in any satisfactory way. At the same time it is not impossible or even difficult to show that there is indeed a light enlightening every man; and this light, though existent in all men, and capable of expression through all, has been expressed in a marvellous degree by some few of the world's exceptionally wise and illumined teachers. The work of Theosophists in America and Europe should be identical with what they are endeavoring to do in Asia. Missionaries have been sent to the East

to tell the Orientals that they are in danger of everlasting misery unless they turn from their religion and scripture to the books and opinions held sacred in the West. Missionary enterprise is almost as futile in India, China, and Japan as is the work of that most ineffective organization, "The Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews," which so persistently asks assistance in countless churches every year on Good Friday. The real value of the theosophical movement in Asia is, that it is helping Asiatics to understand their own religion, by expounding truth to them through the use of a language and literature to which they are accustomed. In Europe and America the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are in every one's hand; the Vedas and Puranas are not. Why not, then, prove the identity of the spirit of all religion, by using, wherever we may be, the literature with which the people are familiar? and, by letting them see the identity of the revelation made in both hemispheres help on gloriously, expeditiously, the realization of our common brotherhood, — a work which can never be effectuated by disparaging one scripture to enthrone another in popular esteem.

The Bible as we have it is full of Theosophy; so are all Oriental scriptures. The same great truths are clearly or obscurely proclaimed in all, according to the clearness or obscurity which marks the reader's mind. Mohini M. Chatterji, the young Brahman who started out on a missionary tour through Europe and America some few years ago, did a grand work in publishing a new translation in English of the Bhagavad-Gítá, with

notes and references to the New Testament, in which he tells his Christian readers that he need not convert them, nor need they convert him to a new religion, for the faith of the Orient and of the Occident is essentially the same. Theosophy being the great undercurrent of spiritual meaning running through all the great writings extant all over the world, no matter when, where, or by whom originally produced, can only be brought to light and do its work as it removes the veil of the letter which kills and gets killed and exposes the Spirit, which ever lives and is the giver of immortal life to all who realize its presence and its sway. With this thought uppermost in our affections and intellects, we can go forth to spread glad tidings over all the earth.

As a further suggestion for increasing the efficiency of the work of all branches of the Theosophical Society, wherever established or about to be established, we would urge upon all members of the various lodges the great desirability, we may add necessity, of members cultivating the society of each other, meeting together as often as practicable at each others' houses where no lodge-room is permanently available. At such meetings the central aim should be to discover how nearly these good people can come together in thought and feeling, and what particular spheres of usefulness they may individually occupy best. It is of little advantage for people to join societies, and acknowledge their adhesion to a great bond of union, if they do not embrace and seek to create opportunities and occasions for mutual converse and help. The work of many a society languishes because of the members not acting in accord-

ance with a due recognition of the tie of brotherhood; while much inspiration is lost by two or three fluent speakers or able writers being looked to at all times, under all circumstances, to furnish food for the mental digestion of all the rest. Timidity and bashfulness should have no place among brothers and sisters; fear of criticism or of being misunderstood should never seal the lips of one who feels he has aught to say for the edification of the assemblage. To underrate our powers or mask our gifts, to fight off inspirations and disown ability, is not humility, but pride masquerading as its opposite virtue.

Above all, in thought, word, and deed let us be charitable in our judgments, the one of the other. This grand old grace, charity, placed by Paul above faith and hope, above prophecy, and tongues, and all beside, is the virtue we so sorely lack to-day. The absence of it from our midst is the cause of the weaknesses and dissensions among us, and its absence among those who profess better things is really unpardonable as well as pitiable. The abnegation of the lower self, about which we hear and talk and write so much, is impossible to us unless we studiously cultivate the higher self. And while the prohibitory form of some of the commandments which constitute the decalogue make it at first sight appear that the highest conception of the ancient Israelites was to refrain from iniquity, we must not forget that the two great affirmative commands on which Jesus declared all the law and prophets depend, are Jewish utterances, taken out of the Old Testament and placed in the New, as proof of the identity of the

counsels of Jesus with those of the great legislators and prophets who preceded him and lived long before his day. Thou shalt love with all thy heart and mind whatever is good, practically means that we are to so cultivate love for good as to find it engrossing our every thought and feeling, leaving no possible room for its opposite. Truth, when spoken in love, is always powerful and convincing. As it lays hold upon the human intellect and heart at one and the same moment, it is both sweet and reasonable to describe it in terms especially dear to the friends and admirers of Matthew Arnold, and men who, like him, have sought to unite reason and affection in all presentations of truth. How much unreasonable sweetness and anything but sweet rationalizing there is in modern literature, converse, and oratory, we need not attempt to decide. That there is far, far too much for the peace and safety of society and the effectual spread of truth, none can deny. It being the special purpose of Theosophy to present wisdom lovingly, and to culture the affections to love wisely, no work is in reality theosophical; *i.e.* wise in the divine, loving sense which does not address itself to reason and affection both at once. Some persons are certainly far more emotional than intellectual; others again far more rational than affectionate. Both classes are capable of doing excellent work for the general good, but the two are better united in one. The old words, "It is not good for man to be alone," recur to us at this point. Many of our readers are doubtless familiar with the Kabalistic interpretation of that text. The Kabalists, not being believers in any such thing as

absolute or essential evil in the constitution of the universe or man, declared the true meaning of the word *evil* to be simply imperfection; less than perfect state is called an evil state. In many of us the Adam (intellect) is without its complementary Eve (affection). We are therefore not good, *i.e.* not perfect. This imperfection of ours is the cause of our irregularities, antagonisms, and general ineffectiveness. As we become inwardly married, and as this inward union manifests outwardly, we shall appear good, perfect, lacking nothing, as the apostle James speaks of those who are filled with divine wisdom, which he contrasts so finely with that unmentionable wisdom of sensuality described as devilish. As we can none of us, to use the old correspondential imagery employed in Genesis, partake of the fruit of the tree of life and also of that of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil, we have to look well to ourselves to see that the serpent of our lower nature does not tempt us to transgress the divine commandment engraven on the imperishable tablets of our own immortal nature. The thirst for knowledge is good, and if we gratify it aright we partake of the fruit of the tree of life, which the Apocalypse tells us yields twelve manners of fruit, — one variety every month, — so that the fruit is sufficient to satisfy the needs of the whole year, through what it signifies. If we are actuated by sordid motives, and seek to become magicians of the lower type, we shall surely forfeit our ability to partake of the fruit of the celestial tree and to drink of the perennial spring of life-giving water.

This expressive imagery is not hard to interpret among students of such literature as now issues from the press, filled with references to a higher and a lower principle in man. Bishop Butler, author of the famous "Analogy," formerly considered an unanswerable vindication of the Christian religion, was without doubt a Theosophist, even if he knew it not, as in his analysis of the component elements which make up man as we at present see him, he described all as good in their place and for some special purpose, but gave the crown and palm of precedence and sovereignty to a spiritual element, — none other than the *atma* or highest principle in the human constitution, insisted upon as supreme by all initiates and their pupils. The intellectual soul of man is surely placed midway between the *anima bruta* seat of all selfish desires and the *anima divina* seat of all spiritual promptings. The Adams and Eves (reasoning and affectional impulses) of our distinctively human principle are always oscillating between obedience to the voice of the divine and the voice of the animal. We must choose to obey one or the other; both we cannot follow, for no man can serve two masters, however much he may desire to do so. We cannot look in two directions at once, though we can turn our heads round, and look first in one, then in the other direction. We cannot be going up and down hill at the same moment, nor can we sail toward the equator and toward the pole at the same instant. Theosophy places before us most clearly and solemnly the responsibility and consequence of choice. We cannot stand still long, if at all; we must move up or down, forward



or backward. Which shall it be, God or Mammon? Christ or Belial? We cannot choose both.

Theosophy, taking as it does all fictitious dread of divine wrath and an ever-burning hell from the minds of man, substitutes for these nightmares of unreason the inevitable law of sequence, *Karma*, cause and effect. By placing the judge and judgment seat within instead of without us, it renders rational the thought of judgment; but by so doing it does but impress the idea of a judgment from which none can escape the more firmly in our minds. Believers in vicarious sacrifice, in the old false view of forgiveness, and other dogmas of externalism, may always hope to evade the consequences of their lives, but Theosophy offers no such loophole of escape. Sin can be outgrown, but penalty is never cancelled. Man makes his own heaven or his own hell. The sources of our joy or misery are within us; and as we cannot escape from ourselves, we cannot be happy or see the divine kingdom until we have grown into an affectionate appreciation of eternal law; then shall we have risen superior to hope of reward and dread of punishment alike. Happiness will then be our unasked boon, our unsought treasure; for as happiness follows righteousness within, as night follows day and day again succeeds to night, heaven and happiness will then be ours forever.

## LECTURE IV.

### MIRACLES AND MODERN THOUGHT.

CONTINUING the thread of our study from our remarks in the past three discourses, we find ourselves brought face to face with the great problem of miracle in the light of nineteenth century criticism. "Robert Elsmere" might supply us with a text for the basis of this study. "Miracles do not happen," which Mrs. Humphrey Ward rightly says is but a restatement of Hume's old argument.

Watching the drifts of modern skeptical inquiry none of us can be blind to the fact that so-called liberalism or radicalism is daily and hourly tending nearer and nearer the unsatisfactory point of historical and actual negation.

Learning in a purely critical direction seems to be one long wearisome process of unlearning; long cherished beliefs and attachments have all to be given up, and the weary restless mind of the scholar must either dismiss the subject with a sigh or allow himself to be carried on by the stream of doubt to where he at length finds himself forever banished from the supernatural and confronted with a stern, inexorable, natural order from which there can be no deviation in time or eternity. A rationalistic view of history allows no

place for a resurrection or an ascension, as it allows no opportunity for a miraculous birth; it is inexorably committed to inevitable natural law and enforces the reign of law everywhere as a dogma of the creed of necessity.

At first sight such a consummation is greatly to be dreaded, as it would drive out of the world all art, poetry, romance, and all beside that appears most attractive to a loving and sensitive disposition; but when inspected a little more closely after the shock of disillusion has been recovered from, the new view of life which science and philosophy alike compel us to take, instead of being the cold barren one it at first seemed to be, soon glows with a life, love, and beauty vastly superior to any excellence we can find in the old discarded system from which it may have cost us such agony to cut loose. Our object on this occasion is not, however, to leave the subject in the hands of Hume or any other negative or speculative philosopher; we are not disposed to deal with negations, nor to remain contented with any attitude of denial; for in our eyes doubt and denial are but dark passage ways leading from one lighted gallery to another, and that other larger and brighter than the one left behind.

Now what does the word *miracle* mean when rightly defined? It is interpreted in several dictionaries as "an act or event beyond human power," while the word *miraculous* in the same lexicons is defined *supernatural* and also *wonderful*. Now this word *miracle* is evidently an elastic one, for wonderful things are by no means necessarily supernatural; nor are events beyond human

power necessarily above nature, for do we not witness natural occurrences every day far beyond man's power to produce. We certainly include insects in our definitions of natural productions; but while any one can easily destroy millions of them, who can create even one? Spontaneous generation is a mere "will o' the wisp," utterly unsubstantiated by any kind of scientific experiment. Life then is miraculous, insects are miraculous, because the wonderful ways of spirit breathing itself into outward expression even in the minutest forms of terrestrial existence are utterly beyond human power to duplicate, or at least beyond such development of human ability as we are at present acquainted with. Now there are three ways of accounting for events usually styled miracles. *First*, they are defined by orthodox theologians, as supernatural in the strictest sense, *i.e.* God has stepped aside from his ordinary method of governing the world by natural law and has astonished its inhabitants by a display of His power to suspend the operation of his own law. *Second*, they are defined by skeptics of every name as non-historical or unreal occurrences, partaking of the nature of imaginary narratives or fairy tales, and are to be accounted for only by attributing belief in them to human ignorance and credulity. *Third*, they are regarded by spiritual scientists as unusual displays of an occult force in the universe which ever exists and which can and will reproduce such phenomena whenever the necessary conditions are afforded. With the first and second explanations we do not care particularly to deal, as the ground has been so long and ably covered by arguers

in favor of both those theories ; it is with the third position only we feel ourselves called upon to deal extensively at any time, as we cannot but feel this reasonable, moderate, and satisfactory view is the only one which makes history really intelligible, and the past record of mankind to accord with the scientific and spiritual developments of the present. Now, plainly the author of "Robert Elsmere" has not grasped this position, she has made her hero recoil from the supernatural and embrace the skeptical, though to do her justice, his skepticism is not of an objectionable type, and does not in the least interfere with his complete acceptance of all truth generally necessary to a noble and successful life.

It is from the scientific and experimental rather than from the theological or moral standpoint that we take exception to the statement, "miracles do not happen," in the sense in which the words are used in her narrative ; for while, undoubtedly, events commonly called miraculous are only wonderful or unusual and do not owe their origin to any interference with universal law, the impression given to the ordinary mind, is that the alleged events never took place, and that similar events never can take place, there being a law to prevent them.

Now, to state our position clearly before proceeding further : In the strictly etymological sense of the term, a miracle is simply a surprising occurrence, not necessarily due to any approach toward a suspension of universal law, but on the contrary exhibiting the power in operation of a hitherto unknown or unrecognized though

eternally-existing law. The phonograph, which reproduced the performance of a military band at the Presidio to an amazed and delighted audience in the centre of San Francisco, wrought a miracle in the ears of those who could not comprehend how tones could be thus mysteriously recorded, preserved, and reproduced at will by a subtle but unpretending little scientific instrument which in common with every really valuable discovery of to-day owes its potency to man's ever-increasing familiarity with electricity and its uses.

Electricity is the future motor, indeed it is the only motor if men did but know it; but electricity works in obedience to an unchanging law, and this law is subject to *will*, as all law is the product and expression of *will*; therefore, as man's will becomes ever more and more free from sordid material entanglement he gains ever greater and greater ascendancy over the subtlest and most potential of all the forces which are really only different modes of operation of one sole force — electricity. In his review or rather, somewhat severe criticism of "Robert Elsmere," William Ewart Gladstone, who is a good theologian as well as a distinguished statesman, shows the incompleteness of "Elsmere's" position by pointing out the serious omission always made by those who repudiate miracles on the score of their being impossible owing to the continuous operation of a fixed law of necessity governing the entire universe; this important omission, which is the reason of the failure of their arguments to reach conclusiveness, is their blindness to the very nature of the law for whose immutability and omnipresence they are such earnest

sticklers. Law is not and cannot be apart from legislation, and legislation necessitates a legislator; this legislator is *will*. Now man is an embodied expression of divine will, and thus all intelligent Theosophists have from the very earliest days understood the esoteric meaning of the text, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The authors of the Synoptics were genealogists, historians, biographers, to a considerable extent at least; they began their gospels with reference to the lineal descent of Jesus from David, or they recorded some incident connected with his early life. Remember we are not questioning the spiritual or correspondential meaning of the first three gospels, we are simply alluding to their literal form which is in such decided contrast with the fourth or gnostic gospel, which without the slightest preparation, or the faintest reference to literal history, plunges at once into a clear but mystical interpretation of the Word. Greek scholars and all who have studied Plato will at once perceive in the Word of John a reaffirmation of the *logos* of Plato.

Now it was the endeavor of whoever wrote the fourth gospel to impress upon his hearers the eternity and divinity of the essential spirit of man. The *logos* of the Greeks means exactly the same as the *atma* of the Hindus, which Theosophists term the seventh and highest principle in the constitution of man. This seventh principle, as it is termed, is the immortal principle, the Alpha and Omega, that from which all lower principles are expressed and by virtue of which alone they can exist.

Now in the days of Jesus there seems to have been a singular and depressing distrust of human goodness and greatness in the world; sin and weakness everywhere abounded, and among the Jews this loss of personal goodness, this failure to maintain a genuine high record for righteousness, was sapping the very foundations of collective and individual safety. Judea was already a Roman province, the hated name of Cæsar was the synonym of government, and while there were no end of religious quacks endeavoring to heal the communal body by disgraceful processes of anarchy and venality, the truly wise and great among the Israelites were beginning to feel the force of the teaching of Jesus, who forbade them under penalty of inevitable ruin to employ ferocious measures or in any way to retaliate upon their conquerors. Jesus came as a Hebrew reformer, to save and bless his own countrymen first, then to spread the gospel of truth over the whole world; but he clearly believed that Jerusalem was the rightful centre of civilization at that time, and from the Hebrew race he taught enlightenment was to go forth to the uttermost parts of the earth. As he interpreted the moral law much as Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets had interpreted it previously, he won for himself the cordial detestation of religious hypocrites and political demagogues, who together conspired against him because his teachings stirred up the people to noble independence of thought and feeling, and tended to wrest the reins of government from the hands of tyrants and establish by peaceable means a kingdom of heaven on earth; not a republic where *vox populi vox Dei* would



be the accepted motto, but a political and social state in which the cream of society would rise to the surface and be acknowledged, no matter whether it rose from the ranks of titled nobility or humble fishermen.

Jesus was neither a monarchist nor a democrat, in that he points out the weakness of both schools, and seeks to lead his disciples to the understanding of a practical utopian government in which righteousness must prevail because of men's love for it. Now in a sensation-loving age we are told by men of the skeptical school of thought that Jesus *had* to appeal to the love of the marvelous in those about him, and we are further informed that the tendency of those times was to exalt miracle so highly that sensational wonder-working would win popularity for a cause which otherwise would fail for lack of sustenance. Taking its stand on that assertion, this school seeks to account for the rise and spread of Christianity on the basis of *alleged* miracle, though of course, the skeptical intellect says, "miracles never happen," and though Jesus and his followers may have been honest they were fanatical, and subject to illusions, while those who came after them were still more fanciful and not always honest, as these later Christians according to all testimony, invented miraculous stories without stint, to propagate their peculiar doctrines, and most of all to gain for themselves undisputed ascendancy over the minds and property of a credulous, ungodly, illiterate multitude.

Now every skeptical objection, however plausible, when put forward on these lines utterly fails to explain away miracles or to account for the spread of Christian-

ity in the first century. Miracles, it is true, were and are very popular among the credulous who are never weary of startling exhibitions of occult power, and who are indeed so well pleased with successful sleight-of-hand and other feats of dexterity, that they do not at all object to be deceived if their credulity is fed. Miracle-mongers and believers in miracles were very common all over the Roman Empire in the days of Jesus, and long afterward, and from this fact alone we may logically conclude that the simply miraculous element had exceedingly little to do with the spread of primitive Christianity; for why, in the name of reason let it be asked, should people abandon one miraculous system for another when the latter was no more miraculous than the former? It is at this point that miracles require classification as well as definition. Miracles may be divided into four classes:—

*First*, Ordinary events which are only regarded as miraculous by persons afflicted with over-strung nerves whose diseased condition causes them to attribute everything unusual or mysterious to supernatural agency. In connection with such occurrences as are termed miracles by hysterically disposed persons, must be classed, of course, those subjective experiences of their own, which have no actual form for any but the nervous beholder.

*Second*, Genuine exhibitions of some occult power, such as mesmerism, thought reading, etc., which must always create intense surprise and be looked upon either as divine or diabolical, until the simple, rational explanation of such phenomena shall be scientifically published and accepted by the world in general. Under

this heading we would place all genuine occult phenomena which apparently accomplish neither appreciable good or harm, but simply amaze the witnesses and set them to wondering how such things can be.

*Third*, All unscrupulous exercise of occult power, sometimes denominated "black magic," and now often designated malicious mesmerism; in the Middle Ages regarded as dealing with the devil, and in very ancient times designated sorcery, witchcraft, necromancy, etc., and sternly forbidden many times by Hebrew prophets and legislators and also by wise and good men in all countries. Under this caption we should include all abuse of psychic power, which is of course reprehensible, as the perversion of any faculty must be a source of danger to the individual and society.

*Fourth*, Divine magic, which is none other than the work of those true adepts or initiates, who have in every age and place so subdued the flesh to the spirit, that they have developed extraordinary power over the lower forces of nature. It is to this divine magic, the true Theosophist ever appeals, when asked for the credentials of Theosophy, and it has now become our duty to deal with Bible miracles in the light of definitions already given.

Every form of divination was at different times practised among the Jews, who often indulged in the black art in common with their less enlightened neighbors; the Canaanites, Hittites, etc. Whenever they sank into idolatry and immorality they had recourse to wizards who peep and mutter, and exalted to the highest offices, unscrupulous persons, who, while doubtless possessed of

considerable occult power, shamelessly perverted it to the basest of ends for personal aggrandizement.

This power, however, misused as it always was by the ambitious and unscrupulous, utterly failed to bestow the slightest blessing on the community; instead, indeed, of benefiting the people, it added to their distresses and sickness. Magic of that type was performed both by Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh's court just prior to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, and until Moses healed the people of their afflictions, he failed to prove that God was with him. Making all the allowance any one may please for exaggeration and romanticism in the narrator's style, the self-evident conclusion is, that when it was a mere matter of converting rods into snakes and snakes into rods, or of multiplying pests, Moses had no pre-eminence over Pharaoh's magicians who did precisely the same with their enchantments; but when it came to driving away plagues and disorders, the magicians failed and Moses triumphed. Henry George, the great labor-agitator, has spoken of Moses frequently in his addresses to workingmen, and has commented with much ability on that ancient law-giver's uncompromising loyalty to principle. Now whether Moses be regarded as a genuine personage, or only a hero of romance, it needs no long analysis of his career to see why such a man was able to accomplish wonders of beneficence, the courted magicians of the Egyptian monarch could not approach. Moses was from an infant accustomed to every luxury; and was indeed heir apparent to the throne of Egypt, but he preferred to cast in his lot with oppressed workmen,

and deliver them from cruel bondage to tyrannical oppressors, at the expense of every possible humiliation to himself, than sit next Sesostris on his throne, where his conscience would rebuke him for leaving the work of human emancipation undone. Such a man is typical of the true initiate, of the adept who is a master where others are but slaves; he has conquered his own appetites and ambitions; he has educated his higher self; he has fanned into a flame the electric spark of divinity within, and has thereby gained power which all who *will rightly*, may gain over the lower elements of nature; he is therefore a healer and a moral benefactor; his miracles are not tricks of occult force, like the sensational blasting of a tree unwisely published by Mr. Sinnett in "Karma; a Theosophical Romance," for the power to blast a tree may be diabolical, and we do not wonder at the Englishman of conservative belief objecting to a young relative of his, remaining where such awful things were accomplished by occult agency. True spiritual power does act destructively when infamies and impurities have to be thrown down, but it never displays itself at all in the simple exhibition of marvels, for, it can only be distinguished from diabolism (which is a perversion of the same power) by its exclusively beneficent action; thus from the earliest days it has been invariably associated almost exclusively with the reformation of sinners and the healing of the sick.

In the case of the prophet Elisha, we are told that in healing Naaman, the Assyrian captain, of leprosy, he required of his patient that he should wash seven times in the Jordan, maintaining that no amount of

bathing in Abana (stony) and Pharpar (swift) rivers of Damascus, could accomplish his cure. We are told of Elijah's stretching himself on the body of a seemingly dead child, and calling earnestly upon God to let his spirit return into the body, and the child revived.

In all these narratives we detect a scientific note; means are employed, events are brought about evidently through the operation of an unchanging law, but such great results can only be achieved by those who *pray* and *fast* as the gospel teaches — prayer and fasting signifying aspiration and self-denial, *i.e.* denial of the lower self that the higher self may perfectly prevail. To revert now very briefly to the miracles said to have been wrought by Jesus and his immediate disciples, not one was a mere sensation; in every instance some sick or insane or crippled person was healed of an infirmity, and whatever view Jesus or his apostles may have taken of his divinity or simple humanity, the miracles were never put forward as evidence of supernatural deity; for had they been, the words could never have found place in the record, "The works that I do ye shall do also, and greater works than these shall ye do because I go to my Father." Here we have a strictly scientific view of miracles. Jesus tells his disciples that according to their faith it shall be unto them; he also tells those who are healed by his touch or by mere contact with his robe that their own faith has healed them, and when he has departed from mortal sight entirely, and his disciples are weaned far more from earthly attachments, then shall they do yet greater deeds than any done before, continually demonstrating further and

further in their own experience the divine possibilities of humanity.

Let us sum up the matter in this wise. Very little do we know of time, place, and circumstance, with regard to the miracles of old, but one great lesson we do learn from all the scriptural narratives, and this we amplify and prove by reason and modern experiment, viz. that wisdom is to be gained only by diligent devotion to truth. Divine wisdom is a queen who permits no rival to share our affections with her; the wisdom which is from above is only to be courted and won by a life of such spirituality as expresses itself invariably in the entire devotion of practical whole-souled philanthropy. "Robert Elsmere" died physically on the road to this higher understanding; let his progressing spirit define miracles and he will not reiterate the words of Hume, "Miracles do not happen," but will explain how man's power derived from God is practically unlimited, but requires earnest and unceasing effort to unfold and apply.

## LECTURE V.

### EGYPTIAN THEOSOPHY.

THE very name of Egypt is associated in almost every mind not only with hoary antiquity, stupendous edifices, and marvelous learning, but above all with a system of religious thought so profound and amazing, that we may well ask whether Professor Smyth has not some justification for his astounding declaration that the Almighty Himself must have designed the Great Pyramid and made known the secret of His plan to Melchisedec or some equally wonderful personage who figures in biblical history.

Though the fact is often disputed by half-informed and one-sided students, the mass of testimony already accumulated in favor of the real historical existence of *Atlantis* is far too great to be set aside by any Egyptologist worthy the name of a scholar, who possesses himself of this evidence and candidly examines it. The Atlantian hypothesis, or rather explanation, does away with the need of supernatural invention, and proves to us how, through long ages of gradual and unceasing developments, the human mind reached a height from which it could command such a view of the universe as that taken by the earliest illumined ones, who have left a sublime and seemingly indelible impress on the earth



itself in that most renowned of all far-famed countries, Egypt. One fact alone is sufficient to give much plausibility to the theory of an Atlantian conquest of Egypt, and that is that the most ancient monuments are by far the most magnificent. This would argue against evolution were we to accept it as a solitary unexplained fact, as orthodox people are glad to do. For the Theosophist, however, these monuments have a widely different meaning; they point not to divine favoritism, to the arbitrary selection of one here and one there as a result of sovereignty, but to the results of long ages of growth, culminating at length in the achievement of an almost complete mastery over the material side of nature.

When the conquerors of the Atlantian race, the celebrated red men of the distant past, came into Egypt, they doubtless found the inhabitants sunk in that form of idolatry commonly called nature worship, as it consisted of an adoration of natural forms below the human. The river Nile, the crocodile, the ox, the lotus flower, the dog, the cat, the serpent, birds, and many other objects in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, were the popular divinities. Now it must not be supposed that idolatry was worship of the inanimate or the material, though it may in some instances have degenerated into this; it was originally a form of Spiritualism of a not very elevated type. The ancients in all the Orient recognized an invisible life principle pervading the entire universe. They witnessed its expression in the multi-form varieties of existence all about them, and seeing one attribute of the life principle expressed in one creature,

and some other attributes expressed elsewhere, they paid honor to the particular creatures who manifested the qualities they most dreaded or admired. Their worship was, therefore, divided into two large and many small varieties. Good influences were praised with flowers, music, and peaceful rites of a poetic and elevating tendency; but a fearful error was perpetuated when the priests of the old temples encouraged the propitiation of evil powers. From this arose the sacrificial customs of the most barbaric type, though mingled with the desire to propitiate awful influences was coupled a desire to feed beneficent ones.

The Spiritualism of primitive people was very childish, but very natural. They saw animals much larger and stronger than themselves waiting to devour them. They saw that birds and beasts of prey rarely attacked man unless hungry or irritated, and they concluded that in the unseen world intelligences whom they ignorantly deified were of similar disposition. Thus those who threw themselves or others into the Nile to feed the crocodiles, usually did so with no other end in view than the propitiation of an unseen power behind the crocodile, which would accept the sacrifice and stay the avenging sword of destruction threatening the land.

Looking backward over the lapse of ages and trying to put ourselves in the place of our ancestors, we shall find much to shock, but more to encourage us as we seek to faithfully trace modern beliefs and practices to their ancient source. The vulgar religious notions of the West of to-day are perpetuations of antique Egyptian ideas and customs. Christianity is the old Egyp-

tian religion in a new dress; and while in ritualistic observances and questionable dogmas we can clearly trace the influence of the old popular belief entertained by the illiterate masses, we need never be at a loss to find abundant traces of that sublime Solar worship which, more than hero worship, was the crowning glory of the religion of the past. The Atlantians were Sun-worshipers, without doubt; and the Great Pyramid of Gizeh was a temple to the Sun, the lord and giver of life. But the question now arises, What is meant by the Sun? How did the enlightened among the ancients regard the central luminary? Did it stand for the highest principle of life in the universe and man, or was it merely, in their eyes, a material light, an orb of matter, with no soul or life, save as soul and life are terms used blindly by agnosticism?

Our answer to all such questions ever is: The Sun was a symbol of Deity and of the presiding rulers and guardian angels of systems. The great central Sun, *in* which the whole universe revolves, was not Alcyone, the centre of the Pleiades, *around* which the suns of several systems revolve; neither was this greater Sun, Alcyone, identified with the Sun, which is but the centre of the small planetary system to which this little globe belongs. When Paul was preaching to the Athenians he reminded the Greeks of their own Theosophy derived directly from the Egyptians. His famous quotation, "*In Him we live, move, and have our being,*" was distinctly a re-affirmation of the wisdom-religion of antiquity, which insisted before all else that the universe revolves within the infinite embrace of one Eter-

nal Spirit. This concept of pure Theosophy places Deity beyond all possible limitation, and disposes finally of all such puerilities as grow out of trying to harmonize the idea of a central sun as ordinarily understood, with the opposite idea of all-pervading Spirit.

Having acknowledged the one Infinite Spirit as the only Eternal self-existent Life of all universes, the *savans* and illumined seers of the Egypt of old pointed out how, in the order of the heavens, a perfect system of government held sway. Nothing is left to chance; law reigns, order prevails everywhere; but there is no blind law of necessity such as that in which fatalists affect to believe. Intelligence is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; and this essential life of all that lives is the inmost spark of consciousness, the basic germ of every organism: "He in us, and we in Him." Beholding the exact order in which everything in nature moves, the wisdom-religionists of antiquity were of necessity evolutionists, but not in the sense of tracing everything to a material germ and then forward to a spiritual hereafter. Involution is indispensable to evolution; nothing can possibly be evolved or unrolled which has not been previously involved or inrolled. When gazing upon the myriad orbs which revolve in infinity, the astronomers and astrologers, who constituted a powerful section of the Magi, concluded that there must be a perfect system of government in the heavens and throughout the universe. As they beheld some worlds brighter by far than others, and differing widely in magnitude, the one from the other, they thought, very reasonably, of the existence of celestial

hierarchies, all of which were said to be under the dominion of the Infinite. We must be careful not to confound their pure, essential Theism with their phenomenal Spiritualism, but diligently compare the one with the other. By so doing we shall find that absolute Theism relates to the sole uncaused cause of all things, — a reality which all scientists and philosophers of all schools must admit under some name. Whether they call it the Infinite Life, Power, Energy, or what they choose, they must admit an uncreated, self-existent Force which pervades the universe, which always was and ever will be; while Spiritualism deals with finite revelations and expressions of the one life. These two systems are not in the least antagonistic one to the other; they only appear so to those who jump at conclusions, and whose immoderately hasty, and therefore shallow brain prevents them from regarding a subject from more than one point of view.

As the Infinite Life, or grand Central Sun of Being, was regarded by the truly wise in ancient times as all-pervading and all-including, the word *central* really signified *interior*, while the phenomenal universe or expressional existence was the theatre for the display of individualized intelligences, continually struggling to manifest their latent potencies. As there must always be a limit to finite thought and description, and as some particular orb must necessarily mark the horizon of finite perception in any epoch, Alcyone, the centre of a universe, not of all universes, was regarded as the abiding-place of the most mighty Archangel discernible by man. This most ancient spiritual being,

whose individualized expression came within the range of astronomical observation, was the real Osiris of the Magi, while the popular Osiris was the angel of the lesser Sun, the sun of this planetary system only. The duality of life in its expression on any plane of existence was a cardinal doctrine of the wisdom-religion. While Sophia (Wisdom) is a Greek feminine noun, and Wisdom is constantly alluded to under the guise of a woman in spiritual documents, this divine Wisdom was ever with her masculine consort Love. He (Love) did nothing alone in the work of creation; neither did she (Wisdom) ever operate singly. An afterthought purely vicious, which grew up in periods of decadence, has found its way into more modern writings purporting to be of equal authority with the most ancient. These writings have been attempts to effect an impossible compromise between the real spiritual knowledge and sublimely exalted sentiment of the true adepts or initiates in Theosophy, and the coarse and brutal notions and practices of the vulgar throng of animalistic worshipers, who certainly did adore the male rather than the female, from the very cause assigned as a justification of the monstrous falsehood that woman is inferior to man and ever must be — because woman has less physical force than man and cannot make so successful a warrior.

The Scriptures of the Hebrews and Christians, both of which collections of antique documents are largely derived from Egypt, set forth both the higher and the lower view of this subject of sexual equality or inequality. Those portions of the Bible which evidently owe

their origin to the wisdom-religion teach the absolute equality of the sexes ; they are not found to contain a single passage which can fairly be construed otherwise. The weaker portions of so-called "Holy Writ" agree with the current misconceptions of the periods in which they were written, and thus argue in favor of man's sole dominance and woman's cringing subservience. Man and woman are, in the divine natural order of the universe, essentially equal. Have you ever met a man who was not a woman's son, or a woman who was not a man's daughter? If woman cannot exist without a father, and man cannot exist without a mother, how can one be above or below the other? Osiris never appeared without his wife, the beautiful veiled Isis, in the ancient portraiture of life's dual essence and expression ; while from the union of the blessed two, the offspring Horus proceeded as a divine child, a celestial messenger, not miraculously though immaculately conceived and born. To understand the real difference between immaculate and miraculous conception, it is only necessary to inquire into the proper meaning of terms, and we shall soon see how perfectly natural the one is and how highly improbable the other. True Theosophy is not incredible mystery ; it is divine wisdom, knowledge of life calculated to so enlighten all its possessors as to make them far better able than they would be without it, to stem the torrents of iniquity and promote the reign of righteousness on earth.

As the Roman Catholic Church has, without doubt, perpetuated the wisdom-religion, though it has studiously concealed it, under an immense mass of dogmas

and ceremonies, from the comprehension of the multitude, we shall find that as the centuries roll on and new doctrines are put forward as articles of faith, and special holidays celebrated in their honor, the veil is gradually lifting and the people are beginning to catch glimpses of a long-cloaked verity. The dogma of the immaculate conception, though at first sight it appears to all Protestants an unfounded superstition, should be hailed with delight by all lovers of natural morality. On the eighth day of December every year (styled in Catholic calendars Patronal Feast of the United States) it is declared from every Roman Catholic pulpit, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived, gestated, and born without sin, yet she had a father and a mother like any other child. True, some may reply, but the Church declares this was the result of a special act of divine grace and has occurred in no other instance, and was rendered necessary to bring the Messiah into the world in a spotless body; therefore the celebration of this feast is only another link in the old chain of superstition, and as such should be denounced. Our answer is, we are not advocating Roman Catholic interpretations of an admitted fact in the Church; we are seeking its theosophical soul and origin; and disguise the truth as theologians may, or fail to see it as many do, the fact remains that the most conservative and miracle-upholding Church does teach that a child has been conceived, gestated, and born like all other children, and yet immaculately; and the priests of that Church do very often in their sermons on the 8th of December hold up Mary as an example to the world on account of



her spotless purity. Inconsistency, you may cry out; for if Mary was specially endowed by God as no other woman was, then how can other women take pattern from her when they are not thus endowed? Again the answer must be given: truth and error are strangely mixed in all theology, and it is the work of Theosophy to disentangle them. He alone is a true Theosophist who is not afraid of any mixture of truth and error, but boldly works to sift the chaff from the wheat, and sever the gold from the alloy. This is not done by the sledgehammer blows of the iconoclast, who looks not at all to the truth within, and seeing some tares would condemn an entire field as full of them. We need constructive, discriminating workers, who can impartially and dispassionately distinguish between truth and falsehood. These, and these only, can collect material for the universal church of the future, which will be enchained by no rigorous bonds, but will welcome to its embrace all who are desirous of living for the spirit rather than for the flesh.

We are quite ready to listen with approval to many objections to the dogma of the miraculous conception of Jesus; but if in the case of Jesus the Church used the same argument it uses with regard to Mary, the immaculate conception and the immaculateness of all that follows could be easily and usefully argued out. How many women are there who expect to become virgin mothers in the literal sense of the word *virgin* as made to apply to a state of celibacy only? Here and there a disappointed, deluded person may be chasing such a will-o'-the-wisp; but may not every girl and

every boy be instructed to regard the procreative function as sacred, and would not some sound, plain talk on the ancient phallic worship in its original purity, do much good in many quarters in the direction of elevating the general idea of sexual relations above that of disgusting animality. Let the original truth on this subject be brought to light, let the natural relation of the sexes be purely and fairly dealt with, and an end will soon come to woman's degradation and enforced motherhood, to the birth of unwelcome children, and the multiplication of criminal tramps. Unless the wisdom-religion be revealed in its application to daily life and social purity, Theosophy, as a system of dreamy speculation, may as well be relegated to the Oriental chairs of a few universities and fall into innocuous desuetude, as the race engages its mind and taxes its brain with matters of every-day utility.

True Theosophy is the underlying principle of all reform; it is no antiquated or half-way measure teaching of things in no direct way pertaining to life here and now; and though we have the greatest respect for Spiritualism, and can see in it a means for the highest elevation of humanity (though honesty compels us to admit it can be desecrated to the undoing of the race), we have no doubt but the excessive other-worldliness of the Egyptians led at length to the loss of power and grandeur which once made Egypt a land of light, though eventually its name became the synonym of darkness. According to Bunsen's Chronology, Egypt was ruled by divine rulers for a consecutive period of 13,900 years; then came a race of demi-gods who ruled the

land; then their reign was over, and the Pharaohs or native rulers wore the crown. After the Pharaonic period, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Turks, in succession, tyrannized over the dispossessed inhabitants, till of late English interference in Egypt has marked the latest stage in foreign conquest. Here again would we emphasize our most positive conviction that Atlantis was the source whence early Egypt derived her knowledge. The gods and goddesses were none other than the ancient rulers who came from the higher Atlantian race, and were looked upon as divinities by the people because of their superior spiritual as well as intellectual attainments. Gerald Massey, whose poetry is often exquisite, and whose fame as a scholar is by no means inconsiderable, has certainly ridden his favorite hobby-horse, Astro-Mythology, to death, when he has characterized Atlantis, "an American mare's nest." While he has without doubt collected a great amount of important information, and published it in his large works and lectures, how can astronomical occurrences account for the condition of the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, though the mythical theory be everywhere pressed into service, and forced to apply whether it will or not to everything everywhere? Astronomical and astrological facts ought to be taken into proper consideration in an interpretation of the *mythos*; but the true rendering of the subject is that the truly wise have ever known much more concerning the influence of world upon world, than the blind scoffers of to-day who, after repeating like parrots the simple formula, "the moon rules the tides," dismiss all further knowledge of the

interaction of planets and satellites as barbaric folly and gross, unworthy superstition. Egypt was never a genuine parent of science. She seems to have had no growth of her own from infancy to maturity; but in the days of her childhood a powerful and wise race of conquering invaders came in upon her, and established themselves as her rulers and possessors. The original inhabitants were doubtless much in the condition of the American Indians and Australian aborigines at the time of the invasions of America and Australia by Europeans.

As some slight account of the other-world theories of the Egyptians may be of peculiar interest to our readers, we will summarize the essential teachings of the "Book of the Dead" in the following brief sentences which are in no way quotations from any Egyptian manuscript, but simply a summing up of the general teaching concerning the soul and its future experiences.

All the wisdom-religionists of the world have believed in pre-existence, though there has been considerable latitude among them concerning re-embodiment; while transmigration may be looked upon as entirely misunderstood by the unlearned at large. The soul is conceived of as a pure, innocent, spiritual essence, containing within itself all the potentialities of life. Its existence in paradise prior to any outward expression is exceedingly difficult to define, as it is in a state of non-reflectiveness. It lives and is content to live; it does not inquire into the why and wherefore of anything; it takes life as a matter of course, enjoying it in serene innocence. But the latent possibilities of the soul will not always remain dormant; they seek expres-

sion; and when first this expression is found, the soul creates a lower self, much as the play of "Pygmalion and Galatea" represents the sculptor fashioning a marble statue, endowing it with life derived from his own breath, and permitting it to choose for itself whether or no it will follow the desires of him who fashioned it.

The mystery of our dual selfhood, of the two "I's" of which we are all conscious, is hard to deal with in satisfactory terms of language; however, we all feel the fact of double desire and double consciousness. This secondary self, or lower nature, needs discipline, correction, education; and when perfected becomes the transparent and thoroughly submissive vehicle through which the higher soul gains expression in all the fullness of the term. Man on earth may be in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or even seventh stage of planetary expression, and the marvelous inequality of human life on earth, though all life is essentially one, and derived from one primal source, is accounted for from the fact that the seven planets, or spheres of progression, are not regarded as orbs, but states. These states are represented, perhaps, on several planets at once, in the different degrees of manifested life common to them. At the same time, according to this view, the very lowest races now on earth must be considered as living through their first round of planetary experience on this earth, while the few exceptionally great teachers who have astonished the world by their marvelous spiritual and intellectual attainments, have manifested the sixth, and in the highest instances the seventh stage of expression.

Re-embodiment need not take place on the same planet; it is possible to live through the whole of one round on one earth; thus, if one lives the life which may be called the rung A in the ladder of progression on this planet, he will live his B life on another world; but if he is found unfit to progress through the intervening spiritual spheres to the next planet, by reason of the exceeding sensuousness of his desires, he is then compelled to take on another earthly form on this earth. Reincarnation on the same planet is also accomplished through intense desire to do some special work, and thus is common only to the very high and the very low, using those terms with moral reference. To explain this planetary chain to the satisfaction of all readers is impossible in the limited space at our disposal. Some doubt if every one would see it clearly if volumes were devoted to its elucidation. In brief, it is but this: All material worlds are ultimatums of spiritual worlds, and on any given planet at a given time several spiritual states are ultimated. There can be no beginning half-way up the ladder for some while others have to commence at the bottom; consequently, those who are now high up were once low down; those who are now low down will once be high up. The Atlantean race may have been a race of souls who had lived out their lower lives on some other planet, and were attracted to this earth in the natural order of sequence. When the time came for them to take a higher step, they were in consequence of growth superior to other races whom they were instrumental in elevating. Every planet affords sustenance during the various periods of

its development for the varied races of men as well as animals. Life does not in the case of every unit commence its expression on one particular earth and remain with that earth till final perfection is reached; but goes on from world to world. In this chain of experience all are treated equally; thus, if any are living an exalted life of attainment here, they have grown to preparedness for it by experiences elsewhere. It is most conducive to the general welfare of the planetary system, that different races should be on each planet simultaneously, though at the outset of a planet's career only the lowest expressions are to be found upon it: as it progresses it affords attraction for the higher races until at length it sustains seventh-race embodiments, and has by that time reached the meridian of its perfection. This theory is at once reasonable and just, and most certainly deserves to be treated with the respect its dignity commands, not to be set aside with flippant sneer, and stupidly condemned because it does not coincide with the narrowest type of some one's particular orthodoxy, which may be heterodoxy of the worst kind in the eyes of his next-door neighbor.

The judgment scene in the court-room of Osiris is most graphically depicted in the Egyptian scriptures, from which it may be safely inferred the Apostle Paul borrowed the glowing imagery in which he indulged in his Epistle to the Corinthians, for there is no extant Hebrew records containing what he declares is "written in the Scriptures." Corinth, an influential seaport, contained a people who traded with Egypt, and thus it is easy to see that a man who, in the best sense of the

phrase, endeavored to be "all things to all men" for the purpose of elevating men of all nationalities and creeds, would use the records most familiar to his auditors when instructing them on the subject of the resurrection, concerning which the Hebrew scriptures are singularly silent. This silence is best accounted for by the admission generally made by scholars, that when in Egypt the Israelites had become so thoroughly indoctrinated with theories of post-mortem existence, that their best moral teachers and legislators found it needful to lay the utmost stress upon matters pertaining to the present life, as concerning the future world they were already well instructed.

In the book of Daniel, — a splendid sample of Chaldean Theosophy, — Nebuchadnezzar's degradation to the level of an animal and subsequent reinstatement as man — a man nobler after his descent than before it — may be studied with much profit by all interested.

When the soul leaves the body it finds itself in an immaterial form closely akin to the vesture it has laid aside in general appearance, in the audience chamber of the utterly impartial judge of the world. This judge is seated on an elevated dais or throne, after the manner of Eastern potentates. Before him are female divinities blindfolded, holding scales in their hands. In perfectly just balances they weigh every act of the soul summoned to judgment, whose fate is decided absolutely by his own acts. Taken out of its venerable archaic setting, this doctrine is a gem of the purest lustre. We may reset the stone, but nothing can dim its lustre nor any length of time wear out its suggestive usefulness.



What truth needs to be more impressed on the consciousness of each and every individual, than that man is the arbiter of his own destiny, and while judgment or sentence may appear to be pronounced from without, each individual really passes sentence upon himself? The higher spheres of paradise open to all who merit entrance therein, while the darkest states are but places of purification through suffering. Transmigration into the bodies of lower animals was never taught by the enlightened, but in every case the human entity is retained, and however a step may appear retrograde, all is in reality advance.

## LECTURE VI.

### EGYPTIAN THEOSOPHY (*continued*). — THE GREAT PYRAMID.

So much has already been written and said, and that many times, concerning Egypt and almost everything pertaining to it, that we scarcely know whether we can offer anything in the least new on the present occasion. Our theme is old, and yet the interest which it calls forth, and the great demand at present for condensed printed information of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh and other ancient Egyptian marvels, has led us to determine to once more discourse on Egypt, and offer another lecture on its wonders to the reading public.

To deal anything like fairly with an ancient theme, it is absolutely necessary to approach it with a mind entirely free from party bias, or one is almost certain to unconsciously indorse particular theories which have no real justification in the facts presented. Scriptural prophecies and references are often immensely strained to support foregone conclusions, and with all respect for Piazzì Smyth and other justly noted men who have striven to make the pyramid testify in defence of orthodox Christianity, we venture to affirm that all sectarian interpretations would considerably astonish the builders of this gigantic pile. Let us take a glimpse at

the pyramid first, and then consider why and by whom it was erected.

Pyramids are very common in Egypt; they literally stud the delta of the Nile, and they all bear striking resemblance to each other. In outward appearance they are quite similar, and the Great Pyramid differs from its younger and smaller brethren only by reason of more imposing proportions. When we enter the pyramids, however, we find an amazing difference, the Great Pyramid alone being conspicuous for the absence of all hieroglyphic inscriptions and for the elaborate interior arrangement, which is more than sufficient for a life-long study. Looking at the pyramid externally, in its present denuded condition, it is not very attractive to the lovers of the simply picturesque. It appears stern, majestic, imperial, forbidding, colossal in size, and hard as adamant in construction; but it can scarcely be called beautiful. Imposing it is in the highest degree; but the days of its loveliness were long ago, when coated with pure white casing-stones it shone with the radiance of spotless alabaster whenever the sun shone upon it. To-day its rugged, naked exterior suggests to us its long and tumultuous history. It looks like the country in which it stands, a splendid ruin, a magnificent wreck, and yet by no means an entire wreck or a perfect ruin. In its despoiled state it calls forth both reverence and regret; but it evidences a solidity which defies the tempest, and declares it ever ready to reveal to those who will patiently listen, a marvelous record of days that are no more.

Its proportions have frequently been given, but as

any treatise on the subject would be imperfect without them, we repeat the most important. In height, the building is about 480 feet from base to apex. Its base line is 764 feet. Interiorly, from the entrance to the commencement of the grand gallery, the space measures about 2527 inches. The length of the grand gallery itself is 1881½ inches. The passage between the grand gallery and the king's chamber is about 55 inches, while the dimensions of the king's chamber are about 412 inches in length, 206 in breadth, and 230 in height. These numbers doubtless have astronomical and spiritual meanings, which the sincere student of Theosophy will soon be able to interpret.

But however interesting and important its outward appearance may be, its history and significance are necessarily far more so. Why was such an edifice constructed? and by whom? These are questions ever recurring and very difficult to answer unless we concede certain points with regard to the affairs of the ancient world, which quite a number of reputed scholars are unwilling to grant. Historically considered, Egypt is doubtless the most fruitful of all ancient lands to those who carry out a well-arranged programme of archæological research. India yields far less than Egypt in the monumental line, however much she may have to teach us through her literature. But just here it is appropriate to call your attention to the fact that the Hermetic literature of Egypt is almost precisely the same as the Hindu Vedas, both in literary style and esoteric teaching. A striking resemblance to this literature is notable also in the Book of Job, which scholars

almost unitedly regard as the oldest portion of the Hebrew Scripture. In our search for the historic as well as the mystic key wherewith to unlock the mystery of ancient Egypt and its most stupendous monument, we must carefully steer clear of two extremes of opinion, both of which are very prevalent. One set of extremists claim that from Egyptian discoveries they can prove the Christian gospels non-historical. This assertion we flatly contradict. The other class of extremists are orthodox evangelicals, whose desire is to account for the Great Pyramid in particular in a strictly miraculous manner. The school of thinkers, of which Gerald Massey is an able representative, is so carried away with the exoteric symbolism of ancient Egypt, that statements are made by it, often most dogmatically, which are not by any means fully borne out by the actual facts in the case; and this school deals so much with the purely astronomical element in the mythos, that it does not dwell sufficiently on the esoteric, or strictly spiritual teaching of which mythology is the outer shell. The school of Piazzzi Smyth displays almost total ignorance of the condition of the real ante-diluvian world; an ignorance shared by most opponents of the theory of Atlantis, as put forward by Ignatius Donnelly in his truly marvelous and highly authentic work bearing that title. But in substantiation of the truth of the theory, it needs only to be said that nothing short of a direct divine miracle, totally supernatural in character, is ever brought forward by the orthodox Christian party to account for the Great Pyramid, independent of the supposition of an Atlantis or its practical working

equivalent. That strange and valuable book (now out of print), "Art Magic," gives a very plausible, and in some respects ample, sketch of the Great Pyramid, who designed it, and for what purpose. The explanation in that treatise is purely theosophical, and to this we will refer more particularly before we close this lecture.

The principal points of interest in connection with Egypt is that its oldest monuments are by far the finest. Egypt seems like unto the Adam of the second chapter of Genesis, who appeared first as a man and then gradually deteriorated, instead of having been born an infant and then slowly ascended in stature and intelligence. *Hadaama* is the Hebrew equivalent of red men, and it is singular, to say the least, that the earliest notable persons of whose history we can find any traces in Egyptian literature, painting, or sculpture, appear to have belonged to a powerful red race. Now this red race seems to have invaded Egypt long, long ago, and to have suddenly established itself in power, introducing religion, sciences, and arts totally at variance with the crude barbaric condition of the original inhabitants. These powerful conquerors must have been the "gods" to whom James Freeman Clarke alluded in that unparalleled work of his, "Ten Great Religions," who are said to have reigned over Egypt for a continuous period of 13,900 years. Then came the reign of demi-gods, and later on the Pharaohs, or native princes, who in their turn were overthrown by the Persians, who were followed by Greeks, Romans, and Turks, until recently England has appeared in Egypt. Now "gods," or sons of God, otherwise designated sons of Osiris, sons of

the Sun, and sons of light, are not angelic beings, who assume human form and intermarry with mortal women, as many fanciful interpreters of some parts of Genesis have assumed. They are simply unusually gifted men ; and with the gods always appear goddesses, or equally gifted women.

These distinguished wise ones of the earth are not supernaturally endowed by arbitrary divine appointment, but qualified adepts, the successful initiates into the genuine mysteries of being, who, in consequence, and as the necessary reward of diligent and long-continued spiritual study, have brought themselves to a state of proficiency in both spiritual and intellectual matters, truly astounding to the uninitiated multitude. Melchisedec, to whom Professor Smyth, and others who share his views, make frequent reference, signifies not a solitary historical character, but whoever for the time being is the head of the inmost and profoundest spiritual order on earth. This order is perpetual, and is always composed of twelve males and twelve females, who, wherever they may be on earth, are always perfectly and consciously united by means of absolute spiritual and thence electric sympathy. This order possesses the knowledge expressed in the pyramid, which only the enlightened can interpret ; for, while astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and geometry are employed as its exponents, the inner meaning is so deep that a merely scientific interpretation fails to reveal the spiritual intent, and though doubtless correct in the main, where astronomy and metrology are concerned, fails totally where universal spiritual teaching is intended.

The first step out of the fog of creedal error into the light of spiritual truth is, to realize that spiritual facts are outside of time and space ; therefore they are super-sensuous, super-historical, and super-theological. For this reason materialistic historians and theologians invariably misapprehend because they limit them. The next step is an understanding of the science or law of exact correspondence, which is totally different from fanciful allegory, the difference consisting in correspondential emblems being universal, and always understandable ; while fanciful allegorization is necessarily dubious owing to the artificial and non-persistent character of the objects employed as types. In order to make this portion of our subject plain we will cite an instance of correspondence, and contrast it with allegory.

Jesus says, "Consider the lilies of the field." A lily is an accurate correspondential emblem, because a lily is a flower which, though appearing in several varieties of form, conveys a definite idea to the mind, as it always grows in the same way, and presents a similar appearance. A table or a chair, for instance, indeed any article of human manufacture, is not truly a correspondence, because it is nothing invariably persistent in nature, being incidental to man's condition or a part of his surroundings in one country and not in another. The highest of all correspondences are the parts of the human body which always appear in the same relations and exist for the same purpose. Another very high order of correspondences are the sun, moon, and stars, which always appear in the heavens, and perform regu-



lar revolutions. Solar worship was originally the very highest and purest form of worship known to man. The ancients understood what Swedenborg in the eighteenth century again brought to light; they knew and taught that the heavens were in the human form, and that in man is to be found a perfect correspondence to all the signs of the zodiac. In the wisdom-religion of antiquity, Alcyone, the central star in the constellation known as the Pleiades, was the fitly chosen symbol of the Divine Mind, to which the immortal life of man directly corresponds. The sun in traveling around Alcyone passes through the twelve zodiacal signs once in every period of about 25,840 years, as the earth passes through the same twelve signs in its every annual revolution of a little more than 365 days. These twelve signs are corresponded to in man by the twelve orders or groups of intellectual faculties which can be distinctly traced and defined. The Grand Pyramid was designed to memorialize for all time the exact science of man in his relation to the universe, which its designer must have pretty thoroughly understood. The apex points directly to Alcyone, which symbolizes the ever-upward glancing of the soul to God, the parent of all intelligence. The interior construction of the pyramid is marvelous and unique, and suggests very much more than any simple metrologist, astronomer, or ordinary theologian can detect, as it portrays in perfect proportions the scenes through which every soul must pass during its journey from infancy to maturity. Only the true adepts of the highest rank, masons of the first order, can interpret the pyramid theosophically, as its

occult meaning is deeply and purposely veiled from all others, though clearly revealed to those who can read the hieroglyphics of the universal lodge, which are simple and accurate geometrical proportions and mathematical figures.

The entrance to the pyramid, as doubtless all are aware, is at the north side only, and while many endeavors had previously been made to force an entrance, El Mamoun was the first to enter within its walls; whether through some unusual knowledge or by accident he discovered the entrance, is a matter of speculation. When the entrance is once found, exploration of the interior is not easy, for the method of construction is so strange, and the facilities for travel so meagre in many places, that it was long after the entrance was gained that any one was hazardous and successful enough to glean much definite information concerning it. El Mamoun's forced hole led to the descending entrance passage by means of a toilsome road; but there is, higher up, a perfect entrance passage, 985 pyramid inches in length, that conducts the explorer immediately to a granite portcullis, which is at the juncture of the first ascending and first descending passages. The descending entrance passage leading to the subterranean chamber, the object of which seems deeply mysterious, is, according to the most authentic estimation, about 4446 inches. The subterranean chamber is at a considerable distance above the high-level watermark of the Nile; but before it is reached a deep well is encountered, with which there is communication from the point of juncture of the first ascending passage (length

1542 inches) with the grand gallery leading to the king's chamber, and the horizontal passage leading to the queen's chamber. The subterranean chamber was, without doubt, the scene of the profoundest mystic rites many thousands of years ago, for it is almost impossible to doubt that the most sublime and awful religious ceremonies were carried on within its walls; rites, the very mention of which would startle and confound any save those whose knowledge of the deep things of Theosophy is infinitely beyond the average attainment of those who just venture to peep curiously over the brink of the occult. The grand gallery has been for several years past the subject of much interest, as its length,  $1881\frac{1}{2}$  inches, has pointed, many think, with remarkable clearness to midsummer, 1882, when Lady Caithness and other eminent writers and thinkers consider *anno domini* (the age of the lord) came to an end and *anno dominæ* (the age of the lady) commenced. This, then, is woman's era, and man's monopoly is at an end.

Let us take a hurried glance at the grand gallery, and gazing upon its majestic proportions see if we cannot gain some clew as to its inner meaning. This gallery is long, light, handsome, and vaulted; but, like all other portions of the pyramid, utterly destitute of ornamentation. It terminates abruptly in a most extraordinary manner, as it leads directly into a narrow passage extremely difficult to travel, into the king's chamber, which is doubtless the most important and significant of all the chambers in the pyramid, as it contains simply a lidless sarcophagus, eminently suggestive of the unveiling

of truth and the removal of every veil of mystery when the hierophant has crossed the mystic threshold and stands face to face with the naked truth in its sublime majesty. The passage through the difficult way may, however, be obviated by those who can soar into the chamber above, access to which can only be gained by ascension or flight. To those who reduce everything to a special chronology, the narrow and difficult passage signifies the present period through which the world is passing; and this present age is certainly a time of universal trial and unrest. Still there are those who can and do live serenely above the strife-laden atmosphere of the lower mind; and these are sheltered in the sanctuary above, while others less spiritually advanced are toiling painfully along the weary road, till they at length gain admittance to the king's chamber, which typifies a new and brighter dispensation.

To those, however, who see in the pyramid a universal picture of man's effort and the soul's destiny, as well as the fate of this and all other planets, the pyramidal architecture is far more deeply significant than it can be to the mere chronologist; for all questions of time and place are far inferior to those relating to the progression of the human spirit everywhere. The metric system so carefully elaborated in the pyramid's construction, is to the occult student of far more moment than a mere literal standard of earthly weights and measures. That reference is correctly made by Professor Smyth and others to the sacred cubit of Scripture, and that "false weights are an abomination to the Lord," we certainly indorse; but our plea is for a higher and

deeper interpretation of the pyramid than that given by those who, in their over-anxiety to prove the Bible literally true, well-nigh overlook its spiritual meaning.

From a theosophical standpoint the pyramid is a monument of universal import, relating to the deepest truths of spirit. Standing as it does on the perfect square, it teaches that the only temple man can build acceptable to the Most High, is a temple whose foundations are perfect equity and universal brotherhood. The square stands for absolute impartiality, and it is not a wrong use of language to speak of a square man, a square transaction, or even a square meal, when you intend to signify that people and things are fully as good as represented. "Acting on the square" is an excellent expression; but it means brotherhood in the fullest sense of the word, and this is the foundation stone which the builders of false systems of political economy have rejected, which rulers have defied, but which is yet to become manifestly the headstone of the corner. This is the stone which grinds all injustice to powder in the day of its might, and breaks irretrievably all that comes in collision with it.

The triangular form of the pyramid is emblematic of the perfect trinity, the three in one and one in three; the perfect light whose color is white but which manifests itself in the threefold radiance of red, blue, and yellow. White is perfect purity, the all-including, but as yet unmanifested life of being. Red is the masculine power of love, the generative principle. Gold is the color of wisdom, the mother element, in whose pure matrix the blue, significant of truth, is miraculously

conceived and born. Osiris, Isis, and Horus are the threefold expression of the one infinite, eternal, nameless life which is above and yet within all, and in whom as well as by and through whom all existence is possible.

The Egyptians, invariably sublime in their conceptions, have in the Great Pyramid far exceeded all their other efforts; and by Egyptians in this connection we do not mean the native dwellers on the soil, who at the time of the Atlantian conquest were slowly emerging from primitive barbarism; but the descendants of those princes in wisdom who, whether of Atlantian or other physical descent, were the true sons of light by reason of their having completely subdued the flesh to the spirit and walked in the glory of an illumination which no mere external culture can supply. To trace out still a little further the object of the pyramid, let us glance at the telescopic gallery, a perfect natural telescope which stretches from the subterranean chamber to the entrance. This perfect telescope enabled the mystics who were engaged in astronomical as well as spiritual studies, to receive light directly from *alpha draconis*, which was the polar star 2170 B.C., and which is always the polar star at the time when some very great event of mystical import affects the earth. 2170 B.C. is about the date of Noah's deluge, which, according to occult tradition, signified a complete remodelment of all things upon the earth, and previously in the spiritual states connected with the earth. Professor Smyth and many others believe the pyramid to have been completed and dedicated in that year; others with

whom we agree, for reasons known only to mystic fraternities, place the date nearly 26,000 years earlier, or about 30,000 years from the present time, when the position of the stars would have been identical with their places 2170 B.C. Be this as it may, the pyramid displays a knowledge of astronomy on the part of its designer wholly incompatible with the foundationless assumption of many that there was no knowledge in the world to speak of until very recently. Western sages are only just beginning to rediscover, and paragraphists to publish as new revelations, facts better understood in the ages long gone by than by any modern scientist.

The present age is, however, very notable for the almost universal dissemination of knowledge which characterizes it; for though the actual attainments of the past may, in some directions at least, have been positively greater than those of the present, facts certainly have not been so universally diffused before, unless it may have been in the palmiest days of the long-sunken and well-nigh forgotten Atlantis, to whose actual existence the bed of the ocean which has derived its name from this mysterious country, irrefragably testifies. The polar star is ever the emblem of the highest perception of truth in man; it is invariably associated with the keenest and loftiest intuition; and thus to turn literally toward the pole star was in the attitude of exact correspondence, to turn ever for light and guidance to the sense of right within; and as the star in the heavens is so far above us that we have to direct our glance steadily upward, and therefore to

divert it completely from the earth, so are we taught by wise spiritual direction, to become so enamored with whatever is above and beyond us that, forsaking carnal pleasures and sensuous delights in our eager quest of spiritual possession, we may rise effectually superior to the snares, entanglements, distresses, and diseases incident to all that is conveyed in the terms *sensuality* and *worldliness*: It is only by the light of another and higher world that earthly business can be done; "one world at a time" is an insane and unnatural expression, for which no justification is found anywhere in the universe; for where have we an example of a world that does not borrow light from a grander orb around which it perpetually revolves? Still the time may come when worlds are self-luminous; but then their relation to other orbs will only be the more intimate, the union more intense.

A comparison of the Egyptian pyramids with pyramids in Central America furnishes many grave arguments in support of the conclusion we long ago arrived at, that in distant times, by means of Atlantis as a central land, communication was open between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The pyramids of the Western world are, however, far inferior to the Egyptian. They are larger (one at Pueblo, New Mexico, covering about forty-seven acres of ground, while the great Egyptian pyramid covers no more than thirteen and one-half acres), but very much lower, thereby suggesting a debased type of architecture, deficient in grandeur and sublimity. *Divinely tall* is a poetic simile; but who ever heard any thing or any one



spoken of as *divinely short*? It is a striking fact that very high buildings are inevitably connected with a high degree of culture. Where very few are civilized, a great artist may design a solitary, lofty pile in a widely extended district, but wherever civilization abounds, the general height of buildings is peculiarly notable, and there are no examples of pigmy races of men displaying great intellectual vigor. The great test of attainment is symmetry of form, good balance, fine equilibrium; and wherever we find the truest and most thorough culture, we shall behold harmony in proportion everywhere as its concomitants. Thus are we led to admire the exquisite beauty of that Greek Theosophy, derived from Egypt, which will form the topic of other essays; and though in succeeding chapters we shall have many words of unaffected praise to bestow on the Hindu religion, which has too often laid excessive stress on austerity, a careful comparison of the best features in all systems will conclusively prove that the highest teachers in all lands have advocated symmetry, *i.e.* perfect culture of morals, mind and body.

## LECTURE VII.

### ATLANTIS.

WHILE there may be no absolute historical proof limited by that history which commences with the period of Herodotus, popularly termed the father of history, who is, after all, only the father of the most modern history; while we say there may not be any direct historical proof of the existence of Atlantis to be received along such direct lines of modern history as modern scholars usually travel, yet the testimony of the very earth itself is sufficient to convince all intelligent students who are capable of making an examination of the bed of the ocean; while all the mythologies of the world and the most ancient documents of the Orient, besides the traditions of the North American Indians and others, all go so far to substantiate Plato's story and to confirm the general line of affirmation in Ignatius Donnelly's work entitled "Atlantis," that we feel certain an impartial and critical review of the subject on the part of all who are fair-minded, will bring students to the inevitable conclusion that there is, at least, a large probability that Atlantis was a fact and no fiction.

From the spiritual side of life it is declared that the existence of Atlantis is thoroughly well ascertained; that

there are multitudes in spirit life who positively know of its existence, that records are kept with most faithful accuracy, and that communications are forthcoming absolutely proving to those who are susceptible of such demonstration the fact of the antediluvian world. We will now call your attention directly to facts in the order in which we deem it advisable to present them, and then leave you with such assistance as you can derive from history and science, to indorse or repudiate the testimony here given.

There can be no doubt whatever that the world is immeasurably older than six thousand years ; there can also be no doubt of man having existed upon the earth through periods which may almost be termed "countless ages." We will not undertake to say how old the human race is ; it may have been millions of years since the first human being set foot upon the earth, for without doubt the story of the earth, as many geologists have affirmed, is a history of a constant succession of risings and fallings of surface. Many geologists have come to the conclusion that a million years is a very short time in the history of the world, for such periods as are sometimes called the Primary, the Secondary, and Tertiary, as well as such other periods as are termed the Silurian, the Devonian, the Carboniferous, etc., have occupied ages upon ages. An eminent geologist in England expressed in our hearing, that all events which transpired less than eighty thousand years ago might be considered, geologically speaking, recent, eighty thousand years being as a mere span in the history of the earth, for since the days of the fire-mist, or the time of

the primitive chaos (the first expression from original cosmos), until the present hour, cycles of ages must have been consumed in the gradual development, peopling, and civilizing of this one little world.

But it would be impossible in an address such as this to enter at any length upon the story of the world's gradual formation and development. It is not our purpose to carry you in thought through long geological epochs or to compute their duration: we simply remind you that the earth develops through a succession of spiritual cycles; these cycles are each divided into twelve lesser cycles ordinarily termed ages, periods, or dispensations, each one occupying twenty-one hundred and seventy years or thereabouts. If the average duration of each minor cycle is between twenty-one and twenty-two hundred years, and there are twelve of these minor cycles in the grand cycle which has been termed the grand year of the Pleiades, during which time the phenomenon is accomplished known as the precession of the equinoxes, you will perceive that a complete cycle embraces nearly twenty-six thousand years. We believe twenty-five thousand eight hundred and forty years is about the time of the duration of each grand cycle when computed with as much accuracy as is possible without entering upon the higher mathematics.

During each period of nearly twenty-six thousand years land and water change their places upon earth, and while there may have been a "glacial period," there is no doubt whatever of there having been many glacial floods; and while there may have been a time when the

entire world, or at all events the greater portion of it, was under water, still all races have their stories of deluges which were simply local and which occurred long after the earth was settled by man. When you were children you all heard the story of Noah's deluge, which, according to the chronology of the Pentateuch, took place about four thousand years ago; but when you consider that these five books, commonly called the five books of Moses, only relate to a very small portion of the earth's surface, no mention being made in them of any other parts of the earth than portions of Europe, Asia, and Africa (nothing whatever being said concerning America or Australia, the eastern parts of Asia, the southern parts of Africa, or the western parts of Europe, all this territory being apparently unknown to the writers), the story dealing only with the Israelites and with the nations with whom they fought and did business, making mention of no other territory than that associated with Israel's history, you become convinced that the flood which occurred nearly four thousand years ago, or thereabouts, was nothing more than a local deluge. The letter of the story undoubtedly referred to events which then occurred — doubtless some great natural upheaval, due to violent earthquakes, and the encroachment of the sea to an unusual extent upon the land; at the same time vast torrents of rain poured down day after day, causing great damage to life and property. But the deluge stories of all nations certainly cannot have been founded upon the Israelitish record of a deluge that occurred comparatively recently and which was limited to a very narrow area. You

will find on inquiry that many a nation which apparently never had communication with the Hebrews has preserved faithfully the record of a great deluge which occurred long, long ago; and though it has been customary for many centuries among the orthodox both in Israel and Christendom, to deny everything that has appeared to conflict with the literal history of the Bible, no scientist, scholar, profound philosopher, or liberal religionist is in any way limited in his acceptance of universal testimony to an event occurring long ago, by any alleged divine revelation concerning the comparative youth of the world, as geology has gone far to prove that the world is millions of years old instead of only a few thousands, while testimony is accumulating daily proving man to be so ancient an inhabitant of the world that his real antiquity is a matter of doubt, it reaching so far into prehistoric ages. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the legends of all nations have been founded upon historical facts, that all mythologies have historical and biographical, as well as scientific, spiritual, and philosophical elements within them; the question therefore at once arises, From what primal fount did the idea of a universal deluge enter into all ancient literature and possess the minds of all nations upon earth?

The story of a universal deluge must necessarily have reference to a great catastrophe, which, even if it did not affect the entire world to the extent of overwhelming the whole earth, must have so far affected the entire world as to have seriously interfered with the condition, occupation, and commerce of all peoples.

There can be little doubt that the Aborigines, both of America and Australia, are the degenerate relics of once ancient and powerful peoples; no one can study the literature of the North American Indians, or their traditions rather (for most of their testimony is conveyed orally, not by means of writing), or the remarkable ceremonies in which they engage connected with the interment of their dead; no one can study their beliefs concerning the future world, and then peruse the Hermetic philosophy of Egypt, the Vedantic philosophy of Hindustan, or the classical literature of Greece and Rome, without coming to the conclusion that there is a truly wonderful similarity between the traditions of the untutored dwellers on the North American prairies and the most ancient and cultivated people upon earth. With such testimony as ancient scriptures, classical lore, and Indian tradition can supply, all deep students must become convinced that there was a time when Europe, America, and Asia were united as they are not now geographically, but as they surely will be to all intents and purposes, as fully if not more perfectly than they ever were in prehistoric times, when commerce and navigation have been brought to such perfection as to place a girdle of fraternity round the whole world.

You all know that in many places islands have been known to suddenly disappear, especially in regions where there are active volcanoes and where earthquakes are frequent, and whenever an island has disappeared in one part of the sea, somewhere else an island has suddenly — apparently miraculously — made its appearance. You all know that whenever the encroachments of the

sea in some places are such as to inundate large tracts of country, submerge habitations, and drive the population inland, at that very time somewhere else large tracts of marshy land become dry, and in some places what was for ages the bed of the ocean becomes once more the habitation of humanity. In California, and all along the line of the Pacific coast, there is a tendency on the part of the sea to withdraw itself; and though something has been done by the hand of man in "making land," human art and ingenuity having redeemed some land from the waters, yet instead of the sea when left to itself gaining upon the land, it is unquestionably assisting man's endeavors to extend the land. We predict the time will not be very long before the waters of the Pacific Ocean will retreat several miles from where they now usually flow, and there will arise a beautiful and fertile tract of country extending far into what is now the ocean. But on the extreme eastern coast, especially in the State of Maine, it is observed that many farms once high and dry are now under water. The water is constantly encroaching upon the eastern shores of the American continent and retreating from the western; and as the march of civilization and progress is now constantly westward, it appears as though the current of human thought and enterprise naturally follows those natural currents which are causing new lands to rise in the West and the sea to encroach upon land that has grown old in the East.

You know that it is necessary in Egypt for the Nile to overflow its banks every year and inundate the land, or it would not be capable of yielding crops; hence the



overflow of the waters of that "sacred" river is absolutely necessary to human sustenance. You also know after long periods of excessive cultivation it is necessary for the earth to have a period of rest; for this reason it was wisely prescribed in the Jewish law that the land should keep its Sabbaths, every seventh year the land should be allowed to rest, as the seventh day every week was given to man for rest; whenever the sabbatic law is ignored by farmers and agriculturists, the land gradually loses its fertility, as by over-cultivation and over-production it becomes sterile, just as man by over-exertion, the loss of natural sleep, and stated periods of refreshment and recuperation, loses his vigor and power to continue labor.

Whenever the land has been excessively cultivated for a long period of time, and has supported very highly developed races of men, the phosphates have been gradually removed from the soil into the sea; and when those phosphates, which are necessary for all human and vegetable life, are removed from the soil, and the richest earth has been carried into the waters, the earth becomes practically uninhabitable; at such times the waters gradually encroach upon land and undermine large portions of the soil. There are many currents of water under the earth; there are also currents of fire. If you could see deep down into the bowels of the earth you would behold connections between interior portions of the earth far inland and the ocean; these are reasons for streams of fire belching forth as they sometimes do far from the centre of any specially volcanic regions. You know there are warm and even

boiling springs in very cold parts of the earth, in Iceland for instance, proving that there is underneath the earth a close connection between rivers of fire and rivers of water; whenever earthquakes occur, the fire and the water under the earth have together produced the phenomena. Earthquakes and volcanoes are always near neighbors. Earthquakes are always common in volcanic regions; where there are many earthquakes there are usually violent volcanic disturbances; in many places where there are now frequent earthquakes there are ranges of extinct volcanoes. Students can discover over all the earth many indications that great upheavals and convulsions of nature, destroying large territories of land, have been brought about by the collision of fire and water, two great necessities and yet two deadly enemies of man, if man's life is regarded only from a physical standpoint; but when our eyes are turned toward the spiritual plan and purpose of being, and we realize that God manifests his presence in the storm; that there is never a period of inundation or strife that is not followed by prosperity and calm; when we realize the existence of a spiritual power beyond all external laws and forces, and attribute all to divine power, never to accident or chance,—nature becomes aglow with divine illumination, and the spirit of God is seen in every movement of the earth. From the standpoint of spiritual life we can observe the action of spiritual powers in peopling and then unpeopling the earth, in rebuilding districts long since rendered uninhabitable; and we thereby come to know that every distinct centre of civilization is a direct response to some special need

in spiritual life, and that when any period or cycle ends, the first-fruits of that cycle are gathered in like garnered sheaves; at such times all the souls belonging to that period are gathered to their home in spiritual life.

If we had space to enter more fully into the laws of spiritual life, to explain the existence of families in the spiritual world, the distinctive origin of the various races of mankind, and prove how each race has its distinctive origin in spirit and afterward in material form; that the negro did not spring from the Malay, nor the Malay from the Caucasian, but that each race represents a distinct order of spiritual life manifested on earth,—we could trace in the outward history of the world the reason why one race after another rises and falls, and why a place which has long been occupied by one people will afterward be occupied by another and totally dissimilar race, until after many such changes (generally brought about by natural convulsions of the most terrific character, also somewhat by wars and pestilence, particularly when the condition of the people has been corrupt) all nations blend into one; then when all nations have blended into one, the paradisiacal or edenic condition of the world will be established on that hemisphere or in that zone where such union has been perfected. There can be no doubt whatever that upon the land where civilized races are now living there were once powerful warlike races, who gradually grew peaceful, then in an age of deterioration warlike again. These races came and went in obedience to a direct law of spiritual being which ordains that all events shall be

accomplished through the precession of cycles of development. When an objection is made that there is not only progress but also retrogression, we answer, that when you can solve the spiritual problem of life, you will KNOW that seeming retrogression as well as seeming progress is in reality only progress in the true sense of the word.

What do we discover concerning the development of the earth itself? Why, that everything advances, then retrogrades, and then goes forward again visibly. There is not a summer but is followed by a winter, day is always followed by night, there is never a period of activity that is not followed by rest; the glory of the meridian sunlight is followed by a midnight. But why is it necessary that there should be a night following upon every day? a winter after every summer? Why is it necessary that men should sleep every night after a period of activity during the day? Why is it that empires fall after they have risen, that flowers fade and forms die so soon after their maturity? Why is it in the history of every nation under heaven as well as in the progress of the earth itself there should be a night-time in every cycle as well as a day-time, rest as well as boundless activity? Surely because during the day period of the cycle the activities are such that it becomes necessary for rest to follow in order that humanity may be prepared to ascend to a yet higher plane. Surely it is necessary that winter should come in order that the seeds may germinate in the earth, and that darkness follow light so that light be more appreciated. In all great pictures the background is dark and the

foreground brilliant; contrasts and reliefs are necessary to show forth the splendors of the artist's ideal; shadow is necessary to reveal the glory of sunshine, adversity gives the highest understanding of pleasure. So in the entire development of the earth and of all races of men there must come a night-time as well as a day-time, a winter as well as a summer in the cycle of unfoldment.

If, then, you behold a bright and brilliant day ending in a dark and awful night; if clouds gather at eventide, and night follows rayless and starless; if thunders, lightnings, and earthquake terminate a day of summer heat prolific of activity and prosperity, remember that that brilliant day not having been a perfect day, its very activities not being absolutely perfect, have begotten such conditions as must of necessity be removed through the agency and instrumentality of the darkness, rest, and storm that follow.

As no spirit can die, no intelligence become extinct, no mind perish, no idea be lost, what matters it if the great empires of the world are buried in oblivion? What matters it if Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon shall some day be forgotten? What matters it if Egypt, Chaldea, and Babylonia are now in ruins? What matters it if along the banks of the Nile, the Ganges, the Euphrates, the Jordan, and all sacred rivers there are now little else than abodes of owls and bitterns where at one time were gorgeous temples and splendid palaces?

Though their outward forms be destroyed and are now but faded flowers and withered leaves, only the most external forms have died, only the chrysalides have been thrown off, while the spirit of the nations

like butterflies of immortality have wended their way to brighter and loftier climes; and from that glorious realm of spirit whither human sense cannot ascend, triumphant mind reaches down to the earth, offering to take us all, though ever gradually, to its higher state.

All graces of the past, all voices of ancient song, all ideas inspiring ancient artificers, are ever ready to rehabilitate themselves on earth with a splendor never known in days gone by.

If the story of Atlantis is regarded by any as a fable, it must be accounted for in other ways than those which have already been resorted to to prove the narrative fabulous. The statement that Atlantis at one time occupied what is now the Atlantic Ocean is borne out by the very name; the ocean has taken its name from Atlantis, at one time an immense continent, but afterward, when reduced in size through gradual encroachments of the waters, only an island of moderate dimensions; also from Atlas, who is said to have been a mighty ruler of Atlantis before the days of Poseidon, from whom the principal city of Atlantis took its name. This great king also gave his name to the central state of the united Atlantian empire of olden time, which was divided into ten kingdoms; he was afterward regarded as a god in mythology: great warriors and heroes of antiquity were always deified after passing from earth — even Romulus was deified and numbered among the gods because he was regarded as the founder of Rome, though it is supposed by many that his sudden death was a result of popular protest against his tyranny; the “gods” therefore were not always immaculate. It was

customary in olden times to give the names of great and mighty warriors to the countries they ruled, as well as to worship them as divinities after their passing into spirit life. We say, then, the very name Atlantic, derived from Atlantis and from Atlas, will have to be accounted for in ways not yet attempted if the story of Atlantis is considered a myth; while the deep-sea soundings of the vessels "Dolphin," "Challenger," and others in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean have absolutely proved the assertion of Plato, made more than twenty-three hundred years ago, reiterated from the words of his ancestor Solon, the great lawgiver of Athens, who flourished about six hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era, as the ocean district bordering upon the northwestern coast of Africa and extending as far as the British Islands is filled with volcanic débris which may be correctly termed "mud" produced by sunken land. It is an absolutely attested fact that the entire bed of the Atlantic Ocean bordering upon the coast of Africa and Europe is at the present time in such a condition as to prove conclusively that violent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have destroyed countries in that region once extending far toward the shore of what is now America, while the peaks of the Azores off the northwestern coast of Africa are without doubt the mountain tops of the highest elevations upon Atlantis. The circular motion of the Gulf Stream is another witness to Atlantis, as it was doubtless occasioned by the water flowing around the island of Atlantis taking an almost circular form from that circumstance; while before Atlantis became an

island (that is while it was yet a large continent), there being no outlet for the waters of the southern sea into the northern ocean, extreme cold prevailed in the north of Europe and other northern climes, which cold has considerably abated through the agency of the Gulf Stream.

The glacial period in Europe was no doubt occasioned by the cold northern ocean being shut off from the waters of the warm southern seas; but as the continent of Atlantis gradually wore away, as the encroachments of the sea steadily diminished its dimensions and reduced it to an island, the Gulf Stream, flowing from the southern seas around Atlantis, warmed the waters of the northern ocean, and by so doing caused that melting of the ice which is supposed by many geologists to have taken place from twelve thousand to twenty thousand years before the present time. The epoch when Atlantis was submerged must have fully terminated the glacial period in the northern parts of North America and Europe, while the more southern portions of these continents must have had their glacial era, if at all, at a period of almost incalculable antiquity.

Let the reader try to imagine himself a citizen of the ancient world occupying a position on Atlantis, say twenty-five thousand years ago, before the continent had been reduced to an island, for at that time Atlantis was physically connected with both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Instead of there being then two large hemispheres, the Eastern and the Western, as now, with two immense oceans between them, there was an immense middle continent, that included con-



siderable portions of what are now known as the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Time came gradually when the land was split by earthquakes and the gradual encroachment of the sea, which caused land to rise from the ocean both on the eastern and western sides of Atlantis; as the land went down more and more in the central continent, it rose correspondingly on either side. In this way both the western parts of the Eastern Hemisphere and the eastern parts of the Western Hemisphere were gradually formed prior to the time of the submergence of Atlantis, but did not assume anything like their present size till after that event.

This fact will account for the presence of widely different races in the opposite hemispheres, races who certainly were not indigenous to the soil. There is, moreover, a wonderful similarity in both the *fauna* and the *flora* of the Eastern and the Western world; these facts, together with that perfect unity of tradition in religious and many other respects prevailing in the most ancient portions of the Eastern and the most ancient portions of the Western Hemisphere prove very strongly the once union of both hemispheres.

There can be no doubt that after Atlantis had been to a large degree separated from the mainland, ridges remained connecting it with the Eastern Hemisphere on the one hand, and with the Western on the other. The course of those ridges can now be distinctly traced, as they are not very far below the bed of the Atlantic Ocean; across these ridges men and animals must have passed from Atlantis to the Eastern and the Western

world. The inhabitants of Atlantis and its animals could pass easily along the eastern ridge into Africa, thence into Europe, and thence into Asia; and along the western ridge they could with equal ease pass into America: this circumstance readily accounts for the close resemblance still existing between the peoples, animals, and vegetation of both hemispheres; such similarity cannot be accounted for satisfactorily in any other way.

You will also remember that the earliest stories of Egypt are tales of unparalleled glory and magnificence. Egypt was at one time the most highly civilized colony of Atlantis; long before the days of the Pharaohs or any native Egyptian rulers, you are told the country was ruled by "gods." Many and many an ancient Egyptian tradition and inscription proves that they were great and mighty men who ruled in prehistoric times; they are represented in tradition as of a reddish hue. The Hebrew narrative ultimately traceable to Moses, who was educated at the court of Pharaoh, and therefore acquainted with all the wonders of Egypt, declares that red men were specially created in Eden by God: now the Atlantians were doubtless a red race, and an exceedingly powerful and highly developed race. The letter of the second chapter of Genesis contains, no doubt, a record of Atlantis as well as the allegorical spiritual truth we have endeavored to bring out further along in this volume. There are very many traditions in Egypt describing the overrunning of the land in very ancient times by a race of powerful and mighty red people. When the Spaniards visited Peru many

centuries ago, they found Solar worship there in its original purity, agreeing perfectly with the ancient Solar worship of Egypt, Persia, and India. Now Solar worship is the true worship of antiquity; and you can account for the similarity between the Peruvian and Egyptian theologies satisfactorily in no other way than by admitting the influence of Atlantians who crossed the connecting ridges now under water, and traveled to Egypt on the one side and to America on the other, leaving in both hemispheres almost ineradicable impressions of their civilization.

Before as well as after the ridges were submerged, the arts of navigation were thoroughly understood in the ancient world. In the brightest days of Atlantis, in its palmyest period of palmy civilization, the Atlantians or their descendants must have built the pyramids of Egypt, and also those wonderful pyramids of Central America, which, though not quite so perfect in form, bear a close resemblance to those of Egypt. Professor Smythe has declared that the Great Pyramid of Egypt was probably built twenty-one hundred and seventy years before the commencement of the Christian era, because at that time *Alpha Draconis* was the polar star, which must then have shone directly down the shaft of the pyramid; and the formation of the galleries in the pyramid proves conclusively to astronomers that it was built for astronomical as well as religious and other purposes. The telescopic gallery evidently was intended for purposes of stellar observation; but it is known that more than twenty thousand years before that date *Alpha Draconis* was also the

polar star; may not the pyramid have been erected at that much earlier period?

Egypt had certainly begun to deteriorate four thousand years ago; for you find all marks of its highest civilization carrying you back to a much earlier date than four thousand years ago. Now as the pyramid contains in its secret and still undiscovered chambers a great deal more than has been discovered in the parts already explored and concerning which so much has already been said and written, we declare that evidence points to the fact that the greatest pyramids of Egypt are between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand years of age, and therefore carry you back to a period of such remote antiquity as places them side by side with the buried marvels of Atlantis. At the time when Atlantis was in the height of its glory, there was, doubtless, a high degree of civilization in Central America, and in various portions of South America, extending also some distance to the north, surpassing any civilization of to-day, but not reaching to the height of the purest civilization of the near future, when it shall have reached its culmination, which will probably be less than one hundred years from the present time. Then will come in the natural order of development, the cooperative commonwealth, so perfectly outlined by Belamy in "Looking Backward."

It is stated to us by those who claim to KNOW, that about twenty thousand years ago Atlantis was at the height of its power and sovereignty, also from eight thousand to ten thousand years before that time, carrying us back from twenty thousand to thirty thousand

years. After a long period of ever-increasing prosperity, the land and its inhabitants gradually began to deteriorate and decline, until at last, nine thousand years or more before the days of Solon, according to his account, Atlantis was overthrown, as Plato graphically and perhaps somewhat poetically and extravagantly states, "in a single day and night."

Before that time the better element of the people had emigrated to other shores, leaving the land in possession of the less enlightened. Races die soon after the emigration of their better element, while those cut off from all other races, left alone in solitary grandeur, soon pine and expire in their isolation. Probably the North American Indians and other aborigines have deteriorated because of the isolation brought about by those natural catastrophes which separated the inhabitants of America from all the rest of the world.

When nations begin to emigrate, it is an evidence that their country is on the declining wave, for then the power and vigor of the nation goes forth to other lands. It may be to-day that Ireland as an island declines; but all the representative element of the Hibernian race is within the American people. It may be said that England is declining; but the very backbone of Anglo-Saxon civilization is in the Canadas, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other parts of the rising world. It may be that Germany will soon decline; but the best elements of the Teutonic race cross the ocean and form an important factor in the life of the United States. If France and Italy decline, it will be because the best elements of the French and

Italian races, through varying circumstances, have departed to other lands and left the mother country barren.

There is nothing really lost when a land is overthrown. It was not in its highest glory that Greece was swallowed up by Rome. Greece had deteriorated, and Spartan bravery was no longer the watchword of the hour.

When Rome fell she was no longer the mistress of the world, but enfeebled and decrepit, given over to vice, and so emasculated that she retained but the skeleton of her former grandeur. When the fair temple of Jerusalem was destroyed and the Israelites driven out over all the earth, whatever was characteristic of the Hebrew race was carried by the exiled Hebrews into all countries whither they roamed, and they still perform their "messianic mission" in all parts of the world.

If the splendors of the days of David and Solomon have long since departed from the sacred shrines of Israel, if India, China, and Persia are no longer what once they were, all that made them great, all nobility of thought, all true culture, all their marvels of art had fled long before their destruction, and these are rehabilitated in the new forms of the modern world; all civilization rises as the phoenix rose, a young bird from the ashes of its parent.

There is no retrogression, no decline, no failure in the purposes of the Eternal; even were there no visible indication upon this particular earth that the glories of the olden days are renewed, still when you turn your

eyes to the star-bespangled heavens by night and gaze on other planets, the countless starry orbs may be today (some of them) the scenes of the higher activities of those who have been transported thither from this earth, there to express higher forms and engage in larger activities than they could conceive of before their earthly career was ended. Arcadia, Eden, Hesperides, the Olympian Heights, the Islands of the Gods, and all the sacred places whose names after a time were interwoven into Greek literature, expressed in mythology and religion in the cultured Greek world reminiscences of Atlantis. When Plato told his story, he had gathered it from Solon, who had obtained it from the priests of Egypt; not from the Alexandrian library, — for it was told before the city of Alexandria was founded, and came from those learned cults or secret orders of the priesthood, who afterward committed it to writing. It is certain that books existed before libraries or book-cases, and afterward in the Alexandrian library ancient knowledge was preserved. The world of letters had in its possession accessible ancient documents pertaining to Atlantis until the time when this library was destroyed, several centuries after the commencement of the Christian era, through the vandalism and bigotry of the Mussulmans. In that library was registered and perpetuated the ancient knowledge of Egypt, its genius, literature, and art, extending to far ancient times. Knowledge has always been preserved in ancient orders, the mysteries of knowledge being always perpetuated in many a rite and symbol. In very ancient times mystic orders in their wisdom deemed it unwise to

place much of their learning in any outward form to insure its preservation; but later on the Alexandrian library contained an embodiment of that knowledge which Solon received, not from books, but direct from the priests of Sais at the time when Egypt was a Grecian colony. Under Grecian rule the richest treasures of Egyptian knowledge were conveyed to the Grecian philosophers and afterward transmitted by them to the world at large, though but imperfectly. The story of Atlantis, recorded by Plato and received by him from Solon (one of the greatest lawgivers the world has ever known), has lately been fully corroborated by the bed of the ocean, stones and the very mud under the sea confirming the statements made by the learned of antiquity concerning this fair and wondrous land.

The Atlantians were, unquestionably, those people of olden time who were called gods and goddesses, and who, because of their godlike form, were termed giants among men. Atlantian men and women at one period—and that the highest in their career—without doubt enjoyed perfect equality, so that their government took that dual form in which it must have appeared at the time when Egypt recognized the divine duality personified in Osiris and Isis: both in government and religion the feminine principle was acknowledged as deserving worship and admiration equal with that accorded to the male.

When Bulwer-Lytton wrote his "Coming Race," he made his hero say that he had traveled in subterranean countries, and had there been introduced to people



whose government, religion, and general customs were far in advance of those of modern Europe and America: not only did Lytton look forward to the future, he reviewed the past history of Atlantis in the popular guise of a fascinating romance. In that book is portrayed that higher potency and dominion of the human mind over the entire earth and atmosphere which, in a period of sovereign and enlightened spirituality, enables man to prove himself indeed the lord and ruler of creation. Those wonderful air-boats in which the Vril-Ya traveled, those wings which they wore upon their shoulders as useful (not ornamental) appendages, were the literal originals of the wings upon the shoulders of the cherubs and angels in Christian art: the winged beings represented to the world by artists were not men and women whose wings grew out naturally from their shoulders, but men and women thoroughly versed in the art of aerial navigation. When Jules Verne, for writing "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," and other sensational works peculiarly pleasing to boys, received a gold medal from the French Academy of Sciences for his perfectly philosophical reasoning, it was because he not only gave rein to imagination, but, following upon the traditions and inspiration of the past, reproduced to a considerable degree in his stories a record of the ancient world, even though strongly colored and largely imbued with the prophetic and romantic spirit.

When the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" were conceived, crowds of travelers would gather together to hear the praises of ancient people and ancient times

recited by itinerants, who entertained the marvel-loving Eastern public by reciting to them the wonders performed by the use of Aladdin's lamp and other marvels of the far Orient. All such stories are but highly colored tales of a far past when a part of the world was brighter than it now is. In stories of the long ago, in many a wonder of architecture, in splendid tapering spires and minarets pointing to the sky, in gorgeous gardens upon the roofs of Oriental houses, in majestic palaces and cities paved with gold, from Noah's ark, the simplest and rudest structure, to the symmetrical and magnificent temple of Solomon — in all we may trace some recollection of Atlantis. Floods sweeping over the land, bringing utter desolation and disaster, and the ark resting upon the water, in which a remnant of the human family were saved, carry us back to a period when Atlantis was in all its power and glory, a very paradise upon earth, and then to the sudden ending of its bright, hot, glorious day, when the storm cloud arose, followed by a dark and awful night of utter desolation.

But from out that splendid land long since submerged there has arisen to the world of souls a glorious company already engaged in enlightening mankind to build a new Atlantis, to form a brighter colony than that of yore. And when America is again united with the Orient, the ocean bridged by perfect navigation; when commerce and the arts shall blend all nations in the pure chain of fraternal relation, and the new republic of peace shall be formed, then will the time come when man shall reach out more fully than of old toward

perfection, and rise to sublimer heights than Atlantis ever attained. To-day men realize the prophecy, but only in its dawning, the budding, not yet the opening of the flower.

There is no retrogression in nature ; all is progress. But as everywhere summer and winter, night and day, light and shade, must alternate, the most appalling catastrophes which overwhelm the earth are forever fulfilling the purposes of the Eternal Good.

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#### ASPIRATION.

ETERNAL FOUNTAIN of all beneficence, Thou who art the orderer and ruler of the universe, Thou in whose hand are all the events of life ; Thou who dost ordain the rising of the morning sun and the shadows of the evening ; Thou who dost call forth the light from its hiding-place, bidding it illumine the world with radiance ; Thou who dost fold the curtains of the night about Thy sleeping children and invite them to repose ; Thou who dost speak unto us in every sunny glance which lights the mountain and valley, in every star-beam that pours down its radiance from the glorious heights above ; Thou who dost speak in nature's myriad tongues, inviting man to Thee with all her countless voices ; Thou who dost allure the world to truth by every form of nature's loveliness displayed in all the changing seasons ; for all the beauties of the earth, for all the loveliness of sea and sky, — we would give praises unto Thee !

Eternal fount and sustainer of our being, in the glories of creation, in the wonders of preservation, in the marvels of reproduction, Thy power do we behold; and when destruction spreads its gloom about us and works of grandeur are reduced to their parent ashes, then from out the pile of ashes cold Thou dost revive the world; while the phoenix, arising from out the newly kindled flame, jubilant and immortal, typifies the resurrection of the spirit from the tomb of sense, ascending beyond all death forever.

If empires rise, then fall in splendid ruins; if magnificence departs and decay takes possession of ancient palaces and temples; if all over the far Orient the lights have gone out and the altars are discarded where once Thou wert worshiped under the sacred name of Brahm and where Thy servants were acknowledged as the messengers of Vishnu the preserver; if all these splendors faded into story as the glories of the Orient were reduced to a name; if over Persia and Hindustan, Greece, Rome, and Egypt the mantle of destruction and the pall of darkness has fallen, then from out the depths of all the buried cities of the earth Thou dost cause the light of truth to arise, and from the buried land beneath the sea Thou dost summon Thy witnesses, until the rocks are eloquent with Thy praises and the stones cry out concerning Thy wondrous works of old.

If, with the voices of inanimate nature, even with the voices of the stones which men have piled together, the spirit of wisdom calls us that we may receive instruction, oh! may we in the midst of Thy living temples of humanity, turn from the dumb idols of wood and stone, from

the temples that lie in ruins, from the deserted banquet halls of ancient kings, to the glory of those immortal habitations which can never be overthrown and to the splendors of the life of those souls who abide forever in Thy keeping.

Whatsoever storms sweep over the earth ; whatsoever waves inundate the land ; whatsoever quaking of the earth removes the cities of the plains ; whatsoever fire and smoke from burning mountains shall desolate human habitations, may we know that Thou art in the whirlwind and the storm, that the earthquake is Thy messenger, the flood Thy servant, and that all things working together for good will at length reveal to all Thy plan, which orders all things for the best.

As we turn from the ancient Eden to the Paradise that will yet be revealed ; as from scanning the history of the past our eyes turn prayerfully and hopefully towards the future, as we gaze toward republics which shall yet be established, toward the purer religion, the milder government and juster laws which shall yet betoken the presence of truth enthroned among humanity, may we sigh not for what is gone, but prepare for what is yet to be, knowing that the future glories of the earth and the future destiny of all human spirits shall surpass all that prophetic eyes have seen, and transcend a thousand-fold all wonders historians may record.

And thus in earnest faith, in the confidence of love, in abiding trust in Thine infinite goodness, may our hearts rest secure : may we never fail nor falter, but fulfill our mission faithfully by proclaiming truth to earth and spreading it in perfect love among all humanity.

## LECTURE VIII.

### FRAGMENTS OF FORGOTTEN HISTORY; OR, ATLANTIS “RECONSTRUCTED.”

MANY persons inquire: “What good do you think you or any one can accomplish by digging up ancient fossils and speaking of remote antiquity, of races of men who have been buried in oblivion for thousands of years? Why not confine yourselves to practical, present-day topics? Why not deal with the burning questions of the age, take up the labor movement or some other matter of vital importance to society as at present organized?”

We answer, that no scientific mind ever thinks of doubting the desirability of studying the history of man in the far past, the science of geology and kindred sciences being regarded by all as matters of the utmost importance in a liberal and progressive education to-day. While geology deals with very ancient fossils; while this natural science carries us back to remote antiquity and teaches us how the earth has gradually developed from primitive chaos until it now assumes an almost spherical form; while we are told of the habits of the very earliest men — yea, and of even the radiata, who swarmed long before the earth could give sustenance to man; while “evolution” embraces a study

of what has been going on for countless æons, and all students of nature or of the history of the globe are obliged to go back through almost incalculable periods of time that they may accumulate the testimony which the rocks and the seas will give, as to how God made the world; as the knowledge of cosmogony is one of the most interesting and important topics of the day, we may well ask, why study geology? Why discuss evolution? The answer comes, we can both regulate the present and prepare for the future in the light of past experience.

While it is true, indeed, that a wise and doubtless highly inspired apostle recommended his hearers and readers to "forget the things which are behind" in their zeal to "press on to the things which are before"; while, without doubt, there is sage counsel in the commandment, "Look forward, not backward," still before we can take a forward glance we are often obliged to review past years, and no one can say that experience is nothing or that the knowledge of what has been may not be most serviceable to those who desire to correct the errors while they would follow all the good examples of the past.

All ancient history teaches us the most valuable and important lessons. By studying the doings of ancient peoples we are enabled to see ourselves as others were in similar conditions to those in which we now are. And as we learn that all ancient civilizations came to naught, that all ancient empires were at length overthrown, that the most splendid achievements of past centuries were hurried into oblivion, and that civilization

seemed only to reach its highest point to be overthrown, we may well inquire, what is that wonderfully mysterious and seemingly awful law which ordains that as soon as the flowers are perfect they should begin to wither, and that as soon as the fruit is fully ripened it should fall from the tree?

In a beautiful hymn often sung the statement is made most sublimely, —

“We do not die — we cannot die;  
 We only change our state of life  
 When these earth temples fall and lie  
 Unmoving 'mid the world's wild strife;”

and then the hymn closes with the magnificent refrain, —

“Our friends have only changed, have sped  
 From lower homes to homes above.”

As we said in the previous lecture concerning Atlantis, that as we gaze upon the starry heavens and watch the planets as they roll, we cannot reasonably regard the occupants of this little orb as being the only intelligent creatures in the universe; we cannot feel that those ancient and majestic globes that roll and shine in the distant heavens and that the various planets in this system are uninhabited, while this world is the only world which contains intelligent, sentient beings; rather do we feel in the progress of the cycles — as wise men of the East were wont to teach in days of remote antiquity — the soul passes on and on from planet to planet, from system to system, and those bright, glorious, and aspiring minds who, while they dwelt on earth were always scan-



ning the heavens and wondering whether those bright, twinkling stars were inhabited, or whether man could ever visit them — we feel that those great inquiring intellects who gaze upon the stellar worlds and desire to know all about them, build their observatories and place their telescopes so that they may discover whatever may be revealed to human sight and understanding concerning the myriad worlds in space — those mighty intellects are destined to travel among those starlit spaces, destined at some time to pass from world to world, to navigate the oceans of space and explore what would be termed by man on earth the farthest corners of the universe. Those great and glorious souls who long to know all they can about the stars are the very ones who are becoming prepared while in earthly life to journey through the universe, and when they have dropped the earthly mantle, clad in other and more glorious form, will assuredly pass to other and more glorious worlds than this.

There are no instincts in the human mind which are beyond satisfaction, no desires eternally destined to remain unsatisfied; there are no demands of our spiritual or intellectual being for which supplies do not exist somewhere, and we have no hesitation in saying that a spiritual revelation has already been made to highly inspired seers and sages, both in the Orient and the Occident, and that there are those to-day in America, and Europe also, who are holding communion with intelligences who speak of what they know when they declare that the old Buddhistic doctrine of a planetary chain and of souls passing from world to world,

assuming new and higher forms with every forward stage in their journey, is substantially true; and these are not the victims of an overheated imagination, but are the recipients of spiritual truth wafted to their minds from higher spheres.

If any one inquires, "What does anybody really know about the lost Atlantians, or about any pre-historic peoples, wonderful God-like men and women who were the models after which the Grecians patterned when they erected statues of fairer and lovelier human beings than we now see around us? Where are those great and mighty nations of antiquity whose very habitations have been washed away by floods, ruined by earthquakes and storms, and now lie but as débris at the bottom of the Atlantic and Pacific waters?" we answer, Turn your eyes skyward; gaze upon the myriad worlds that shine in the blue expanse of heaven, ask of those stars which the telescope but dimly reveals, concerning which no adequate information can be obtained by material science, at least with reference to their inhabitants, and if you have the quick ear of the spirit and hear the answers that will vibrate toward you through the illimitable spaces dividing the earth from those distant worlds, as swiftly as light and electricity pass down to you, you will receive tidings of those races of mankind who have graduated to higher schools and universities in the universe. Races of men, families of souls, colonies of spirits come to the earth to fulfill their appointed mission; their destiny is slowly outwrought here, and then the countries wherein they labored and which they perfected by their toil become

like old school-houses from which the scholars have fled. The school-houses may fall into decay, the edifice, no matter how fair, may lie in ruins, but the emancipated scholars have graduated and gone forth into a broader universe; all of them are learners, some may now be professors in those great colleges which you call other and brighter worlds.

Not only is this world a school, but all worlds are schools; not only is this world inhabited, but all worlds are inhabited at some period in their career. All are born from one great parent source; all are brought to perfection in obedience to one beautiful law; all are intended as houses of discipline and education for immortal mind, and filled with probationers for a glorious immortality. Such is the mission of all the planets and stars which stud the glorious firmament.

Therefore it is not ruin, devastation, or failure that overtakes a world or any portion of it when, having reached the climax of perfection, it afterward fades away, but as the book of Genesis tells us, when the heavens and the earth were completed and man appeared upon the earth, the sons of God shouted for joy. Why did those sons of God shout for joy when this world was sufficiently far advanced to sustain human beings? Why did those angels and archangels of which theology teaches give praise to God when God had made a new earth, but, because they were evidently former inhabitants of worlds that had passed out of existence, and from the very star-dust, from the cosmic fluid and the primal chaos, a new world had been born in the building of which they had been instrumental as

the servants and messengers of the Most High, rearing habitations and schools for other souls who must undergo experiences similar to those which had made them great.

And so whenever a world is blotted out or quenched in flame, or whenever a portion of the earth fades out of sight (even its memory may lie for a long time forgotten, buried among the ruins of departed ages),—when its forgotten history is again remembered, and knowledge of ancient days is revived, and men exclaim, “Oh, what saddening spectacles of decay! Oh, what pitiable wrecks! Oh, how terrible it is that when things have been brought to such perfection they are surely doomed to die!”—angelic choirs chant with exceeding gladness, “Ah, it is not so; for we who were the inhabitants of those now deserted haunts have been called to a higher world; and when the spirit, which kept alive the earth and advanced it on its way, receded, it journeyed to higher spheres, and only through the withdrawal of the spirit from the outward form at the time of their death, the old tabernacles, no longer vitalized by mind, passed away, and their places know them no more.”

Let us look back upon those grand old people whom we call Atlantians, who inhabited many thousands of years ago that glorious land beyond the Pillars of Hercules at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, spoken of by Plato in his wonderful account of that ancient world; let us take such glimpses as we may catch both from inspiration and from history of their manners and customs, of their religion and general

condition, and we shall find that corroborative testimony collected from an immense variety of authentic sources will lead us to the conclusion that they were in their highest culmination, without doubt those very remarkable people who are called "sons of God" in ancient lore, and whom the poets have sighed over as the fair and happy beings who once were well-nigh immortal upon earth.

There are two directly conflicting theories extant, (*i.e.* apparently conflicting) concerning man's origin, growth, and destiny, which cannot either of them be set aside as spurious or without foundation. The one theory is, that man began his career as an illiterate, naked savage, and slowly made his way to his present point in civilization. That theory, which is termed the evolutionary theory, and which is now held by nearly all scientific and philosophical minds in some form or other (subject to various modifications), seems to harmonize perfectly with all we can understand of God's goodness and of the infinite wisdom displayed in the scheme of the universe. Such a theory seems to harmonize perfectly with all our knowledge of the laws of growth in nature, that man should begin a human acorn, as it were, and work his way out by dint of progressive effort until he becomes a giant oak; that he should begin as the very tiniest seed, though containing every highest possibility of future development within him, but only through ages of growth become as a flower in all his expanded beauty; that he should begin as an infant with the most rudimentary intelligence and scarcely any idea of Deity or the soul's immortality,

and then slowly evolve through long periods of time, religion, government, science, art, and philosophy, until he becomes at length well-nigh a god in human form. This theory of evolution fills us with boundless hope; it enables us to look forward to a future far more glorious than the past; it teaches that paradise is before and not behind us, that we are working our way to an Eden that has not yet been found. It fills us with a boundless confidence that our dreams are all to be realized in days to come, and that there is something infinitely better before us than ever lay behind us. To a great extent this theory, commending itself as it does to the very highest, noblest and most intelligent sentiments of our nature, is indisputable, it is supported by many irrefutable truths, and is beyond cavil when judged either from a moral or intellectual standpoint.

But while we may glory in the evolutionary theory of man's development; while we may give to it the palm and in a general sense sincerely believe in it,— at all events we believe it to be the nearest approximation to truth which modern science has preached to the world,— we are compelled to admit that history and the condition of the globe itself everywhere points to a forfeited Eden, to a lost paradise. We need not turn to the Bible to read the story of Adam and Eve expelled from a garden of Eden in Asia six thousand years ago; we need not read of the flaming sword held by the cherubim to deter man from partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Life; we need not delve through wonderful stories in the Old Testament and read of a Deluge that swept away the inhabitants of the earth with the ex-

ception of eight persons, about four thousand years ago, or of the fire and brimstone that came down from heaven and destroyed the wicked cities of the plain; we need not *read* in history of the fall of Rome, the fall of Israel, the desolation of Nineveh and Babylon, or the sweeping away of Tyre and Sidon; for no traveler who journeys through the land of the Nile, or through any of the territories watered by the Euphrates or the Ganges, and contrasts the present condition of Egypt, or of India under British misrule, or the present condition of the Chinese Empire given over to degradation and idolatry, with the splendid teachings of an age that brought to light a Buddha and Confucius, can fail to perceive that the earth has in many of its parts enjoyed in days gone by a glorious history which is now scarcely remembered even in name.

All the eloquent ruins of Egypt, those wondrous pyramids, that mysterious Sphinx, and all those weird and mystic obelisks standing in impressive grandeur in the Delta of the Nile, point to a time when there was a race of men in Egypt who could build structures which to-day excite the attention of the most scientific minds, and are well-nigh beyond decipherment. We find in Central America, in Peru, though to-day the native populations are degraded, evidences of a glorious enlightenment in the far past, which assures us that all these districts have once been centers of a civilization and art now almost entirely forgotten.

No traveler in Rome, in Athens, in Palestine, can possibly pass through the desolated walks where once

the noblest and mightiest men of earth were wont to travel, without sighing over the world's loss in their destruction, and exclaiming, "Oh, if to-day things were only what once they were!" The traveler pours forth a wail of anguish when he gazes upon the desolated splendors of the earth, and yet all the while modern science tells him that progress is the watchword of the earth and humanity, that everything is moving forward to a more glorious goal than was ever reached in bygone ages.

Here are two apparently irreconcilable stories told by the earth itself. The earth says, "I am advancing," and the same earth in many, many places says, "Oh, how sadly have I retrograded!"

The doctrine of evolution is positively confirmed by the testimony of the rocks, and by a study of ethnology. But at the same time the story of a lost paradise as sung by every poet and prophet, is eloquently told by the very stones beneath our feet. By reason of the ships which to-day go forth across the Atlantic, and make deep-sea soundings in the very bed of the ocean, thinkers are led to conclude that there is no longer any doubt that the peaks of the Azores are the mountain tops of Atlantis, and that for thousands of miles under that wonderful Atlantic Ocean, yea, and under the Pacific also, we may find the remains of continents and islands, which were once more glorious than any of to-day.

We can, however, affirm this: while there is an order of circular motion in the development of all things, while night follows day, rest follows work, winter fol-



lows summer; the earth is progressing all the while, and taking it all in all, everything considered, the world was never as well off as it is now.

We are now in the spring-time of a new cycle; we are now in the early morning hours of a new day; they who stand on free fair American soil, where their unknown ancestors trod in ages buried in the night of prehistoric antiquity, are carving out a destiny for fair Columbia, infinitely surpassing that of the palmiest days of old. When the fruits are ripened next season, when the waving corn is next gathered in, when next the angels are commissioned to thrust in their sharp sickle because the harvest of the earth is ripe, the vintage and gathered crops of grain will be more luxurious, if not more delicious, than ever of old. Civilization covering a far wider territory than it ever covered before, the world will fulfill the prediction of Jesus, "Greater works than these shall ye do." Not necessarily greater in kind, but greater in quantity; not greater in marvelousness, but more widely extended. The civilization of olden times was localized, here and there was an oasis in what might otherwise be called the desert of the world; and though such oases grew larger and larger until civilization spread over wide tracts of country, there never was a culmination in days gone by so glorious as the culmination we may now anticipate.

The forward march of the world is accomplished not only through the day-hours, but also through the night that follows day; so the new day following a departed night is a brighter day than the preceding one; winter follows harvest, then another spring-time and summer

result in a harvest more plenteous than the one of the year before. And so there is indeed a forward march of the world, a response from all beings to the Master's great cry, "Excelsior," a perpetual response to the invitation, "Come up higher," and this in perfect accordance with what at first sight appears like a reversal of the order and a contradiction of the doctrine of humanity's progression.

We maintain, therefore, when we take anything like an intelligent survey of the world's history and cast the horoscope of coming generations with anything like accuracy, that we must look on this side of the picture and on that; on the side of seeming retrogression and on that of real progress. When we do so we shall learn that a new and more glorious life than has ever yet been known to earth is not merely a poet's rhapsody or a sentence placed by an enthusiastic painter at the foot of a great work of art, but a sure and solid reality capable of application in every national and individual case.

In "Fragments of Forgotten History," a work published under the auspices of the Theosophical Society in London, by two Cheelahs, the statement is made that there were days long gone by in the far East when men possessed seven senses instead of five, and that beyond the senses of the body these men enjoyed clear perceptions of the spirit which gradually were lost as men became more and more materialistic, thinking more and more of mammon and less and less of spirit. This same work which is the result of mystical researches into the spiritual as well as the physical his-

tory of mankind, declares that the various powers and senses of human nature were not developed all at once, but gradually one by one. Now as we hear that there has been a stone age, a bronze age, an iron age, etc., and different ages of the world have been characterized by special developments in all departments of being, we can readily understand there may have been a mystic period long ago, an age of intuition, an age of wonderful spiritual enlightenment, when the morality of the world, at all events in certain sections, was higher than it is now. We may assure ourselves there were times, now long gone by, when people realized their nearness to the spiritual universe as they do not ordinarily realize it now; that there were times when the gods really walked among men; but who were the gods? Those mentioned in the New Testament were simply human beings upon whom the spirit of God (the Eternal) came; gods are said to have ruled in Egypt before the Pharaohs; Egyptian gods and goddesses were highly inspired men and women whose spiritual gifts enabled them to realize not only scientific, but also spiritual truth in wonderful degree. The accounts in Grecian and Roman poetry and philosophy of how gods and goddesses in the happy days long passed, walked among men; the stories which are told of mortals meeting with the gods upon the Heights of Parnassus and Olympus, and of mortals hearing the lyre of Orpheus play when touched by invisible hands, clearly prove that men were once nearer to the spiritual world than they now are. These tales are records of a holier and happier age, of a period when the earth was

young in this sense : that the beauty of the unsophisticated spirit of poesy and philosophy had not been tampered with and sullied as much as now. However, that may have been a period, comparatively speaking, of the world's infancy, for we know that children to-day are often far more alive to spiritual visions than the oldest gray-headed sires. We know there is a profounder wisdom than appears at first sight in the action of Jesus taking a little child, setting him in the midst of the wise men of that day, and saying to the sages : "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." We know that childlikeness does not only mean innocence and virtue, but frequently spiritual illumination ; it means that intuitive wisdom which fades away when reason dogmatically asserts itself and intellect claims to be the only ruler, saying : "What I cannot comprehend is not worth knowing." We all know that in a spiritual sense a little child is often a sage, while many a man of science is but an ignoramus spiritually.

We do not undervalue the achievements of material science, but we do say an age of intuition in the far past gave to man a knowledge of spiritual law coupled with a power to produce æsthetic art, as the faculty of instinct enables animals (lower creatures than men) to act unerringly while man stumbles and falls. Do not animals — creatures far beneath you in intelligence and dignity — astonish and abase you by knowing more than you know, or apparently so, because they act with foresight that you do not possess ? And is it not true that man falls when he endeavors to walk alone, but

when guided by a power beyond himself he always walks uprightly?

We are not prepared to say that the Atlantians or that any ancient wonder-workers of either the Orient or the Occident were as rationalistic as modern scientists. We are not prepared to say that intellectually considered they had come to that perfection in the development of science, literature, and art which men of to-day are rapidly achieving; we rather look upon them as what may be termed mediumistic people, guided very greatly by a spiritual instinct, by a subtle intuition, and by a peculiar receptivity to the operation of the spiritual nature. Thus we find associated with all their achievements, and with all their art, names and forms of those whom they called gods and goddesses, and these gods and goddesses, though originally men and women, were those in whom spiritual gifts were unfolded, to a very remarkable degree, and who held constant and open communion with spiritual states of life.

Our own knowledge is derived from sources which we cannot divulge further than to say that it emanates from those who positively know of the ancient world. Atlantis in particular was the primal source of all the splendid literature which startles the world with its profundity and glowing imagery, that has been worshiped as sacred but yet misunderstood, as its inner meaning has not yet been found by the masses; sacred lore has been handed down to modern peoples and committed to the custody of the nations of to-day from the very ancient prehistoric races of Asia, Africa, and America at large.

We have no doubt but that the Israelites, borrowing their wonderful knowledge from the Egyptians, acknowledging Moses as their leader, Moses having been educated at the court of Pharaoh, acknowledged as the grandson of the reigning monarch, when leaving Egypt at the time of the exodus, borrowing from the Egyptians their ornaments, had gathered from the Egyptians that wonderful knowledge which they embodied in their scriptures, which agree esoterically with the marvelous tales of Atlantis told to Solon, the Athenian law-giver, by the priests of Sais, and we are sure the Alexandrian library prior to its destruction by the Mohammedans contained in priceless manuscripts knowledge of the ancient world transmitted to parchment. But the knowledge which men suppose to have been destroyed by the Mussulmans when they caused the Alexandrian library to be burned — because, said they, there is nothing worth preserving but the Koran; and if the statements in these books are not in harmony with the Koran, they are false; and if they are in harmony, we do not need them because the Koran contains all truth and knowledge — this knowledge was never swept from the face of the earth, for in sacred secret orders (theosophical lodges we may call them, for they are lodges for the study of divine wisdom, and that is all the word *theosophy* signifies) this knowledge has always been preserved, and there are those now all over the world who act as ordinary citizens, who wear the ordinary costume of the period, whose outward manners would betoken no singularity, who belong to these ancient lodges and hold communion with

those who have handed down to them a direct line of history of those ancient buried peoples. Now concerning *Mahatmas* and Himalayan brothers: while a great many stories have been told of them filled with sensational exaggerations; while a great deal of mystery has been thrown over Theosophy by those who endeavor to advertise themselves rather than divine wisdom, we assure you that we know as a positive fact that ancient history is now in the possession of secret orders which is yet to be disclosed to the world, printed in plain English and sold by booksellers, for there are many important palimpsests about to be deciphered by learned hieroglyphists, archæologists, and other students of antiquity, and you will soon find our words concerning the condition of the Atlantians are in accordance with veritable facts recorded on the sacred tablets of the world's ancient monuments and parchments, which are slowly being discovered by those who in various ways are interrogating the bed of the ocean, and the wonderful monuments of antiquity all over the earth, and who will reveal all the truth they can decipher to the world at large.

The religion of Atlantis, which has been aptly called solar worship, was not a simple recognition of the solar orb as a center of light, heat, and electricity, but as Swedenborg said in a later day, reviving the science of correspondences which he declares was known in the time of Job and lost for four thousand years, until he refound it in 1757, divine wisdom is divine light, divine love is divine heat. Therefore, as the sun is now known to be the center of light, heat, and electricity from which

the world and all that grows upon it derives its sustenance, and this fact that all things are dependent upon the sun, is a recent scientific discovery, so far as the present age is concerned—the very fact that all ancient people, Egyptians, Hindus, Peruvians, Central Americans and others worshiped the sun, is an evidence that they were acquainted with the scientific facts which are now being newly revealed or newly discovered to the world.

In Solar mythology, when spiritually deciphered, the sun represents the soul, the light, heat, and electricity radiating from it, love, wisdom, and truth which illumine the entire understanding and body of man, and give him all his intellect and vitality, man being the microcosm, God the macrocosm.

Alcyone, the centre of the Pleiades, the great and glorious central sun around which the sun which lights this system in company with many others accomplishes its periodical journey in the grand year of the Pleiades, was the best representative of the Almighty that man could find, and instead of dwarfing and limiting God to a puny earthly form, instead of declaring that God was to be likened to a dog, a cat, or a bird,—as many idolaters have likened God,—knowing that great central sun (without which the universe could not exist) was the center of all light, life, heat, and electricity, they acknowledged it as a symbol of the divine spiritual power which kindled all worlds everywhere; and thus Solar worship, the grand old religion of the Atlantians, the religion of Egypt at the time when the Great Pyramid of Gizeh was built, and the religion of all the most



enlightened ancients, instead of being an idolatry which worships matter and ignores spirit altogether, as some suppose, was a correspondential religion acknowledging the glorious luminary which lights all space, as being the best and most perfect symbol of the divine all-illuminating Being.

The Atlantians, acknowledging the central sun as the source of all light, declared that as the sun gave light, heat, gladness, and vitality to countless worlds, as the sun did not exist for itself, did not live in solitary grandeur, shining in splendor for its own glory, but lighted all space and brought teeming worlds into existence with all their myriad populations, such was God's light in the great universe as a whole; and in every individual life God must be understood as always imparting his beams of glory to all who will to be reached by His power. Acting upon this glorious principle, they declared that love to the neighbor and works of philanthropy were the only possible means of showing forth the glory of God; and from that great and glorious ancient world came the very spirit of the commandments, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The ancient religion of Atlantis has been well reconstructed and re-presented to the world in Bulwer-Lytton's magnificent description of the Vril-Ya; and when that great novelist wrote his "Coming Race," he did not depend upon romance or imagination, but being himself indoctrinated into the innermost mysteries of certain secret orders, he wrote the history of Atlantis, and prophesied that in coming days the world would

achieve even more glorious triumphs over matter and beget even diviner forms of government than were ever known before.

Atlantis, then, is that wondrous world said to be under the earth (for it is now under the water), where those tall and venerable men and women rose in glory with their Vrilsticks in their hands to dominate the earth and gather force from everything in nature, driving away all errors and annoyance by the mere touch of their magic wands. From many ancient sources we may learn much of the condition of the ancient world. We are convinced that Atlantis will be reconstructed, nay, surpassed in future days in the condition of some fair, bright land in which all nations will unite, in which all peoples will amalgamate, in which all religions and languages will blend in perfect harmony; for out of all the chaos of the present, a pure religion, a perfect language, and a just government founded upon principles of intelligence, equity, and freedom, will appear, like a phoenix from the ashes, soaring triumphantly to future glory.

What was the condition of the Atlantians when at the zenith of their greatness? Study if you will the most perfect models of Grecian art, gaze upon the magnificent statues of these highly civilized peoples, when the nations bordering upon Hellenic seas were at the very summit of civilization. Behold the majesty of Hercules, the mighty in strength; the wondrous loveliness of Apollo Belvedere; the matchless intelligence of Minerva; the charming grace of Venus. Compare those wonderful models of humanity with the almost

pigmy creatures who strut upon the earth to-day, and then you will have caught something of a photograph of those marvelous people of old who attained to this surpassing loveliness by a life of intelligence far, far surpassing that which is dictated by the highest culture of to-day, which is superficial because intellectual only and not spiritual, even when avowedly religious.

In those ancient days when the gods and goddesses, as they are termed, walked the earth, the most perfect symmetry extended through the moral, intellectual, and physical departments of human nature. The most spiritually minded were the most intellectual, and the most intellectual were the strongest and healthiest in body. Instead of emaciated skeletons priding themselves upon their sanctity because they look more fit for the grave than for the discharge of ordinary life duties; instead of pale and lifeless men and women cloistered beneath the earth, shut away from the invigorating influence of sunshine, air and beauty, those noble Atlantians, who were the builders of the pyramids and other wonderful structures now in ruins in Central America, were the people who were made mention of as "the children of God" in the olden times, separated from the ordinary children of men, because characterized by exceeding grace of mind and form.

Their government was a pure republic, a perfect democracy, and yet at the same time a theocracy. It was of God, and yet it was "a government of the people, for the people, and by the people." It was the self-government of an enlightened nation who followed their moral instincts and were guided by intelligence and wise

enough to allow every one to fall into his own place and to elect as rulers those who were seen to be most fitted for the work. Bulwer-Lytton, very true to Atlantian history, says that the Vril-Ya, when they selected their rulers, singled out for their representatives men of wonderful unfoldment and special qualifications and urged them to take office. He states further that there was no clamoring for position, no electioneering strife, no bribery or corruption through people trying to get into Congress or Parliament in order that they may appear a little better than their neighbors; he reviews the past and forecasts the future, in his description of a coming race, and tells you what was in the highest civilization of olden times, and what will be again on a more extended scale in the civilization of the future.

Atlantis of old passed through all the stages of trial and development through which America and France are now passing. Republican and democratic experiments were tried, monarchies came and went, empires rose and fell, and then at last a system of intelligent co-operation arose, embodying all the excellence of the communistic idea with all that is truly good in a parental form of government, united in an absolutely democratic form of administration.

The land was abundantly fruitful, highly cultivated, favored with a charming climate from end to end, and occupied by an intelligent, industrious people who had carried their labor-saving appliances to such a point that all their manual work was performed automatically, the people devoting themselves to intellectual and artistic studies of every kind. They soared in the air,

travelling with wings as mechanical appendages; they had a perfect system of aerial navigation, and in their air-boats sailed in the calm atmosphere surrounding that beautiful land, which was itself a terrestrial paradise, as easily as vessels cross water to-day in calmest weather.

All this points to the glorious coming days when the new Atlantis shall be established all over the civilized globe. Society will yet show itself capable of taking the most romantic theory of the most enthusiastic prophet and reducing it to science, showing man's absolute power at length over the elements, but only after he has first mastered his own lower nature.

Men and women of Atlantis were in blessed equality; no striving on the part of one for supremacy over the other, they acknowledged their equal rights and offices, and came together in the highest marriage relation as mothers and fathers of children whom they loved, not one of whom they unwillingly bore. In those bright days of old the highest civilization expressed itself in such perfect education, such pure religion, such high art and equitable government, that to-day with all our boasted pride and civilization we look back that we may pattern after the ancients. You admire the splendid temples of old so much that when you build a new cathedral or coliseum you endeavor to imitate ancient architecture instead of seeking to improve modern imperfections. Every one admires the ancient models, and with all our "superior culture" we have to acknowledge that the finest poetry and the most sacred writings belong to a bygone age.

Be it so! These are the rich ripe fruits of a cycle

long since culminated, and as we look back and study the history of the old world, let us go forward into the new age, not only to equal, but to surpass, the attainments and achievements which were the loftiest developments of yore.

The new Atlantis, Atlantis reconstructed, resurrected as a phoenix from the pile of ashes, will give to humanity in the days to come even more perfect religion, manners, government, and art than these prehistoric people ever knew: for Whittier's words ever prove correct, —

“The new transcends the old  
In signs and wonders manifold.”

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### ASPIRATION.

ETERNAL FOUNTAIN of all goodness, our Father and our Mother, who art in all the heavens and in all the earths; Thou who art in all the seas, the winds and hurricanes, the earthquakes and the storms; Thou who art in everything which men call beautiful, and in all things which men call adverse, when they understand not Thy purpose, when they realize not the beauty of Thy plan; Thou who art all in all, the Eternal One blessed forever and ever, we lift our hearts and minds and voices unto Thee, the infinite spirit, with glad acclaim, praising Thee that we live in a beautiful universe governed by an all-wise and all-loving law.

If in the law of nature there are mysteries we cannot explain; if there are wonders we cannot decipher, and

marvelous doings beyond our ken; may we in humble trust and fervent love acknowledge Thee now and at all times as the guiding and inspiring power of all, working out a glorious destiny for all Thy children, and ever preparing for the sons and daughters of men a larger heritage and a more glorious possession than they ever forfeited in the destruction which has fallen upon the wondrous places of olden time.

If we turn our eyes to the earth and ocean beneath our feet, and observe the footprints of the storm and tempest — where'er we turn our eyes; if nations once most powerful and victorious lie low in ruin, and their place is now the habitation of the bittern and the owl; if we see no longer the gay and festive crowds marching through imperial Rome, or following the philosophers of Greece to halls of learning; if over all the Orient the temples are desolate and the fires extinguished upon their altars, — may we know that Thou dost ever kindle anew the fires of aspiration in the human mind, and sendest fresh fire from heaven to give evidence to all humble and honest seekers after Thee, that Thou dost answer all thy suppliants by the fire of truth which cometh down from spheres supernal, purging the dross and separating precious metal from base alloy.

May we know that in the glorious Eden-time yet to come, in the paradise yet to be found on earth, men will realize more than the poet's dream, more than the prophet's expectation; and that the lion and the lamb, the little child and the serpent, as Thy servants of old foretold, will, in peace and harmony, dwell together,

having lost all subtlety, all ravenous desire, and whatsoever would militate against a republic of perfect peace and happiness.

May we know, O Thou eternal fountain of all goodness, that though Thou art in the storm and in the deep waters, Thy way is ever love conjoined with wisdom. If friends more loved than life have been called away as with a flood, to realms beyond the tomb, then through the rifted clouds, from out the opening heavens may we behold them with the eye of the spirit and listen to their glad voices with the ear of the spirit, hearing them singing together and seeing them rejoice as they walk in white, proclaiming there is no death, but only translation; may we see them risen and ascended, beckoning us on to the bright worlds where now they dwell. May we feel the guidance of heaven's beckoning hand: may we listen and obey the entreaties of all loving voices that call us to a higher and nobler life; and though it be upon the wreck of all that sense holds dear, may we gladly turn to the Spirit of Truth as our only guide and counselor, and fixing our minds steadfastly upon those incorruptible treasures of the spirit which neither time nor death can ever touch, find in our own souls a new paradise, a kingdom of life and love wherein Thou dost dwell forever, revealed to the hearts of Thy children. Amen.



## LECTURE IX.

### ORIENTAL THEOSOPHY. — BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM.

IT is indeed impossible to deal exhaustively with these two most stupendous religious systems of olden time, and it would be futile to enter upon labored arguments to establish the priority of one or the other. They are both unmistakably of very great age, dating back into what is commonly called prehistoric antiquity. Our endeavor will be to compare the two, not to settle any mooted question regarding age or doctrinal superiority.

The chief difference between these two systems is, that Brahmanism deals principally with abstract metaphysics, Buddhism with practical philanthropy. The Brahmanical system of thought is indigenious to the East, and profoundly metaphysical. When Mrs. Eddy makes the statement, "All is mind; there is no matter," she uses a phrase in harmony with all spiritual understanding of the universe; but such a conception certainly did not originate with her, nor even with the Greek philosophers of more than two thousand years ago; it is an echo from perhaps the oldest system of thought extant on earth — ancient Brahmanism — which recognizes Spirit as the incorporeal *Brahm*, the only Reality, the all in all of Being. Matter (*Maya*) is

nothing but illusion, though a reflection of the All (Spirit). The material world has no existence save as a reflection of the spiritual, which is the only real world, as Spirit is the only reality. This doctrine of the sole reality of spirit and the utterly illusive character of matter can be traced back through thousands of years to the Vedas, which embody the profoundest system of thought known to the East. But this system of abstract and unapplied metaphysics often addresses itself to the intellect alone, not to the affections; consequently it frequently fosters personal spiritual pride and self-righteousness, out of which has grown many a system of caste, giving undue authority to a ceremonial and priesthood. Any attempt to convert the world to absolute Brahmanism to-day would be futile. People who love to revel exclusively in abstract ideas are not as a rule benevolent.

Buddhism is entirely different from Brahmanism; as a religion it is ethical rather than creedal, and delights entirely in benevolent action. Brahmanism frequently looks to the salvation of one's own soul; Buddhism asks the higher question, "What can I do to save others?" The most frequent question of the individual in the world of to-day is, "What can I do to advance my own prospects? how raise myself to some high condition in this world or another?" Now all selfish consideration represses what is noblest and best in human nature. Gautama (Buddha) renounced everything, became a mendicant friar, and gave to the world a religion so nearly resembling that of Jesus, that we cannot contrast the two, there being no essential variance between them;

we can only compare, and seek to harmonize popular ideas concerning them. Buddha did not originate his teachings; he found them in the sacred Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads. Buddha was a great Brahmanical reformer, as Jesus was a reformer among the Jews. Jesus never protested against the law or the prophets, only against the spurious aristocratic element that had crept into Judaism and exalted the teachings of the Talmud above the Torah or Mosaic law. Gautama taught, five and a half centuries earlier than Jesus, the same truth, that all religion must be made practical. Buddha disregarded, as he grew in spirit, all the austerities of the Brahman creed, and devoted himself so entirely to a life of lovingkindness, that he exalted moral perfection far above intellectual accuracy; he reduced the purely metaphysical ideas of his countrymen to practice, and founded a system purely ethical; a pure religion carrying into effect the grandest teachings to be found in all the world. Buddha had attained in his earliest youth (at eight years of age) to the understanding of all philosophy and science, and all through his life he felt in his heart the religion of the Spirit; but not until he reduced it to daily, hourly practice did he attain to the state of perfect blessedness (*Nirvana*). While meditating under the sacred tree he saw all his past embodiments, reviewed every link in the chain of his existence as it had been forged by the effort of his own spirit, and learned in this moment of divine revelation that everything which had prepared him for *Nirvana* was the good he had done, not the intellectual eminence he had attained. A merely intel-

lectual comprehension of Theosophy is not a road to salvation. Salvation springs from the practical exemplification of truth in our relation to our brethren. Our progress along the road cannot be judged by intellectual accomplishment, but only by our spiritual growth. We cannot estimate real progress by the amount of knowledge stored up in the mind, for we do not always find saints in professors' chairs, or sinners clothed in rags. Spiritual good is always our *essential* good, the good of our affections, not the truth of our intellects; though in a perfect condition of dual unfoldment, it is needless to declare, we shall be both intellectually and spiritually developed.

Brahmanism, as we understand it, was originally a pure, spiritual religion, proclaiming the essential oneness of all life, and regarding matter as an illusion of finite sense. But in the lapse of centuries the lofty ideal of primitive Hindu sages was obscured by priestly arrogance, till, as in the case of Israel, prophets became fewer and fewer, while priests and sacrificial ordinances multiplied on every hand. There is but one Spirit; whatever appears to exist separately from that Spirit is but illusion; this was the protest of ancient Brahmanical Theosophy against all materialistic or sensuous conceptions of the Universe. Para-Brahm, the Infinite Unknown, inaccessible to the intellect, was the sum and substance of the ancient teaching. Modern philosophers in the West talk of the Unknowable,—a foolish word, for none can measure prospective knowledge. Theosophy contents itself with speaking of the Great Unknown; and this eternal mystery, though beyond all

our present power to solve, may be so far understood by us in the future as to appear quite well known by comparison with our present ignorance.

As the mortal senses can never discern spirit, it is quite useless to argue with confirmed sensualists concerning Deity, as they are quite destitute of the first requisite for considering the question fairly; and to some extent it is also futile to discuss the divine problem with intellectualists who scoff at *intuition*, and declare *reason* to be all. Such people may be quite honest, and live clean lives, but they are in the state of the "dog," as the term is used correspondentially in the Scriptures; the former class are corresponded to by "swine." To attain to knowledge of the Supreme Being it is necessary to acknowledge and liberate the divine element in man, the "spiritual man" who can and does discern the things of the Spirit, but takes no cognizance of outward forms of sense. As no one can really serve two masters, it is vain to expect any great contribution to spiritual knowledge from those who are immured in sense and worldly pursuits, and it is equally unlikely that the world will receive very much assistance in mere money-making from those Cheelahs and Adepts who devote themselves exclusively to spiritual considerations.

There is a prevalent belief in the West to-day that the Oriental religions counsel at all times a life of the most rigid and painful asceticism; that they would urge their followers to completely renounce every earthly obligation as well as pleasure, in attaining to adepthood. This view is erroneous; though it is true that there is

a strong ascetic element in Hinduism as there is in Roman Catholicism; and the two systems, when carefully analyzed, will be found to teach about the same thing concerning prayer, penance, mortification, etc. In the Roman Catholic Church there are two distinct sets of commandments: First. Those binding on everybody. These include the Decalogue and certain rules of the Church concerning confession, communion, fasting, alms, attendance at Mass, etc. Second. Those which pertain only to members of religious orders, and these orders are by no means equally strict. The Carmelites and Poor Clares differ in their discipline from the Benedictines, Dominicans, and others whose churches are plentiful all over the world. In the Catholic Church, just as in ancient Brahmanism, there are again two distinct views as to the most effectual means of attaining the highest blessedness. In the "Lives of the Saints," by Alban Butler, and that much more Anglican view of the subject taken in a similar work by Baring-Gould, the writers distinctly prove that some eminent mystics in the Church, many of whom wrought miracles (works which excited wonder because the multitude could not duplicate them), adopted the idea that pure contemplation of perfect holiness excited in the devotee the intensest love of righteousness and conduces to the attainment even here on earth of ineffable beatification; while others insisted that scourgings of the flesh, fearful flagellations, and other horrid exercises of self-imposed torture, were necessary to free the soul from carnal bondage. Is it not probable that the founders of different orders judged the world by

themselves, and, being persons of widely different temperament, they each commended only that discipline which seemed appropriate to their own needs? For this reason the Popes have sanctioned many orders, and the "infallible" Church confesses to freedom in discipline, but rigid uniformity in doctrine. Many Catholic priests of unquestioned orthodoxy disapprove of the persecution of "heretics" to the death, and consider the fiery martyrdoms of the sixteenth century the result of grievous error in ecclesiastical discipline; but these same priests would render themselves liable to immediate suspension and ultimate excommunication, were they to show any toleration for the doctrines taught by those same "heresiarchs" and their condemned followers. With this explanatory digression we will now take up the two opposing elements in Hinduism, one of which is sublime and the other hideous, leaving the reader to use his own judgment in accepting or condemning whatever comes to him in an Oriental guise, alleging itself to be "Eastern wisdom."

Pure, undiluted Brahmanism (an absolutely metaphysical system) is no doubt the most ancient religion of the East; but Buddhism, which seeks to embody the divine idea in a perfect man, may be almost as ancient. The two systems are probably almost contemporaneous. To-day they exist side by side in Asia as do Judaism and Christianity in Europe and America. Brahmanism deals with God out of Buddha; Buddhism sees God only through Buddha, as Christianity sees God only through Christ, which view of Deity Judaism stoutly rejects, as the Jewish mind fears it is only a species of

idolatry or polytheism ; but polytheism is not necessarily idolatrous, nor is it really opposed to Monotheism when inferior divinities are never permitted to usurp the throne of the Infinite in the mind of the worshiper. The Jewish Kabalists, though they never swerved in their allegiance to the fundamental proposition of Judaism, "God is one," admitted nine orders of Sephiroth as emanations from the Supreme, each one of which, according to the Kabala, constitutes a distinct hierarchy in the invisible world. Moses, though never deified in Israel, is regarded by all orthodox Israelites as the greatest man who ever lived, — a man to whom God spoke as He has spoken to no other ; but the distinctly mystic element in Judaism has always clustered around the person of Melchisedec, King of Salem (abode of peace). He, as priest of the Most High, was a greater man than Abraham ; for, when Abraham met him he did obeisance before him, and offered him loaves and wine in token of his superior rank as a priest of the unchanging order of the Spirit. The Hebrew name for Deity, Jahveh, or Jehovah, means the self-existent being. Adonai (the term used in the Hebrew ritual) only signifies Lord, which is a title of doubtful meaning, and suggests to the mind familiar with Greek literature, Adonis, the god of beauty, whom the Greeks never considered the equal of Zeus, who, in his turn, was subordinate to the nameless, ineffable Power which, when Stoicism was in the ascendant, was called Fate, to which gods as well as men were always subject.

It is so impossible for the finite mind to content itself with the infinite and absolute in idea, that every relig-



ious system on earth has added Spiritualism to Monotheism. These two systems are not antagonistic in the minds of those who can grasp both; for the latter is but a manifestation of the former which, while unmanifest, is incomprehensible. Who was the personal Lord who spake to Moses from the bush at Horeb, and from the summit of Sinai, who appeared to Elijah in the wilderness, and constantly manifested himself as an angel to the patriarchs? Surely, not the Infinite Eternal, whom no man has seen at any time, but a messenger from the invisible world, near enough to the plane of man's comprehension to be intelligible as a personality, and yet far enough removed from ordinary limitations to be a master in wisdom to those with whom he conversed. We know the purely subjective type of mind will repudiate this explanation, and contend that objective spiritual phenomena never occur, but people think they take place when they are hallucinated. While those who argue thus are often very spiritually minded people who are quite sure they enjoy interior silent communion with the Divine Spirit, we must differ from them in all kindness, when they tell us that only subjectively is spiritual truth revealed to man. The subjective or internal revelation is, no doubt, the highest, but all are not prepared to receive it; therefore there is always an accommodation of truth to the varied necessities of mankind.

So impossible does it appear to revel only in the thought of the infinity of the unmanifest Supreme Being, that those uncompromising metaphysicians, the ancient Brahmans, soon discoursed of a trinity by means

of which the infinite Brahm was revealed in the universe. As there is but one absolute color (white), but three primaries (red, blue, and yellow), and these three spring from one, and melt into one, so *Brahma* (Creator), *Vishnu* (Preserver), and *Siva* (Destroyer and Reproducer) are introduced on the pages of Sanskrit lore as the threefold expression of the sole Infinite. Buddhism here steps in and puts forward its prominent claim, that Vishnu is periodically incarnated on earth as a Buddha (wise one), and that these incarnations of Vishnu are necessary at intervals, to save and redeem mankind. Vishnu as a spiritual power never embodied in human form is a purely Brahmanical idea, and chimes in very well with the Gnostic idea of Christ never manifest in the flesh as a single personality, while Vishnu incarnate as Buddha born of a virgin, singularly precocious as a child, living a life of singular purity, healing the sick, preaching to the poor, suffering much, and then translated without dying, finds its parallel in that far more popular phase of Christianity which deifies Jesus and declares him to be "very God of very God," in a sense in which it would be blasphemy to consider any human being God. The popular view of truth is always more or less beclouded with error in consequence of the very limited view most people are able to take. Certain it is that great masses of mankind grasp some idea, fundamentally true, and then build upon it an enormous structure partly true and partly false. As with Christianity so with Buddhism; the enlightened are but few, while the ignorant are very many, and frequently the exoteric belief of the masses is taken for the esoteric

verity known only to initiates. Mr. Sinnett in his "Esoteric Buddhism" has not, in our opinion, fathomed the deeper truths of Buddhism, except here and there. His work is learned, and gives evidence of much research and not a little deep thought; but it is not always theosophical, as it falls into the stupid error so common in Christendom, that literal death, what Shakespeare calls "shuffling off this mortal coil," makes an immense difference in the immediate condition of the individual who has died to the external world. This conclusion is less true than almost the crudest notion of the most illiterate of modern Spiritualists on the same subject, for one will hardly find a Spiritualist in any part of the world who does not know enough to deny this palpable and misleading blunder.

The whole difficulty concerning "separation of principles at death," "shells," "astral bodies," "*reliquae* of the departed," and many other crude conceptions thrust upon the world as arcane wisdom, has arisen from an utter failure to understand the mystical meaning of the term *death* as employed by spiritually enlightened writers the world over. "Ye are dead," "I die daily," and similar expressions of Paul in several of his epistles cannot be made to refer to physical dissolution without destroying the sense irrationally; and just as Paul spoke of death and dying in a figurative sense, so did the mystics of the far Orient, to whom, as to the Rosicrucians, the secret of death is transmutation. A more foolish misstatement can hardly be imagined than this we meet with continually in avowedly theosophical publications, which are too often theosophical only in

name; and as these misapprehensions are great roots of bitterness, occasioning much strife, contention, and often severe mental distress, we are determined to do our part in presenting what we know to be the truth as opposed to these errors. Mrs. E. H. Britten, though herself a student of occultism, and one who has done much to promote the study of it in others, has written vehement articles against Theosophy in her paper, *The Two Worlds*, published weekly in Manchester, England, in consequence of this foolish misconception coming so prominently to the front in many places. We wish she had corrected the error more theosophically; but anyway her denunciation of it can have done no real harm to the theosophical movement, as only the tares can perish — nothing can destroy the wheat.

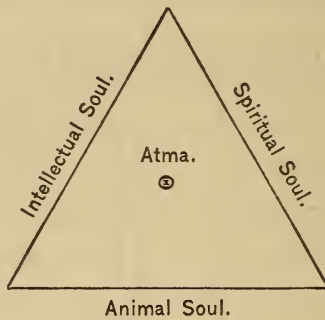
The seven-fold constitution of man, as generally stated by "Esoteric Buddhists," is comparatively easy of acceptance and provokes no reasonable hostility, though to the word *principle* used in that sense many may take exception, as there is in reality but one principle of life — essential spirit. The seven-fold constitution is really a misnomer, as there is but one life principle according to those who speak most of seven principles, and that one, which is both Alpha and Omega, is called *atma*, which signifies divine soul, the immortal atom of intelligence which, as a deathless entity, lives unchanged despite all that may occur to its subordinates. This *atma*, or ultimate unit of consciousness, is expressed in what is termed the *spiritual soul*, which is the seat of moral perception; this in turn is displayed through the *intellectual soul*, which is the seat of human reason or

intellect, without which man would not be man. Below these divine and human principles are placed the *animal soul*, which is the seat of instinct and passion; the *astral body*, which is the invisible form or organism; *vitality*, which is the connecting link between the astral or immaterial body and the physical frame; and lastly, the physical body itself. As involution necessarily precedes evolution, the first from the spiritual side is the seventh from the material, and *vice versa*. To give our readers a plain illustration of the idea we present the following table of the constitution of man: —

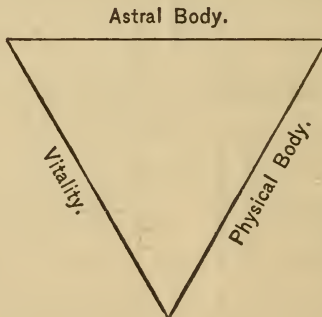
## ABSOLUTE UNMANIFEST LIFE.

7. Atma.	LADDER OF LIFE.	Invisible	Involution. Descent of Spirit into Expression. 1. Atma.
6. Spiritual Soul.		Order.	2. Spiritual Soul.
5. Intellectual Soul.			3. Intellectual Soul.
4. Animal Soul.			4. Animal Soul.
3. Astral Body.			5. Astral Body.
2. Vitality.		Order.	6. Vitality.
1. Physical Body. Evolution. Return of Spirit.		Visible	7. Physical Body.

It will be readily seen by this table that the popular Kabalistic figure of the double triangle is intended to represent the sixfold expression of the one inexpressible life principle; and those who study this will see how vast a truth those healers have grasped, who sometimes, however, cannot very well explain their philosophy, who treat by urging forgetfulness of all but the *atma*. “God is well, and so are you,” is quite true in every case, provided we know what it means. The upward pointing triangle ( $\Delta$ ) may be read thus:—



The eye, or divine name in the centre, always signifies the immortal life principle, which is one with God, and is all-good in finite degree as the Infinite is all-good in infinite degree. The downward-pointing triangle ( $\nabla$ ) may be read thus:—



but it is no real part of man, and thus the fourfold constitution is all that is admitted by those who know the external form to be nothing more than a temporary appendage. Man is one, as there is but one God. To use Brahmanical terms, *Brahm* is corresponded to by the *atma* which manifests itself in the following threefold order: *Brahma* (Creator) in the spiritual soul, *Vishnu* (Preserver) in the intellectual soul, and *Siva* (Destroyer and Reproducer) in the animal soul. It is intuition which creates, reason which preserves, and animal impulses which destroy and reproduce expressions. Thus the three loves which Swedenborg says are in the heart of every man can be located; *divine love* in the spiritual soul, *neighborly love* in the intellectual soul, and *self-love* in the animal soul. When these three loves are rightly subordinated, man is an angel; but when they are inverted, he is a fiend. Thus "All is good, there is no evil," can receive a perfect explanation as we learn to know ourselves. *Demon est deus inversus* (a demon is an inverted god) is an ancient theosophical maxim and teaches us as we study what is perfectly in accord with all the researches of outward science, viz., that everything in nature is innately or inherently good, and only needs to be rightly employed to proclaim its goodness.

Evolution teaches that the component parts of antediluvian monsters have been dissipated, and that after the molecules were separated and eventually recombined, fair and graceful forms took the place of the frightful creations of bygone cycles. When Theosophy lifts the curtain and reveals the inner sense of the first

chapter of Genesis, the six days' labor of the soul and its seventh day of rest appear before us as a beautiful allegory of the progress of each individual spirit from untempted innocence to celestial purity. Innocence differs from purity in that it is dove-like harmlessness, but nothing more; while purity unites the wisdom of the serpent therewith, and is a permanent condition from which no fall need be feared. The four states mentioned in "Esoteric Buddhism" as lying beyond the grave, can be easily comprehended if we know that *Avitchi*, the lowest of them, corresponds to hell, a place, or state of remorse and misery, entered upon only by those whose motives have been malicious, and who have purposely worked to injure others. A peculiar feature of this condition is that while it is not and cannot be eternal, it appears everlasting to those who are suffering in it, and from this cause Dante in his "Inferno," and Swedenborg in his "Heaven and Hell," have pictured it as though unending. *Avitchi* is only possible to the very worst type of men conceivable. *Kama-loca* is an Oriental synonym for purgatory, and really means nothing more than a progressive condition after death, which the majority of persons must experience, for they are not low enough for *Avitchi*, nor high enough in the moral scale for *Devachan*, which is the Sanskrit name for paradise, a condition of calm repose and sweet content, the well-earned reward of an active and self-denying life on earth. *Nirvana* means ineffable blessedness, and describes the state of the soul when finally released from the need of further planetary pilgrimages.

The planetary chain is a very interesting feature of



the Eastern doctrine, and explains the old idea of the seven worlds in harmony with astronomy, at the same time giving us a very intelligent glimpse at the object of planetary creation. As there are seven notes in the musical scale, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, so in a scale of worlds there are seven planets; but the same world does not always represent the same note: there are always seven worlds in each scale, and as a world progresses, it strikes the octave note and becomes the commencement of a higher scale, at which time there is another world ready to enter the scale as lower A, from which this advanced planet has departed as higher A. Say, for instance, that at present in this solar system, Mercury is A; Venus, B; Earth, C; Mars, D; Jupiter, E; Saturn, F; and Uranus, G. Neptune must be A in a scale above. In the order of development a world must either go forward in the scale, or go to pieces, and drop out of it. Some people think the later fate befell one planet in this system, and that the Asteroids are the fragments of this disrupted orb. Some very interesting views on astronomy will be found in the section entitled "Electrical Christian Theosophy"; therefore we will not pursue the theme further at this point, neither will we enlarge upon *Karma*, as that is treated at length in a section devoted to it. In bringing this lecture to a close we will content ourselves with declaring that a fair-minded study of Hinduism leaves the student amazed at its agreement with Christianity esoterically interpreted, which everywhere forces itself on the student's mind. Verily there is but one esoteric religion under many names.

## LECTURE X.

### THROUGH THE AGES.

#### A STUDY OF THE SOUL'S PROGRESSION THROUGH REPEATED EARTHLY EXPERIENCES.

IT is almost impossible to touch upon the profoundly interesting subject of the repeated embodiments of the human soul, or the plurality of terrestrial existences, without feeling something of that pressure of antagonistic thought which beats against the minds of those who are seeking to solve life's mighty problem, and from the prejudiced thoughts of a multitude who seemingly must dogmatize where they have no light, and appear as though compelled to unkindly, even fiercely, denounce all who have received a ray of truth from any source except such sources as they, in their arrogance, suppose to be alone creditable, because in consonance with their own predilections. From science we have nothing to fear and everything to hope; but from blind and self-conceited sciolism we ask no quarter and seek no indorsement.

The objections to the doctrine of repeated embodiments, so far as we have heard them, are without exception crudely materialistic, personalistic in the narrowest sense, and not infrequently vulgar and insulting. For several years the author of this volume and many,

many other persons have through the public press importuned the objectors to this great mystery, as it appears to so many, to state reasonably, logically, and consistently, without puerility or venom, their best answer to this dogma, as they term it, and to which they manifest such senseless and irrepressible opposition; but in vain. All arguments to prove it false have turned out weak when not spiteful; and though all over the world a controversy has been waging for many years, and is not ended yet: we have yet to see a single answer to the central claim, that divine justice, impartial equity, is only thus displayed. The innumerable inequalities apparent on every hand imperatively demand some just explanation. Those who oppose the theory of re-embodiment never answer the questions which are put to them. If they are theological bigots committed to some antiquated church dogma which is sure to be a perversion of some occult truth, they content themselves, and strive, though usually quite unsuccessfully in this age, to satisfy their interlocutors with the time-worn and depressing reply, "We must not speculate on matters of religion, God having revealed to us in the Bible and through the ministry of the church all he intends us to know in this life; probably in the hereafter what is now mystery will be made plain."

If the objector be a Spiritualist, he usually commences with an utterly illogical statement concerning relationships, entirely forgetting that no relation which is simply of earth, in any way pertains to the spirit. Persons may be very near earthly relatives and at the same time bound to each other by the closest spiritual ties;

but it is equally common for those who have no tie of blood between them to be exceedingly near to each other in spirit, while the closest earthly bonds often betoken no spiritual relationship whatever. Not only do those Spiritualists who oppose the theory of re-embodiment utterly fail to realize the truth concerning real relations; they confound the terms *identity*, *individuality*, and *personality* so bewilderingly that only one idea is expressed by these three words, each of which when rightly understood conveys a totally different idea. Identity pertains to the soul, individuality to the mind, and personality to the body. In a very fascinating story, published in three volumes by C. L. H. Wallace, Oxford Mansions, London, entitled "Through the Ages," the gifted author, who remains anonymous, brings forward argument after argument in favor of this much misunderstood but most important fact of repeated embodiments, and answers very powerfully the leading objections to it. For those who are not particularly attracted to philosophical essays, such a novel is very helpful and instructive. The same remark may apply in great measure to "Karma," by A. P. Sinnett, which is obtainable everywhere at purely nominal cost, — fifteen to thirty-five cents, according to style of binding and size of type. For those who are really anxious to seriously investigate this great subject we would recommend a work entitled "Reincarnation," published by the Occult Publishing Company, 120 Tremont Street, Boston; also, "The Soul," a series of teachings given through the mediumship of Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, published by William Richmond, Roger's Park, Illinois.

Both of these works are most interesting: the former is historical, comparative, illustrative; the latter, positive and didactic in style and reasoning. Of course, manifold questions will arise on this subject in the minds of all who are seeking the light its consideration may help to afford. It is not to be expected that so vast a theme can be dealt with off-hand; nor, in the present stage of general knowledge, need we expect a thoroughly consistent statement of the whole case from the lips or pens of all its numerous advocates.

Allan Kardec, the noted Frenchman, whose name, or rather *nom de plume*, is so intimately associated with the doctrine of re-embodiment in Europe, was by no means an ultimate authority on the subject, nor did he ever profess to be. He was among the kindest and most modest of men, say those who knew him best. His sole desire was to advance the cause of truth and human progress; to this end he freely gave time, money, energy, and all he had to bestow, reserving for himself only sufficient means to enable him to live quietly in Paris, in rooms largely devoted to the work so near his heart. In the early days of Spiritism in France, the apartments of this noble man were freely open to earnest investigators in the field of psychic science, while all the sensitives who came in his atmosphere found him firm but gentle, grave but kind, ever anxious to give the utmost latitude to individual expression, and then to diligently compare the teachings given through different channels the one with the other, until he found a sufficient concord in the general statement to justify him in publishing them to the world in the

*Revue Spirite*, an excellent journal he was then editing. Four of his principal works — “The Spirits’ Book,” “The Medium’s Book,” “Heaven and Hell,” and “Genesis” — are now for sale in English at the *Banner of Light* establishment, — 9 Bosworth St., Boston, — at \$1.50 per volume. “Heaven and Hell” is, in our opinion, the most intensely interesting of the series to those who are desirous of considering the matter from a religious standpoint. No matter whether or not one is prepared to accept all that is put forward concerning the sources whence the teachings were derived; wherever they came from, they are excellent, and whatever may be their defects in the opinion of any, no one can justly accuse them of glossing over a palpable weakness or creeping out through a small crevice when a question pertaining to universal equity is on the tapis.

As we look over the earth to-day we see any number of varieties in human condition, and we are naturally led to inquire, Why are things as they are? Theology with its “divine mysteries” may satisfy those who do not feel deeply on these matters, and the future life as mapped out by Spiritualists may seem quite satisfactory to those who are contented with an evasive and partial reply. That everything is for the best, that God does all things well, that all will be fully compensated in the hereafter, may be expressions of a great truth; but the question still remains unanswered, Why are people so terribly unequal now? To this question Theosophy fearlessly addresses itself, and by having recourse to the wisdom of the ages presents the nineteenth century with a philosophy fully in accord with the doctrine of

evolution, and also in perfect consonance with every exalted religious sentiment. Evolution is unthinkable if there be no such a base for it as involution supplies. We may trace every organism back from the most complex to the most rudimentary, to a single germ cell; but such an original cell must contain within it all possibilities of future expression, or the development of a higher type could not take place. In the light which involution supplies, evolution is no longer insoluble; for, back of the germ is the spiritual monad, or soul, the living entity, the conscious designer and builder of forms, which is never really confined to any material tabernacle, but uses one after another, the palpable organizations we behold, through which to display its latent talents. James Freeman Clarke, whose essays on Oriental religions are exceptionally fine, tells us in his "Ten Great Religions," a most marvelous production, which all students of Theosophy should study, that while he claims to actually *know* nothing of transmigration, its truth or error, he feels convinced that the enlightened of ancient time and Orient clime did not teach the vulgar notion entertained by the illiterate, that human souls after the dissolution of their physical bodies pass into the forms of animals; but that the theory of transmigration was really an idea of evolution: therefore the various developments of inferior organisms by the human entity preceded birth into human form instead of succeeding the death of that form. Now if evolution be accepted for the human race at large, why not for every unit in particular? What is there foolish or repulsive in the theory that

the vital spark of divine life animating a human organism to-day, built an inferior form in ages past, and that, ever proceeding along its upward way, it is continually advancing toward perfection in expression. "Art Magic" and "Ghost Land," those extraordinary works published about 1876, by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, who declares them to have been written by "one who knows," and that one not herself,—she being only their translator and editor,—both take the ground of pre-existence, though they do not favor the idea of repeated embodiment in human form. In both those volumes a theory of "elementals" is ingeniously put forward to explain the genesis of the individual soul of man in a rational manner. Such theories are intensely interesting, and well worthy of consideration. We should imagine those who consider them conclusive must believe that some human entities have advanced further in the elemental kingdoms prior to their manifesting in human form than others; and if this conjecture can be fairly argued out, it certainly may do much to remove the terrible blot on the posture of the universal plan, placed there by the dogmas of those who deny both pre-existence and re-embodiment.

A singular work, "The Light of Egypt," for which great claims are made by the author, who holds to being exceeding wise, and who expresses acrid hostility to "Esoteric Buddhism," which he unsparingly denounces and in many places grossly misrepresents, puts forward a somewhat similar view, and were it not for his denunciation of others his work would be very readable throughout: as it is, he, in common with all others of



his school who seek to deny whatever they do not understand, misrepresents the purpose of successive embodiments in the most important instances, and makes the doctrine of *Karma* (consequence) signify a harsh, unreasonable, vindictive, unfair system of punishment, while it is exactly the reverse, — a perfectly equitable plan of *education*. To many minds the works of Kardec savor of a doctrine of expiation of sins committed in a former existence far too strongly, as also do certain writings of Anna Blackwell, still extant, some of which first appeared many years ago in *Human Nature*, a London periodical not issued at present. But the stress laid on expiatory suffering is often due to the urgent quest for a satisfactory answer to the query, Why do we suffer? which will not down. In dealing with this topic we desire to be particularly lucid and cautious, and shall therefore carefully avoid all technicalities and seek to present the subject so that any intelligent child may understand it. The human soul, according to Hindu Theosophy, is quite distinct from the spiritual soul, which is its originator and on which it depends for everything. This human soul, the offspring of the spiritual, requires discipline, all of an educational character. It must forfeit its primeval, automatic innocence, and eventually attain the royal height of perfect purity in which, to use a Gospel metaphor, the wisdom of the serpent is united with the harmlessness of the dove. During probationary stages of growth the human soul must develop its own consciousness, and from choice, not compulsion, follow in all things the dictates of spiritual desire. To accomplish the perfect

individualization of this subordinate consciousness, it is essential that the soul should experience to the full the result of sowing and reaping according to its own will. There are no rewards and no punishments in the usual but wrongful acceptance of those words. Throughout all periods of progression, each individual reaps what he sows, and his next sowing is in large measure dependent upon his last reaping. There is no particular private destiny marked out for any individual; there is a common race destiny to which all are subject, and this destiny is simply *destination*. If one man sows grapes and another thorns, one will reap grapes and the other thorns; but there is no law compelling one to sow fruit and another weeds; the law is imperative only in its declaration, — “No man can gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.” If any one desires figs he must cultivate fig-trees, for figs will grow upon no other boughs. If one desire grapes he must cultivate grape-vines, for grapes are produced nowhere else and in no other manner. Thus we cannot say that men are either rewarded or punished in the conventional usage of these terms, but all take the consequences of their own acts, be those acts at a given time remembered or forgotten, and the consequence is itself at all times, under all circumstances, the best thing which could possibly happen to the person who rejoices or suffers by reason of its happening.

Such puerile absurdities as an illustration drawn from whipping a dog for the wrong it committed when a puppy, put forward with all the assumption and dignity imaginable, in “The Light [more correctly the darkness]

of Egypt," prove the person who used so ridiculous and false an analogy to be anything but enlightened on the question he perverts. To take up his own dog and puppy simile, we can prove his reasoning false on his own ground; for had he understood the doctrine he assails he would have known that in its reference to canines as well as men it would operate thus: A man (or a dog) has contracted an injurious habit when a youth (or a puppy), the consequence of which has entailed upon him certain suffering, which suffering grows out of the act itself: such suffering is not a judicial punishment in the popular sense; it is a result, and as such in no way dependent upon memory or forgetfulness of the act which occasioned it. Now if the penalty following the act proceeds from the act as naturally as grapes grow on grape-vines and figs on fig-trees, how can one pronounce the suffering in any arbitrary sense a punishment? But our philosophy does not desert us at that point by any means; it carries us much further into an understanding of universal rectitude, by assuring us that the penalty is educational and remedial. Thus what we suffer is not intended to punish us for doing amiss, but to lead us to where we shall not err in future. The best medical doctors all agree that pain serves a double end; it calls our attention to some error, and at the same time is caused by an effort of nature to heal a wound; consequently we do not need nor should we seek exemption from penalty, but deliverance from the ignorant or perverse mental state which occasions suffering, and which is outgrown by means of suffering. The whole doctrine

of *Karma* when reasonably explained is a simple recognition of the perpetual operation of immutable cause and effect. Sin produces suffering, and suffering wipes out the sin; just as when one's garments are stained they need cleansing, and to cleanse them means work.

The present system of incarcerating criminals appears to us entirely wrong, while capital punishment is an offense against reason, justice, and humanity. Hospitals, penitentiaries, industrial schools (miscalled such), lunatic asylums, and a host of other semi-barbaric institutions are no safeguards against crime; those who advocate them as necessities are utterly blind to the real wants of society. The idea of punitive expiation seems to have so befogged the minds of a majority, that it is well-nigh impossible to all at once clear the mental air sufficiently to let in the light of reason upon the popular mind concerning this subject. No life is for punishment, no experience is to pay some one out in a harsh, vindictive sense for some error of a previous existence; but effects will follow causes in the natural order, and hence, if the effect of previous folly is present suffering, is not that suffering a result which cannot be avoided, and which will in due time produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness? Theosophy teaches that all souls are equal; that the first expression of every soul is at the foot of the ladder of progress; every rung is a distinct term of experience, while the spaces between the rungs are periods passed in the invisible state. During the interim between embodiments the soul is neither unconscious or inactive, but still moving forward, till, when that stage of experience

is at an end, the next ultimatum expression, though in a material form, is always the next step in the forward order.

Some very vulgar errors are exceedingly common, and among them none more prevalent than the belief that "reward" and "punishment" can be determined by one's outward circumstances; that the rich are always favored while the poor are invariably under chastisement, is a very popular but most insane mistake. Some rich people are very happy while others are wretched; the same is true of the poor; neither riches nor poverty can then be regarded as indicators of spiritual, moral, or intellectual status; but wherever we find real nobility, sweet contentment, and pure enjoyment, in a word, blessed satisfaction with one's condition whatever it may be, we witness tokens of spiritual unfoldment. All that we can ever see our way to teach or advocate on this subject of successive embodiments is, that in the cycle of the ages everything is equalized, no one is favored above another; those who are now born in the inferior races will some way be born in the superior; those who are now superior have once been inferior; all start at one point, all ultimately arrive at one goal. The manifold discrepancies of the present will all be cleared up in the light of the future, so that we shall all realize that whatever occurs is for the best; every obstacle we meet we need to encounter and overcome.

But before we can grasp this philosophy we must study the nature of death.

Death to a Theosophist means death to old conditions,

the death of the animal instincts, followed by a resurrection to spiritual consciousness, which, like a glorious Phoenix bursts its bonds when freed from the control of earthly passions. This death is truly represented by the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, or by such emblems as the Easter egg. Death is a casting-off of an outer shell, deliverance from the trammels of the senses, as the spiritual life-principle works its way upward. Resurrection is the triumph of spirit over the thralldom of sense. A great deal in all of us needs to die. As animals we die never to rise again; but when our outer clothing is cast aside, we, *i.e.* our real selves, ascend to higher states of conscious life. Death, when understood in its true significance, means spiritual elevation, not physical dissolution. The apostle Paul rightly exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" In this saying, his meaning is that death is only a casting aside of an outgrown shell, as a once imprisoned bird breaks from its calcareous environment, and rejoices in deliverance from its prison. There would be no fear of death if people did not depend on the body for happiness. We should be willing to wear it, and use it as long as we need it, but be ready to cast it off when it can be of no further use, with no doubt of the spirit-world being a better state than this. Strive to make it a matter of perfect indifference to you whether you remain here or go hence. We are always at work in the spiritual universe. There is no real difference to the spirit between birth and death, and as we rise to a consciousness of our real being we deny that we ever were born or ever

can die; we realize that we ARE forever. We affirm that we have nothing to fear from death, and we thereby overcome its power to bereave us of what we prize and love. Those who live in the spirit pass to the unseen state without any suffering; they gradually dismiss their physical environment, until the ultimate stage appears only like passing through a beautiful gateway of transition, as it appeared to those great adepts, Enoch and Elijah. Is it necessary that a house should tumble down because we are ready to move out of it? need the body we are ready to vacate first become foul and loathsome? The true philosophy of Being is expressed in Longfellow's immortal couplet, "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the *soul*." Soul has a prior existence to the body, and "returns to God who gave it." The experience of a spirit on earth may be likened to that of a child at a boarding-school, or of a youth while an apprentice to a trade away from home. He remembers his home with love, and enjoys it on his return as he never could have enjoyed it had he never left it. The "elder brother" of the Prodigal Son, though *unfallen* was the inferior of the two, as he had not the tender loving spirit of the father toward his brother, who, though fallen, had risen again. The prodigal, who returned to his home, had fought life's battle, and won its prize. We develop from manhood to angelhood, as a child develops from infancy to maturity. The glory of the angel does not equal that of the archangel, but the archangel was once a man, as the man was once an infant. All reflections that lead to an intelligent recognition of Theosophy

bring us to a point where we comprehend the true relations of spirit and body here and hereafter; they therefore aid us practically to an incalculable extent in our endeavors to effectually banish all errors and superstitions which produce misery on earth.

We regard the physical body as a necessary tool in the hands of a spiritual workman. Our bodies are constructed for a definite purpose; they are tools for work as well as dresses to wear. They are brought into existence from necessity. The spirit forms its body as a workman constructs his tools. If the question arises, "Why, then, do we not all have the bodies we would like?" we must bear in mind that we cannot always externalize our thought perfectly, even in the making of a dress or coat. We have not as yet perfect power over material, even with the best patterns before us. People are often very much dissatisfied with their own efforts, and much prefer the workmanship of others. The ideal always antedates the actual; a perfect expression of the ideal is reserved for a condition in this world, or some other, where we have gained complete ascendancy over all material; then we shall be clothed upon with bodies of glorious spiritual form. There is no such thing as creation of substance, but only creation of form. Forms come and go, substance abides. When bodies are formed nothing comes into *being*, and when they die nothing goes out of *being*: there is only a change in appearance. Creation is organization, expression; seeming death is simply dematerialization, the disappearance of some object from the realm of mortal perception. From the standpoint of the Eternal



there *can* be no death. There can be no change in divine law, but there is frequently great change in our conception of it; there can be no change in truth, but only in our views of truth. All outward things change, because outward things are manifestations of finite ideas: all intelligence moves in incessant but ever-diversified activity. Why do worlds change, why do they advance from infancy to old age, and thence to reabsorption into the element whence they sprang? Their changes from first to last are resultant from the condition of some unseen mind working out its capabilities in expression. An organ may remain in one condition during all the years you are studying music, but you are capable of evolving at one time far more intricate harmonies from it than you could at another; the capacity of the organ has not changed, but the musician has; the organ has never been educated, but you have. Planets and human bodies, as we behold them outwardly, are constantly acted upon by intelligences who are always advancing.

The story of Pygmalion and Galatea, in which the statue comes to life and is made to speak, is illustrative of the truth of spiritual evolution. The sculptor produces a marble form by means of his intellect and affections, which somewhat embodies his ideal; he breathes his life into the work of his own hands; it could never become himself: still the statue was made to breathe. Man's outward form can have no life in itself, but it is an animated statue made by the soul; it is will and affection manifest in form. We may even fancy the soul's animated statue to have a wavering,

wandering will of its own, which often *knows* better than it *does*. Everything we call objective in mineral, vegetable, or animal form, expresses some mental condition; it is an embodied result of mental breath, but not always a faithful reproduction of the one who breathes. Human souls have doubtless lived for ages before they expressed themselves in mortal form. Man is the creator of everything below him. It is far more reasonable to state that the action of a human mind *made* a monkey than that man ever *was* a monkey. Man, as a spiritual entity, is now and always in the spiritual world. If our thought has passed through the animal and vegetable kingdoms, they have naturally proceeded from the mind of man previous to his building a form, in which his thought could more perfectly express itself. We can only understand evolution in the light of involution. We never are embodied; we live now and ever in the spiritual state, but the soul gives forth various impulsions, which produce forms, and endow them with more or less perfection. When we rise to conceive of ourselves as we really are, we shall know that we have never been on earth at all, our real selves have created mortal forms, and endowed them with life, as the sculptor created and endowed the statue.

The next question which arises, is, "How can we know each other in spirit?" We know each other in soul-life by nothing that is manifest to sense. Do we any of us really know ourselves? does the lower know the higher nature? Most people live so much in the lower nature that they cannot know themselves in spirit. The "fall of man" is his losing sight of his

spiritual nature amid the busy scenes of external activity. The lower *ego* must find the higher *ego* before man can, in any true sense, be said to know himself. In the deepest sense we never had mothers, and never were born. Our spiritual being did not commence with mortal birth, but our spiritual entity was the cause of physical conception. Spirit causes mothers to become mothers through a spiritual impulse, too often unrecognized. No woman can give life to a child. We acknowledge spiritual Deity and spiritual humanity. Man must come to an understanding of his true self, and of the principle of spiritual being, before he can know his own soul, and walk in the light of the Spirit, which is the only true Being.

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[ORIGINAL POEM.]

THE LAW OF GROWTH: THE PRIOR EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL, ITS EARTHLY DISCIPLINE, AND RETURN TO ITS PRIMAL HOME.

From the sphere of spirit, the realm of the soul,  
 The spirit descends to earth,  
 And here takes on its external form,  
 Born of earth's changeful birth.  
 For here it must strive for a while  
 On the earth with all forms of sense,  
 To develop all power from within itself,  
 And gain wonderful recompense.

The soul in the realm of the soul above  
 Is like an unplanted seed,

Like a beautiful acorn that yet will grow  
 To an oak, whose living seed  
 Shall be scattered through distant ages,  
 Over ocean, land, and sea;  
 Through the many worlds that roll in space,  
 Amid heaven's immensity.

The law of growth is this wonderful law,  
 That the spirit contains within  
 Whatever power or majesty  
 Is unfolded; for it can win  
 No added power by the earth's control,  
 Though earth can display the power of soul.  
 Like a seed that is planted deep in the earth  
 Nothing is added thereto,  
 Though the rains have descended, the sunbeams  
 shone,  
 Though the balmiest zephyrs blew;  
 Though man should cultivate the soil  
 And irrigate with care  
 The place where the seed is sheltered,  
 Yet the harvest will declare  
 The special form of the special seed,  
 And no other can spring from the seed,  
 But the body expressed as that special flower,  
 For God gives to each seed its especial dower.

If the soul of man is embodied here,  
 And bound to the earth for a while,  
 Like an alien pilgrim away from home,  
 While the heavens above it smile;  
 If weary and worn and oftentimes sad,  
 The spirit shall turn for light

And ask of the rolling orbs above,  
For their testimony bright;

And ask of the wondrous fields of space,  
"Oh, what is God's decree?"  
All worlds and all souls will answer that  
Throughout eternity  
The law of growth by God's mighty power  
Ordains the expanding seed,  
And its outward manifestation here  
Of what is within — indeed

It may seem that all earthly care,  
That all earthly pain and loss,  
And all the burdens one may bear  
And the heavy weight of the cross,  
Are unneeded by the soul,  
And you may complain to God  
And ask the wherefore and the why  
Of griefs that spring from the sod.

But angel hosts in their bright array  
Would bring you this wonderful dower,  
Would tell you that all their glorious songs,  
Which are their spirit's flower;  
That all the music and the crown,  
And the brightest lights above,  
Are answers to the spirit's cry  
For more room to unfold its love.

If among the cherubs and seraphs fair  
A soul to its master shall say,  
"Oh, may I go down to toil on the earth  
And travel life's mystic way?"

I see the archangels passing fair,  
In their hierarchies of light,  
And I know though innocent and pure —  
My robes are not so bright.

“I hear of their deeds of great renown,  
I read in their love-lit eyes  
The wonderful story of victory gained;  
And when I with ecstasy  
Look on you my angel guide, I ask,  
‘Why am I not such as thee?’”  
The angel answers the infant soul,  
“My child, if you come to me  
And ask of my glory and wondrous state,  
Inquiring the reason why,  
I must tell you of struggle on many a world,  
In many a time passed by;

“Of the gate of birth and the gate of death  
Ere my soul was rounded forth  
In the splendor of that innocence  
Which triumphed over wrath;  
In the splendor of that perfect love  
And of that wisdom bright  
That links me to the radiant realms  
Of cloudless heavenly light.”

If the soul shall again exclaim,  
“I would be such as thee;  
Is there no way whereby I may  
Gain such a high degree?  
Are there no means for me to trace  
The pathway to the skies?

Oh! can I never wear the crown,  
 Can there never in my eyes

“Shine that light of wisdom divine  
 Which in yours is more bright than day?”  
 The angel makes answer: “The way is dark  
 And long, and thou must stray  
 For many a cycle far from those  
 To you the dearest and best,  
 And toil on earth full many a time  
 Till thy soul is fully blest.”

Then the fairy child of angelic light,  
 The cherub and seraph fair,  
 Consents, yea, desires to leave its home  
 And the beauties over there.  
 For into the waters of “Lethe” dark  
 The soul must needs descend,  
 And then a child is born on earth;  
 As the soul its path doth wend  
 Adown from the skies so fair,  
 The trailing light from above  
 But dimly lights its earthly way,  
 And dimly foreshadows its love.  
 And a child is born with many a tear,  
 And imprisoned a while in sense,  
 The captive spirit must sigh and groan  
 And patiently wait its recompense.

But after all toils of earth,  
 When the battle is fought and won,  
 When the life of the spirit is rounded out,  
 Then more glorious than the sun—

Not cherub nor seraph, but angel bright,  
 At length an archangel fair,  
 In one of the highest spheres of heaven —  
 The soul can then declare ;

“I have fought the fight, I have won my crown,”  
 For the soul goes back again,  
 Like the prodigal returning home,  
 With experience not in vain.  
 And the soul then turns to the angel guide,  
 Who makes answer, “Thou’rt such as I,  
 For the life thou hast lived, the toil thou hast borne,  
 Has lifted thy spirit on high.”

Then all the ages, the weary years,  
 Full of trials and sorrows below,  
 To quickened memory pass along  
 As a wondrous fantastic show:  
 And the panorama is all outspread,  
 And the many lives in one,  
 Like many a link in a golden chain,  
 Will prove how the work is done.

Through long, long growth to the perfect tree  
 From the little angelic seed,  
 Is the soul’s unfoldment to perfect light,  
 For life is blest indeed.  
 And you need not complain, you need not sigh,  
 And you never need shed a tear,  
 For all the burdens that here you bear,  
 Though they last through many a year,

Are at length exchanged for a crown of light  
 Where the flowers can ne’er decay,



And the victory gained, through eternal years  
Is your joy, and your light will stay.

Then work ye well and bear your load  
Whatever the burden be,  
Knowing your earthly discipline  
For a glad immortality  
Is for growth to the planted seed  
Which, pure as a snow-white dove,  
Finds at length in the home divine  
Perfect wisdom blent with love.

## LECTURE XI.

A FURTHER STUDY OF EMBODIMENT. — THE LAW OF KARMA (SEQUENCE), AND HOW IT OPERATES IN DAILY LIFE.

THE preceding lecture has led us up to where we can affirm that though all spirit is in essence good, it needs experience to unfold its capacities. The soul prior to embodiment is like an unplanted seed ; physical form gives it opportunity to expand. Many think that souls come to earth merely for expression, in the smaller sense of that word ; but if after a struggle through many existences the soul were only converted to its primal state, all effort and earthly discipline would be of no avail whatever. All souls are equally pure in essence ; but the soul is not powerful like God ; it has no such knowledge as God possesses. If our knowledge is finite and His is infinite, there must be an infinite difference between infinite and finite power ; therefore we can understand eternal progression, which means our unending advancement in power and knowledge. God is the only infinite : He is all-powerful Love and Wisdom. Eternal good-will, the pure beneficence of the Infinite brings all beings into existence and endows them with the power and privilege of perpetually drawing nearer to Him in their own consciousness. We are

constantly advancing nearer to infinite knowledge and power, but the goal is always beyond us. The human soul is as pure as God, but capable of infinite advancement in knowledge. Souls are embodied on earth to *acquire* and to *unfold*, as well as to express. The efforts of finite souls bring worlds and bodies into existence. As soon as we have learned all we can in this present state, and there is therefore no longer need of our further embodiment on earth, we advance to a higher planet. When we have outgrown all love of earth and all yearning for it, we shall live only in spirit; but so long as we retain earthly attractions, they will draw us into realms where earthly experiences can be gained. The earth is a magnet to us until we have overcome all sensuous attraction, and put away all "childish things" through the higher development of understanding. We are drawn to earth just so long as any desire for earthly things lurks within us, and we are often brought (seemingly) involuntarily into whatever outward state corresponds to our mental condition. When we attain to that perfect state of growth of which neither eye nor ear nor heart can yet conceive, we reach the true "home of the soul," the eternal world, or "kingdom of heaven," the absolute Nirvana of unalloyed and perpetual bliss. We have then reached the end of our journey, so far as our spiritual pilgrimage is at present perceived by any of us. What further heights there may be for us to climb, in states beyond our present conception, altogether removed from time and sense, none should attempt dogmatically to decide; though of this we may feel assured, that the conscious immortal

entity, the real *ego*, will be forever reaching out to a yet more glorious destiny.

In the Kabala the statement is made that all worlds and forms are brought into existence, not by En-Soph (Supreme Wisdom) directly, but through the action of subordinate deities designated *Elohim*. There can be only one supreme life, infinitely good; but the one contains the multitude. Souls always have existed and always will. In the eternal world it is always NOW. Each individual soul can say "I am that I am" in *being*, though not in existence. Existence is but an external manifestation of being. The unembodied soul is as perfectly pure and divine as the Eternal Soul, in the sense of spotless innocence at least. In our highest conception of ourselves we know we are perfectly pure, but we must learn to distinguish carefully between the divine soul (*Atma*) and the human soul. The divine soul creates (or emanates) the individual human spirit; the divine soul is the ultimate atom of self-conscious life which physical scientists have never discovered; they can only discover molecules and monads, which are aggregations of atoms, but never do they find an atom. The absolute atom is entirely beyond recognition by means of the five bodily senses, and can only be apprehended spiritually. This divine atom, in its endeavor to express itself, creates the "spiritual soul," which is a secondary emanation; the divine soul belongs to the *Elohim*, and is a child of God. It is the human spirit which needs earthly discipline and experience. Now we cannot any of us begin at the top of the ladder. Everything originates in spirit; matter is the lowest

vibration of spirit. We see everything on earth, as it were, through inverted lenses, for we see effects without their causes. Jacob's ladder symbolizes embodiment for experience; it represents the descent of spirit into matter and its return to its source. There can be no self-existent matter; there is but one eternal homogeneous substance, but this is heterogeneously expressed. Matter is the lowest expression of this one substance, and is non-existent in the realm of cause, for in absolute reality ALL IS SPIRIT. The esoteric doctrine admits matter only as an appearance in time to sense: spirit alone is both Alpha and Omega. The spiritual soul, the human soul, and the animal soul form a trinity in expression; but the *Atma* is the sole origin of all. The spiritual soul is expressed through intuition, the human soul through reason, and the animal soul through instinct. We all possess these three so-called principles. Intuition is a moral sense, reason is purely intellectual, while instinct is animal perception. We outgrow animal perception as we lose hope in certainty and belief in knowledge, or as we lose the shell when the bird emerges from it, and the bud as it becomes the flower: we shall at length conquer all limitation. Theosophists usually place the human soul (intellectual principle) between the animal soul which tends to earth and the spiritual soul which soars heavenward: though intellect may often aspire, it is constantly vibrating and faltering in its allegiance between spirit and matter. It is for each individual to decide whether he will voluntarily unite himself with the spiritual universe, or remain susceptible to lower influences. If he choose the

latter, it must result in moral suicide or death. Each one must individually decide whether he will live after the flesh or in the spirit. Herein is contained the meaning of all allegories setting forth the temptation and fall of man. If there were no lower states in the universe, we could not reach the higher. Intellectual culture alone is not sufficient for mankind, for many intellectual people give themselves to vice. The spiritual soul, through intuition, like a good genius, is ever urging us onward and upward; while our evil genius (animal soul) is ever attracting us downward toward its own plane. The fourth principle in man (animal soul) must be the servant of the fifth, and the fifth of the sixth, or chaos (discord) is inevitable. This subordination of the lower to the higher answers the old question concerning good and evil, light and shadow, which constitute the foreground and background of existence; but it is light that reigns forever; the shadow does its work and is then absorbed in the light which alone made it possible. In the light of re-embodiment, the idea of punishment is partly true and partly false. By punishment we do not mean retaliation, but means for unfoldment, education, and expansion through suffering. We must understand what we are, before we can comprehend our mission, or conceive why we are embodied at all. Man spiritually is a perfect unit; in manifestation, a trinity in unity: the upward-pointing triangle represents the mental, the moral, and the spiritual in man, while at the centre shines the central sun, *Atma*, the true *Ego*, the individualizing principle, which is forever the child of God,

and, like its divine Author, incapable of sin, sickness, or sorrow.

Varying degrees of unfoldment account for differences in people, but these differences are only external. The divine soul of man is the child of God, and never varies from goodness or holiness; the soul being perfect in purity, even while expressed on earth. When we sin, we do not live in union with this divine principle. All we recognize of ourselves ordinarily is very much less than our true selves; we have never made a full discovery of what we are, or of our real powers. Sons of men, in rare instances only, have come to know they are sons of God. Many have come to a better understanding of this divine truth than others. Whenever we dwell on the successive embodiments of spirit, we endeavor to show that all is in harmony with God's perfect law of justice, in consequence of which there can be no respect of persons. The Buddhist doctrine of Karma is simply an Oriental mode of portraying divine justice as always acting impartially; its entire philosophy is a vindication of divine justice in an application of the law of spiritual *involution* and physical *evolution* in every individual case. The doctrine of evolution teaches falsity when not interpreted spiritually. How often we hear of a man's being superlatively gifted, when in reality his gifts are powers acquired in a previous expression of his soul when he worked as others work now who are acquiring similar gifts. There is no way of justly explaining the marked differences between people which we all observe, but by the law of Karma, or sequence. If all persons to-day

enjoyed equal knowledge of truth, all would appear equal; if we all knew the right and did it, we should be entirely free from pain and trouble; but do we all, in our present expression, have equal opportunities of knowing the truth? Are there not multitudes on earth to-day who have no adequate opportunity of acquiring spiritual knowledge? The reason is found in the law of Karma, which Theosophy explains.

Karma regulates our opportunities. In the use we make of them we create good, and in misuse, or failure to utilize opportunity, we make evil Karma. One may have the opportunity to learn certain things, while his nearest friend may be so situated as to never find such knowledge within his reach. Why? because he had not grown to meet such opportunity. Then in relation to external affairs, take an example: Two persons may advertise for a position; one obtains a favorable reply, another receives none. Thus does Karma operate in daily life. Some persons have "gifts" others cannot cultivate. But remember we are never at a standstill; we are making Karma perpetually. Our past has made our present, and our present is making our future. We only live one life after all, but our experience of life is divided into many parts, and just as our present is the result of our past, our next condition will be the result of our present efforts, for we are incessantly manufacturing Karma. We are creatures of past Karma only so far as immediate opportunity is concerned; to-morrow we shall be swayed by the Karma we are making to-day. No endeavor is by any means valueless. Whatever gift we possess, whatever possibility of advancement is



now ours, is due to something we have learned in our past, when we laid up the treasure which is now ours. As it teaches that everything finally rests with the individual, the doctrine of Karma is, therefore, most encouraging, hopeful, and inspiring, not depressingly fatalistic as so many people misunderstand it. What is fate? Not something arbitrarily imposed upon us: our present condition is but the result of our previous life. Whether we remember making Karma or not, our Karma is of our own manufacture, and this is our present limitation. We rise beyond this through better effort in this existence than we made in our previous one. The soul in its first embodiment has no Karma. When we have conquered Karma we are controllers, not creatures of circumstances any longer. To attain to a Karmaless condition is to complete the cycle of embodiments, and attain Nirvana.

Some people seem "darlings of fortune," while others are always "unlucky." It is a false theory that states it to be God's will that some should enjoy all the blessings, and others endure all the hardships of life. In regard to our failures when we try hard to succeed, and all the events we do not as yet understand, we must conclude we have not grown to where we can always attract, or be benefited by what we desire. Our trials are preparations for a state where we shall receive all we crave when we crave only good. There is some good and adequate reason why we have not succeeded hitherto; but past failure is no evidence of future misfortune. All failure has done something for us; it has been a means of development, and as we progress we

are not really the persons who failed, so there is no reason why *we* should not succeed in future. King Bruce of Scotland, when in prison, watched a spider fail in spinning his web six times, but succeed with the seventh attempt. The six failures made the success of the seventh effort possible. This spider was a working illustration of the universal principle of growth. The spider had not gained the experience and skill after the fifth attempt it had acquired after the sixth, when it had developed to a condition which culminated in success. In all life's endeavors we win the prize only after humiliation and defeat. The triumphs of the successful embody the proposition that some people have outgrown the states in which others still are. All souls have the same to conquer, but at a given moment all are not equally far advanced. We should take all the humiliations we experience as a needful part of our education. There is really no luck or fortune, but one road for all to travel, — the path of growth. We must all climb one ladder of effort. Whatever comes to us is a result of our position on the ladder, and our position to-day is the result of all the steps we have taken hitherto. The understanding of Karma causes us never to dread ultimate failure, never to look forward with forebodings as though any were doomed to failure, but to press hopefully onward with such opportunities as are born of past accomplishment. Without special prophetic vision we can all see the results of our previous experiences in our condition at present. If we can bear fame and riches without haughtiness, and fill a high position well, we shall not need to sweep cross-

ings in a future embodiment. The *good* ruler does not return as a slave, but despots must acquire humility through humble service, learning the blessedness of ministration in the lowest positions. Whatever good one has earned one retains forever. As everything is a direct effect of some cause, every one should feel, "I have only to make a proper effort to succeed. I am assured of ultimate success. I am called to pass through no experiences others have not passed through." It is precisely with the individual as with the race, for the race is only a man on a larger scale. The race undergoes what each man undergoes till his final conquest over all material things. We are all growing from an imperfect to a perfect state. We should not look regretfully upon the past, but acknowledge a divine unity of purpose displayed in all experiences.

Instead of the world being about to be destroyed, it is becoming ever more and more perfect. When finally the spirit that has operated upon it withdraws, it will pass into obscurity, but will again be brought forth as a school for other minds, who will in their turn also recede from it. These vast periods or cycles of birth and death are the "days and nights of Brahm," which are ever succeeding each other: but a perpetual monotonous round is not the destiny of any individual; for every individual there is no going back, but, on the contrary, perpetual progress. The world is always a school, in which there are days for action, and nights for sleep. The scholar who once graduates never goes back to the infant school as a learner, but steadily progresses until he at length reaches Nirvana, or heaven

(the highest state conceivable). We shall all at length become Karmaless, and thus outgrow our "fate," and rise superior to everything we now call accident. Our experience on earth qualifies us all for a higher life. Our present state is that of the chrysalis; the next will be that of the butterfly. A poet aptly says, "here in the body *pent*"; for this state is one of limitation. But it may be asked, Does not the butterfly die as well as the chrysalis? Yes; for all external forms dissolve, but the soul dwells in eternity, and is forever the same. When the distinction between the true identity and the fleeting personality of man is grasped, there will be no further difficulty in understanding ourselves as distinct from our embodiments.

The question is often asked, Does the law of Karma make no provision for the forgiveness of sin? We reply: It is founded on eternal justice, which is the abiding rock of truth. The internal proof of any theory is that it harmonizes with perfect justice. Having a keen sense of justice born within ourselves, we know that whatever is just is true, and that whatever is unjust cannot be true. Justice is the universal solvent, the sole interpreter of all the mysteries of existence. Is the law of Karma just or not? It is often said, "to err is human; to forgive, divine," but we are told that Karma allows of no forgiveness. Is it not less than divine to forgive? Can your highest idea of God be of one who forgets and forgives? Can we believe Him capable of anger, wrath, or resentment? So long as our idea of God is semi-barbaric, so long is the Divine Being endowed by our thought with human limitations,

but no longer. God is no more than human if he forgives, and not even human in the highest sense, because forgiveness implies an alteration in the mind of the one who forgives. God can never change his mind, for he is never less than perfect; he can never change his attitude toward his children, though they may frequently change their attitude toward him. God is never angry, though he may appear so to us when we hold anger in our hearts toward our brethren. What a lesson for humanity there is in "neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Jesus, when on the cross, said, "Father, forgive them" — as an example to the unforgiving, not to ask God to do what he otherwise might not have done; but in tender pity for man's imperfection, to teach man the needed lesson of forgiveness. It is often our duty to forgive others, because we are imperfect; but God, being perfect, can never become angry, and therefore He has nothing to forgive. God is never anything but Infinite Love and Wisdom. It is *carnally* human to err; it is humanly divine to forgive, because when man forgives he puts away his own error. It was once thought that in the thunder clap God revealed his anger; the lightning flash was interpreted by the Romans as the fury of imperial Jove, but storms are now regarded as footprints of Divine Goodness. The true philosopher sees only infinite love and wisdom in everything; all is good even when incomprehensible. All of God's actions are based on infinite goodness; man's are not. Theosophy gives us this higher conception of an unchangeable Deity. Now if *God, Law, and Nature* are inseparable; if immutable,

*Natural Law* is the law of Divine Mind, law is simply the expression of Divine Will. We thus get rid of everything but God, and attain to pure Theism. God is the eternal cause present in the effect; the effect must partake of the nature of the cause. What, then, is inexorable, immutable law, but the unvarying manifestation of divine benevolence? *Karma* is only sequence, effect following cause; and if some consequences of human folly are painful, they are not the less gracious and beneficial.

The operation of *Karma* often brings us bereavements; but there are no bereavements except to sense. So long as we place our affections on things of sense, we need the discipline of losing their object: thus the bitterest experience is a stepping-stone to a higher affection. True happiness does not depend on external things, but on peace of mind. A bereaved mother might develop a love so pure and unselfish for her child, a love so full of comprehension of what was really best for him, that she would come to know herself forever in the *real* child's presence. Then there would be for her no more sense of loss or bereavement; she would be more conscious of the spirit world than of earth, and *absolutely certain* her child was with her and loving her. It is the animal soul in us which continually wars against the spirit. This lower element occasions all our grief. Spiritual science declares death to be only *belief*; but who entertains the belief? Not the one who appears to die, but they who pass through the bereavement occasioned by belief in another's death. He who is supposed to have died, has not passed

through a belief of death at all. If he could speak to your consciousness, he would say, "I am alive and with you, just as before." The belief in death is on the earthly side; the one who has "passed over" *knows* he has not died. How can a living soul believe in its own death, and how can God know anything of death when all live unto him? How can he sympathize with your physical loss when your friends are not lost? God must see everything in its true light; how, then, can he sympathize with what has never occurred? We fancy people die, but that is our error, and we continually ask God to recognize it. If God is infinitely true, how can he recognize what has no reality, what never took place, and never can take place? If we knew the why and wherefore of all our experience, if we could take the point of view that celestials take, we should see at once that *all is good*; we should know that trial is good in disguise, and exclaim with Job: Shall we not receive from the hand of God what *seemeth* good and what *seemeth* evil? We give two opposing names to one impartial dispensation of divine goodness. What we call good at one time we call evil at another. At the true point of observation we see that *all is good; there is no evil; all things are for the best.*

When we arrive at this point, truth blots from our vision all sight of tears and sorrow. We then know that the eternal purpose is fulfilled in everything. There must come a period when we shall all know that whatever we have undergone was needful to our unfoldment, but the flower is not foreseen by all when the seed is planted, though the flower is in the seed. Exter-

nally speaking, the seed is before the flower, and slowly develops into the flower; but in spiritual understanding, the flower is perfect previous to the seed. The external world will at length become a faithful portrait of the thought of the Divine Artist, but in the present condition of the world the photograph is unfinished. When all divine ideas are perfectly mirrored on earth, the millennium will have come, which is the period of the finishing of the world-picture, when ideas that have always existed in the mind of God shall be perfectly reflected in the mind of man and his surroundings. When God's idea is perfectly reflected in us, we shall be perfectly contented and happy, knowing no further care or annoyance.

Geologists say that the earth is still young; upheavals of nature are but signs of imperfection, the means by which the earth advances to a more perfect condition; by means of cyclones and earthquakes all that is fitted to survive reaches maturity. There is a reciprocal action between earth and man. Physical and spiritual science really teach the same truth. When all prophecies are fulfilled in human experience, and spiritual illumination gilds the page of Scripture, we learn that everything *is* right *now*, we lose sight of all evil, and outgrow everything that occasions sorrow, humiliation, or pain. When we feel that a so-called calamity is the best thing that can possibly occur, it ceases to be a calamity in our eyes. There is in every mind an under-current of thought that submission is ignoble; we often think that the world would get on better without storms, that if something could avert earthquakes



what a blessing it would be; but science teaches all these convulsions are necessary to the evolution of a perfect earth, and harmful only from a superficial point of view. When those who suffer outwardly understand this, they are sufferers no longer in mind, for they feel no anguish of spirit as when they deem themselves deserted by divine goodness. The pessimist thinks all mysterious events are occasioned by blind force, void of intelligence and mercy: this feeling causes much of the misery of the world. If our house is burned, and we feel it to be an experience we need to pass through, we do not really suffer when we recognize a divine purpose working through the fire; for even if it leaves us paupers, we feel it was a necessary part of our education, therefore we can maintain a cheerful spirit in spite of poverty. If we can realize that everything is really for the best, we are able to meet all the difficulties in our way, without letting them crush us to the earth; we cannot in that case feel downtrodden and overwhelmed, as though we thought ourselves the playthings of blind force. The point to be reached is to be entirely unaffected by external things; gaining this point, we have completed our terrestrial journey. However and whenever this result is reached, it marks the completion of all earthly discipline.

We can in some instances exhaust all "bad *Karma*" in our present life. Those who can do so are often healed or converted to all appearance *suddenly*. *Karma* is of all our thoughts, words, and deeds the necessary effect. We have been making *Karma* through our whole life; it is the concentrated result of all our actions and

thoughts during our entire lifetime. The question often arises, Can we change all our conditions in the remaining years of our present earthly life? can we project a force now, strong enough to obliterate all past *Karma*? If we make a very sincere effort, perhaps we can; but if we live on in a careless fashion, we certainly cannot enter in the future world upon a state of perfect happiness. Remember always that what pertains to an immediate *future* state is not true of the *eternal* state; these terms are not by any means identical. What we often call "forever" is not eternity. Through the operation of *Karma* (sequence), the steady development of individual merit, we get rid entirely of the doctrine of everlasting punishment, which is founded on a misunderstanding of the right application of a Greek adjective which means sometimes long-enduring and sometimes eternal; but sulphur, brimstone, and fire are always symbolical of purification.

Churchmen have made a grave mistake in limiting probation to one lifetime, and in regarding as eternal the period which follows one life and precedes another. It is utterly impossible that a just God should make an eternity depend on our acts in one temporal life; but a temporary result ever follows a temporary cause. With eternity "hell" has nothing to do, only with the life which immediately follows the present; that life we are preparing for here and now. Our immediate future certainly depends on the use we make of this school; and the duties belonging to this world have to be done here or nowhere. A theory that endows this life with such importance, making this world a vitally important world,

inspires us with energy to live well *now*. We gain temporal reward for temporal good, and suffer temporal punishment for temporal error. Eternal reward for temporal merit would be unjust. When some beautiful, innocent soul enters the spiritual world, bright, pure, and happy, it may have nothing to outgrow; but it may have much to learn, nevertheless. We must develop spiritually in this world if we would enjoy the spiritual state after death. If a talent has not been improved here, it will be taken away there; not finally, indeed, but held in abeyance till another embodiment, when we shall again have it to use. We cannot be truly happy here or elsewhere until we have destroyed all evil *Karma*, for it is that which causes all suffering and distress, and the only way to destroy it is to do the special good that counteracts the special evil. We can only judge of progress by noting our development toward perfect charity. When we have conquered some particular vice, we have proof of it, for we can then destroy similar vice in others. All the good you *think* builds up your spirit; all bad thoughts have the same effect on the spirit that bad air or tainted food has on the body. But still another question arises, Have you encouraged enough good thought to more than counterbalance the evil? Often, alas, we build with one hand and pull down with the other. Some lives oscillate continually between good and evil, and thus remain stationary. Whenever we speak a kind word we step forward; when we are unkind we go backward; but even in going back we learn something, for there is progress even through retrogression. Good lives forever; bad *Karma*, at worst,

endures only for a limited time, as it relates only to time ; it makes us suffer, and thus we advance by means of it. *Karma* works as a discipline for our good in every case. To understand this takes from us all disposition to repine at any grief, care, or misery which we have brought upon ourselves. We really suffer only as long as we see no reason for what we endure. Whatever befalls us is the consequence of what we have been. We are reaping our past and creating our future every moment ; as whatever we do, say, or think makes fresh *Karma*. To study *Karma* is highly practical ; for as we can destroy evil *Karma* by creating good, the creation of good *Karma* is the work of to-day. Let us make the very best of our past and its consequences, by converting the failure and folly of the past into pure gold for future days. There is no arbitrarily allotted time for any result. There is work for us all to do ; and when we have done it we receive the result of that work independent of the time occupied in its performance.

We must strive to eliminate from our efforts all anxiety as to their result ; for reward always springs from work done, not from anxiety concerning a future. If we worry, we are almost certain to turn the scales against ourselves. Right must prevail because it is right ; truth conquers because it is truth. In a tranquil state of mind we are able to do what we could not otherwise see how to do. All worry disqualifies us for work. If we feel our success to be uncertain, we are apt to fail ; but when we do not worry, we walk in light ; the light of intuition which is for our universal guidance. We are all far too prone to pray the prayer of doubt and uncer-

tainty. Intuition is an infallible guide which we cannot follow until the higher principle in us is developed. The highest advancement springs from self-forgetfulness. As we become indifferent to our lower selves, we rise to care for the welfare of the whole human race. While we are in our spiritual infancy, we may be cold, haughty, and imperious, which proves we have not grown superior to the tempter (our own lower self).

Jesus, as an incarnation of Truth, was the Light of the world, and lived in perfect harmony with divine law. Both Jesus and Buddha were ripened fruits on the tree of life, in contrast to others who were yet green. If we are sour and acid now, let us not despair, but remember Jesus and Buddha gathered sweetness through earthly discipline. We behold in such matchless lives the perfect culmination of the wearisome stages we are now passing through. Jesus, "perfected through suffering," ascended to his glory, only after having passed through the very experiences whose utility we are so prone to disallow. The very sufferings we find hardest to bear lead most surely to perfection. The most bitter of all his experiences was the infidelity of his friends; the betrayal of Jesus by Judas he surely did not deserve, but through the alchemy of universal justice that heart-rending trial proved the very means by which he was perfected. Only in being faithful under trial can we create good *Karma*. Every time we meet with a trial or annoyance we have special opportunity to make good *Karma*; and it is a heavy loss to us if we do not take advantage of it. In the sum of our existence (many links, but one chain), we receive our full deserts. Impressions are made on

our spiritual bodies by everything we have thought, said, or done. The law of *Karma* is a law of perfect compensation.

As there are many terms used by Theosophists which are unfamiliar to the general reader, we will seek to explain a few of them. We understand by *Devachan*, for instance, simply a night between two days, a Sabbath between two periods of activity. *Devachan* is the Buddhist's paradise, a place of rest, but not of perfect enjoyment. It is natural that all should look forward to a state of perfect happiness eventually, but man's ideal state is capable of an entirely better explanation than is ordinarily furnished by Theosophy. No one could greatly enjoy resting, and never returning to a state of activity. The Second Adventists' theory of sleeping in the grave is a corruption of the Buddhist idea of *Devachan*. *Nirvana* is a state where activity will be perfectly restful, and where perfect rest will be active enjoyment. The spirit on passing from earth sometimes needs a period of repose before it wakes up to active consciousness; but there is no heavenly state which is one of idleness. Perpetual motion is the law of existence. Rest does not mean idleness, or stagnation, but only a temporary suspension of our mental activity, as during a vacation or holiday. The soul at some time reaches a point where it has no longer any occupation connected with earth. In *Devachan*, or "the spirit world," we all remain until we are prepared for another term of activity, and during our sojourn in that state we grow quietly but surely, as physical bodies grow most in sleep. The "spirit world" will yield us the fruitage of the life we are now living;

we shall reap there as we have sown here ; then we may after a while enter upon a new embodiment, but we cannot then be at once wise and noble or of very great use to the world, if we have hitherto sown evil seed. Consequences run from one life to another, but eventually work themselves out. God does not forgive sin, as orthodoxy teaches, but we *outgrow* past errors. When we have outgrown all evil desires we become *Karma*-less. The tree of life is the tree of the knowledge of good only. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the tree of discipline on which *Karma* grows, and thereon rewards and penalties grow together.

Everything that comes to us *must* redound to our final good ; it cannot possibly be otherwise. If some of us had eternally fewer difficulties and trials than others, we would have fewer opportunities for progress, and may we not ask, "Does God give more opportunities for unfoldment to some than to others?" "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" it is always some lower element in our nature not yet overcome that tempts us. The animal soul is our tempter and the only devil there is. Only through resisting this tempter can we develop strength of character. No one is spiritually great who has not made an effort to become great, either in this or in some past embodiment. All past experience is stored up in the mind, but we are not always aware of it. We have far more accumulated experience than we know anything of, for we do not express on earth more than we now need. Wendell Phillips was naturally a man of great capacity, but he never would have greatly distinguished himself had not the great need of the age made

its demand upon him. He would in any case have been a graceful speaker, but not the great and thrilling orator he was in the days when the antislavery conflict was at its height, had not that great cause appealed to the ability within him. We are not all equally imbued with power, because only a few have undergone such discipline as to have stored within them great latent capacity.

In our next embodiment we shall not begin where we left off in this, but where we ended in the spiritual state following this embodiment. If we live impurely now, it will leave us in a state of mental exhaustion, so we will have but small chance to progress; we shall have to struggle with tremendous odds, but may, nevertheless, win a great victory. No condition is hopeless, and no child was ever born for punishment. This world is not a hell, but simply a school where all have opportunity to learn; no fate hangs over any head ordaining failure, though some have to struggle very hard to make life a success. The doctrine of *Karma* teaches hope and inspires to effort; it does not encourage reconciliation to the inevitable, because nothing in the fatalistic sense is inevitable; we *all* have opportunity to make good *Karma* now, and thereby secure happiness in our next embodiment. If one succeeds in developing character here, his spirit goes into the spirit world (*Devachan*) bright and beautiful, prepared for bliss in the next embodiment. A martyr's crown shines brightest of all in the life beyond. For such lives there is compensation whose glory no words can portray.

Our heaven is always what we make it. Whatever is our idea of heaven we will realize. Every one receives



what is the very best for him. We have all conceived of something we think of as perfect happiness, but some of us are capable of enjoying far more than others: it would take far more to satisfy one than another; but if we are faithful in this life, we shall attain in the next all the happiness we can appreciate. Some we know can apprehend beauty in music and art that ordinary people cannot detect. Some can drink copious inspiration from a landscape; others cannot appreciate it at all. The difference in people is so great that, if we could measure the actual amount of their enjoyment, one person when thoroughly happy would appear in capacity like a small-sized goblet; another, like a gallon vessel. The Indian of the North American prairies has no higher idea of the future state than of happy hunting-grounds: his sole ambition is to reach that desired goal, which would not, with our higher desires, in any way satisfy us; but the Indian would exclaim, "Great Spirit, so good to give me all I want"; he could not enjoy anything higher. If one has lived an artistic life, he might imagine a beautiful city, with scenery of gorgeous description, where treasures of beauty are freely outpoured. All can receive happiness in the ideal world they have pictured to themselves. The man in his study is no happier with his books than is the child in the nursery with his toys; the child must grow mentally to the stature of a man before he can enjoy a man's books. If we strive for the highest growth we can conceive of, we awake after "death" to all the glories we can enjoy. There can be no absolutely perfect reward except for an absolutely perfect life. The more advanced the soul, the

higher its possibilities of enjoyment. This view of the future life will at once strike the reflective reader as in perfect accord with "Many mansions in the Father's house."

How can we meet our friends in heaven if they are re-embodied? is a question which perplexes many; let us try to answer it: There is often a very long period between embodiments, — the intervals are referred to in the New Testament as ages. "The world coming to an end," "a new heaven and a new earth," and similar expressions, often refer to lapses between embodiments. We need not fear that if our friends are re-embodied we shall not meet them in the spirit world. We do not realize the dual life we are now living, and this is the reason why we cannot realize spiritual communion more fully than we usually do. This world is not man's native element; we are at times obliged to retire from it; this earth is a workshop, from which we need temporary retreats; we have to withdraw frequently into our natural element to find rest beyond the realm of dreams. From unbroken slumbers we awake recreated, strong, and full of peace. In the realm of spirit our spirit has enjoyed a higher fellowship than we can outwardly realize, but we experience the result in renewal of energy for all states of life. When embodied on earth, we are like amphibious animals, living between two elements. We, in perfect repose, go out of the material element into the ocean of spirit, and we could not do our work on the dry land if we did not occasionally rest in the water. We must strive to realize each other *now*, not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

When we reach a higher state of being, we shall neither know nor care what external form our friends may wear, since form does not contain spirit. The earthly embodiment is only a garment, an external projection of spirit: the substance must not be confounded with the shadow it casts. We (our real selves) always were, and we always shall be, in the spirit realm; we must learn to know each other in spirit now, if we would know and understand what we really are. The soul retains its perfect individuality in the spirit world, independent of external expression. When people express a desire to meet their friends in the life beyond, they often fail to realize in what spiritual union really consists. We should very soon grow tired of rigid outer personalities. Nothing external could forever satisfy us. We live forever in the life immortal, and true unions pertain to the unchanging state of the soul only.

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As a supplement to this discourse, we append some thoughts on the true relations of

#### THEOSOPHY AND METAPHYSICAL HEALING.

Considerable misapprehension has prevailed in some quarters on this subject; but metaphysical healing is really Theosophy applied to health, metaphysical healing being the utilization of the spiritual power in man for beneficent ends. It is the desire of adepts to bring this truth before the world for the benefit of all mankind. The metaphysical movement has come before the

world through the direct action of master-minds, belonging to the most important orders in the world. The principle of metaphysics is the principle of Eastern wisdom, and it is only just to Theosophy and the wisdom of the East to make this statement. Mrs. Eddy says she obtained it from a study of the Bible. How did Dr. Quimby and others receive it? It matters not. These flashes of light which have come to different minds have all proceeded from orders that have for ages held this truth, which they give to the masses as they are able to receive it. Those who receive it intuitively do, in a certain sense, as they claim, receive it from God. Metaphysics and Theosophy are perfectly at one: mediumship has often been an erratic manifestation of spiritual power, but in its highest phases it is strictly theosophical, though in its lowest it is nothing more than "gray magic." No one can be a successful healer unless he lives a pure life, in conformity with the teachings of the science he professes to hold dear. By perfect devotion to spiritual truth and the good of humanity, all can exercise the power, the use of which Jesus taught to his disciples.

Every true healer is a true Theosophist, for he endeavors to turn the attention of his patients from matter to spirit; he insists upon the culture of the spiritual nature, and the establishment of noble relations with the psychic world, which will enable man to inherit all things worth inheriting. Our external forms receive an imprint from every thought which enters our minds. We believe in the perfect physical regeneration of the body through psychical means, and contend that this

can only be accomplished through the action of the highest thought: when the higher nature is appealed to, it drives out what the lower nature has accreted. The elixir of life is not a drug, or the blood of an animal, but the life that springs from the interior principle, — the Logos, the true Ego, the Life of God within us. In our highest condition we undertake to heal no one; but as the sun radiates light and heat through the solar system, so do we radiate health when we are in health. Every soul in eternity can perceive only good, be receptive to, and express only good.

The man who has really found his soul sheds blessing everywhere; he can go nowhere without healing the sick: wherever he goes he carries a beneficent influence which he unconsciously dispenses as freely as the song of a bird or the perfume of a flower. We shall never develop into such a condition, however, unless we love to do good to mankind universally. Let us cultivate our higher principle *for the sake of the good we can do*. All power is ours when we are in Divine Understanding. Life is a battle, and only they who fight the battle win the prize. Spiritual healing is more than mental healing. Mind-cure is an inadequate expression.

Spiritual illumination is necessary for perfect healing. A proper metaphysical treatment closes the door upon error and opens a door into heaven; it is often like opening the window in a room full of foul air so as to let in a fresh, cool, sweet breeze, which soon purifies and harmonizes the apartment. This is what thought does, when we affirm: "I am spirit, one with God; I am perfectly well in my interior, immortal being." When we

thus relate ourselves with the Infinite, we open a window nothing can ever close. Sometimes in the minds of the afflicted there are windows opening to most disagreeable places; a spiritual treatment shuts that window and opens another to a bed of roses, as it were, letting in thoughts of peace, and harmonizing all with celestial planes of intelligence. Spiritual truth opens the avenues of the mind to the knowledge of *being*; it conduces to right living, to traveling in the right way, to the overcoming of all discordant thought; it enables us to enter upon our rightful heritage of eternal life and blessedness. Every such treatment should be educative; the healer should develop a spiritual atmosphere by benevolent thought. Trust in God; rest in Spirit; work without anxiety as to results. In giving ourselves up to spiritual influx, we are yielding to the Holy Spirit, which is far better than relying on our own mentality. When one treats with personal will he soon becomes exhausted. Treatment coupled with doubt is worse than none at all; when you are agitated and do not leave all to God, you are giving wrong mental medicine, — *your* thought, not *God's* thought. You cannot fail when you are in truth, for it is God's will that every one should be well and happy.

Theosophy recognizes seven senses: Spiritual Science seeks to develop the sixth and seventh senses, through which we come into conscious relation with the astral and spiritual worlds. When we study Spiritual Science, we study everything there is; for spiritual knowledge is the only solvent of life's mystery. Some Theosophists we know take a mistaken view of spiritual healing,

owing to a false view of astrology, or planetary influences. Now astrology and alchemy are true sciences; they are the spiritual side of astronomy and chemistry. Theosophy teaches that we were born when certain influences were in the ascendant, because of the *Karma* we brought with us from past experiences: this caused us to be conceived and born just when we were. Our "brooding stars" are due to our *Karma*; but *Karma* is to be vanquished, it is not to govern us. The perfectly unfolded soul is represented astrologically in the twelfth chapter of Revelations, as a woman clothed with the sun, in contrast to Adam and Eve, who were represented in the garden of Eden as naked, signifying ignorant though innocent; that is, in a state of moral infancy. Their adoption of clothing signified growth in knowledge through experience. Eve, though innocent and perfect in virgin beauty, wore no crown; chaste as marble, pure as ice, with beauty unsullied, she was still no queen, no conqueror. She is the representative of infantile innocence, but one to whom no one need apply for advice or instruction, as she has no knowledge of the world, or its trials. While fair and pure, she was only a little child who could not serve as teacher, counselor, or guide. Now gaze upon the other picture,—a woman standing in regal glory, clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, a crown of twelve stars upon her head; a woman with all the chastity that could be imagined as pertaining to the pure Edenic virgin, but chastity combined with all—commanding knowledge, intelligence united to purity, love married to wisdom. Between these two, a great gulf is fixed; but it is the Edenic

woman who has developed into the radiant queen of the Apocalypse. We may take Eve to represent a susceptible person who always "takes on conditions"; when tempted by the serpent (error), she is utterly unprotected; but the light that clothes the apocalyptic woman is the armor of the Spirit which envelopes her from head to foot and paralyzes the serpent. Jesus placed before us, as our goal, a glorious condition that is still beyond us, the union of the dove's harmlessness with the serpent's wisdom.

Now what is the esoteric significance of the apocalyptic figure? The sun corresponds to our spiritual nature, the moon to our physical, or animal nature, and the twelve stars to our different intellectual powers. Many astrologers tell us, "the wise man rules his stars." The true Theosophist, in whom divine wisdom is regnant, rules his own intellectual powers, compelling them to act as servants to the divine soul (*atma*) as the visible sun rules the planets which revolve around it. Our *atma* is the sun *in us*; the true *ego* is *the spiritual sun*. The moon represents the animal nature, a mere satellite which must be subjected to the intellect, while both mind and sense must obey the Spirit. This is the true planetary correspondence of the powers within ourselves. As planets revolve in space, they are continually discharging electricity into the atmosphere; the recent perihelion of several has had a great deal to do with the present tumult and unrest in human society all over the world; but all these influences being mortal, they afflict only those who are on the mortal plane of thought and affection. When we cultivate our soul power, when we are



clad in armor from head to foot, no arrows or bullets can pierce our armor. When we live in the Spirit, by constant at-one-ment with the interior life, we clothe ourselves with the sun, subdue the moon (all carnal passions) beneath our feet, and earn a diadem of twelve stars, signifying the perfect development of our intellect (the twelve stars refer to all zodiacal influences). A thoroughly rounded development is a regal crown. As we live in the light of spiritual truth we become ever more and more invulnerable, no matter what hydra-headed monster makes war upon us; our heels, being cased in armor, blunt the serpent's fangs, and the spiritual armor with which we are clothed, not only *protects us*, but radiates an atmosphere which purifies the air for every one else to breathe; it generates a counter-influence of good that destroys evil, as light dispels darkness. When this is understood, we shall learn how useless it is to expect to succeed in spiritual work merely through intellectual accomplishments. Verily, the spoken or written word of truth carries conviction by the sheer force of sound argument to many minds, but much more than argument is needed in breaking down the stronghold of error and letting in the light of truth.

N.B. — In compiling the foregoing essay, the writer has been to some extent indebted to "Short Lessons in Theosophy," compiled by S. C. Clark, a valuable little handbook in *question and answer form*, 59 pages, leatherette, price 25 cents, for sale by Colby & Rich.

## LECTURE XII.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES. — THE SECRET DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN ALL RELIGIONS.

Is the world ready to receive esoteric truth? is a constantly recurring question. All must admit that every one is not prepared for theosophical teaching in its most intricate form, though every one is ready for something. Jesus condensed in his parables all the wisdom of the ancients; they were both sublime and simple. The mental veil is soon rent in those who give themselves wholly to truth, but it conceals the inner meaning of truth from the world at large. The spiritual mysteries of all religions are now being revealed, although the materiality of the present day tends to dwarf the minds of all who do not enter fully into the consciousness of spiritual being. When man really knows himself, he knows God. He who cannot find divinity in himself has only developed his fourth principle (animal soul), life being to him only a round of eating, drinking, and similar indulgences. We see many people who are animated bodies, but little more; they have occasionally better moments, but their souls have not yet shone through their organisms to any extent. Then there are others who have no consciousness of spiritual existence, yet are often actuated by a pure benevolence that puts to shame professional sanc-

tity. Many feel a spiritual impulse they are unable to express through their lower nature. Many people are not yet prepared for profound occult study or theosophical investigation, which really comprises religion, philosophy, and science.

Theosophy in its profounder aspect is not intended for children, but for men and women in understanding, who are the only people qualified to deal with the great problems which it presents to the world,— problems which call for the most earnest and persistent study. We should not give that which is holy to dogs; we should never force advanced ideas upon unprepared minds, but be ever ready to impart instruction to those who seek it. Whatever we learn truly we never unlearn; all teaching is progressive. We must impart esoteric truth to the public by degrees, but always teach children in accordance with foundation principles. Teaching must be pure in order to be good. Give milk and water where people are not ready for stronger food, but never prevaricate when you withhold, nor adulterate when you omit. The needs of human nature are very varied; each mind requires a phase of truth adapted to its particular understanding. A Theosophist should in the righteous sense be “all things to all men” to save all. Conduct the student, as in music, through scales and exercises to the works of the great masters. If we apply divine wisdom, as it was applied on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples spake in divers tongues, we shall divide the Word of Truth so as to minister to the edification of all who hear it. If we exercise in this age the genuine gift of tongues, we shall preach only one gospel as we

teach only one arithmetic and one chemistry, but we impart different degrees of instruction in these sciences as pupils are prepared to receive them: the one law and the one gospel can be adapted to all. Many complain of the unintelligibility of a great amount of theosophical literature, — the language is so mystical, the thought so involved, the ideas and forms of expression are both so unusual that the average reader cannot understand it, they say; but if all things difficult at first were laid aside, pupils might never learn anything new.

The study of Theosophy is like the study of a new science of which the multitude know nothing; an art with which the crowd is unfamiliar. We confront new expressions of old thoughts when learning a new language. Theosophical ideas, even though exceedingly ancient, are new to the world of to-day. The nomenclature often seems new and startling, but is soon interpreted. *Kama loca* is only a Sanskrit equivalent for purgatory; *Devachan* signifies the spirit world, or paradise; *Nirvana* means heaven; *Buddha* is no more mystical a name than *Christ*. There is nothing true or useful in Buddhism that there is not also in Christianity. The value of Theosophy is that it demonstrates the absolute unity of all divine philosophy. The general tendency of modern secular thought is toward the rise of the individual, that of Theosophy toward the welfare of the race, through forgetfulness of self; it admonishes us to kill out all sense of *separateness*, which means divided or opposing interests. We must feel that we are all living one true life, and that is the life of the race, the only life

with which we should be concerned. Self-forgetfulness is not antithetical to self-preservation; but human laws must give place to Divine Law; all good earthly laws are included in the one universal Law of Spirit, and that is stated in the formula usually styled the Golden Rule and in the method of the Pater Noster.

There is a rapidly growing desire on the part of all mankind for higher spiritual revelation. Surely none can be so blind as not to see the great and ever-increasing interest which now prevails in all that relates to *occultism*, which means secret philosophy or science. Theosophy means divine wisdom, but do we not have to search for divine wisdom as for hidden treasure? Without spiritual wisdom we cannot possibly understand life present, past, or future. Theosophy alone unlocks the mysteries of Being. It does not deal with the individual as separate from mankind, but only with man collectively, since the Eternal Being is Father and Mother of us all. All demonstrations of truth to an individual must depend on the mental caliber of that individual and the effort he makes to solve life's problem. Sciences are but various manifestations of one true SCIENCE; there are various departments of knowledge, but knowledge itself is a unit. All religious systems are endeavors on the part of humanity to express its highest ideas, though often but feebly in sign and symbol. Theosophy exerts a uniting, never a separating, influence on those who study it; its adherents become friends when previously strangers. Theosophy does not seek to overturn any creed, but, on the contrary, without deifying any form of religion, symbol, or book, it interprets all symbols, creeds, and

books esoterically instead of exoterically, as it recognizes that while the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. Every true Theosophist is a universal religionist.

Our faculties, whatever they may be, are capable of stimulation in every direction. We must know that we have a special endowment to begin with, but that we are born gifted does not imply that we should not diligently cultivate our gift. It is possible to put our talents out at interest so as to make one talent two, then two will increase to four, and ten will become twenty as easily as one became two. Unto those who have, more shall be given continually. Spiritual growth is valuable here and now as well as in the state beyond the grave. It is not necessary that we all should isolate ourselves from our kindred to develop our spiritual gifts, but we must realize ourselves as living now a spiritual life in the spiritual universe; we must speak and think now as we would wish to in the supernal state. Theosophy claims that we can cultivate and exercise *now* and *here* all the powers of the spirit. Spiritual development is within the reach of all, as spiritual endowments are already in our possession. We can all enjoy spiritual illumination and vigor of intellect if we live harmoniously with divine law. Practice alone makes perfect; we can all develop spiritual muscle and cultivate the latent spiritual power within us. Man can use his sixth sense, and so accustom himself to employ it as to find it a reliable guide at all times. We are not so diverse as we suppose; we often think mistakenly that if we were constituted like some other people we could shine brighter than they shine; but Theosophy teaches that genius is

after all applied energy, a determination to take possession of our own. We all possess the power within us that characterized the most renowned people who ever walked the globe. We need not ask, "Have I this or that gift?" for when a gift is appealed to, it responds, and can be used as a means of further development or higher culture. All persons really possess the gifts they wish for; what you do not possess you could not care for. Love of anything is due to a power within struggling for expression, which says: "I have chosen you" (not, "you have chosen me"); "I am in you already and want to be used." Our spiritual powers are continually asking to be exercised. This is the real condition in the spirit of every man. As we increase in knowledge of the law of *Karma*, or sequence, we shall be able to explain quite satisfactorily in every instance why human demands and affections are outwardly as diverse as they are. These explanations we must give a little later in our work, after we have led up to them by taking a hurried glance at Theosophy in general.

In the chapters devoted to Hindu and Persian Theosophy (*vide* Lectures IX. and X.) we have sought to familiarize the reader with the general scheme of Oriental thought and doctrine; we are now about to enter upon the doctrinal and practical, rather than to continue the historical portion of our work. As book reviews are, we know, expected, and greatly appreciated by many readers who have little time for reading but are desirous of acquainting themselves with as many good books as possible in a short time, we shall now introduce —

“The Mystery of the Ages contained in the Secret Doctrine of All Religions.” Under this heading Lady Caithness, Duchesse de Pomar, one of the brightest minds in Europe engaged in theosophical propaganda, has issued from the press of C. L. H. Wallace, Oxford Mansion, London, W. (price 10s. 6d.),<sup>1</sup> one of the finest and most comprehensive works we have been privileged to peruse. It is a complete digest of universal Theosophy, treating all schools of thought and branches of this vast subject with remarkable fairness and ability, in a manner to attract all and repel no honest enquirer. In a copious preface, excellently worded, the talented authoress and compiler, who has drawn from almost every conceivable source important material for her work, calls attention, with great power and ability, to the identity of all religions at their root. There may be many branches and countless leaves, but only one root, as all intelligences are nourished from one eternal fountain of life, all warmed by the same great central fire of being. All prayers are cries of God’s children seeking their Parent, — cries which are never disregarded, even though it often seems amid the mass of worldliness and error in which so many are seemingly engulfed that the originally pure aspirational element, which is the vital germ of religion, had been crushed to death. Overlaid with error it may be, as frescoes in ancient churches have been covered for centuries with white-wash, which, though it has hidden, has preserved them; for at a time of restoration they reappear, fresh as on the day when some great artist, long since departed, placed them there.

<sup>1</sup> For sale by Colby & Rich, Boston.



Truth alone is immortal; its absolute imperishability was never more clearly demonstrated than now, when from every quarter new forms of truth are springing up, but all animated with the old vitalizing breath of spiritual revelation. None of our readers who have carefully followed us in our hasty scamper over ancient fields of thought and modern inspiration, will be unready to welcome all that Lady Caithness has to say to them. Her work, though very popular, and enjoying a very wide circulation, is scarcely for beginners in the study, unless they are persons whose previous training has led them up to desire arcane knowledge, such as she serves to them in a manner which at once bespeaks the profundity of the *savant* and the grace of the accomplished society leader. Among the many who are giving time and energy to a dissemination of spiritual truth, no one perhaps is working more efficiently than this truly noble woman, who, while wearing her ducal coronet with all the imperial grace of a noble dame of the *ancien régime*, mingling freely in high society where she is an acknowledged leader, uses her influence to carry into the gilded halls of wealth and splendor a truth which is surely destined to bring all stations of life into sweet and gracious union, whereas now, unhappily, ill-feeling often prevails among those which conventionalism divides into upper and lower classes. Jesus taught all with whom he came in contact to be faithful in the sphere of action where their special mission lay; and do we not, when we see clearly, behold more real excellence and usefulness among those who adorn the state to which they are born, than among such as go out of their way to carve out for them-

selves a channel of supposed greater usefulness, where often they are unable to do anything at all?

Some people, envious no doubt of the wealth of others, would object to any man or woman who teaches Theosophy, or anything of the kind, living other than as a peasant; but so we have not learned the Christ (Truth). In all spheres of life great good may be accomplished by those who are in those spheres exerting themselves, as far as in them lies, to do the good which lies nearest to their hand. Jesus said to a very wealthy young man who sought perfection, "Go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." He said also to another who would be his disciple, but wished to linger to conduct a funeral, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me." In another place, however, he checked the ardor of an impetuous missionary who would leave his home and kindred to itinerate through Galilee: "Go home." Carping critics might find in these opposite passages marks of discordance in the Gospel teachings; but carping people are always short-sighted and shallow, and quite incapable of looking at any subject from more than one (and that their own) point of view. The broad-minded student of sacred history will soon learn that all truly great teachers were extremely versatile in their thought and doctrine. Though they never contradicted themselves, they were deep-seeing enough to recommend each one who applied to them for advice to do the particular work he could best accomplish in his own place and in his own way; and as the missions of different people differ widely, advice suitable to one would be quite misleading for an-

other. One criterion, however, we have at all times, and that is, be sincere, be strictly *honest* with yourself, never toy with conviction; and to this we add, never judge or condemn another who does not act as you would, or rather, as you think you would were you in his place.

Nothing illustrates the old adage, "It takes all sorts of people to make a world," more than Theosophy. All sorts and conditions of men, women, and children are necessary to the completeness of the human family and the performance of life's multiple duties. This fact Lady Caithness elaborately illustrates in her charming theosophical mosaic, for which she has culled from all the spiritual and mystical flower-gardens of the world their choicest blossoms. At one time we are introduced to a poor, half-naked fakir, seeking to attain supreme blessedness through a life of complete renunciation of all external joys. Almost on the same page we read of the spiritual attainments of some who have adorned the highest stations in Church and State. The true catholicity and marked absence of prejudice in the work of Lady Caithness constitute its great charm. In one sense it is not a consecutive narrative, as it presents a series of dissolving views, so to speak, of great characters, memorable events, and noble systems. The information it gives is very exact, and supported by innumerable references to writers of high standing, and in this respect it renders a very valuable service to the student by whetting his appetite for more knowledge, and then informing him just where he can find it. In her copious and beautifully written preface, the gifted authoress launches upon her subject at once, and

throws down the gauntlet, without delay, for materialism and dogmatic theology to pick up, if they will. She makes few, if any, unsupported statements, and ventures but very few personal opinions. She says in effect, Here are facts; deal with them as you can. Conservatism and radicalism are united throughout the volume; and is it not the province of Theosophy to conserve truth and destroy error?—a task which can never be fulfilled by either the diffident servant of popular tradition, or the ruthless iconoclast who sees no good in any system in which he finds some error.

The book opens with an allusion to the famous story of Hiero of Syracuse, who proposed to Simonides the question, What is God? He replied after long and earnest study, "The longer I consider this question, the more obscure it seems to me." Cicero endorsed the statement of Simonides, and through all classic literature it appears that even the very greatest minds, who sought for knowledge of divine truth by means of intellect alone, were baffled in their search. All persons who have been reared in the Christian faith, and do not wish to surrender it, will find in "The Mystery of the Ages" a strong vindication of the esoteric claim, though the same book deals quite mercilessly with fabulous and injurious dogmas, which have arisen from time to time in days of general ignorance and oppression.

The book proper is divided into twelve very long chapters, each of which will prove well worthy of reading carefully at least a dozen times. Milk is the exception, strong meat the rule, though the most intricate

and unusual topics are dealt with with surprising clearness, in vigorous classic English. The first chapter, which is "introductory," commences with the statement that a study of Theo-Sophia (Divine Wisdom) "*alone* enables man to feel that divine love which is the supreme good, and the manifestation of the Eternal in his own being." In the second chapter, which is on "The Theory and Practice of Theosophy," a long list of valuable books for reference is given, at the head of which stands "Hermes Trismegistus," translated by Professor Wilder. This work, and many others recommended, are for advanced studies, and should be read after "The Mystery of the Ages," to which it is a concise introduction. Extracts are also given from "The Perfect Way," by Anna Kingsford, which can be obtained for \$2.00 from any bookseller, and will well repay re-perusal, though some of its statements are severely contested by many Spiritualists, who think it does not teach truly concerning the post-mortem existence of the soul. This chapter ends with the most true definition of universal religion—which Theosophy is, or it is nothing. "Our Temple is a Pantheon, admitting all Divine Ideas and excluding only the demoniac; but before a God-Idea is admitted it should be mathematically examined as to whether it is truly Divine." When this rule is strictly applied, all ideas of a Supreme Being will be rigidly excluded, save that glorious monotheistic conception, which is the very essence of the Theosophy of all climes and ages; an idea gaining an ever-extending hold upon advanced minds everywhere, that one Infinite Spirit lives in all

universes and is the life of all. Thus, in a last analysis of all things, we arrive at spiritual (not material) pantheism, and, exclaiming, "All is Spirit," we agree that God (Infinite Good Intelligence) is all in all.

Chapter III. commences with a treatise on "The Secret of Mythology," and most ably argues down the gross materialism of many would-be *savans*, who can see nothing but literal astronomy clad in fanciful disguise in the sublime mysticism of the Hermetists of old, who taught spiritual science while teaching at the same time much of importance concerning the physical aspects of nature. The science of Correspondence, familiar to all students of Swedenborg, opens up a wide field for diligent research; and though some Swedenborgians cling too closely to the letter of Swedenborg's writings, the "New Jerusalem Church" is doing far more than any other body of Christians at the present time to "open up the interior sense of the Word." But what is God's Word? Is it a book or is it Man? Human nature is surely God's inspired volume, in a much deeper sense than the best literature can be; for, were not men inspired rather than parchment scrolls in the days of old? and does not the Bible itself inform us that in the brightest days of Israel's history there were living prophets, oracles, and voices? and that only in a degenerate age, when the celestial voice was not so plainly heard, did men feel obliged to turn to the written law and testament? And what, we may ask, is a testament but a legacy, — a something bequeathed, left behind by one who can no longer come in and out among us? Scriptures are, no doubt, all susceptible of an interior inter-

pretation, as, instead of being written by ignorant men, they were the work of the exceptionally enlightened; and though in their present translated forms they contain many blunders, and were not at the start in the original necessarily infallible, no unprejudiced scholar can doubt for an instant that they were wise works of wise men, written in a double manner, intended to preserve literal history in a substantially correct outward guise, and to preserve for all coming generations the spiritual wisdom in possession of the writers. The letter is often sacrificed considerably for the sake of the spirit; but the spirit is never sacrificed to accommodate the letter. Thus, literally, bibles are no sure guides in matters of history, though they are repositories of the deepest truth the world has become acquainted with. These remarks apply equally to many bibles, and it would be well for Swedenborgians to remember their leader's words concerning the word of the Lord hidden in Great Tartary, if they ever feel disposed to unduly exalt one canon and repudiate all others.

Chapter IV. continues a discussion of Hermetic Theosophy in a very able comparison of Egyptian and Christian Gnosticism. From this exceedingly valuable and scholarly chapter we make the following brief extract, regretting our limited space peremptorily forbids more:—

Christianity, the outcome of a Neo-Hermetic Gnosticism and opposed to the sensualistic cult that for ages disfigured the ancient religious systems, had in the first centuries of its establishment a hard struggle for existence. "Gnosis," individual experience, knowledge of God, was the Center, the great Arcanum, and the Mystic Christ. The sanctuary of Christianity is Theosophy. Christianity

would have perished as the ephemeral teachings of the so-called false Messiahs of the Jews, had it not been that it was established by those ignorantly deplored and abused Gnostic Heresies. Gnosis, the sanctuary of Christianity, being attained to by some earnest, striving souls, life and reality was given to the new system by their enthusiasm.

Chapter V. introduces us to the Theosophy of the Brahmans, Magi, and Druids. Chapter VI. treats on Buddhist Theosophy. Both these chapters are exceedingly interesting and very important; but we have touched sufficiently, perhaps, on these topics in the lectures or essays devoted specially to their elucidation, so we will not say more about them here, but pass on to Chapter VII., entitled "Pagan Theosophy." In the treatment of this thoroughly classic theme, Lady Caithness introduces powerful arguments to show how its exclusiveness was demolished by two Jews (Jesus and Paul), who by preaching the Gospel to the multitude broke up the aristocratic hierarchies which flourished in the Roman Empire in their day. Concerning the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries we have spoken in another place, but will here introduce a fine passage concerning the philosophers: "Nearly all ancient philosophers were not only Initiates, but also Esoterists, teaching Theosophy under the veil of allegory. They were all spiritual teachers, and their Philosophy was Theosophy. Material terms were only used as symbols for spiritual things." If this fact were only realized in modern universities, where Greek verse is parsed and translated without the student being led to imagine there is anything of merit in it beyond the rhythm, how living collegiate studies



would become where now they are dead and lifeless as inanimate marble. Orpheus, Hesiod, Xenophanes, Empedocles, and many other famous bards of ancient Greece have sung pure spiritual truth in lines now usually regarded as devoid of any valuable meaning. Let Theosophy awaken the thoughts of the multitude, and Ezekiel's vision of dry bones will be realized in our universities.

The eighth chapter, on "Semitic Theosophy," contributes a great deal of valuable information on the Kabbala. The Hebrew religion is very appreciatively dealt with, and truthful reasons for Levitical ceremonies assigned. It is doubtful whether the Jews, as a people, ever understood the spirit of their religion to any great extent; but the Sages undoubtedly understood something very different from the vulgar conception of the populace. The most fantastic ceremonies, when traced to their origin, are all found to be reasonable, and calculated to benefit the place and time, where and when they were instituted. Much information is given concerning the Nazaries, who were prophets, and as such unpopular with the priests, who were ever apt to despise prophesyings; prophets being living mouth-pieces of a continuous revelation, while priests are jealous custodians of the manna which fell the day before.

Chapter IX. treats of "The Sufis and Mohammedan Theosophy." In analyzing the character of the founder of the religion of Islam, the authoress is very ready to credit him with many solid excellencies, though she does not claim him to have been anything like a perfect character. The very word *Islam* means resignation, or entire submission to the will of God. In its theoretical

part it is called *Imân*, Faith; in its practice, *Sin*, Religion (or Wisdom), which contains the ritual and moral laws, inculcating four chief duties, — prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage. The belief in angels forms a prominent dogma; they are created of fire, and stand between God and man, — adoring and serving the one, interceding for and guarding the other. Besides angels there are good and evil genii. The poor will enter Paradise five hundred years before the rich; there are about a hundred degrees of the various felicities which await the pious, and those who go to heaven find exceedingly sensual delights prepared for them. There are, however, higher degrees of recompense of a purely spiritual kind, for those who are of a higher and more spiritual nature, and who on earth have lived the inner life of the spirit rather than the outward life of the senses. Some curious historical facts are quoted to prove Mo-Ahmed “the 10th Avatar or Theosophic Messenger from the Logos, or Divine Wisdom.” The grand Mosque at Constantinople significantly named “Santa Sophia,” which is divided into four stages, is remarked upon as setting forth four stages through which the initiate passes during his probation, till he reaches the divine arcanum. Before concluding this section Persian Theosophy is interestingly alluded to.

Chapter X., on “Christian Theosophy,” is very fine; and had we not written so much on that score ourselves we should be tempted to quote largely from Lady Caithness, who deals with it with a master-hand. We will just give a few extracts which convey the entire pith and marrow of the difference between Esoteric and Exo-

teric Christianity, which is hourly becoming more apparent. “‘The Son of God died for my sins,’ is far more pleasing to an ordinary mind than the truth that he must die to his sins in order to become a true Son of God. Jesus, imparting the true Gnosis, or knowledge, to those who for generations had been deluded by sacrificial perversions of religion, was with necessary emphasis regarded by his disciples as the Divine Light becoming manifested to those who sat in darkness.” “Theosophically, then, the Gospels are the histories of an inward and regenerating principle, called the only begotten Son of God, which is the Saviour of humanity; for it redeems man from the prison house of earth; and the development in him of this principle transforms the Son of Man into the Son of God. Call it the Spirit of Truth, or call it Love, or Life; or call it Wisdom, the Logos, or the sixth Principle in man, as do the Buddhists; or the Keystone of the Arch, as do the Royal Arch-Masons; or the Head-stone of the Corner, as do the Scriptures in certain places: it is always the highest state to which man can attain. It is, in fact, ‘to put on Christ.’” Read in this connection Matt. xvi., which gives an account of Jesus saying to Peter that he will build his church on a rock, and we shall the better understand the esoteric foundation of the spiritual (not the outward) catholic church.” To the Gospel-writers Christ was the invisible Holy One of Israel, seen through the veil of the Old Testament; not merely the Spirit of the Old Testament, but Life itself that was before Abraham, or, as Christ calls it, the Spirit of Truth that should guide us into all truth. This was the secret of those earlier Theosophists, the Essenes,

and was regarded as a great mystery, called the ‘Mystery of Christ,’ because it is certainly not of a nature to be communicated by any external process, for it must be felt and lived before it can be spiritually understood.” “Jesus of Nazareth was a soul in its last earthly embodiment whose life was a model; a pattern life, of matchless purity and devotion to duty. Had he been more than *perfect* man, he would have been too exalted to be an example to humanity. We utterly fail to see how or why, with any show of consistency, those who believe in the successive embodiments of the human spirit until it reaches perfection, can dispute the fact of an occasional case in point occurring as an illustration of the fact that the human spirit in its final embodiment on earth, manifests the perfect character, to ensure which, all preceding embodiments have been a necessity.” “The Christ is indeed the central or spiritual Sun of human life; the source of its better inspiration, and the genius of its supreme evolution and final ascension.”

Chapter XI., on “The Theosophic Interpretation of the Bible,” commences, “all that is true is Spiritual; no chapter in the Bible bears (only) a physical meaning. For Matter as it now exists shall cease, and all that is of it, but the Word of the Lord shall endure forever. And how shall it endure except it be purely Spiritual; since, when Matter ceases, it would then be no longer comprehensible?” Then follow extracts from “The Perfect Way,” which we hope many of our readers will procure and study, though it is not a book for beginners by any means, and we conceive much harm to be often ignorantly done by commencing with ad-

vanced treatises instead of elementary text-books. Our aim is to introduce excerpts from advanced works, rather to show the simplicity of the spirit than to exhibit the complexity of the literal form of Theosophy. "The Science of Correspondences Elucidated,"<sup>1</sup> by Edward Madeley, is a large and very helpful work for those who can glean knowledge when presented in a form acceptable to Swedenborgians. It certainly is a treasure-house of wisdom for many Sunday-school and Bible-class teachers who cannot feed their classes with literal husks and consider they have done their duty, and who would be the last people in the world to throw the Bible overboard and substitute simply ethical treatises by modern authors. Lady Caithness' words on this subject are numerous and deep; they are of a character to greatly interest scholars, and at the same time are sufficiently simple to be useful to every thoughtful and fairly instructed reader. Her quotations from the Fathers of the Church, Augustine, Origen, and others, are exceedingly apposite; but it is not necessary to study the patristic writings to gain a spiritual insight into the meaning of inspired documents. Every one may be his own priest and key, if he but faithfully seek illumination by aspiring ever toward the highest and abstaining in thought, as well as in word and deed, from all carnality.

The concluding chapter, the twelfth, commences as follows: "The knowledge or revelation of God comes to the world in cycles or waves"; and ends with the fol-

<sup>1</sup> Published by E. Claxton & Co., 930 Market Street, Philadelphia. Price \$1.50.

lowing quotation, "When, after an earthly pilgrimage of many centuries, the wandering Jew prototype of unbelieving man shall return at length to Jerusalem (state of peace), he will find himself in the midst of a great multitude assembled from every quarter of the world, and gathered around an altar on Mount Moriah (height where truth is manifested). He will look at the officiating priest, and his eyes will overflow with tears as he will exclaim: 'Tis He!' and fall down at His feet. He will regard the holy offering which the pontiff raises above the heads of the crowd, and with a deep-drawn sigh, he will again exclaim, 'Tis He!' and will worship Him the second time. He will look around on the multitude as far as his eyes can reach, and recognize Him in each one of his brother-men, and will cry with a sob, '*Tis He* again! *He* is present in all! '*Tis He* everywhere! 'Tis always *He*!' and he will sink down in the deepest adoration. At length he will look into the depths of his own being, and then his heart will melt with love and gratitude, for he will at last discover *Him* in his own heart. His selfhood will have become transmuted into that of the Christ, and the work of regeneration will be finished."

Thus ends, with an exquisite extract couched in the most fervent prose poetry, "The Mystery of the Ages," by the Duchesse de Pomar, a work almost without a peer in modern literature, written by a woman whose presence in the world is a perpetual benediction, and in whose own graceful and actively useful life, Theosophy finds one of its truest exponents.

Deeming the following extracts from an article en-

titled, "The Test of Theosophic Interest," published in *The Path* of January, 1889, of more than ordinary interest and instructiveness, we give them to our readers as a sequel to this chapter:—

The test of Theosophic interest is precisely the test of every other kind of interest,—What one will do to promote it. And here, obviously, two considerations arise.

The first is, that no act which is superficial, or perfunctory, or for personal benefit, can at all gauge devotion to a cause which is both impersonal and deep-reaching. It is easy to descant on the glory of a system so elevated as the Wisdom-Religion. It is as easy to proclaim one's own appreciation of its tenets. It is not difficult to attend punctiliously the meetings of a Theosophical Society, and to absorb with readiness, perhaps with profit, whatever of truth may be there disclosed. It may not be easy, but it is entirely possible, to read every theosophical work of repute, to extract its main thought, and to digest well the learning acquired. And yet, very evidently, the first two are exercises only of the voice, the last two only of the mind. If Theosophy was a matter of the breath or the brains, this participation in it would not only be salutary, but ample.

In truth, however, Theosophy gives but a light benediction to either the mere talker or the mere student. It by no means undervalues sincere homage or zealous inquiry, but it is so intent on the work of transferring interest from the lower to the higher levels of being, so eager to excite the unselfish enthusiasm for others' good, which, subordinating its own advancement, shall be most thrilled at the chance to advance Humanity, that its ideal is the man who is exerting himself to help others, rather than the man who is exerting himself to get ahead. . . .

Of the three objects contemplated in the establishment of the Theosophical Society, the first and greatest is the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. But this does not mean merely a sentimental recognition of a general human fraternity; it means an active beneficence toward the rest of the family. And if correct

views, loftier ideals, richer motives, finer principles, healthier aspirations are more attainable through the theosophic system than through other systems of faith or morals, the Theosophist is best serving the interests of his brother-men by giving that system all the publicity he can. . . .

The second consideration referred to at the outset is that the test of theosophic interest is not the absolute amount of help given, but that amount as related to the capacity of the giver. Five cents, five hours, constitute a far larger proportion of one man's available means or time, than five thousand dollars or five months do of another's. Hence it is not the figures, but their fractional value, which determines the extent of the interest. Just so is it in every other human interest. How much one cares for a relation, for a friend, for a philanthropic cause, for a public object, is unerringly shown by the proportion of outlay he devotes thereto. And this does not mean a careless profusion with superfluous goods, but the cutting-off of personal indulgences, cherished but dispensable, for the better sustentation of a cause, — in other word, *self-sacrifice*. Nor does self-sacrifice mean the sacrifice of other people, as some think; the bearing with great fortitude privations one does not share, the consecration of money or time or effort which really belongs to one's family or entourage. It means the sacrifice of *yourself*, of your own habits and enjoyments and expenses, in order to build up a cause you profess to love. And the extent to which this is done gauges the proportion of your love for that cause to your love for yourself.

Now Theosophy is not unreasonable or captious. It does not advise any man to starve himself, or to wear rags, or to scout at the conditions of life in the civilization wherein he was born and which express the laws of sociology. It does not enjoin monasticism or seclusion, or parsimony, or want of public spirit, or abnegation of social amenities, or one-sidedness, or bigotry, or folly under any name. We are to be men, rational men, civilized men, cultivated men; and we promote no noble cause, least of all the noblest, if we are unsocial, unpractical, or fantastic. But while all this is true, it is equally true that in one's own private affairs, in that sphere of personal belongings outside the claims of others,



and wherein absolute freedom is unquestioned, the test of theosophic interest is directly applicable. It is, as has been shown, the proportion of time, money, literary or other effort one is willing to give up. . . .

What is there for me to do? Everything that you *can* do. A word, a hint, a tract, a volume, a subscription. If it costs you nothing, your interest is nothing. If it costs you little, your interest is little. If it costs you till you *feel* it, then it is that you feel your interest. And when you yourself, body, soul, and spirit, are devoted to the doing, when you thrill with that topic as with no other topic, when your pleasure is in self-sacrificing efforts for its promotion, when you forget yourself, have lost yourself, in it, then will you have become in measure what are the Founders, — may one not even say, what are the Masters themselves.

These bold, noble sentences were signed, “HARRIS P.,” who evidently is a very earnest worker for the Society, whose interest he holds so dear. We have only extracted from his able and eloquent plea such passages as refer to consecration of time, money, and all one has to give to one’s highest ideal. As to joining or working for the Theosophical Society, every individual must decide for him or herself. Our counsel is, work wherever you feel your work lies, and because you feel it lies there. Care not where or how others work; ask not for their commendation, nor be depressed if their criticisms are unfavorable. Fidelity to the inner light, to the esoteric Christ, the illuminator of the world, will alone enable us to unravel the “mystery of the ages,” and so solve life’s problem as to enable us to *know* that “all is good.”

## LECTURE XIII.

### PERSIAN, GREEK, AND ROMAN THEOSOPHY.

As the Persian religion has excited so much attention on account of the dualism which is considered its leading feature, and as Persian ideas have without doubt found their way largely into the Hebrew Scriptures, any treatise purporting to give an outline of universal Theosophy would be singularly incomplete were no reference made to the grand old faith of the Parsees, many of whom are to-day sojourners in Hindustan, where they form a distinct community, carrying on their worship in their own peculiar way, much as do the Jews in Christian communities, where they trade with Gentiles freely, but in all religious matters keep quite distinct from those about them.

Zoroaster, the name by which the alleged founder of Parseeism is generally known, stands for a divine incarnation, much as Buddha does among his followers, and as there have been several Buddhas, so there have been several illumined teachers, from whose actual lives the biography of the traditional Zoroaster has been compiled. Some historians place the date of Zoroaster at 6000 B.C.; others make him a contemporary of Abraham; others, coeval with Pythagoras. As these dates differ by thousands of years, as well as centuries, it

seems incredible that the same personage is intended in all instances; it is far more reasonable to conclude that some illumined teacher has left a record behind him dating back to 6000 B.C., while another lived in the days of Abraham, and again another in the lifetime of Pythagoras.

The name Zoroaster, or Zurthost, really means a spiritual messenger, aglow with sacred fire, and one who brings light to the world, as fire emits light and heat to its surroundings; one, moreover, who consumes the stubble of error and purifies the gold of truth, by separating from it the alloy with which on earth it has been mingled. As Christ, Buddha, Krishna, and Zoroaster are all spiritual titles, they have never been used exclusively with regard to any single individual. The Zend-Avesta, or four chief sacred books of the Parsees, are in some respects not at all unlike the Hindu Vedas and the Hermetic writings of Egypt, which so closely resemble each other as to be almost indistinguishable. The main feature of Parseeism is its doctrine of eternal fire, which is the one absolute divine element, from which all creation issues, and to which it all returns.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have been greatly a Parsee in spirit when he said, "Our God is a consuming fire"; but so were almost all the Old Testament writers, for scarcely ever do we hear of a divine revelation unaccompanied by fire. The pure Fire-Spirit of the Parsees and the Hebrew Jehovah, who is the God that answers by fire, according to the Book of Kings, are almost identical in conception. Swedenborg also compares divine life to fire, and says that heat cor-

responds to love, and light to wisdom; therefore, as God is perfect love and wisdom, fire is the only element to which He can be likened; and this is a thoroughly reasonable and acceptable view, as fire is the only all-purifying and incorruptible element: earth, air, and water are subject to contamination, and often conducive of disease; fire is all-purifying, and can never suffer pollution.

To show the universality of the Divine Spirit and God's immanence in the universe, the Parsee priest, when preparing the sacred fire, would kindle a flame in several places, and then, to show forth the truth that the divine life is the innermost life of all that lives, would take only the pure essence of the flame, refined through many symbolic processes. In Olcott's "Address to the Parsees" we have a fascinating account of how the fire is brought from heaven, the "missing spirit evoked by the adept Prometheus." In recent novels we have come across many allusions to these ancient and suggestive practices, and stories containing such references are always eagerly read, showing that a popular interest is at last awakened in the great religions of the world. Such an awakening of popular sentiment cannot but help forward the glorious cause of universal brotherhood, — as we only need to know each other better, to love each other more.

As we pursue our studies in ancient religions we are struck ever more and more with the wonderful unity in the spirit and essential teaching of all; and more and more convinced that the recent materialistic reaction, momentarily assisted by a cursory glance at a few

scientific discoveries, will soon have passed entirely from the minds of reasoning men. On no subject has more ignorance been displayed than with reference to the true meaning of the "six days of creation." Zoroaster's teaching on this subject may be interesting to those who are studying comparative cosmogony. It is said that at his initiation he acquired the following idea of the formation of the globe, which was slowly evolved during six gigantic periods of time, of indefinite duration, and which are termed *Gâhambârs*, meaning ages or cycles of great length. In the first, the heavenly canopy was formed; in the second, water was brought into existence; in the third, the earth became solid; in the fourth, vegetation sprang forth; in the fifth, animal life was slowly evolved; and in the sixth, the animals culminated in man. The seventh period is the day of the advent of the Messiah, when the sun of our solar system will be extinguished, and *Pralaya*, a period of rest from all striving, will begin.

There can be no doubt that the Persians as well as the Hindus were deeply versed in the sciences of involution and evolution, and it is an ignorance impossible to the learned to berate ancient scriptures, and attribute them to unenlightened romancers. They all contain an inner meaning, and are in a sense masonic documents. This is particularly true of books like Daniel and the Apocalypse, which are almost wholly correspondential; but even those in which the historical element far more largely preponderates, are by no means simple records of local mundane events. The Supreme Being is considered by the Parsees to be revealed to man only

in the purest essence of fire ; the sacred fire is never allowed to go out in the temples, where it burns as a perpetual reminder of the immortality of the soul as well as of the ever-living Deity. In time, the Persian religion presents us with two divinities, or rather with a divine being (Ormuzd) and a diabolical spirit (Ahri-man) ; but these are brothers, and though they contend for a while, they are at length reconciled. Thus the distinct teaching is that evil, having a beginning, must have an end ; Good, being beginningless, is also endless. As the zodiacal element enters into all systems, it would not be difficult to connect the six good spirits who proceed from Ormuzd with the six summer signs, and the six evil spirits which issue from Ahriman as the six winter signs, and then in the restitution of all things, so firmly believed in by every devout Parsee, trace the growth of man's conception, from belief in evil to acknowledgment of good only. Beginning with March 25th (Lady Day) and ending with September 29th (Michaelmas), the good powers were always recognized as in the ascendant ; while beginning with Michaelmas and ending with Lady Day, the evil powers were considered regnant. But no ultimate triumph was ever conceded to aught but good ; hence one of the grandest festivals of the year was invariably celebrated in the middle of winter. Though in *time* the Parsees believed in a perpetual conflict between good personified in Ormuzd and evil in Ahriman, in *eternity* good alone was to triumph. Thus the Parsees were very early Universalists, and taught exactly what Hosea Ballou and other American preachers of modern times pro-

claimed when opposing the tenets of the then prevailing Calvinism.

Persons who read one bible, and one only, can hardly understand the one they read: thus, the ignorant and bigoted classes are composed, on the one hand, of those who *worship* one bible, and on the other, of those who *hate* one bible. The enlightened student of comparative theology, who has read and studied several bibles, neither accepts blindly nor blindly condemns; he reasons and compares, with a view to finding the underlying truth in all systems of religion, knowing from experience that *all* truth cannot be found in one. Rev. Leighton Parks, rector of Emanuel Church, Boston, in a very charming volume, entitled "His Star in the East: A Study of the Early Aryan Religions," has many very interesting facts to relate concerning the Parsees, as well as other Oriental bodies, among which nothing is more important than the part played by Parseeism in moulding Hebrew and, more latterly, Christian thought and literature. Previous to the time of the Babylonish captivity, the Jews seem to have known nothing of an accuser, or Satan; but in the days of Ezra, when the Scriptures were re-written, this distinctly Persian personage appears prominently on the scene. The serpent of Genesis ii. may have come from Egypt, also the two classes of serpents mentioned in the story of the journeyings through the wilderness, as two diametrically opposed aspects of the serpent were familiar to the Egyptians of old. The elevated serpent signified wisdom, and was a very imposing emblem of eternal knowledge and immortal life, while the serpent

in its lower attitude was the symbol of carnality, and to be trampled under foot by the higher human nature. The Egyptian devil, Typhon, is regarded by some as the prototype of the Satan of the Book of Job; but this latter character corresponds so exactly with the Persian Ahriman that there can be little doubt of their proximate identity, *i.e.* the Hebrew Satan is the Persian Ahriman with a little different local coloring.

Now, when the Parsees taught that Ormuzd created six gods, and that Ahriman also created six gods, and therefore in *time* the universe was subject to the equal sway of good and evil, they intended only to illustrate that, despite the prevalence of darkness equally with light on earth, light alone reigned in eternity. Thus the rival deities are found to be one in their source and one in their destiny. As light is the most befitting emblem of knowledge, so darkness corresponds to ignorance; but there can be no two opposite substances or realities in the universe. God is light, and the only reality; Satan is darkness, and therefore but the shadow of God. When once this sublime truth is realized, there will be no further misunderstanding or lack of solution of the problem of life. Evil is no good, as darkness is no light and ignorance no knowledge. "Father, forgive them, for they *know not* what they do," occurs to our mind at this time as a most philosophical, as well as charitable, construction to put upon human error and misdeeds. But if there be no crime in ignorance, it is surely a most undesirable and decidedly unsatisfactory condition; therefore let us seek enlightenment, and do all in our power to illumine the path of those who yet



wander on in darkness. If "sin is mistake," let us use every agency we can employ to rectify that error.

Education, though sometimes severe as a discipline, is never spiteful or retaliative in its methods. When one is cold, you bring him to the fire, or let the sun shine on him, and warmth, the universal invigorator, is the only stimulant needed in cases of drowning, etc.: whatever is given to stimulate is intended to warm; a warm body is a living organism; a cold one is a corpse. Thus is tribute hourly paid in the Far West in these later days to the grand conception of the ancients that fire is life, and life is fire; for where the fire goes out animation is extinct, and to reanimate the frame, the flame must be rekindled. As it is cold when the sun does not shine on us (*i.e.* when something intervenes between us and its beams), so our ignorance is the shadow to remove, and when this is removed, we know one only God, and all false notions of duality are exploded.

The true dualism of reason and intuition in man is the dualism of heat and light, which ever proceed from the one parent source — fire. Fire is both hot and bright: coal may be hot within when not bright without; but there can be no flame without heat, though there can be heat without visible flame. When we remember that heat corresponds to love, and light to wisdom, and that both are expressions of the one divine element, fire, we shall understand the spirit not only of Zoroastrianism, but of Swedenborg, for the great Scandinavian sage taught thousands of years later what the gifted Persians taught long before the Christian

era, concerning the divine nature and its twofold manifestation in the visible universe. *Purity* was and is the watchword of Parseeism. The little colony of Parsees now resident in Bombay (but few are to be found in Persia) are scrupulously exact in their injunctions concerning purity, and though unfortunately not as a rule deeply versed in the spirit of their noble ancient faith, they are noted, wherever known, for extreme cleanliness of mind and person. They consider outward as well as inward purity the one grand essential of religion. As they consider all the elements sacred, they will not bury or burn the bodies of their dead, but expose them to birds of prey after they have deposited them in high "*towers of silence.*" While at first mention this practice may repel many who think lovingly of cemeteries, and may not quite accord with the wishes of those who favor crematories, still there is nothing whatever repulsive in the thought when one becomes accustomed to it, and a Parsee funeral is so conducted that the most reverential and fastidious can be offended at nothing in the ceremony.

Differing in some respects widely from the Parsees, the Greeks first and then the Romans, in their elaborate system of polytheism, which, however, always ran parallel with pantheism, sought to behold in every object the divine life manifest. No Oriental religion was ever quite without its polytheistic and pantheistic elements; but the two united in the highest Greek philosophy and art, and it was at Athens, rather than anywhere else, that the highest conception of the divine manifestation was grasped in a perfect presentation of

beauty. Beauty, perfection of form, a complete ultimatum of the divine loveliness, — this was the Greek ideal, and those who can see to any depth below the letter of the classics, know that classic lore is a rich, deep mine of the purest golden ore. Beauty is divine; divinity must ever be beautiful: we turn with a sigh of discontent amounting to repugnance from all exhibitions of extreme asceticism to the matchless BEAUTY of Greek Theosophy. There we find the one infinite life displayed before our enamoured vision in a million different forms of grace and beauty. Polytheism is the multiple manifestation of pantheism, which is the acknowledgment of the one indivisible immanent life. If Greece, and then Rome, through abominable sensualism, defaulted the exquisite models of the original Theosophy, primitive Christianity spiritualized them once more, and they live in true Christianity to-day, though most unfortunately popular Christianity has denied the spirit of the classics, as it has thrown a veil over its own spiritual scriptures, too often, alas, perverted to most unworthy ends.

Pythagoras, who flourished in Greece about the time of Gautama in India and Confucius in China, was one of the greatest teachers whose imprint has been traced on the pages of history. His philosophy was pure *Monism*, and yet in his elaborate system of numerals he allowed for an infinity of expressions of the one life. He was thus both pantheist (believer in the divine immanence) and polytheist (one who recognized the measureless variety of the divine manifestations). He it was who taught his scholars that all numbers might be lost, but

the number one must remain eternally, for one is at once the greatest and the least, the All and the Atom. Socrates, who lived a century later, was the great Athenian publicist, the one who gathered a vast concourse of people in the open thoroughfares, and educated all who came to him outside the academic halls. He taught nothing but what all the learned agreed to. His offense consisted in speaking unvarnished truth to the common throng. Monopolists hated him, and had him put to death; but the spirit of his teachings remained in his favorite pupil and brilliant successor, Plato, who was more politic than his master, and thus escaped martyrdom. Socrates was the speaker, Plato, the scribe of Athens, at a time when error was coating over the beautiful Greek Theosophy which the Apostle Paul proclaimed in his magnificent oration to the Athenians on Mars-Hill.

As we shall attempt to show in succeeding essays, primitive Christianity was a further development of much that had preceded it from Greece and Rome. Christianity received multitudes of converts, and to accommodate their peculiar needs, Paul at least thought it desirable to be "all things to all men," an expression which the malicious can easily twist into a confession of insincerity. The right-minded man or woman sees it, however, in a totally different light, and can easily perceive that the chief fault of later missions has been that missionaries have treated all religions as hopelessly false, with the exception of their own, which they have proclaimed entirely true. Such an attitude is as ignorant as it is unkind, and brings upon its advocates the

hatred and scorn of those they might otherwise enlighten and bless. We are very sorry to see so many intelligent men turning away from religion because of the utterly stupid manner in which the subject has been broached to them.

Workingmen in the first century were the mainstay of the spiritual and socialistic movement, which after a while took the name of Christianity, and soon after the adoption of that term seemingly began to degenerate. Early Christianity was a progressive eclecticism, and its endeavor was to unite the world. Rome and Greece were its cradles, and from Egypt and Persia it gathered the accumulated wisdom of many centuries. Greek Theosophy lives in the fourth Gospel, where the *Logos*, or divine word — the expressed divinity — is spoken of as perfectly embodied in an ideal human form, but by no means confined to any personality, as it is the universal light and world-wide enlightener. Theosophy alone can explain the Scriptures, revive pure religion, and unite the world: thus in India it invites the natives to return to the essentials of Hinduism; in Persia it urges the people to return to the old-time wisdom-religion of *their* forefathers; and in Christendom it invites the masses to the spirit of the Gospel, and prepares an additional banquet for collegians, by unfolding to them the spirit of the classics. Study mythologic lore with new eyes: let Plato speak to you afresh, as you no longer regard him as a pagan; and the classics as well as the Bible, and the poets as well as the prophets, will all teach you the one great truth, that we are all brothers, and remove from your minds forever the hate-

ful thought of a capricious deity and a restricted revelation. Listen to the philosophers and poets of Greece and Rome as to the sages of the Orient, with ears no longer dull of hearing, and you will see for yourselves that there is but one religion, spoken in many tongues.

Dr. F. L. H. Willis, a gifted and learned scribe, says, in an article which recently appeared in the *Banner of Light*:—

It was in the sacred seclusion of her own room that the consecrated Greek or Roman maiden sought in faith and prayer to reveal the will of heaven. Although she called her Heavenly Father by the name of Jove or Jupiter, yet with an ardent heart she clung to the sacred life that united her to the spiritual realm, and with trusting faith called down the gifts of heaven to her mortal consciousness.

All the ancient Latin and Greek poets present to us the beauty and power of this faith in divine things. History is full of facts that testify of the truthfulness of this sacred gift of the past, and although the veil of ignorance shrouds much of the beauty, yet there gleams forth a supernal light to show us how near to earth was heaven, even in the days of idolatrous Greece and Rome.

Cassandra, who, like many mediums of to-day, had to bear the imputation of insanity, was one of the great prophets of the Trojan nation. She was princess of Troy, but was subject to the divine impressions. It was said that her ears were unstopped so that she could hear spiritual voices, and her prophecies were literally fulfilled. The destruction of Troy and her own death she repeatedly foretold. Her prophecies proved not to be warnings. They were unheeded by her nation, and it had to learn wisdom through sad experiences.

The Roman Emperor Julian declared that he had familiar communications with divine beings. He says they awoke him from sleep by touching his hand or hair, and that he knew them so

well that he could instantly distinguish their voices and their forms.

Pausanias, the Roman historian, says that in the temple of Æsculapius at Epidaurus, a pillar was erected in memory of Hypopolitus, who had been raised from the dead, and Strabo says the temples were full of the records of such miracles as healing the sick, raising the dead, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, etc.

Enlightened minds of Greece and Rome did not worship the many gods, but only one Supreme Spirit, considering the minor deities as only impersonations of the attributes of the one great Deity. With this view we can readily see how the beauty of the universe could call forth reverence, and the strength and wisdom thereof excite adoration. Thus also we learn how definite and clear to these old Greeks and Romans must have been these ideas of spiritual visions and realities, for notwithstanding they often said the gods gave the visions, they must have considered all spiritual appearances as coming through individual intelligence in the spirit-world.

Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of any age, had implicit faith in spiritual presence and power. His demon or genius was his constant adviser. He listened to its voice reverently, and its promptings were his inspiration. He believed that every one had a heavenly guardian, who constantly attended him until death, when it returned to a higher and diviner life. It is related of him in Grote's History of Greece that when he was accompanying the army of Xenophon he became entranced, and so great was his absorption that he took no notice of anything transpiring around him. It was under the scorching sun, and he was standing; but he remained motionless while the whole army passed by, and all efforts to arouse him were in vain. After he came out of this condition he said he had been talking with a spirit.

Xenophon in his "Apology" says: "I call this voice of Socrates the divine, or spiritual influence." Socrates himself says of it: "One day when I was about to cross the river, I saw the usual spiritual sign which prohibits me from doing anything. I seemed to hear a voice also."

Our modern wise men have been greatly puzzled by the avowal of this faith, in so great and wise a man as Socrates. Some have said it was the voice of conscience, others that it was imagination; but his own testimony and that of Xenophon is, *It was a spirit.*

Plato had a similar faith, though perhaps more clearly defined than that of Socrates. He says of spirits:—

“Their office is to go between gods and men; to convey and interpret to the gods the prayers and offerings of men, and bring to men the commands of the gods. Deity can have no immediate intercourse with men. All communication between gods and mortals is carried on by means of spirits, both in sleeping and waking.”

In another place he says:—

“They are clothed with air, wander through heaven, hover over the stars and abide on the earth. They behold unveiled the secrets of time to come, and regulate events according to their pleasure.”

He too believed that every human spirit received at birth a guardian spirit, who accompanied him to the end, and witnessed all his thoughts and actions.

In Plato’s “Ion” there is a remarkable dialogue which we have space to but briefly mention. Ion asks Socrates why it is that when he is reciting the poems of Homer, he should do it with a power that deserted him with respect to all other poets. Socrates, in reply, proceeds to unfold the most wonderful and beautiful theory of divine inspiration, and closes with these words:—

“You, O Ion, are influenced by Homer. If you recite the works of any other poet, you get drowsy, and are at a loss what to say; but when you hear any of the compositions of that poet you are roused; your thoughts are excited, and you grow eloquent; for what you say of Homer is not derived from any art or knowledge, but from divine inspiration and possession. As the Corybantes feel acutely the melodies of him by whom they are inspired, and abound with verse and gesture for his songs alone, and care for no other, thus you, O Ion, are eloquent when you expound Homer, and are barren of words with regard to every other poet. And this explains the question you asked wherefore Homer and no



other poet inspires you with eloquence? It is because you are thus excellent in your recitations not through science, but from divine inspiration."

Pythagoras professed to communicate directly with spiritual beings through visions. Aristotle furnishes us with an elaborate and remarkably strong theory of dreams as inspired by spiritual beings.

Apollonius of Tyana, a follower of Pythagoras, cured diseases and predicted future events. "Do you imagine," says he, "that spirits are anything else but souls? It is not strange that souls should come to souls, and impart knowledge either by a touch or a glance."

In this manner we might go through the whole list of Grecian and Roman poets, philosophers, and wise men, giving their faith and their declarations, but we have brought from these two nations sufficient evidence for our purpose. They all harmonize, and all are clear and definite on this faith in spirit-communion. It was at the foundation of all their religious belief, and it was the inspiration of their religious fervor. All the poetry and the imagination of Greece in the days of her intellectual grandeur rested on this basis of belief in Spiritualism, and from out the half-clouded radiance we find fact and theory, and the divine power of God in man.

As we thus lift the curtain of the past, and bring back its history, the record of its thought and feeling, how full of beauty is the diviner part of man's nature. In spite of all its weakness and folly, its ignorance and sin, it has blossomed forth into individualized characters of great beauty and perfection, and in revelations of wonderful truth and spirituality. Should we not become more humble and less arrogant as we learn thus of the revelations of divine truth given to all men in all ages? Should we not become more thankful as we learn of the certainty of inspiration in all times, more studious as we learn of the laws that govern the spiritual condition, and more hopeful as we learn of the power of beautiful facts and phenomena over philosophy and religion?

While the golden hue of the intellectual days of Athens and of Rome has dazzled the students of our colleges and schools, let us see in it the simplicity and beauty of divine inspiration, and thus we can bring the great representatives of the past, Pythagoras,

Plato, and Socrates, into the list of those of our own faith, and feel the friendly influence of their lives reaching even our own age and time.

Thus have Greece and Rome borne their testimony, and added glowing links to the chain of evidence that brightens as it winds down through the centuries.

## LECTURE XIV.

### CHINESE THEOSOPHY. — CONFUCIANISM.

AN article in the August, 1887, number of the *North American Review* entitled, "Why am I a Heathen?" from the pen of an educated Chinaman, Wong Chin Foo, has been read and commented upon by perhaps millions of people all over the United States, and its circulation has been by no means confined to America. The article itself, though deeply interesting, is by no means remarkable from a literary point of view. The writer evinces no profound acquaintance with his subject; his reasons for remaining a "heathen" are quite commonplace; they are, nevertheless, of such a character as to deeply impress the average reader, and without discussing the actual literary merits of this singular effusion, we cannot restrain an expression of gratitude to the writer for the very concise and definite manner in which he has stated his reasons for upholding Confucianism and objecting to become a Christian. It may possibly be a surprise to some people to be told that Chinamen, as a class, are neither atheists nor idolaters, but believers in one Infinite God, in the immortality of the human soul, and in future rewards and punishments proportioned to the merits of all who receive them. To the unenlightened and untravelled

American or European the Chinaman is an idolater, paying homage to some grotesque and miserable fetish to be witnessed in a Joss house, and certainly the aspect of Chinatown and the Chinese in California is not always likely to dispel this illusion ; but then, what can be said of the illiterate Roman Catholic peasantry of Europe, and their forms of devotion — of the adoration paid to wayside crosses and images of saints often appearing like children's tawdry dolls? The priests do not inculcate idolatry, and the most ignorant Romanist would indignantly repel the charge of idolatry if brought against him ; but appearances, all must confess, foster rather than dispel the opinion of the uninstructed stranger. The Chinese religion sanctions idolatry no more than does the Christian. Confucius worshiped idols no more than Jesus ; and though his day was five or six centuries earlier than that of Jesus, his teachings were in many instances identical in spirit with those of the great Galilean master. It may be interesting before proceeding further, to briefly review the life and teachings of Confucius and contrast them with those of Jesus.

The time when Confucius was born was one of those marked eras in the history of nations which invariably produce great and gifted men. The Jews were just returning to Palestine after the Babylonish captivity ; the Greeks were triumphing over Xerxes, the Persian ; thus the world was in a state of peculiar readiness for some great intellectual and moral luminary who should enforce the essential truths of all religions, and so put forward the fundamental principles of morality, that

government and the social order might be reconstructed on a higher base than previously.

It is singular that one so highly gifted and so eminently successful as Confucius should have given way to melancholy in his later years, and pronounced his mission a failure ; but great souls are exceedingly sensitive, and their ideals so immeasurably higher than those of the populace around them, that what would be termed triumph by the majority seems almost defeat to them, and we may pertinently ask if ever during the physical lifetime of a seer or sage, he wins that glorious victory over prejudice and wrong which is his ultimately in unlimited degree ? The temperament of Confucius was scholarly and sedate, yet there burned within him the most ardent and enthusiastic ambitions, not for his own aggrandizement, but for the elevation of his nation, and indeed the whole human family. It is well to note the precocity of many great heroes and heroines of history. Their boyhood or girlhood has usually been marked by some special streaks of brilliancy, and he whose career we are now considering was no exception to this rule ; indeed he was one of its most forcible illustrations. At seventeen his biographers tell us he held the high office of inspector of grain, a position of trust and responsibility, and we are assured by Wong Chin Foo, in his article in the *North American Review*, that in conservative China offices are held only by those whose competency has led to their election or appointment ; so we may feel sure Confucius must have been a singularly bright and capable boy to be promoted to such a station while so young in years. This ap-

pointment gave him the very opportunity he needed to show of what pure metal he was made. So conscientious and just was he in his every transaction that he won one of the highest marks of distinction a rising young man of business can possibly obtain. He was feared and detested by usurers, cheats, and merciless monopolists; he could neither be bought nor sold; integrity was the polar star of his life; honesty the only air in which he could breathe without suffocation. At nineteen, at which age he married, he enjoyed promotion to a much higher office, that of inspector-general of fields and herds, and in that superior place he continued to show in a marked degree those traits of manly excellence which had shone so conspicuously in him while he adorned a lower sphere. We may here take notice of the thoroughness with which a really great man does everything he essays to do at all. A great man's motto invariably is, "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well"; or he translates the Christian maxim, "Whatsoever your hands find to do, that do with all your might" into daily and hourly practice. All over the land, under the guidance of Confucius, agriculture was so improved that waste lands were rendered fertile, and the necessaries of life were everywhere cheapened and improved. Such faithful service to his country was not allowed to pass unnoticed; his fame increased, his reputation spread, till even at court his name was mentioned with respect and admiration.

His mother, whom he loved devotedly, and for whom he entertained a feeling akin to worship, passed from her mortal form while her beloved son was still a very

young man. Contrary to many despicable Eastern customs, which exemplify the degrading theory of woman's inferiority to man, Confucius so ordered the conduct of his mother's burial that no honor shown to his father's remains might be omitted at the interment of his mother. Whatever may have been the previous rites of burial among the Chinese, since his day it has been the unfailing custom in China to show equal respect to male and female departed. The words of Confucius on this subject are quoted as a maxim, "Those whom we have alike loved in life should not be separated in our respect in death." After his mother's passage to the unseen state, Confucius spent three whole years in retirement; giving up his public work and resigning his emoluments, he spent three of the best years of his life, from twenty-four to twenty-seven, in the study of truth, meditating on questions of immortal import to mankind. That very grief, which to him partook of the form of the sorest bereavement imaginable, opened his eyes to the Great Unseen; a business career no longer held any charms for him; the commonplaces of material existence seemed to him as nothing in comparison with those great questions of life and death which make the thoughtful man forget time and space as he strives to realize the stupendous facts of infinity and eternity. In the freshness of his bereavement his meditations were of a somber cast; it was only with great difficulty he could lay hold on the truth of immortality. Reared as he was in ancestor worship, he could but feel the influence of the spiritualistic ideas with which the mental air he breathed was

fully charged; still a vague unrest possessed him, and while he retained implicit faith and reposed his entire confidence in Deity, whom he called the Principle of Life, there was a vein of pessimism in his philosophy which tended to sadden its founder, and in after years to enervate his followers.

It may be instructive as well as interesting to inquire somewhat closely into the Confucian idea of God, which is without doubt a very exalted one, though possibly, in the eyes of some, slightly pantheistic. In a conversation said to have taken place between Confucius and one of the princes of his country later in his life he expresses himself thus: "Chang-Ty (the Chinese term for the Supreme Spirit) is the universal Principle of Life — the faithful source whence all things have proceeded. To show gratitude to heaven is man's first duty; to show gratitude to ancestors his second." He explained how, after having rendered thanks to the Universal Spirit from whom all things flow, our hearts naturally turn lovingly to those departed worthies and beloved teachers and friends through whose instrumentality our minds have been directed toward the Supreme and our feet turned into the path of obedience to divine commandments. Duty to God can never be separated from duty to man; gratitude to God is inseparable from gratitude to man; we never find a great and good man or woman in all the annals of history who is not noted for filial devotion and respect shown to the great and good who have gone before.

A feature of the doctrine of Confucius, which may seem to some to condone the vice of idolatry, is very



easily explained if we can comprehend the exceeding subtlety of his intellect and his deep spiritual consciousness of the omnipresence of the Infinite Being. He never discountenanced the symbolic rites and practices of his countrymen; on the other hand, he gave them the sanction of his approval, justifying them in words like the following: "Under whatever title man renders worship; whoever may be the apparent object of it, and of whatever nature may be the apparent ceremonies, it is always to Chang-Ty that one renders it, and it is Chang-Ty who is the object of veneration."

In reading O. B. Frothingham's "Life of Theodore Parker" we meet with passages in that great preacher's sayings when in conversation with Italian Catholic priests, strongly reminding us of the above quotation from Confucius. When Parker witnessed the devotions of the people at the shrines of their patron saints and listened to their intercessions, he calmly remarked that God probably cared little or nothing for the language in which petitions were couched, but everything for the state of mind and heart which led to prayers being offered at all. On one occasion he boldly said he did not think God would be offended if an honest though ignorant child should call the Eternal Parent St. Cecilia. The Roman Catholic priest to whom he made the remark was shocked, and said such views supported idolatry. How singular it seems that the very persons who are most addicted to seemingly idolatrous practices are the very ones who can see the least deeply into the spiritual truth they enshrine and hide. Probably this is due to the fact that those alone are highly gifted

with spiritual discernment who have outlived the mental condition for which such forms constitute needed pabulum. Confucius, twenty-four centuries before Parker, was as uncompromising and devout a theist as he, and the very comprehensiveness of his pure theism enabled him to find the true God everywhere, in everybody and everything, and thus make excuses for all imperfection, though crime was hateful in his sight, and vice a target at which he directed his sharpest and surest arrows.

In many respects Confucius might be called a religious Rationalist; natural instead of supernatural religion won his confidence; his mind was too large, his sympathies too universal to permit of his taking that contracted view of revelation so prevalent among orthodox Christians. His whole system being founded on a recognition of universal justice and impartiality, he could not escape the conclusion that all the nations of earth, and all men individually, are accepted of God in proportion to their uprightness.

Wong Chin Foo truly says, the Calvinistic idea of predestination, with its awful doctrine of election for some and reprobation for others, has no place in the Confucian philosophy. It must be carefully borne in mind that Confucius stands before the world as a philosopher rather than as a theologian. He never endeavored to form a religious sect; his whole aim and ambition was to save the state; and knowing, as all wise statesmen must, that a nation's security depends on its morality, he rendered sacred all secular ideas and duties, carrying practical religion into daily life and commercial enterprise, instead of allowing it to be re-

garded as a thing apart, to be brought into requisition one hour a day, or one day a week, while all the rest of the time can be devoted to purely material endeavors.

Religion, rightly defined, is the science of righteous living; and as rectitude is as necessary in the holder of a civil as an ecclesiastical office, a true philosophy must needs be theological (as was that of Plato), if theology be defined, as it is by able etymologists, to mean first and last the knowledge of divine truth. As all religious concepts have a more or less direct bearing on the affairs of every-day life, a statesman or man of business needs to be fully as religious as one whose profession permits him to style himself a reverend minister of the Gospel.

The mind of Confucius turning as it did to moral philosophy, and the supreme object of his life being the reduction of moral theory to practice as a safeguard and savior of the nation, he early abandoned his political and business career and devoted his time and strength solely to the interests of philosophy. Like many another hero of the Old World, though he had a glorious ideal before him, he was always directing his own gaze and that of others to an ideal past. History informed him of a time long past when the government was purer and the people holier than in his day; and forgetful of the proverb, "Distance lends enchantment to the view," he permitted his mind to revert too frequently to olden days. This tinged his thought with sadness. It fostered deep regret and often hindered the advancement of the very cause in which all his energies and sympathies were enlisted.

Being of an artistic turn of mind, refined in his tastes almost to the verge of fastidiousness, he would frequently withdraw from all associates and turn to music and the sister arts for rest and recreation; music (of which he was passionately fond) always delighted him. He also took great interest in literary style and matters of etiquette, and of the use of arms he was not ignorant. His relations with the unseen world were very intimate, but some of his sayings give rise to the opinion that he was more of a Positivist than a Spiritualist.

The best followers of Auguste Comte could heartily sympathize with such exclamations as "The world is open to me; what am I fitted for? What is my place? Shall I live for time or for the long future—for the common weal, or for my own narrow good?" He decided as all noble souls decide. The remonstrances of friends, who told him he was throwing himself away on philosophy and reformatory projects (difficult if not impossible to realize), weighed nothing with him. The most brilliant offers failed to entice him; he was desirous of sinking every personal ambition in unwearied labor for the general good. The "Ancient Doctrine" was his text. All his discourses might have been from the text, "Choose the old paths and walk in them," and as eulogists are apt to overestimate the characters of whom they speak, so Confucius threw a glamour of glory round the heads of the nation's ancestors and held up these halo-crowned worthies as though they were in fact almost more than mortals.

We notice a tendency in many reverent and grateful

minds to dwell exclusively upon the virtues of the past, totally ignoring its vices. In biblical exegesis this is too frequently the case; it is an error of the gravest type, as it supports pessimism more than all arguments combined. The grand old Hebrew Bible gives us no encouragement in this direction, as it proves its truthfulness, and the wisdom and foresight of its authors in no way so forcibly as in the attitude of impartial criticism it assumes toward patriarchs and prophets as well as common every-day men and women. The patriarchs and sages are not represented as perfect by any means. Their vices and frailties, even their crimes, are fully recorded, so we rise from a diligent perusal of Jewish Scripture, far more ready to thank God for the happy times in which we live and for our manifold blessings, than to sigh over a forfeited paradise in which purity and wisdom blazed in dazzling brightness, and ruled with undisputed sway.

Despite this criticism of the method and mental frontage of Confucius, we can but give our unquestioning sanction to the models he held up as examples to the populace. . . . The ancients, as he pictured them, were gods rather than men. Their historical virtues may have been fancied, but as ideals they were almost matchless. Supposing they were in some instances romantic personages to some extent or even evolved from the fertile fancy of Confucius himself, they were samples of the highest excellence, and in an exemplar we want to see virtue itself exhibited even though as in a romance lay figures may be introduced. Still the Confucian ideal of judicial administration was not perfect.

Certain of his maxims we had better avoid. Those we should avoid are indeed very few compared with those we would do well to adopt; but as he supports the theory of capital punishment as necessary for traitors, in order that social welfare be preserved, we can see at least one serious flaw in an otherwise almost perfect philosophy.

Speaking of office-holders he says, if they were inefficient or indifferent, remove them at once; but if dishonest morally or financially, execute them as traitors. Here we find one of the greatest blots in the recommendations of Confucius. His endorsement of capital punishment shows there is a rotten timber somewhere in his platform of principles. True, the professing Christian cannot take exception to this, for nowhere are executions more common than in avowedly Christian lands. The Christian church has always advocated and supported hanging for murder, and only recently we read of a horrid sensation in France over the guillotine; but it must be distinctly borne in mind that when Confucians execute criminals they are acting in harmony with the teachings of their most venerated leader, while Christians are guilty of a disgraceful violation of the law proclaimed by him whom they profess to regard, if they are orthodox, as incarnate Deity, and if they are unorthodox (Universalist or Unitarian for example), as the noblest specimen of manhood and brightest moral exemplar the world has ever seen.

Wong Chin Foo when he invites the Christians of America to come to Confucius should remember that if they adhere closely to the precepts of Jesus they can

gain nothing by transferring their allegiance to the great Chinese philosopher; and if it be objected that Christianity has been in existence over eighteen hundred years and has failed to bless the world to any appreciable extent, bloody wars and religious persecutions having characterized its advance everywhere, we must boldly and fairly meet the issue by denouncing popular Christianity as a system of usurpation, the name of Jesus having been made a cloak wherewith to cover the vilest atrocities and the most disgusting hypocrisy. The religion of Jesus and nominal Christianity are two very different things. The former is a simple gospel of universal charity, the latter a tissue of creeds and dogmas, many of them utterly false and terribly pernicious in their effects upon society. The gospels, however, afford no warrant for such dogmas, all of which were derived from mythology, not from the teachings of Jesus or the older sayings of the Hebrew prophets. Paul, not Jesus, was the founder of creedal Christianity, and he derived his materials largely from ancient Egyptian scriptures, with which his letters to the Corinthians prove his familiarity. His whole argument for the resurrection is based on Egyptian teaching and symbolism, and when he alludes to certain things being written in the Scriptures, we search in vain for them in the Old Testament, and scholars inform us the gospels were not then in existence. The Egyptian origin of many, though certainly not all of the doctrines and ceremonies of the prevailing Christian Church, can readily be proved by reference to history. Paul was a complex character; his was a very learned mind; as a reasoner his astuteness

was marvelous; but if the evangelists speak truly, his character was widely different from that of Jesus. He burned to make proselytes, while Jesus protested against proselytism, after the manner of Israelites generally. Jesus was a consistent but extremely progressive Jew, who never attacked the temple worship or the synagogue as an institution. His respect for the Mosaic law was unsurpassed, though he took exception to many Levitical injunctions, and showed little countenance to puerile Talmudic fables.

If Jesus were on earth to-day, his doctrines would find far more favor with progressive Jews than with orthodox Christians.

Jesus, like Confucius, was a political reformer as well as a moralist. He was by no means the "miracle worker" many people suppose him to have been, neither was he an illiterate man as many suppose; for though the secret source of his "letters" was a mystery to his countrymen, he displayed remarkable evidences of learning on many occasions; and when did a man create as much astonishment among the multitudes by knowing so much of "letters" as he did among the doctors at Jerusalem when only twelve? The historical element in the gospels shows us Jesus as a very lovely character. Ernest Renan has eulogized him none too highly, though we think Renan's criticisms a little too sentimental. We can detect fully as much power as sweetness in the character of Jesus. The phrase, "lovely Galilean vision," does not touch all sides of his character by any means, for he was one of the most rigid moralists the world has ever seen; even



Isaiah was never more severe in his denunciation of injustice than was Jesus; but with all his bold denunciation of error he preached love as the only savior of sinners. Once in a while he could dilate grandly on the terrible retribution awaiting the ungodly, but love was the key-note of all his sermons. Love with him was alpha and omega, and it is only in the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, that that great apostle thoroughly presents the religion of Jesus in its native simplicity. James and John both interpreted Jesus better than Paul on the whole, though they may not have been Paul's equals in scholarship.

Luther was blind indeed when he became so carried away with Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as to reject the epistle of James, calling it an epistle of straw when it is really one of the finest, if not the very finest of all the epistles. Had Luther looked more deeply into the true nature of faith he would have seen that James was the most lynx-eyed of all the apostles, for his interpretation of faith chimes in exactly with the doctrine of Jesus, and is most true etymologically to the sources whence faith (Latin *fides*, which gives us the English word *fidelity*) is derived. We cannot contrast the doctrine of Jesus concerning faith with that of Confucius, for the two are one. Confucius extols rectitude; Jesus, faithfulness: and here if we have a distinction at all, it is without a difference, and therefore none in reality. What our Chinese friend Wong Chin Foo objects to, is the very thing we are never tired of attacking, and which we are frequently com-

pelled to rebuke, and that is the mischievous way in which blind belief is confounded with and substituted for genuine faith, which is a virtue, a moral excellence, certainly not a blind belief in ecclesiastical assumptions.

“He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned” (sometimes the harsher word *damned* is used) is a text which has led to the detestable inference that there is but a single step from the gallows to glory, if a criminal only repent at the eleventh hour; and by repentance is meant not reformation, but belief in vicarious atonement. Had that passage been always translated true to its original intent, our Chinese friend would have had no opportunity to enter his protest against the demoralizing doctrines of popular Christianity. For, had no liberties been taken with the original, and had the general tenor of “Christ’s” teaching been taken into account, the text would read, he who is faithful (*i.e.* full of faith in its true sense) shall be saved, he who is unfaithful (faithless) shall be condemned. Here is common ground between Jew, Gentile, and undenominational teacher of ethics. Professor Huxley expresses unqualified admiration for the simple ethics of Judaism as expounded by Micah. Professor Tyndal admires the Decalogue and has frequently advocated the strict observance of the eighth commandment especially. Judaism is the purest of all the world’s great religions, its professed doctrines constituting the foundation of all religions. Jesus was no apostate or renegade Jew; he may have been turned out of the synagogue, as many noble men have been,

when the synagogue has been mismanaged by ignorant and bigoted conservatives, as in the days of Spinoza in Germany; but if we are to acknowledge Jesus as "a teacher sent from God," especially if we are to see in him the greatest teacher who ever lived, as Christians claim him to have been, we must revert to first principles, and gladly and contentedly submit to obey the moral law given by Moses to the children of Israel, not indeed in all its literal severity as proclaimed by uncompromising sticklers for the letter, but in that deep and true sense in which it can be fulfilled in love.

We are constantly plied with questions relative to the treatment of criminals: this seems to indicate either that crime is on the increase, and therefore the popular mind is unusually exercised concerning it; or that a wave of merciful feeling is sweeping over the public that is so far changing it as to occasion a drift away from the old barbaric administrations of reproof. There can be but two lawful objects to be obtained by the enforcement of penalties, viz.: the reformation of the offender and the protection of society. We unhesitatingly declare that capital punishment neither reforms nor protects; it may have been lawful in a darker age, but eighteen hundred and fifty years ago the highest thought in Palestine was in advance of it, Jesus seeing nothing in a perfect fulfillment of the moral law which required the taking away of a human life, even the life of one who had slain his neighbor. He distinctly, and with great emphasis, repudiates the belief that God is the author of a retaliative policy: all retaliation he at-

tributes to certain men of old with whom he disagrees ; yet he says he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. The object of legislation is unchanging ; its outward forms are subject to incessant alteration, for with the constant development of human intelligence, and particularly the moral sense, institutions once regarded as essential to the preservation of social order are frowned upon as not only useless, but inhuman. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was barbaric justice. No one could call it injustice, for it was exact retribution for the offense committed ; one eye exchanged for one eye, one tooth as payment for one tooth, seems perfectly fair and harmonizes perfectly with that crude idea of compensation which possesses the spiritually untutored mind. But Jesus, seeing far more deeply into the essence of the moral law, knew such modes of carrying out the law of justice must inevitably result in a cruel enforcement of justice, untempered by mercy, and wherever love is absent, the reformatory and protective elements in just penalties are alike impossible.

The old prophecies, "whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and "a life for a life" are references to the Oriental doctrine of Karma, upon which we have entered treating of Buddhism. To interpret prophecy as though it were commandment, leads to gross errors in administration ; but only the humane and gentle are gifted with sufficient spiritual insight to discern the true meaning of such profound utterances as deal with the (to ordinary minds) insoluble mysteries of divine government.

Whenever Jesus is really appealed to as an authority by Christians, Christianity loses all its asperity; its contradictions are forgotten, its ecclesiastical savagery is replaced by love, and a fair and lovely vision of divine beneficence supplants the hideous spectacle of a religious inquisition. The cathedral at Seville, in Spain, in front of which, in the open square, bull fights are of common occurrence, is a scandal and disgrace to those who profess to worship Jesus, of sufficient magnitude to justify the harshest accusations by the most rabid opponents of the system. The horrors of the Spanish inquisition, whose blood-curdling details are so often rehearsed as arguments against Christianity, are indeed enough to repel any intelligent or humane Jew or "heathen" from a system under whose auspices such flagrant iniquities could possibly be sustained, and we hesitate not to say that recent persecutions of Jews in Russia and Poland have been vile enough to brand professedly Christian governments with the stigma of perpetual infamy. Yea, and the dealings of modern nations with the Orient, — opium forced upon the Chinese at the point of the bayonet by Christian soldiers. Missionaries, Bibles, ardent spirits, and hosts of dissolute practices, all sent together out to China by Christian emissaries, avowedly bent on the holy mission of sanctifying the heathen, cannot but create a fearful recoil against Christianity in the minds of the Chinese, while in this country so little is done to benefit the Chinamen that the thought of foreign missions must appear ludicrous in the extreme to the serene and placid follower of Confucius, who taught every citizen

to mind his own business, to value virtue more than gold, and to let well alone, instead of forever, with feverish haste, rushing after innovations, and living so restless a life that health, happiness, and morality are squandered in the idolatry of the god of gold.

Wong Chin Foo accuses Americans of worshiping the almighty dollar more than God, of building costly temples and other avowedly religious and philanthropic institutions, which they support at the expense of justice and benevolence; and in bringing forward such accusations he is doing what Jesus himself would commend, for surely no one who ever lived detested avariciousness more than he who told his followers not to be anxious concerning any material thing. Strange, indeed, to a "heathen" must be the anomalous spectacle of a people worshiping Jesus with their lips, and practically deserting his precepts with barefaced impudence. Against the religion of Jesus, Wong Chin Foo has not uttered a single word. In his eulogy of Confucius and the Chinese religion he has not betrayed himself into a single extravagance, but he has evidently failed to see wherein Jesus as a moral teacher surpassed Confucius, and may indeed have been that "star in the west" to which Confucius pointed, whose bright shining in days to come he eloquently foretold.

Having alluded to the pessimistic tendencies of the system of Confucius, and to his melancholy disposition, we do not feel it would be just to dismiss our theme without assigning what we feel to be, after all, the true reason for the sadness of the great Chinese sage. So lofty were his ideals, so keen his prophetic foresight,

that his spirit looked ahead across the vistas of ages, and saw the ultimate future not only of China, but of the world. The true greatness of all idealism consists in its prophetic inspiration. Realism is cold, lifeless, and inefficient, because it sees no future. Artistic creations are immortal; imitations are all short-lived. Quixotic schemes, Utopian projects, never desert us, because Don Quixote is ever a prophet, and Utopia is our future state of being.

All before us, not behind us, lies paradise without a serpent. The future of the world will witness the absence of every obnoxious beast, venomous reptile, poisonous tree, and contentious man; but the future is often the distant future, and he who thinks it immediate is terribly apt to be disheartened and die in despair of his darling hopes ever being fulfilled for humanity. Isaiah saw the possible future of the house of Israel, and the certain destiny of universal mankind. In his noblest flights of poetry time and distance are annihilated. He sees the whole earth in the coming days of glory, but never yet in the experience of the Jewish people have Isaiah's glorious prophecies been literally fulfilled, and Christianity has certainly been far from the realization of Isaiah's vision. Still Isaiah's words of hope and comfort have kept up the fainting spirits of exiled, persecuted Hebrews, when to be a Jew in Europe meant to be an outlaw, to dwell in a wretched ghetto apart from all the rest of mankind, and be a target at which the most envenomed arrows of hatred and cruel mendacity were perpetually hurled.

Jeremiah, on the other hand, though also a great

prophet, never rose to the sublimity of Isaiah, because he was the poet of complaint, while Isaiah was the poet of hope and jubilant exultation. Individual temperament has much to do with the view one takes of life; a restless, eager soul that cannot always feast upon the outlined glories of celestial mountains rising above the clouds in the far distance, falls into depression, often into despair, when darkness intercepts his view, and mists and shadows hide the mountains from his gaze. Confucius could never stand on the top of Mt. Pisgah and view the promised land as the sure and certain possession of his countrymen in his later days. He could not see beyond death, as Jesus or as Moses could. He was disheartened because of the length of time spent in the wilderness, and the smallness of the number of those who would undertake an exodus from Egypt at all. His countrymen had long remained in bondage to hoary errors; they, with characteristic Oriental conservatism, were slow to change. Not only was the distance great between them and the glorious goal ahead, but those who did attempt the march forward walked feebly and falteringly; they crept like the tortoise, while their leader wanted them to run like the hare, and they often turned backward; then when the true import and full significance of his mission was made known to them, many deserted his standard and grieved him with their apostacy for filthy lucre's sake. This was gall and wormwood to his spirit; it pained him deeply. When he was misinterpreted and reviled he never answered back in anger, but his heart was sore, and, with a gentle and pitiful contempt, he lost faith



in humanity, esteeming a people hardly worth saving if they would not save themselves.

We think no better simile of the efforts of Confucius can be shown us than the spectacle of a young, energetic man catching sight of a glorious range of mountains, from the snow-capped, light-crowned peaks of which a view of the most gorgeous and extensive scenery can be obtained. The day is fine, the air bracing, the sun brightly shining; it is early morn, the birds are just pouring forth their matin praise; the youth is strong and refreshed for labor, and so near seem the hills, he thinks he can gain not only their base, but reach their summits before nightfall. But, alas for him, he has altogether miscalculated the distance between him and them, and still further has he underrated the length of the journey from base to summit, and the exceeding difficulty of the way. Day after day and night after night go by; he wearies on the road, sinks to sleep one night with the mountains out of sight because beclouded with mist, and thinks at last that he has been a fool for his pains in striving to reach what must, after all, be but a mirage in the desert. After a sleep unusually profound and refreshing, he wakes to find them close at hand. He has traveled further than he knew in the days of mist and shadow, when their dim outlines were scarcely discernible, and at length, after days instead of hours of effort, he finds the mountains there in greater size and grandeur than any far-off prospect could reveal.

Confucius could never know how far along the road he had himself traveled, or how many others he had in-

duced to undertake the forward march, till the clearer light of immortality, after physical dissolution, awoke within him in that realm of revelation where his doubting but ever faithful spirit grasped with an unyielding grip the truth of optimism. A soul so noble could never have been disappointed after death, whatever set-backs he may have encountered on this side of Jordan. His closing hours were marked by peaceful resignation and tender, loving solicitude for the well-being of his country, yea, the world at large, though he made special efforts to secure the well-being of his own beloved children. No more loving father, no more powerful moralist, no more faithful man ever trod the earth: but he had not the all-conquering power of Jesus to abolish death and triumph so gloriously over its dominion as to make his death the door of hope to all who should read of it.

As to the moral and social condition of the Chinese Empire, there are two sides to every question. Wong Chin Foo is evidently a patriot, — in some senses a partisan, — and therefore not an altogether disinterested witness, but we believe him when he says crime is less frequent in China than in England and America. The much-lauded and decidedly overestimated civilization of the West loses much when its restless mammon-worship is contrasted with the reposeful stolidity of Eastern peoples. A careful comparison of Oriental religions, and a further acquaintance with the actual condition of Asiatics cannot but knock some of the conceit out of those pretenders to a monopoly of culture and revelation who calmly imagine Europe and

America terrestrial paradises, while Asia and Africa are to them purgatories, if not infernal dominions.

Without adopting the Christian name, we can end this lecture with the words, "Come to Jesus." We do not invite our readers to Christianity, but to that simple gospel of love proclaimed by its alleged founder. To Wong Chin Foo we do not say, Abandon Confucianism; for there is no Christian society he would be improved by joining; but we do say to him (and perhaps he does not need the advice—he may have already done so), Study carefully the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, and you may become a missionary to Christians in their own land. You have been rather severe on the Unitarians, but scarcely too much so on any other denomination. Spiritualism, as it is at this time usually presented, might repel rather than attract you, and possibly Theosophy may be too mystical in its appearance to invite your examination. You evidently are desirous of seeing established in America a universal practical religion of good and noble deeds, without cant and without dissimulation. You can find in the ethics of Judaism, and also in the gospel utterances (which are, as Benjamin D'Israeli always said, but an amplification of the Hebrew religion) exactly the material you need to work upon. We are all deeply indebted to you for your scathing though merited tirade against hypocrisy, and trust the American people will so far follow your good advice as to live by all the good there is in the Confucian philosophy, and, not resting there, harmonize their lives with the yet more spiritual teachings of the prophet of Galilee.

Thus may they develop a truly theosophical religion, to which no Confucian, Brahman, Parsee, Buddhist, or any other Oriental need take the slightest exception; for Theosophy is free universal religion (not creedism) in the broadest meaning of the phrase.

## LECTURE XV.

ELECTRICAL CHRISTIAN THEOSOPHY; ELECTRICITY  
THE BASIS OF LIFE; AN ELECTRIC CREED; ELEC-  
TRICAL THERAPEUTICS.

IN approaching the subject of electricity in this age of marvelous and ever-multiplying electrical inventions and appliances, we are led to inquire whether, despite all the control which man is seemingly gaining over the electric fluid, electricity is not, after all, the sovereign master instead of the obedient servant. A very wonderful and truly theosophical book, "A Romance of Two Worlds," by Marie Corelli, continues to circulate widely all over America as well as in England, where it was originally published. The authoress is evidently a woman of sincere and noble convictions, and uses her facile pen and unusual ability as a novelist, to convey to the minds of her readers something like an adequate idea of the stupendous power inherent in a force about which so few really know anything. Dr. Molière of San Francisco, and other truly eminent physicians who do honor to the profession they adorn, are in exact agreement with Marie Corelli, in declaring it to be their conviction that electricity is the one only vital force in nature; that it can be gathered from the atmosphere and returned to the earth, but is never gen-

erated and never destroyed. Dr. Scott, whose various inventions have made his name known everywhere, no doubt tells a great truth through the instrumentality of a hair-brush, when he makes that common toilet accessory declare on its back, which holds a battery, "the germ of all life is electricity." To many who read these words, an idea is at once erroneously conveyed, that if this be so, there can be no spiritual basis of life, for electricity is generally regarded as a blind force utterly distinct from everything we can call mind, soul, or spirit. Such, however, is not the case; this subtle all-pervading force is in its essence purely spiritual, and flows through all the kingdoms and forms of nature as their life-giving principle, or nothing could exist. We cannot affirm that what we are accustomed to call electricity is other than a manifestation of spirit, a phenomenal display of the unitary life-principle which pervades the universe; it is indeed the sole agent employed by intelligence itself in its expressions through the varied and numberless fields of nature. As it is part of the object of this volume to review standard works bearing on Theosophy, in the broad acceptance of the word, we will here introduce extracts from "A Romance of Two Worlds," appending such comments of our own as we may find necessary to insure our readers' understanding of our own attitude to this extraordinary revelation,—for revelation it is; and a revelation, moreover, peculiarly timely when electricity is everywhere the subject of thought and experimentation. As we cannot do more than briefly allude to any one book, no matter how valuable its contents, owing to

our limited space, we shall present our readers with only such extracts from Marie Corelli's priceless contribution to literature as seem to us of special interest and importance to students of Theosophy, which means for us the all in all of spiritual revelation.

From the Introduction to the 50-cent edition of "A Romance of Two Worlds," published by Ivers & Co., New York, we extract the following sublime utterances:—

In spite of the doctrines of agnostics and materialists, there is a perpetual, passionate craving in the souls of many for that inward peace and absolute content which can only be obtained by a perfect faith in God and the coming Life Eternal. Materialism does not and can never still the hunger of the Immortal Spirit in man for those things divine, which are, by right, its heritage. Nothing on earth can soothe or console it—nothing temporal can long delight it—in time the best gifts the world can offer seem valueless; while one spark of God's own essence remains alit within us, it is impossible that here, on this limited plane of thought and action, we should ever be satisfied. I do not address myself to those who have forsaken all spirituality—who have made their cold adieux to God, and who, of their own free will and choice, lie down in dust and ashes, with foolish faces turned earthward and hidden from the light—to them I say pitifully, "Requiescat in pace!" for they are as though they were not. It is to those who feel the quick stirrings of a larger, grander life within them—who realize with love and eagerness the wonders of the world to come, and who gaze appealingly across the darkness of present things, striving to see, no matter how distantly, the first faint glimmer of the brightness that glitters beyond the grave—to these I speak, inadequately and feebly I know, yet with all my soul desiring to cheer them, as they climb from steep to steep of high thought and noble endeavor, onward and upward.

The "Romance" has since its appearance been made the subject of much discussion; and I, as its author, have had to submit to a great deal of cross-questioning concerning its theories. I have been

brought into contact with many peculiar phases of thought and feeling relating to occultism and clairvoyance, and people of all shades of opinion seek my acquaintance in the expectation of being initiated into something very strange and mysterious — let me say, something vulgarly melodramatic — concerning the spiritual world. Their disappointment is always extreme when they learn that my creed has its foundation in Christ alone, and that I date my spiritual growth in this world from that one Light, containing in itself both the divine and human essence of absolute power, wisdom and purity. “Only Christ!” is the look plainly expressed in their faces; and they turn from me altogether puzzled and dissatisfied. Were I to initiate them — or rather pretend to initiate them — into some new or old form of Buddhism — could I show them some poor trickery such as the vanishing of a box in the air, the turning of a red flower to white, or white to red, or any of the optical illusions practiced with such skill by native conjurers, I might easily be surrounded by disciples of “Occultism” — persons who are generally ready, nay, even eager, to be deceived. But “Only Christ!” — only the old, old story of Divine Love and Sacrifice! — how tame and trivial! No skipping about of chairs and tables — no “dematerialization of matter” — no jumping through a ceiling without making a hole in it — not even a sideboard possessed of voluntary volition — no excitement — no incipient madness — nothing but the well-worn doctrines of Christ which have been dinned into our ears from childhood — how shall anything new come of these?

Many have eagerly asked me: “How can we perform miracles?” “Can we see visions?” “How are we to cultivate the electric Spirit within us?” I have only one reply to make to these “searchers after the unseen”: it is this — “With God all things are possible.” Without Him, nothing is possible. The power of performing miracles, the gifts of healing and prophecy, and the ability to see beyond the things of this world, are all obtainable, but only through absolute faith in Christ. The smallest hesitation, the least grain of that insolent and foolish pride which dares to deny the very existence of the Creator, the faintest shadow of self-seeking or self-love, and the inner spiritual force is instantly paralyzed. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of those interested in this



high question, that nothing temporal, however pleasant, brings any gratification or advantage to the Soul. While pent up in clay it is a cramped and prisoned creature, and unless fed with the divine and heating influences of unselfish love, unswerving faith, high aspirations and pure devotion, it starves and dwindles down to so feeble a flame that, when the body in which it has passed such a miserable existence perishes, it is forced to seek elsewhere for some fresh chance of development. I have explained this fully in the "Electric Creed" which, I may here observe, has been much commented upon, and by some deemed blasphemous—I know not why. Its tenets are completely borne out by the New Testament, which sacred little book, however, has much of its mystical and true meaning obscured nowadays through the indifference of those who read, and the apathy of those who hear. Sunday after Sunday its noble passages are drawled or droned forth by clergymen who have ceased to put any life or soul into their manner of utterance, and most of whom look upon their sacred vocation merely as a means of livelihood. Their congregations appear to listen, but in truth their thoughts are far away—they have "heard it so often," they murmur, with an apologetic yawn. The words, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," fall on dull and inattentive ears: the people are unconscious that in themselves they are fulfilling that prophecy as well as this: "Seeing, they shall not see; and hearing, they shall not understand. . . ."

*True spiritual progress and knowledge are shown in the cheerful, sincere, and wholesome life of the person possessing it, and in the encouraging and ennobling influence that life has on the lives of others. Moreover, it is displayed in the buoyancy and tireless energy of the body in which the beautiful, expanding, highly destined Spirit is for a time bidden to work—in the brightness and serenity of the eye, the absence of all depression, the contentment and tranquillity of the disposition and temper. Hypnotism, which is merely animal magnetism called by a new name, and which is nothing but a physical attraction of strong bodies brought to bear on weakly, diseased, or passive ones, has nothing whatever in common with what I may designate spiritual electric force. The professor of hypnotism is able on certain occasions to instil a thought into the mind of his patient, and force*

him (or her — it is generally a feeble woman who is the subject practiced upon) to act upon it; pain may be soothed, and long trances may ensue, but this power is only temporary. The trance of hypnotism is a stupor, — in it the patient sees nothing worth remembering, even if he could remember, which he never does. This is a positive sign that hypnotism pertains to the material side of existence, and has nothing to do with the spiritual. Many persons — particularly women — who are highly nervous and in a debilitated condition of mind and body, imagine their state of chronic hysteria to be one of supernatural inspiration; and several such overwrought beings have been introduced to me as “wonderful spiritualists,” whereas they are only sickly and morbid. *True Spiritualism is above all things healthy; it places the human being in a fearless, noble attitude toward both God and Man, and nothing but benefits can accrue from it. . . .*

*The miracles of Christ were emanations of pitying love and entire unselfishness, performed solely for the benefit or relief of others, without ostentation or pretense at mystery.*

I once asked an ardent Buddhist the reason of his preference for Buddhism to Christianity. He hesitated a little, then said: “Oh, I don’t know! Anything for a change!” After this, who could doubt the sincerity of his convictions? Certainly, if ever there was a time for a new apostle of Christ to arise and preach His grandly simple message anew that time is now. *Such a one should belong to no Church, for in the multitude of churches and their differing and, unhappily, quarrelsome sects, Christ is crucified over and over again, and made to die a thousand shameful deaths.* The old forms of preaching do not move the minds of the present generation. There needs fresh fire, more touching eloquence, more earnestness of purpose. And the light of Science must be brought to bear on the New Testament, in which its glorious pages will grow bright with hitherto unguessed mystical meanings if humbly and prayerfully studied. *I have often wondered at the density of preachers who, in accordance with the established rule of their order, keep on telling their congregations to “save their souls,” without making the slightest attempt to explain what the Soul is.* The people taken *en masse* are never brought to realize the fact of the imperishable inner Self

within each one of them — *that actual Self which claims as much and more sustenance than the outer body on which we spend such a superabundance of care — care which avails nothing at death, while the attention bestowed on the deathless part of us avails everything.* The world is growing surely tired of monotonous sermons on the old Jewish doctrine of original sin and necessary sacrifice. Most truly did Christ declare, “In vain do they worship Me, *teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.*”

And, as has been set forth in the “Electric Creed,” Christ did not come to us as a Sacrifice, but as a means of close communication with God. *I consider it both horrible and sacrilegious to imagine that God, the Creator of Love and Beauty, could desire a bleeding victim as a sacrifice to appease His anger, and that Victim part of Himself imprisoned in human form — as if God could feel such an unworthy passion as anger! Sorrow, pity, desire to draw the love of even so small a part of His creation as this earth nearer to His Infinite Protection — these emotions are God-like, and are all displayed in the person of His Christ.* This is why I venture to say that the time has come for a new form of preaching, that shall show the Gospel to be one of Love, not Fear. Not because, coward-like, we are afraid to displease God, should we endeavor to purify our lives, but because we know and feel we have a spark of His essence in ourselves that attracts us to Him (and therefore to all goodness) by the force of pure Love alone. Not because we would shun future punishment or desire future joy, but because we know we are akin to Him and He to us, and in that marvelous affinity feel that we would rather perish forever than wrong by so much as a thought the Supremely Beloved. This, it seems to me, is Christianity as Christ meant it: Unselfish love for the Creator, the corresponding cord of which *must* be unselfish love for all he has created; love radiating like broad sunbeams everywhere without grudge or stint; love for one’s fellow-creatures; love for the birds and flowers and all the wise and wonderful workings of nature; love, the first and best nourishment of the spirit within us, which, fed thus, responds like a vibrating harp string to the smallest hint from the Divine master-hand; love which looks beyond the veil of temporal things, and sees clearly with most bright and undazzled eyes; love which

is endowed with perfect faith, because, being part of God, it cannot doubt God's existence. And to the immortal spirit possessed of this love, all things are possible — all miracles, all gifts of healing and high influence. But without it all spiritual research is utterly useless. . . .

The distinguishing mark of the true Spiritualist is what I may call Self-rejection. Self stands on one side, as it were, and is no longer allowed to obscure the soul's view of the splendid universe to which it belongs. And I affirm, and will most ardently maintain, that in the teachings of Christ will be found all the secrets of occult science, all the keynotes of the myriad, upward-sounding scales of the highest *active* spirituality — spirituality that has nothing to do with a morbid imagination and a debilitated or diseased physical frame, but that, on the contrary, is strong and calm, useful and beneficial wherever it works; cheering, strengthening, encouraging, and ennobling all with whom it is brought in contact, and leaving men and women better, happier, and purer for its influence. Such spirituality, the outcome of the electric spirit of Divinity in man, corresponding to the supreme center of Divinity in the Creator, can see and converse with angels — can heal the sick and console the afflicted — can preserve health in the body and beauty in the face and form — can even retain youth much longer than materialists dream of — can meet misfortune as though it were joy, and can triumph in death, knowing Death to be but this world's name for Life.

The idea of Eternity, as depicted in the "Electric Ring encompassing God's World" contained in that part of the "Romance" called "A Miniature Creation," has been for the most part passed over by those who have reviewed my book in the columns of the press, and it is to this I wish briefly to draw the attention of my readers. The Ring is described as *perpetually creative and perpetually absorbent*. Planets are from time to time drawn within it and again cast forth from it, and of this tremendous electric Force there can be no end, inasmuch as it is the outer circle or atmosphere of the Central Planet of all planets wherein the Creator has His being. The theory is simple, yet by it all the gigantic and minute marvels of the universe are made easy of comprehension —

as easy as the explanation of the main-spring of a watch, though an untutored savage would find a watch most difficult to understand. But to the mechanician who has put the watch together and knows how to wind it up, there is no mystery in the seemingly intricate work; and we, who consider ourselves wise, especially when we are called scientists — we who, in the insolent littleness of our limited thought, sometimes presume to dismiss the Creator as no part of His creation — we shall in the hereafter wake up from the troubled dream we call living, to the fact that the great Chronometer of the Universe is quite a simple thing — so simple that we shall wonder at ourselves for not reading its apparent secret before. As the wise king wrote: “The thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and their devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright the things that are upon earth, and with labor do we find the things that are before our eyes; but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out? Except *Thou* give wisdom and send *Thy Holy Spirit from above.*”

I have lately been accused by a leading critic of “imagining a new heaven and earth, and passionately flinging them in the teeth of an obstinate reality that will not conform to them.” But I have imagined no theory of which the starting-point cannot be found in the Scriptures, and the only “obstinate reality” I am aware of in this world is death, to which, undoubtedly, all things must conform. Therefore I hope I do “passionately fling into the teeth of *that* obstinate reality” my glad, grateful, and full belief in the future existence — the coming life of perfect joy, love, and beauty — a life which alone is worth working for, hoping for, praying for, — and compared to which, in my eyes at least, this earth seems but a sort of eclipse — a black disk, obscuring for a time the desired and desirable sunlight — a passing cloud, the movement of which I note with a certain impatience, accepting its shadow, as it falls on my soul, not as an “obstinate reality,” but simply as shadow through which sometimes — by the way of the Cross — the light of the veiled Glory shines.

MARIE CORELLI.

The following equally beautiful, powerful, and exceedingly apposite words at this juncture in the world's thought are from the Prologue :—

WE live in an age of universal inquiry, *ergo* of universal skepticism. The prophecies of the poet, the dreams of the philosopher and scientist, are being daily realized — things formerly considered mere fairy-tales have become facts — yet, in spite of the marvels of learning and science that are hourly accomplished among us, the attitude of mankind is one of disbelief. “There is no God!” cries one theorist; “or if there be one, *I* can obtain no proof of His existence!” “There is no Creator!” exclaims another. “The Universe is simply a rushing together of atoms.” “There can be no Immortality,” asserts a third. “We are but dust, and to dust we shall return.” “What is called by idealists the SOUL,” argues another, “is simply the vital principle composed of heat and air, which escapes from the body at death, and mingles again with its native element. A candle when lit emits flame; blow out the light, the flame vanishes — where? Would it not be madness to assert the flame immortal? Yet the soul, or vital principle of human existence, is no more than the flame of a candle.”

If you propound to these theorists the eternal question WHY? — why is the world in existence? why is there a universe? why do we live? why do we think and plan? why do we perish at the last? — their grandiose reply is, “Because of the Law of Universal Necessity.” They cannot explain this mysterious Law to themselves, nor can they probe deep enough to find the answer to a still more tremendous WHY — namely, *Why* is there a Law of Universal Necessity? — but they are satisfied with the result of their reasonings, if not wholly, yet in part, and seldom try to search beyond that great vague vast Necessity, lest their finite brains should reel into madness worse than death. Recognizing, therefore, that in this cultivated age a wall of skepticism and cynicism is gradually being built up by intellectual thinkers of every nation against all that treats of the Supernatural and Unseen, I am aware that my narration of the events I have recently experienced will be read with incredulity. At a time when the great empire of the Christian

Religion is being assailed, or politely ignored by governments and public speakers and teachers, I realize to the fullest extent how daring is any attempt to prove, even by a plain history of strange occurrences happening to one's self, the actual existence of the Supernatural around us; and the absolute certainty of a future state of being, after the passage through that brief soul-torpor in which the body perishes, known to us as Death.

In the present narration, which I have purposely called a "romance," I do not expect to be believed, as I can only relate what I myself have experienced. I know that men and women of to-day must have proofs, or what they are willing to accept as proofs, before they will credit anything that purports to be of a spiritual tendency, — something startling — some miracle of a stupendous nature, such as according to prophecy they are all unfit to receive. Few will admit the subtle influence and incontestable, though mysterious, authority exercised upon their lives by higher intelligences than their own — intelligences unseen, unknown, but felt. Yes! felt by the most careless, the most cynical; in the uncomfortable prescience of danger, the inner forebodings of guilt — the moral and mental torture endured by those who fight a protracted battle to gain the hardly-won victory in themselves of right over wrong — in the thousand and one sudden appeals made without warning to that compass of a man's life, Conscience — and in those brilliant and startling impulses of generosity, bravery, and self-sacrifice which carry us on, heedless of consequences, to the performance of great and noble deeds, whose fame makes the whole world one resounding echo of glory — deeds that we wonder at ourselves even in the performance of them — acts of heroism in which mere life goes for nothing, and the Soul for a brief space is pre-eminent, obeying blindly the guiding influence of a something akin to itself, yet higher in the realms of Thought.

We have not space to review the amazing story which follows the truly remarkable introduction of which the foregoing extracts give a good idea. The authoress proceeds to relate how the heroine of the romance

was completely restored to health from a condition of extreme and protracted debility by spiritual electric methods. The narrative is delightfully told, and carries the reader with it from first to last. The scenes are laid first in Italy, then in Paris. In Paris the heroine meets a wonderful electrician, by name "Heliobas," who lives in a beautiful house fitted up with every conceivable electrical appliance for health, comfort, and beauty. His only sister, to whom he is tenderly attached, lives with him. Between her and Marie Corelli's charming heroine a warm friendship springs up, which continues to increase till the gifted "Zara" passes to the invisible world. Her exit from the mortal body is electric, as everything of importance is throughout the story. After her departure from the mortal form, she shows herself in immortal beauty to her sorrow-stricken friend, who, immediately after the vision, carries tidings to Heliobas, who is being misjudged and cruelly insulted by a man of the world, who had been an unwelcome aspirant for Zara's hand in marriage, and who, after her tragic transition, heaped reproaches upon the noble and faithful brother, between whom and his sister nothing but the most loyal and loving confidence had ever existed.

As might be expected in a work of such exceptionally pure tone and ennobling sentiment as "A Romance of Two Worlds," the young lady who had been the recipient of a message from her ascended friend, succeeded by the sheer force of spiritual truth and dignity to quell all disturbance, and make peace between the two men, one of whom was so sorely tried, the other so



unspeakably exasperating. We affirm such incidents are true to life, in our own experience, though but rarely we have met grand natures whose royalty of soul and spiritual conquest over usual earthly limitations made them invincible when standing for right, protesting against error. Skeptics who know nothing of consecration to high ideals may laugh to scorn the testimony of the ages to the invincible power of right when supremely trusted in, and courageously upheld, as those who know not what real prayer means may revile that potent agent of spiritual strength and consolation, which is an incessant and most faithful source of lasting good to those who employ it; but, despite the mockery of the profane and the cynicism of the contemptuous, in the midst of humanity to-day, spiritual works are putting to shame all the devices of iniquity, and the true spiritual worker, be it ever remembered, may be a strong man, a delicate woman, or a little child. Power belongs not to coarse animal organisms which generate in copious measure what is generally and appropriately termed *animal magnetism*,—a physical force possessed by beasts as well as men,—but to a force beyond all physical discernment or discovery, the power of the electric spirit of divinity in man; when this is acknowledged and brought into requisition, the mysteries of Christian Science, Mind Healing, etc., etc., will all be made plain, and the excellences of opposing systems be found in the truth that not what a person *believes* or *professes*, but what he *is*, enables him to accomplish whatever good he works for humanity in seemingly mysterious ways. Teaching is always useful;

those who proclaim truth, even if they live it not, are intellectual benefactors of the race, for they are ventilating knowledge, and thereby assisting inquiring minds that need a ministry which appeals to reason; but those who would be practically, personally endowed with healing grace must live continually so as to cultivate the divine and overcome the animal within them. This essential truth runs through all Marie Corelli's writings, entitling her to high rank as a spiritual helper of mankind.

We will now present our readers with some extracts from "The Electric Creed" which the heroine received in manuscript as a gift from Heliobas: —

From all Eternity God, or the *Supreme Spirit of Light*, existed, and to all Eternity He will continue to exist. This is plainly stated in the New Testament thus: "God is a *Spirit*, and they that worship Him must worship Him *in spirit* and in truth."

He is a Shape of pure Electric Radiance. Those who may be inclined to doubt this may search the Scriptures on which they pin their faith, and they will find that all the visions and appearances of the Deity there chronicled were electric in character.

As a poet forms poems, or a musician melodies, so God formed by a Thought the Vast Central Sphere in which He dwells, and peopled it with the pure creations of His glorious fancy. And why? Because, being pure Light, He is also pure Love; the power or capacity of Love implies the necessity of Loving; the necessity of loving points to the existence of things to be loved — hence the secret of creation. From the ever-working Intelligence of this Divine Love proceeded the Electric Circle of the Universe, from whence are born all worlds.

This truth vaguely dawned upon the ancient poets of Scripture when they wrote: "Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light."

These words apply *solely* to the creation or production of *our own Earth*, and in them we read nothing but a simple manifestation of electricity, consisting in a *heating passage of rays* from the Central Circle to the planet newly propelled forth from it, which caused that planet to produce and multiply the wonders of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms which we call Nature.

Let us now turn again to the poet-prophets of Scripture: "And God said, Let us make man in our image." The word "*our*" here implies an instinctive idea that God was never alone. This idea is correct. Love cannot exist in a chaos; and God by the sheer necessity of His Being has forever been surrounded by radiant and immortal Spirits emanating from His own creative glory — beings in whom all beauty and all purity are found. In the *images*, therefore (only the *images*), of these Children of Light and of Himself, He made Man — that is, He caused the Earth to be inhabited and *dominated* by beings composed of Earth's component parts, animal, vegetable, and mineral, giving them their superiority by placing within them His "*likeness*" in the form of an *electric flame* or *germ* of spiritual existence combined with its companion working-force of *Will-power*.

Like all flames, this electric spark can either be fanned into a fire or it can be allowed to escape into air — *it can never be destroyed*. It can be fostered and educated till it becomes a living Spiritual Form of absolute beauty — an immortal creature of thought, memory, emotion, and working intelligence. If, on the contrary, it is neglected or forgotten, and its companion Will is drawn by the weight of Earth to work for earthly aims alone, then it escapes and seeks other chances of development in *other forms* on *other planets*, while the body it leaves, *supported only by physical sustenance drawn from the earth on which it dwells*, becomes a mere lump of clay *animated by mere animal life solely*, full of inward ignorance and corruption and outward incapacity. Of such material are the majority of men composed *by their own free will and choice*, because they habitually deaden the voice of conscience and refuse to believe in the existence of a spiritual element within and around them.

To resume: the Earth is one of the smallest of planets; and not only this, but, from its position in the Universe, receives a less

amount of direct influence from the Electric Circle than other worlds more happily situated. Were men wise enough to accept this fact, they would foster to the utmost the germs of electric sympathy within themselves, in order to form a direct communication, or system of attraction, between this planet and the ever-widening Ring, so that some spiritual benefit might accrue to them thereby. But as the ages roll on, their chances of doing this diminish. The time is swiftly approaching when the invincible Law of Absorption shall extinguish Earth as easily as we blow out the flame of a candle. True, it may be again reproduced, and again thrown out on space; but then it will be in a new and grander form, and will doubtless have more godlike inhabitants. . . .

Christ's death was not a sacrifice; it was simply a means of confidence and communion with the Creator. A sinless Spirit suffered to show us how to suffer; lived on earth to show us how to live; prayed to show us how to pray; died to show us how to die; rose again to impress strongly upon us that there was in truth a life beyond this one, for which He strove to prepare our souls. Finally, by His re-ascension into Heaven He established that much needed electric communication between us and the Central Sphere.

It can be proved from the statements of the New Testament that in Christ was an Embodied Electric Spirit. From first to last His career was attended by *electric phenomena*, of which eight examples are here quoted; and earnest students of the matter can find many others if they choose to examine for themselves.

1. The appearance of the Star and the Vision of Angels on the night of His birth. The Chaldeans saw His "star in the east," and they came to worship Him. The Chaldeans were always a learned people, and electricity was an advanced science with them. They at once recognized the star to be no new planet, but simply a star-shaped flame flitting through space. They knew what this meant. Observe, too, that they had no doubts upon the point; they came "to worship Him," and provided themselves with gifts to offer to this radiant Guest, the offspring of pure Light. The vision of the angels appearing to the shepherds was simply a joyous band of the Singing Children of the Electric Ring, who out of pure interest and pleasure floated in sight of Earth, drawn thither partly by the

already strong attractive influence of the Radiance that was imprisoned there in the form of the Babe of Bethlehem.

2. When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, "*the heavens opened.*"

3. The sympathetic influence of Christ was so powerful that when He selected His disciples, He had but to speak to them, and at the sound of His voice, though they were engaged in other business, "*they left all and followed Him.*"

4. Christ's body was charged with electricity. Thus he was easily able to heal sick and diseased persons by a touch or a look. The woman who caught at His garment in the crowd was cured of her long-standing ailment; and we see that Christ was aware of His own electric force by the words He used on that occasion: "*Who touched Me? For I feel that some virtue is gone out of Me*" — which is the exact feeling that a physical electrician experiences at this day after employing his powers on a subject. The raising of Jairus's daughter, of the widow's son at Nain, and of Lazarus, were all accomplished by the same means.

5. The walking on the sea was a purely electric effort, *and can be accomplished now by any one* who has cultivated sufficient inner force. The sea being full of electric particles will support anybody sufficiently and similarly charged — the two currents combining to procure the necessary equilibrium. Peter, who was able to walk a little way, lost his power directly his will became vanquished by fear — because the sentiment of fear disperses electricity, and being a purely *human* emotion, does away with spiritual strength for the time.

6. The Death of Christ was attended by electric manifestations — by the darkness over the land during the Crucifixion; the tearing of the temple veil in twain; and the earthquake which finally ensued.

7. The Resurrection was a most powerful display of electric force. It will be remembered that the angel who was found sitting at the entrance of the empty sepulcher "*had a countenance like lightning,*" *i.e.* like electric flame. It must also be called to mind how the risen Christ addressed Mary Magdalene: "*Touch Me not, for I am but newly risen!*" Why should she not have touched

Him? Simply because His strength then was the strength of concentrated in-rushing currents of electricity; and to touch Him at that moment would have been for Magdalene instant death by lightning. This effect of embodied electric force has been shadowed forth in the Greek legend of Apollo, whose glory consumed at a breath the mortal who dared to look upon him.

8. The descent of the Holy Ghost, by which term is meant an ever-flowing current of the inspired working Intelligence of the Creator, was purely electric in character: "Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them *cloven tongues like as of fire*, and sat upon each of them." It may here be noted that the natural electric flame is *dual* or "cloven" in shape.

*For those who have once become aware of the existence of the Central Sphere and of the Electric Ring surrounding it, and who are able to realize to the full the gigantic as well as minute work performed by the electric waves around us and within us, there can no longer be any doubt as to all the facts of Christianity, as none of them, viewed by the electric theory, are otherwise than in accordance with the Creator's love and sympathy with even the smallest portion of His creation.*

Why then, if Christianity be a Divine Truth, are not all people Christians? As well ask, if music and poetry are good things, why all men are not poets and musicians. Art seeks art; in like manner God seeks God — that is, He seeks portions of His own essence among His creatures. Christ Himself said, "Many are called, but few are chosen"; and it stands to reason that very few souls will succeed in becoming pure enough to enter the Central Sphere without hindrance. Many, on leaving Earth, will be detained in the Purgatory of Air, where thousands of spirits work for ages, watching over others, helping and warning others, and in this unselfish labor succeed in raising themselves, little by little, higher and ever higher, till they at last reach the longed-for goal. It must also be remembered that not only from Earth but from *all worlds*, released souls seek to attain final happiness in the Central Sphere where God is; so that, however great the number of those that are

permitted to proceed thither from this little planet, they can only form, as it were, one drop in a mighty ocean. . . .

Regarding the Electric Theory of Religion, it is curious to observe how the truth of it has again and again been dimly shadowed forth in the prophecies of Art, Science, and Poesy. The old painters who depicted a halo of light round the head of their Virgins and Saints did so out of a correct impulse which they did not hesitate to obey.<sup>1</sup> The astronomers who, after years' study, have been enabled to measure the flames of the burning sun, and to find out that these are from two to four thousand miles high, are nearly arrived at the conclusion that it is a world in a state of conflagration, in which they will be perfectly right. Those who hold that this Earth of ours was once self-luminous are also right; for it was indeed so when first projected from the Electric Ring. All art, all prophecy, all poesy, should therefore be accepted eagerly and studied earnestly, for in them we find *electric inspiration*, out of which we are able to draw lessons for our guidance hereafter. The great point that scientists and artists have hitherto failed to discover is the existence of the Central Sphere and its Surrounding Electric Circle. Once realize these two great facts, and all the wonders and mysteries of the Universe are perfectly easy of comprehension.

In conclusion, I offer no opinion as to which is Christ's Church, or the Fountain-head of Spirituality in the world. In all Churches errors have intruded through unworthy and hypocritical members. In a crowded congregation of worshipers there may perhaps be only one or two who are free from self-interest and personal vanity. In Sectarianism, for instance, there is no shred of Christianity. Lovers of God and followers of Christ must, in the first place, have perfect Unity; and the bond uniting them must be an *electric* one of love and faith. No true Christian should be able to hate, despise, or envy the other. . . .

Now I beseech the reader of this manuscript to which I, Helio-bas, append my hand and seal, to remember and realize earnestly

<sup>1</sup> An impulse which led them vaguely to foresee, though not to explain, the electric principle of spiritual life.

the following invincible facts: first, that God and His Christ *exist*; secondly, that while the little paltry affairs of our temporal state are being built up as crazily as a child's house of cards, the huge Central Sphere revolves, and the Electric Ring, strong and indestructible, is ever at its work of production and re-absorption; thirdly, that every thought and word of *every habitant on every planet* is reflected in lightning language before the Creator's eyes as easily as we receive telegrams; fourthly, that this world is *the only spot in the Universe* where His existence is actually questioned and doubted. And the general spread of modern positivism, materialism, and atheism, is one of the most terrific and meaning signs of the times. The work of separating the wheat from the chaff is beginning. Those who love and believe in God and Spiritual Beauty are about to be placed on one side; the millions who worship Self are drawing together in vast opposing ranks on the other; and the moment approaches which is prophesied to be "as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, and shineth even to the other part." In other words, the fiery whirlpool of the Ring is nearly ready to absorb our planet in its vortex; and out of all who dwell upon its surface, how many shall reach the glorious Central World of God? Of two men working in the same field, shall it not be as Christ foretold — "the one shall be taken and the other left"?

Friend, Pupil, Reader! Whoever thou art, take heed and foster thine own soul! For know that nothing can hinder the Immortal Germ within us from taking the form imposed upon it by our *Wills*. Through Love and Faith, it can become an Angel, and perform wonders even while in its habitation of clay; through indifference and apathy, it can desert us altogether and forever; through mockery and blasphemous disbelief, it can sink into even a lower form than that of a snake or toad. In our own unfettered hand lies our eternal destiny. Wonderful and terrible responsibility! Who shall dare to say we have no need of prayer? . . .

In making extracts from books we cordially recommend for perusal, we do not, of course, pledge ourselves



in the slightest degree to an endorsement of all they contain. Our view of literature is substantially that taken by Matthew Arnold, which is in effect, that it is a good thing to read a great deal so as to get acquainted as much as possible with the best thoughts of the best thinkers which have found their way into literature. This acquaintance the great essayist and critic calls "culture." Now, in reviewing "The Electric Creed" as a whole, or even such portions of it as we have given in this chapter, we might easily question many of the views therein put forward; but as it does not claim to be an infallible document, had we not better leave each reader to consider and criticise it for himself or herself, without attempting to analyze fully all its stupendous claims? As no human mind can possibly form an ultimate idea of Deity, some may reasonably take mild exception to some of the expressions concerning God; but are we not obliged to clothe our best spiritual conceptions in a proximate language, which may be called (again agreeing with Matthew Arnold) not the exact language of science, but the fluid language of poetry?

One of the grandest poems ever written, —

"O thou Eternal One whose presence bright  
All space doth occupy, all motion guide," —

introduces the expression,

"Though worthless our conceptions are of Thee,"

at the very time when he is pouring forth his very soul in an ardent tribute of praise to the Eternal One, concerning whose perfect goodness, as well as absolute being, he entertains no doubt. Let us not, then, permit

a spirit of carping criticism to possess us, till we spurn as false or ridiculous that which is after all the best accommodation of truth possible to our weak understanding. How few there are who can afford to dispense with every outward symbol; nearly every one we meet requires something tangible to lay hold upon; the absolute eternal infinite seems too remote to meet the finite needs of those who dwell amid countless limitations, and are themselves far less than infinite. Our experience has taught us, and is daily teaching us more and more decidedly, that those who are first to cry out against a sublime metaphor, or exalted symbol, make unto themselves idols of the crudest type; thus we gladly welcome as a real help to all who seek ennobled views of life, anything and everything that supplants a sordid image with a sublime one.

Madame Blavatsky said many years ago in "Isis Unveiled," that she had gazed on Gustave Doré's wonderful picture of the Trinity, feeling all the while that the awful silent chaos in the background spoke more of the eternal than the three quite ordinary, though exceedingly well executed figures intended to represent Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Does not the litany of the Church of England, which is also the litany of the Episcopal Church in America, address three persons — and one God? Who and what is the one God beyond the three persons, but the nameless ineffable Para-Brahm of Oriental Theosophy?

With reference to the idea of Christ so stoutly maintained in "The Electric Creed," it is one of those great ideas which must ever transcend every attempt at

explicit definition. In the exquisite model of divine humanity presented by the Christian evangelists we recognize a faultless type of man: yes, *faultless*; we reiterate the word despite all the puerile attempts made by the learned and illiterate alike to find flaws in the matchless character of the world's greatest Saviour. The pattern life is perfect, as we should all find out did we attempt to make it the model of our own. We may insult the loftiest ideal of manly purity as much as we will, but ever to our own detriment, for the world to-day is sick, sad, and sinful just to the extent of its departure from the perfect model exhibited in the New Testament. We care nothing for genealogies and other doubtful points, but we will stand for the unanswerable truth that were the exact precepts of Jesus made the foundation of all our conduct, the world would soon become the lovely paradise it never can be till this is the rule of action. Count Tolstoi, the eminent Russian philanthropist, has said none too much, and spoken none too strongly on this subject, and while we do not commit ourselves, by any means, to all his theories of political economy, many of which are no doubt better adapted to Russia than to other countries, we do endorse to the full every word he has written concerning the gospels as containing a rule of life, which, if exactly followed, would redress all wrongs, and bring the entire human family into perfect harmony in all its members.

As it would be quite useless for us to endeavor to review this marvelous electric philosophy in detail without occupying at least a volume, and knowing at the

same time that no words of ours can set it forth as fascinatingly as it is proclaimed in the book under review, we will here introduce a few more choice extracts from the "Romance."

The following is a very greatly curtailed account of one of the most striking spiritual experiences we have ever encountered in literature or heard from human lips; the scientific views it advances must be of interest to all who would study the objects of life. Before the heroine's spiritual voyage through space, this conversation takes place between her and Heliobas:—

"I have a few serious things to say to you before you leave me on your celestial journey."

I trembled slightly, but took the chair he pointed out to me—a large easy-chair in which one could recline and sleep.

"Listen," continued Heliobas; "I told you, when you first came here, that whatever I might do to restore you to health, you would have it in your power to repay me amply. You *are* restored to health; will you give me my reward?"

"I would and will do anything to prove my gratitude to you," I said earnestly. "Only tell me how."

"You are aware," he went on, "of my theories respecting the Electric Spirit or Soul in Man. It is progressive, as I have told you—it begins as a germ—it goes on increasing in power and beauty forever, till it is great and pure enough to enter the last of all worlds—God's world. But there are sometimes hindrances to its progression—obstacles in its path, which cause it to recoil and retire a long way back—so far back occasionally that it has to commence its journey over again. Now, by my earnest researches, I am able to study and watch the progress of my own inner force or soul. So far, all has been well—prayerfully and humbly I may say I believe all has been well. But I foresee an approaching shadow—a difficulty—a danger—which, if it cannot be repelled or passed in some way, threatens to violently push

back my advancing spiritual nature, so that, with much grief and pain, I shall have to recommence the work that I had hoped was done. I cannot, with all my best effort, discover *what* this darkening obstacle is — but *you, yes, you* — for I had started up in surprise — “you, when you are lifted up high enough to behold these things, may, being perfectly unselfish in this research, attain to the knowledge of it, and explain it to me when you return. In trying to probe the secret for myself, it is of course purely for my own interest; and *nothing clear, nothing satisfactory can be spiritually obtained, in which selfishness has ever so slight a share.* You, if indeed I deserve your gratitude for the aid I have given you — you will be able to search out the matter more certainly, being in the position of one soul working for another. Still, I cannot compel you to do this for me — I only ask, *will you?*”

His entreating and anxious tone touched me keenly; but I was amazed and perplexed, and could not yet realize what strange thing was going to happen to me. But whatever occurred I was resolved to give a ready consent to his request; therefore I said firmly: —

“I will do my best, I promise you. Remember that I do not know, I cannot even guess where I am going, or what strange sensations will overcome me; but if I am permitted to have any recollection of earth at all, I will try to find out what you ask.”

Heliobas seemed satisfied, and rising from his chair, unlocked a heavily bound iron safe. From this he took a glass flask of a strange, ever-moving, glittering fluid, the same in appearance as that which Raffaello Cellini had forbidden me to drink. He then paused and looked searchingly at me.

“Tell me,” he said in an authoritative tone, “tell me *why* you wish to see what to mortals is unseen? What motive have you? What ulterior plan?”

I hesitated. Then I gathered my strength together and answered decisively: —

“I desire to know why this world, this universe, exists; and I also wish to prove, if possible, the truth and necessity of religion. And I think I would give my life, if it were worth anything, to be certain of the truth of Christianity.”

Heliobas gazed in my face with a sort of half-pity, half-censure.

"You have a daring aim," he said slowly, "and you are a bold seeker. But shame, repentance, and sorrow await you where you are going, as well as rapture and amazement. '*I would give my life, if it were worth anything.*' That utterance has saved you — otherwise to soar into an unexplored wilderness of spheres, weighted by your own doubts and guided solely by your own wild desires, would be a fruitless journey."

I felt abashed as I met his steady scrutinizing eyes.

"Surely it is well to wish to know the reason of things?" I asked, with some timidity.

"The desire of knowledge is a great virtue, certainly," he replied; "it is not truly felt by one in a thousand. Most persons are content to live and die, absorbed in their own petty, commonplace affairs, without troubling themselves as to the reasons of their existence. Yet it is almost better, like these, to wallow in blind ignorance than wantonly to doubt the Creator because He is unseen, or to put a self-opinionated construction on His mysteries because He chooses to veil them from our eyes."

"I do not doubt!" I exclaimed earnestly, "I only want to make sure, and then perhaps I may persuade others."

"You can never compel faith," said Heliobas calmly. "You are going to see wonderful things that no tongue or pen can adequately describe. Well, when you return to earth again, do you suppose you can make people believe the story of your experiences? Never! Be thankful if you are the possessor of a secret joy yourself, and do not attempt to impart it to others, who will only repel and mock you."

"Not even to one other?" I asked hesitatingly.

A warm, kindly smile seemed to illuminate his face as I put this question.

"Yes, to one other — the other half of yourself — you may tell all things," he said. "But now, no more converse. If you are quite ready, drink this."

He held out to me a small tumbler filled with the sparkling, volatile liquid he had poured from the flask. For one moment my

courage almost forsook me, and an icy shiver ran through my veins. Then I bethought myself of all my boasted bravery; was it possible that I should fail now at this critical moment? I allowed myself no more time for reflection, but took the glass from his hand and drained its contents to the last drop. It was tasteless, but sparkling and warm on the tongue. Scarcely had I swallowed it, when a curiously light, dizzy sensation overcame me, and the figure of Heliobas standing before me seemed to assume gigantic proportions. I saw his hands extend—his eyes, like lamps of electric flame, burned through and through me—and like a distant echo, I heard the deep vibrating tones of his voice uttering the following words:—

“Azùl! Azùl! Lift up this light and daring spirit unto thyself; be its pioneer upon the path it must pursue; suffer it to float untrammelled through the wide and glorious Continents of Air; give it form and force to alight on any of the vast and beautiful spheres it may desire to behold; and if worthy, permit it to gaze, if only for a brief interval, upon the supreme vision of the First and Last of worlds. By the force thou givest unto me, I free this soul; do thou, Azùl, quickly receive it!”

A dense darkness now grew thickly around me—I lost all power over my limbs—I felt myself being lifted up forcibly and rapidly, up, up, into some illimitable, terrible space of blackness and nothingness. I could not think, move, or cry out—I could only feel that I was rising, rising, steadily, swiftly, breathlessly . . . when suddenly a long quivering flash of radiance, like the fragment of a rainbow, struck dazzlingly across my sight. Darkness? What had I to do with darkness? I knew not the word—I was only conscious of light—light exquisitely pure and brilliant—light through which I stepped as easily as a bird flies in air. Perfectly awake to my sensations, I felt somehow that there was nothing remarkable in them—I seemed to be at home in some familiar element. Delicate hands held mine—a face far lovelier than the loveliest face of woman ever dreamed by poet or painter smiled radiantly at me, and I smiled back again. A voice whispered in strange musical murmurs, such as I well seemed to know and comprehend:—

“Gaze behind thee ere the picture fades.”

I obeyed, half reluctantly, and saw as a passing shadow in a glass, or a sort of blurred miniature painting, the room where Heliobas stood, watching some strange imperfect shape, which I seemed faintly to recognize. It looked like a small cast in clay, very badly executed, of the shape I at present wore; but it was incomplete, as though the sculptor had given it up as a failure and gone away, leaving it unfinished.

“Did I dwell in that body?” I mused to myself, as I felt the perfection of my then state of being. “How came I shut in such a prison? How poor a form — how destitute of faculties — how full of infirmities — how limited in capabilities — how narrow in all intelligence — how ignorant — how mean!”

And I turned for relief to the shining companion who held me, and obeying an impulse suddenly imparted, I felt myself floating higher and higher till the last limits of the atmosphere surrounding the Earth were passed, and fields of pure and cloudless ether extended before us. Here we met myriads of creatures like ourselves, all hastening in various directions — all lovely and radiant as a dream of the fairies. Some of these beings were quite tiny and delicate — some of lofty stature and glorious appearance; their forms were human, yet so refined, improved, and perfected, that they were unlike, while so like humanity.

“Askest thou nothing?” whispered the voice beside me.

“Tell me,” I answered, “what I must know.”

“These spirits that we behold,” went on the voice, “are the guardians of all the inhabitants of all the planets. Their labors are those of love and penitence. Their work is to draw other souls to God — to attract them by warnings, by pleading, by praying. They have all worn the garb of mortality themselves, and they teach mortals by their own experience. For these radiant creatures are expiating sins of their own in thus striving to save others — the oftener they succeed the nearer they approach to Heaven. This is what is vaguely understood on your earth as purgatory; the sufferings of spirits who love and long for the presence of their Creator, and who yet are not pure enough to approach Him. Only by serving and saving others can they obtain at last their own joy. Every act of ingratitude and forgetfulness and wickedness com-



mitted by a mortal, detains one or another of these patient workers longer away from Heaven — imagine then what a weary while many of them have to wait!”

I made no answer, and we floated on. Higher and higher — higher and higher — till at last my guide, whom I knew to be that being whom Heliobas had called Azùl, bade me pause. We were floating close together in what seemed a sea of translucent light. From this point I could learn something of the mighty workings of the Universe. I gazed upon countless solar systems, that like wheels within wheels revolved with such rapidity that they seemed all one wheel. I saw planets whirl around and around with breathless swiftness, like glittering balls flung through the air — burning comets flared fiercely past like torches of alarm for God’s war against Evil — a marvelous procession of indescribable wonders sweeping on forever in circles, grand, huge, and immeasurable. And as I watched the superb pageant, I was not startled or confused — I looked upon it as any one might look on any quiet landscape scene in what we know of Nature. I scarcely could perceive the Earth from whence I had come — so tiny a speck was it — nothing but a mere pin’s point in the burning whirl of immensities. I felt, however, perfectly conscious of a superior force in myself to all these enormous forces around me. I knew without needing any explanation that I was formed of an indestructible essence, and that were all these stars and systems suddenly to end in one fell burst of brilliant horror, I should still exist — I should know and remember and feel — should be able to watch the birth of a new Universe, and take my part in its growth and design.

“Remind me why these wonders exist,” I said, turning to my guide, and speaking in those dulcet sounds which were like music and yet like speech; “and why amid them all the Earth is believed by its inhabitants to have merited destruction, and yet to have been found worthy of redemption?”

“Thy last question shall be answered first,” replied Azùl. “Seest thou yonder planet circled with a ring? It is known to the dwellers on Earth, of whom when in clay thou art one, as Saturn. Descend with me!”

And in a breath of time we floated downward and alighted on

a broad and beautiful plain, where flowers of strange shape and color grew in profusion. Here we were met by creatures of lofty stature and dazzling beauty, human in shape, yet angelic in countenance. They knelt to us with reverence and joy, and then passed on to their toil or pleasure, whichever invited them, and I looked to Azùl for explanation.

"To these children of the Creator," said that radiant guide, "is granted the ability to see and to converse with the spirits of the air. They know them and love them, and implore their protection. In this planet sickness and old age are unknown, and death comes as a quiet sleep. The period of existence is about two hundred years, according to the Earth's standard of time; and the process of decay is no more unlovely than the gentle withering of roses. The influence of the electric belt around their world is a bar to pestilence and disease, and scatters health with light. All sciences, arts, and inventions known on Earth are known here, only to greater perfection. The three important differences between the inhabitants of this planet and those who dwell on Earth are these: first, they have no rulers in authority, as each one perfectly governs himself; second, they do not marry, as the law of attraction which draws together any two of opposite sexes, holds them fast in inviolable fidelity; thirdly, there is no creature in all the immensity of this magnificent sphere who has ever doubted, or whoever will doubt, the existence of the Creator."

A thrill of fiery shame seemed to dart through my spiritual being as I heard this, and I made no answer. Some fairy-like little creatures, the children of the Saturnites, as I supposed, here came running towards us and knelt down, reverently clasping their hands in prayer. They then gathered flowers and flung them on that portion of ground where we stood, and gazed at us fearlessly and lovingly, as they might have gazed at some rare bird or butterfly.

Azùl signed to me, and we rose while yet in their sight, and soaring through the radiance of the ring, which was like a sun woven into a circle, we soon left Saturn far behind us, and alighted on Venus. Here seas, mountains, forests, lakes, and meadows were one vast garden, in which the bloom and verdure of all worlds

seemed to find a home. Here were realized the dreams of sculptors and painters, in the graceful forms and exquisite faces of the women, and the splendid strength and godlike beauty of the men. A brief glance was sufficient to show me that the moving spring of all the civilization of this radiant planet was the love of Nature and Art united. There were no wars — for there were no different nations. All the inhabitants were like one vast family; they worked for one another, and vied with each other in paying homage to those of the loftiest genius among them. They had one supreme Monarch to whom they all rendered glad obedience; and he was a Poet, ready to sacrifice his throne with joy as soon as his people should discover a greater than he. For they all loved not the artist but the Art; and selfishness was a vice unknown. Here, none loved or were wedded save those who had spiritual sympathies, and here too, no creature existed who did not believe in and worship the Creator.

The same state of things existed in Jupiter, the planet we next visited, where everything was performed by electricity. Here, persons living hundreds of miles apart could yet converse together with perfect ease through an electric medium; ships ploughed the seas by electricity; printing, an art of which the dwellers on Earth are so proud, was accomplished by electricity — in fact everything in the way of science, art, and invention known to us was also known in Jupiter, only to greater perfection, because tempered and strengthened by an electric force which never failed. From Jupiter, Azùl guided me to many other fair and splendid worlds — yet none of them were Paradise; all had some slight drawback — some physical or spiritual ailment as it were, which had to be combated with and conquered. All the inhabitants of each star longed for something they had not, — something better, greater, and higher, — and therefore all had discontent. They could not realize their best desires in the state of existence they then were, therefore they all suffered disappointment. They were all compelled to work in some way or another; they were all doomed to die. Yet, unlike the dwellers on Earth, they did not, because their lives were more or less constrained and painful, complain of or deny the goodness of God — on the contrary, they believed in a future state which

should be as perfect as their present one was imperfect; and the chief aim and object of all their labors was to become worthy of attaining that final grand result — Eternal Happiness and Peace.

“Readest thou the lesson in these glowing spheres, teeming with life and learning?” murmured Azùl to me, as we soared swiftly on together. “Know that not one smallest world in all the myriad systems circling before thee holds a single human creature who doubts his Maker. Not one! except thine own doomed star! Behold it yonder — sparkling feebly, like a faint flame amid sunshine — how poor a speck it is — how like a scarcely visible point in all the brilliancy of the ever-revolving wheel of Life! Yet there dwell the dwarfs of clay — the men and women who pretend to love while they secretly hate and despise one another. There, wealth is a god, and the greed of gain a virtue. There, genius starves, and heroism dies unrewarded. There, faith is martyred, and unbelief elected sovereign monarch of the people. There, the sublime, unreachable mysteries of the Universe are haggled over by poor finite minds who cannot call their lives their own. There, nation wars against nation, creed against creed, soul against soul. Alas, fated planet! how soon shalt thou be extinct, and thy place shall know thee no more!”

I gazed earnestly at my radiant guide. “If that is true,” I said, “why then should we have a legend that God, in the person of one called Christ, came to die for so miserable and mean a race of beings?”

Azùl answered not, but turned her luminous eyes upon me with a sort of wide, dazzling wonder. Some strange impelling force bore me onward, and before I could realize it I was alone. Alone, in a vast area of light through which I floated, serene and conscious of power. A sound falling from a great height reached me; it was first like a grand organ-chord, and then like a voice, trumpet-clear and far-echoing.

“Spirit that searchest for the Unseen,” it said, “because I will not that one atom of true worth should perish, unto thee shall be given a vision — unto thee shall be taught a lesson thou dreamest not of. *Thou* shalt create; *thou* shalt design and plan; *thou* shalt be worshiped, and *thou* shalt destroy! Rest therefore

in the light and behold the things that are in the light, for the time cometh when all that seemeth clear and visible now shall be but darkness. And they that love me not shall have no place of abode in that hour!"

The voice ceased. Awed, yet consoled, I listened for it again. There was no more sound. Around me was illimitable light, illimitable silence. But a strange scene unfolded itself swiftly before me—a sort of shifting dream that was a reality, yet so wonderfully unreal—a vision that impressed itself on every portion of my intelligence; a kind of spirit-drama in which I was forced to enact the chief part, and where a mystery that I had deemed impenetrable was made perfectly clear and simple of comprehension.

What follows is somewhat theological in character, and may provoke dissent among many who claim much illumination. We cannot abbreviate it without marring its beauty, and therefore refer the reader to the book itself. After the heroine returns from her wonderful journey, Heliobas addresses her thus:—

“When you have educated your Will to a certain height of electric command, you can at your pleasure see at any time, and see plainly, the spirits who inhabit the air; and also those who, descending to long distances below the Great Circle, come within the range of human electricity, or the attractive matter contained in the Earth’s atmosphere. You can converse with them, and they with you. You will also be able, at your desire, to see the parted spirits of dead persons so long as they linger within Earth’s radius, which they seldom do, being always anxious to escape from it as soon as possible. Love may sometimes detain them, or remorse; but even these have to yield to the superior longings which possess them the instant they are set free. You will, in your intercourse with your fellow-mortals, be able to discern their motives quickly and unerringly—you will at once discover where you are loved and where you are disliked; and not all the learning and logic of

so-called philosophers shall be able to cloud your instinct. You will have a keener appreciation of good and beautiful things—a delightful sense of humor, and invariable cheerfulness; and whatever you do, unless you make some mistake by your own folly, will carry with it its success. And, what is perhaps a greater privilege, you will find that all who are brought into very close contact with you will be beneficially influenced, or the reverse, exactly as you choose to exert your power. I do not think, after what you have seen, you will ever desire to exert a malign influence, knowing that the Creator of your being is all love and forgiveness. At any rate, the greatest force in the universe, electricity, is yours—that is, it has begun to form itself in you—and you have nothing to do but to encourage its growth, just as you would encourage a taste for music or the fine arts. . . .

“Look out yonder,” he said, in low and earnest tones; “look at the dark blue veil strewn with stars, through which so lately your daring soul pierced its flight! See how the small Moon hangs like a lamp in Heaven, apparently outshining the myriad worlds around her, that are so much vaster and fairer! How deceptive is the human eye!—nearly as deceptive as the human reason. Tell me—why did you not visit the Moon, or the Sun, in your recent wanderings?”

This question caused me some surprise. It was certainly very strange that I had not thought of doing so. Yet, on pondering the matter in my mind, I remembered that during my aerial journey suns and moons had been no more to me than flowers strewn on a meadow. I now regretted that I had not sought to know something of those two fair luminaries which light and warm our earth.

Heliobas, after watching my face intently, resumed: “You cannot guess the reason of your omission? I will tell you. There is nothing to see in either Sun or Moon. They were both inhabited worlds once; but the dwellers in the Sun have ages ago lived their lives and passed to the Central Sphere. The Sun is nothing now but a burning world, burning rapidly and surely away; or, rather, *it is being absorbed back into the Electric Circle from which it originally sprang, to be thrown out again in some new and grander form.*

And so with all worlds, suns, and systems, forever and ever. Hundreds of thousands of those brief time-breathings, called years, may pass before this consummation of the Sun; but its destruction is going on now, or rather its absorption — and we, on our cold, small star, warm ourselves, and are glad, in the light of an empty world on fire!”

I listened with awe and interest. “And the Moon?” I asked eagerly.

“The Moon does not exist. What we see is the reflection or the *electrograph* of what she once was. Atmospheric electricity has imprinted this picture of a long-ago living world upon the heavens, just as Raphael drew his cartoons for the men of to-day to see.”

“But,” I exclaimed in surprise, “how about the Moon’s influence on the tides? and what of eclipses?”

“Not the Moon, but the electric photograph of a once living but now absorbed world, has certainly an influence on the tides. The sea is impregnated with electricity. Just as the Sun will absorb colors, so the electricity in the sea is repelled or attracted by the electric picture of the Moon in Heaven. Because, as a painting is full of color, so is that faithful sketch of a vanished sphere, drawn with a pencil of pure light, full of immense electricity; and to carry the simile further, just as a painting may be said to be formed of various dark and light tints, so the electric portrait of the Moon contains various degrees of electric force, which, coming in contact with the electricity of the Earth’s atmosphere, produces different effects on us and on the natural scenes amid which we dwell. As for eclipses — if you slowly pass a round screen between yourself and a blazing fire, you will only see the edges of the fire. In the same way the *electrograph* of the Moon passes at stated intervals between the Earth and the burning world of the Sun.”

“Yet surely,” I said, “the telescope has enabled us to see the Moon as a solid globe — we have discerned mountains and valleys on its surface; and then it revolves round us regularly — how do you account for these facts?”

“The telescope,” returned Heliobas, “is merely an aid to the

human eye; and, as I told you before, nothing is so easily deceived as our sense of vision, even when assisted by mechanical appliances. The telescope, like the stereoscope, simply enables us to see the portrait of the Moon more clearly; but all the same, the Moon, as a world, does not exist. Her likeness, taken by electricity, may last some thousands of years, and as long as it lasts it must revolve around us, because everything in the universe moves, and moves in a circle. Besides which, this portrait of the Moon being composed of pure electricity, is attracted and forced to follow the Earth by the compelling influence of the Earth's own electric power. Therefore, till the picture fades, it must attend the Earth like the haunting specter of a dead joy. You cannot understand now why we never see what we imagine to be the *other side* of the Moon. It simply has *no* other side, except space. Space is the canvas — the Moon is a sketch. How interested we are when a discovery is made of some rare old painting, of which the subject is a perfectly beautiful woman! It bears no name — perhaps no date — but the face that smiles at us is exquisite — the lips yet pout for kisses — the eyes brim over with love! And we admire it tenderly and reverently — we mark it '*Portrait of a Lady*,' and give it an honored place among our art collections. With how much more reverence and tenderness ought we to look up at the '*Portrait of a Fair Lost Sphere*,' circling yonder in that dense, ever-moving gallery of wonders, where the hurrying throng of spectators are living and dying worlds!"

I had followed the speaker's words with fascinated attention, but now I said: "Dying, Heliobas? There is no death."

"True!" he answered, with hesitating slowness. "But there is what we call death — transition — and it is always a parting."

"But not for long!" I exclaimed, with all the gladness and eagerness of my lately instructed soul. "As worlds are absorbed into the Electric Circle and again thrown out in new and more glorious forms, so are we absorbed and changed into shapes of perfect beauty, having eyes that are strong and pure enough to look God in the face. The body perishes; but what have *we* to do with the body — our prison and place of experience — except to rejoice when we shake off its weight forever?"



With these words, "Rejoice when we shake off its weight forever," we conclude our notice of a book which, to our certain knowledge, has done more to instruct and console, ennoble and purify current romantic literature than any other volume with which we are acquainted. "Robert Elsmere" fades into gloom beside it, as Mrs. Humphrey Ward has unhappily cast off the miraculous for no certain kind of spiritual assurance whatever, while Marie Corelli has given pure gold whenever she has removed dross from prevailing religious conceptions. We do not wonder at the numerous letters of grateful thanks she has received from readers in various parts of the world, a few of which form a valuable appendix to the story. Before closing this inordinately long chapter, at the request of many of our correspondents we cite a short incident from one of our own stories, "Onesimus Toole," published as a serial in the *Golden Gate* of San Francisco, during the spring and early summer of 1889, and now issued as a separate volume. The main facts related in that tale came under the writer's personal notice a few years ago, and were vouched for by thoroughly responsible persons, who, however, shunned notoriety, and therefore would not give permission for their real names and residences to be made known.

Paris, strange as it may seem, is a nest of Theosophy, hidden deeply under the veil of outward glamour and frivolity. The bright French capital holds fully as much if not more genuine spirituality than the more sober, but not of necessity more virtuous, British metropolis, which also, to the writer's knowledge, contains very much more of genuine spiritual light than the casual

observer is ever led to suppose. Highly developed persons rarely court publicity, and seldom do they offer to give light to those who are not earnestly in search of it. Once in a while some ray of spiritual truth may seemingly go out of its accustomed path to convince some soul who is not looking for light; but such instances are extremely rare, and may be termed exceptions to the general rule, which is expressed exactly in the words so often heard and read, but, alas, so seldom truly applied: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." Those who ask in a spirit of vainglorious self-seeking, or who desire only to better their own personal condition for their private enjoyment, need not expect an answer from a very exalted spiritual source when they knock at the portals of the unseen realm; but those who are guided by unselfish desire to bless rather than to be blessed themselves have a right to expect that according to their faith it shall be unto them. This law is inexorable and eternal, and is as truly natural as the law disputed by none when applied to earthly things, however much it may be discredited when given a higher application. "Men *cannot* gather figs of thorns, or grapes of thistles." Would that every seeker after any spiritual gift, or knowledge, could remember and be guided by the assurance that words are comparatively worthless, while motive is everything in our search into the invisible. Then would the teachings and experiences recorded in this chapter be of no rare occurrence among mankind. What follows from "Onesimus Toole" will, we think, be of some service to those who are in search of light on spiritual electric therapeutics.

Professor Montmarte, the pseudonym of a distinguished *savant*, known to the writer, gave the following explanation of spiritual healing to a pupil and patient, who had been long a sufferer from complicated ailments, and was completely restored under his teaching and treatment.

“Electricity is the unitary manifestation of spirit; only in an electric guise is spirit ever revealed, and while electricity is both the ‘savor of life unto life, and of death unto death’ in electrical therapeutics, the *savant* invariably works with the constructive current, if he be true to the irreversible commandment of divine law: ‘Resist not evil, but overcome evil with good’; the constructive force, however, is transformed into an agent of destruction when it expels foreign material from the frame, the *animalcules*, concerning which there is at present so much glib prating, are driven out never to return, their vacant places never to be re-occupied by similar disturbers of the peace, when the element of life enters in as the superlatively strong man to evict one relatively strong, but of necessity comparatively weak when contrasted with the stronger. If you ask me how I explain the *modus operandi* of regeneration, I can only answer in a brief conversation such as we are now engaged in, that new cells and tissues, all vigorously healthy, being formed, the old decayed cells and tissues are removed.

“I believe, indeed I will add, I know, that mental treatment can be so given as to be all inclusive, but in such cases electricity is the agent employed by spirit in rebuilding the frame, though in many instances, probably in most, quite without the knowledge of the mental therapist.”

“Excuse my interrupting,” broke in Mr. Toole, who had been an eager listener to the Professor’s speech, “but are we to conclude once for all, that Jesus and the apostles healed by electrical means, and that what you term human electricity issued from the hem of Christ’s garment, reaching and healing the woman who had suffered twelve years from a painful malady which baffled all medical skill, and that the same force entered into the handkerchiefs and aprons, which according to the testimony of the Acts were laid on sick

persons, and did this same force extend even to Peter's shadow and permeate the anointing oil recommended by James, when applied by the elders of the primitive church?"

"I answer unreservedly, yes; but I may possibly take a somewhat different view of some of these narratives to the one you doubtless entertain, judging by the style of your interrogations. Now, in the case of the woman first referred to; what did the Great Healer say to her? were not his words on several such occasions, 'Be of good cheer, your faith has made you whole,' or a statement to that effect? Now faith has three distinct elements: first, a sincere disposition toward right; second, confidence in the right perceived; third, open spiritual vision, or unusually keen discernment of right. To say your faith has made you whole is therefore equivalent to the declaration, you owe your restoration to health to your faithfulness of disposition, your confidence in divine truth, and your spiritual perception of what is needful for your welfare. Had I the time and opportunity this evening to explain the 'way of salvation' as I understand it, I am sure I could settle your mind with regard to many mooted theological questions which still embarrass you; I will endeavor, in a very few words, to explain what I understand by salvation.

"The great and holy teacher, Jesus, was in his terrestrial embodiment, a perfect human being, radiating constantly an untainted electric fluid; this absolutely healthy life-essence reached out to all receptive minds, and drew them to him, in whom they found all the assistance they needed to lead them to live a healthy life; but be cautious here, and beware lest you attribute to an emanation from a physical form what originates in the unseen realm of spirit, and only ultimates itself in the perfect human physique. The power exercised by Jesus was a power which delivered from the love of sin; his influence excited an ardent love of righteousness, and led the suppliant for earthly benefit, to seek first the heavenly kingdom of righteousness, following upon the discovery of which earthly blessings could be fully realized. I am not intending to discuss dogmatic theology, which is often a belligerent as well as fruitless theme. I am inviting you to glean from the New Testament practical help for daily use, and thus I emphasize those pas-

sages which teach the latent possibilities of every human soul. What think you mean the words so often quoted, 'the works which I do, ye shall do also'? Whoever uttered such a sentence was a true scientist, a genuine teacher of men, one who explained the road along which we must travel if we too would reach the heights he had already scaled. Some persons were not at all benefited by personal association with the Christ; the ever-execrated Judas Iscariot had been as near the person of his Master as the beloved and ever-faithful evangelist John; the people who caused Jesus to marvel at their obstinate incredulity were as near his body, and could have touched his garments as readily as those whom it appears were instantly relieved of their infirmities.

"What constitutes the difference between a receptive and a non-receptive state? You may as well ask wherein a closed window differs from an open one. People open their windows when they wish for light and air; they close and barricade them when they are afraid of sunshine. We need not go far to find analogies in the field of daily experience. I am invited often to the homes of poor, misguided worldlings who offer themselves and children in sacrifice to the moloch of fashion and display. See those unhealthy, wretched women, clad in indecent garments which torture the 'human form divine,' into a hideous caricature of nature; witness the poor, deluded worshipers of the upholsterer's creations, whose sitting-rooms have the odor of tombs, and whose children are penned up in gilded cages, deprived of all the rightful freedom of youth for fear that carpets may be faded or soiled and complexions grow healthy through exposure to the light and air. Were Jesus on earth to-day, many a 'Christian' woman would be insulted and turn indignantly away when she found that tight-lacing, foot-pinching, and complexion-spoiling were not permissible in 'the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.'

"We cannot disobey the law of God made manifest throughout the illimitable field of nature, to gratify the serpent of our lowest instincts without paying the penalty. I would offer the sternest rebuke to those pseudo-Christian scientists who teach the outrageous falsehood that we become superior to the effect of all exter-

nal things by pampering illicit appetites, and then presumptuously denying that anything material can affect us; such travesties of gospel-teaching need to be scorched with the fire of truthful teaching until they wither into ashes. I grant fully that when people live as the Gospel teaches them to live, they cannot be harmed by poisons, serpents, or aught else noxious under other conditions, but the impudent lie which affirms immunity from consequence while error is indulged, is the vilest falsification of the Gospel ever fabricated by 'mortal mind' in its most ignorant degree of degradation. I do not read in gospel or epistle that any one was ever permanently saved from suffering who was not redeemed from the love of error, and what error is so gross, or affection so degrading as that which enslaves the reason in the chains of carnal appetite and frivolous desire for the world's applause, while in the same breath we are told to ignore all things material and all personal concerns, and trust entirely in Infinite Spirit?

"The absence of the jewel *consistency*, from any crown, will rob that diadem of all abiding luster; I do not wish for a moment to speak disparagingly of 'Christian Science,' but I do see rotten timbers in the vessel now launched upon the waves, bearing that inscription. But with regard to the handkerchiefs, aprons, shadows, and oil to which you have called my attention, I should unhesitatingly pronounce many ancient beliefs decidedly superstitious, and I can readily see how many people in an Oriental country would approach spiritual life through the veil of their preconceived ideas and practices. I do not accredit garments, oils, or shadows with power to heal the sick, but I do know that there is no shadow without some substance to cast it, while wearing apparel is not, in the cases referred to, valued for its own sake, but solely by reason of its connection with an owner or wearer who inspires confidence and esteem; and the very fact of the oil being ceremoniously administered by persons in high standing among the gnostic brethren of the first century, is, to my mind, sufficient proof that these outward things were nothing in themselves, but only serviceable as they enabled very crude and undeveloped intellects to lay hold of a truth whose naked beauty they could not at once discern."

“Still,” continued Mr. Toole, “granting all you say, and I most cordially thank you for your exceeding plainness of speech and clearness of doctrine, is there not, after all, something solid in the claim of the animal magnetist, or certainly in that of the psychologist, mesmerist, or electrobiologist to whose instrumentality we undoubtedly owe some cases of complete, and many of partial restoration to health?”

“I do not see,” resumed the Professor, “that I need to alter my base, or in the slightest degree vary my position to admit that a healthy state of mind overflows in a torrent of healthy magnetism. I claim always that animal magnetism is not what we should seek for; too often it is most grievously polluted, and is not at all an agreeable or a safe thing to handle when in a tainted condition. I put it to you as a reasonable man, does it seem feasible that an unhealthy body should communicate pure vital force to another frame? Of what character and in what condition are the bulk of magnetic healers and those who employ *massage*? I do not suggest that they are below the average man or woman, but are they above mediocrity in any direction? Any one can give magnetic treatment, but can any one heal the sick by laying on of hands? Experience answers no! Now, if we allow that many people whose outward methods are defective, accomplish good because of their goodness of heart and sincerity of purpose, I will agree with you that they enjoy a limited amount of success, and in this connection I beg you to note that ninety per cent of those who heal by such methods are Spiritualists and claim to be mediums. Their own theory, then, demolishes belief in what is animal, and lifts the healing gift into a purely psychic realm, where it is made to depend on the intelligent action of incorporeal beings.

“Mrs. Richmond of Chicago, whose inspired addresses I often read with much pleasure, though not by any means friendly to certain phases of the Christian or Mental Science Movement, takes this latter ground and defends it forcibly. Now, as I cannot deal with pluralities such as *laws* and *forces* continually without confounding those who come to me for instruction, I bring everything to a point of unity and speak of *law* and *force* in the singular. I am often provoked to laughter by the absurd statements of many

conceited sciolists who, ignorant of the very first principle, to say nothing of the latest discoveries in chemistry, inform us that because while the ancients spoke of only four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, and modern chemists tell of somewhere between sixty and seventy primates, therefore nature does not proclaim unity; to such unlightened dabblers in science I would say, there is not a chemist of any repute on either side of the Atlantic or Pacific who does not maintain that all primates must be ultimately reducible to one absolute primary. This essential primary, I maintain, is electricity, which in its turn is but the outward garb of pure spirit, itself ever invisible, the unseen cause of all things, known only through its manifestations."

As the conversation had proceeded, Mrs. Kittenscomb had fallen into a profound slumber, from which she awoke suddenly, after about an hour's enjoyment of most perfect and refreshing rest, exclaiming:

"Oh, I see it all now; I have been grieving for the loss of my husband's body, and now I am to blend my efforts with his in enlarging the sphere of his present ministry. To do this, to co-operate in his endeavors, *I must forget self, and disembarrass my mind of all concern for material welfare.*"

Only as we learn to know and prize each other in spirit, can we be healthy, happy, or pure. As we find spiritual life we know there can be no death.

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## THE CHRIST.

"Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
Vidit Jesum in tormentis  
Et flagellis subditum."

### I.

WHAT care we who his parents were, or where  
The light of day first beamed on his dear face?  
Plainly he stands the foremost of the race;



His truth and purity all men declare.  
 Philosopher pronouncing words aflame ;  
 Truer than all others from a human tongue,  
 Deeper in meaning than when priests the same  
 In tabernacles preached or cloisters sung ;  
 We hail him Christ, who showed the wondrous God,  
 Yet sought not to describe or limit him.  
 Free from material thought, conceit or whim :  
 Content not in the common paths to plod ;  
 Whose wondrous mission stands in contrast bold  
 With church or creed or teaching new or old.

## II.

When we the lessons comprehend, he taught ;  
 So deeply filled with love, so pure, so free  
 From doubtful meaning, problems we have sought  
 In vain to solve would have no mystery.  
 Were they not practical they'd have no worth.  
 He taught not how to pray so much as learn  
 Man's duty to his brother man on earth ;  
 Man's duty to himself, how to discern :  
 Made plain the unity of all, with Him  
 Through whom he raised the dead and made the blind  
 To see ; revived the weak and palsied limb,  
 Or stilled to sleep the threatening wave and wind ;  
 E'en as from out the tomb's dark damp confine  
 The deathless man strode forth, with power divine.

## III.

Let it be granted that from lower forms  
 Of life sprang higher forms, through long, long years,  
 And others higher still, through wreck and storms,  
 Hard struggling came, timid and filled with fears,

Until to conscious view came naked men,  
 Living in caves like beasts, without a thought  
 But that of comfort for the body, then ;  
 A monkey's ease or wolfish strife their lot.  
 Surely some future dawn, with whiter light,  
 Shall beam effulgent forth upon a race  
 Of men who seek to know all things aright,  
 Controlled not by the senses, time or place ;  
 And in the brilliant splendor of that day  
 Heaven shall be revealed, o'er earth hold sway.

## IV.

Then shall the blinding mists, which hide from view  
 Real things, be driven by the white sun hence ;  
 God shall be manifest, so real, so true ;  
 Freed from the shocking creed of recompense  
 For good deeds done in a cheap, trivial way,  
 Or vengeance for the wrong he knoweth not.  
 And he shall come so near that those who seek  
 A blessing from his hand, by night or day,  
 May need no mediator — all untaught  
 In litany — not knowing how to speak  
 In prayer : they may approach him without fear,  
 Take from his bounteous hand their rightful share,  
 Which he will not, cannot, from them withhold,  
 Who seek him meekly, but with wisdom bold.

T. S. VERY.

## LECTURE XVI.

### THEISM, SPIRITUALISM, AND THEOSOPHY: THEIR ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT AND NECESSARY UNION.

WHAT is the basis of true reform?

Should Spiritualists offer prayer to a Supreme Being?

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

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When we are asked whether Spiritualists should offer prayer to a Supreme Being, we may be allowed to enquire what constitutes a Spiritualist and what is Spiritualism.

We understand that there are only two philosophies which can be said to account in any intelligent or rational way for the universe. The one is Spiritualistic; the other is Materialistic. Either the Spiritual is the cause and the Material is the effect, or the Material is the cause and the Spiritual is the effect.

We all know the position of Materialism: Materialism states that everything is matter; therefore if there is any spirit at all,—and certainly Materialists admit the phenomena of consciousness,—they declare that this consciousness is inseparable from the material form from which it is evolved. By tracing everything back to a germ cell, they endeavor to account for every external phenomenon and for all the consciousness or

intelligence displayed through organisms by a process of evolution; and while the theories of evolution put forth by Larmarck in France, by Prof. Alfred Russel Wallace in England, by many notable men in the United States, and many eminent scientists all over the world, may prove this position substantially correct, — at all events reasonable, — yet all such theories of evolution are founded upon nothing unless you grant that there is a power behind all expression which is the cause of such expression.

We have no objection whatever to evolution; we have no conflict whatever with any evolutionist; we do not even deny that one form can be transformed or transmuted into another, but we have never witnessed any process of typical transformation or transmutation, so we do not dogmatically affirm it. You will kindly remember that while a great many very positive statements are put into the mouth of Darwin by people who are not very familiar with his writings, Darwin himself did not make any positive statements whatever as to the transformation of species, but simply inferred it may be that one type is sometimes developed into another. He states a great many things which he puts forth hypothetically; and if Darwin is to be credited with one special virtue more than another, that virtue is extreme cautiousness, unusual carefulness in making a statement.

Alfred Russel Wallace, who should share honor with Darwin as co-discoverer of evolution in England, has declared in many works, and particularly in a very recent one, that the spiritual theory of life is not in

any way shaken by the theory of evolution, but that evolution rather helps to sustain it; while Professor Le Conte of the University at Berkeley, and many other eminent men in California, and indeed all over America and the world, take exactly the same position.

Now if people think for a single instant that faith in a Supreme Being is endangered by evolution, they know no more of the subject than a blind man knows of color or a deaf man of sound. Though blind men may be perfectly honest, we refuse to put out our eyes, or even close them, because some people are lamentably short-sighted; and though deaf people may be perfectly sincere, we shall not wear cotton in our ears because they cannot hear. Therefore with all respect for those who take the Materialistic or Atheistic position, we are determined to affirm what we know to be truth, and what we know to be truth is that every research of modern science, worthy of the name, absolutely confirms the position of the true Theist who acknowledges that an infinite intelligence is back of all phenomena.

These words are not idle sentences thrown out on the spur of the moment. We would strongly advise all to read the most recent writings of Alfred Russel Wallace, the wise and eminent Spiritualist, who was honored with a very large audience in Metropolitan Temple, San Francisco, some time ago, when he delivered that remarkable lecture, "If a man die, shall he live again?" printed in the *Golden Gate*, the *Banner of Light*, and other papers, and then issued in a pamphlet published by Colby & Rich, 9 Bosworth St., Boston, and Albert Morton, 210 Stockton St., San Francisco.

We would advise all to study the latest writings of Professor Le Conte, and to compare the testimony of various men worthy the name of scientists, and you will find that evolution does not in any sense contradict the essential statement of any Bible. People may argue as much as they please concerning the different interpretations put upon the Pentateuch, and while some think it the result of a divided authorship, and many doubt its genuineness altogether; while some interpret it literally, and others allegorically, and the Swedenborgians contend with Swedenborg that it contains an interior significance which can only be interpreted by those who have the key of correspondence, we shall certainly not ask any one to accept the statements in the opening chapters of Genesis as of a character to convince scientists or explorers in any scientific domain. But you will please remember that the eminent geologist, Dr. Steele, a distinguished author of text-books on all the natural sciences, and many other equally able men, most distinctly affirm that there is nothing whatever in geology which causes any reasonable mind to dispute the general underlying truth of Hebrew Cosmogony. To say that the Bible is absolutely true, in its outward form, at least, or to claim that the accounts of creation in Genesis are exact facts as they stand, would be to claim a great deal more than any intelligent person or genuine scholar would think of claiming in these times. But we must remember that not only one Bible, but all the Bibles of the world (and there are many) point to the same central idea of life, and in that central idea all the greatest, the mightiest, and the wisest

minds in every age and country have concurred; all have united in affirming that "the heavens declare the glory of God." That "God geometrizes," as stated by Plato, has been echoed in the mind of every genuine scientist ever since his time.

Science is knowledge, and nothing less. It is not speculation; it is not assertion; it is whatever can be proved, whatever can be demonstrated; and that which can be demonstrated through evolution is that, so far as evolution itself can be demonstrated, it demonstrates the action of an infinite intelligence, which from the earliest start of the most primitive organism involved the thought of perfection ultimately outwrought in the wonderfully complex yet beautifully simple form of perfected humanity.

If we cannot see into the future, we can into the past far enough to realize that not a single creature has walked the earth with aimless tread; that nothing whatever has appeared which has not served some purpose; therefore instead of our being at all fearful that the idea of God will go as people become scientific, we know that a sublime idea of God will come as soon as unscientific people receive some scientific enlightenment. When the idea is presented to the world that God is an all-ruling intelligence, an infinite spirit, you certainly will not be deluded by any foolish statements about a personal God, especially when persons know well that the word *person* is used in a hundred different ways by a hundred different people; and that the best authors of the day refuse to contest the personal side of the question. Some people say that God is personal; some

say that God is impersonal; some say God is super-personal; but modest people are apt to say they really do not know: what you may mean by the word *person* and what I may mean by that word is somewhat doubtful.

A Supreme Intelligence, an Infinite Being, does not at all imply limited personality; so if any one says to us, "Do you believe in a God with personal limitations?" we answer we do not. "Do you believe God has a localized throne?" We do not, for we cannot possibly conceive of the Eternal Infinite occupying one place and not all space; or manifesting through one form and not through all forms. It may be quite true that science tends in the direction of what may be termed, for want of a better designation, Spiritual Pantheism; but Spiritual Pantheism is the very reverse of Materialism. Spiritual Pantheism is the glorious conception that one infinite intelligence pervades all the universe and that Eternal Law is the expression of Infinite Will. Certainly law is eternal; certainly law is immutable; certainly everything is governed by law; but cannot a child understand if it be stated as a primal postulate that the Divine Being is one and unalterable, and that the Divine Law is the operation of the Divine Mind, that the movement of the Divine Mind must be orderly, consistent, and unvarying, if the mind itself is consistent, orderly, and unvarying?

No idea of law gathered from human legislation can be applied to Divine Law, because man is continually changing; and as man changes, his laws change. There is no law apart from intelligence; there is not a fraction of proof that there is any law in the universe which is



not a manifestation of intelligent Will producing order. Every expression of human life tends directly to the conclusion that all law is the expression of will. If we rise from the "known" to the "unknown," calling the ways of men on earth "the known" and whatever lies beyond the sphere of human activity "the unknown," we must conclude concerning eternal law, the law of the universe, that it is on the basic line we have laid down, having discovered WILL to be the sole foundation for an expression of law in the management of human affairs. What is law in America? There is no law without a legislator; there cannot be. In a republic the law changes every time the will of the people changes. In Turkey the law changes when the will of the Sultan changes; in Russia it changes when the will of the Czar changes; but if intelligent people distinctly affirm that God never changes, how can they suppose that the law which is the expression of God's WILL will ever change?

Therefore, admitting, as all intelligent Theists admit, that back of law is an intelligence which is unchanging, universal law being the manifestation of this intelligence, how can the manifestation change if the intelligence does not change? Immutable law is the manifestation of immutable mind. The apostle James was undoubtedly right when he said "God is without variableness, or shadow of alteration"; therefore as the Divine Being is without alteration, a law which is the manifestation of the Divine Being is likewise without alteration. Read the sermons of the Rev. M. J. Savage, of Boston, concerning Spiritualism and kindred topics, and you will

find when he deals with any theistic problem, he harmonizes perfectly with the most scientific and enlightened thought in all countries; he unhesitatingly affirms that what we call the law of nature, is nothing other than the unvarying habit of the Divine Mind; that what we talk about as law is simply the orderly succession of events. The law of KARMA (a Sanskritic word meaning consequence) signifies nothing more than the regular succession of cause and effect; that whatsoever we sow we shall reap; and it is eternally true, that if we ask for stones we will not get bread; if we ask for serpents we will not get fish. The law is undoubtedly eternally and immutably fixed, but it is only the eternal order in which all events move. If there were no God, everything would be subject to change, to fate, to caprice, to we know not what; and to live forever in a universe governed by a blind, cold, unintelligent law would be a catastrophe instead of a blessing.

For ourselves, we want no Godless Spiritualism; we desire to live in no Godless universe. To live in a universe forever ruled by a blind power which knows neither wisdom nor love, is a prospect so much worse than that held out by Materialists, that we much prefer Materialism, which teaches that we drop wholly out of conscious existence when the physical body dies. Spiritualism only becomes worthy of acceptance, as it is only spiritual and intelligent, when it bases everything upon the rock of Spirit; true Spiritualism through all ages, wherever expressed, is not "Atheism with a ghost." All Spiritualists worthy the name acknowledge a spiritual foundation for all things. Dr. J. R. Buchanan, who

is certainly an eminent Spiritualist, declares that life is a spiritual power and cannot be derived except from prior life, and this in a work entitled "Sarcognomy" (science of the flesh), where, from the title, we should scarcely expect to find such a statement, did we not know that a reasoning anthropologist cannot be an atheist. Look where you will in a scientific direction, science affirms God: on this position we are willing to stake all issues; here we have always planted our feet and always shall, for we KNOW that Atheism is radically false.

We maintain that to abolish prayer and to state that invocations are out of place in a Spiritualists' meeting is most absurd, and further, that it implies a spirit of tyranny. We maintain also that it is a positive duty for people who know that prayer is answered, to proclaim their knowledge to the world. We have over and over again been called upon to sustain spiritual positions in opposition to physical speculations, and in all such cases we hold to the metaphysical statement because we have proved it correct. Having proven it, it was utterly impossible for us to be shaken out of it or moved from it in the least; and as we positively know that prayer is efficacious, we affirm that it is what Montgomery terms it, "the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." If any one will pray sincerely and in a faithful spirit, he will be able to give the lie to all such statements as "prayer is useless." But though prayer is answered, it is not answered except in harmony with Divine Law, for it is answered through the eternal operation of immutable Law. The Law is stated in the

words, If you ask, you receive; if you seek, you find. There is the statement of the Law; the prayer of faith literally does accomplish wonders: but this prayer is not out of harmony with the law of nature; it is indeed as much in accord with it as the growth of any flower, the development of any tree, or the progress of any natural event.

The object of public prayer is to acknowledge publicly that all things are guided by one infinite universal principle of goodness. Persons who set up men of straw and then knock them down are not virtually assailing any position taken by intelligent people, for no intelligent people acknowledge the existence of their men of straw, so easily made and so easily knocked over, as being other than a creation of the fancy of the persons who make them and then demolish them; the gods attacked by infidels are at most individual minds or personal spirits endowed with all human limitations. That there are individual spirits, and that these individual spirits really do answer certain kinds of prayer, there is no doubt in the minds of earnest students of the subject. That the deities of mythology have been more or less historical personages may very well be credited. Persons who are interested in the evolution of this theory concerning the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome may receive some interesting information, if they will study Donnelly's "Atlantis," and other works which enter into the history of the subject. (James Freeman Clarke's "Ten Great Religions," and Alger's "History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," will be found very suggestive.)

Persons speak of their "guides" and "controls" to-day; whether they call them familiar spirits or not, they express the idea that unseen influences walk about with them and are peculiarly interested in their private welfare, sustaining such relations to them as brother or sister, son or daughter, uncle or aunt. While this is not the highest Spiritualism, it leads many a mind to something far beyond it, when properly understood and judiciously employed. Such Spiritualism is of great value as a factor in human progress.

Now, if you remove from your thoughts all limited personal ideas of a deity, who is a great Frenchman, German, or Englishman, you are no longer addressing some individual intelligence greatly interested in the welfare of some particular country, and who has not yet outgrown earthly ideas of patriotism. Spiritualism has never taught that a man is at once emancipated from all errors and limitations by quitting the mortal form, but, rather, the deduction from all Spiritualistic teachings is that we begin in the state beyond the grave just where we left off on this side of it. Many people pray, no doubt, to intelligences who have a particular regard for their own individual welfare, and they ask to be helped forward by such in their business and all private enterprises; such prayer is not addressed to a Supreme Being at all. Now is this kind of prayer desirable? It is not, if it is inconsistent with the idea of universal human brotherhood. A great many people at the time of the Franco-Prussian War prayed, "God bless France," and they meant, God curse Germany; and a great many other people prayed, "God bless Germany," and they

meant, God curse France. Is such prayer desirable? Decidedly it is not. It is quite possible to draw to your aid individual intelligences who love one country and hate another; it is quite possible to draw around you a class of influences that will endeavor to build you up on the ruins of somebody else; but you cannot conduct any reform on these grounds, and you will be successful in any reform measure only as you rise to the higher Spiritualism, which is one with pure Theism, as it acknowledges one infinite intelligence which loves all mankind alike.

We have no doubt but your brother may care more for you than he does for any other person's brother; your mother is, very probably, more interested in your welfare than in the welfare of some other woman's child; no doubt you can commune with your particular friends and receive tokens of their identity, and be aided constantly by them; but while all this may be perfectly true, it only constitutes the smaller circle; it is a perpetuation of earthly relationship or of tribal and clan-nish affection: this may be perfectly well when included in the Divine Circle of universal fraternity, but it is altogether mischievous and misleading when excluded from that Divine Circle.

We have no objection to people communing with their spirit friends and receiving assistance from them, nor have we the least doubt that numbers are guided to-day by individual spirit friends; but when we pray in presence of a public audience, where all states and conditions of men, women, and children may be represented, where there may be delegates from all nations, we should

not pray to our aunts, we should not address our invocations to individual spirits who are limited in power and affection; for while they can be communicated with, and can be helpful to us in our individual capacities, they are very likely to have private prejudices and personal feelings much as they had on earth.

Now, if there is to be any true reform, that reform must be conducted on the basis of Theosophy. True Theosophy is Spiritualism, and true Spiritualism is Theosophy. The foundation of Theosophy is the recognition of universal brotherhood; no more, no less. Acknowledge universal brotherhood, and you are a Theosophist in principle, for that is the whole foundation of Theosophy. You may build thereon a structure of gold, silver, and other valuable things, beautiful and useful, or you may build thereon a structure of hay and stubble which will be overturned as soon as the fires of adverse criticism approach it; but the foundation of Theosophy is always universal brotherhood, and universal brotherhood necessitates a recognition of one life principle, one unitary spirit.

Thus, while Spiritualism includes communion with individual minds and all the psychical associations we can possibly conceive of; while it affirms "there is no death," that none are dead, but when our friends drop the mortal form, they only vanish from our personal sight, and are just as truly related to us and as near to us, and perhaps nearer and more intimately connected in spirit, than ever before, — while Spiritualism acknowledges all this, the acknowledgment of one Supreme Being is the inclusive acknowledgment of the unity of

all life, and is the only foundation for the doctrine of universal brotherhood, which is the basis of all reform, as it is the basis of all reasonable science, religion, and philosophy.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, acknowledged in England and elsewhere as one of the most eminent and instructive inspirational speakers who have appeared before the world in advocacy of Modern Spiritualism, states that through her mediumship there have been formulated five great propositions constituting a spiritual creed: the first is the fatherhood of God; the second, the brotherhood of man. Then she goes on to deal very forcibly with individual human responsibility, with a progressive life after death, and with spiritual communication; but the foundation is the parenthood of Deity. Parenthood is an ampler word than fatherhood; as it includes the fatherhood and motherhood of Deity, there is the same difficulty with the word *brotherhood*, because we acknowledge sisterhood as well as brotherhood, and as we need a term for God which signifies the infinite father and mother, we need an idea of brotherhood which includes sisterhood: in these matters language is at present defective and needs enriching.

But all wording aside, the idea is ever that of parent and child. The due acknowledgment of one Infinite Spirit is the great need of the age, as it is the foundation of all genuine reform. A lower form of spiritual thought is at the base of all theological errors and misrepresentations. Calvin taught that God loved some people and hated others; Calvin's God had some favorites, and some whom he had determined to damn forever.



Calvin's idea, no more than Mohammed's, which takes the same view, can ever be the basis of a universal religion. Many people declare that *religion* has been the cause of persecution; we say that persecution comes from the acknowledgment that God loves some people and hates others. The acknowledgment that there is one Infinite Spirit who loves every one equally, and that we are all equally participants in the Divine care and recipients of the Divine influx, could never have lighted the fires of Smithfield or brought about the persecution of Catholics in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or burned witches at Salem in Massachusetts.

If people to-day would acknowledge the one Infinite Spirit, and also use common sense, they would soon find that common sense is quite enough to convince them that persecution is indefensible, and that the acknowledgment of one Infinite Spirit never led to persecution. The worship of a Jewish God, who loved only Jews, led to persecution. Worship of a God who loved one church and not another, led to persecution; but the acknowledgment of one Infinite Spirit, in whose sight all are equal, in whom all live and move and have their being, not only can never lead to persecution, but is the only effectual means of its removal.

If we believe in no Supreme Spirit, but have in place of one Infinite Being any number of finite intelligences who may all exercise their preferences, we retain all the objectionable features of religion and refuse its advantages. All that is unworthy and that leads to persecution and cruelty could be preserved and presented under the name of Spiritualism, but so soon as we acknowledge

the absolute oneness of the Infinite, and in consequence thereof the absolute oneness of all human life in the Infinite Being, then we can account for universal law; then we can see why the order of the universe is unchanging; then we can see how it is natural for us all to be good, powerful, wise, and noble; why we should all love one another — love every one and hate no one; why we should mete out to every one the same justice we desire meted out to ourselves.

No matter how widely people may wander from the literal word, if they pray in a spirit of universal love, they will receive an answer of blessing. If one prays that some one may leave him a sum of money, it is very uncertain whether he will get it or not. But if we acknowledge that the Infinite Spirit is equally interested in the welfare of all humanity, we cannot pray to the Supreme Being to dispose the minds of so-and-so to leave us their money, and vainly imagine that we may get it, because God may be fonder of us than of some others. The only intelligent prayer we can offer is, that we may be led so to conduct ourselves as to do the greatest good in our day and generation. We should pray for the universal welfare of mankind, and for our own individual welfare only as it is contributive to the general welfare. Some will ask, "What is the use of offering prayer? It cannot alter God nor change nature." Our answer is, Prayer improves and develops us; prayer is for our benefit; it is not intended to effect any alteration in the Infinite Spirit, or to change the order of nature.

It really seems childish to occupy space in defending

what all can prove for themselves. If you never pray, you do not and cannot know whether prayer is answered or not, for you cannot prove anything rightly except as you yourself deal with it dispassionately; and if you do not pray in the universal spirit, though you may say, "O God," you may be praying, not to the Eternal, but to some limited influence that represents God to your mind.

Spiritualists and all others need to realize that the one Infinite Spirit of life, who is the essential life of all the universe, is the only proper object of adoration. We hear some very foolish and conceited people say that there is no power in the universe greater than themselves. We should advise those people to attack that immutable "law" which they acknowledge, and see whether it will break them or they will break it. All human intelligence evolves power, and power is ever measured by knowledge. The more we know, the more powerful we are; the more our intelligence unfolds, the more control we have over the earth. Behind all phenomena, intelligence is the cause of all organization. Organization does not develop without intelligence which fashions organization, and organisms, which are expressions of intelligence, are ever modified and improved as the intelligence expressing through them gains more and more ascendancy over the external form.

Now, we should never ask any one to do anything he does not feel he can do conscientiously; and while the word *fool* is a harsh word though employed in some versions of the Old Testament, we consider it perfectly

legitimate to use the text when it appears in its revised form, "The foolish one has said in his heart, There is no God," because it is essentially foolish to say there is no God. Some people make a few scientific statements and directly afterward make a great many unscientific ones, and all are accepted as though they were scientific by people who do not reason or compare; if people would only bear in mind the proper definition of science, which is knowledge, there would be no farther difficulty on this point. "The foolish one has said in his heart, There is no God." The heart is not the intellect; it always stands for the affections: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are all the issues of life." The heart is the seat of affection, and from affection the *will* proceeds: the wish, we say, is very often father to the thought. David, or whoever wrote the 14th Psalm, found that those who said in their heart, there is no God, were those who did not wish any God. We do not say that all atheists are insincere, for we have known many atheists (at least persons usually classed under that name) who were as sincere as any people we ever met, but such professed atheists were usually in a state of transitional revolt against hypocrisy, in matters pertaining to religion, of which they had unfortunately seen a great deal.

While it is the foolish one who is ever saying in his heart there is no good, the wise one is always saying in *his* heart there is infinite good (saying there is good means speaking the word of good). You will find all through the Bible and in all occult writings, that the spoken word is alluded to as bringing everything to

pass. The Word which is spoken of in the first chapter of the fourth Gospel is not a personality, but the Divine proceeding influence; the light which enlightens all; the universal light; the universal illumination; the *Word* made manifest. The *Word* is the Divine intelligence in man made manifest through man; and when we allude to speaking spiritually, we mean expressing, sending out thought, conveying idea. When we speak, we let our voices flow out with the intention of conveying an idea, and whatsoever we say, whether we repeat words audibly, or simply allow our thoughts to go from our minds with no audible utterance, they always carry with them, wherever they travel, the nature of the thought whence they proceed.

If you are in a loving frame of mind, you may say some things that sound a little unkind, but they will not harm any one; but if you are feeling unpleasantly, and indulge in silent utterances, people who are sensitive feel they have been stabbed as with a dagger, and would very much rather you would show your weapon than conceal it. If you say anything in your heart, whatsoever it may be, and your words of mouth do not harmonize with your thoughts, the words are distinctly not the bearers of tidings which you have outwardly expressed, but are bearers in effect of tidings directly opposite; what appear to be kindly words may be the cruelest of blows; and all mediumistic people feel this keenly. A letter not apparently expressed in kindly language may do great good, being fraught with the invigorating breath of a noble mind, while the most sweetly worded epistle may sting like an adder.

The persons whom the Psalmist alluded to were not in the love of good, and so were endeavoring to persuade themselves there was no good anywhere. On the basis of spiritual science, we must always affirm that all is good. There is the basis of reform. It is ridiculous to tell persons to be good if it is natural for them to be evil. It is natural for a fish to swim in water and for a bird to fly in air: thus it would be insane folly to blame a fish because it cannot fly, or a bird because it cannot swim; but it would be just as unreasonable if persons are naturally bad to expect them to be good. If we base our idea of human nature upon the postulate that people are evil, if we are always telling them that they inherit evil and are by nature totally depraved, it is all in vain that we argue with ourselves, or others, to live lives of righteousness.

What is the good of thundering from the Decalogue — “Thou shalt not steal” — at poor human nature, if it is natural to be dishonest. What is the use of a command, if one feels all the time that persons cannot execute it. Who would be so unreasonable as to expect a person with no voice to sing finely? We must acknowledge that man has the power to obey the Divine Law, or the intention of the Divine Will is rendered inconceivable. Therefore, take as the only basis, that man is good, pure, noble, and just. Spiritual science holds the essence of all reform, and it is indeed time that persons lay aside their old false methods, and endeavor to put the precepts of the Gospel into practice instead of allowing them to appear as impractically theoretical, or else denying them because they do not

understand them, owing to a lack of even attempted application.

Take the ground that every one is essentially good ; bring up children to feel that they are good by nature ; never tell them it is natural to do wrong ; believe children good, and put them upon their honor ; hold them in thought as good ; expect them to be good ; before you leave them point out to them the work to fulfill during your absence ; do not tell them what *not* to do, but what *to* do ; give them credit for being capable of fulfilling useful works, and for possessing the disposition to fulfill them.

The basis of all reform is spiritual culture ; man is in the image of eternal good (not evil). To recognize good in man is the only way to reform, the only way to thoroughly protect society, as it is the only way to prevent disease — which is a great deal better than curing it ; the only way to prevent vice — which is a great deal better than punishing it. Every individual (even “the vilest sinner upon the face of the earth”) should be held as not only capable of good, but as desirous of doing good. For this reason, we can most conscientiously endorse the efforts of the Nationalists who are establishing clubs all over the country, using Edward Bellamy’s “Looking Backward” as a text-book, because Mr. Bellamy, in that thoroughly practical story, points out that the only way of abolishing the competitive system and of developing an intelligent system of co-operation, is not by incendiarism, anarchy, or any form of aggression or onslaught, but through an appeal to the divinity in human nature. If we want to make people

good in action, we must acknowledge that they are good at the core, though they may need to be assisted in doing good; but instead of that, society insists that they are evil. San Francisco has an "Industrial School" which the *Evening Report* of that city denounced, because the influences and associations in that school are neither reformatory nor industrial; for, instead of teaching weak youth to live nobly, they surround undeveloped children, prone to error, with the very vicious influences they should be shielded from, and then people wonder why they are worse when they are turned out of the institution than they were when they went in. If you cultivate weeds, and do all in your power to bring them to perfection, you need not be astonished if they grow very luxuriantly, and you need not say the soil is bad because it bears nothing but weeds. If you have been cultivating weeds by mistake, thinking that a weed in its germ is a flower when you cannot tell the difference in its earlier growth, even though you do this in ignorance, you will get a crop of weeds. Now, we do not say that hospitals, houses of correction, penitentiaries, and industrial schools have not had for their object the protection of society, — the popular feeling is in the direction of trying to protect society, — but we do say that the present course is an entirely mistaken one. Sinners need to be associated with saints, and it is only a saint who can very safely associate with sinners. Instead of sinners being put with sinners and saints with saints, let the saints go among the sinners and reform them, and let the sinners go among the saints and get reformed. If sinners are led to know that they are capable of a better



life, and that there is a better way open for them, they will only be too glad, with better associations than those of old, to take the upward instead of the downward grade.

A great many people divide society into two parts or sections, as though some people were all divine and others all diabolical; but those who mingle with mankind at large find the worst and the best specimens of human nature equally among millionaires and among people who have not a dollar to their name. Some people wretchedly poor are the noblest and purest one can meet; others are as degraded as they can well be. We do not denounce capitalists, but we do denounce selfishness; we do not denounce any class of people and say that all the black sheep are in one fold, for in every fold there are black sheep and white sheep; but all black sheep can be made to shed their wool, and, if properly fed, new wool will grow out white.

When we work to develop good, we develop as a result a new shell or skin, and having no use for the old, we let it go; it will cast itself aside. All good writers on phrenology declare that there can be no reform except through the stimulation of the faculties we wish to see developed. Man is good at the core. Human nature is naturally good; goodness is natural to all mankind. Deep below all *débris* of error, below all incrustations of folly and vice, there is divinity in every human soul; acknowledge it, speak to it, and it will respond.

## LECTURE XVII.

### THE ATTITUDE OF THEOSOPHY TOWARD SPIRITUALISM AND ALL THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.

Do Theosophists admit communion with the spirit world? is a question which troubles many and occasions much controversy.

There is in many quarters a decided misapprehension as to what Theosophy really teaches on this point. Theosophy does not approve of "business mediumship," but neither do many earnest and ardent Spiritualists, of whom may be mentioned Professor Kiddle of New York. Communion with the spirit world for mundane advantage is attended with grave risks and dangers. Theosophists hold that passive mediumship should be superseded by spiritual illumination, which is certainly very different from *automatic* mediumship. Mediumistic power is not necessarily associated with intellectual vigor or moral excellence; it is often nothing more than mesmeric sensitiveness, the medium serving as a thermometer to register the condition of the passing hour. We must advance higher and cultivate genuine spiritual gifts. If we cultivate our spiritual nature, we cannot help seeing into the spiritual world and enjoying spiritual revelation. When any one drags mediumship down to the level of a money-making business, or abuses it

to gratify idle curiosity, such communion with the invisible world is invariably detrimental to all concerned. Theosophy urges such Spiritualists as do thus to look higher, and all the best writers on Spiritualism teach the same. We must make an effort to cultivate and spiritualize ourselves instead of seeking to bring the spirit world down to earth and materializing it. While our own mental development is confined to a sensuous, phenomenal plane, we are subject to dangers and mistakes of every description. We do not intend to advocate Materialism with another name. The more fully a spirit is delivered from earthly affections and interest in earthly affairs, the more that spirit is satisfied to live in a purely spiritual state of being, holding communion through spiritual affinity with man's higher spiritual principle rather than through physical phenomena. We know of widows who have no desire for sensuous communication with departed husbands, for they tell us when they enjoy an unbroken night's sleep they feel themselves with their loved ones in a boundless spiritual world. They cannot fully remember the superior state when in mortal consciousness, but they feel on waking that they have only just returned from a visit to husband and children; they sometimes hear themselves saying "good-bye" to their spiritual associates on waking. This is true spiritual communion and permits of no deception and no intermission; nothing can break this union, — no, not any number of terrestrial embodiments. Theosophy is a high phase of Spiritualism, and there is no contradiction or discrepancy between the two. When we see only a little of Theosophy, it may

appear to us hostile to Spiritualism, but when we study it more thoroughly we see no conflict whatever. Spiritualism should mean communion with the spirit world through the unfoldment of our spiritual nature. An ordinary mistaken idea of mediumship is that for all information and guidance in mundane affairs we are abjectly dependent on extraneous intelligences. Theosophy claims that we can all develop independent clairvoyance and psychometric power to some degree,—not in all instances equally, however. We shall not want another spirit to show us the spiritual world when we have the use of our spiritual eyes, which comes with the development of our sixth sense. We endorse mediumistic power as *supplementary*, but not as *substitutionary*. Rightly understood it means voluntary spiritual cooperation, not arbitrary coercive control over one mind by another. Mediums should live what they are inspired to teach. True Theosophy acknowledges that we can receive much from the spirit world that we can obtain in no other way, but we must cultivate ourselves to do so. We are living to-day as spiritual beings in a spiritual world; and while with our physical eyes we behold matter, with our inward eyes we can look upon an interior universe. Concerning the “astral” world, the astral interpenetrates the physical. If we see a dog’s footprint on the floor, it is not necessary that we see a dog enter or leave a room to know that a dog has been there. On seeing a human footprint we can judge about how large the person is who made it. Similarly on the astral atmosphere, every thought makes its impression; our thoughts and desires all leave prints on

the astral "sands of time." A seer can see these thought-impressions as with our physical eyes we can track footprints across the snow. A clairvoyant is merely one who can look on the astral atmosphere and see what is reflected there. All material forms are results of astral vibrations, which in their turn are due to spiritual vibrations; spirit is force and life *per se*. In a descending chromatic scale nature slides down in man from *atma* to spiritual soul, from spiritual soul to intellectual soul, thence to astral body, and from astral body to material body; the astral realm is intermediary between the spiritual and the physical. Both Spiritualists and Theosophists have grasped the fact that the "disembodied" can commune with man and produce all kinds of psychic phenomena. The trained occultist can command a table to move, and it will move in obedience to his will. People often attribute wonderful powers and much wisdom to "spirits" which they in large measure possess in themselves. We need to discover the psychical powers embodied in us, and we must not imagine that death will give us anything, neither will it deprive us of anything really ours. The odic (all-pervading) force in the universe we can all discover and understand; it is *not* unknowable. We have not yet discovered anything like all the power we possess to produce psychic phenomena; but there is a great difference between the conscious illumination of the adept and the unconscious passivity of the medium; the latter is certainly the lower condition. If through passivity we receive spiritual tidings, and a message cannot be verified, we have to take another's word for its verity, and though the words may be beauti-

ful and helpful in some instances, they may not be all true; but when we have developed our own psychic powers there can be no room for doubt, because though still in the body, we can look into and travel in the spirit world. If we could only remember the astral excursions we often make in our nocturnal rambles, we should learn that every time we are *sound asleep* we visit our "spirit home"; we travel in our astral body here, there, and everywhere. One who has developed his higher principle can *consciously* pass the external barrier and roam at will in the astral world. When we are in a condition of spiritual receptivity, we hear from our spirit friends as we now hear from one another on earth, and we can see them as plainly as we see each other's bodies; tidings of them are then no longer hypothetical. Let us add to our *belief faith*, and to our *faith spiritual knowledge*; then we shall in our relations with "departed" friends know nothing of even a thin veil between us.

Our opinion of spiritualistic phenomena is that phenomena when genuine are often unsatisfactory and ambiguous. Human conditions are such that the astral light in which clairvoyants see is usually so perturbed that they cannot see clearly, and so get only a confused vision of one's surroundings. Societies for spiritual culture and the unfoldment of psychic powers should be formed in private homes; promiscuous developing circles are not desirable. A large percentage of the entire human family can develop psychic power to a wonderful degree. Let every one allow his spiritual nature full scope, put away all prejudice, and invite

the soul to declare itself. We do not repudiate mediumistic phenomena, but desire to develop mediumship to the plane of a high order of intelligence. The astral world is as full of cemeteries as the earth is; for as the spirit passes to a higher life, the astral body is left behind in the astral sphere, as the physical body is left behind in this sphere, where it *gradually* disintegrates as the higher principle recedes entirely from it. All physical vital force emanates from the astral body; the astral body can suffer the amputation of its members, but the *spiritual* body is always intact. Our higher spiritual principle is in the spirit world always. Phenomena are only valuable when demonstrative of truth. Theosophy is intended to bring people into higher relation with those spiritual forces of the universe that exist within ourselves as well as all around us. "The proper study of mankind is man." Theosophy aims at the elevation of man to a spiritual plane of consciousness and love while here on earth. Unlimited progress hereafter is assured for every spirit.

All the elements are peopled with spirits; there is nothing without its spirit; to use kabbalistic terms, no fire without its presiding Salamanders, no water without its Undines, no earth without Gnomes, or air without Sylphs. Man contains these four elements within himself. The salamanders correspond to his affections, the undines to his reason, the sylphs to his imagination, and the gnomes to his animal passions. If men gratify their lower instincts they attract these lower forces, and herein lies the true philosophy of ghosts and apparitions. The miser has united himself with the spirits of

earth; for by the worship of gold in thought, and perpetual striving for wealth, we come under the dominion of the elementary forces of the plane invoked. If we live in thought on the animal plane, we cannot absorb or respond to spiritual truth. What do we know of life immortal when we keep the spiritual in the background and the physical in the ascendant? Were such a one to pass out of the physical form, he would be entirely out of his sphere, and would find himself in a state he could not enjoy were he miraculously translated to heaven. Theosophy points out two paths, as Jesus showed them, — the broad way with many travelers, and the narrow way with but few going along it. Jesus was undoubtedly a prince among Theosophists. Occult records inform us, that between the ages of twelve and thirty, he traveled extensively, visiting in Egypt, Persia, India, etc., the most powerful lodges on earth, as one of their greatest and most glorious teachers. Christians accept Jesus, and blindly reject Gautama; but no comparison need be instituted between the two, as their teachings were exactly the same. If any Christian thinks he would benefit by becoming a Buddhist, he makes a great mistake, for the two religions, Buddhism and Christianity, when esoterically studied, are found identical. The great importance of the Oriental aspect of Theosophy is that it is breaking down the wall of prejudice which has so long existed between the East and the West. Popular Christianity has contended that the poor East could have no gospel unless the West carried it there; the East is reciprocating, and showing the West its meed of truth. The East is, in



some respects, more privileged than the West, for during several thousands of years Asia represented the highest development of civilization. In coming epochs the West will be the great center of spiritual activity. Theosophy is not an exotic that belongs to any special clime, but is everywhere an indigenous plant, true religion being the same in every clime and age; but Western minds are somewhat dependent on the East to teach them certain things, as children are dependent on those already educated, in matters concerning which they are as yet ignorant; but every one becomes a teacher in his turn. If *Mahatmas*, *Chelas*, and other mystics are your instructors in occult wisdom, they enjoy no prerogative that others do not share, they only help their younger brethren to become educated like themselves; they prepare pupils to interpret universal mysteries, and to use occult power aright. Only a few are willing to go in at the narrow gate, while the many enter the broad gate of fashion. There is no reason why any of us should not some day interpret all mysteries for ourselves, the only hindrance to our doing so is that theosophical study requires of us a kind of life many do not wish to live. How many would take as much time and trouble, or make as many sacrifices to attain spiritual good, as did Kepler, Copernicus, or Galileo, to demonstrate a problem in external nature? and yet all could live a truly happy life, engaged in the acquisition of divine wisdom. All the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Whatever one has to give up is something really not worth having; the pleasures of earth are counterfeit; its gold,

though glittering, is mere tinsel; its acquisition never brings solid happiness as it is the outcome of selfishness, which is a vice. *Self-culture* can be consecrated to the highest ends, selfishness never. Subordinate all love of self to love of neighbor and of God. Work for Truth and for humanity with all your might, — these are the only imperative and universal rules for neophytes.

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,” say all the masters. The sight of God means spiritual perception, the discovery of the Divine Being. Man is as invisible as God, in whose image and likeness he is made; the only true man is the invisible man. What is God? There must necessarily be mystery concerning the Divine Indwelling Presence. All we know about God we learn in our higher realm of life; only the higher consciousness of man can realize an Infinite Good Being who rules over all. If every one who doubts the being of God could enter into a state of mind in which he felt absolutely certain that everything was for the best, without a ripple of doubt passing through his mind, would he not actually see God with the eye of the soul, as an all-satisfying, all-consolatory reality, as he felt sure that everything was in the hand of infinite love and wisdom, all vessels safely conducted into port, piloted by a perfectly skillful and loving commander? If trust in supreme goodness were perfect, how our minds would rest, free from misery of every sort. The soul finds perfect peace in realizing God. Intuition in a higher state of existence is developed as it never is on earth. As our mental horizon widens, our reason confirms and comprehends what our

intuition apprehends first. When we find God in ourselves we shall be satisfied. When we have positively found our own soul, we have found God; but knowledge of the soul comes only through spiritual influx. In spite of all materialistic negations, there is more proof of the soul's immortality than there is of any demonstrated scientific fact, as the realization of immortality is far more universal than acquaintance with any physical science.

Theosophy alone can answer the great need of the world, which is that all nations should recognize their brotherhood, which unfortunately they do not, for the most civilized still follow in the track of barbarians, and look upon those from whom they are separated by physical barriers as foreigners; the peace of the world is thus delayed. Nations contend with one another not only for territory and other possessions, but also for intellectual differences and divers theologies; these struggles are not confined to earth's inhabitants alone, but, as St. Paul said, we do not only war with flesh and blood, but with invisible principalities and powers, with unseen hosts. Christianity has long outgrown its primitive recognition of a variety of unseen influences continually attendant upon individuals and nations, but according to all ancient theologies every one has personal attending influences, as well as household "*lares et penates*"; every form in nature has also its representative in the unseen world, and every nation its presiding divinity. Jehovah, in the narrow sense, was not the God of the world, but exclusively the God of Israel, as Zeus was the God of the Greeks, and under the name

Jupiter, of the Romans also; all primitive nations had their spiritual hierarchs devoted to their special cause; and to them the people offered oblations in their sanctuaries, that these unseen powers might fight their battles; their ideas were always of gods and lords many. All early religions were forms of Spiritualism, as they all recognized spirits around them, some higher, some lower, who could serve and bless them. The Semitic races had, however, a glorious conception of an Infinite *in-dwelling* as well as *over-ruling* Spirit, who found his dwelling-place in the hearts and minds of humanity; while the Aryan races made much of spiritual communion. The peculiar trait of all Semitic people was their turning to the still small Voice of God within. The Chaldean religion blended both the Aryan and Semitic characteristics, as it recognized individual spiritual communion between finite intelligences and also the voice of God in the soul; this dual conception is everywhere prevalent to-day. If any one seeks for divine wisdom, he must recognize God as dwelling in humanity. There can be no universal prosperity till all nations unite in harmony. Theosophy is a moral, ethical, humanitarian movement; as soon as we feel that we are one in spirit, we shall know that all men are brothers; we cannot then behave any longer as if we were not all children of one God. Ethical culture and moral reform will build the structure of universal freedom; and the present theosophical movement in the minds of men is the sure and certain harbinger of this glorious consummation.

We can hardly think of a very sensuous person as

highly intellectual ; or if so, he is not intellectual in consequence of animality, but in spite of it. The animal impulse does not naturally seek expression in literature or art. The intellectual and moral principles, however, completely harmonize. A person can easily possess at the same time, moral and intellectual nobility, and be simultaneously engaged in benevolence, literature, and art ; there can always be a dual expression of the soul, as spirit manifests itself in love and wisdom. The majority have only developed their intellectual principle, and therefore have no conception of the divine, and only a glimmering consciousness of the spiritual. Such have but feeble understanding of Truth ; they may cling to creeds, beliefs, and theories, but all opinions when compared with knowledge are as twilight to sunshine ; for even when pure and ennobling, they are not demonstrable. When the spiritual principle is developed, through which the divine can shine, we shall no longer need any one to teach us, for we shall then receive unction from the Holy One within. The personified Christ, or Buddha, is one perfectly developed both in his intellectual and moral nature ; the highest intellect and purest morality in such a one are jointly unfolded. There is no perfect expression of the soul except in masculine and feminine form ; the intellect and moral nature, when perfectly united, constitute true spiritual marriage. Gautama occupied in India the same relation to mankind that Jesus occupied 550 years later in Palestine. Once in about every 600 years, there is a revival of spirituality somewhere on earth ; then a greater revival every 2170 years, or thereabouts, as

there are twelve dispensations in each grand cycle of nearly 26,000 years. About 600 years after Jesus, Mahomet inaugurated the faith of Islam, one of the greatest religious systems of the world to-day; 600 years later, the Waldenses and others proclaimed a spiritual form of Christianity, and at the present time there are many unmistakable indications of a new spiritual dispensation on earth.

We will here append two short essays on Theosophy from our psychological romance, "Onesimus Toole," serving to show the very slight difference which really exists between Theosophists of the Christian and Buddhist schools.

This essay was written to enforce the beauty of a Theosophy, which does not require allegiance to the religion of India in any particular manner.

Theosophy is the master-key to eternal life; to the understanding of God and man. True Theosophy concerns itself exclusively with man's spiritual development, with the finding of the Christ within, the Divine *Logos* or Word of the Eternal. When we find God within, where Jesus and Buddha alike say God resides, we truly realize our divine nature. Genuine Theosophy is to this generation the Christ of truth rising out of the tomb of error; it teaches complete self-control, the crucifixion of the senses, the liberation of the spirit from all carnal passion, the resurrection of all that is divine within us. Theosophy is complete spiritual science. Knowledge of the eternal is the only true science. To know the Christ is to hear the living Word which speaks in us from Infinite Divine Being. When spirit is revealed, henceforth we have no thought of death. The true Theosophist drinks in inspiration from the ever-present spiritual life, the universe thus becomes to him an open book. We must outgrow false ideas of sacerdotalism, and become each one a true priest; our daily sacrifice

must be the daily surrender of our lower appetites to our higher promptings.

The principles of Theosophy are love, wisdom, and truth, which reveal to us in measure as we can understand it the absolute purity and perfection of the divine nature. Theosophy is universal truth and universal religion; it is demonstrated spiritual science, and holds the key to all sciences and religions. In Theosophy we behold the essential unity of all religions; Theosophists should study all religions, but dogmatically enforce none. What does religion really mean? *Religio* signifies to bind together, but does not imply a condition of bondage other than that bondage in which the lower nature is held subject to the higher. This is truly atonement or reconciliation, the perfect harmony of all the elements in human nature. Religion does not consist in *belief* in immortality, or in God. Belief saves no one for it is merely intellectual assent given to certain dogmas. One can believe in religion and be devilish. The devils, it is said, believe and tremble. We can be so intellectually unfolded as to believe in God without being in the least developed in our truly spiritual nature.

What does resurrection mean in our individual lives? It means a rising from the death of the lower nature to a condition of spiritual triumph. Nothing dies in reality, only in seeming. The seed is not quickened unless it undergoes the appearance of death, and there is no quickening of the spirit unless there is in appearance a death of the lower nature; then from the sepulcher the rock is rolled away, a symbol of our new birth to a knowledge of Truth. Theosophy, like all true religion, is the science of right living, and is in no sense a sacerdotal system. Divine wisdom is the whole world's only religion for the future; a religion which meets every want and fully satisfies every lawful craving of human emotion as well as intellect.

The Divine Being is necessarily beyond the comprehension of the mind of man. Man is not equal to God; there is therefore a mystery attaching to God in the human mind. That which is on our level we may explain, whatever is beyond that level remains unsolved; God alone understands God, as man alone can comprehend man. As Deity is infinitely above us, so Deity is beyond all

definition. The soundest metaphysicians never undertake to define Deity. Agnosticism is a confession of honest men whose intellects are unable to solve the problem of being. Theosophists need not conflict with Huxley or Spencer. All divine things are unknowable to the senses, but Theosophy teaches there is a spiritual intuition by which we can arrive at some knowledge of spirit, though to our researches there can be no end. Intellectually we find not God, but energy, power, force. The word God means the All-Good, the Good One, nothing more, nothing less.

Plato's immortal assertion, "God geometrizes," does not imply Plato's acknowledgment of anything more than infinite Mind; no kind, loving God appears in that sentence. Infinite power might be cruel. Many people know nothing of God though they profess to *believe* in God; but not until they advance beyond belief do they *find* the Eternal. Belief implies that some school is the custodian of special intelligence from Deity, whose testimony is accepted by the disciples as final authority. The word Testament means something one leaves behind him when he is gone away; while the testator liveth, such documents are of no effect. People who know nothing of God but what they read in the Bible, concerning which venerable book we would indeed utter nothing disrespectful, believe in a God who has left a Testament. Practically it is so to them. Many Christians believe in a God very far from this world and in no direct way concerned with human affairs. There was, they believe, a time when God spoke to the world, but He speaks no longer; God, for them, has finished writing His book, and has delivered the published volume completed into their hands. How utterly incongruous is this mental attitude with the teachings of Jesus: "He hath been *with* you and shall be *in* you." It is expedient that I go away, for when I have vanished from your sight the Paraclete will be nearer to you than ever before, and will gradually lead you into all truth. The disciples were directed not to receive truth through any written revelation, but entirely by means of the ever-living presence of the Holy Spirit within them. Theosophy places every individual soul on the solid rock of experienced truth on which Theosophy itself is based. We must build our social temple on the rock of impartial justice, which



we can never find until we discover it in ourselves. Enlightenment is a matter of individual spiritual unfoldment; God is Love and Wisdom; absolute Justice is the infinite principle of Life. As we act divinely do we perceive a revelation of divine wisdom in our own lives, and all knowledge of wisdom proceeds from the love of good in us, which is the only divine love. Only when we act from a motive of love directed toward good are our acts truly wise.

Man's best conception of Deity is that God is love. Love is the highest element in the human soul, and is inseparable from charity, which is love in expression.

Henry James (an earnest student of Swedenborg; not the novelist) declares in his admirable work, "Society the Redeemed Form of Man," that in studying the problem of life one comes to see ever more and more distinctly that the only possible cause of creation is that God being pure love he cannot love himself. Love must have an object, and this object is humanity. Creation, then, is the result of the divine love seeking object and expression. By humanity, of course, we do not mean exclusively the inhabitants of this one little planet. We need not tell you that the earth is not the universe. We mean all intelligent inhabitants of all worlds together, which unitedly constitute the form of the divine man or the progeny of God, which is without beginning and without end.

The true hidden wisdom is to be found in our own inmost selves, not in books or scrolls. God's living word is man, who is the highest expression of nature. The hidden wisdom from our own souls must come to us through development of our own inner nature, and can come in no other way. Theosophy does not depend on legend, or our belief in historical personalities, or the truth contained in any sacred books. It rests on its own intrinsic value, and appeals to our moral nature. If Buddha and Jesus never lived, their teachings are no less valuable to man. Precious stones have intrinsic value, and truth is aptly compared to a priceless pearl.

All divine teaching is demonstrated in its hallowing influence exerted on human life. Judge the tree by its fruits. Bring all theories to the touch-stone of expediency. Were we to find that

the teachings of the Vedas when lived up to caused war and hatred to vanish from the earth, we should thereby know the source whence these streams sprang to be a fountain of living water, able to slake the spiritual thirst of mankind.

There is nothing in the Vedas that we do not find in the New Testament. The teachings attributed to Buddha and Jesus are identical. We can well dispense with controversy when we drink from inspiration. Whether we look to Gautama or any other historic avatar of India, or to Jesus, the historic light of Palestine, or to Orisses, the legendary messiah of Egypt, we must never forget that neither Orisses, Christ, or Buddha, or what they typify, is dead and buried. In spirit Jesus is working now as actively as when he was on earth. The truth Buddha and Orisses revealed is still operating in the world.

“Why seek ye the living among the dead?” Why watch by a sepulcher, when you can converse with the living spirit on the highways of life? When we liberate our intuition the sun within us sheds around our path its bright beams of appreciable light and heat.

Those who bathe in the sunlight hourly appropriate its rays. Not those who have analyzed the water or tested the depth of the well, but those who *drink* the water of life reap its benefits. Not our historic knowledge of a revelation of truth, but our assimilation of it profits us. We must eat, drink, and appropriate the living spirit of truth, which is ever active throughout the universe. The past has risen in the present. We must live to-day, not worshipfully regretting days of old. Our present at-one-ment with the living Christ of the spirit can alone bring us into consciousness of Truth. The truths of spirit are not apprehended by the intellect first, but by intuition; later on, reason grapples with inward revelation and defines it. Be guided entirely by your individual intuition; be ever honest and intensely earnest in your search for truth, and you will each one of you discover all it is needful for you to know.

Races of *Mahatmas* may have spent ages in ferreting out the truths of the universe, but their existence is not positively known to Buddhists. Truth is revealed only to those who are in a con-

dition to appreciate it. There is probably no reluctance on the part of any genuine *Mahatmas* to reveal themselves, but no one can create eyes in us to see Truth even if it visits us.

When Edwin Arnold revisited India, he held conferences with the Buddhists of Ceylon, and received from them a very complimentary address, eulogizing him as a true interpreter of the Sanskrit philosophy. His work, "The Light of Asia," they endorsed with much affection. Conversing with them of the *Mahatmas*, he was told that the priests knew nothing of the existence of such people. They could not be found, though they were so famous in Europe and America. At the same time these Buddhists affirmed that there were many teachings in the Sanskrit which, if followed out, would develop men into the state of *Mahatmas*.

The Buddhists themselves think Arnold's faithful and magnificent portrayal of the career of Buddha has done more than anything else to recall the attention of the Hindu people to a perception of the beauties enshrined in the Buddhistic religion, and it affords a powerful incentive to them to live up to these teachings.

We hear a great deal of Indian degradation, and particularly much of woman's degraded condition there. Now it cannot be disputed that many women in India are in a state of gross degradation, but this condition exists in *spite* of the teachings of the Sanskrit philosophy (which leads logically to the purest elevation of mankind), not in consequence of their religion. All the vices of Christendom are rebuked in Scripture, and yet tolerated in Christian communities. No charge can be brought against the Buddhist religion for the vices of Asia that cannot be brought against every other religion on earth.

As the religion of India is set forth in its sacred books, it is a religion of the greatest purity and noblest wisdom. No one who compares the ten great religions of the world, the one with the others, will fail to find Buddhism the most humanitarian, and Brahmanism the most metaphysical of all the systems. Buddha taught that nothing and no one can come between us and God.

We are, according to his philosophy, our own high priests, mediators, and intercessors, absolutely free to discover truth for ourselves by following in the path marked out by our own intuition

which gives "Thus saith the indwelling Spirit" as final authority. Too many people unfortunately are not contented without some external lord or master to obey; they require some one to do their thinking for them instead of appealing directly to the Lord within their own hearts, so as to receive Truth from the source of all Truth. It is only to awaken spiritual thought and intellectual enquiry that we study Theosophy, not to induce allegiance to some hierarchy of India, for to the Christian world "follow Jesus" is as necessary as "follow Buddha" can be to Orientals.

The following essay was compiled in defense of the views put forward by Madame Blavatsky:—

While an immense amount of floating opinion is at the present time circulating on the subject of Theosophy, there are comparatively but very few persons who have set themselves the task of so simplifying the tenets of Theosophy as to make the main doctrines clearly intelligent to the Western mind. The word *Theosophy*, which signifies neither more nor less than divine wisdom, is by no means exclusively confined to ancient Hinduism; it is a term properly applicable to all that can legitimately be termed knowledge of the spiritual universe. Theosophy in its modern form is constantly associated with the name of H. P. Blavatsky, because that most industrious Russian lady has done more than any other one individual to ransack the treasure-houses of Eastern scripture, and to bring forth the truth therein contained for the edification of Europeans and Americans.

Most students of Asiatic lore have been either Christian apologists or confirmed skeptics. Their previous training and fixed habit of thought have therefore largely disqualified them for an unprejudiced performance of their task. Madame Blavatsky, on the other hand, has searched the records, not with a view to prove certain foregone propositions, or to discover fraud and folly in the documents under review, but to honestly express the information therein contained. Her latest work, "The Secret Doctrine," amply proves the honesty of her endeavor and the ability she brings to the work. But some of our Christian friends will inquire, Why go

to the Vedas for the truths we can find so perfectly revealed in the New Testament? Why speak of Gautama when we have before us the example of Jesus? The answer to such inquiry is twofold. 1st, The New Testament deals almost exclusively with ethics. Its moral code is indeed unsurpassed, but on questions of science it is silent. Now the Hindu records are not simply moral text books, they are scientific treatises, as any one who intelligently peruses them will soon discover. 2d, There is a widespread feeling in Christendom that beyond the pale of Christianity all is heathen darkness. Such a belief renders well nigh impossible any effectual carrying out of the fundamental basis of Theosophy — *the universal brotherhood of man*.

Theosophy does not require of any one who embraces it a surrender of the Christian religion, so far as its basis in the New Testament is concerned; at the same time it cannot allow that any one book, or any one people, or any one system, can embody all the divine wisdom known upon earth. The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, teaches the cardinal doctrines of Theosophy without amplifying them very clearly or extendedly. These doctrines certainly include what are commonly called "*Karma*" and "Reincarnation," teachings which simply need clear and cogent reasoning to make them appear thoroughly rational and scientific, and, above all, consistent with man's highest conception of divine, impartial justice.

The Oriental wisdom religion does not acknowledge any fall of man in the orthodox Christian sense. It teaches the involution of spirit and consequent evolution of matter, and in the exposition of this theory it accounts for all the anomalies visible in the external world by attributing them to the experimental efforts of intelligent spiritual units to make themselves manifest. In consonance with the teachings of the Kabbala and other occult works of olden time, Theosophy teaches that the external universe is an expression of finite intelligences, necessarily limited in power and wisdom, but continually subject to the law of progress. These intelligences begin at the foot of the ladder of expression and work their way diligently but gradually to the top; thus the theory of transmigration is inverted in a manner very favorably regarded by Rev. J. F.

Clarke in his "Ten Great Religions," and many other liberal and learned authors.

Reincarnation is usually ridiculously misunderstood. People who utterly fail to comprehend it talk an unlimited amount of nonsense concerning another spirit usurping the body of a new-born child, and much similar folly, while Theosophy explains how a soul awaiting embodiment introduces itself into earthly expression at the moment of conception by itself breathing the breath of life into the primal germ. In other words, conception is the result of spirit seeking expression through an appropriate material medium.

*Karma* only means sequence, or the unvarying operation of the law of cause and effect. Our present *Karma* is the effect of all our past career, remembered or seemingly forgotten. Whatever trials or difficulties we now confront come to us to try us because of our moral, mental, and physical condition being what it is; and it necessarily is what it is at any given moment as a result of our past thinking, speaking, and acting.

The doctrine of *Karma* is not fatalism, for it does not teach us that all our lives are mapped out for us by the sovereign decree of inexorable fate; it simply declares the universal law which ordains that certain effects must ever proceed from certain causes; thus, while we cannot evade the operation of *Karma*, we can as we increase in knowledge of the law so frame our conduct, so govern our thoughts and affections, as well as our speech and behavior, as to sow nothing but good seed, and consequently reap nothing but an agreeable harvest.

*Nirvana*, or the state of supreme blessedness, is a condition in which we know no care and suffer no pain. When we have reached that celestial altitude, we are proof against all that could possibly afflict or disturb us; we are then above the recognition of sin, sickness, and death, and in a state so exalted that for us *Karma* no longer operates.

Theosophy does not allow that the penalty due to transgression can ever be evaded. To forgive sin is to deliver the mind from the bondage of evil desire. This can be accomplished by purely educational processes.

Spiritual Healing is acknowledged by Theosophy only so far as it can be scientifically demonstrated as a means of awakening the higher consciousness, or appealing to the nobler principle in man, while phenomenal Spiritualism is regarded as a legitimate subject for honest painstaking investigation, with a view to ascertain the true source whence the phenomena proceed. The true Theosophist lays the utmost stress on the culture of the higher self, not on the suppression of the lower instincts so much as on the cultivation of the higher; and on the basis of this conviction it is reasonably claimed the elevation of humanity can be successfully conducted.

Theosophy is religion, but it is not any limited system or view of religion; it is science, but it does not confine itself to any particular department of research. It is, in a word, compendious anthropology; it teaches man to look within, to study his own permanent selfhood, to outgrow dependence on external sources of information and authority, and find within himself the true, perpetual light. Armed with the testimony of the ages, with malice toward none and good will toward all, Theosophy claims as its mission the unification of all human interests, and the establishment of a perfectly natural and yet highly spiritual church of humanity unconfined by party, race, color, or belief.

N.B. — Indebtedness is acknowledged for portions of this chapter to "Short Lessons in Theosophy," compiled by Miss S. C. Clark, a valuable little work handsomely bound in leatherette, price 25 cents, procurable at *The Banner of Light* bookstore, and wherever theosophical literature is sold. The lessons are in the form of questions and answers, all of which are exceedingly useful for reference, and very acceptable to busy people.

## LECTURE XVIII.

### THEOSOPHY, SPIRITUALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE question as to what Spiritualism really is, is one that never seems settled, and it is very doubtful whether it will ever be settled in the minds of the present generation. The word *Spiritualism* is so much older than the Rochester Knockings, so far antedates 1848, that we find it in the very oldest dictionaries, and whenever we come across words in ancient lexicons we know they must have had distinctive meanings long before what is termed Modern Spiritualism had its birth. Bishop Berkeley was called a Spiritualist as well as a metaphysician, and we know there have been Spiritualists and Materialists from time immemorial; the world of thought on religious questions is necessarily divided into the spiritualistic and materialistic schools. We must either be Spiritualists or Materialists, if we are anything definite; though many occupy a kind of middle position between Spiritualism and Materialism, between Theism and Atheism, and call themselves Free-thinkers or Agnostics. Some prefer to call themselves Secularists. By that term they mean that they devote all their time, thought, and energy to this one world while dwelling upon it, and that if there be a future state they will leave it to take care of itself. They



declare one world at a time is sufficient, and if there is a future state, say they, we shall all know it sooner or later; it is time enough for us to consider the future world when we are called upon to live in it.

Now such reasoning would be perfectly sound if our knowledge of the future state in no way affected our condition in the life that now is; if, when we laid aside the garments of mortality and passed through the change called death, we were thoroughly remodeled; if, by some subtle process, indescribable and unfathomable, we were transformed into another order of beings with entirely different feelings, desires, and occupations. If the life beyond were altogether remote from our present life and in no way affected by it, such arguments might be perfectly sound, such reasoning faultless. But if we understand — as all spiritual revelation, and indeed common sense and sober reflection must alike teach us — that what we sow at one time we reap at another, that what we do in our present stage of existence affects our condition in the beyond, we know that we live once and always, we are in the spiritual world now and forever; and as the life we shall live is the life we are living, as the life we are now living is the life we have lived, we learn that there is far more truth than imagination, far more prose and stern reality than imaginative poetry in the old word *Karma*, which only signifies sequence, or that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

The word *Karma* is the Sanskrit equivalent of the English word *consequence*; it means that to-day we prepare for tomorrow, as yesterday we prepared for to-day, as in youth we prepare for middle life, and in

middle life, for old age. As our condition on the morrow is the result of our action on the day previous, so on the day after death, on the morrow of our mortal existence, we must reap what we have sown and as we have sown. Thus the passage in Ecclesiastes is literally true (though often misconstrued): "As the tree falls so shall it lie." Its condition is not a fixed or unalterable one, but at that point where the tree falls and in the condition in which it fell must all those transformations commence which eventually will lead to the perfect glorification of the human spirit compared to a tree by an ancient writer.

Now if Spiritualism means anything, it means we are alive now in the spiritual universe; it means we are now spiritual entities, responsible and accountable beings, accountable according to our light, responsible according to our knowledge, gradually making our way by sure, though slow degrees, toward some future goal which is dimly outlined before us, but which none of us can plainly see except it may be in occasional moments of spiritual ecstasy and wonderful exaltation. Once in a while we find ourselves transported to Paul's third heaven, in some extremely lucid condition in which we are lifted above all sublunary things and brought face to face with the sublime realities of the immortal world; but ordinarily the future is dark and dim before us, illumined, indeed, with the bright rays of hope and expectation; but future glories are like mountain tops capped with perpetual clouds that hide the summits from our view. Once in a while the day breaks dispelling the mists and putting the shades to flight, show-

ing us those glorious peaks crowned with perpetual snow and illumined with eternal glory. All the world looks forward to a higher, brighter, and nobler life. Brahmins and Buddhists, equally with Mohammedans, Jews and Christians, expect a brighter home hereafter. Not only the civilized, but the barbarian, not only the Caucasian, but the untutored Indian on the prairie, looks forward to a life beyond more beautiful than this; and though western minds fail to understand the profundity of eastern thought, and failing to interpret the hieroglyphics of ancient Hindustan declare that multitudes look forward to annihilation, having blindly confounded extinction with *Nirvana*; those who have penetrated into the inner teachings of the seers and sages of the Orient know full well that the Buddhistic term *Nirvana* is identical with the Christian term Kingdom of Heaven. Christian and Buddhist alike desire not extinction, but to overcome carnality, pride, selfishness, and all such sense of separateness from their brethren as causes one to feel averse to the interests of his fellows, and to erect barriers and partition walls between clans and tribes, parties, sects, and nations. The idea of the ultimate heaven of rest is so sublime, so exquisite in all religions, that a majority of people have contented themselves with skimming the surface of sacred literature, merely dwelling upon those parabolical explanations of spiritual truth which have pleased their childish fancy, as pictures and toys delight children.

There must always be in what is popularly termed Spiritualism a great deal that is decidedly attractive to lovers of sensation: therefore Spiritualism as a distinc-

tive philosophy has always drawn to itself a good many people who spend all their time in hearing or telling some new thing; but while the "craze" is certainly abating, while the search for the wonderful is subsiding, while the sensational has no longer such a hold upon the people as it had some years ago, though Spiritualism is now universally regarded as one of the philosophies of the age, and Spiritualists are looked upon as one of the various branches into which the religious world is divided up, though such eminent men as Alfred Russel Wallace, and many other eminent scientists have espoused the cause of Spiritualism, and put it before the world in a dignified shape, Spiritualism has necessarily within its fold much of that element which people commonly call mystical—so much that all who desire to dream or see visions, who seek to draw aside the curtain, even though but slightly, and peer into the mysteries of the unseen, are more attracted by the words Spiritualism and spirit-communion than by the word religion, or any phrases ordinarily used to signify ethical culture. Spiritualism by its very name draws to itself a large number of people who desire that the romantic or imaginative element in their nature shall be especially ministered to, consequently we find a great many people among Spiritualists who do not care much for sound and sober philosophy, but care immensely for startling phenomena. Many calling themselves Spiritualists do not care to read a learned book or listen to a profound discourse, but if they can see a table move, or tambourine carried round a room by unseen hands, or, best of all, witness a *materialization*, they

are delighted. We do not blame or censure such people ; for they are a class who have either been emotionally starved or possess an over-supply of the imaginative element ; they have either had their imagination unduly repressed, until it breaks its bonds and bursts forth like the eruption of a volcano long delayed, or they have never paid any attention to the sober side of culture, having fed upon the sweetmeats of sensationalism until their palates are dissatisfied with plainer and more wholesome food. These people who are always seeking for sensation do not investigate, as Professor Wallace did, for the sake of publishing great discoveries to the world ; they do not enter the seance room feeling that there are truths to be understood, problems to be solved, and facts to be discovered, by means of which the world can be made better and happier ; unfortunately there are many in the present condition of human development continually crying out for more and more of the wonderful, simply because it is wonderful.

Then we find extremists who endeavor to correct this evil by taking away the wonderful altogether, who say all marvels are out of place ; that they do more harm than good. Such statements are necessarily one-sided and short-sighted ; no philosopher, no true scientist, could ever fall into such an error, for we might as well say because some people talk too much it would be better not to use our vocal organs at all. Such an extreme position is as absurd as the equally extreme position of those who crave more than a normal and natural supply of one particular form of food. Spiritual manifestations in and of themselves are good and valu-

able; they are, indeed, absolutely necessary; far be it from us to say anything that could be properly construed as derogatory to phenomena, but we do maintain that if Spiritualism is to be a power for good, for genuine usefulness in the world, while phenomena may constitute a basis for philosophy, philosophy must necessarily be brought home to the hearts and minds of the people, and be put in practice, or all the conclusions derived from sensuous observation of facts will be of little more value than the tinkling brass and sounding cymbals of those who have gifts and knowledge but lack charity, the faith which is proved by works of love. Some Spiritualists are prone to worship, others to deride phenomena; those who take an extreme view on one side or the other probably feel themselves entirely dependent upon phenomena or else altogether independent of it. It is positively amusing to read some spiritualistic literature, and listen to the utterance of certain Spiritualists. We hear one party say, "There is no foundation for our philosophy except physical phenomena"; then we hear other persons exclaim, "We want the philosophy and do not care about phenomena at all; indeed, we believe they do more harm than good." Now how can these diametrically opposite statements be reconciled? Are they reconcilable? We maintain they are. Certain people can only drink in knowledge as it is presented to their senses; every grain of truth has to be filtered through the sensuous perceptions before it can reach their intellect; before they can realize anything of spiritual truth, they must taste, touch, smell, see, or hear. It appears that some of the apostles of Jesus

(Thomas especially) were of this class. Thomas was a natural skeptic, by no means a sensual man, but, nevertheless, one who demanded sensuous proof of immortality. He said, therefore, "Unless I touch and see I will not believe." We often hear it said that belief rests upon evidence. How many people exclaim: "I would believe if I could; how I wish I could; the philosophy of Spiritualism is so beautiful; if it is not true, it *should* be true; it is so consoling; oh, if I only could believe it, but I cannot." We hear such words uttered again and again by thoroughly honest seekers after truth; but some are so constituted they cannot receive light from preaching or reading, but let them witness almost any phenomena of a physical character, the genuineness of which they cannot question, and they will go home rejoicing, declaring they have found a key which has unlocked the very door of heaven; they have discovered the rule by means of which they can solve the most important problem that has ever presented itself for solution to human understanding. Now what is more likely than that such people should eulogize phenomena through the length and breadth of the land, rush into print, and wherever they can, enter into conversation, to proclaim phenomena everything; without phenomenal proof they would have remained in darkness; through it the tears are wiped from their eyes, their doubts are removed, their fears dispelled, they are joyously happy; they straightway conclude all their brethren are like themselves; they think everybody requires exactly the kind of evidence they required and while they honestly believe phenom-

ena to be the universal panacea for every doubt and ailment, certain others as honest as themselves fly to similar phenomena and receive no satisfaction.

Another class of people are so constituted that they must receive everything intellectually. No matter how much phenomena they witness, they cannot accept spiritual truth on the testimony of their senses alone; they must have everything made plain to the intellect. These will incessantly read, question, listen, and think, and it is only through mental deliberations, and delving deeply into the mines of literature that they can possibly receive satisfaction; then when they are satisfied through study, through intellectual research, they proclaim that if you will only circulate literature, deliver lectures, enter into debates, converse fluently with your friends, place before them cogent reasons and sound arguments, you will have the world at the feet of spiritual philosophy.

There are others again who receive truth intuitively; they are not reasoners to any great extent, neither are they great readers; they are neither very studious nor the best of listeners, but keenly alive to everything that touches the moral sense. They are always striving to enter into silent communion with the world of souls; they seek in solitary places a spiritual influx which reaches them independently of all outward ministrations, such as the sound of the human voice, the printed page, or any external sign or symbol; they realize the nearness of the spiritual world only as it secretly touches their inmost nature. These tell you that if you would receive the highest spiritual revelation you must retire



from the haunts of men, throw yourself into seclusion, and live a solitary, almost monastic life. The monastery and convent have charms for them, and if Roman Catholicism does not attract them, Buddhism will. They readily imagine in some sacred retreat in the mountains of India, saintly Mahatmas who have solved the most difficult problems of the universe through living lives of abstemiousness and seclusion, and consider that all spiritual gifts are to be cultivated only by means of prayer and fasting, by reining in the lower nature, and thus allowing the higher self to have full sway; only thus, say they, can we really arrive at knowledge of truth.

These latter are often the most interior and spiritual of all, but unfortunately in all pronounced types of mind there is a development of one side only of human nature rather than symmetrical unfoldment of the entire being. Wherever certain exclusive forms of good are over-highly prized, and the harmonious culture of the entire individual not regarded as essential, persons are sure to be more or less erratic, consequently the gospel they preach is good news for *some* people, but not for *all*. We are told that when Jesus was born, the angels shouted, "Peace on earth; good will to men"; and declared that glad tidings were to be heralded abroad which should be for all people; then when the Holy Spirit came, on that wondrous feast of Pentecost following the final departure of Jesus from the external form, we are told that illiterate fishermen and other disciples gathered there, who knew only one language, were inspired to speak of the wonderful works of God in so many different tongues, that the vast concourse

of nationalities gathered in Jerusalem's fair temple, could all hear the truth in the language to which they were born. Paul, drinking in the spirit of the earliest followers of Jesus, speaks of a diversity of gifts, but *one spirit*; many forms of administration, yet one Lord over all, one God, one Spirit in all and through all.

If our platform is to be truly universal, spiritual, and humanitarian, we must never restrict ourselves to the advocacy of that which will meet the requirements of just one class of people; we must never desire that only in one tongue the truth shall be spoken; we must never seek to narrow divine revelation to one particular form of presentation; but, having in view the general good to all, whether we individually require phenomena or not, we should remember there are many who do, consequently we should do all in our power to promote it in its genuineness in all its phases, and honor all who are the instruments of presenting it to the world. No matter whether we require argument or not, there are some who can only be convinced by an appeal to the intellect, therefore we should do all in our power to sustain the platform and the press. If we can receive truth without retiring into solitude, we must bear in mind that there are many who cannot hear the voices of heaven when the harsh noises of earth are ringing in their ears, so we should gladly prepare for such a quiet retreat. Some of us may resemble tall forest trees, or conspicuous flowers, appearing in the world in its most noted places, while others may be like lilies of the valley or modest violets hiding in the shade, making sweet the copse and sheltered dell, doing their work in silence

and in secrecy, just as effectually as others of us may do ours in the public marts of the world.

True Spiritualism, like Theosophy, is *inclusive*, never *exclusive*. The Spiritualism that is for Spiritualists only is a Spiritualism we want nothing to do with. We shall never take any part in its advocacy, as we cannot conscientiously sustain it. A Spiritualism that is for all humanity is the only Spiritualism we recognize as genuine. That Spiritualism which is not for the world, not alike for Jew, Gentile, Greek, Roman, and barbarian; which does not speak to the Eastern and Western Hemispheres alike; which cannot recognize the virtues of Plato, Socrates, of the Buddhas, Zoroaster, and Jesus, as well as those of modern workers, is a narrow, exclusive, limited thing, fostering contention and strife, and can never be anything more than a sickly exotic, a poor little pampered plant, reared in a hothouse, its leaves destined soon to wither and fall, while its fruit will never come to perfection. Efforts, tending to wrap Spiritualism up within the folds of sectarian organization, may be the means of adding one more to the countless sects into which the world is now divided, but will never add anything to the great living, progressive, liberal thought of the age. Spiritualism is a universal movement, or it is nothing; it does not belong to any clan, party or sect; there is for the true Spiritualist no Jerusalem, no Mecca upon earth, and no special teacher or leader at its head. True Spiritualism is like leaven hid in all measures of meal of which men partake — it must penetrate the entire mass until the whole is leavened.

Now, let us inquire, What is the relation of Spiritualism, pure and simple, to Christianity? We take particular notice of Christianity because it is the prevailing religion of America and Europe. If we were working in Hindustan, we should particularly consider the relation of Spiritualism to the Buddhistic and Brahmanical faiths; if we were speaking in the Ottoman Empire, we should particularly consider its relation to the Mohammedan religion; but as we are working in countries in which the majority of the people profess the Christian name, and where the so-called Christian religion is the religion of the masses, it specially behooves us to consider the relation of Spiritualism to Christianity.

Should Spiritualists antagonize Christianity? That depends entirely upon what is meant by Christianity. If you mean a hierarchical system, a theological imperialism, an ecclesiasticism which has in the past given birth to the Inquisition, and would re-establish it to-day if it had the power, hostility to such unchristian Christianity is but natural and right; but Unitarians and Universalists bear the Christian name, and nearly all liberal minds in the churches delight in it. Christian Scientists say that Christ is only another name for truth; and surely Paul when writing to the Corinthians entertained the broadest possible idea of the Christ when he said that all honest spiritual workers were members of one body, and that the great body of humanity enlightened by the spirit of truth, constituted the Christ. It is a mere technical quibble with many people who are continually antagonizing Christianity; they are evidently determined to fight something and some one, and therefore often set

up a man of straw which they call Christianity, and then proceed to knock it down.

Many people are very fond of heaping ridicule upon everything which bears the Christian name. With all such onslaught and attack we have no sympathy whatever. When people resort to sarcasm and abuse it is usually because they are devoid of understanding, and for lack of argument throw dirt when unable to logically defend their position. Many sciolists, when they cannot argue a question out, throw dust in the eyes of their hearers, and in raising dust think they can cover their ignominious retreat; but no really intelligent person has ever taken any such course. We are living in an age when every one must be allowed the free expression of his sincere and honest convictions without being subjected to abuse for so doing, and any person who calls another a fool because he does not agree with him must be strangely destitute of intelligence himself, or else desirous to be a god before whom the world is to bow down and worship. We are, happily, outgrowing the era of personal and localized divinities; we no longer recognize the authority of self-styled apostles. The time now is when the priestly office is being abandoned, and we are approaching a happier era when every honest man will be both priest and king. As in the future there will be no special laboring class because there will be no idlers, so the time is coming when all will be kings and queens, priests and priestesses, prophets and prophetesses, seers and seeresses, for the happy day approaches when the prediction of olden prophets will be fulfilled and the spirit of truth be poured out upon all

mankind, to the end that young and old, male and female, shall alike prophesy, and be enlightened.

We are approaching the glorious time when all the limits of sectarianism must necessarily be removed, and when, as a result, the old stereotyped forms of Christianity must go the way of all transitory things. They were well enough in the days of old when the multitude could neither read nor write, when scribes and readers were idolized, because the scribes and priests were the only educated men in the community; well enough in those old times when most men were little better than slaves and barbarians, whose leaders were obliged to hold them in check with the tightest possible rein to prevent lawlessness and insurrection; but their day is past.

All the good there is in Christendom, all the noble examples of heroism shown by Christian martyrs, would live forever, though the words, Christ, Christian, and Christianity should eventually be dropped out of the world's lexicons. Many have no longer any need for distinctive appellations, but if any have outgrown the Christian name, it is not because Christianity was a system of imposition, but only that something better, higher, and newer is always in store for humanity.

We are frequently informed that many who were formerly outspoken Spiritualists have gone back into Christian churches, and that many have gone into them for the first time because they find there a more lucrative field of labor. You will find in almost every instance that those who have acted thus had respectability and organization on the brain; and, as the churches are perfectly organized and very respectable, they found

that organization and respectability could be secured in churches better than in any independent movement. We do not blame them; if they belong in churches let them go there; finding their true level they can best do their work. There is a great deal to be done in and by churches; a great deal of good can be done in them; and instead of harshly criticising those who enter them, we say if they feel better satisfied therein the church is the place for them; then, if they find it uncomfortable, they can get out again. This is a question that must be left to the conscientious decision of the individual; no one has any right to place restrictions upon his brother's or sister's convictions and opinions, or to impute improper motives to another.

If there are any, and common report says there are many, who go into the churches because they think they can do better in a financial sense, then we are sorry for the churches they have entered; for persons whose motives are only selfish are a detriment to the society they enter, while no one can come into the atmosphere of sincere, disinterested workers for humanity without being uplifted in some degree; your nobler feelings will be touched, your loftiest emotions stirred through communion with their thought.

All we say is, be true to your inward light, go where conscience leads you, and all the hosts of heaven will bless you in your undertaking. Bad results and uselessness must always proceed from hypocrisy and false swearing. Let us then attach more and more importance to the cardinal virtues; let us look more to the foundations, the essentials of morality; let us strive for

spirituality rather than for professed Spiritualism which many use as a convenient term to cover anything.

No honest seeker after truth shall ever hear from us a slighting or insulting word because of his or her church associations. What right have we, what right has any one, to point to any institution and declare it superior to all others, unless it can prove its superiority by the practical good it does in the world? Everything must be tried by the fruit it bears. If any desire to build up Spiritualism they must not find fault the one with the other, or indulge in petty disputes and antagonisms. Spiritualists unfortunately have been their own worst enemies; they have mercilessly attacked each other instead of attacking evil. If they would attack vice and error, if they would preach a glorious, intelligible and affirmative philosophy, and surround *mediums* with the best conditions for eliciting satisfactory phenomena, Spiritualism would go forward conquering and to conquer, which it can never do if misrepresented by assumed exponents who perpetually indulge in sarcasm, abuse, and ruthless iconoclasm.

Spiritualism is a system of philosophy with accompanying signs and wonders, and as Jesus said concerning his followers, "These signs shall follow those who believe," so that when they went out into the world men might know they were really his disciples, as they healed the sick and cast out devils, which meant that they helped people to overcome their vices; so to-day, if Spiritualists are to be lights of the world and salt of the earth, they can only become so by reviving in our midst those wonderful gifts of the spirit (teaching and



healing) which in the olden days brought such honor to the Christian name, and shed so glorious a luster over all the earth wherever the pioneers of Christianity traveled.

Spiritualism, if true to itself, must be brighter and more liberal than all systems beside. The very word Spiritualism embodies the idea of universality. Our theosophical brethren in India are doing better work than any other missionaries because instead of attacking Oriental religions they are seeking to interpret the spirit of the Sanskrit Scriptures to the Hindu youth, revealing to them the buried treasures in the mines of their own literature. A Hindu teacher, Mohini M. Chatterji, whose English translation of the Bhagavad Gîtâ with notes and references to the New Testament should be studied by all students of Theosophy, when in Boston preached in some of the leading Unitarian churches; among others he occupied the pulpit usually occupied by the far-famed Edward Everett Hale, where he declared he saw no difference between esoteric Buddhism and esoteric Christianity; for after he studied the New Testament he found it identical in its spirit with the Hindu Vedas. He said he did not desire either to Christianize Buddhists or to make Buddhists of Christians. Such is the prevailing sentiment of spiritually minded scholars everywhere.

The need of to-day is universal Spiritualism or universal Theosophy; we need to cull flowers from every garden, to take the wise maxims and noble thoughts of ancient and modern poets, seers, and sages, and so bind them together as to forward the highest purposes of life.

It is altogether too late for one party to denounce all others; it is altogether out of date to throw aside the world's Bibles, and say there are no kernels in their shells because people have been long fed on husks and have not yet discovered the kernels.

We have the greatest respect for every honorable man and woman; we admire honesty wherever we find it. All persons who are really noble and sincere live to do good; and, whether on the platform, in the pulpit, or through the press, or by means of work in silent and secret places, their influence goes forth as the sweet perfumes of the choicest flowers; wherever the blossoms are they exhale their fragrance. So every good man and woman, no matter where or who he or she may be, is certain to lift the morals of society to a higher standard. Our work is not to throw the Bibles of the world overboard, nor to denounce the religion of those about us, but to help all, so far as we are able, to see the treasures in their own Scriptures, and understand the great esoteric verities which are shrouded in their systems of theology. Let us, therefore, endeavor to trace all religious faiths and customs to their primal source, gladly accepting all that is good and true, while throwing away the refuse; with unsparing hands break idols wherever they stand in the way of true progress, but ever with the intent of clearing ground for the erection of larger and nobler ideals for humanity.

The parenthood of Deity, the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity, are the two essential planks of the broad platform on which all can safely stand. With love to all and malice toward none, let us build

our temples with sky-lights in the roof, so that the light of heaven may shine in fresh every day ; let us go out every morning to pick up the manna which has freshly fallen ; let us drink from the water of the everflowing spring ; let us not desire the ancient or the modern because it is either old or new, nor seek after that which goes under one name or another because of its distinctive appellation, but for truth alone in the spirit of love. Those who ask will find ; those who seek will surely win the treasure, and to all who knock upon the door of the temple of divine wisdom an answer will come, an adapted ministration suited to the needs of every suppliant.

## LECTURE XIX.

WHY ARE THERE CONTRADICTIONARY TEACHINGS THROUGH  
MEDIUMS? — WHAT IS THE TRUE STANDARD OF  
AUTHORITY?

(Delivered in Metropolitan Temple, San Francisco, March 31, 1889. Published by particular request.)

WE have often been particularly requested to say something on the practical value of communications which are said to be received from the spirit-world.

Now it seems to us imperatively necessary that we should take a fair and common-sense position with regard to ancient and modern inspiration and spiritual revelation, so that we may not be led either to blindly indorse whatsoever purports to be of spiritual origin, or to denounce anything without positive knowledge that it is false; we certainly are not justified in proclaiming as evil that which does not at first commend itself to the outer degrees of our understanding, nor are we justified in accepting as truth whatever tickles our fancy or supports our preconceptions.

We have always maintained that a spiritual revelation does not undertake to reveal to mankind anything he can learn as readily from mundane sources; communion with the spirit-world is not properly a substitute for normal education; we must not infer that our

true attitude to the spirit-world is an attitude of abject dependence or of servile adoration.

On the other hand, an intelligent view of the endless continuity of individual life, an intelligent view of the position which is now being taken by the most enlightened minds everywhere, viz.: that there is no death, and that when the material form drops away we go on living as we lived before in mind and morals, though ever progressing nearer and nearer to a divine goal of surpassing excellence which beggars all description and is beyond the furthest flight of our imagination — leads us to readily admit that in harmony with divine justice there can be no perfect heaven for one portion of humanity awaiting them the moment they cast aside their material bodies, and no dark and dreadful hell awaiting others immediately they shuffle off this mortal coil; our own reason, our own right feeling, our own intelligent sense of justice tell us that the spiritual world can neither be divided into one, two, nor four departments, and that there is an infinite meaning in the oft-quoted passage of the New Testament: “In my Father’s house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you; if it were not so I would have told you;” and also in the words of another writer in the New Testament, who, when speaking concerning Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Master, pronounced no condemnation upon him, but merely said: “He went to his own place.” “He went to his own place” meant that he went to that particular place whither he was attracted; and without undertaking to say how good or how bad he was, how wise or how foolish, how insincere

or how mistaken, the writer allows the imagination and the conscience to fill in all the blanks, and contents himself with saying: "He went to his own place." Those words are true universally of all who depart from the body.

When we remember that in this world if each one were to go to his own place this moment — if all the barriers of distance, land and water, were removed, and we could all go just where we pleased, associating with whomsoever we would, and engaging in any pastime or occupation which pleased us most — even in an audience of a few hundreds, like the assembly gathered here this morning, there might be a few hundred different places selected; and when the millions upon millions of the earth's population are taken into consideration, and we see before our mental vision each going to his own place from all quarters of the globe, how readily we must perceive that the natural result of this must be that the North American Indian will still pursue the chase, even though it be but in imagination and subjectively in his own mind, until he has outgrown the desire to hunt buffalo on the prairie. How naturally we can conclude that the Mussulman, aiming at an extension of the term of physical enjoyment, goes to a state and condition where so-called angels of paradise take the place (ever in a subjective sense) of earthly women; and how readily we can imagine the contemplative Brahmin and the self-denying Buddhist passing gladly away from all material haunts, pains, and pleasures, resting in those calm worlds which lead up at length to the absolute glories of *Nirvana*, a condition of abso-

lute spiritual blessedness and entire immunity from all physical thought and desire. How readily we can fancy the Greek, with his wonderful love of beauty and symmetry, going into a world where painters, sculptors, and poets have gone, and inspiring those of future generations upon earth to become yet diviner in the execution of their artistic faculties than were the most renowned among artists of old; and how readily we can fancy the politician, the clergyman, the lawyer, the doctor, all going out into a realm of spirit and finding there in the kingdom of mind certain difficulties to adjust, mental ills to cure, mistakes to correct, and moral lessons to learn—and then inspiring mankind as best they can with the wiser laws, deeper truths, and more spiritual facts which they have discovered. How readily we can fancy the soldier, with his war-like impulse, beginning perhaps with those who were engaged in warfare about him, still entertaining the thought that physical strife on earth is yet needful, but at length outgrowing all thought of an outward encounter, and bending all his war-like impulses to fighting with abstract evils and demolishing the very foundations of the citadel of error. How readily we can feel that the men and women of the world—the mere frivolous butterflies of fashion, who seek hither and thither amusement to while away the idle hour, who are by no means vicious, and yet live a life which is better befitting an insect than a rational creature—find for the time being no other enjoyment, no other pursuit or desire in their mind than to roam through the fields of space and play with this and the other joy or beauty which they encounter in their sur-

roundings. We cannot feel that death, which is simply laying the material form aside, can all in a moment transform the character or alter the bent of mental pursuit.

While there may be, and doubtless is, a world of light and loveliness where all are engaged in the worship of God and the service of humanity, in the very highest meaning which we can attach to those phrases; while after ages of progression every human spirit reaches a point where all earthliness is refined away, all mistakes are corrected, and the affections exclusively set upon the highest good — *until* that glorious consummation arrives, all are growing, constantly advancing, and those who are yet in mortal form and those who have cast it aside are members of one family and one household; they are soldiers in one army, citizens of the same great republic.

Feeling, therefore, that death is not what so many people suppose it to be: the sudden termination of all so-called earthly activity, — regarding death in no sense in the light of an abrupt ending either to mental pursuit or to the desires of the heart, we do not expect in the realm of spirit to come in contact only with infallible oracles, who can inspire the world to the loftiest deeds of heroism or to the accomplishment of the greatest and noblest designs; on the contrary, we expect to have this lesson taught us by constant spiritual communion that “As the tree falls so shall it lie”; that “where the tree falls there shall it lie”; whether it fall to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west; whether it fall in the young beauty of the sapling or in the full-blown splendor of the perfected tree;



whether it fall in a condition of perfect health and vigor, or in any way maimed and imperfect; *as* it falls so does it lie, for there and in that condition does it begin those transformations, which, going on perhaps forever and forever, can only start from that point where the mind was found at the moment when what is termed death released the spirit and terminated its career on earth.

Many orthodox Christians have so long been accustomed to misinterpret the similes of Scripture, that instead of conforming their interpretation to Nature and allowing the images to speak for themselves, they argue an impossible deduction from a very simple illustration. No one has ever seen a tree remain unchanged year after year and century after century; no one has ever seen a fallen tree lying by the banks of a river, or out in a forest, subject to no change or decay; but, on the other hand, after a while the tree is completely changed in its form; all there was of it has been absorbed into the earth or has evaporated into the air; and while the tree began to change in that place, and its transformations started from that condition wherein it fell, there never was a tree that remained in the condition and in the place where it fell even for a century, to say nothing of forever. The very similes which have been continually employed as arguing against progression in the life beyond, and an infinite diversity in the states and conditions of spirit-life, in reality were intended to signify the very opposite of what commentators and interpreters have argued from them.

In every age of the world the great simple and natural truth has been revealed to man, that the human spirit in

the body and the human spirit out of the body are not only near neighbors, but are identical in their amenability to the immutable laws of growth and expansion. We find that every desire or endeavor to make a distinction where none naturally exists, to create a difference where there is none in reality, between the friend on earth and the spirit friend, leads to specious forms of idolatry, sends people forward on ridiculous errands, and lifts them up with the false belief that they are specially great and wonderful instruments of heaven, as other people are not, and often makes them believe that the highest spirits named in some illustrious literature are forever by their side; whereas, spiritual communion in and of itself, divested of all unnatural accretions, means no more than this: that we continue to remain in the family in which we now are; and though we are certain there are many people who are thoroughly sincere, perfectly conscientious in their beliefs, — and we would not say one unkind or harsh word concerning them, or endeavor to take from them any consolation which they receive from their peculiar belief in a certain kind of spiritual communion, — yet we would urge all investigators not to be so much carried away, as they usually are, by grandiloquent utterances, or by great promises and high-sounding names.

It is true that *all* have a great and holy work to do, *all* have a mission in life. It is true that no one came into the world by accident; every one has a vocation, and should endeavor to make his calling and election sure; but while it is a great truth that not one of you goes through the world alone, unattended by angel legions, a

great cloud of witnesses surround you all, and you all have a niche to fill in the great temple of the universe; while it is perfectly true in the larger sense that you all have some great and holy mission to fulfill, it is not true in the smaller sense that Miss Smith has an important mission in life while Miss Brown has not, one's mission being in no sense so very much greater and more important than another's, even though Mr. Jones may be called by the angel world to do a work for humanity that Mr. White can never accomplish. It is simply universally true that every individual has his own work to do and his own inspiration to follow; but that tendency of the human mind to rejoice in being flattered, that tendency in human fancy to set one's self upon a pedestal, feeling one is called to do something greater and more beautiful than any other person, is a very unhappy and a very unfortunate state in which many persons are found.

What we urge upon all inquirers into Spiritualism, upon all persons who sit for spirit communication or who have mediumistic power, is that they value a communication for its intrinsic worth, and not be forever asking *who* it is that is communicating and what is the name of the spirit. If you are dealing with personal matters, if you desire to receive a communication from your mother or your child, then the giving of a name is often a necessary test of identity. If you go to a circle and are told that some dear friend of yours has a message for you, and the medium is a perfect stranger — no matter whether the word is spoken or written, whether it comes between closed slates or on a ballot, or is uttered through the lips — a name is sometimes a great test of spiritual

presence, one which is very satisfactory and helpful to you, as it constitutes a link which binds you in a peculiarly near and affectionate manner to the spiritual world. We do not say you should not rejoice in getting the names of your friends given to you through strangers when you are studying psychological laws and endeavoring to obtain intelligent spirit communication ; but what we do say is this : You did not enjoy personal acquaintance on earth with Jesus Christ and the Apostles ; you were not personally acquainted with Solomon, Moses, Elijah, Confucius, nor with any of those wonderful people who are mentioned so much in spiritual communications, consequently the fact of such names as those being given is no test of spirit identity ; it does not proclaim in any special way that the friendships of earth are continued in the life beyond, and there is no added proof of genuineness attached to a communication because it bears any such signature. Consequently we are always pleased when ideas are put forward first ; let the question of whom they come from be inquired into later on, if at all.

We will make no concession whatever to theological or any other kind of bigotry, to those who would be ashamed to own a truth because they thought it was unpopular, nor would we wish to give countenance to any unworthy spirit of suspicion ; but there are a large number of people who are so constituted that if you can give them the spiritual kernel without so much chaff, if you can give them the genuine spiritual communication without wrapping it in so many envelopes, if you can divest it of all unnecessary outward accretions — which

disguise rather than reveal truth — though you may think you have given less and the communication is less wonderful, it is far more convincing. We can tell you our own experience, and nothing else, has led us to decidedly assume the attitude that it is most undesirable to try and receive evidences of the presence of great personages, and to seek for very, very wonderful works; judging by the nature of the communications themselves, we have found again and again that those which are practically anonymous are by far the most inspiring in a majority of instances.

We knew a very beautiful lady in New York who was a private medium; the most exquisite poetry was written through her hand — splendid poems, day after day, were written upon a great variety of subjects. Her friends said to her: “Who is your control? It must be some very great poet.” The lady answered in a most artless and simple manner: “A few years ago I had a young lady boarding with me to whom I was very much attached; she was very fond of poetry; she passed away very suddenly, and she has regularly inspired me ever since; that young lady, who was once an inmate of my family, writes these poems through me.” Those poems were so beautiful, so exquisite in their composition and so refined in their sentiment, that if the name of Byron had been given people would have said: “Byron has improved greatly since he passed into the spirit-world.”

In a very, very large number of instances, if a few lines of verse are given it is said to come from some one who had such a reputation on earth as a poet that the claim deters the public from believing there was any

inspiration in it, because those lines are not nearly up to the earthly standard.

Now, of course there is a way out of all these difficulties: it may be said that when these great minds were on earth they had their own organisms to work through, and their own organisms were far better adapted to the work in hand than the organisms which they are now endeavoring to manipulate; that it took them a long time to use their own brains perfectly, and now that they are endeavoring to work through others they find themselves at a great disadvantage. Of course, this is reasonable enough, and may often be the case; but another great point that ought to be raised in all such instances is, that these very individuals who have been singled out as so great and wonderful upon the earth were not, in reality, so much greater than others as they are supposed to have been; and what is more, they were not really the sole authors of the works which have borne their names. Homer's "Iliad" is one of the most magnificent poetical compositions on earth, but no scholar to-day believes that a single Greek poet by the name of Homer wrote the entire "Iliad." The "Iliad" was the production of a period, and instead of giving credit to one man as its sole author, we cannot doubt that it should be regarded as a result of the poetic inspirations of the period. Now, it does not detract from the beauty of the "Iliad" as a classical poem to take this view of it; it remains as great as it ever was, for it has an intrinsic value all its own. To-day there are serious questions as to whether the plays of Shakespeare were all written by him, it being conceded in many quarters that Lord

Bacon and others may have had a great deal to do with the Shakespearian productions ; but the plays themselves are just as great — and always will be — as though a man named William Shakespeare wrote every word of them ; you will not enjoy them any the less the next time you hear and see them acted upon the stage. It is not a question of where they came from or when they were written, but solely of what they are intrinsically worth, which determines their value.

So with the entire Bible and with all sacred literature. You cannot in the present state of controversy declare that Moses wrote all the Pentateuch ; indeed, there are valid reasons for assuming that he did not write more than a small portion, if he wrote any of it. The books containing the Mosaic law are certainly not five books written by the hand of Moses ; and while it is utterly impossible to decide what words in the Gospels were uttered by Jesus of Nazareth, while even a cloud of doubt rests over the personality of Christ altogether, and there are now many scholars who are not prepared to affirm positively whether Jesus ever lived or not, every word in the Mosaic law, every precept in the Gospels contains just as much truth, is just as valuable and edifying as if we knew exactly where it came from and who wrote it — as valuable as though we had been on the spot and were witnesses to every utterance and writing. What does it matter to us whether the ten commandments were given thirty-one hundred years ago from the top of Mount Sinai, or whether they were known to the ancient Atlantians and to the pre-historic races which inhabited Central America before some great cataclysm

had changed the positions of land and water upon the globe? What does it matter whether the reputed sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount were uttered two thousand years ago, or whether they were uttered in ancient temples of the antediluvian world whose ruins have long rested under the bed of the ocean? The commandments are no less binding, and the Gospels no less inspired. Moral truth is no less sublime because its history is lost sight of; it can be of no greater value because we know the day and the hour when it was first delivered to the world, the personality through whom utterance was given to it, and the circumstances which attended its proclamation! If we can rise from the lower to the higher level of thought, and, instead of bowing down to its antecedents, judge of the jewel by its own worth, we shall not be deceived any longer by imitations. But unfortunately, in the minds of a great many people the inquiry is not what is said, but *who* said it. And does not this apply to agnostics as well as to Christians? A Christian will accept anything on the alleged authority of Jesus or if it is in the Bible, but many and many an agnostic will accept any statement on the say-so of Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, or Spencer. If we set up these modern idols in the scientific world and bow down to them as authorities, we are just as guilty of superstition and idolatry as though we bowed to the dictum of the old prophets. If we make of a modern scientist a lord and ruler, and allow him to decide everything for us, and then foolishly speak about what Science says, when all we mean is what a certain individual says, we shall fall into just as many difficul-



ties and be just as superstitious as ever were the ancients whose superstitions we affect to despise. Unfortunately there are very few original thinkers in the world; unfortunately, also, there are very few independent minds, very few people who will appeal directly to God or directly to Nature, who will interrogate the universe and stand up in the royalty of their own manhood and womanhood and acknowledge that God and truth are as near to them as to any so-called authority.

As long as we allow the adoration of persons and the adoration of books, the works of modern scientists and philosophers, we create fetiches as much as ever the Bibles of antiquity have become objects of fetich adoration; just as surely do we set up new idols and bow down to new graven images, when we quote authorities forever as much as though we were to confine ourselves to beliefs of the most unwarrantable character that have come to us from the past. Why not be free, why not enter so fully into the liberty of the spirit that we can hear everything and read everything, and then allow our own moral sense and highest judgment to discriminate between the chaff and the wheat, between the precious and the vile? Why not go fearlessly into the presence of the mightiest intellect and the meanest? Why not read books hoary with age and those yet moist from the printing-press with equal respect? Why not listen to the words of those universally admired and also of those who in solitary hiding-places, living apart from men, are called recluses or even "cranks," and pay equal deference to all; acknowledge your bootblack and your laundryman as being possibly as near to God

as any ancient prophet or modern scribe? And when you allow every word that is spoken, every message that is given, every page that is written, be it ancient or modern, be it couched in elegant phraseology or draped in the humblest form of words, to appeal to your own conscience and reason, and assume a reasonable attitude with regard to all, you will then lay upon the shelf and remain non-committal toward that which does not convince your spirit as yet, and gladly accept what feeds you of the bread of truth, no matter where it may have been made, or by whom outwardly presented. When in this attitude we rise forever superior to a blind idolatry of persons, and not only do we protest against past superstition, but we protest with equal vigor against that foolish idolatry in the agnostic world which sets up a few modern authorities and calls upon the world to bow down and worship them as foolishly as ever the ancients worshiped the golden calf or a golden image set up by an impious king. If we continue to bow down to personal minds, if we allow representative individuals to become the sole leaders of thought and of opinion, if we dare not stand up for our own divine manhood and womanhood, we shall never receive the highest revelation. And if we think that something is any the better because uttered by an illustrious or popular person, or any the worse because it comes through the mediumship of a street urchin, we shall never be in a condition to deliver ourselves from the bonds of that mesmeric control which holds the majority of people in the leading-strings of fashion, and compels them to bow at any idol-shrine, because the

popular voice calls them to that shrine to worship. People who follow the popular idol of the hour are as fickle as the winds; they change with the weather-cock, and are but barometers or thermometers at best, as at every change in the temperature or condition of the weather they can be pressed into the service of the greatest reform, provided a good and noble man is the fashion for the time; or they may be dragged to the level of the greatest folly and even sin and be taken in by the meanest swindler, provided that swindler or imposter is at the top of the social ladder for the time being. Persons who do not use their own reason, who try instead to use the reason of somebody else, who do not use their own conscience but try to be guided by the moral sense of some one else, who believe that God makes a revelation to some other people but not to them, will never come into that living knowledge of truth where they will be able to appreciate the full dignity and power of the words of Jesus: "If I say the truth why do ye not believe me?"

The highest grandeur and dignity of the character of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, consisted in this: that he did not stand before the world and say: "I am God, and you will go to hell if you do not believe it"; he did not say: "I am the Divine Being, and unless you believe I am the second person of the Blessed Trinity your soul is in danger"; nothing of the kind. Jesus appealed to the divine sense in man; he spoke words of truth, and he knew when man was willing to listen to the Divine Word that he had the capacity within himself for understanding it; therefore he said: "If I say the

truth, why do ye not believe me?" What was the meaning of this? If I say what you know and feel inwardly to be the truth, if I make an appeal to your conscience, if there is a living monitor within you that bears witness to my spirit, which is in harmony with the spirit of the truth uttered through me, why not believe me? why allow prejudice, pride, fashion, or any hope or fear of the world's praise or condemnation to prevent you from acknowledging truth? If any one had turned to Jesus and said: "I do not think what you say is true; it may be true, but I do not understand it as truth," do you think Jesus would have occupied the position of the charlatan and said: "You must believe it, because I say it." No, he would have argued with such a person — not reprimanded; and even might have gone so far as to perform what might be called a "miracle" to produce conviction. He would have worked with the understanding of the critic, and spared neither time nor energy in making the matter plain to him, but never would have asked any one to accept anything upon his verbal authority. When the disciples of John came to the disciples of Jesus to inquire as to the dignity of their Master, did Jesus point to any authority other than that of practically demonstrated good? He said, in effect, My system, my teaching, heals the sick and casts out devils — that is, puts down immoralities and makes the world more virtuous; blind eyes are opened, deaf ears hear, the lame walk; you can therefore see for yourselves the blessed and beneficial effect of my teachings. For that reason, and for that reason only, you are called upon to acknowledge what I teach as truth.

There was a direct appeal to human understanding, to human intelligence, as well as to conscience or the moral sense.

The entire question resolves itself into this: If there is anything marvelous or mysterious occurring, if there is any wonder connected with the source whence something proceeds, if sometimes great promises are made involving great predictions, and you feel that while they do not contradict your reason they very, very far transcend it; if statements are made to you which you can neither verify nor disprove because they are beyond and above your ken, how should you judge of the sources whence they emanate?

Judge of what is beyond your present means of investigation by the tone and tenor of what is within the limits of your investigation. We should say in every instance that the amount of truth that is being put forward anywhere under any circumstances, may be judged by the effects upon the lives of those who come under its influence in every individual case. If you ask how you shall decide whether a spiritual being who manifests to you comes from above or from below, if you desire to try the spirits and prove whether they are of God, whether you shall accept the advice which comes from a spiritual source or refuse to admit it, judge it by the influence which comes with it and its effect upon your life. All those old communications with the prefix: "Thus saith the Lord," which when followed resulted in error, havoc and misery, were communications which would never have come to the house of Israel if it had not been for idolatries, backsliding and mammon-worship.

Many times "Thus saith the Lord" sanctioned murder, when the commandment had been already given: "Thou shalt not kill." "Thus saith the Lord" put to death innocent women and children who were taken prisoners in war. It would, in many such cases, have been more appropriate if the prefix had been "Thus saith the devil."<sup>1</sup> When the people were demoralized they could not discriminate between the voice of truth and the voice of false gods, because they themselves were sunk in immorality and idolatry, because they had descended to a brutal plane of thought and action, and by their own depravity had beclouded the moral sense; they were ready to accept anything as coming from a higher world, provided there was something marvelous or mysterious about it. Was not the magical element, the merely miraculous theory, completely shown up in the account of the plagues of Egypt, when the magicians and soothsayers of the wicked Pharaoh endeavored to multiply frogs and lice? They accomplished it just as readily as did Moses; they could imitate the magic of Moses perfectly. But how did Moses show his superiority to the Egyptian soothsayers who sanctioned the wicked practices of the tyrant of that day? Moses could remove the plagues and they could but intensify them. Moses could clear the land of frogs; he could cause the boils to disappear from the bodies of the afflicted. Virtue and health were manifested when divine power worked through a truly inspired leader. But as long as Moses

<sup>1</sup> These remarks refer exclusively to the letter of the Bible, and do not cast the slightest reflection upon its interior or correspondential meaning.

was playing magician and working miracles, and that seemed to be all the power he had, the magicians of the court of Pharaoh could duplicate the wonders he performed, and put in a just plea for equality with the representative of divine power.

In every age of the world the same thing has occurred, and if any Christian says Christianity is supported by miracles, and the miracles are incontestable, then there is no evidence that Christianity is not "the devil's" religion; but if, on the other hand, there is a spiritual power, a wealth of truth, a sound moral influence exerted in its teachings, and by those who harmonize with its teachings; if there is a power accompanying all wonders, to uplift, redeem, and save humanity, then the Christian religion rests forever sure upon the foundation of its moral excellence, while its miraculous side is only an accommodation to the as yet childish condition of a large number of people who have to be reached through the senses at first, because they have not as yet so fully developed their inner perception that they can do without sensuous demonstrations.

"Try the spirits, whether they be of God." Does that simply mean that you should ask them who they are? or see whether they can do something curious and inexplicable which physical scientists will attribute to some unknown force in Nature, which they will also probably pronounce unknowable? Does it mean that you must find out whether they really were some great and renowned people of old? No; but their communication must carry its own spiritual influence with it that appeals to your spiritual nature. You do not want any other

evidence that a bird is a sweet singer than that you hear it sing sweetly ; you do not need any other evidence of the fragrance of a flower than that you inhale its perfume ; shut yourself in a dark room and hear the song of a canary, and you do not need to see the color of its plumage ; its voice appeals to you in the dark quite effectually ; you can judge of the bird by its song and the flower by its perfume.

And when there comes to you from an invisible realm a messenger whom you do not see, when words fall upon your inward ear and a vision lights upon your interior eye ; when you feel a hand laid upon you in the darkness and you inquire : “ Is this from above or from below ? ” and there floods your mind along with the phenomenon a spiritual evidence which touches the deepest springs of your being ; if you are aroused to some height of nobility and benevolence by the influence thrown upon you ; if a communication humbles your pride, increases your charity, gives you a deeper and diviner sense of justice ; if it sends you out into the world determined to do more to help humanity than you have ever done before, and if there is a thrill of divine response within you, then you can judge truly of the divinity of the message and the messenger by the spiritual influence that you feel inwardly. In every instance, then, let us judge by the spiritual power and influence that convinces us. When we apply the inward test, we can say to every spirit who approaches : “ I can know of you by the influence you exert upon me ; can you touch my moral nature and elevate me to a diviner plane, or can you not ? ” We should judge of the sincerity,



truthfulness, and genuineness of every communication received, without caring, perhaps, to know where it comes from, or by whom it is delivered, by the influence it leaves upon the individuals whom it reaches and impresses.

We have been in meetings where people were gathered together in the name of truth, humbly desiring an outpouring of the spirit, and we have been in places where there seemed to be little expectation or thought, but where the spirit of truth undoubtedly came; old quarrels were ended, the stingy became benevolent, the hard-hearted were melted to tears, wrongs were buried, friendships were formed, and the angel of truth showed its presence by these results.

If we insist upon applying a moral rather than an external or sensuous test we can never be deceived, for whatever opportunity there may be for counterfeiting or masquerading on the external plane, there can be no counterfeit on the spiritual. A flower if it is withered and dead and in stagnant water, cannot by any manner of means give forth a sweet odor. A bird that has not the power of song cannot warble sweet melodies. In the spiritual world flowers that are not fresh and pure, that do not come from heavenly bowers, cannot breathe forth the fragrance of beauty and love! Unclean spirit-birds — which are not birds of paradise — cannot imitate the note of the songsters of the higher spheres.

To place ourselves forever beyond the reach of deception is to so far cultivate our own moral sense that the atmosphere of deception being foreign to us, we detect it at once, and having outgrown the condition in which

we can even wish to deceive or do a wrong, we shall be beyond the power of any to make us the victims of deception.

In response to numerous interrogations on the subject we state it as our unalterable conviction that all who investigate Spiritualism in any of its phases under proper moral conditions with a sincere desire to arrive at truth, with benevolent dispositions toward their neighbors, will ere long be blessed with authentic revelations from the life beyond far exceeding all past outpourings, as we have now seriously entered upon a new era in the world's progressive history, wherein truth will be embodied far more objectively than in any preceding age whose record is preserved in the archives of history accessible to the multitude.

## LECTURE XX.

### INGERSOLLISM AND THEOSOPHY. — COLONEL INGERSOLL'S CREED.

1. Happiness is the only good.
2. The way to be happy is to make others happy. Other things being equal, that man is the happiest who is the nearest just — who is truthful, merciful, and intelligent — in other words, the man who lives in accordance with the conditions of life.
3. The time to be happy is *now*, and the place to be happy is *here*.
4. Reason is the lamp of the mind — the only torch of progress ; and, instead of blowing that out and depending upon darkness and dogma, it is far better to increase that light.
5. Every man should be the intellectual proprietor of himself — honest with himself and intellectually hospitable — and upon every brain reason should be enthroned as king.
6. Every man must bear the consequences, at least, of his own actions ; if he put his hand in the fire, *his* hand must smart, and not the hands of another. In other words, each man must eat the fruit of the tree he plants.

THE above creed is indeed as good a one as was ever invented, though, of course, it does not go as far in the recognition of spiritual truth as many would desire to have it. The very word is objectionable in the ears of many people, though for what reason we are at a loss to surmise, unless it be that many foolish, ignorant, and dogmatic creeds have been forced upon the world,

but such dogmatic compilations are, in many instances, properly speaking, not creeds at all. The word creed is derived from the Latin *credo* (I believe). Therefore, out of the three great creeds of Christendom, two only are, properly speaking, creeds; the third is not rightly a creed, but a dogmatic ecclesiastical manifesto. The Apostles' Creed begins with "I believe," so does the Nicene Creed, but the Athanasian Creed begins with, "*Quicumque vult,*" etc. "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." That awful declaration is, however, inconsistently modified before we reach the end of the "creed," as a concluding clause reads: "They who have done good shall go into life everlasting." So Colonel Ingersoll is not excluded from eternal happiness, even on the showing of the pretended creed of Athanasius, who, by the way, if history does not lie, was not its author or compiler. The three creeds held alike by the Roman, Greek, and Anglican divisions of the Christian hierarchy show us how primitive simplicity and becoming modesty and charity were banished as soon as imperialism took root in Christian minds and countries. The first creed (the Apostles') is a simple exposition of evangelical Christianity in terse and lucid sentences; the Nicene Creed is a more elaborate and verbose exposition of the same doctrine, but both these creeds are so written as to challenge no opposition. The right of freedom of speech would be arraigned should we question any one's right to express publicly, if he wishes, his religious convic-

tions. The Athanasian Creed is not properly reprehensible because of its mysterious doctrine of a trinity consisting of three persons in the Godhead, but solely on account of the presumptuous blasphemy which makes any man, or body of men, dare to condemn their fellow beings to everlasting damnation, unless they agree with them in accepting incomprehensible notions regarding the nature of the Supreme Being.

Colonel Ingersoll in reply to the savage and purblind criticisms and denunciations of Dr. Talmage, the eminent pulpit sensationalist of Brooklyn Tabernacle, has favored the public with a statement of what he does believe. He has told us for so long so much about what he does not believe that we are truly delighted with an affirmative statement from his ready pen and eloquent tongue. His creed is a worthy and a liberal one; he does not seek to bind it as a chain about the neck of his brethren; he is content to hold and proclaim it as his own honest belief and conviction, and in so doing challenges the thoughtful and respectful attention of the entire thinking community.

Let us take a moment's glance at the man before we analyze his creed. Men and their creeds always bear a family resemblance. A contracted creed could never have been drawn up by a broad, liberal man. A narrow mind could never have devised such a creed as Ingersoll's. Ingersoll, both mentally and physically, is an instructive as well as an interesting subject for study; his is a large, genial, breezy nature. He carries with him the breadth of the prairies, and is, in many respects, a good typical American. His intellect is

great, but not fully developed, neither is it highly polished. His personal appearance is attractive, strong, manly, fatherly, social, and withal gentle; for, strange as it may seem, the author of "Mistakes of Moses," and other literary firebrands and bombshells, is in every sense a gentle and affectionate man in his friendly and domestic relations. As a father, a husband, and a citizen he is irreproachable, and as a lawyer he is a conscientious advocate of liberty. As a lecturer he is a ruthless iconoclast in nine instances out of every ten, but every once in a while his tones are tender, melting, pathetic; and when they are so, he moves his audience — not only to mingled applause and tears by his burning eloquence, but by the profundity and moral aptitude of his constructive reasoning. As a destroyer of the world's faith we have often had passages at arms with Ingersoll, but when he undertakes to build we can only watch with unqualified admiration the skill and deftness of his work.

Article 1 in his creed reads: "Happiness is the only good," — as sweeping an assertion as it is possible for any one to make, and one, moreover, to which exception might readily be taken, but we have no desire to cavil or disagree; we prefer to look deeply into this sentence and see if we cannot discover in it a perfect epitome of sound philosophy.

That happiness is the supreme object of human search is self-evident, for the most religious, even when they profess to disregard earthly happiness, seek happiness in heaven which they believe will be of eternal duration; while the most unselfish, who seem not to

seek their own individual enjoyment, devise all their schemes of benevolence with a view to securing the happiness of others. Thus happiness is clearly the universal good desired; whether we seek our own or that of others is the criterion of our selfishness or our philanthropy. If it is natural to man to seek happiness as the supreme goal of all his effort, may we not safely conclude that we are constituted by an infinitely happy God whose good pleasure it is that all should seek and find happiness that will endure forever. This thought certainly discords with Calvinistic orthodoxy, but harmonizes with all liberal thought and spiritual philosophy.

Article 2 in Ingersoll's creed reads: "The way to be happy is to make others happy. Other things being equal, that man is the happiest who is the nearest just—who is truthful, merciful, and intelligent—in other words, the man who lives in accordance with the conditions of life." This article being expository and exegetical needs close analysis, and to many minds some amplification to render it wholly acceptable alike to the moral sense and intellectual understanding. Its morality is unexceptionable. Who among moral teachers has ever given a supreamer place to truthfulness and mercy than Ingersoll? Truth and mercy he places even before intelligence, thereby according with what we perpetually insist upon, viz., that moral training is even more important than mental culture, though both are of priceless value.

Let us briefly consider the nature and especial merits of the three excellences to which Ingersoll gives the most

conspicuous place in his code of ethics, in fact the only three he mentions in his creed as necessary to a "just" man, one who, to use his own words, "lives in accordance with the conditions of life"—life meaning, of course, something infinitely above mere vegetative existence, as simple bodily existence is maintained by many who violate every condition of life in its highest meaning. Now what is it to be truthful, merciful, and intelligent? We should reply, it is to be just, loving, and wise. Truth must ever stand foremost among the virtues. We must be true to ourselves and true to humanity if we would make our lives peaceful, useful, and harmonious. What is truth? is a question we all need to ask of that inward monitor we agree in calling conscience; we have all a moral sense, a perception of right, and this inward perception or intuitive conviction never leads us astray. It may apparently differ in measure, but never in kind with different individuals. All may know a certain amount of truth, though all may not know equally much of truth. To be true is to be loyal to one's highest convictions of right and duty, and though perfection be not possible in all instances, perfect truthfulness of intent is the characterizing mark of every noble man and woman.

The idea of unlimited progress does not conflict in any sense with the highest standard of relative truthfulness held up by an individual conscience as the guide of personal conduct. Truth demands that we should follow its lead instantly and unhesitatingly in all cases; *i.e.* we must never dally with convictions; never toy with conscientious scruples; never resort to



the sophistry of self-excuse; but act immediately without reluctance in accordance with our highest conception of right.

Truth is infinite and we are finite; thus there is always an infinite ocean of truth unsounded, unexplored by us. In mathematical studies, problem after problem presents itself for solution, each one more difficult than its predecessor; we may be utterly unable as yet to solve the more abstruse of the problems we have encountered, but those which are less difficult we can solve readily if we will only faithfully apply the rule; the more difficult ones we shall be able to grapple with by and by, if we are only faithful and diligent in our studies. There is no road to our ever mastering obstacles now apparently insuperable other than the plain direct path of conscientious, unflagging devotion to duty. Much truth is as yet veiled from us in dim obscurity, but our eyes grow stronger as we rightly use them, and every effort to follow the guidance of truth prepares us for deeper research into its mysteries. What then is our practical duty in daily life? Should we always speak the truth? Yes, except when it is our duty to remain silent.

A criminal is not required by the civil law to criminate himself in court, but he is most assuredly bound by the most sacred moral obligation never to utter a falsehood in self-defense. There are indeed times when we should keep silence, as well as times when we should speak, but no time ever occurs when it is permissible to tell a lie, no, nor even to act one. But some may object, Is it not our duty to shield our fellow-beings?

Are there not often extenuating circumstances which should be duly considered? are not your too rigid moralists apt to err on the side of severity, and in overlooking clemency discard one of the sweetest of graces and most noble of virtues? We answer unhesitatingly, whenever such inquiries are raised, ends never justify means which are not in themselves good. What is commonly called the Jesuitical policy is a dastardly one, and one moreover which must ultimately prove fatal to the welfare of all who adopt it. In that pathetic drama, "The Two Orphans," which the public are never tired of witnessing, a fatally weak spot mars the moral beauty of the character of a Sister of Charity, who is in every respect the embodiment of mercy. She finds herself in a terribly trying situation; a child she loves dearly, one who leans on her as upon a tender mother, is in cruel danger and deep distress, and to save the poor blind maiden whose heart is breaking at the thought of an impending catastrophe, she resorts to a falsehood, a simple "white lie," to frustrate the evil designs of an unscrupulous adversary. Was such a falsehood wicked? It was assuredly weak, as no one can condescend to employ deception as a weapon of defense if he trusts implicitly in the almightiness of truth.

How few of us, alas! have that perfect faith in truth which would enable us to remove every mountain of error out of our path if we only possessed it. Lacking this supreme trust in truth, we weakly yield to deception with what we fondly call the best motive possible. Our intent may be good, but our policy is virtually suicidal. Tell the truth or preserve silence is a motto

we should do well to hang up in a conspicuous place in all our schools, homes, and places of business.

A mistake can never be a lie, an unintentional misstatement has in it none of the characteristics, and possesses none of the attributes of mendacity. We may often ignorantly and quite innocently err in judgment, and thus unknowingly mislead ourselves and others. Such error is perfectly excusable on the ground that we are not omniscient. Falsehood, to partake of deliberate and intentional opposition to truth, must be freighted with the intention to deceive. Of course falsehood is encountered in various shades of criminality; its very mildest form is that in which we employ it as a cloak to save our neighbors from distress: in its worst degree it is the result of deliberate intention to wrong another. The three forms of lying most common may be described as the lie of timidity, the lie of selfishness, and the lie of malice. The first is of course more of a weakness than a sin, even though the element of sinfulness is not absent from it. The second is very popular, indeed awfully prevalent, and the source of untold misery. The third is the most despicable and fiendish thing imaginable on earth, and can never proceed from the lips of any but depraved persons.

To be always truthful one needs a large stock of courage, and for ourselves we can scarcely see how any one can have the requisite amount of confidence in truth to be always true unless he has confidence in a Supreme Universal Being who is infinitely true, and the author and inspirer of the law of the universe; One whose infinite veracity insures the triumph of truth

and the defeat of falsehood in accordance with the very nature and constitution of universal moral government.

Ingersoll is not an avowed Theist, but so far as we understand him he has no prejudice against pure Theism. The evidences of the being of God are, in his opinion, not strong enough to justify his saying, "I believe in God." But surely, no man could place truthfulness in the place of highest honor, to which Ingersoll assigns it, were he not morally in harmony with the most exalted Theism. His intellect wavers between God and no God, but his innermost sentiments and noblest aspirations are all pre-eminently theistic, as they are also altruistic. Next to truth, Ingersoll places mercy, and we must remember he is defining a *just* man's character, so we take it for granted he means by mercy that beautiful and regal attribute of divinity which always was, and ever will be, the spouse of perfect equity.

Let us consider briefly the relation of justice to mercy in divine beneficence, and what lends added importance to this theme is that the doctrine of vicarious atonement is considered a very vital point in Christian orthodoxy. Our readers, doubtless, are all far too familiar with the orthodox theory of redemption to necessitate our rehearsing it. It is, in fine, a wonderfully constructed edifice built upon the treacherous sand of misconception with regard to the relation of divine attributes, one toward the other. God the Father represents justice; God the Son mercy; and these two persons in the trinity have positively to become at variance with each other (at least in appearance) that justice and

mercy may both be satisfied ere man can be redeemed from endless misery.

The wretchedly blind sophistry to which this baseless assumption has given birth needs only to be examined to be instantly refuted as a libel on the very nature of Deity and the constitution of the universe. All who have attended strictly orthodox Christian churches and heard old-fashioned Calvinistic sermons and Sunday-school lessons must have felt their young minds rebel against the monstrous inhumanity of a schoolmaster who would punish an innocent boy and let a guilty one go free: yet this most immoral illustration of God's way of saving sinners was quite common not so many years ago, and we are not sure it has yet fallen into entire disuse. The great importance of discussing such a subject as this, is that it most nearly affects our conduct one towards another, and has a most direct and decided bearing on the treatment of offenders by the civil authority.

Now mercy and justice never had a quarrel; their interests were never separate. There never could be a time when justice clamored for revenge and mercy pleaded against it, for vengeance and justice are antipodal both in nature and in interest, as well as in effect.

“Retribution is mine, and I will repay, saith the Eternal,” is an excellent and morally elevating Scripture text, but the substitution of the word “vengeance” for “retribution” in familiar translations, utterly beclouds and spoils the moral teaching of the original. A radical reform is needed wherever the word “vengeance” is used in connection with anything just and wise, and

for any theologian to talk of divine justice and wisdom (to say nothing of love) and then speak of divine vengeance, is for him to be guilty of a contradiction in terms, as well as to become the exponent of a highly mischievous as well as utterly false philosophy.

Shakespeare shows how utterly impossible it is for a man to be just when he seeks revenge. Shylock asks the pound of flesh which is legally his due; but he cannot obtain it without the shedding of blood, and the law does not permit him to shed a single drop of blood; consequently he must forego his claim, based on the theory of retaliation. Not until mercy illuminates the page can the moral law be beheld or executed.

We have elsewhere expressed our detestation of capital punishment, and urged the recognition of two only justifiable reasons for inflicting penalties upon offenders, viz., their own reformation and the protection of society; now we will utter a word of protest not only against dungeon cells, transportation for life, and other cruel atrocities repugnant to the moral feeling of every humane individual, but also against that harsh government of children, and inmates of public institutions, which discords so entirely with all intelligent and merciful ideas of divine and human justice. We must be merciful in order to be just, so says Ingersoll and so say we.

Supposing a child tells you a lie, and you have every reason to believe the lie deliberate and premeditated, you feel it to be your duty to correct your offspring for the two great reasons aforesaid. If a child is allowed to lie with impunity, the habit grows upon him, and it is alike unjust and unkind to permit one entrusted to

your charge to contract and develop destructive habits without doing all in your power to break him of such habits for his own good. Then it is a greater injustice to society to let an unrestrained falsifier loose upon the world than not to keep a child away from school when suffering from an infectious disorder. Clearly it is our duty to do our utmost to eradicate the love of falsehood from the minds of our sons and daughters and thereby prevent a repetition of an offense against society.

The question now arises, How shall the reproof be administered, and what shall be its nature? Severe punishment of an unreasonable kind; reproofs administered in anger though reasonable to some extent when calmly given, tend to intimidate the nervous, in whom they foster deception, but in no case do they appeal to the moral nature. They are utterly powerless to arouse any noble ambition. A child whose ears are often boxed, whose head is struck, who is shut up in a dark room and kept on bread and water till he for policy's sake offers a sullen or tearful apology to the parent who has maltreated or incarcerated him, has usually been meditating on the pleasure of doing wrong, and the unpleasantness of being found out during his term of "correction." To such a child, a lie becomes more than ever fascinating, and henceforth his energies are devoted to devising means for more artful lying. Thus it is not wrong to tell a lie, in such a child's estimation, but it is a great misfortune to be discovered. By inference, therefore, it is something to be proud of, something to boast of among school-fellows and playmates who are taken into a disgraceful confidence, when one has been artful enough to do a

wrong and escape detection. From among children who have been treated to retaliation ; from the ranks of those who have been severely punished by strict disciplinarians who were lacking in the higher moral perceptions, innumerable recruits are always found to swell the ranks of the army of criminals we see marching through our streets to dock and dungeon, often, alas ! to the hideous gallows, or yet more frightful block.

The greatest blessing conferred upon humanity to-day by professed metaphysical teachers and healers, accrues from the stress they lay upon the inherent goodness of human nature. While no justice-loving person can gloss over iniquity and excuse malpractice, the enlightened lover of justice is equally a lover of mercy, and finds it possible to be just while merciful, and merciful while just.

Colonel Ingersoll, after having sung the praises of truthfulness and mercy, introduces intelligence for our acceptance, and in doing so, he places intellectual development in its proper place after moral culture. When we are disposed toward truth and mercy, the more we know, and the more power there is placed in our hands, the better for society. Secular training is a priceless boon. The common schools are among the grandest institutions of America, but it needs no prophet to foretell that without an appeal to the deepest moral sentiments of youth mere intellectual development is worse than vain. Knowledge is always power, but power placed in unscrupulous hands is a source of danger and terror to a community. Intelligence in its highest and fullest sense includes moral enlightenment, and standing in juxtaposition to



truth and mercy in the creed of Ingersoll, it can mean no less to him.

If we are intelligent enough to know how to deal wisely with the evils threatening the nation, if we know enough to act effectively in a moment of danger so as to end a panic or prevent one, we have added to our faith knowledge, or in other words, our goodness of heart is supplemented and assisted by clearness of head. Simple good nature often leads to weak indulgence, and fosters many a vice the kind-hearted are eager to repress, but know not how to do it. Many tender-hearted people shrink from the thought of inflicting the slightest suffering on any sentient creature, and they are indeed noble and wise, as well as loving, when they refuse to inflict the slightest pain on any sentient thing for their own personal welfare ; but when it comes to sparing the rod and spoiling the child, it is as though one were to advocate letting all prisoners, lunatics, and fever patients loose upon the streets. Prisons, reformatories, hospitals, asylums, etc., should be and will be, when properly conducted, no more dreadful than well-appointed schools and workshops. Those placed under surveillance will be those who have proved themselves incompetent to govern themselves. No fixed term of imprisonment will constitute their sentence: the criminal will go to prison to be cured of a moral malady, as a lunatic is sent to an asylum to be cured of insanity, and a physically diseased person to a hospital to be restored to soundness of physique. Why should moral maladies be treated differently from physical and mental aberrations? Mercy and justice are a unit in all in-

stances, when both are rightly understood. Mercy says, Be kind to the offender; Justice asks, Would you not also be considerate for the general weal? Mercy replies, I cannot favor one at the expense of others any more than you can. Justice then passes a sentence favorable to mercy. Mercy speaks in tones of justice, and the two ever harmonious ones who dwell eternally together in the bosom of infinitude never need to be reconciled, for they never disagree; thus you may recommend a criminal from undue severity to mercy, or from justice to blind soft-heartedness, but a just decree is never an unmerciful one, as a merciful one can never be unjust.

To revert to the old Calvinistic idea of substitution, as instanced by the schoolboys already mentioned, we must inquire why should the teacher ever punish at all. All legal prattle concerning the dignity of law and the honor of the school is just so much antiquated misconception of the true nature of the case. Human laws are changing, and immediately they are found to conflict with human interests, need to be repealed. Law is only an expression of mind. If the intelligence of a republic improves, the laws necessarily improve. Divine Law is of course immutable, and therefore perfect, and so cannot be fairly compared with the code of any school or state on earth subject to change of discipline.

The proper reason for "punishing" a child or adult is to reform, teach, and elevate him. The nature of the penalty is evil if it does not accomplish these ends. It should never be enforced to sustain the dignity of an institution any more than an operation should be performed to sustain the dignity of a surgical institute.

When we see the matter in its true light, we shall regard punishment in the light of a necessary operation performed solely in the interests of an invalid, and also in the interests of all who risk being affected, if a contagious malady be not repressed in a neighbor. Now, how brutal and idiotic would the spectacle appear were a patient who did not need the service of the surgeon's knife to come forward and be operated upon in the stead of the invalid. If a friend thought the doctors were cruelly butchering a patient more delicate and sensitive than himself, he might reasonably request to be allowed to suffer in his stead, were he imbued with the belief that the operation was an utterly unnecessary manifestation of anger and retaliation; but when the authorities pointed out to him that the operation was for his friend's good, that it appeared to them the only way of saving his life, or at least of preventing the spread of some terrible disease, destructive alike to himself and others, his friend would be a maniac, after he understood the surgeon's motive, to offer himself as a substitute, while the doctors would be brutal and foolish in the extreme did they allow him to suffer unnecessarily.

Whenever we see criminals on their way to the reformatories of the future, we shall only feel for them as we feel for patients carried to the hospital. You often hear the remark, "Poor fellow, I am very sorry for him, but he will be better there than at home; he is assured of the best doctoring and nursing always procurable in any of our great hospitals."

No thought of anger — only one of compassion — follows the sufferer to his bed of pain. That illness or

accident may, however, have been the direct consequence of evil doing. A drunken brawl, a sensual excess, an angry blow may have been the only reason for his prostrate condition; still he must be pitied and cared for as a brother in distress. If he has sinned, he also suffers. It is not for us to condemn, but to help him to health, virtue, usefulness, and happiness. No one refuses to employ a man recently discharged from a hospital; why then shun those who have been let out of prison? When our duty is truly done to our offending brethren; no one will be put in prison but for his reformation; no one will be let out until he has proved himself able to use wisely the privilege of liberty; no one will be kept within prison walls after he has shown himself morally strong enough to live outside them, and no one will be turned adrift upon an unsympathetic world without means of honest maintenance. Work should be found for every released convict, as no one can reasonably be expected to live virtuously when no opportunity of doing so is afforded him. We have punished iniquity long enough; and punishment has not availed. We must now set to work to stamp it out, to literally destroy evil, to lay the ax of reform at the root of every poisonous tree, and root up every weed infesting our gardens. The old idea of punishment has led people to believe that the wicked will be tormented forever, or else utterly destroyed. The former theory is too terrible to retain its hold much longer on any portion of a thinking community; the latter, however, which is much milder, but also fallacious, has gained currency, not only among church people, who have

revolted against the doctrine of perpetual torment, but also among Theosophists who have failed to grasp the inner meanings of the ancient esoteric doctrine they study so devoutly.

Religious ideas are practically momentous, as they influence speech and conduct. Thus we cannot part with moral, spiritual, or strictly speaking, religious culture in the public schools. The difficulty has ever been to distinguish between simple morals and religious dogmas, and we are sure every advocate of sound, practical, ethical teaching will be thankful to Col. Ingersoll for letting the public see that a champion of agnosticism, a reputed infidel, has some definite ideas of morality, and prizes truth, justice, and mercy as highly as any Jew or Christian. We have always advocated the complete secularization of the state, but not of the individual. We have always set our faces against the non-taxation of church property, and even against the reading of the Bible in the public schools. We have even gone so far as to suggest the erasure of the word *God* and the substitution of such a word as justice, equity, or truth in the inscription on the American coinage, solely because of the respect we consider due to those whose ideas upon religious matters differ from our own, and differ still more widely from the beliefs of all who lay claim to the title "orthodox," whether in Christian or Jewish circles.

The point we are aiming at is to distinguish between morality, pure and simple, and adherence to certain religious ideas accompanied by attendance upon places of worship and the study of a literature commonly

called sacred. Now it would be suicidal to the interests of the state and to the safety of the community to ignore morals, and therefore tacitly sanction immorality. We know that a vast amount of evil takes its rise in *no* moral training, as well as in advocacy, or at least tacit indorsement, of such views and practices as undermine the morals of the world. Ingersoll is happily a thorough moralist, and doubtless his children receive from their parents (the most proper of all people to convey it) the soundest ethical instruction. Whether Ingersoll's creed goes far enough, in its spirit and affirmations, to completely supply the necessity we all feel for a definite declaration, is an open and quite another question. Whatever may be its lack, so far as incentive to morality is concerned (and people seem to be in absolute need of definite spiritual revelation), all must admit, so far as it goes (and it really goes quite a long way) it sanctions only virtue, and by clear inference distinctly reprehends vice. *No* idea of God is clearly an improvement upon a degrading idea of the Supreme Being, and for that reason we welcome agnosticism in preference to a horrible theology.

Materialism is a relief from the idea of infinite vengeance and endless suffering, but it is clearly unsatisfactory even to those who advocate it. We have only to listen to their speeches and read their publications to be convinced that materialistic ideas are far too barren and comfortless to support those who advocate them in their hours of sorrow and bereavement. They may be brave with the courage of stoics, who boast of their perfect resignation to the inevitable, but stoicism

sheds no light and kindles no hope in the human breast; true it offers no added misery to the mourner by conjuring up a hell of devouring flame into which all unbelievers must be cast, but while it does not terrify us with the orthodox hell, it robs us at the same time of every hope of heaven. Ingersoll is always breaking away from Materialism. His temperament is so sanguine he cannot but be hopeful. Where he cannot affirm he will not deny. So, when in the third article of his creed, he says, "The time to be happy is now, and the place to be happy is here," he does not necessarily deny immortality any more than did a Christian apostle who said with emphasis, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Even Jesus himself seems to have laid such peculiar stress on seizing the moment as it flies, that many people have objected to some of his teachings, because he said, "Be not anxious for the morrow."

The Jewish Scriptures say very little about life beyond the grave, the reason for this silence being the intense desire of Moses and his successors to keep the minds of the people so fixed on their present duties that, instead of living in an anticipated future, neglecting the *now* to dream of a coming time, neglecting the *here* to speculate on a *hereafter* (as many people unfortunately do to their own and others' detriment) they might be prepared for all coming time and all possible happiness beyond the grave, through a faithful and diligent preparation such as a noble life from day to day can alone afford. There is, however, another side to the picture, for to many people everything is in a

motive, an ideal. How hard it is to tread a dreary, monotonous path uncheered by the assurance of a brighter prospect ahead! Ingersoll is a happy man, jovial, healthy, hearty; in the prime of a vigorous manhood, most agreeably situated from a worldly point of view. His home is his delight; his means are ample; he is, in a word, in truly affluent circumstances, and may well ask the fleeting hour to stay. Such a man, however broad his sympathies with suffering and poverty-stricken humanity, can never fully realize how much more necessary to the poor and unhappy are spiritual consolations than to those in health, wealth, and prosperity. When Ingersoll says, "The time to be happy is now, and the place here," he must know that multitudes have so hard a struggle to eke out a subsistence, and have so many trials and difficulties to encounter, that happiness, for them, is not so easily procurable as for him whose lines have fallen in pleasant places, who has a very fine fig-tree and well spreading vine to sit under, to employ a familiar ancient metaphor. He may answer and so may others, "We should think little of ourselves and much of others; we should be happy in making others happy"; and his answer would be indeed true; his advice would indeed be sound; but from the days when Seneca put forth the same thought—from the time when Confucius proclaimed it in China, and Socrates in Greece—yea, and long before their time, when the earliest moralists of the world preached the old yet ever new gospel of doing all for others—though altruism has indeed been the noblest philosophy, it has gained much, and never lost one iota of its value by



being coupled with a clear and elevating conception of human individual immortality. As to the ideas of endless punishment and annihilation for the wicked, both of which are still promulgated in different sections of the Christian church — we object to the influence of them both upon society; for, while the latter is far less hideous and merciless than the former, they both teach the incorrigibility of certain human beings. They declare that men can sin beyond redemption, or the possibility of redemption. This error, expressed in legislation, supports capital punishment, transportation and imprisonment for life, and other hateful barbarisms to the overthrowing of which all truly humane and enlightened persons are directing their most zealous efforts.

Whatever opinion some of our readers may have formed of metaphysics — however prejudiced some may be against what is commonly called Christian Science, all must admit that the system has one great redeeming feature, and that is its refusal to regard any one as incorrigibly wicked or hopelessly lost. We, most of us, actually need a spiritual impetus, or we falter on our journey, and fail in the accomplishment of reformatory work. We need to see with the eye of the spirit a happy time and blessed place when and where all we undertake to help will stand arrayed in the white robes of purity, cleansed from all defilement. We need to hear with our spiritual ears a song of triumph proceeding from the lips of those who now utter falsehood and curses. If we are to strive to be truly happy, now and here, we venture to say we cannot become thoroughly so, as a people (whatever exceptional individuals may

accomplish), we cannot do our best, most thorough and successful work to raise our weaker brethren, unless we are cheered and strengthened in some degree by a hold on immortality. If any of us can be just, true, merciful, intelligent, philanthropic, useful, and happy, as Ingersoll would have us, without any knowledge of the beyond, we are highly privileged individuals, and must enjoy dispositions of exceptional amiability. For us in that case life after seeming death will be a beautiful and most welcome surprise — perhaps all the more beautiful and welcome because we did not look forward to it; but for the majority, true Spiritualism, divested of all extraneous matter, free from all belittling superstitions and follies, offers solid comfort and help, unrivaled by all other systems of philosophy. Pure and unadulterated Spiritualism teaches what Ingersoll teaches in the first three articles of the noble creed we have endeavored to review.

## LECTURE XXI.

“ROBERT ELSMERE;” OR, THE OLD FETTERS AND THE  
NEW FAITH.

AMONG the many valuable and interesting works now before the world, no one has excited greater interest than Mrs. Humphrey Ward's religious novel "Robert Elsmere." That it should have created such extraordinary interest in America, may be like the astounding interest centered in Moody's preaching; one of the psychological marvels of the day, and this for two reasons: *First*, the work does not really advance any very strange or startling theory. *Second*, it is a story of English not American life, and records the struggles of a clergyman of the English church who makes his way by painful processes of thought and action from a "living" in a rural district, where he is the rector of a comparatively unimportant parish, to the broad open field of unfettered and almost creedless humanitarian effort. A little closer inspection of the details of the story will soon, however, convince even the superficial reader that the interest taken in the book does not center in any reference to place or period, or in any character however finely drawn, but in the fierce conflict between orthodox literalism and heterodox spiritualism therein so graphically presented.

Mrs. Ward is a vivid portrait painter, her characters are all decidedly drawn, they are all widely different the one from the other; each is a study in itself and even the least important have a fascination for any reader who delights in a vivid portrayal of human individuality, whether he can admire the type under consideration or not. The book shows us many characters, but not too many, as they never get mixed and each is essential to a perfect tale, such as the one so graphically told in 680 closely printed pages in the full size American paper edition. Some critics have of course said the story was too long, unnecessarily spun out; some have complained that others than the central figures have received too much notice; but such criticisms are exceedingly shallow and unfounded, as the real merit of the work is in its completeness, which consists in its elaborate analysis of the surroundings of the hero, and its careful explanation of the varied influences which shaped his thought and determined his conduct. Robert Elsmere is not an ordinary man, though educated in an ordinary way, so far as outward appearances go. His mother was by no means an ordinary woman, and without the careful description of her character and influence over her son in the opening chapters, one of the most essential factors in Robert's education would have been left out.

Robert, as a boy, predicts his own future, and to any careful and experienced student of mental tendencies, his early days led by a perfectly natural course to his subsequent career. Robert Elsmere is from the first a free spirit, impatient of all restraint, his bodily frame

is weak, his mind ardent, his feeling intense ; his mother is an excitable, singular woman, very industrious, self-centered, unselfish, nervous, and self-opinionated without being in the least self-conceited. She and her son are everything to each other, they have no secrets from each other ; she is both playmate and teacher ; an Irishwoman of a very noble type, she combines an indomitable love of personal liberty with an intense regard for the rights of everybody else. Anything like meretricious display is odious to her ; ritualistic curates, whom she suspects of being only half sincere are her pet abomination, and though her son seems destined to become a clergyman, and she is a deeply religious woman, she cannot but make special fun over the eccentricities of the clerical profession ; for to her the ministry of religion must be a life, not a trade ; and where the minister of the gospel is only a tradesman, selling his wares, she despises the man while she loves the gospel he dishonors. Robert goes to Oxford at the usual age, accompanied by his mother, and there in the very midst of ecclesiastical supremacy and literary conservatism he makes friends with two learned men, both professors in the University, neither of whom are in the slightest degree orthodox in sentiment or proclivity. One of these, Henry Grey, is a practical heroic saint, in the guise of a religious rationalist ; the other, Edward Langham, is a dilettant man of letters, whose temper is as melancholy as Grey's is energetic, and whose philosophy is as depressing as Grey's is bracing. In the execution of the portraits of these two men, the authoress displays consummate genius ; she brings into the most

striking relief two directly opposite types of so-called liberals with which we are all apt to become familiar. Both are rationalists in the usual acceptance of that word, but one acts and thinks as though everything in life were worthy of the loftiest endeavor, while the other concludes that nothing is really worth the effort required to accomplish it even decently.

Grey's mind is constantly expanding, Langham's perpetually dwindling; and between these diametrically opposite poles of radicalism at Oxford the young student for the ministry of the established church of England finds himself placed. He passes through his studies, however, without realizing that there is anything in the creeds and articles of the church to which he cannot conscientiously subscribe; he takes orders and accepts a living without any conscientious scruples, though the fact is never disguised that his physical weakness considerably influences his settlement at length, in a quiet country district. Had he been physically stronger, he would have sought active work in London or some great manufacturing city, where he could have strained every nerve to meet the requirements of a large and needy parish; he is therefore, at the very outset of his ministerial career, crippled by bodily weakness, and with a most vigorous mind and ardent spirit has seemingly to yield to the dictates of weak flesh or break down before his work has even fairly commenced.

Before entering upon the living in Surrey which is in the gift of a peer of the realm, a relative of Elsmere's, he travels in many countries, always accompanied by his mother, and then visits Westmoreland, where he is

introduced, in the performance of his clerical duties as a curate there, to the Leyburn family from which he selects the eldest daughter, Catherine, to be his wife. At that period of his early manhood, at the outset of his career as a clergyman, just when he is most intensely impressionable in all directions, he finds in a woman whom he compares to St. Elizabeth, one whom he feels may be indeed his "twin soul," she of all others who can share his work with him and make him all he is capable of becoming, while apart from her he feels himself utterly at the mercy of influences and temptations, of the strength and subtlety of which he can form no adequate idea, but which he instinctively and deeply feels would be sufficient to overwhelm him, or at least disqualify him utterly for a noble performance of his duty, were he left to fight them singlehanded.

Catherine Leyburn and Robert Elsmere are extreme opposites; she is quiet in the extreme, he is as turbulent in nature as she is self-contained, but her passivity is in no sense the quiet unresisting temper of a character not decided; in her quietness is her strength; her marvelous fund of reserve power forcibly illustrates the truth of the old adage, "Still waters run deep," and while she can but very rarely be brought to betray an emotion, when her feelings are too strongly aroused, the pent-up tide of emotion in her nature bursts forth all the more impetuously, and sways her all the more violently by reason of the constant restraint to which she invariably subjects all her feelings. Catherine's mother is an utterly inconsequent woman, from whom she seems to have inherited nothing; her father passed

from earth in her early youth (she is twenty-six years of age when we are first introduced to her); from him she seems to have inherited largely, and in her eyes he is a saint; around his memory her deepest affections cluster, and her loyalty to all that she conceives to have been his wishes is touching in the extreme. She rules her mother tenderly and lovingly, as though she were the mother and her mother a delicate child needing incessant care. Her two sisters she also regards as entrusted to her charge, and as they are both her juniors by several years, her guardianship of them seems perfectly natural; the elder of the two seems an easy, graceful girl of no very marked proclivities, but Rose, the youngest member of the family, is a very decided character, passionately devoted to the violin, which she plays superbly. Possessed with an indomitable will and an irrepressible desire for freedom, her spirit naturally rebels against the quiet domineering of her elder sister whom she really loves, however, and who decidedly loves her; but the woman and the girl do not understand each other, and they present to our mind one of those vivid contrasts we often meet in members of the same family, which seem to forcibly illustrate the truth of the now widely accepted theory that flesh and blood relationships are not necessarily those of spirit.

Robert Elsmere and Catherine Leyburn have one very great and important point of resemblance which forms a solid basis for their mutual attraction; they are both extremely conscientious; he is diffident about proposing to her at first, on account of his deep sense of



his own unworthiness; she refuses him when he first offers himself to her (though she truly loves him), from an exaggerated sense of duty, and of her importance as the guardian and director of her mother's household. When the mother finds out the true state of affairs, she almost insists upon Catherine accepting Robert, and after tears and prayers and much inward conflict, she consents to be the wife of a man whom she admires as well as loves, and who regards her more in the light of a divinity than of an ordinary woman.

His marriage marks a very important epoch in the young clergyman's life; he goes to Surrey, and immediately upon his establishment as rector of Murewell, a mere village with a population chiefly composed of rustics, he begins to effect many decided improvements in the condition of the place; he and his wife are all in all to each other, she seconds his every enterprise, enters heart and soul into every detail of his parish work, and proves herself in all things a woman of the noblest self-denying effort and charity; benevolence and self-forgetfulness come naturally to her; she has been always accustomed to do and think for others. Among the poor, the sick, the lonely, the erring, the outcast, she is a ministering angel and it is plain to see that Mrs. Ward, in faithfully depicting the heroic sanctity of a woman with whose religious views she is by no means fully in sympathy, is as unbiased as one well can be by any predilections of her own; but Catherine, a St. Elizabeth though she may be in many ways, is continually displaying her lack of breadth of mind; her's is a noble heart, but her intellect is narrow; with all her goodness

she is decidedly illiberal in sentiment and constantly falls into the error common to all strictly orthodox persons; she can deal very tenderly with sinners, even with criminals she can be gentle, but for honest heretics she has no mercy. Heresy in her eyes is crime; unorthodox opinion is worse in her eyes than flagrant immorality, and with all her own honest purity of heart and life she can be far more lenient with unblushing vice than with honest skepticism; errors of opinion are worse offenses in her eyes than sins of the deepest dye. On one occasion when Mr. Langham has visited them and succeeded in awakening the affections of her sister Rose, who was on a visit to Murewell at the time, and the girl asks her elder sister if she could have married a man who did not believe in Christ, she answers impetuously: "To me it would not be marriage."

Such a woman could not be expected to sympathize with, or even tolerate the slightest departure from the very strictest line of evangelical orthodoxy, and the very serious defect in her habit of thought which causes her such bitter sorrow a little later on, is manifested most unpleasantly in her inability to admire the sterling excellence of a man like Henry Grey because, despite his deep and noble earnestness and integrity, he is not a believer in the orthodox interpretation of the Bible.

A very important, interesting, but in some respects decidedly forbidding, character is Mr. Wendover, the squire of Murewell, a man nearer seventy than sixty, without family and seemingly almost devoid of all human sympathy; a veritable literary fossil, a man of prodigious intellect, a voluminous author, an erudite

scholar, but a cynic and misanthrope living almost the life of a recluse, with no near relative or friend to share his magnificent mansion, save a curious, flighty sister, a strange little lady, whom one feels often ready to pity and sometimes almost to despise. This squire is the possessor of a splendid library; his collection of books is unsurpassed anywhere in England.

Robert Elsmere loves books and longs to devour the contents of the squire's library, and so long as the squire has been absent traveling on the continent, the rector has enjoyed freedom of access to the Hall library. On the return of the squire his agent, Henslowe (a thoroughly detestable man), prejudices his employer against the rector on account of the disgraceful condition of a portion of the squire's estate which is allowed to remain in a disgusting, disease-engendering condition; the squire trusts his agent and believes the lies he pours into his ears against Elsmere, falsehoods he is the more ready to accept as truth by reason of his prejudice against clergymen and enthusiasts in general, and Elsmere is both a clergyman and an enthusiast.

For some time the rector works as best he can, doing a large amount of work in and out of the church, and carrying on important literary labor of a historical kind, under decided difficulties and at considerable expense, on account of his determination to be under no obligation to the squire, whose books he insisted on returning to their owner immediately a misunderstanding had arisen between the two gentlemen, brought about by the rector's statement concerning Mile End being disregarded by the squire in favor of Henslowe's garbled

account, intended to provoke hostility between his employer and the philanthropic rector.

After a while a terrible disorder breaks out in the wretched tumble-down hovels of that forsaken district. The squire is abroad at the time, but arrives home just soon enough to be brought face to face with the frightful misery of the inhabitants of this shamefully neglected portion of his property, and to witness with his own eyes the heroic fortitude of Mr. and Mrs. Elsmere.

Squire Wendover is a man who cannot be moved to the outward expression of deep feeling; his nature is of that painfully repressed type common to a school of intensely rationalistic literary minds. Such a nature is not however without feeling, and while a man of that caliber will not say much, he will freely place his purse at the disposal of an intensely sincere and thoroughly practical, philanthropic enthusiast like Robert Elsmere, when he has become convinced that the energetic worker has solid grounds for his undertakings. From that day the squire and the rector became fast friends; in many a country walk they enjoyed each other's society immensely, as two men of diametrically opposite temperaments and yet with many tastes in common frequently do. As we see them constantly together, we readily trace the softening, mellowing influence, almost imperceptibly exerted upon the aged cynic by the youthful and impetuous enthusiast; and even more clearly do we observe how the aged scholar (who delights in nothing so much as in the destruction of all that appears to him as superstitious folly) gradually undermines Elsmere's religious superstructure of dogmatic creed

and ecclesiastical usage, but never does he seem to shake the young clergyman's vivid apprehension of God in the universe and in the human soul. At this period (the most intensely trying one imaginable in the career of a young man of Elsmere's temper) an extremely ascetic priest of the most fervid Catholic evangelical type urges Elsmere to join in a "retreat" at a neighboring village, and there seek to overcome what the priest regards as the most pernicious effects of religious free-thinking, at the foot of the altar of personal self-surrender to the voice of the church, in the most uncompromising manner. Mr. Newcome, the Anglican priest, not at all an uncommon figure in "high church" circles both in England and America, is an unquestionably good man; a man, however, who sees nothing outside of orthodoxy but damnation. Such a narrow view cannot commend itself to the budding and ever-expanding genius of our hero; and thus Newcome must turn away saddened and depressed, half in anger, half in pity, from the man for whom he entertains a warm, disinterested friendship, but with whom he cannot possibly associate after he has discovered his persistence in heretical opinion. Once in a while this thin, pleading, but commanding figure in long, black clerical attire, appears on the scene of Elsmere's work; but at length very seldom, and then only when he feels impelled by what he regards as the voice of the Almighty, to call back his wandering servant to the fold. Here again we are constrained to pause an instant to most warmly commend the authoress's exquisite fairness in dealing with the representatives of all shades of opinion and

schools of thought. She paints the ascetic priest as a noble fellow, while she shows up as plainly as can be done, the defects in persons whose opinions coincide far more nearly with her own, and it is for this reason that we regard Mrs. Ward as an epoch-making woman in the field of romantic religious literature; for if the future church of humanity, foreseen by prophetic minds through all the ages, is ever to be established, its members must be those who can allow no intellectual differences or agreements to becloud their judgment or pervert their will.

Mr. Newcome and Catherine Elsmere are neither of them liberal-minded, but they are both truly excellent in their peculiar ways; both are deeply in earnest in proclaiming and maintaining what they feel (and think they know) to be divine truth; both are evangelicals, he of the Catholic, she of the Protestant type; but they both insult reason to feed hysterical emotion; both are narrow and intellectually very shortsighted. Let either of them present their hearts to the judgment of the sincere of all persuasions, and they immediately invite and obtain the deepest affection and most loving appreciation from all whose affection is worth the having; but let them present their minds for inspection to the just and liberal, and the verdict pronounced must be that they are deficient, lamentably so in critical ability, and painfully predisposed to exalt dogma to the very throne of heaven.

A crisis is speedily reached in Elsmere's mental evolution; he soon finds himself no longer able to remain in the Church of England as a minister; were he a lay-

man, he could continue, no doubt, to worship in his accustomed place, but his keen sense of honor sternly revolts against all endeavor to effect a compromise between conviction and appearance.

Some of Mrs. Ward's very best writing is where she shows up in its true light the evasive position held by many clergymen who retain their livings only through their personal popularity and influence, or their singular power to twist language and give words a meaning they do not possess to the ears of ordinary listeners. Robert Elsmere must leave the church, he will not wait to be turned out or even allow himself to be tried for heresy; he will go out, and his leaving the church thus suggests far more topic for thought and discussion than a series of lectures or even volumes could exhaust.

We know that some men who remain in a church while they are not in sympathy with its dogmas are thoroughly sincere, and as their course commends itself to their own consciences they are undoubtedly right in staying where they are; such men, or at least, the greatest of them, have something of the work to do attempted by Savonarola; but was Savonarola successful in reforming the church from within? History, alas! answers with a decided negative. But then it can easily be argued that Savonarola's work was to purge out immorality rather than to perfect a change in religious doctrine, consequently in a licentious age the will of the ruling party opposed him, while reformers in the Protestant communions of to-day have the sympathy of the masses on their side, who only need a more liberal education to bring them out of the wilderness of dog-

matic theology into the fair promised land of complete freedom from intellectual and ceremonial restriction.

Archdeacon Farrar of Westminster is fully as unorthodox as the much revered and lamented Dean Stanley, also of Westminster, whose "History of the Jewish Church" is almost as radical as the utterances of the celebrated Colenso, late Bishop of Natal, South Africa. This man, popularly known as Canon Farrar, is, however, in no equivocal position; he is in a most *conspicuous* position, from which his light shines over the earth as well as over England, as the head of the Broad Church party; but he publicly announces his position, and it is a clearly defined, and to his mind a thoroughly tenable one; he does not tacitly ignore objectionable dogmas, he boldly attacks and refutes them, and while many gifted men and women both in and out of the church cannot agree with his standing where he does while saying what he does, no one with a grain of judgment or an ounce of perception can accuse Farrar of willful temporizing.

In New York City, Heber Newton preaches decided radicalism in an Episcopal church; almost everybody knows what his views are on the Bible, the atonement, and every other leading doctrine of the church. Many people, of course, condemn him for remaining where he is, and declare his position an anachronism of the worst kind, but is it? Is he not one of an ever-enlarging number of excellent and learned men who believe it to be their mission to revise creeds and restate theology within the precincts of the church itself?

Now, many a man has been ignominiously thrust out of the church for entertaining and preaching the very



views one can now hear promulgated from avowedly evangelical pulpits almost every day, and certainly twice every Sunday. Why is this but because ecclesiastical authorities are apt to be extremely wary? It does not do to weaken the church, as it would be weakened, were men of great popularity and ability constantly thrust out of its body; and it is but fact, that personal influence, more than all besides, usually influences the final decision. Can we afford to lose the man? is the chief question asked by those in whom the power to excommunicate resides. For those who toy with their conscience, juggle with words, repress convictions, and make ministerial duties simply matters of business, we can have no sympathy, for while a man has a right to earn his living by preaching what he does believe, he has no right to earn a penny, even were he in destitution, by preaching what he does not believe, or through ingenious processes of prevarication, which are doubtless cleverer but no less sinful than downright lying.

All cant about unpaid ministers is folly. Business is not a disgrace, and those who object to clergymen receiving salaries are never logical in their arguments or apt in their illustrations. The whole question is, How far are you honest? To what extent does your conscience approve your method of obtaining a livelihood? The strictest conscientiousness should be demanded of a clergyman, but no less should be exacted of a business man. Elsmere could not take a penny of the church's money; he could not preach another Sunday after he *knew* that he did not indorse the words his lips would be compelled to repeat while reading the service, and it

is, after all, the liturgy rather than the sermon that most sorely taxes the conscientious liberal.

There are plenty of hymns one can select which do not offend against liberal sentiment, and there is an almost unlimited choice of topics for discourse open to a religious radical, even when in a conservative pulpit; but portions of creeds and litany, as well as the endings of many prayers and collects, place the liberal-minded Episcopal minister in a sorry fix. If he is anything of a mystic, or a Theosophist, he can use every word with the mental reservation that he employs it in the understanding of its hidden meaning, but can an honest man do this in a place where he dare not explain this meaning to his congregation?

In a Swedenborgian place of worship the congregation knows that the Scriptures are understood spiritually, that psalms are not taken in their letter; but the minister in such a church can enter his pulpit with an unfettered tongue and expatiate freely on the hidden meanings of the sacred word. In Robert Elsmere's extremity he very wisely consults with his noble friend, Professor Grey. He makes a flying visit to Oxford, and in his old tutor's sanctum unburdens his mind freely. The gist of Grey's advice is, conceal nothing from your wife; return home instantly and tell her everything. Mr. Grey does not appear, with all his insight, to have sounded the depths of Catherine Elsmere's religious fanaticism, and thus he cannot tell how agonizingly she will suffer when she feels called upon to decide between Christ and her husband, for so the matter must appear to her. Then the question of the father's influ-

ence over the little daughter will add fresh pangs to her torture, for remember she regards intellectual orthodoxy as the only passport to heaven and means of redemption from hell. Here a homily on marriage might well be preached, and as Mrs. Mona Caird's question, Is marriage a failure? has not yet lost its interest for the popular mind, we cannot refrain from a hasty analysis of Elsmere's partial mistake in marrying Catherine Leyburn, for it cannot be denied that he and she were both made indescribably wretched in consequence of their terribly ill-matched intellects.

They loved each other truly and tenderly from first to last and were a decided blessing the one to the other; of this there can be no doubt. But is love ALL that is needful to secure a truly happy marriage? Love is blind when not united with wisdom. Affection without reason, heart without head, will always run astray; and where natures may be the purest and ideals the highest, intellectual incompatibility will frequently prove the source of untold misery. Husband and wife need not, and should not, be alike; they may *differ* widely, but they must not *disagree*. One may sing and not paint; the other may paint and not sing; but the singer must love pictures and the painter must love song. One temperament may be emotional, the other intellectual, but they must complement, not antagonize each other. Red contrasts with gold or blue, and while these colors are intensely dissimilar, their combination produces charming and harmonious effects.

To all young people contemplating matrimony our exhortation is: Do not sacrifice either heart to head or

head to heart. Marriage is a partnership not requiring similarity of attainment in the members of the firm, but imperatively demanding unity without uniformity — harmony as beyond unison. Husband and wife may differ as a soprano voice differs from a basso profundo, or as the music of a violin differs from that of a cornet, but they must be able to sing or play together, so that harmony, not discord, is produced.

Conservative Hebrews and Roman Catholics are quite right in discouraging mixed marriages, for where one is an ardent believer in one system of faith and the other is equally earnest in defending a counter-system, harmony is impossible; and where there are children, what can be more terrible in its effects than a constant jar between parents? Mixed marriages of an objectionable kind are not necessarily marriages where the contracting parties are one Jew and the other Gentile, or one Catholic and the other Protestant, for in San Francisco, for instance, the Jewish Temple Emanu-El, has often presented a delightful picture of true harmony between liberal Jew and liberal Christian. Dr. Stebbins, the Unitarian pastor, has conducted public Thanksgiving services with Dr. Cohn and Dr. Voorsanger in the Temple, and who could decide where the vital differences were in the theology of these three estimable gentlemen? But let a Hebrew or a Unitarian marry a rigid Presbyterian of the old school; or let a devout Roman Catholic marry a bigoted Protestant or a skeptic, how can harmony prevail? People who have convictions must make their convictions the basis of their union. Physical charms may quickly disappear, accomplishments may

cease to inspire admiration, but deep-seated convictions are permanent. Two *unformed* minds may marry in early youth, and if mutually loving and sympathetic, may form themselves into one. Two *formed* minds who know they agree on all vital points, can marry with the greatest safety; but an unformed mind, coupled with an ardent progressive temper, like that of Robert Elsmere in his early twenties, uniting itself with a thoroughly set mind like that of Catherine Leyburn, must inevitably bring bitter sorrow; for they are both so intense in their feelings that not to feel alike is to suffer beyond description. A youth's marriage with a woman, mentally mature, though still young in years and physically youthful, must be a mistake, unless the young man's mind is so open to his wife's influence that she can be his guide, or at least his companion in intellectual pursuits.

In this age the intellect cannot and will not be patiently submissive to the heart. Intellect and affection themselves insist upon being married in every reasonable and healthy individual, and though goodness of heart is the mainspring of all virtue, a good heart and a level head are both needed when two young people agree to enter upon a compact, the most sacred and binding on earth.

As Elsmere's mind expands ever wider and wider, opening like a beautiful flower to the sunshine and pure air of fresh progressive thought, Catherine retires deeper and deeper into herself and sees in her husband's earnest and successful efforts to bless his fellows, nothing better than a fight against Christ and his gospel. Very slowly and by very painful steps is she at length led to believe that after all he may be following the Master in

a way she knows not of, but she never enters fully into his work; she cannot. She remains in the old way, drinking old wine from an old bottle, while he cannot partake of any other than the new wine of the new dispensation from a new bottle, ever expanding in his hands as the new wine ferments within it.

Robert Elsmere's theology is sublime; his work Christ-like in the highest sense. He reaches the secularists on their own ground in their own halls; he shows them the worthlessness and the wrong of their incendiary and shallow methods of attack on all religious things. He reconceives the Christ; he strips the man of Nazareth of all fictitious adornment, and like Count Tolstoi of Russia, he leaves a magnificent human worker and exemplar, as loving as the model of Renan, but far more vigorous and manly. He is able, through a thorough identification with workingmen, to bring to them the practical gospel they so sorely need. In his hands social and political problems are taken out of the arena of fierce and acrimonious partisanship and placed where they belong in the arena of religious thought and feeling.

Religion is the science of right living. *Religio*, to bind, means to unite, not to enslave; and when all are bound together in the chains of true co-operative fellowship — when the demon, competition, is cast from out our minds — then, but not till then, will dawn the golden day when

“Peace shall over all the earth  
Its undimmed splendors fling,  
And the whole earth send back the song  
The blessed angels sing.”

## LECTURE XXII.

### CHRIST RE-CONCEIVED ; OR, THE BASIS OF THE NEW RELIGION.

Now that we are engaged in a study of comparative theology, we find ourselves daily more and more in sympathy with the work of Lady Caithness, who, in her "Mystery of the Ages," (the very best book on Theosophy ever published for general readers,) explains to the satisfaction of every genuine scholar and true radical or rationalist (using those terms as their use is justified by etymology), how both the historical and astronomical characters presented to students of mythology are designed to conceal great spiritual truths pertaining to the origin, progress, and destiny of the human soul ; truths common to all religious systems and therefore super-theological as theology is ordinarily understood. Now it is with the universal spiritual element in religion, (the science of right living) that we have properly to deal, not with curious speculative theories and historical uncertainties ; for until religion is taken out of all particular time and place, and posited in the universal, it is less than religion proper. A religion in the narrow sense in which there may be many religions, it may be, but *religion* unqualified by article or adjective, it cannot be.

Now a study of the world's several great systems of religion leads every unbiased mind to the conclusion that the spirit of religion is ONE. Religious conceptions are innate in the human soul; and gradually revealed, manifested, expressed, or evolved as the human intellect permits the soul's conviction to filter through it. Such men as Piazza Smythe, the celebrated Scotch astronomer, endeavor to account for the great Egyptian pyramid only on the supposition of supernatural miracle; but in so doing they limit and dwarf man's idea of the Supreme Being, and while striving to honor God they are in reality belittling Him, for what can be smaller or more puerile than the notion that God has to change or supersede law in order to fulfill his own design, or accomplish good to humanity. The student of archaeology traces the gradual development of the human race for perhaps more than 50,000 years, and instead of rejecting the testimony of earth and ocean to the astonishing antiquity of man, gladly avails himself of every means of verifying whatever story of human antiquity tends to clear away the fog of the mysterious, and present to intelligence a comprehensible and rational picture of gradual but incessant human progress.

In this transitional period of thought, it is highly necessary to deal in positive affirmations; nothing short of gnosticism will satisfy the tired intellect and wounded restless heart, worried and disappointed with philosophic agnosticism, (scholarly ignorance). Souls no sooner break away from the traditional view of the Christ, than they feel called upon to re-conceive the Christ, and while this re-conception may be at first inadequate in



many respects, it is generally healthful, hopeful, practical, and sublime. The Christ idea is in reality, however, a much larger idea than either the orthodox or heterodox imagine it to be. According to Theosophy, it is much broader than any ideal which can find its fulfillment in either a supernatural incarnation of deity, once in the history of the planet; or in the life of an excellent but, nevertheless, imperfect man; and it is to the latter view unfortunately that liberal religious thought almost invariably turns. Now the Christ idea must not be confounded with the personal appearance of any Messiah, nor with the biography of any hero, no matter how noble. In Egypt the Christ idea found its exemplification many thousands of years before Christ, in the embodiment, according to ancient tradition, of the angel of the sun (Osiris).

The life of this "incarnate god" is clearly written on many an antique scroll, and shown forth to perfection in the interior construction of the great pyramid; but to all who are in any degree familiar with the hidden truths of Egyptian Theosophy, the personal career of the embodied Osiris is known to be a delineation of the universal experiences of the human soul, of which the sun is the symbol according to the ritual of antiquity.

Gerald Massey and other authors of his school of thought have thrown much valuable light on the astronomical aspects of mythology, but it is reserved for the true Theosophist to penetrate deeper into the spirit and explain how astronomical facts as well as personal histories have all been pressed into the service of a sublime and universal philosophy (or rather science), in which

the heavenly bodies as well as the lives of men have all been employed as material for illustrating the mystery of all ages — God manifest in flesh. In Asia, Buddha, Krishna and Zoroaster mean vastly more than solitary individuals; but a little close inspection of two seemingly divergent theories will demonstrate the inseparable unity of the universal with the individual idea. Osiris, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Christ, are all titles expressive of spiritual dignity won only through victory over sense; therefore these titles may have been given to many different personages in the history of the race, but they all mean one who has triumphed in spiritual conflict over every enemy of righteousness, one in whom the divine light of the soul (the central sun around which all the planets of intellect and satellites of sense must obediently revolve in perfectly harmonious accord) is revealed in its true splendor, — made manifest through the veil of flesh, which, from being the opaque veil of concealment hiding the soul, has become through a completion of all necessary processes of initiation, a transparent window, a perfectly diaphanous medium for divine revelation.

Now though Zoroaster in particular has puzzled chronologists, some of whom have made him live six thousand years before Christ, others in the time of Abraham, others again as a contemporary of Pythagoras, so that his literal history seems all in the air, the enlightened Parsee explains that Zoroaster is a title, not a family surname, and therefore may have been borne in different ages and places by different individuals, each of whom attained to the perfect life of complete control over the lower self;

thus the historical difficulty is removed and all the dates assigned may be correct.

An Oriental tradition concerning Buddha is to the effect that Vishnu, (the second person of the Brahmin trinity,) incarnates himself whenever the world is in special need of a deliverer; this belief stripped of all encumbering fallacies signifies simply that whenever there is a great demand or imperative need for spiritual enlightenment on earth, the need is met, the demand supplied; thus the Indian prince Gautama, the hero of Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," was only one of many Buddhas, and while his period was about 550 B.C., the records of a Buddha's appearing many thousand years earlier need not be disputed.

The Jews of old were always looking for the advent of a Messiah, and some of the orthodox to-day expect a personal deliverer soon to appear to restore all Israel to Palestine. Progressive Jewish thought, however, favors the impersonal view and makes the Messiah the entire people when redeemed from error, so soon as their messianic mission among all nations is accomplished; but as the lesser may always be contained in the greater, the personal may always be included in the universal; thus the true idea of the achievement of a single individual prior to the glorification of an entire community and eventually of all mankind, is simply that there must always be some fruit on the Tree of Life ripened earlier than other specimens on the same tree. The personal Christ, as an exemplar, is a most reasonable and helpful expression of the Christ idea, for the pattern life of one who has already attained is the model

for others who are striving to excel ; not simply a model in the sense of a pattern for imitation, but what is far more to the point, the embodied fulfillment in history of a state to which the entire race is ever aspiring, which state is thereby proved attainable by reason of its being already an accomplished fact. The Christ in history is a perfect human model, an ideal man, and is common in some degree to all countries and to all periods.

Any conception of an imperfect Christ is a scholar's transitional conception caused by looking at the picture of the ideal man through the glasses of distorted history. Neither Strauss or Renan have caught anything like a full view of the Christ idea in history ; they have carefully studied literature on its superficial side and have compiled interesting biographical narratives, but the work of both these authors is very incomplete. Many men have struck out from orthodoxy into religious liberalism through reading such books, which as contributions to literature are histories of evidence, elaborate treatises on the validity or invalidity of human testimony. For the inner meaning and spiritual import of narratives designed to set forth esoteric verities such authors have no affections, and of this deeper meaning in what they discuss they know nothing ; their minds are legal, judicial, external ; fair and honorable without doubt in intent, but prejudiced nevertheless ; for while they show themselves thoroughly determined to allow Christian evidence no favor denied to evidence on any other side, their positive prejudices against the Christian system often warp their judgment as it warps that of most skeptics who are only too delighted to find flaws

in a system they have grown to despise, doubtless by reason of the errors which have so long disfigured it. Such people desire to flog the character of Jesus over the shoulders of an ecclesiastical tyranny which has usurped the name whilst it has denied and forsaken the spirit of the Christ, and so long as this reactionary feeling continues, "free thought" will be in many instances a misapplied term, for no thought can possibly be free till the mind of the thinker is completely cured of the disease of prejudice from which so many otherwise candid and able men are at present suffering grievously. Concerning the proper estimate of Christian testimony when placed side by side with other testimony and the actual tendency of orthodox works on Christian evidence to make infidels of reasoners, their position is impregnable, for it is indeed pitiful to witness the shameful special pleading of men who ought to know and do better when they are endeavoring to bolster up a system to which they are attached, at the expense of every other system on earth.

Unless it be among Unitarians by whom all religions are treated with an unusual degree of fairness, the divinity class in a college is the place where Christianity is proved true by processes of the most unwarrantable assumption. Christianity is a client to be defended at all risk, and every possible artifice by which mental ingenuity can possibly be pressed into the service is strained to its utmost to defend the one system which is alone adjudged defensible, while the very vilest excrescences of other systems are taken as representative of the systems of which they are but disfiguring accretions.

On Friday, January 18th, 1889, in the First Congregational Church of San Francisco, Mr. Moody, during his Bible Reading, had a kind word to say for almost everybody and manifested royal liberality of soul when speaking of the Chinese; but when he alluded to Buddhism he was guilty of the most egregious though doubtless guiltless misrepresentation; he no doubt believed what he said, but he spoke untruly, for Buddhism no more teaches the inferiority of woman than Christianity does, and while no doubt one can find utterances of Buddhists and many more of Brahmins and Mohammedans speaking contemptuously of woman, is Mr. Moody so blind to the teaching of the present day as not to know that Paul's Epistles are the armory from which the opponents not only of female suffrage but of female pastors often draw their ammunition? Jesus and Paul did not always teach alike. Jesus did work to emancipate women from Oriental slavery as far as his benign influence extended, but Paul was never fully liberated himself, and on Paul more than on Jesus is the edifice of Christian sacerdotalism made to rest; and of this system Mr. Moody is in great measure a representative, advocate and exponent, even though his pronounced Protestantism leads him to object to the word *sacerdos* (a priest). Now Buddha never taught woman's inferiority to man, while the absurd dogma of her having to be re-embodied as a male ere she could enjoy immortality, is a most ignorant misconception of a prominent feature of a certain school of Oriental philosophy not unknown in Europe and America, which teaches that the human soul must be successively embodied in male

and female forms to gain all possible earthly experience; those who favor this doctrine believe necessarily in the absolute equality of the sexes, and maintain that man and woman differ only in external organism, for if woman ever needs re-embodiment as man, man equally needs re-embodiment as woman. We have simply introduced this criticism of Mr. Moody's misrepresentation of Buddhism as an example of the frightfully pernicious course pursued by Christian apologists in general, and if criticism does no more than call attention to this manifest and shameful unfairness on the part of alleged disciples of an impartial Christ, it will certainly not be offered in vain. We must now very briefly point out where a misconception of the Christ often prevents an intelligent re-conception, and that it often does so is patent to all discerning readers of current literature. The life of Jesus is a representative, an ideal life, no matter whether historical or otherwise; the actions of the Christ are recorded as examples of universal godliness, therefore it is but right and reasonable to submit them to the most searching scrutiny.

On a few occasions Jesus is said by critics to have lost his temper and allowed uncontrolled passion to disfigure his conduct. Objectors to his life being a model life dwell particularly on his cursing a barren fig-tree and driving money changers out of the temple. Now when these acts are misinterpreted as ventings of personal spleen, or displays of vulgar indignation against objects and individuals which have disappointed, annoyed or injured him, they certainly are serious blemishes and prove him to have been decidedly imperfect;

but when these same exhibitions of manifestly righteous indignation are taken for what they really are, protests against hypocrisy and injustice, they enhance the grandeur of a character they would otherwise disfigure.

The Palestinian fig-tree has no right to be covered with leaves until it is bearing fruit, for its striking peculiarity is that when covered with leaves, travelers seeing it from a distance know they will find fruit thereon. A tree covered with leaves but destitute of fruit would lead tired, hungry, thirsty travelers out of their way. It is then an expressive symbol of hypocrites and of institutions which promise much and perform nothing. To blast it is to defeat the schemes of pretenders; its removal is a public benefaction. Now an important part of the work of a genuine reformer is to abate nuisances and put down all deceit and pretence to the utmost of his ability. In the temple courts at Jerusalem, oxen, sheep and birds were sold for sacrifice. Three times a year when crowds of country folk came to the temple, an immense trade was done by the traders in the outer courts of the temple. While they were honest they were in no sense a nuisance, but when through their unprincipled extortion they made the house of God "a den of thieves," it was the plain duty of a lover of justice and humanity to drive them out. But why did a company of men allow themselves to be driven out by one? Why did they not take a whip and drive him out who dared to interfere with them? Surely the answer is not far to seek. Jesus driving out usurers, extortioners, with a whip of small cords, is a forcible picture of human conscience, aroused by burn-



ing words of manly protest against iniquity — conscience being itself the whip which forces from the temple courts the self-convicted usurer.

Jesus spoke to the consciences of these men, he awoke within them a burning sense of shame at their own wrong doing, and maybe threw the tables down in his earnest protest against wrong, while the humiliated sinners could not resist the force of his sublime appeal. He was not injured, but as the friend of the people standing for the public good, he resolutely (regardless of any possible risk to himself) put himself between the people and their oppressors.

Jesus, it is frequently said, was the friend of the poor in the wrong way, because he pronounced poverty blessed. His teachings on this subject were, however, only to the effect that ill-gotten gain is accursed, while honest poverty is no disgrace. Unlike incendiary atheistic anarchists, he would effect reform, not by denouncing all capitalists as devils, but by moving the hearts and minds of rich and poor alike to reconstruct society on a basis of justice. Anarchists and nihilists have wrongs to right, grievances to redress, it is true, but incendiary speeches and writings can never bring about reform. Rich and poor alike are amenable to justice, and while the wage system is not the ultimate, it cannot be abolished by violent means, though it will be outgrown through preaching and practice pertaining to the new era.

Jesus, as a co-operator at war with competition in all its phases, is the central figure in the new theology. The received human Christ has a special message to discontented workingmen, and can find his way to the

hearts and minds of the laboring classes at the east end of London. We read with surprise the words of Bishop Potter concerning rivalry and competition, as published in *Scribner's Magazine*, Feb. 1889, in an article on "The Competitive Element in Modern Life." That such utterances should proceed from a Christian bishop proves afresh that a re-conception of Christ is indeed a necessity to-day. Competition is infernal; rivalry is diabolical; and a man or woman must be short-sighted indeed who does not see that lawful ambition to excel is not desire to get ahead of some one else, but to contribute one's proper share to the success of a grand performance on the stage of life, in which every part needs to be well sustained by thoroughly competent actors. A theatrical simile may serve to illustrate the truth we seek to convey. A grand opera needs that every part be admirably taken. The star system is an offence against propriety and shocks all sensitive lovers of good music, for to have one part taken superbly by one person and all other parts taken badly, or at least indifferently, mutilates the composer's idea and effectually spoils the performance. In an ideal opera troupe all are stars, all excel, all shine, not as rivals, but in galaxies necessary to the completeness of the scene. If one is honored, all share the honor; if one is deficient, the effect of everybody's work is marred. So in human life: no one can rise by another's fall, and none need fall through another's rise. Co-operation is the key-note of social order, while the ambition to excel nobly is the antithesis of rivalry.

## APPENDIX.

### REVIEW OF "THE LIGHT OF EGYPT; OR, THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL AND THE STARS."

The most singular work recently published by the Religio-Philosophical Publishing House, Chicago, bearing the above title, is deserving of more than a cursory glance. Though it is by no means a thoroughly theosophical work, and has been severely criticised in the *Path* and other periodicals, yet it contains much interesting and useful information. Its authorship is curiously anonymous, as a glance at its title-page will show. We ask, "Who is 'X'?" and echo answers, "Who?" A quotation from Rev. chaps. i. and v. constitutes the prelude to the work: "Write the things *which thou hast seen*, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; **THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS** which thou sawest in my right hand." Is the reader to infer that the mysterious author, whose name is represented by a sign, is gifted like unto John the Evangelist or Swedenborg? The work is dedicated "To the Budding Spirituality of the Occident and the Rising Genius of the Western Race." That our readers may be informed at the outset of this review of the ground plan of the work we place before them its preface, which is as follows:—

"The reasons which have induced the writer to undertake the responsibility of presenting a purely occult treatise to the world, are briefly these:—

"For nearly twenty years the writer has been deeply engaged investigating the hidden realms of occult force, and, as the results of these mystical labors were considered to be of great value and real worth by a few personal acquaintances who were also seeking light, he was finally induced to condense, as far as practicable, the general

results of these researches into a series of lessons for private occult study. This idea was ultimately carried out and put into external form; the whole, when completed, presenting the dual aspects of occult lore as seen and realized in the soul and the stars, corresponding to the microcosm and the macrocosm of ancient Egypt and Chaldea, and thus giving a brief epitome of Hermetic philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

“Having served their original purpose, external circumstances have compelled their preparation for a much wider circle of minds. The chief reason urging to this step was the strenuous efforts now being systematically put forth to poison the budding spirituality of the western mind, and to fasten upon its mediumistic mentality the subtle, delusive dogmas of *Karma* and Re-incarnation, as taught by the sacerdotalisms of the decaying Orient.

“From the foregoing statement it will be seen that this work is issued with a definite purpose, namely, to explain the true spiritual connection between God and man, the soul and the stars, and to reveal the real truths of both *Karma* and Re-incarnation as they actually exist in nature, stripped of all priestly interpretation. The definite statements made in regard to these subjects are absolute facts, in so far as embodied man can understand them through the symbolism of human language, and the writer defies contradiction by any living authority who possesses the spiritual right to say, ‘I know.’

“During these twenty years of personal intercourse with the exalted minds of those who constitute the brethren of light, the fact was revealed that long ages ago the Orient had lost the use of the true spiritual compass of the soul, as well as the real secrets of its own Theosophy. As a race, they have been, and still are, traveling the descending arc of this racial cycle, whereas the western race have been slowly working their way upward through matter upon the ascending arc. Already it has reached the equator of its mental and spiritual development. Therefore the writer does not fear the ultimate results of the occult knowledge put forth in the present work, during this, the great mental crisis of the race.

“Having explained the actual causes which impelled the writer to undertake this responsibility, it is also necessary to state most emphatically, that he does not wish to convey the impression to the reader’s mind that the Orient is destitute of spiritual truth. On the

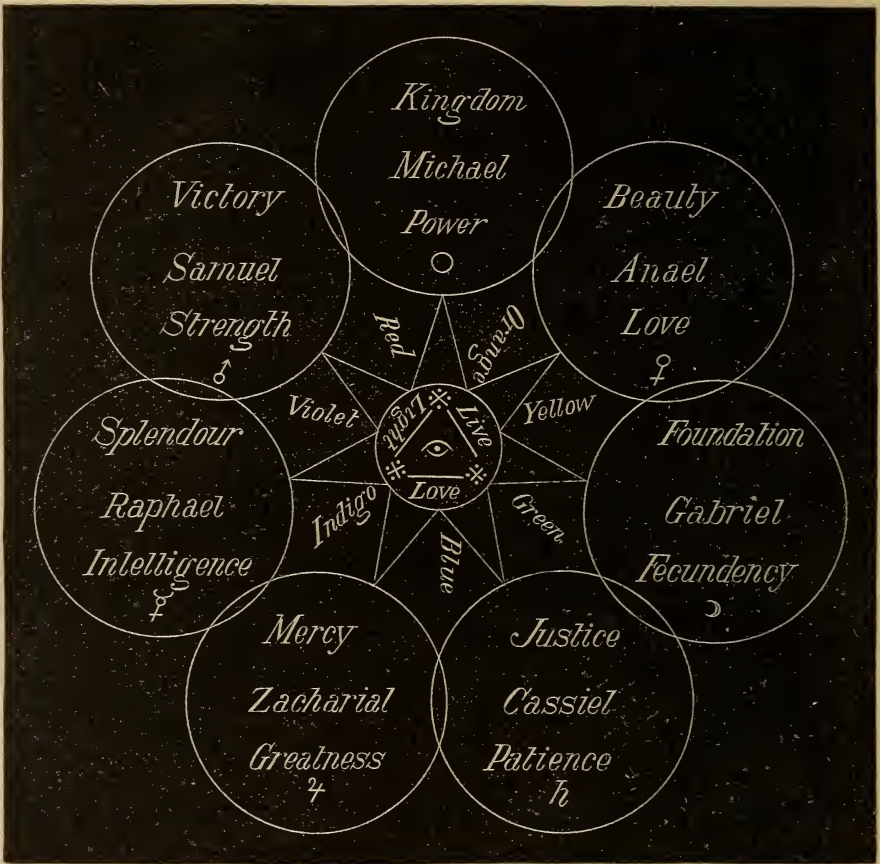
<sup>1</sup> The term Hermetic is here used in its true sense of sealed or secret.

contrary, every genuine student of occult lore is justly proud of the snow-white locks of old Hindustan, and thoroughly appreciates the wondrous stores of mystical knowledge concealed within the astral vortices of the Hindu branch of the Aryan race. In India, probably more than in any other country, are the latent forces and mysteries of nature the subject of thought and study. But alas! it is not a progressive study. The descending arc of this spiritual force keeps them bound to the dogmas, traditions, and externalisms of the decaying past, whose real secrets they cannot now penetrate. The ever-living truths concealed beneath the symbols in the astral light are hidden from this view by the setting sun of their spiritual cycle. Therefore, the writer only desires to impress upon the reader's candid mind the fact that his earnest effort is to expose that particular section of Buddhistic Theosophy (esoteric, so called) that would fasten the cramping shackles of theological dogma upon the rising genius of the western race. It is the delusive Oriental systems against which his efforts are directed, and not the race nor the mediumistic individuals who uphold and support them; for '*omnia vincit veritas*' is the life motto of

THE AUTHOR."

We are entirely unacquainted with the particular species of Buddhistic Theosophy referred to. The Theosophical Society bears no resemblance to the system characterized in the above preface. Why cannot writers put forward their honest convictions without insinuating evil of others? Evil speaking is characteristic of no true adept. "Truth conquers all things" indeed, and whoever adopts this motto for his own should remember the precept, "Overcome evil with good," or he may soon find himself a "mediumistic individual" controlled by "cramping shackles" of prejudice and misconception.

The introduction to Part I. inculcates many good ideas. The diagram which is its frontispiece is an ambitious and ingenious attempt to represent "the realm of spirit." The background is black; in the centre is a seven-pointed star, the points of which represent the seven prismatic hues, — red, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, and orange. The central sphere or body of the star contains a central eye, enclosed within a triangle, the sides of which are marked with the words Light, Love, Live. Surrounding this central figure are seven spheres, designated as follows, according to the names of the seven representative angels: —



At the foot of the figure are the following quotations from the 1st chapter of the 4th Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Though the seven angels are distinctly Kabalistic and the quotation Græco-Christian, there is nothing necessarily incongruous in this grouping. As the Egyptians doubtless originally conveyed instruction in the mysteries first to the Hebrews and then to the Greeks, Christianity undeniably perpetuated many Egyptian secrets, which it veiled from the multitude in the symbols of the church and the ritual of secret orders.

Section 1, Chapter I., dealing with Involution, supplies us with some extraordinary theories. In our judgment the words "unconscious" and "motionless" cannot reasonably be applied to "Divinity"; but of course there is an unpenetrated, though not necessarily impene-

trable life, which not even the wisest has fully analyzed. Would it not be advisable, in view of the "great mystery," to be cautious in the use of negative adjectives? Is it not extremely probable that what seems to us unconscious or motionless is more conscious and more active than aught we comprehend? and do not scientific revelations in these days support this supposition? "The whole universe is filled with the Deific presence of God" is, no doubt, an accurate statement, and doubtless it is also true that "the universe is boundless and unlimited, — a circle whose circumference is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere"; and also that "the universe is dual, and consists of the manifest and the non-manifest." But the language is in one instance tautological, and in neither case easy to be comprehended. We should say the *centre* is everywhere and the *circumference* nowhere were we speaking of infinity, but perhaps our definition is no clearer than the one we have quoted; however, it seems clearer to us, and may seem so to some at least of our readers, therefore we append it. The explanation of the diagram is simple, and we give it in the words of the book, as we deem it well worthy of consideration: "The central triad represents Love, Wisdom, and Crown" (the Hebrew word *kepher* signifies truth — in this connection, though, crown is the literal translation); "the seven-pointed star the seven rays issuing therefrom; the seven circles show the seven angelic worlds formed from the seven active principles; the names Cassiel, Michael, etc., are Kabalistical ones for the Sephiroth, while the words above and below show their attributes."

In Chapter II. matter is described as "the polar opposite of manifested spirit," the reaction of spiritual action. Evolution is correctly defined from the Latin *e* and *voluo* (to unroll). "Man, in his physical body, is a perfect epitome of the planet upon which he lives, while the celestial worlds find their perfect expression in his soul." "Every known 'thing' is dependent upon a something else, and all things, therefore, eventually dependent upon each other." Such passages teach very good Theosophy, and whoever may be their author, the reader cannot but be instructed by their perusal. "Evolution is dependent upon involution" is another great truth.

As in the Buddhistic idea of man there are seven "principles," so is it with the Kabalistic. The definitions are as follows: —

1. The Spiritual; creative.                   The Word.
2. The Astral;     realm of design.   The Idea.

- |                    |                 |          |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------|
| 3. The Aerial ;    | realm of force. | Power.   |
| 4. The Mineral ;   | phenomenal.     | Justice. |
| 5. The Vegetable ; | life.           | Beauty.  |
| 6. The Animal ;    | consciousness.  | Love.    |
| 7. The Human ;     | mind.           | Glory.   |

The author does not claim any originality for these views, but declares they have been known to Hermetic initiates for at least a thousand generations. Hermes Trismegistus, the great Prince of Egyptian hierophants, distinctly declared, "The Universe is from God, and man from the Universe." If the first two chapters of Genesis are studied in the light of the Kabala, the Bible student will find no conflict in the two accounts of creation, as the first refers to the spiritual from God, the second to the physical from the "sons of God."

Concerning sex in spirit the author contends that the male and female forms are always distinctly preserved. This doctrine is steadfastly maintained in Mrs. Richmond's "Soul and its Embodiments," though that work teaches quite differently on the question of repeated embodiments. "Twin souls are related to each other primarily as brother and sister, and finally as man and wife." Many very good ideas on marriage are set forth, and asceticism is frowned upon, except in cases where physical continence is the result of inward purity. All metaphysicians are bound to agree that when impure desires are permitted to run riot in the mind, physical abstinence from indulgence is no safeguard from the attacks of evil influences. On the question of celibacy the author says, "Upon one plane it becomes a delusion and a snare ; but upon a higher plane it contains all the elements of a glorious truth." This statement we know to be true. The affections must be spiritualized before any outward expression of purity can be genuine ; and as our secret thoughts are magnets, attracting unseen influences, it is impossible to lay too much stress on purity of thought. Of this we may rest assured : no hypocritical sanctimony or slavish prudery can protect any one against unseen dangers, however much it may throw a fictitious halo around an earthly reputation.

Section 2 opens with a dissertation on "Incarnation and Re-incarnation." While the author may be correct in some of his comments upon ancient sacerdotal systems, his style is exaggerated, and little that he has to say on this subject can be called luminous. Evidently he is prejudiced against "re-incarnation," and there is nothing like



prejudice for concealing truth. Many of the assertions in this section misrepresent the doctrine; the "Inversive Brethren," against whom we are warned, have probably inspired much that is here written; and then with cunning subtlety warned readers against others. The arguments against "re-incarnation" are often ludicrously inconsistent. They have a value, however, in showing how very little can really be advanced in opposition to the doctrine. Do not let us be understood to say that none of the views put forward concerning the spiritual world and the transit of the soul from planet to planet are correct; we believe many of them to be true, but we do say most emphatically, that the arguments amount to nothing in disproof of the idea he is combating. On the contrary, his assertion proves, rather than disproves, what he seeks to condemn.

Notwithstanding a perfect diatribe against "re-incarnation" in general, in three particular classes of instances it is said to take place: 1st. Still-born children and those not allowed to come to maturity. 2d. "Natural born idiots." 3d. "Messianic incarnation by exalted souls, for the special purpose of enlightening the race." No doubt these three classes are represented in "re-incarnation," but are they the only ones?

"The Hermetic Constitution of Man" makes a very interesting chapter. The seven divisions, counting upward, are: A, The physical form; B, an electro-vital body; C, an astral form; D, the animal soul; E, the spiritual body; F, the divine soul; G, the pure spirit entity itself; the divine Ego, which is the divine atom of life, the central spiritual sun of the microcosm. The author proceeds to defend his system at the expense of a supposed "Buddhism" which is his pet aversion. If the theories stated were not connected with abuse of this curious caricature of Buddhism, they would be very readable; but this constant attacking something the author lamentably misconceives, is belittling to the work and irritating to the non-partisan searcher for truth. Could "The Light of Egypt" be re-written with the obnoxious elements expurgated, it would be a valuable theosophical work for reference; as it is, it engenders and fosters much needless hostility.

The chapter on "*Karma*" is often amusing by reason of the singular manner in which it confounds "*Karma*" with the astral light.

We find, despite this extreme paucity of reason displayed in connection with a prejudged theme, much interesting theorizing on the successive races of mankind, which, according to our author, were:

1st, gold ; 2d, silver ; 3d, copper. Amid a mass of rubbish and misstatement we pick up a beautiful gem of thought: "Do good, not for the sake of gaining good thereby, but for the sake of simple goodness and virtue alone." If "*Karma* cannot be interfered with," it can be outlived and outgrown ; the *law* cannot be changed ; but our life to-day can atone for our past follies. This all Theosophy teaches, though possibly some individual Theosophists are not very happy in some of their expressions on the subject.

What is said on "Mediumship, its Nature and Mysteries" (chap. IV., sec. 2), contains a good share of sound metaphysical teaching. This chapter could and may be profitably studied by all Spiritualists, and those seeking information concerning Spiritualism. Section 3 treats upon "The Soul, its Nature and Attributes," headed with this sentence from Plutarch: "The divine spirit is to the soul what the soul is to the body ;" and ends with another great axiom, "Know the Divinity within you, that you may know the Divine One, of which your soul is a ray." "Every soul is immortal by virtue of its community with God." *Albertus Magnus* heads a chapter on "Mortality and Immortality," decidedly a fine production. Chapter III., "The Dark Satellite," will interest lovers of the uncanny. Chapter IV., "The Triumph of the Soul, Adeptship," contains salutary advice, though here again the advancing student must learn to select the wheat from the chaff, and not mistake acrimony for wisdom. Another septenary table is here given, defining the seven senses.

*Physical senses.*

1. Touch.
2. Taste.
3. Smell.
4. Sight.
5. Hearing.
6. Intuition.
7. Thought transference.

*Soul senses.*

1. The power to psychometrize.
2. The power to absorb and enjoy the finer essence of the life wave.
3. The power to distinguish the spiritual aromas of nature.
4. The lucid state, called clairvoyance.
5. The ability to perceive ethereal vibrations, called clairaudience.
6. The capacity to receive true inspiration.
7. The power to converse with spiritual beings at will.

Part II. of this singular book is on "The Science of the Stars," and will well repay perusal. It certainly is a very fair statement of astrol-

ogy, and not calculated to lead to pessimistic conclusions, as the author allows a great deal of liberty to man to shape his own destiny. The frontispiece to this second part is the figure of a man standing in the center of the zodiacal serpent. "Astrology *per se* is a combination of two sciences, viz., astronomy and correspondences. These two are related to each other as hand and glove; the former deals with suns, moons, planets, and stars, and strictly confines its researches to a knowledge of their size, distance, and motion; while the latter deals with the spiritual and physical influences of the same bodies, — first upon each other, then upon the earth, and lastly upon the organism of man. Astronomy is the external lifeless glove; correspondences the living hand within." Exactly what we have said many times in our public lectures and private instructions, and for saying which have been accused of indorsing effete superstition; but truth will triumph, and the ignorant externalists who deny *in toto* the ancient wisdom of Chaldea and other favored climes in the long ago, must, in this age of re-awakening intelligence, come ere long to see things as they really are and not as they blindly supposed them to be. Astrology, rightly understood, is the spiritual side of astronomy; these sciences always went together with the learned of old; ignorance has divorced them, knowledge will re-unite them. The language in the introduction to this second part often rises to the sublime, and shows the touch of a finished scholar.

The writer heads the first chapter of his treatise with these words: "So God created man in his own image, in his own image created he him." Students of spiritual and mental healing will find much to think about if they ponder upon such statements as this: —

"When trouble or anxiety of mind crosses our path, the first place where we feel its influence is that part of the body called the pit of the stomach. This sensitive region is within the solar plexus. How many times do forebodings of coming trouble impress themselves upon this delicate center. . . . The solar plexus is our grand contracting point whereby we are placed *en rapport* with all things external to us; therefore we can see that the true psychical basis of physical health rests with this center; for it is taken for granted that man is by lawful superiority the natural ruler of those powers which live, move, and have their being within his own magnetic dominions. To possess true psychological power which shall be subject to the imperial WILL, and thus be able to assume perfect control of the odyllic sphere; to con-

centrate all our loyal forces, at a moment's notice, upon any particular section of this magnetic kingdom, and thus instantly subdue any revolt of the reactionary powers, — it is absolutely imperative that our physical bodies be kept free and uncramped by any article of dress which restrains us from developing our true natural forms.”

Some very wise words are to be found on page 176 concerning colors, all of which are pronounced good in their significance, though when mediumistic persons see dull colors around persons the dullness of the tint denotes impurity, or at least a lamentable deficiency of spirituality. Colors without doubt have a very powerful influence on all sensitive persons. White is always congenial to the innocent and pure-minded, as it denotes both simplicity and entirety. Red, when bright and clear, denotes pure love and mental power, but when dull and dirty-looking signifies unhallowed animality and perverted strength. Blue means fidelity, truth, constancy. Yellow signifies wisdom, knowledge, understanding. Green is indicative of delight in externals; but each and every color, when seen in the aura surrounding a person or object, indicates the purity or impurity represented by the brightness or dullness of the color seen.

Concerning Christian Science, the following remarks are made on page 178: “It is utterly impossible for antagonistic natures to benefit each other mentally, no matter how good or pure they, as individuals, may be.” This no doubt is true, so far as magnetic influences and mind-cure are concerned; but when true Spiritual (or Christian) Science is understood, an immense difference will be at once perceived, as the truly scientific healer is a teacher who appeals to the innate divinity of a patient, and by arousing his own spiritual nature enables him to rectify any derangement in his own organism. At the same time we frankly admit that really beneficial results are rarely obtained when no sympathy is felt between healer and patient. In our chapter on “Electric Christian Theosophy,” containing our review of Marie Corelli's “Romance of Two Worlds,” and elsewhere in this volume, we have expressed our views fully on this matter; let us now recommend as a subject of special reflection for all healers and teachers the following Scripture texts, laying peculiar stress on the pronouns: “All that the Father giveth *me* shall come to *me*, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” “In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for *you*. Where *I* am there *ye* may be also.” “Whosoever two or three are gathered together in *my name* there

am *I* in the midst of *them*." Not Calvinism, with its hideous blasphemies against the universal action of Divine Love and Wisdom which it abominably travesties, but a spiritual law of sympathetic attraction is set forth in these luminous and beautiful lessons from the Gospel. As each finds his own sphere and does his own work, minding his own business, not intermeddling with his neighbor's affairs, society will develop into a delightful co-operative commonwealth, and the demons of unjust and spiteful rivalry and competition will have left the earth to appear on it no more forever.

Chapter II. is headed with "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should kill him." In the midst of a good deal that appears to us of rather doubtful authenticity, we pick up many pearls. *Saturn* is said to produce a reserved and cold nature, which corresponds to the blue ray of the spectrum. *Jupiter* is described as conducive to joviality, generosity, and benevolence, and corresponds to the purple or indigo ray. *Mars* generates a fierce, intrepid force and corresponds to the red ray. The *Sun* "radiates the principle which is at once life-giving and dignified. It is affable but majestic, proud but gracious, and blends firmness with kindness, ambition with paternal consideration, combativeness with self-respect, and liberality with discretion." It corresponds to the orange ray. The above is a good general outline of a solar which really means spiritually governed and well balanced character. *Venus* is described as loving, pliant, and receptive, but capable of strong attachment for a totally different type; hence the mythological friendship between Mars and Venus. Venus corresponds to the yellow ray. *Mercury* is the volatile and commercial planet, bright and witty, but full of cunning devices; it corresponds to the violet ray. The *Moon* is wisely dismissed without any definite statement concerning its attributes. As it can be only an astral reflex of the earth it corresponds to the green ray. Concerning *Uranus* and *Neptune* the following is said: "After the seven notes of the magnetic gamut have been sounded, the next note must be upon a higher octave and form a repetition of the first." The following statement is of interest: "There is still another planet more remote from our Sun than Neptune, but its action on our organism at present is *nil*, because the present races have not yet attained to that special state of spiritual and mental development that will admit of its influence becoming manifest. Neither will such a planet become visible to this earth's inhabitants until there is sufficient

mental force of the requisite grade to enable its existence to become apparent.”

A fine astro-phrenological chart prefaces Chapter III. It explains that the Sun and Jupiter are related to man's moral sentiments; Saturn to the selfish propensities; Venus and the Moon to the domestic qualities and semi-intellectual sentiments; Mars to perception. Phrenology is accepted with considerable caution and modification, though its general teachings are undisputed. Some very curious and elaborate explanations of these statements are given in clear, perspicuous language; among them we find the singular declaration that sorrow is symbolized by a square or angle of  $90^\circ$ ; harmony by a triangle, or angle of  $120^\circ$ . Chapter IV. deals with the Four Triplicities, each of which contains three zodiacal signs. The fiery trigon embraces Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius; the earthly trigon, Taurus, Virgo, and Capricornus; the airy trigon, Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius; the watery trigon, Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. On page 201 we read: “The four ancient elements have been symbolized from time immemorial as the Man, the Bull, the Eagle, and the Lion.” In Christian art these are the symbols of the four evangelists, which fact alone, were others wanting, should be enough to convince the thoughtful student that Christianity, both in its history and its art, is not by any means a solitary revelation. Chapter IV. ends with a beautiful interpretation of Eden. On page 203 is a chart entitled, “The Grand Astrological Key of Alchemical Science.” In its center is a blazing golden Sun, radiating four sets of rays respectively denominated Sylphs, Undines, Gnomes, and Salamanders. These, according to Kabalistic science, signify the four great groups of human faculties, — the spiritual (salamanders), the imaginative (sylphs), the intellectual (undines), and the animal (gnomes).

Concerning nativities, we are told that the longest livers are usually born in March, April, or May; while the bulk of the short-lived are born in August, September, or October; but this is only true in a very general way. Alchemy is treated spiritually and sensibly, and proper warning is given to all in search of earthly gold by means of desecrated occult energies. The metals have their planetary rulers designated.

The Astro-Kabalistical Planisphere of the Signs and Constellations of the Zodiac, facing page 210, assigns the twelve tribes of Israel to the following signs and months: —

*Aries*, March, Benjamin; *Taurus*, April, Issachar; *Gemini*, May,

Simeon-Levi ; *Cancer*, June, Zebulon ; *Leo*, July, Judah ; *Virgo*, August, Asshur ; *Libra*, September, Dan ; *Scorpio*, October, Gad ; *Sagittarius*, November, Joseph ; *Capricornus*, December, Naphtali ; *Aquarius*, January, Reuben ; *Pisces*, February, Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus fourteen names are given to the tribes, as *Gemini* and *Pisces* are dual signs, and thus express duality in their correspondences.

The symbolical aspects of the twelve signs are very interestingly amplified as the work proceeds. *Aries* represents sacrifice ; astronomically it is the lamb slain upon the equinoctial cross. Kabalistically it refers to the head and brains of the grand man of the Cosmos. Upon the intellectual plane it signifies the martial or contending spirit. On the physical plane it gives the native a spare but strong body, medium height, long face and neck, and powerful chest. People who are dominated by this sign are usually courageous and ambitious, but irritable. *Taurus* symbolizes all the procreative forces in nature ; it is the sign of husbandry. Kabalistically it represents the ears, neck, and throat of the grand man, and is considered a silent, patient, listening sign. Upon the intellectual plane *Taurus* governs carefulness and self-reliance, industry and application ; but persons of *Taurus*' nature are fiery as an infuriated bull when greatly aroused, though ordinarily reserved and equable. *Gemini* symbolizes unity. The bright stars, *Castor* and *Pollux*, have also been regarded as typical of twin souls. Kabalistically this sign represents the hands and arms of the grand man, and therefore governs executive and mechanical ability. Upon the intellectual plane *Gemini* denotes the union of reason with intuition ; those under it are of nervous temperament and highly magnetic ; physically they are tall and erect. *Cancer* symbolizes tenacity to life. Kabalistically it signifies the vital organs of the grand man ; it governs inspiration and respiration. Upon the intellectual plane it denotes considerable force, but those dominated by it are usually timid and retiring ; but their passivity renders them highly mediumistic ; physically they are apt to be small and fair. *Leo* symbolizes indomitable courage, linked with extraordinary strength. Kabalistically it represents the heart of the grand man ; those born under its influence are generally possessed of fine constitution and great recuperative power. On the intellectual plane it works sympathetically, making the native generous in the extreme ; physically, this sign is expressed in a large, fair person, broad-shouldered, with golden hair. *Virgo* symbolizes chastity. Kabalistically it is the solar plexus of the grand man, and there-

fore represents the assimilating and distributing functions of the human body. Intellectually it denotes the fulfillment of hopes. Those receptive to its influx are characterized by love of reflection and study, consequently they become repositories of knowledge. Their chief attributes are hope and contentment; they are therefore well fitted for close application to scientific pursuits. Such persons possess large brain power, and make excellent statesmen. Physically they are usually of medium stature, very compact, and of dark complexion. As orators they are fluent, practical, and entertaining. *Libra* typifies justice. Kabalistically it stands for the reins and loins of the grand man, and therefore represents the central storehouse of reproductive ability. Upon the universal chart it denotes equilibrium as expressed in the perfect man. Intellectually it rules external perception, balanced by intuition, which union gives foresight; but those born under it rarely become practical interpreters of their theories: they possess a finely balanced mental and magnetic organism, but are seldom elevated to very prominent positions. Physically they are usually tall and slender, perfectly proportioned, with brown hair, bright blue eyes, and clear complexion; sometimes, however, *Libra* produces very dark hair. *Scorpio* symbolizes death and deceit. Kabalistically it typifies the procreative system, which by the ancients was always typical of divine power when employed spiritually, but of sensuality and loss of innocence when treated of as carnal emblems. On the intellectual plane *Scorpio* signifies the generation of ideas; persons governed by it are of active, evolutionary minds; their brains literally crammed with inventive imagery. They possess keen perception, clear intuition, and powerful will. Physically such persons are strong and inclined to corpulence. *Sagittarius* symbolizes retribution, and also a hunter. Kabalistically it signifies the thighs of the grand man—the muscular foundation of the seat of locomotion; it is emblematic of stability. Intellectually it stands for organizing power. Persons ruled by this are loyal, patriotic, and law-abiding; they are also generous and free, charitable and kind to the distressed. They possess strong conservative qualities, and their characteristics are self-control and ability to rule others. Physically they are well-formed and, indeed, handsome. *Capricorn* typifies sin and the offerings made to put away sin. In all ancient mythologies the Saviour of mankind was born at midnight, directly the sun enters this sign. The young child laid in the stable in Christian commemorations, according to a far older system denotes



the birth of the year in midwinter. Kabalistically this sign represents the knees of the grand man ; it is emblematic of servitude. Intellectually it denotes a scheming temperament, very little developed spiritually ; its natives are intensely quick to see the weak points in others, and turn them to their own advantage. Physically they are, as a rule, of medium stature, not very well proportioned, and though energetic in their own interest, indolent in the employ of others. *Aquarius* symbolizes judgment. Kabalistically it stands for the legs of the grand man ; it emblemizes the migratory forces of the body. Intellectually it represents popular science : those governed by it, though brilliantly intellectual, are confined to the evidence of their senses, and cannot peer at all into the realm of such truth as must be discerned spiritually. Physically this sign gives a decidedly prepossessing appearance, coupled with an amiable and refined disposition. *Pisces* signifies a flood. Kabalistically it represents the feet of the grand man ; it is emblematic of patient obedience. Intellectually it betokens mental indifference : persons ruled by it take things as they come, and pay no serious attention to anything. Physically its natives are usually short, and inclined to be stout. Their nature is peaceable, but their actions are largely influenced by their surroundings.

Concerning the occult application of the twelve signs, we learn that the four triplicities symbolize the four cardinal points of the universe, constituting the universal cross, sacred in all ages, and the four occult elements, Fire, Earth, Air, and Water. The Fiery Trigon corresponds to the eastern horizon at daybreak. Fire was undoubtedly the origin of all worlds, and from a fiery state they have gradually cooled, at length becoming inhabitable. The principle of heat, termed Caloric, sustains all living organisms. Fire represents courage, zeal, daring, and will ; in fact, it pertains to every kind of activity ; while on the higher or esoteric plane it signifies the very source of being, which is, of course, spiritual. Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius correspond to the intellect, the emotions, and the offspring of the two when they are closely united. The Earthly triplicity stands for the frozen north, the symbol of crystallization : it is concerned with the mutual relations of solids, from which are evolved form, proportion, and sound ; it also refers to all metals and metallic industries. Esoterically, Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn correspond to patient effort, formation, and reformation, and the results of these in distinct expressions of force, either on the

upward or downward grade of action. The Airy triplicity represents the west, or the setting sun ; but this only gives promise of a new and brighter day. This triplicity deals with the higher qualities of the social, political, and priestly relations. Its esoteric significance is the one true science, the knowledge of life as spirit—the one enduring life of the entire universe. The Watery triplicity, symbolical of the south, signifies the polar opposite of the Earthy, and therefore represents the liquefaction of crystals and all hard substances ; it expresses the union of opposites, the harmonious adjustment of contradictories. On the esoteric plane it denotes triumph over mundane obstacles, difficulties vanquished, paradise regained. The reader is reminded that the four triplicities are but different sections of attributes within the human soul ; the twelve constellations reveal the mystery of Adam Kadmon, the archetypal man of the starry planisphere. We begin with fire and terminate with water.

We here append a notice of the twelve precious gems, which correspond to the twelve signs, and are, therefore, according to astral science, respectively appropriate to be worn by persons born in the month named, as a magnetic talisman.

Aries . . . .	March . . . .	Amethyst.
Taurus . . . .	April . . . .	Agate.
Gemini . . . .	May . . . .	Beryl (Crystal).
Cancer . . . .	June . . . .	Emerald.
Leo . . . .	July . . . .	Ruby.
Virgo . . . .	August . . . .	Jasper.
Libra . . . .	September . . . .	Diamond.
Scorpio . . . .	October . . . .	Topaz.
Sagittarius . . . .	November . . . .	Carbuncle.
Capricorn . . . .	December . . . .	Onyx (Chalcedony).
Aquarius . . . .	January . . . .	Sky-blue Sapphire.
Pisces . . . .	February . . . .	Chrysolite.

Having entered upon this subject of precious gems and their significance, we will only add our decided conviction that as colors and gems, of vivid hue especially, exert a marked influence both upon human beings and animals, and as we can suppose no outward form to originate without some spiritual impulse, we conclude that were more attention given to this subject, we might derive much valuable

and practical information as a guide to dressing our bodies and furnishing our rooms according to our necessities. Certain it is that all persons are not influenced alike by gems and colors: those most agreeable to some cause annoyance to others. Dr. Babbitt, in "The Principles of Light and Color," enters very deeply into this theme; and those who desire to pursue it to a length impossible in a work not exclusively devoted to that topic, would do well to peruse that learned volume.

As we have no further space to follow out the line of thought suggested by "The Light of Egypt," — the second half of which is fascinating in the extreme, and deals with astrology more succinctly than we have ever seen that abstruse subject dealt with elsewhere, — we will conclude this lengthy, though incomplete, review by testifying to our own perfect agreement with the best views on astrology now being given to the world. As man contains all the planets and constellations within himself, or, at all events, man being the microcosm, there is no element without him which is not also within, it stands to reason that the wonderful occult sciences of the ancients, now being stripped of their mystical garb as rapidly as the public mind can benefit by the process, all end at the same grand point, and declare man to be the arbiter of his own fate, the creator of his own destiny. The essential germ of life we vaguely call the innermost spirit of man can expand its latent forces, in every instance, until human beings shall completely dominate the earth, and be free to roam at will through the constellated fields of space, unhampered by any external limitation. True Theosophy is the knowledge of how to live above the senses, so as to make them serve the spirit in all things; and this they will not do, so long as the pressure of material greed is allowed to make such heavy demands upon human thought and energy. To live in the world, and yet above being enslaved by it in anything, is to find the royal road to health and happiness. When we have found this way, and are walking in it, for us there will indeed be no more sin, sickness, or dying; old things will have passed away, and all will have become new. From many different sources we may gather material to enrich our store, but, turn where we will, the same great truth confronts us, — Man is the measure of the universe, and mind is the measure of man.

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

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